UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND

CONFERENCE ON

THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31ST AUGUST - 3RD SEPTEMBER 1959

C O N T E N T S

FOREWORD

Since the Conference was intended to promote informal discussion about the history syllabus for the School and Higher School Certificate examinations, it was decided not to issue any formal report, but in response to many requests the lectures have been cyclostyled. Certain suggestions which commanded a fair measure of agreement were, however, submitted to the Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate and to the various education authorities in the Federation. These suggestions are set out at the end of my lecture on 'The Case for African History'. From the replies I have received it would appear that a good deal of further thought and discussion is called for before the education authorities would be prepared to recommend alterations to the existing syllabus. Undoubtedly one chief drawback to giving a more prominent place to the history of Africa is the lack of adequate textbooks. It is hoped that this deficiency will be remedied in the next few years. Certainly no person seriously concerned with education in this country can remain complacent in face of a situation in which so little teaching is given in the higher forms regarding the history of the continent in which we live. Whatever the outcome of the syllabus discussions I hope the Conference made a useful if modest contribution to stimulating thought and discussion on the problems of history teaching. One concrete result has been the decision to go ahead with the formation of the Historical Association of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which will be an Overseas Branch of the Historical Association of the United Kingdom.

I would like to acknowledge the co-operation of the Federal Education Ministry, the Ministry for African Education, Northern Rhodesia, the Department of African Education, Southern Rhodesia, and the Department of Education, Nyasaland. All these made grants to assist teachers to attend the Conference. The Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate presented copies of their examination syllabuses and copies of old examination papers.

Messrs. Longmans and the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses were responsible for exhibiting a most useful book display.

E. T. STOKES
Professor of History

May 1960.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND

LIST OF MEMBERS

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959

AMBROSE, Mrs. M. ...	Girls' High School, Salisbury.
ANNANDALE, Mr. J. ...	Northlea School, Bulawayo.
ANSELNA, Sister ...	Dominican Convent, Salisbury.
BIRRI, Mr. J. ...	Gokomere Secondary School, Fort Victoria.
BODMER, Mrs. A.V. ...	Townsend School, Bulawayo.
BOGOMAS, Mr. E.V. ...	Founders High School, Bulawayo.
CREMINS, Mr.R.J.,S.J.	Canisius College, Chikuni.
CARTER, Mr. E.P. ...	Prince Edward School, Salisbury.
CHEVIN, Mr. R. ...	Goromonzi School, S. Rhodesia.
CHRISTIE, Mr. R.B. ...	Inspector of Schools, Lusaka.
COBBAN, Mr. G. ...	Fletcher High School, Gwelo.
COLEMAN, Mr. F. ...	Chingola High School, N.Rhodesia.
CORNISH, Miss W.M. ...	Chipembi Girls' School, Chisamba.
COLLINS, Rev.Bro.R. ...	Zomba Catholic Secondary School,Nyasaland.
CROSS, Mr.P.A. ...	Prince Edward School, Salisbury.
DAVIDSON, Mr. J. ...	Peterhouse, Marandellas.
DE BEER, Mr. E.P. ...	Solusi Missionary College, Bulawayo.
ELLENBOGEN,Mrs. E. ...	Townsend School, Bulawayo.
FLOOD, Mr. D. ...	King George VI School, Broken Hill.
GLYN-JONES, Miss E. ...	Chisipite School, Salisbury.
HADFIELD, Mr. J. ...	Munali Secondary School, Lusaka.
HANSSEN, Mr. E. ...	King George VI School, Broken Hill.
HOOPER, Mr. J.D. ...	Umtali Boys' High School.
HORN, Miss C.L. ...	Eveline High School, Bulawayo.
JAMES BENEDICT,Brother	St.Francis Xavier College, Kutama,N.R.
JONES, Mr.J.D. ...	Morgan High School, Salisbury.
KELLY, Mrs. ...	Roosevelt High School.
LUMB, Miss S.V. ...	Hartzell Secondary School, Umtali.
McARTHY, Miss M.E ...	Hatfield High School, Salisbury.
McCARTHY, Mr. T. ...	St. George's College, Salisbury.
McCRINDLE, Mr. R.S. ...	Churchill School.
McGRATH, Mr.G.E. ...	Umtali Boys' High School.
McINTYRE,Mr.I.M.C. ...	Luanshya High School, N.Rhodesia.
MARY VIRGINIA,Sister ...	Dominican Convent, Salisbury.
MAURICE, Brother ...	St.Francis Xavier College, Kutama,N.R.
MOORE, Mr.D.G. ...	Prince Edward School, Salisbury.
MULLON, Mrs.F.M. ...	St.Andrew's School, Blantyre, Nyasaland.
NDLOVU, Mr. K. ...	Inyati Institution, Bulawayo.
NEL, Mr. L.J. ...	Thornhill High School, Gwelo.
O'HARA, Mr.R.J. ...	Churchill School, Salisbury.
PRENTICE, Mr.R.W. ...	Gilbert Rennie School, Lusaka.
RAYNER, Mr. W. ...	Prince Edward School, Salisbury.
REA, Rev. Fr. W. ...	St. George's College, Salisbury.
REILLY, Mr. J. ...	Ellis Robins School, Salisbury.
RIMINGTON, Mr.J. ...	Llewellin School, Ndola.
RUDD, Mr. J.C. ...	Dedza Secondary School, Nyasaland.
SEYMOUR, Mr.A.O. ...	Northlea School, Bulawayo.
SHARPLES, Mr.E.J. ...	Hamilton High School, Bulawayo.
SOLOMONS, Mr. - ...	Founders High School, Bulawayo.
THWAITS, Miss V.P. ...	Queen Elizabeth School, Salisbury.
TINDALL, Mr.T.E. ...	African Education Inspectorate, Umtali.
TSOPOTSA, Mr.S.M. ...	Hartzell Secondary School, Umtali.
TURNER, Mr.P.V. ...	Blantyre Secondary School, Nyasaland.
VIGOR, Mr.J.B.D. ...	Ellis Robins School, Salisbury.
WICKINS, Mr.P.L. ...	Goromonzi School, S.Rhodesia.

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959.

MONDAY, 31 AUGUST

3 - 4 pm. Members arrive.

3.30-4 pm. TEA

4.15 pm. Tour of College and visit to Library.

6.45 pm. DINNER. Address by Principal, Dr.W.Adams,CMG,OBE,Hon.LL.D.

8 pm. Short talk on National Archives by Mr.T.W.Baxter, Director of the National Archives, followed by films.

TUESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER

8.30-9.50 am. 'The Case for African History'- Professor E.T.Stokes,MA,PhD (Cantab).

9.50 am. TEA

10.20-11.30 School Certificate History Teaching: Syllabus and problems. (Discussion)

11.40-12.40 'The Making of British Central Africa'- Mr.L.H.Gann,MA,B.Litt. (Oxon)

1 pm. LUNCH

2.30-4 pm. Free

4-4.30 pm. TEA

6.45 pm. DINNER

8 pm. 'The relevance of the African Past'. A Symposium. Chairman: Dr.T.O.Ranger,M.A.,D.Phil.(Oxon).

WEDNESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER

8.30-9.50 am Historical Revision. 'English Historians and the Debate on the 17th century'. Dr.T.O.Ranger.

9.50 am. TEA

10.20-11.30 Higher Certificate History Teaching: Syllabus and Problems. (Discussion)

11.40-12.40 'Great Britain and Africa 1880-1914'. Professor E.T.Stokes.

1 pm. LUNCH

2.15-4 pm. Visit to National Archives and Parliament.

4-4.30 pm. TEA

6 pm. College Sherry Party.

6.45 pm. DINNER.

8 pm. 'A Scientist Looks at the Teaching of History'. Professor B.A.Fletcher,MA,B.Sc.(Lond.).

THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER

8.30-9.50 am Historical Revision. 'Cavour, Bismarck and the Making of the Nation State'. Mr.R.Brown,MA.(Cantab).

9.50 am. TEA

10.20-11.30 'Methods of Sixth Form and University History Teaching'. (Discussion)

11.40-12.40 'Zimbabwe'. Mr.A.Whitty,ARIBA, Surveyor of Monuments. Illustrated Talk.

1 pm. LUNCH

2.30-3.30pm Formation of an Historical Association. (Discussion).

3.40 pm. Summing up.

4.15 pm. TEA

6.45 DINNER

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959.

Lecture given by Professor E. T. Stokes of the Department of History

THE CASE FOR AFRICAN HISTORY

What I hope to do in this introductory talk is no more than to open up the question as to what is the most suitable form of history teaching for Central Africa. I do not wish to argue the case for African history in any partisan way, but rather to examine dispassionately the strength and weakness of the case, and to suggest where in my view the balance of the argument lies.

One cannot begin discussing the claims of African history without being led at once to a much larger issue: the ultimate object of all historical study. I take it that there are two impulses behind our interest in history. The first is an emotional impulse, an attachment to the past for its own sake, a yearning, in Miss Wedgwood's phrase, to push life back beyond the womb and to link hands with our forefathers. This I take it, is the root of the historical sense, and its satisfaction is the imaginative re-living of the past. The second impulse is more intellectual. It seeks to elicit order out of the seemingly disconnected flow of experience. It is concerned with how things have come to be as they are. The first impulse is directed to the objects of natural affection, to the past of one's local environment and society, or to the lives of great men with whom one feels emotionally linked. The second impulse tends to be more scientific and even philosophic. Its sweep is much wider; it looks to the history of whole societies, to the nature of impersonal historical forces like nationalism or industrial change. It seeks explanation rather than imaginative creation of the past. In its wilder moments it hopes to discover some underlying pattern in history that will explain the past and perhaps prognosticate the future.

A healthy interest in history will share something of both these impulses. Without any feeling for the past in its own right, without the capacity to enter into another mental and emotional world, intellectual or philosophic history loses the capacity to escape from the prison-house of immediate prejudices. Certainly it grows arid as it loses touch with experience in its immediacy and flesh and blood of life give place to the dead bones of abstraction. But history prompted by the first impulse, by an emotional kinship with the past of one's own immediate group or society, can be equally distorting and initially more dangerous, for it tends to feed prejudice directly within a much narrower emotional range. From this springs history as national myth, as thinly-disguised political propaganda.

The greatest history, as I understand it, avoids both kinds of defects while combining both impulses. It stands near enough to re-enact past emotion but detached enough to analyse and to rise superior to it. At its height it has the quality of Greek tragedy; it rings with the note which Thucydides struck in his account of the disaster that overtook the Athenian expedition to Sicily.

All this may seem far from the subject of African history, but it is highly relevant. At present the weight of senior history teaching in the schools falls on English and European history. The defects of this arrangement are obvious. Such history is neither directly connected with the natural objects of interest and affection, with the familiar environment and with immediate experience, nor on the other hand does it offer any explanation of how the present political configuration of Central Africa was brought about. But these are not the most serious defects of English and European history; if they were they could perhaps be offset

by the claims they have, in common with the ancient history of Greece or Rome, to a certain universal validity. Their principal defect is their angle of vision. As they are treated in historical writing, they are 'European-centred'. They look upon their theme with the eyes of London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester. Now these are no doubt cities fully as renowned as Salisbury, Blantyre, or Ndola, but I take it that a person brought up here in Central Africa can never fully appropriate English and European history until he can look on these subjects from his own centre, from the standpoint of his own society. There is bound to be some loss in any case in the process of transmission, particularly the feeling of emotional kinship which gives these subjects their significance and relevance in their own homeland. The study of English and European history is bound to be given a more detached intellectual status; we are more concerned with it as an aid to explaining the process of development by which the present world has been shaped. We value the broad, impersonal movements, the -isms more than the personalities. No doubt this is not altogether true of the better European student with some feeling for his European inheritance, but it certainly must apply to the African.

How then are we to provide a place for that primary impulse to historical inquiry, the affectionate curiosity concerning the past of one's immediate surroundings? In other words what local history should and could be taught?

In the period next to this in the programme we shall be looking at the Cambridge School Certificate, and there we shall observe in the syllabuses for India, Pakistan, Tropical Africa, Malaya, and the West Indies, what have been the first thoughts of those who undertook to design a history syllabus for the new emergent nations. In particular we shall observe how the Malaya and West Indies syllabuses were framed on the assumption that historical interest grows outward from the local centre, and that the history of the homeland must be the heart and kernel of any formal course. The preamble to History for Candidates in the Caribbean Area (p.9 of the Subject Syllabus H.G.2 (1960)), explicitly states this belief:

> 'The purpose of this paper is to test the candidates's knowledge of his own world. It is considered to be of the first importance that he should understand how the community in which he lives came into being and have some knowledge of the principal ideas and forces which have influenced its development. For a proper understanding of local history, it is necessary for him also to have a general knowledge of the wider historical setting in which his community has developed. In this way the student will not only find that the history of his own community, seen in its proper perspective, becomes far more intelligible but he comes to realize that he himself is a member of a world society.

Abstractly considered few will probably disagree with these sentiments. The difficulties appear when we come to apply them to a given situation, particularly our own. Putting aside the practical questions as to whether local history exists as an ordered body of knowledge with sufficient depth in time to be considered a proper object of historical study, there arises the more intractable problem as to the canon of interpretation. It is all too lightly assumed that because English history is suitable for English schoolboys, Malayan history is <u>pari passu</u> suitable for Malayan schoolboys, and Central African history for Central African schoolboys. The assumption ignores the fact that for English history there is an agreed interpretation that puts it beyond the reach of racial, sectarian, or political bias; and it is this very fact which gives English history its educational value as a study capable of lifting the mind out of the narrow circle of prejudices into which it is born. It was not always so, but even when the Whig interpretation of history flourished vigorously it was an educated and not ungenerous bias. Reading Macaulay never did anyone any harm. For Englishmen to study the strife of faction and party that filled their past, when that strife has been cooled by time, can be a rewarding and invigorating activity. But to study the history of a conflict that is still warm may in ordinary minds merely serve to give passion and prejudice the reinforcement of an intellectual sanction. We remember the aphorism that Irish history is something for Englishmen to

remember and Irishmen to forget.

All this has a direct bearing on our own situation. Assuming that we can define an intelligible subject of study that possesses sufficient depth in time, how can we arrive at an agreed central view on African history? We live in a plural society at its acutest stage, in a state occupied by two separate racial groups owning no common culture, loyalty, or nationhood. We have therefore not merely to avoid the ordinary occasions for bias, but somehow establish something approaching a unitary view. And for this we have nothing better to work on than a detailed record of European activities in Africa and only the rare glimpse (still through European eyes) of what was happening in African society itself. All this greatly affects what we mean by African history. There is firstly all the enormous disparity in the balance of the evidence - the tremendous overweighting on the side of European activities, and secondly, the overwhelmingly European canon of interpretation. Until Africans begin to write their own history the balance will not begin to be redressed, but even then experience (as for example that of India) suggests that this brings a shift in political rather than cultural viewpoint: European activities will still crowd out the forefront of the picture , though the picture will be painted by an African rather than European artist.

The further question remains as to whether there can be African history which is not simply the record of European activities. An attempt has been made, particularly since the War, to answer this question in the affirmative. The impulse behind the attempt has undoubtedly been the urge to create some sort of national history for the emerging African nation states. The names of Ghana or the Federation of Mali reflect the need of a national myth and for a sense of self-respect. This means in turn waging war against another myth, the myth of Darkest Africa, of a continent devoid of all the arts and standards of civilized life, sunk in the dreariest and most primitive savagery. It was perhaps to be expected that the movement should at the outset have been guilty of some exaggeration, of a desire to turn the tables on the idee fixe of the European mind. Mr. Basil Davidson who has of recent years done much to make known to the ordinary educated public the findings of scholarship and archaeology is one of those who does not shirk from the ringing phrase:

> 'Yet the notion that negro africa has a history of its own - and moreover a history of civilization - is now enough to be controversial. Not many years have passed since it was generally accepted, at any rate in Europe, that Africans had lived in a land of man-eating solitude and mental darkness. Against those who now deny this it is still argued, often enough with heat and passion, that peoples who had never known the wheel, the plough or the use of writing, and whose societies had become so far removed in growth and sentiment from the societies of Europe - and perhaps of Asia - could not be said to have a history of their own, much less a history of civilization. But we are still living in an age of discovery... Just as Europe learned a century ago that the Niger flowed from west to east - and not from east to west, as maps of Africa had showed since antiquity - so now we find that the course of pre-European negro history passed through many cultures and polities that were neither primitive nor savage .... The myth of "savage Africa" gives way to history: to the history of African civilization.'
>
> (B.Davidson, 'The Tents of Kedar', History Today, Oct.1957)

For Mr.Davidson the reason for the excessively low opinion which Europeans entertained in the nineteenth century was not merely the superiority complex with which all non-European societies - Indian, Chinese, and so forth - were regarded, but also the fact that Europeans came into African society when it was in the last stages of degeneration and decline. That decline was itself in some degree a product of European influence, the baneful effects of European guns, liquor, and slave-trading making themselves felt in the far interior long before the direct assumption of European political control. We may well comment that the notion of a golden age before the imposition of alien rule is a stock ingredient of the historical myth of nationalism. Yet there can be no

doubt that, whatever the extravagances of popularisation, the shift of vision is of the first importance. From it we may expect an accumulating body of knowledge that can be set over against the record of European activities - a record which we know is itself far from free of the elements of myth. In concrete terms, applied to our own situation we should hope to develop our knowledge of the pre-European African cultures of Central Africa, so that the stone ruins of Inyanga, Khami, and Zimbabwe should acquire an essential meaning in all history teaching.

On the other hand I think we should be careful to recognize the limitations of the subject. Although the Portuguese records have still to be ransacked and oral tradition to be scientifically sifted it seems likely that on the whole we shall have to continue to rely mainly on the archaeologist for this aspect of African history. And if history proper begins and pre-history ends with the written record, this subject is never likely to go much beyond that shadowy middle kingdom which has acquired the name of proto-history. That is, the history of African societies which themselves possess no written records and of which no continuous body of records by outside observers exists, can scarcely become history in the ordinary accepted sense.

It seems to me that we must in practice set our sights lower. By the sheer distribution of the evidence we are confined for the most part to modern history, and it is my own conviction that we shall gain more profitable results from an attempt to build up a central unitary view of the more recent past than in hoping to build up an elaborate corpus of the medieval history of Central Africa. There are no doubt immense difficulties in the way of achieving this detached central viewpoint but the mere effort is always rewarding. It means trying to see the more recent past in terms of a double action, as the joint interaction of the European and the African world rather than a single one-way process of imposing the Western world on an undifferentiated, characterless African setting. Mr. Philip Mason's book on the growth of society in Southern Rhodesia, The Birth of a Dilemma, while not pretending to be a work of historical scholarship, has attempted to obtain such a stereoscopic image by trying to see things simultaneously through European and African eyes. In particular his picture of Lobengula is particularly memorable. The mere mental effort of trying to see the occupation of Rhodesia from the royal kraal at Bulawayo rather than from the pioneers' base camp on the Macloutsie river has its reward. Mr. Gann in his recent book on Northern Rhodesia, The Birth of a Plural Society, has also sought to show that the modern state in Central Africa was not imposed on a tabula rasa but was itself partly shaped by the nature of pre-existing African society. For instance, the existence of a relatively powerful and well-organized African state in Barotseland meant from the beginning that the system of direct rule adopted in the remainder of Northern Rhodesia was inapplicable. What was the African reaction to European rule? How was his society modified by it? European sources can be exploited to answer these questions. Mr. Mason has shown, for instance, that a study of the early diaries of the native commissioners in Southern Rhodesia can yield significant pointers. It is along such lines as these, I feel, that the Central African history will be most fruitfully developed.

But is Central African history an intelligible self-contained subject of study? It is here that I feel considerable misgivings. It is never, of course, possible to isolate any one field entirely, but Central African history is so very much the product of East and South African history that I find it difficult to see it standing apart. Even if one can amass sufficient material - and this is no difficult thing - we are still left with questions of scale and relevance. I personally would like to see African history studied on a broad and not parochial basis. We have certainly tried to do this in our own history syllabus for the B.A. degree. It may be objected that this would widen any syllabus unduly, but the same objection applies to a subject like European history which ranges over an enormous field of study. There is no reason why the history of the homeland should not be given special

emphasis, but it should be kept, I believe, within the broader African setting. Such an approach has a certain catholic influence on the mind that is particularly desirable when local Central African history is being studied. For we must remember that the recent past is dubious as history; that even in England, where political temperatures run lower, the archives close at 1909; that there is a danger of history re-opening old wounds instead of performing its ministry of healing. Looked at in its broader sweep, however, there can be no doubt that the history of Africa has been established as a body of ordered knowledge, with a considerable and rapidly growing body of literature. We may expect very soon a standard work in the two-volumed history of Africa by R.Oliver and J.D.Fage.

There still remains the task of seeing the place of African history in the history syllabus taken as a whole. Is it to take pride of place, displacing English and European history entirely or reducing them to the level of background material? I can only state my own views briefly. I myself would like to see, at the least, either British or European history continuing to be run in harness with African history. My view rests on a conviction that English and European history will for long retain a marked superiority as academic disciplines, quite apart from other considerations. The wealth of their literature, the talents of mind and pen that have been devoted to them, the constant reinterpretation and criticism supplied by rival schools of historians who conduct the argument by which historical thought progresses - all these make them an intellectual diet that will take centuries to rival. English and European history (or at least the former) should continue, in my view, to form the staple ingredients of the syllabus. On the other hand, the elements of novelty, experiment, and change should be provided by African history. One may anticipate that the corpus of historical writing on Africa will itself be rapidly changing and its balance increasingly affected by the growing body of literature devoted to the history of African as distinct from the history of European activities. As I see it, each subject would stand separately in its own right, a fixed period of African and say a fixed period of English history, up to the School Certificate level, while at the Higher Certificate stage European history could well be brought back.

I hope I have started a few hares and that you will chase them hard.

Postscript

Since this talk Basil Davidson's Old Africa Rediscovered (Gollancz, 1959, Rhodesian price 26/6d) has been published. It is the best general survey of the history of indigenous African cultures that has yet appeared.

As a result of discussions at the Conference the following suggestions were forwarded for consideration by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate and the local education authorities:

1) In place of the optional South African history section in the British and European History paper of the School Certificate there might be substituted a defined period of the history of Africa (treated as a whole).

2) The 'Development of Tropical Africa' paper (which in practice few European schools take) might be transformed into a straight history paper, turning the civics portion into a defined period of African history, and having the other section as a related period of English history.

3) Schools should be encouraged to take a Special Subject in the Higher School Certificate History course. The existing Special Subject option 'Great Britain and Africa 1880-1914' would give students a fair historical knowledge of the developments of modern Africa without in any way trespassing on the established British and European history papers.

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959.

Lecture given by Mr. A. Whitty, A.R.I.B.A., Surveyor of Monuments.

ZIMBABWE AND ITS PLACE IN PREHISTORY

The value of any discussion on the subject of Zimbabwe is greatly enhanced if the general background of the Iron Age in Southern Rhodesia is taken into account. No prehistoric site can properly be studied in vacuo, and attempts to do this in the case of Zimbabwe have led to much confusion. I therefore propose to start by giving a very brief outline of the Iron Age so far as it is known at present.

In this part of Africa the Iron Age lies, stratigraphically, immediately over the Later Stone Age. We have no Neolithic, no Bronze Age, nor indeed any indication of a gradual development of our Iron Age out of the earlier cultures. In other words it is clear that the Iron Age was brought here from the outside. The evidence suggests that it was brought by Bantu-speaking peoples who came from the north. It is very probable that large numbers of the Stone Age inhabitants of the country intermarried with the newcomers. This racial mixing differed in degree with time and place and accounts for some of the widely varied physical characteristics found in human remains from our Iron Age sites.

The Iron Age is defined in terms of its characteristic artifacts, which include the following:-

1. Handmade pottery,
2. Drystone walling,
3. Daga buildings, ('Daga' being unburnt earth in one form or another, used as a building material),
4. Primitive metalwork.

In addition to these locally made artifacts, various imported objects are found on Iron Age sites. These include glass beads, porcelain, firearms and cloth.

By far the most important artifact, from the point of view of the archaeologist, is pottery. Some difficulty arises from the fact that the women were the potters, and that they were subject to exchange due to war and raiding, so that local traditions tended to become rather mixed. Fortunately there remain certain clearly discernible trends, and these form the framework upon which the study of the Iron Age is based. One of the most characteristic pottery forms has been called 'Stamped Ware', on account of the way in which decoration, in the form usually of rows of diagonally placed tooth impressions, has been stamped on to the wet clay by means of a sort of comb, probably made from a piece of gourd. Variations on this stamped theme are found over most of the country and throughout the whole period of the Iron Age. The earliest (pre-ruin) pottery from Zimbabwe, for instance, is of this general type, as is that of Inyanga (also earlier than the main building period), although there are marked stylistic differences between the two. Stamped wares are not confined to early sites, however, and appear in other contexts, some as late as the 19th century. These last are clearly rather degenerate forms, but are unquestionably related to the main stamped tradition. The cultural series of stamped pottery, stretching from earliest Iron Age times, perhaps 15 or 20 centuries ago, down to the nineteenth century, together with its other associated artifacts, has been given the name Iron Age A.

Iron Age A also includes other pottery traditions more or less closely influenced by or related to the stamped wares. These include Leopard's Kopje pottery (pre-ruin at Khami) and, quite different,

Salisbury Ware, known as yet only from burial sites found in the Salisbury Area. The pottery associated with the main building phase at Inyanga also belongs to this group.

The other major division of the Iron Age, based again on pottery, is Iron Age B. It is more commonly known as the Zimbabwe Culture on account of the normal association of this pottery with stone building work of the Zimbabwe type. Iron Age B pots were more lightly made, of a finer fabric, and their characteristic forms are found widespread over most of Southern Rhodesia. Nevertheless they show certain regional variations some of which suggest that there were local cultural connections between Iron Age A and B. This is hardly surprising because they were in fact contemporary for a considerable period.

The relationship between Iron Age A and B is well illustrated by a study of the stone buildings which belong to each. To Iron Age A belongs the Inyanga complex of building work, and it is extremely interesting to compare this with the building works of Iron Age B, that is, with the Zimbabwe type ruins. The Inyanga people used building ideas which we can readily understand. Their stone structures such as agricultural terraces, pit settlements, cattle kraals, dams, hut bases and walls, etc., were closely related to purely utilitarian needs. The functions of these buildings are self-evident from their designs. The building technique itself was pretty rough, but the functional ideas behind it clearly reflect the practical needs of an agricultural community. (If, as the evidence seems to indicate, they worked their land in the typical African manner by using it for a few years only, until it was exhausted, and then moved on to new areas, we need not assume an abnormally high population). Their walling was undoubtedly an important element of their economy and can be described as a folk building tradition. The Zimbabwe type structures, on the contrary, show no evidence of such a logical and utilitarian understanding of building. Admittedly, here, theactual techniques employed were far superior to anything achieved by the Inyanga people, but the motives behind it were vastly different. The stone walls were closely integrated with daga living huts and served two main functions, firstly to act as screens between huts and around groups of huts, and secondly to act as retaining walls for the masses of daga which resulted from successive rebuildings of huts and other such structures. Often enough these functions were combined. The walling was apparently never used for agricultural purposes. A study of the plans of many individual ruins and of their relatively sparse distribution over most of the granite areas of Southern Rhodesia has led to the conclusion that this type of building was the work of a dominant minority or ruling group. As such it has been described as a form of 'prestige architecture'. By comparison with the conceptually more sophisticated works of the Inyanga people, the Zimbabwe buildings reveal their essentially primitive character, which is but poorly masked by a superior technique and sometimes by an impressive though barbaric ostentation.

Not only are the differences between Iron Age A and B reflected in their pottery and their stone walling; the construction and use of materials in dwelling huts are found to have differed widely as well. Iron Age A huts consist of a light wooden framework plastered with a fairly thin coat of daga. Such is the usual method of hut building even today, and although the fragmentary remains on prehistoric sites seldom permit of more than theoretical reconstruction, we may suppose that there were then, as now, many variations upon this theme. The huts of Iron Age B, normally found in association with Zimbabwe type walling, are radically different. They are of monolithic daga construction with walls varying between about 6 and 14 inches in thickness. The timber frame was commonly dispensed with, but in some cases the remains of fairly substantial poles have been found in the thickness of the wall. Generally speaking this type of hut was relatively large, sometimes reaching a diameter of about 40 feet. The daga used in these massive structures was usually of a high quality, quarried from deposits of decomposed granite, often containing free kaolin, which occur on this type of site.

When we come to consider metal artifacts the relative richness of the Iron Age B sites is again evident. For instance, the standard of workmanship and material of weapons and ritual objects (the last sometimes so called merely because one can see no obvious utilitarian purpose for them!) is high, while the occurrence of the more workaday implements such as hoes is comparatively slight.

The presence of imported articles (with the possible exception of glass beads which are ubiquitous) is more common on the B sites, which have a virtual monopoly of the rare examples of Chinese, Middle Eastern and European ceramics which have found their way into the central African hinterland.

Our division of the Southern Rhodesian Iron Age into these two main streams, A and B, represents of course only the very broad outline of the recent prehistory of this part of Africa. Although each division embodies many local variations, Iron Age A, the background culture, advanced practically not at all so far as its material level was concerned. With the single exception of the Inyanga building works, technical skills remained at much the same level during the whole period. Iron Age B differs from this background in having the concurrent qualities of being (a) widespread, (b) progressive and (c) possessed of a richer cultural level.

So far as chronology is concerned, the primitive cultures of central Africa have always proved a hard nut to crack. Cut off as they have been from the main streams of civilization, they can be related only with difficulty to events outside their own sphere. Imports are rare, and in any case may have been long in transit and then preserved as heirlooms for long periods before eventually finding their way into the occupation deposits. Moreover, even relative chronological sequences are difficult to establish due to the fact that among our Iron Age artifacts there are very few which show any sign of systematic development in design or technique. The chronology of the period is therefore not well established. Radio-carbon analysis has helped to provide a framework, and as work on our sites goes on, will help much more. In the meantime, our best carbon date for the beginning of Iron Age A is about 1st or 2nd century A.D. This is actually for a site north of the Zambezi and therefore has no firm relevance to Southern Rhodesia, although we can assume that it bears some relation to our own problem. For Iron Age B our earliest carbon date (for Zimbabwe) is 7th or 8th century A.D. There are reasons, which I shall discuss later, for treating this date also with some reserve, and the results of further tests are at present awaited.

So far as more recent events are concerned, historical evidence is emphatic that the highly destructive Nguni invasions from the south took place in the first half of the 19th century. It is probable that the social and economic structure which we see as Iron Age B was wiped out at this time. The continuance of raiding activities by the Matabele, now established in the southwestern part of the country, was responsible for the building of hundreds of roughly constructed stone-walled refuges, well known as 'Mashona fortifications'. Theoretically speaking, Iron Age A lasted until the time that the European took over the country, although this last period was so disturbed by local wars, raiding and tribal movements that the situations which greeted the early missionaries, traders and hunters was by no means a true picture of the Southern Rhodesian Iron Age as a whole. We will call this the post-Nguni period.

Now that we have completed this very brief survey, we may turn to the question of Zimbabwe itself. The first important point is that although it is the largest, Zimbabwe is by no means the only site of its type. There are certainly no less than a hundred others also belonging to Iron Age B and having pottery, walling, huts etc, of the characteristic kind. As we shall see, however, Zimbabwe may well be the oldest among those of its kind and there is some slight evidence to suggest that it is the place of origin of that peculiar architectural style. The Zimbabwe ruin field falls into three main groups. The first is a labyrinthine

complex of walls covering the top and upper slopes of a hill which rises some 350 feet above the level of the surrounding country. This is somewhat inappropriately called the 'Acropolis'. At the foot of the Acropolis is a flat bottomed valley in which lies the second series of buildings, known as the Valley Ruins, while on a raised plateau overlooking the valley and facing the Acropolis is the third group, which includes the Great Enclosure, better known as the 'Temple'. These three groups of buildings all fall within an area of about 70 acres, but there are in addition a number of small outlying sites.

The first white man known to have seen the Ruins was Adam Renders, a trader, who stumbled on them in 1868. Renders' report reached the ears of a German geologist named Karl Mauch, who was thus inspired to make a visit to the place. Mauch achieved this very hazardous undertaking in 1871 and his account of it was published in the following year. Very much a child of his times, Mauch interpreted Zimbabwe in the romantic manner. He suggested that the Acropolis was a copy of King Solomon's temple on Mount Moriah, and that the Great Enclosure was modelled on the palace which Solomon built for the Queen of Sheba. Even allowing for difficulties arising from the fact that the Acropolis was then occupied by a not too friendly chieftain and that the interior of the Great Enclosure was thickly overgrown, it is hard to see how he was able to reconcile these interpretations with the specifications set out in the First Book of Kings. Nevertheless, Mauch's drawings and factual descriptions are of considerable value to the modern worker, for they tell something of what the ruins were like at this first stage of investigation. From Mauch we know, for instance, that the Conical Tower in the Great Enclosure originally stood higher than it does at present and that its top was decorated with a band of 'dentelle' pattern stonework. Mauch's publications kindled an interest in the prehistoric buildings of central Africa and the characteristically romantic attitued to them which has survived until today.

It was twenty years before another investigator appeared at Zimbabwe. This time it was an English gentleman, of wide antiquarian interests and learning, by the name of Theodore Bent. He and his wife, together with his assistant-cartographer, Robert Swan, visited Mashonaland in 1891, the year after the British occupation. By this time the site, and others like it, had been reported by many of the hunters and traders who had been coming into the country over the intervening twenty years. In such reports, together with Mauch's publications, probably lay the cause of Bent's predisposition, barely disguised in his book, towards a very ancient origin for the ruins. Superficial examination does indeed suggest that between the acievements of the builders of Zimbabwe and those of the present day African lies a great gulf. Bent's conclusion matched his predisposition and he evaluated the ruins as the work of an ancient civilization derived from the Middle East of about three thousand years ago. He noted that the quality of the walling varied, and considered that the best style belonged to the earliest period, while a later occupation was responsible for the rougher work. His assistant, Swan, aided his interpretation by making a series of measurements of the Great Enclosure. From these measurements he concluded that the building has been set out by skilled geometricians to a very high degree of accuracy. He quoted dimensions measured to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and, converting these into cubits, supposed that the building was orientated and set out in a manner which, combined with a knowledge of ancient astronomy, would provide a highly accurate calendar for the exact timing of annual festivals of worship. The fact that he connected his theory to the stars of the northern sky led him to conclude that the building was the work of people originating in the northern hemisphere. Delightful and quaint as all this may be, it has to be totally rejected, not only on account of the work done by later investigators, but also because the measurements used are found to have been inaccurate and because the method, if suitably adjusted, could be applied with similar results to almost any building of comparable complexity. But Bent's published conclusions did much to strengthen the view, already commonly held, that the ruins could only be the work of some exotic civilization of the remote past.

The next significant worker at Zimbabwe was one of Rhodes' young adventurers, Captain Sir John Willoughby, Bart. In 1893 Willoughby took a month's leave to carry out his 'investigation'. He cleared the superficial deposits from about half of the Great Enclosure, and completely removed all deposits, down to bedrock, from a small site, known now as No. 1 Ruins, nearby. His conclusions were somewhat non-committal, (a fact hardly surprising in view of his methods), although one has the idea from reading his book that it seriously crossed his mind that the buildings were the work of the ancestors of the local inhabitants. From the point of view of the modern worker, Willoughby's efforts were not only valueless, but positively destructive in a high degree.

By this time many of the other ruins were becoming known and in 1896 a company was floated for the purpose of rifling them for the gold which they had been found to contain. Until it was proscribed on orders from Rhodes this company did untold damage to these sites, particularly in the Matabeleland area. Its records fell into the hands of a journalist, Richard Hall, who, in collaboration with an ex-shareholder in the company, published in 1902 a book on the archaeology of the ruins. In the same year Hall was appointed by the Administration to act as Curator at Zimbabwe with the job of tidying up the ruins for the benefit of visitors. In this he considerably exceeded his warrant, and undertook the large-scale removal of deposits in the name of archaeology. He was himself removed within a fairly short time but published two other books on the strength of the work he had been able to do. His books have considerable value on account of the factual description and photographs contained in them, but his opinions and conclusions, following in the romantic and ancient trail of Bent, are nowadays quite unacceptable. But again, the publications of works supporting the view that the ruins are ancient and of exotic origin was quite according to popular taste. Indeed, Hall probably did more to fix these ideas in popular fancy than any other writer.

In 1905 a change came over the scene with the arrival in Southern Rhodesia of Dr David Randall-MacIver, an archaeologist appointed by the British Association for the Advancement of Science to make a study of the Rhodesian ruins. Zimbabwe had received the attention of many people by the time MacIver arrived: Mauch the geologist, Bent the antiquarian, Willoughby the soldier, Hall the journalist and dozens of other 'investigators', many of whose ambitions were not unconnected with the hope of finding gold. Now, in 1905, fifteen years after the country had come under European control, the site was for the first time investigated by an archaeologist.

MacIver didn't spend much time at Zimbabwe, where the depredations of his predecessors had, he considered, left little of value to the archaeologist. He spent much of his time at Dhlo-Dhlo and at Inyanga which had not suffered to the same extent. Nevertheless he did one excavation in the Great Enclosure which had notable results. Here he dug down to what he took to be the lowest and earliest deposits, where he found that the walling was associated inescapably with native cultural remains including all the usual articles such as typical handmade pottery, glass beads, metalwork, etc. Among this material he found a few fragments of datable imported earthenware from China. From these basic facts, with the support of equally significant evidence from other sites, he concluded that Zimbabwe had been built by people practising a typical African culture and that judging from the imports the buildings might be dated to about the 14th century A.D. or later. These conclusions have since been found to represent something of an oversimplification, but in general principle no trained investigator has found reason to question them.

MacIver's pronouncement put the cat fairly in among the ancient pidgeons. Despite the fact that his evidence was the first ever obtained in an objective and scientific manner, popular opinion was quite unable to stomach the thought that these magnificent walls could ever have been built by the barbaric indegene. In the forefront of the attack on MacIver was Hall, whose last book, written in reply to MacIver's publication, consists of over 400 pages of bitter evilement, endlessly repeating

itself and calling as witness the opinions of many well-known personalities of Rhodesia who had expressed at some time or other an inclination towards the ancient theory. That such opinions were totally speculative and often misinformed as to fact evidently did nothing, in Hall's view, to detract from their value. By this time, moreover, many people were beginning to see that in Zimbabwe was not only a valuable tourist attraction but also a ready-made background of honourable and ancient civilization, susceptible perhaps of treatment even as a national historical myth, which would be hopelessly debased by an admission that it might be the work of the local peoples. This attitude still persists strongly to-day, and its supporters stick to it in the teeth of a huge mass of contrary evidence which they totally ignore simply on the strength of their privately held opinions that their present African servants couldn't possibly have done it. Thus, from 1905 onwards the battle has raged between the relatively few trained archaeologists and other unprejudiced investigators who have carried out practical studies of the problem, and the great mass of romantics who know what they want the past to have been and are not prepared to allow it to have been otherwise.

During the twenty-five years after MacIver's visit, an increasing number of people became interested in Zimbabwe, although no large-scale excavation of a scientific nature was carried out. It is interesting to note that the two architects who did an appreciable amount of study during this period, Masey in 1911 and Schofield during the 1920s, both held firmly to the local and recent theory.

In 1929 the British Association sent another archaeologist to the site with the explicit task of obtaining firm evidence of date. This was Dr Gertrude Caton-Thompson, whose wide experience in the Middle East was felt to be a fitting background for work on a site where the Middle Eastern analogy was so persistently invoked to justify a theory of origins lying in that sphere. Caton-Thompson's main effort was concentrated on one of the lesser known valley sites, the Maund Ruins, where treasure hunters had not been so active as in the larger ruins. (She followed MacIver in considering that most of the larger buildings had been too badly 'hogged' to provide a good chance of success. This view was found later not to be strictly correct, as a result of the highly rewarding excavations in the Great Enclosure by Summers in 1958). She also did important work on the upper slopes of the Acropolis and on the plateau near the Great Enclosure. In all major respects she came out on the side of MacIver, and for similar reasons agreed with him in placing the main building period around the 14th century. Her Acropolis excavations provided some evidence, however, that the site may have been occupied a few centuries earlier, by about the 9th or 10th century A.D. Among other things her work drew particular attention to the fact that the stone walling was closely associated with daga huts and that these formed an integral element in the building tradition. She firmly rejected any idea that the ruins were the work of an ancient or foreign civilization. Her book, Zimbabwe Culture has remained the standard work for the last thirty years.

After this, no major excavation was carried out at Zimbabwe until 1958, but in 1941 a book was published in America by H.A.Wieschhoff, who had excavated at other sites in Rhodesia and had made a study of the Zimbabwe culture. In his opinion the ruins were many of them even more recent that MacIver and Caton-Thompson had suggested, and he put some of them as recent as the 18th or even 19th century. Thus, the pendulum had swung to its full extreme, and opinions were concurrently held which varied in dating the ruins almost any time during the last three or four thousand years.

The next important event was the discovery by the then Warden of the Ruins, S.D.Sandes, in 195[illegible], of some timber supporting the stonework over a drain built through a wall in the Great Enclosure. After excavation this was submitted to radio-carbon analysis, and somewhat to the surprise of archaeologists, was found to be about 1150 to 1250 years old, thus apparently dating the wall to the 7th or 8th century A.D. Further consideration showed, however, that this dating was not entirely reliable for three reasons. In the first place the wood concerned is of a type which

is resistant to attack by termites and decay, but is never cut by Africans, due to its highly astringent sap. It might therefore have been lying about for a long period before being put into the wall. Secondly, it is heartwood, and because the tree as a whole may go on living long after its heartwood has ceased to absorb new carbon, the analysis does not necessarily relate to the time that the tree was felled. Thirdly, owing to its high durability, the wood may have been re-used many times before finding its way into the drain. Thus the date of 7th or 8th century A.D. does not necessarily apply to the wall. It does, however, indicate the possibility that the wall is of comparable age to the wood, and that the site was occupied by this period.

Not long after the war, the Historical Monuments Commission had decided that no further extensive excavation work should be done at Zimbabwe for a period of ten years. This would have the effect of spreading the research effort over the wider field of the Southern Rhodesian Iron Age in general and of allowing time for new techniques (for example, as it turned out, radio-carbon analysis) to be developed. The next and most recent major excavatory effort was therefore not made until 1958, by which time the Iron Age as a whole had, in fact, become very much better understood. The 1958 excavations were carried out on two main sites: on the Acropolis by K.R.Robinson, and in the Great Enclosure by Roger Summers, assisted by myself. Robinson's main object was to obtain a pottery sequence covering the whole of the Iron Age occupation of the site. Caton-Thompson's sequence had proved invaluable in the building up of the picture during the preceding thirty years, but it had become clear that there was greater complexity than it could account for. As we have seen, the whole of our cultural and chronological framework is based on pottery, and for this reason the Acropolis dig was of vital importance.

The main object in the Great Enclosure was to investigate the architectural history of the building, and, of course, to relate this to the sequence obtained from the Acropolis.

Apart from excavation work, a detailed study was made of wall-building techniques and the architectural features associated with them. In the course of the Great Enclosure dig it was found possible to establish a relationship between styles of walling and the cultural periods which were derived from excavation work.

The detailed results of all this work have not yet been published and I shall confine myself here to a description of the general outlines of what was achieved. The pottery succession obtained from the Acropolis was found to consist of five Classes (numbered 1 to 5 starting with the earliest) which represent five occupations of the site, each differing from the others to some extent. These occupations were probably continuous and the differences between them may well be the result of the influx of new but related groups of people. Classes 1 and 2 belong to Iron Age A and are associated with the light timber-framed huts characteristic of it. Class 1 represents the first Iron Age occupation of the site and consists of a fine stamped ware. Class 2 is not a true stamped pottery but includes animal figurines. Then, with Classes 3 and 4 we have the two main phases of Iron Age B. The appearance of Class 3 pottery coincides generally with the first stone walling and the first monolithic hut construction. The earliest walling at Zimbabwe is roughly built and unformed in style, a fact which suggests the possibility that this stone-building technique was evolved at Zimbabwe itself. The earliest monolithic hut remains are not well enough preserved for detailed study, and the question whether they represent a tradition of daga building brought in from elsewhere remains in doubt. It is my own opinion, however, that in the combination of daga work with stonework that runs right through the Zimbabwe tradition of building, the system of daga building probably preceded that of stone. The stone-building technique seems to have evolved not directly out of, or in imitation of, daga, so much as from the need to provide strong walls to retain the masses of daga which quickly accumulated.

In the Acropolis these daga structures were relatively undifferentiated, being all of similar colour and texture, but in the Great Enclosure daga of different colours was used at different times, and Summers was able to work out an extremely valuable sequence of dagas for that building. It is interesting to note that Hall had asserted the existence of a logical sequence of dagas, although he had failed to understand or make good use of it.

With appearance of Class 4 pottery we find a development of the stone-building technique to the finest type of walling. The basic difference here is that the stones are carefully matched and trimmed and are laid in courses. The rougher walling, which we called Class P, is therefore generally associated with Class 3 pottery and the finer walling, called Class Q with Class 4 pottery, while both are accompanied by monolithic huts.

Class 5 pottery represents the post-Nguni period, and is probably, but not certainly connected with a very rough form of walling which we called Class R. It is possible that Class R walling had been used during the earlier periods for unimportant buildings, but this is a point on which evidence is at present lacking. After the Nguni invasion, which destroyed the Iron Age B culture, the system of building in monolithic daga may have been continued for a while by the people who occupied the site and made Class 5 pottery. These people, by the way, were not the Nguni, who moved on when their destructive work was done, but were some 'poor relations' of the previous inhabitants under a chief named Mugabe. They were mere squatters on the site, and were living there when the first Europeans arrived.

The relationship between the pottery and the styles of hut building and stone walling may therefore be summarised as follows:-

Pottery	Huts	Stone walls	
Class 1	light timber framed	none	IRON AGE A
Class 2	light timber framed	none	
Class 3	monolithic	Class P (random facing)	IRON AGE B
Class 4	monolithic	Class Q (coursed facing)	
Class 5	? monolithic and light timber	Class R (rough)	POST-NGUNI PERIOD

In the course of his excavations on the Acropolis, upon which this succession is based, Robinson obtained numerous samples of carbon from various levels, and these are now awaiting radio-carbon analysis. So far as the chronology of Zimbabwe is concerned, it would be unwise to speculate pending the carbon results

The architectural history of the Great Enclosure was worked out on the basis of the pottery sequence, the daga sequence and the walling sequence, and a fairly complete picture of its development was obtained, in which it has been possible to place, in the order of their construction, nearly all the presently visible wal s and daga structures as well as many others which lie below ground. Briefly the site gradually developed from an insignificant occupation nucleous sometime during the Class 3 pottery period to its present size which was reached sometime about the

end of the Class 4 pottery period. The Great Wall and the Conical Tower belong to the last phases of building. The structure was clearly one which gradually acquired its present form by processes of building, delapidation, repair, rebuilding and addition, over a fairly long period of time. During the Class 5 pottery period the building fell into ruinous desuetude, but was probably used as a cattle kraal until not long before the arrival of the first Europeans.

By means of the established sequence of wall styles it has been possible to extend our knowledge of the site as a whole. Most of the valley ruins consist, for instance, almost exclusively of Class Q walling, and their construction can therefore be placed with some reliability into the Class 4 pottery period. The whole of the walling at Zimbabwe has been studied in this way and it has been seen to fall into a logical pattern of development covering the whole site.

From what I have said, I hope that it will be clear that an understanding of Zimbabwe is dependent upon a knowledge of the Southern Rhodesian Iron Age as a whole. Iron Age B, or as it is better known, the Zimbabwe Culture, arose out of that background, probably due to the arrival from the north of new people whose potentialities for building in stone may well have chrystallised out for the first time at Zimbabwe. This culture developed through two main phases on lines which diverged from the predominant cultural pattern around it. Perhaps its most interesting characteristic is the unique style of architecture which emerged from it. Remote as it was from the sources of influence which had guided the development of architecture in the civilized world, it developed in isolation into a monstrous oddity. The works of the Inyanga people, although they also did not continue to evolve, had more in them which might have contributed towards a balanced advance in material culture.

So far as Zimbabwe is concerned, my own opinion is that the high technical standard of the better walling is the only respect in which its material culture rose significantly above the level of untutored barbarism.

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959.

Lecture given by Mr. L.H.Gann,M.A.,B.Litt.(Oxon) of the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

THE MAKINGS OF CENTRAL AFRICA

Little more than a hundred years ago, the lands now comprising the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland were almost untouched by European influence. There were few natural lines of communication; travel was impeded by disease, by the vagaries of a tropical climate, and by the enormous distances of the African continent. Most important of all, there seemed little to attract white men, for the indigenous people possessed few goods and fewer wants. They were grouped in a variety of political communities that ranged from comparatively highly-organised kingdoms, such as those of the Barotse and the Bemba, to militaristic raider-states, like those of the Matabele and Ngoni, and to scattered tribes like the Tonga and Nyanja, completely devoid of any state organisation. The basis of native life was a simple slash-and-burn agriculture, supplemented by hunting, and sometimes by fishing and cattle keeping. There was little specialization of labour and the margin of survival was always a narrow one. At the same time there was constant internecine warfare, as the stronger groups were continually pressing on the weaker ones. The indigenous pattern of power was further complicated by the intrusion of numerous alien groups. The Interior might be poor, but it did possess two sources of wealth. The first of these was man-power, the second ivory, and gradually several streams of invaders began to converge on Central Africa. From the West came Portuguese half-castes and members of the Umbundu tribe in search of slaves for sale at Angola and in the cocoa plantations of St. Thomé. From the East there came Arabs and Moslemized Africans who dealt in ivory and wanted slaves for export to the clove estates of the Coast, and to the markets of Islamic countries overseas. There were also inroads from half-caste raiders settled in the lower Zambezi valley, and in addition some African tribes themselves learnt the technique of this new commerce, foremost amongst these being the Yao of Nyasaland. Slaves and ivory were paid for mainly with guns and powder and the advance of the trade meant that the "gunpowder frontier" was steadily moving into the Interior with devastating effect. Warfare became even more destructive. There was also a steady shift in the internal balance of power as tribes armed with guns were able to expand at the expense of the more backward communities. There was thus heavy loss of life, not merely from inter-tribal fighting itself, but also from famines that resulted from the destruction of crops and from the forcible abduction of so many able-bodied men and women from native villages.

The first Europeans to venture into the Interior were the Portuguese; but despite bold explorers such as Dr. Francisco Jose de Lacerda e Almeida, Portuguese influence remained confined to a string of small settlements on the East and West coasts and along the lower Zambesi Valley. Portugal's population was too small to explore these vast regions, her emigrants preferred Brazil to far-off Moçambique, and those settlers who did come had no means of protecting themselves against the deadly diseases abounding in the low-lying valleys.

In addition to Portuguese explorers and traders there also came English- and Afrikaans-speaking adventurers from the South, attracted by the ivory of Central Africa. As the South African frontier was moving inland, new opportunities for trade came into existence and a

number of hunters and traders pushed ahead of the main bodies of settlers. Few of these Southern frontiersmen dealt in slaves; there was no market for slaves in South Africa and the Southerners, moreover, transported their goods in wagons and did not require slave porters like the Arabs and Portuguese. At the same time, the English and Boers brought arms superior to those brought by their Northern competitors, and they began to play an increasingly important role in tribal affairs. But even these pioneers could not solve the problem of providing a steady stream of exports from Central Africa. Ivory, like wild rubber, was an irreplaceable commodity; only a few chiefs like Lobengula paid any attention to the question of preserving elephants, and by the end of the last century the trade in tusks was beginning to decline, even in far-off North-Western Rhodesia.

As European pioneers became more familiar with the "Far Interior", reports of conditions inland gradually began to reach the outside world, but the man who did more than anyone else to throw light on conditions in Central Africa was David Livingstone. A Scot of working-class origin, he acquired a medical training and then entered the service of the London Missionary Society in Bechuanaland. Later on he devoted himself almost entirely to the work of geographical discovery. Between 1851 and 1872 he travelled through many parts of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and crossed the Continent from coast to coast, providing Europe with a wealth of geographical, ethnographic and medical information. In addition to being an intrepid explorer and an earnest Christian, Livingstone was also a pioneer of tropical medicine. But more important still, he had a religious and social message to preach that was well in tune with the spirit of optimism and of commercial expansion characterizing Victorian England - Africa must be saved through the Gospel. But the new faith would only flourish within a new setting. The traffic must be replaced by "legitimate trade" in tropical goods. Selected European settlers, Livingstone hoped, would teach new skills to Africans. Africa would then supply the growing industries of Europe with products like cotton, and in turn buy manufactured goods from abroad. Trade would create better means of communication; and steam-power, by doing away with the need for slave porters, would bring about the liberation of Africa.

Livingstone's life work, followed by a heroic death in the wilderness of North-Eastern Rhodesia, made a tremendous impression overseas. "Legitimate commerce" seemed to offer new opportunities to businessmen, whose interest in the region as a whole was further roused by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Religious-minded men, who included many Scottish merchants, became similarly impressed with the new opportunities for extending the Gospel. At the same time Christians of many denominations gave their donations to missionary societies, and by doing so they greatly strengthened the existing complex machinery for religious expansion. As early as 1859, the London Missionary Society established a station at Inyati in Matabeleland In the course of the 'seventies, two Scottish missions were founded in Nyasaland. Anglican and Catholic missionaries also arrived on the scene and in the North, Livingstone's own society set up some stations further along Lake Tanganyika, which were then linked to the Lake Nyasa water route by the strategic Stevenson Road. In addition, François Coillard, an intrepid French Protestant, made his way to Barotseland, where he became permanently established in 1884.

These early missionaries did not think of politics when they began to build their first little stations consisting of mud huts or primitive houses made of sun-dried bricks. They were preoccupied with the problem of making a living from the soil that often did not turn out as fertile as it appeared; they had to gain the confidence of their African neighbours, and they frequently quarrelled fiercely amongst themselves in the fever-ridden settlements of Central Africa, where the death rate was terrifying. But they could not help being drawn into local, and even internatic al, politics. This was particularly true in regions where there was no strong indigenous

authority in existence. In Nyasaland, for instance, the missionaries were forcibly turned into rulers. The country where they had settled was the scene of bitter fighting; there was no powerful chief to whom they could turn, and the mission stations attracted crowds of refugees willing to accept the White man's Gospel in return for food and protection. The presence of these folk raised complicated problems of a disciplinary and administrative nature. Then supply questions made their appearance. The missions could not operate without a commissariat, and thus in 1878 Glasgow ship builders and merchants established a commercial body, known as the African Lakes Company for the purpose of supplying the missions and introducing "legitimate trade" into the interior. The Company, however, found great difficulty in paying its way, for its expenses were too high in relation to its turnover. The Company also found, like so many others, that almost the only commodity which would then stand the cost of transport from Central Africa was ivory. In order to obtain more of this merchandise, the Company extended its operations to the north end of Lake Nyasa. Here its servants soon clashed with Mlozi, an East Coast freebooter, who had made himself the local "Sultan". Mlozi resented interference with his local monopoly and between 1887 and 1889 there was a good deal of fighting between the Company and the "North End" Arabs. Despite the support received from most missionaries and from adventurous fighting men like Frederick Dealtry Lugard, later raised to the peerage, the Company was unable to dislodge the well-armed Arabs from their strongly fortified posts.

Missionary enterprise also led to international complications. The Portuguese became suspicious of British missionary influence in what they regarded as their own sphere. In addition, Germany began to acquire colonial ambitions. In 1884 the Germans established themselves in present-day Tanganyika, hitherto under the largely nominal control of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The Sultan was an ally of Great Britain, whose naval power he perforce had to respect, but the new intrusion meant that the previous policy of maintaining a shadowy kind of influence through the Sultan was no longer feasible. Despite constant opposition on the part of a reluctant Treasury, still wedded to the principle of low taxation and low public expenditure, of resentful "Little Englanders", and of some diplomatists fearful of foreign complications, an unwilling British Government found itself compelled to take a more active interest in the fate of the handful of British missionaries and traders in Lake Nyasa country. The number of people concerned might be small, but they received powerful support, especially in Scotland, from missionary societies and their supporters, as well as from some mercantile interests. To Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, the Nyasaland question was, of course, not of itself an important one, but as far as the wider question of Africa was concerned, he was convinced that partition amongst the European powers was inevitable. The important thing was to carry out the division in such a way that Britain would receive her due share, and that neither the peace of Europe nor the existing balance of power would be endangered. Britain, at the same time, should take her place in Africa at a minimum of public expenditure which, by reason of its unpopularity with the Treasury and with a large section of the British public alike, would endanger the Parliamentary majority of the Government. Salisbury was thus willing to co-operate to some extent with Imperialists convinced of the need for further Imperial expansion. Britain, many thoughtful men began to argue, was becoming relatively weaker, and was losing some of her former industrial supremacy to other powers, especially Germany and the United States. At the same time protective tariffs were becoming more and more popular with foreigners. Only Imperial expansion would thus protect Britain's future markets and sources of raw materials, as well as providing some kind of insurance against the menace of foreign tariffs.

When Nyasaland was beginning to become the object of Imperial projects, the little country's fate was suddenly linked to that of the

regions south of the Zambesi, where British influence was also on the point of asserting itself. As far as Matabeleland and Mashonaland were concerned, it was ivory that formed the first attraction for the traders and hunters willing to take the road into the "Far Interior". But then travellers, such as Carl Mauch, an adventurous German schoolmaster, and Thomas Baines, an English artist and explorer, brought back glowing reports of gold. The popular fancy was stirred by imaginative works, such as Sir Henry Rider Haggard's book King Solomon's Mines. Most important of all, both British and South African financiers began to pay attention to the Far North with its vast potential mineral resources. The greatest of these monied men was Cecil John Rhodes, the son of an English clergyman. Rhodes was a strange mixture of dreamer and schemer, financier and statesman. He, more than any other person in South Africa, clearly understood how financial power could be linked to political expansion, how political expansion in turn might serve the investor's cause, and how popular enthusiasm could be linked to his schemes by means of brilliantly-conceived propaganda.

Rhodes first of all succeeded in establishing control over the diamond industry of Kimberley, where precious stones had first been discovered in 1867. Then he acquired an important interest in the gold industry of the Witwatersrand. But these achievements were mere stepping stones on the way to further expansion. Rhodes wanted the "Far North". Control over Rhodesia would secure enormous new mineral wealth. It would also tap the still unused labour resources of South Central Africa, for both the diamond and gold industries needed migrant labour in ever increasing numbers. Expansion would also secure new territory for British trade and investment. This was an important consideration at a time when more and more investors in the City of London were looking for new opportunities for their capital overseas, where they hoped for higher returns on their money than at home. Territorial expansion seemed even more necessary, as other European powers were also extending their hold on various parts of the African continent from which they might exclude British investors in the future. Expansion northwards, moreover, would unite Briton and Boer in a common task. It would afford new opportunities for settlement to South African farmers generally accustomed to methods of extensive rather than intensive methods of cultivating the soil. As far as the Cape Colony was concerned, of which Rhodes became Prime Minister in 1890, northward expansion would make the territory the main gateway into the Interior and the predominant state in South Africa. British expansion north of the Limpopo would in turn form the stepping stone of a new, magnificent Empire, stretching from Cape to Cairo and flanking the older Empire in India. Rhodes proceeded methodically. First of all, through Imperial intervention, the British position in Bechuanaland, the "Suez Canal into the Interior" was made secure against competition from the Transvaal. Then, in 1888, Rhodes, by means of the so-called "Rudd Concession" obtained a monopoly of all minerals in the countries under Matabele sway in return for a subsidy and a promise of rifles and a gun-boat that would break Barotse "canoe-power" on the Zambesi and leave the Matabele the dominant tribe in South Central Africa. Rhodes then amalgamated with other rival financial interests. With the Matabele mineral concession in his pocket, he asked for a Royal Charter that would enable him to assume governmental powers north of the Zambezi. In 1889 he succeeded. The British Government was still generally unwilling to finance colonial expansion at the general taxpayer's expense, but it had no objection if an association of private investors would shoulder the burden. The Charter issued to the newly-formed British South Africa Company thus gave extensive administrative powers to its Directors and, having secured these, Rhodes in 1890 despatched a small, privately-paid and equipped force which successfully occupied Mashonaland.

Rhodes's expedition was led by an Imperial officer, the Pioneers proper being raised by Major Frank Johnson on a contract basis.

Johnson was a most able man, half soldier, half entrepreneur, the sort of man familiar to Europe in the age of Wallenstein, and Johnson carried out his task quickly and efficiently. The Pioneers halted at Salisbury and they were to Southern Rhodesia what the Mayflower is to America. Actually - judging by the number of enquiries which we have had in the Archives on the part of people who wish to prove their descent from Pioneers, the Column must have numbered about 100,000 men. But in fact there were only a few hundred, and the Pioneers were soon disbanded to look for gold. They were, however, due for a great disappointment and the promised Rand could not be found. There were practically no alluvial deposits in Rhodesia, and this was a heavy blow to many of the colonists, for gold could not be worked without capital except in its alluvial form. Transport, moreover, proved a desperate problem; the mining terms originally imposed by the British South Africa Company were exceptionally onerous, being based on the assumption that the country was going to contain riches beyond description. The pioneers suffered from hunger and disease, and progress was further interrupted when war broke out with the Matabele in 1893.

Matabeleland constituted a kind of "Black Sparta". Its entire social structure was geared to war and to raiding its neighbours for man-power and cattle. Mashonaland was one of the traditional hunting grounds of the Matabele, but the European gold-diggers established in Mashonaland were unwilling to tolerate Matabele raids into Mashonaland which endangered both their property and their black labour supplies. Neither did they want a strongly armed enemy on their door-steps, an enemy moreover, who locked up a country that was supposed to contain a great deal of gold. Lobengula, the Matabele King, now found himself in a desperate position. He was anxious to avoid war with the British who had inflicted such a crushing defeat on his Zulu kinsmen in the south. On the other hand he could not permanently resist the war party of younger indunas who wanted new followers to build up their power and prestige, and new cattle to increase the economic resources of a partly parasitic economy. Emigration to the north of the Zambezi may not have been feasible in view of the danger from the moving belts of tsetse fly and from Barotse canoe power. Jameson, the Company's Administrator, did not himself look for war; he personally would have preferred to integrate the Matabele peacefully into a wage economy by encouraging them to take up employment with the Europeans. But this unstable balance of power did not last, and war broke out in 1893. The Matabele armies, trained to charge in close formation, and poor shots, were unable to withstand the mobility and fire-power of the small settler force, numbering only 670 men, which was mobilized in Mashonaland. The Matabele were crushed with surprising swiftness, Bulawayo occupied and Lobengula perished on his flight.

Three years later the Matabele and also many of the Mashona tribes rose to exterminate the Europeans. They believed that the Chartered Company had been fatally weakened by the defeat of its forces in the abortive "Raid" against the Transvaal, designed to overthrow President Kruger's government. The "Raid" left the country north of the Limpopo virtually undefended and now, for the first time in their history, a large proportion of the tribes managed to co-operate militarily. The Rising was thus altogether a much more serious affair than the Matabele War. The Matabele military organization had not been fully smashed, and the Matabele were further strengthened by numerous deserters from the Native Police, with their European training and their rifles. Co-operation with other tribes appears to have been closely linked with a religious movement identified with the worship of Mlimo, but there were also wider grievances. The Matabele objected to the seizure of much of Lobengula's cattle, holding that the King's herds, frequently looted from neighbouring tribes, were tribal rather than the King's personal property, as the invaders appeared to believe. They also believed that the Europeans were responsible

for having brought the dreaded rindorpest, which was devastating the white and the black man's cattle alike; and they could not understand the European way of trying to prevent the spread of the disease by killing infected herds. In addition, the natives disliked the Company's practice of conscripting labour through headmen; they grumbled at taxation, and at harsh dealings from individual Native Commissioners and native policemen, and they also resented the end of their former military supremacy.

This time there was prolonged partisan warfare. The Europeans, in relation to their numbers, suffered very heavy loss of life and a large proportion of the settlers in the outlying districts were murdered with their families or tortured to death. But the open veld of Southern Rhodesia was, on the whole, not well suited to guerilla warfare. Partisan operations, carried on by tribal subsistence farmers and pastoralists, were not likely to succeed against a determined and self-confident enemy, able to draw on reinforcements from Britain and South Africa. The rebels received no help from the few Africans living in the townships, which remained firmly in European hands. Reinforcements were recruited in South Africa and there was also some assistance from an Imperial force of mounted infantry. Gradually the rebels' will to resist was weakened in a series of engagements; the larger gangs were broken up and the insurgents kept on the move by mounted patrols, whilst chains of small forts prevented the rebels from rallying. The remaining strongholds in fortified kopjes and caves were blasted out with dynamite, and in addition there was steady and effective pressure on the rebels by means of the destruction of their crops and the seizure of their cattle.

The Matabele were the first to capitulate after skilful negotiations conducted with considerable personal courage by Rhodes himself. The Mashona, who lacked any central organization, held out longer, but in the end they too were gradually forced to make peace, and by the end of 1897 Southern Rhodesia was pacified.

But by now the European settlers too had mostly been reduced to desperate circumstances. The Country's economy had come to a temporary standstill - almost ten per cent. of its white population had been murdered, and many of the survivors had to sell their claims to their better-off compatriots in possession of liquid cash. Throughout the eighteen-nineties, Rhodesia was a land of reckless speculation, carried on against a background of hardship and high expectations.

After the South African War, however, the mining industry was placed on a sounder footing. It was now clear that Southern Rhodesia did contain widely disseminated, low-grade ore bodies, which could be worked by syndicates of small workers, who between them, just managed to put up enough money to buy the required machinery. Admittedly mining was a chancy business, and the names of many of the smaller Rhodesian mines read like noms de plume used on t-day's Rhodesian lottery tickets; "Cross Your Luck", "Clean Up", "Cissey" and "Broke" all figured cheek by jowl with the names of more substantial mining concerns in contemporary directories. Nevertheless, gold production expanded quickly, and mining was greatly encouraged, both by the discovery of vast coal deposits at Wankie, which did much to solve the industry's fuel problems, and also by the building of an extensive railway network, built so as to serve the miners' rather than the farmers' needs. In addition to the smallworkers a number of larger companies, able to work gold at greater depth, established themselves in the country, and a considerable number of valuable base minerals were also found.

The early miner's frontier attracted a type of person very different from the sort of man who went to East Africa to make his fortune. All the skilled work on th mines was done by Europeans who came from Johannesburg and furthe afield, these men being the

only trained hands available at the time. The mining townships and the railways also attracted white artisans, storekeepers and clerks who did jobs that were commonly done by Indians in East Africa. Farming passed in the hands of emigrants from the south in search of cheap land, these people who generally looked upon Rhodesia as their permanent home, not planters such as settled down in Kenya and Nyasaland to grow tea, coffee or similar crop in order to retire ultimately to England. The early settler had a very difficult time, and whether he was an entrepreneur or a salaried employee or even a farmer, he belonged to a labour force that was very unstable. A great deal has been made in more recent days of the evils of the migrant labour system amongst Africans by anthropologists and economists. But in some ways, the early settlers' position was not so unlike that of the Black man. The European would drift from mine to mine in search of employment and did not strike roots anywhere; the miner's permanent home was for long outside Rhodesia and many years passed until he looked upon the Rhodesian town as "home", the place where he intended to spend his old age. There were few European women in the country; settled family life was rare and it was hard to bring up and educate children properly in a country where the breadwinner had to move about constantly and where there were few schools. There were few amenities: drink, sport, gambling and politics were the main forms of amusement and the average colonist made good use of them all. People changed their jobs a great deal; labour accordingly was inefficient, and the position only gradually improved, as the labour force gradually lost its migrant character.

Human life, moreover, was cheap. Admittedly, early Rhodesia never remotely resembled the "Wild West" or even Kimberley in their pioneering days of lawlessness. There were plenty of drunken pub brawls, but gun fights and stage coach robberies were unknown. You can still see early photographs in our collection. There are Wild West shanties, the men with broad-brimmed hats, but there are no six-shooters, at best hunting rifles. The reason for this state of affairs is probably to be found in the country's administrative history. Rhodesia was reasonably well policed from the early beginnings and the British South Africa Company quickly managed to set up a relatively efficient administration. The social level on the Rhodesian frontier was, moreover, a little higher than was customary on other frontiers. There was a substantial number of younger sons of good families, though Rhodesia of course never remotely resembled the land of Eton boys and old Harrovians of colonial mythology.

The early settler's deadliest enemy, like the missionary's was the malaria mosquito and throughout the pioneering stage, White mortality was high. Conditions only began to improve after the turn of the present century, when the scourge of malaria was largely mastered. Gradually, whole families settled down in Rhodesia, the country's demographic structure slowly began to resemble more that of older countries and the White labour force became more settled, in the same way as the Black labour force also started to become stabilized after a time lag of well over a generation afterwards.

In Nyasaland, the pattern of settlement took a very different shape. Foreign opposition was swept aside and between 1889 and 1891 the country was annexed by the Imperial Government, which received financial assistance from Rhodes, who wanted the country as one of the stepping stones to the north and who also had economic interests in the area. But, largely in deference to missionary wishes, the country was placed under Imperial administration. In addition treaties were concluded in what is now Northern Rhodesia.

The pacification of these disturbed regions was, however, mainly due to Imperial forces and not to the local settlers, as in Southern

Rhodesia. The local White colonists had their chance in the so-called "North End War" in which the African Lakes Company had tried to expel Arab free booters from the North End of Lake Nyasa. But this military task had proved beyond the strength of the local Europeans and Nyasaland, unlike Southern Rhodesia, was pacified entirely by Imperial intervention. Between 1891 and 1897 Sir Harry Johnston, the country's first Imperial Commissioner, carried out a series of campaigns against Arab, Yao and Ngoni raiders. The secret of his success lay in two things, Sikhs and sea-power. The latter was provided in the shape of British gunboats which cut the slave trading routes across Lake Nyasa, and the country was gradually pacified.

In the late 'nineties, Imperial troops also crossed into Northern Rhodesia, which had by now been placed under the Chartered Company, and smashed the war-like Ngoni and the Lunda Empire headed by Kazembe.

British conquest was fraught with profound consequences for the whole of British Central Africa. Throughout the region there was an end to independent indigenous power. Inter-tribal warfare stopped for the first time, and a limit was set to large-scale tribal migrations; this meant that the location of the various African peoples became more stabilized. The power of the slave traders was crushed and the Moslems ceased to be effective competitors for the interior.

At the same time, the foundations were laid for a European wage and plantation economy which was incompatible with the regime of small warring native states. Nyasaland became a planter's colony, and coffee, later followed by tea became the country's main cash crop.

The typical European in Nyasaland right from the start was accordingly a planter, a civil servant, a missionary, or a commercial employee. Very few White workers came into the country, whilst the role of the small White trader and artisan, who had come to Southern Rhodesia, was filled by Indians, and later by mission-trained Africans. White society in many ways thus came to resemble the East African and even the Indian pattern. It was sharply stratified socially, much more so than Southern Rhodesia, where, one m'ght mention, the Administrator rode around Salisbury on a bicycle, and the influence of the settlers in the political sphere was small, Nyasaland being the country where "the Governor was always right". Politically and socially it looked towards London rather than Johannesburg or Cape Town. In this way again it contrasted sharply with Southern Rhodesia; for the British South Africa Company was generally very friendly towards the European colonists - even though the Rhodesians did not think so at the time. The Company constituted the country's largest entrepreneur; it was a sleeping partner in all the mining companies and the main shareholder in the railways; and it thus identified its cause with that of all other smaller entrepreneurs.

The two kinds of frontier, the miner's and the farmer's frontier of South Africa, and the planter's and missionary's frontier from the East, ultimately met in Northern Rhodesia. The North Western Rhodesian railway belt became the extreme northward limit of South Africa, whilst North Eastern Rhodesia tended to follow the Nyasaland pattern. North of the Zambezi, the two differing concepts of colonization clashed for the first time, and the future of the Federation will depend on which of the two will ultimately prevail.

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959.

Lecture given by Professor E. T. Stokes of the Department of History

GREAT BRITAIN AND AFRICA 1880 - 1914

In the title of this talk I stake out more ground than I can effectively occupy. I could not resist, however, the opportunity of drawing attention to the Cambridge Higher School Certificate special subject of the same name, and of commending it as a practical avenue through which the history of Africa can be studied without the necessity of abandoning the traditional syllabus in British and European history. In effect I shall deal for the most part with British participation in the Scramble for Africa in the light of recent new interpretations.

Until recently it was commonly assumed that English colonial policy in the nineteenth century could be divided into two sharply defined and contrasting phases: an anti-imperialist phase running roughly from the Vienna settlement of 1815 down to 1870, and an expansionist phase lasting from 1870 until the end of the century. The shift was brought about, it was held, primarily by economic factors, so that international competition for markets and raw materials dispelled the free-trade anti-imperialism of the Manchester school and replaced it with the imperialist doctrine that trade followed the flag.[1] It was usual to point out how British policy swung from the extreme of indifference to empire - symbolized in the report of the Parliamentary committee of 1865 recommending the ultimate abandonment of all Britain's West African possessions except Sierra Leone - to a consuming 'earth hunger'. Even the leading statesman of the Liberal party, Lord Rosebery, was prepared to boast to an Edinburgh audience in 1897 that in the past twelve years 2,600,000 sq. miles of territory had been added to the Empire, most of them in Africa. The economic interpretation that was often placed on this movement by contemporary statesmen, who were concerned to justify the cost of empire, was later powerfully reinforced by J.A.Hobson's celebrated work, Imperialism, published in 1902. Lenin drew upon Hobson to formulate his theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, and despite the allowance made for other motives by non-Marxist historians it has been usual to regard the 'Scramble for Africa' as a locus classicus of economic imperialism.

The correctness of this picture has been challenged in recent years in its two leading features: firstly, the image of a sharp break in the nature and direction of British policy, and secondly the emphasis that has been given to economic motives. Two Cambridge historians, Ronald Robinson and J.R.Gallagher, have been the main exponents of the new interpretation.[2] They have sought to demonstrate the substantial continuity of British policy throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. Instead of a violent swing from pacific anti-imperialism to belligerent expansionism they argue that the change after 1870 was at most one of emphasis and method. The underlying motive and objective of British policy remained unaltered: the protection of British commercial (and in a smaller degree, humanitarian) enterprise.

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[1] cf. Ramsay Muir, Short History of the British Commonwealth, 1937, vol.II, p.620 ff.
J.A.Williamson, Great Britain and the Empire, 1946, p.124 ff.

[2] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', Economic History Review, 2nd ser., vo..vi, no.1, 1953.
R.E.Robinson, 'Imperial Problems in British Politics 1880-1895, Cambridge History of British Empire, vol.iii, chap. v.

The means used for achieving this end had never been single and uniform, but had varied constantly with time and circumstance. At one extreme Britain had commercial relations with independent countries possessing modern governments like the United States, where there was no question of trade requiring the support of political power. At the other extreme were relations with countries like India where trade could only be secured by Britain stepping in to establish a modern system of law and government. Between these extremes there grew up various forms of political dependency that stopped short of formal British sovereignty or protection.

'Informal empire' of this intermediate kind tended to characterize the period before 1870. Where it failed to meet its object, however, Britain did not hesitate to resort to military force and open annexation. Hence in the supposedly pacific anti-imperialist period between 1840 and 1860 Britain assumed political sovereignty over New Zealand, the Gold Coast, Labuan, Natal, the Punjab, Sind, Hong Kong, Berar, Oudh, Lower Burma, Kowloon, Lagos, and so on. Indeed, while in her relations with politically weak countries like Turkey or Persia British influence was confined to diplomatic pressure and special treaty rights, the usual pattern was for her to underpin her influence by a chain of strong points strung out along her trade routes. These bases, often off-shore islands, served at the same time as naval stations, places d'armes, and commercial entrepot centres. From them Britain was able to exercise a veiled protectorate over surrounding areas in support of the enterprise of her nationals, without being put to the expense or liability of actual government. In this way she exercised a paramountcy over the Niger delta from Lagos, over East Africa from Zanzibar, over Malaya from Singapore, over South China from Hong Kong, and so on. A form of 'indirect imperialism' could be pursued even within the limits of the formal empire with relation to colonies of white settlement. While control over relations beyond the frontier and matters of imperial defence was retained by the home government, the actual burden and expense of administration could happily be devolved on to the colonists themselves through the device of self-government.

'Informal empire' in the tropical regions could endure only so long as Britain had a monopoly of overseas enterprise and great power rivalries were confined to Europe. But even when Britain felt compelled to take tropical areas under her formal protection there was no sharp break in policy. In line with her tradition of 'indirect imperialism' she still sought to keep her political and financial responsibilities to a minimum by resorting to the device of chartered companies for the government of new territories. Towards her white colonies she continued with her policy of advancing self government and using them as an instrument of expansion whenever it was considered necessary to bring adjacent areas under the British flag.

There was no indiscriminate land-grabbing; the extensions to British territory were highly selective. Britain was content to see huge areas pass under foreign control so long as she could secure commercial access on equal terms. This was the object of the abortive Congo treaty with Portugal in 1884, the Congo Arrangement of 1885, and the Anglo-German Agreement over East Africa in 1886. In West Africa she stood by and allowed France to secure the lion's share of the Niger basin. The closer British policy is studied the more difficult it is to sustain the Hobson thesis of economic imperialism. So that the traditional school-book picture of the Scramble for Africa has been challenged in this, its second principal feature. Hobson drew upon Africa for the bulk of his examples, but he implicitly recognised some of the weaknesses of his argument. He emphasized that it was only certain parasitic elements rather than the main body of capitalism itself that generated the economic pressure for colonial empire. Lenin and Leonard Woolf after him made no such qualifications, but Woolf did recognize with Hobson the economic unprofitability of much of Britain's

acquisitions and used the fact to demonstrate the illusion on which imperialist motives were founded.[1]

It is not necessary, however, to challenge the theory of economic imperialism as a whole - as the late Professor Koebner did[2] - to refute its validity for British policy. Gallagher and Robinson rest their argument on the absence of any coincidence between the area of formal empire and the main area of British overseas trade and investment.

> '... the historian who is seeking to find the deepest meaning of the expansion at the end of the nineteenth century should look not at the mere pegging out of claims in African jungle and bush, but at the successful exploitation of the empire, both formal and informal, which was then coming to fruition in India, in Latin America, in Canada and elsewhere. The main work of imperialism in the so-called expansionist era was in the more intensive development of areas already linked with the world economy, rather than in the extensive annexations of the remaining marginal areas of Africa. The best finds and prizes had already been made: in tropical Africa the imperialists were merely scraping the bottom of the barrel.'

It is a subtle, powerful and convincing argument.

Where established economic interests were at stake they prompted acquisitions that were broadly defensive in character. Such acquisitions meant for the most part placing under British protection areas which had long formed part of the economic hinterland of British trading centres on the coast and which had hitherto been regarded as part of the 'informal empire'. The protectorate over the lower Niger delta (Oil Rivers) in 1884, and the advance to the Zambesi can be placed in this category. 1888 is usually taken to be the year from which dates the mental conversion of the Unionist Government to the idea of a new tropical African empire. But the chief economic prizes had been secured beforehand. Although the B.S.A. Company did not take shape until after the Rudd concession, British influence was openly extended to the Zambesi in February 1888 as a result of the non-alienation agreement with Lobengula reached on the initiative of the Cape Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson. But this was a counter-move against Transvaal expansion. From an international viewpoint Salisbury had already warned Portugal in August 1887 that no pretension of Portugal to Matebeleland could be recognized.

The new empire which sprang up north of the Zambesi, in Central and East Africa, had an origin other than economic. Gladstone, with an old man's seer-like prescience, had predicted in 1877 the outcome of a possible British occupation of Egypt:

> 'But our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire, that will grow and grow until another Victoria and another Albert, titles of the Lake sources of the White Nile, come within our borders; and till we finally join hands across the Equator with Natal and Cape Town, to say nothing of the Transvaal or the Orange River on the South, or of Abyssinia or Zanzibar to be swallowed by way of viaticum on our journey.'[3]

Paradoxically it was Gladstone's government in 1882 which sent British forces into Egypt to safeguard the lives and property of its nationals and to ensure the security of the Suez Canal. By the end

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[1] Leonard Woolf, Commerce and Empire in Africa /1920/, Part III, Chap.I.

[2] R.Koebner, 'The Concept of Economic Imperialism', Economic History Review, 2nd ser., vol.ii, no.1., 1949.

[3] W.E.Gladstone, 'Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East', The Nineteenth Century, vol.ii, (1877), pp.158-9.

of 1887 the failure of the Drummond Wolff Convention made it obvious that the international guarantees which Britain required before she felt able to bring the occupation to an end would not be forthcoming. It had also become apparent that Cromer's surgery on the Egyptian finances had made feasible continued British control without expense to the British taxpayer - the sine qua non of Victorian Empire until Chamberlain took over the Colonial Office. Salisbury's mind advanced in consequence during the course of 1888 not only to the firm conclusion that Egypt must be held indefinitely, but that British policy must be directed to securing the entire Nile basin against the encroachments of other European powers. For he shared the contemporary belief that Egypt would lie at the mercy of the power which could turn off or divert the Nile headwaters. Salisbury's earlier unconcern at Germany's activities in East Africa, so long as they did not harm British commercial interests, now gave way to a clear-sighted determination to reach an agreement with her that would keep Uganda and the line of communication from Mombasa (that is present-day Kenya) within the British sphere. When he came to justify the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 before the House of Lords the first advantage of the African settlement to which he pointed was the safeguarding of the Nile sources and that 'save for the Italian dominion over Abyssinia and its dependencies, we have no rivalry to fear from any European civilised Power until we reach the confines of Egypt.'[1]

Although other motives were not absent, the final decision to retain Uganda in 1894 on the demise of the East African Company was based upon the same overriding strategical consideration.[2] Professor Koebner's criticism of the thesis of economic imperialism is particularly convincing in its treatment of the British East Africa Company. Leonard Woolf's attempt to depict the Company as the tool of high capitalism is indeed the weakest and most questionable part of his argument.[3] He was too readily impressed with the exaggerated language of the advocates of expansion who cast about for every conceivable argument to bolster their case.[4]

Despite the weight of the strategic motive in leading to the acquisition of British East Africa, it has to be recognised that it was a territory of marginal importance. The fact that the retention of Uganda was a matter of dispute in English politics is proof enough of this. On questions where vital British interests were thought to be at stake there was no division. A Liberal administration had undertaken the occupation of Egypt, and although Liberal leaders like Gladstone and Morley continued to hanker after ultimate British withdrawal they were quick to disclaim advocating it as an immediately practical step when challenged by Salisbury in 1891. Similarly there was never any serious dispute about the advance to the Zambesi. North of the Zambesi, however, was again an area of marginal importance. The Directors of the B.S.A. Company were interested in the mineral potentialities of Barotseland, and prompted by Johnston, Rhodes would like to have forestalled the Congo Free State for possession of Katanga. But there was no possibility of the immediate exploitation of the northern regions while Southern Rhodesia remained to be subdued and settled. In Nyasaland there was no significant economic interest at stake, but the Scottish missionaries were strongly entrenched and had thrown out a fragile arc up the 'Stevenson Road' to the southern end of Lake Tanganyika. Embattled with the 'Arab' slave traders they already formed a de facto political authority, recognised and assisted by a British consul specially appointed for the region.

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[1] Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, vol.cccxlvi, c.1264, 10 July 1890.

[2] cf. A.J.P.Taylor, 'Prelude to Fashoda', Rumour of Wars, 1952, p.83. Also A.Low, 'British Public Opinion and the Uganda Question' Uganda Journal vol.18, No.2, Sept. 1954, pp.83, 97.

[3] L.Woolf, Commerce & Empire in Africa, Chap.VI.

[4] cf.M. Perham, Lord Lugard: The Years of Adventure, p.426.

The practical issue was whether this area was to be allowed to pass under Portuguese or German control. Salisbury was undoubtedly sincere in his concern and admiration for the British missionary efforts, but recognised that from the viewpoint of British interests they could not be reckoned - as he admitted to the German ambassador - more than 'questions of sentiment'.[1] It is true that sentiment shaded insensibly into concern for prestige. Salisbury believed that Britain inherited special obligations as the historic leader of the anti-slavery movement and felt it would be unworthy of her traditions to allow herself to be ousted entirely from the region of the great Lakes which was hallowed in the popular mind by Livingstone's name. Yet no vital interest could be said to be at stake, certainly not one that was worth risking the peace of Europe, or even amoderate expenditure of British money. It is said, on Sir Harry Johnston's authority, that in the summer of 1888 Salisbury was revolving in his mind a scheme by which the region north of the Zambesi was to be brought under British protection, but that he was baulked by the resistance of the Treasury. Certainly in July of that year he rejected the open demand for a British protectorate in Nyasaland.[2]

As late as October 30, 1888, the British minister in Lisbon was reporting on a solution he had proposed to the Portuguese Foreign minister by which the entire area north of the Zambesi, including Nyasaland, should be recognised as Portuguese, on condition that the Portuguese provided safeguards for British economic enterprise and for some form of local self-government for the Scottish missions in the Nyasa districts. All this illustrates on how thin a thread hung the northward extension beyond the Zambesi.

It was only when Cecil Rhodes in the spring of 1889 offered to assume the financial liabilities that Salisbury saw his way clear.[3] His views on the northern Zambesi region then took rapid and firm shape. He was not interested in the Cape-to-Cairo dream shared by leading Africanists like Johnston, Rhodes, Kirk, Lugard and Mackinnon. In fact by an understanding with Germany of June 1887 Salisbury had admitted Germany's right to extend her coastal settlement in East Africa inland to Lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa. He had, indeed, as late as the summer of 1889 agreed to take no action without previous consultation north of the parallel of 11 degrees south - which meant that Germany kept open a claim to project the southern border of her East Africa sphere westwards across Lake Nyasa to the frontier of the Congo Free State. Despite these limitations Salisbury saw the value of a British region covering the area of modern Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. A belt of British territory across the Zambesi would form the means of overcoming the isolation and inaccessibility of Nyasaland and of connecting it directly with British South Africa. The predominant British role in East Africa and her leadership in humanitarian enterprise could be preserved at little cost. Moreover, despite German claims, there was no need to sacrifice the tenuous missionary hold on the region at the southern end of Lake Tanganyika and the line of the Stevenson road. It was early apparent in the negotiations leading up to the Anglo-German Agreement of July 1890 that Germany had no strong interests in the area and that so long as the projected British corridor - or 'wasp's waist' - joining the northern end of Lake Tanganyika to Uganda - was surrendered, Germany would readily concede a favourable frontier in the south. Portuguese claims, though more tenacious, could also be readily disposed of.

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[1] Hatzfield to Caprivi, 30 April 1890, Die Grosse Politik, Bd.8, p.9.

[2] Hansard 3rd ser. vol. cccxxviii, c.548 ff.

[3] Cf. Roland Oliver, Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa, ch.5.

Recognising Portugal's position up to the limits of effective occupation it was not difficult - though it meant 'gun-boat' diplomacy - to force her to surrender her claims on the remainder of Central Africa.

There were subsidiary advantages in expanding in these regions. Salisbury may not have been much moved by the glowing prospects which Johnston and Lugard held out for British commercial enterprise and British settlement in the highland regions of East and Central Africa, but at least such prospects did suggest the possibility that at some distant date the responsibility for government could be devolved on to British settler communities. This contrasted with the outlook for colonial possessions in West Africa where the only foreseeable future on the breakdown of chartered company rule was permanent administration by the Crown.

As a final argument against the predominance of economic motives or even of the determining force of imperialism itself, it is well to mark how the scramble for Africa was constantly kept subordinate to considerations of European power diplomacy. Bismarck had declared in December 1888: 'My map of Africa lies in Europe. Here lies Russia and here lies France; that is my map of Africa'. Mr. F.H. Hinsley has commented:

> '...The deadlock in Europe was, if not the most immediate incentive, at least the chief underlying condition in the great phase of extra-European expansion that now began. From the beginning of the phase, the policies of the governments, if not of all elements in the states, were dominated by strategic rather than by economic and financial motives, by considerations of balance and relative position, in Europe no less than throughout the world, rather than by purely colonial interests....' [1]

We have seen how for Salisbury and Rosebery the strategic motive was uppermost. All other considerations were subordinate to protecting the Suez route - 'the jugular vein' of the Empire, in Bismarck's striking phrase. As a consequence British policy pivoted on the British position in Egypt and the Nile Valley, and for the sake of these Britain was prepared to concede to France a dominant position in West Africa. Yet if the strategic motive was uppermost it was - at least so far as British policy was concerned - symptomatic of the character of British imperialism. So far from pursuing territorial expansion for its own sake British policy was inherently defensive in mentality, and concerned above all with the protection of established interests. Anxiety over the Suez route sprang principally from a desire to safeguard the highway to the 'insured markets' of India, and the Australasian colonies.

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An analysis of British policy towards South Africa would also appear to bear out the thesis of Mr.Gallagher and Dr. Robinson that there was no sharp break in policy in the later Victorian period. 'Indirect imperialism' remained the keynote of the relationship with the South African colonies. The hoisting of the German flag in South West Africa in 1884 stirred Gladstone's government into sending the Warren expedition and into proclaiming a protectorate over Bechuanaland in order to prevent the Transvaal republic establishing a common frontier with a German colony. But there was no intention of perpetuating the 'Imperial factor'. It was always assumed that the administration of Bechuanaland would eventually be handed over to the Cape Colony once a satisfactory agreement could be reached on safeguarding the interests of the African population. Similarly imperial administration of Basutoland was never looked upon as more than a temporary expedient. Zululand was in fact made over to Natal in 1887. In its other aspect the continued process of loosening British control and eliminating the Imperial factor can be seen in the granting of

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[1] Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol.iii, p.99.

responsible government to Natal in 1893.[1]

But here the argument stops. It is a significant point. In 1895 Joseph Chamberlain took over the Colonial Office and within a few years made the South African question the dominant issue in English politics. The tide of British policy was - for a few years at least - dramatically reversed. The limitations within which Victorian colonial policy had been forced to operate - the subordinate importance of colonial affairs, the consequent impossibility of obtaining money, troops, and public support for a prolonged assertion of the Imperial factor, the enforced reliance on local agents to preserve British interests - all these limitations were now swept aside. It may be argued that the Chamberlain era was exceptional and in the end, by the reaction it bred, served only to confirm and renew the Victorian attitude to empire. While this may be broadly true, it is questionable whether the South African War can be regarded as no more than a temporary aberration. The prominence which it gave in English national life to colonial affairs could not be suddenly effaced. It wrought a permanent qualitative change in the public attitude to the Empire.

The scale of effort called forth by the South African crisis was, of course, far from intentional. The Imperial factor had to be invoked and asserted to an unprecendented degree owing to the catastrophic breakdown of traditional policy. The problem originated in the discovery of the Witwatersrand gold reef in 1886. Developed for the most part by British capital and enterprise, the Rand quickly transformed the Transvaal from a poor, backward farming country into the richest state in South Africa. The key to the British economic position was thus placed outside the ordinary colonial system and could be exploited by the Transvaal Boers to establish a powerful and hostile state threatening British paramountcy.

At first England was content to rely on local agency to contain and neutralise this threat. Because of the strong Afrikaaner vote in the self-governing Cape Colony, and the advantages of a more flexible instrument, the local agency relied upon Rhodes' British South Africa Company, chartered in 1889. Rhodes hoped to defeat the challenge of 'Afrikanderdom' by developing the newly-won territories north of the Limpopo. If a second Rand could be discovered it would quickly bring a thriving new British colony into existence and would permanently tilt the scales in favour of the British element throughout South Africa. Rhodesia was to be the instrument for forging a British-dominated South African federation. By 1893 Rhodes realised that his hopes of quickly developed mineral wealth were not to be realised. He concluded that the Boer supremacy in the Transvaal would have to be overthrown by violence. His imperial masters were not ignorant of the situation. British ministers like Ripon and Rosebery were fully aware of the possibility of a rising of British subjects in Johannesburg against the Kruger regime, and recognised that timely intervention and support might easily bring the Transvaal back under the Union Jack. Only Chamberlain seems to have been informed of Rhodes' actual plot and he did not shrink from giving Rhodes his active connivance. The fiasco of the Jameson Raid at the end of 1895 dealt a sudden overwhelming blow at this disreputable type of 'indirect imperialism'. Rhodes, the local instrument on which it relied, lost for a moment his power and credit, and Kruger began transforming his state into a formidable military power.

The result was the re-assertion of the Imperial factor in unprecedented strength. A new high commissioner of proconsular stature was sent out early in 1897. Sir Alfred Milner's appointment involved more than an issue of colonial politics or even British strategic interests, for the South African crisis opened a channel, through which the mounting tide of English imperialist sentiment could pour. Milnerism was the antithesis of the mid-Victorian outlook. Instead of being regarded as subordinate and secondary to Britain's wider political and commercial interests, the Empire became the supreme object of policy. The goal which Milnerism

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[1] cf. Lord Ripon's policy as Colonial Secretary, L.Wolf, Life of Ripon, p.223 ff.

held before it was the welding together of the scattered elements of the Empire into 'one body politic', a self-contained economic and political system. The whole philosophy of free trade was denied, and with it the inmost kernel of mid-Victorian conviction. So far from trusting for progress to the free action of individual initiative and spontaneity and regarding politics as a regulating and harmonising but not originating function, Milner looked to government to supply the ultimate directing idea and shaping force of society. In this belief he was prepared to use the full power of the state, culminating in coercive force, so as to fashion a new unified South Africa predominantly British in population, law and culture.

He was, of course, a visionary, and so was incredulous when the British nation which did not shrink from the unprecedented expenditure of some £250 million on a war to preserve British paramountcy could within a few years hand back not merely the old Boer republics but the whole of South Africa to an Afrikaner majority. He could not understand, as Chamberlain did, that the national effort had been carried by the war to an unnatural height, that this effort to impose rather than negotiate a solution could not be indefinitely prolonged, and that in consenting to the solution of self-government the nation was reverting to its permanent political instinct. Chamberlain had persistently rejected Milner's efforts to suspend the self-governing constitution of the Cape Colony and so secure a tabula rasa for the imposed solution. The Colonial Secretary's jocular remark uttered at Johannesburg only a few months after the British victory - 'Downing Street is ready to abdicate' - showed a cold intuitive flash of truth. In his dealings with the post-war problem, particularly over the language and education issues, Chamberlain revealed clearly that he sought reconciliation rather than domination.

Yet if the unnatural magnitude of the British war effort bred by reaction a corresponding volte-face and ensured that Britain would never again attempt a head-on challenge with colonial nationalism - white, brown or black - , the scale of effort put forth could not be without lasting effects. It may be acknowledge as a result of the latest interpretations that imperialism was a more short-lived and exceptional episode than was previously believed; and both Robinson and Koebner would by implication confine it within the narrow limits of Chamberlain's tenure of the Colonial Office between 1895 and 1903. Yet the movement left its impress.

Too much, perhaps, should not be made of the immediate results of the heightened imperial consciousness. But certainly it was in Chamberlain's day that the colonial empire in Africa was recognised in its own right. When he made his stand in 1897 against the policy of deference to France in settling West African frontiers Chamberlain was asserting the autonomy of purely British colonial interests in opposition to Salisbury subordination of these to considerations of foreign policy and strategy. Similarly Chamberlain broke the hold of Treasury doctrine to which Salisbury had so meekly deferred. There were already signs of change before he took office. In 1895 the Liberal ministry had agreed to take over financial responsibility for Nyasaland from Rhodes, despite the fact that the administrative bill had mounted to £30,000, contrasted with the paltry £10,000 for which Salisbury would not ask the Treasury in 1889. With Chamberlain the principle of the grant-in-aid was established, and more important, loans at low rates of interest.[1] He was able to end chartered company rule in Nigeria (which as an exponent of the 'Imperial factor' he had always professed to dislike) and assume direct responsibility by the Crown for the whole of this vast territory. In this way he gave substance to the notion of an enduring colonial empire in Africa, and by laying the basis of a proper colonial service he made progress towards the time when after Salisbury's death the private Foreign Office empire in East Africa and Nyasaland would come under Colonial Office rule.

There could be no going back to the pre-Chamberlain outlook on empire, even though after 1905 the British public tended to turn back its gaze to its own domestic problems and to the war-clouds gathering in Europe. At least one may say indirect imperialism had been replaced by direct imperialism with limited liability.

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[1] G.S.Graham, Cambridge History of British Empire, vol.iii, p.465 ff.

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY

31st August - 3rd September 1959.

Lecture given by Dr.T.O.Ranger of the Department of History.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY CONTROVERSY

It is often said of this or that distinguished historian that he has made a period his own - so Professor Trevor-Roper, for instance, begins his attack on Professor Tawney's interpretation of the social changes which took place between 1540 and 1640 by recognising that this century 'may almost be defined, thanks to his radical re-interpretation of it, as "Tawney's century" . . . historians can no more think of it now in pre-Tawney terms than sociologists can think of society in pre-Marxist terms'. I sometimes wonder, however, whether it would not be more true in many cases to say that a certain period or controversy had made this or that historian its own. Certainly there are no more embattled historians than those now engaged in the furious controversy over what they variously call the Civil War, the Great Rebellion and the English Revolution. Trenchant and partisan pamphlets have scarcely appeared so plentifully since the 1640s and 1650s themselves - for like the great revolutionary debate of those decades this is a pamphlet war. The very titles ring with the spirit of seventeenth century controversy - Mr Lawrence Stone's 'An Anatomy of the Elizabethan Aristocracy' answered by Professor Trevor-Roper's 'The Elizabethan Aristocracy, an Anatomy Anatomised'. Indeed the historiography of the Great Rebellion has undergone a development similar to its own progressions. We have moved from the days of Gardiner and Firth and Trevelyan - from the days of urbane dispute, of limited aristocratic warfare, in which ferocity was only shown to some intruding Jesuit - into the days of Tawney and Hill and Trevor Roper - the days of clashing ideologies and falling heads.

Nothing, it is said, is more ridiculous to sensible men than the warfare of scholars but this at least must be said in justification of our militant historians of the early seventeenth century. If it is worth while to dispute about the past at all then it is supremely worth while to debate the origins and consequences of the Great Rebellion. Its historians are not engaged in a debate which is of technical, professional interest but which is unintelligible to the lay reader - like the historians, say, of mediaeval household administration; nor are they engaged in a debate which is not particularly significant or interesting in itself but which reveals differences and weaknesses of historical method - like the debate on the policy and significance of George III; nor are they engaged in a debate which appears to have no interest or significance at all. They are examining if not the most significant event in English history then one of the most significant events. Whatever else they differ on they have at least in common a sense of that importance. We have escaped at last from the comfortable myth that the Civil war was typically English in its common sense, its moderation and so on - a War which seemed scarcely an interruption in the orderly progress to the development of parliamentary institutions. Many of the text books still take this sort of line - in them, as Christopher Hill wrote in 1940, 'the bloodshed and the violence which accompanied the revolution are slurred over as regrettable incidents when Englishmen for once descended to the wicked continental practice of fighting one another about politics. But this was only because mistakes were made, opportunities for British compromise were missed: what a good thing, the books imply, that we are so much wiser and more sensible today'. Modern historians cannot easily feel such confidence in our superior wisdom and good sense: modern historians are interested in revolutions and used to them. So they have seen with fresh eyes the revolutionary nature of what used to be called the Civil War. They have noted that contemporary Europe did not regard the war or its aftermath as moderate or merciful - even the Europe of the Thirty Year's War recoiled in horror at the solemn execution of a king and the

wholesale destruction of an established order. They have read again the literature of the revolutionary left and heard its demands echo through the centuries to the present. Increasingly, therefore, they have come to see the period as one of revolution and seen that to it can be applied the so-called laws of revolution - the progression from a falling out among the ruling classes through the demands of the middling men, through the 'terror' to the stabilisation of the great man. The English Revolution, so Christopher Hill calls it, and Russian historians date from it the beginning of that modern world whose course is marked by revolutions - the American, the French, the Russian. Increasingly the English Revolution - or the Great Rebellion, as it is called by the historians of whom I am one who prefers to use the contemporary terminology in order to preserve something of the contemporary attitudes - is coming to be seen as of equal significance to these other great upheavals. The debate on its origins is, therefore, no trivial or irrelevant one even if that debate sometimes takes us through apparently tedious and unimportant details.

I said above that the warring historians of the Great Rebellion were in a historiographical period which corresponded to the bitter ideological disputes which followed the end of what is known as the First Civil War. There is another analogy which it is illuminating to draw. The disputes in the years which immediately preceded and followed the execution of Charles I were disputes between men who had fought on the same side and who held a number of common assumptions. It is, indeed, often the case that disputes are more bitter between those who share a good deal of common ground than between those who have little or nothing in common. So it was with the Levellers, the Millenarians, the Independents, the Presbyterians: so it was with the Anarchists, Syndicalists and Marxists before the 1914-18 war: so it is with the Stalinists, the Trotskyites and the Titoists today. And so it is with the contesting historians of the Great Rebellion. All of them share an important set of common assumptions, all of them have fought against a common enemy. Before we can understand the disputes which divide them we must understand these common assumptions.

'The object of this essay', wrote Christopher Hill in 1940, 'is to suggest . . . that the English Revolution of 1640-60 was a great social movement like the French Revolution of 1789'. This expresses clearly what all the contesting historians believe - that the Great Rebellion can only be understood as the expression of social and economic forces. 'Ultimately',writes Professor Trevor Roper, who is, as we shall see, the great adversary of Mr Hill and Professor Tawney, 'Ultimately social processes manifest themselves in political effects. The Great Rebellion in the central event of the seventeenth century in England, and any interpretation of English society which leaves unexplained that great convulsion is obviously unsatisfying'. Professor Trevor Roper accuses Professor Tawney of failing to provide such an explanation in his account of the most significant economic and social developments between 1540 and 1640. Professor Tawney does not, of course, reply that an analysis of these developments need not 'explain' the Great Rebellion - for he believes in the necessary inter-relation as firmly as Professor Trevor-Roper - he merely replies that to his own mind the social and economic developments he had described do account for the Rebellion and the ones which Professor Trevor-Roper describes do not.

'The orthodox attitude to the seventeenth century revolution is misleading', writes Mr Hill, 'because it does not try to penetrate below the surface, because it takes the actors in the revolution at their face value and assumes that the best way to find out what people were fighting about is to consider what the leaders said they were fighting about'. And although both Professor Tawney and Professor Trevor-Roper endeavour to show that some sharp-sighted contemporaries realised the significance of social change, both really approach the problem in Mr Hill's spirit. This is particularly noticeable with regard to the problem of religion. None of the controversialists take seriously the idea that religion was a fundamental issue in the

Great Rebellion - at any rate not religion in any other sense than the convenient theological clothing of economic and social aspirations. 'The fact that men spoke and wrote in a religious language should not prevent us from realising that there is a social content behind what are apparently purely theological ideas', writes Mr Hill, 'Each class created and attempted to impose the religious outlook best suited to its own needs and interests: behind the parson stood the squire'. Mr Hill is a Marxist and Professor Tawney a neo-Marxist. One might expect their chief adversary to attack this sort of assumption. But Professor Trevor-Roper has, if anything, a more mechanistic approach to religious belief than Mr Hill as anyone can see who cares to read the introductory chapter to his biography of archbishop Laud. Indeed so resolute is he in his dismissal of the religious feeling that I have heard Marxist historians pleading in discussion with him for the postulate that more attention should be paid to religion as a factor in 17th century history!

And so, as Professor Hexter complains in his summary of the controversy in Encounter, May 1958, the controversialists both dismiss 'conflicts over Parliamentary privilege, royal prerogative, judicial independence, arbitrary arrest, power of taxation and the rule of law in England' and count as of no significance the fact that the Rebellion was 'triggered by a religious upheaval in Scotland and . . [was] ... traversed by the complex lines of fission that separated Anglican from Puritan'. Both find, in Hexter's rather clumsy phrase 'the source of human action in the circumambient economic configuration'. It is in this context that the controversy must be examined.

The idea that English history can be interpreted through concepts of economic and social change is not, of course, a new one. Nor has it been confined in English historiography to the Marxist or neo-Marxist historian. The great Victorian and early twentieth century historians were great ones for the Rise of the Middle Class. Professor Postan in a brilliant essay describes how 'the middle class formula has been used to bridge gaps in historical knowledge. The recipe has been to credit the rising middle class with almost every revolutionary event of European culture to which a more specific cause has not yet been assigned. If towns grow in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this was due to the rise of the middle classes; if lay culture and religious dissent flourished in the late twelfth and the early thirteenth centuries this was also due to the rise of the middle class. So, if we are to believe some writers, was the consolidation of the national monarchies in England and France in the later Middle Ages, the dissolution of feudal power in the fifteenth century, the Reformation, the Tudor despotism, the Elizabethan renaissance, the scientific development of the seventeenth century, the Puritan revolution, the economic liberalism and the sentimental novel of the eighteenth century. In fact the martyrdom of Poland and the Russian revolution are very nearly the only historical phenomena which nobody has yet seen fit to lay at the door of the newly born bourgeoisie.' But as a matter of fact, although Professor Postan includes 'the Puritan revolution' in his list, the concept of the Rise of the Middle Class was not applied to the Civil War by the great nineteenth and early twentieth century historians of the period - presumably because 'more specific causes' had been and were being assigned. It was after the 1914-18 war that first writers of history and then historians began to experiment with looking at the early seventeenth century through the spectacles of class-conflict.

One of the explanations thus produced was the Marxist - which we will have occasion to look at more closely in a moment. Another was what Christopher Hill calls the 'Tory' interpretation to distinguish it from the prevalent 'Whig' interpretation. This 'Tory' interpretation - which with its mixture of authoritarianism and concern for the small man might be described as a 'National Socialist' interpretation - was being much canvassed in the inter-war years by writers 'whose political prejudices, royalist or Catholic sympathies and bias against liberalism in general' to quote Mr Hill's unsparing but

accurate account, made 'up for their lack of historical understanding. Their idea is that Charles I and his advisers were really trying to protect ordinary people from economic exploitation by a small class of capitalists on the make and that the opposition which faced Charles was organised and worked up to serve their own purposes by the business men. Though superficially occupying much of the same ground this approach was really standing Marxism on its head, and Christopher Hill's pamphlet: THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION with which I want to begin my account of the current controversy was as much concerned to deal with the 'Tory' version as with the long established Whig interpretation of the Revolution as a contest for liberty, religion and parliamentary government.

To Hill, as we have already seen, 'the English Revolution of 1640-60 was a great social movement like the French Revolution of 1789. The state power protecting an old order that was essentially feudal was violently overthrown, power passed into the hands of a new class, and so the freer development of capitalism was made possible. The Civil War was a class war in which the despotism of Charles I was defended by the reactionary forces of the established church and conservative landlords. Parliament beat the king because it could appeal to the enthusiastic support of the trading and industrial classes in town and countryside, to the yeoman and progressive gentry, and to wider masses of the population whenever they were able by free discussion to understand what the struggle was really about'. The most noticeable thing about Hill's essay is that it is concerned with moral values to an extraordinary degree. It is really about what one should retrospectively support. Hill is concerned to show that the revolution was a class one not a national one and to show up the Whig historians for pretending that 'the interest of the bourgeoisie are identical with those of the nation, a legend obviously convenient for our own day though so much less true now than in the seventeenth century'. But he is even more concerned to show that the bourgeois revolution was in its own time 'progressive'. 'The Tories', he says, 'stress the class nature of the revolution in an attempt to deny its progressiveness and value in its own time, to whitewash feudalism and to suggest that revolutions never benefit more than a narrow clique'. This, he says, is nonsense. The court stood not for the people but for 'aristocratic commercial racketeers and their hangers-on sucking the life blood from the whole people by methods of economic exploitation . . . The middle class struggle to shake off the control of this group was not merely selfish: it fulfilled a progressive historical function. . . it was necessary for the further development of capitalism that this choking parasitism should be ended by the overthrow of the feudal state. It was to the advantage of the masses of the population that capitalism should be allowed to develop freely'.

This idea of Hill's is one of powerful attraction because it allows belief in the supreme importance of economic developments - which is the dominating belief of most historians - to underprop rather than to overthrow some of the older ideas - such as that the triumph of parliament in the civil war was a 'good thing'. In fact Hill admits some of the older arguments for the excellence of that triumph - such as the fact that parliament's victory 'was important as establishing a certain amount of self government' - and adds to them the excellence that comes from being in tune with the inevitable progress of history. It was certainly much more attractive to a shaken Whig in 1940 - and most Whig historians were shaken by then - than the Tory on National Socialist theory.

The 'National Socialist' theory was discredited by the war; the Whig certainties also became more difficult to hold. An interpretation like Mr Hill's stood, therefore, an excellent chance of achieving canonical status. But there was one difficulty. Mr. Hill's thesis seemed to give too much importance to the urban classes, to the merchants and the industrialists. And as Mr Hexter writes, 'from the beginning of that revolution to the end the men with the decisive power were landed folk not city folk, not bourgeoisie in the inconvenient etymological

meaning of the term'. How does one get around this dilemma? Hill himself indicated the solution when he included his 'progressive gentry' among the coalition which defeated Charles I and when he devoted a good deal of his description of the Economic background to the emergence of what he calls 'rural capitalism'. Here, as we shall see, lay the answer. But Hill's account of the rural capitalist was rather confusing - one could never tell from one section to the next on which side the landowning gentleman was going to crop up - and he had, in any case, put 'trading and industrial classes in the town and countryside' before the 'progressive gentry' in his list of the opposition.

It was Professor Tawney's achievement to produce the solution and to produce it in an extremely convincing way. Professor Tawney had been working in the field of 16th century economic history since before the first world war and had produced some exceedingly distinguished results - among them his famous THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. In this he described the fate of the English peasantry as the result of changes in the organisation of agriculture. In 1912, when this book was published, Professor Tawney's attitude to these changes was rather different from Mr Hill's attitude in 1940. 'Sometimes it seems', comments Professor Trevor Roper, 'that he has been misled by emotion, by a generous but uncritical sentimentality towards the English peasantry and a corresponding hatred of the English gentry who (he supposes) rose by their ruin: "that blind, selfish, indomitable aristocracy of county families" as he once called them "which made the British Empire and ruined a considerable proportion of the British nation". This would never do for Mr Hill who had some hard words to say about those 'who looked back regretfully to the stability and relative security of the peasantry in the Middle Ages'. Such sentimentalists were, according to Mr Hill, 'quite unrealistic and in effect reactionary. Their role was the same as that of many liberals at the present day who think how nice it would be if capitalism could still work in the 'liberal' nineteenth century way without having to resort quite so frequently to fascism and war. But fine words alter no historical processes'. By 1941, when Professor Tawney's article THE RISE OF THE GENTRY was published in the Economic History Review he had come to terms with historical processes. The gentry were, as Hexter puts it, 're-characterised'. 'Those who recall', writes Hexter, 'the magnificent and ambivalent sketch that Marx draws of his hero-villaisn, the bourgeoisie, in the Communist Manifesto, will hardly fail to recognise the lineaments of his old acquaintances in Tawney's description of "the agricultural capitalists . . who were making the pace and to whom the future belonged", the rising gentry revolutionising the relations of production in the country side in their ruthless single-minded drive to appropriate the surplus value of England's largest industry'.

Hexter's quotation indicates the nature of Professor Tawney's solution. For 'bourgeoisie' Professor Tawney read 'gentry'. 'To speak of the transition from a feudal to a bourgeois society', wrote Professor Tawney, 'is to decline upon a cliche. But a process difficult to epitomise in less hackneyed terms has left deep marks on the social systems of most parts of Europe. What a contemporary described as the conversion of "a gentry addicted to war" into "good husbands" who "knew as well how to improve their lands to the uttermost as the farmer or countryman" may reasonably be regarded as an insular species of the same genus'. Hexter comments on this: 'The English gentry must be transfigured into the bourgeoisie to maintain the view that the rise of the bourgeoisie is the indispensable framework for almost a millenium of history. This necessity becomes the more pressing if one is committed to the belief that socially the Revolution was a bourgeois revolution'. So instead of the application of the idea of the Rise of the Middle Class Professor Tawney applied the concept of the Rise of the Gentry.

The solution was brilliantly successful. All obstacles to the acceptance of the thesis in Mr Hill's form fell away. 'All historians

who have since studied that period are inevitably if unconsciously affected by his re-interpretation', writes Professor Trevor-Roper who, as we have seen, describes the years between 1540 and 1640 as 'Tawney's century'. 'It is now something of a commonplace', wrote Mr. Lawrence Stone in 1948, 'that the collapse of the ancien regime in 1640 was an event that must be related to a shift in the social balance, the transfer of a section of the national income away from the crown, some of the peerage and the episcopacy to the middle class of gentry, officials, and lawyers that took place in the preceding century'. Professor Hexter, who disagrees with Tawney's thesis, comments ruefully that 'it does indeed seem that the hypothesis is on the verge of enshrinement in the pantheon of historical commonplaces'. Yet, of course, Professor Tawney could not have been so successful just by a brilliant conjuring trick - hey presto' the gentry are transformed into the bourgeoisie. Two things at least are needed to account for the popularity of his thesis - one the feeling that it is not ridiculous to describe the gentry as a capitalist middle class: the other that it can be shown with apparent truth that the gentry were increasing in wealth and influence at the expense of the crown and the nobility.

Professor Tawney's article endeavours to show - and many would say succeeds in showing - that the gentry did so increase their power and wealth. It does not bother to demonstrate that they were a class in the Marxist sense with a class interest distinct from that of the aristocracy and from that of the 'lower classes' but rather relies on the justifiable assumption that the reader is conditioned to think in class terms. Professor Tawney merely describes the gentry: 'The core consisted', he writes, 'of landed proprietors, above the yeomanry and below the peerage, together with a growing body of well-to-do farmers, sometimes tenants of their relatives who had succeeded the peasants of the past as lessees of demesne farms; professional men, also rapidly increasing in number, such as the more eminent lawyers, divines and an occasional medical practitioner; and the wealthier merchants who, if not, as many of them were, themselves sons of landed families, had received a similar education, moved in the same circles and in England, unlike France, were commonly recognised to be socially indistinguishable from them'. (We may note in passing that this differs significantly from Hill's account of the progressive gentry whom he included among the victorious bourgeoisie. According to Hill the 'new kind of farmer . . . the capitalist farmer . . might be a pirate or a slave trader, a respectable city merchant who had done well in currants or a country clothing capitalist'. Hill's account thus gives primacy to commerce and industry - his progressive gentry being merchants or industrialists turning to the land. Tawney's account, however, significantly gives primacy to the land itself, his 'wealthier merchants' finding their way into the ranks of the agents of historical destiny because they were either sons of landed families or shared their attitudes.) Tawney, then described the 'gentry' merely and was careful to say that the 'elasticity of a class recruited from below' was 'not favourable to precise classifications'. It was left to the enthusiastic disciple Mr Stone to actually state that the gentry were a class with clearly defined class interests. 'The gentry', he writes, were 'a new class whose political aspirations and whose views on foreign, religious and social policy differed fundamentally from those of the aristocracy'. If this is true, and although before Mr Stone no-one actually said it no more did anyone dispute it, then the gentry class is clearly a middle class since it has above it another class, the 'homogenous, closed, self-contained caste' of the nobility and below it a variety of property-less classes.

If Tawney does not bother to show that the gentry were a class he does show in what way they can be called capitalist. Hill had written of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in these terms: 'Both in the Middle Ages and in the 17th century the first importance of an estate was that it supplied a landowner (through his control over the labour of others) with the means of livelihood. But over and above this, the large estates had in the Middle Ages maintained with their surplus agricultural produce a body of retainers who would

on occasion act as soldiers and so were the basis of power of the feudal lords. Now, with the development of the capitalist mode of production within the structure of feudalism, many landowners began either to market that portion of the produce of their estates which was not consumed by their families or to lease their lands to a farmer who could produce for the market. So landowners came to regard their estates in a new light: as a source of money profit, of profits that were elastic and could be increased'. This is the process Tawney shows - the capitalisation of land in that land was being used for producing commodities to sell for cash: in that capital was being used to develop the land in order to more efficiently produce such commodities: in that land was being bought by merchant capitalists as a safe investment for their profits because it could be used in this 'capitalist' way, and conversely in that landowners were investing profits from their land in industrial and commercial enterprises. Tawney shows the gentry turning to these various capitalist alternatives. 'Several types emerge . . There is the gentleman farmer, leasing land, till he makes money, without owning it, and not infrequently - since the thing is his profession - running several farms at once. There is the man who works his . . /own/. . land as a commercial undertaking - a John Toke in Kent buying Welsh and Scottish runts to finish on Romney Marsh for the London market: a Robert Loder in Berkshire, all piety and profits; a Sir Thomas Tresham in Northamptonshire selling everything, from rabbits supplied on a contract to a poulterer in Gracechurch Street to wool to the value of £1,000 a year . . .; a Sir John Wynn in North Wales, cattle breeder, tribal chieftan, land-grabber, scholar and prospector for minerals unknown to science, ... There are families like the Pelhams and the Twysdens, living mainly on rents, but doing on the side a useful trade in grain, hops, wool and iron in local markets and in London. Each type has idiosyncrasies but none is in land for its health. All watch markets closely; buy and sell in bulk, compare the costs and yields of different crops; charge the rent, when the custom allows, that a farm will stand; keep careful accounts. Mr. Fussell's description of one of them - 'before all things a business man' - is true of all'.

Now we must note that all these examples are examples not of men from the towns bringing new ideas into the conservative countryside but examples of men whose families were rural adapting themselves to new circumstances. 'The enterprising country gentleman', the 'owners of small and medium size estates' were primarily responsible for this capitalisation of agriculture, even although, as Professor Tawney shows, professional men and merchants from the towns learning that 'properly handled, land could be made to yield' hastened to invest in land. The initiative is with the gentry even although, Professor Tawney says, (quietly completing his conjuring trick) there came to be little difference between them and the urban bourgeoisie. 'The landowner living on the profits and rents of commercial farming and the merchant or banker who was also a landowner represented not two classes but one. Patrician and parvenu both owed their ascent to causes of the same order. Judged by the source of their incomes both were equally bourgeois'.

So much for Tawney's demonstration that the gentry were capitalists. What of the second half of the equation - that this capitalist class increased in wealth and power at the expense of the crown and nobility? Now, of course, it will already be plain that the very transition to capitalist agriculture will bring an increase in wealth - especially in a situation described by Professor Tawney in these terms: 'Not only were prices rising, but, with the process of internal unification, the development of specialised semi-industrial areas, and the growth of urban markets, demand was spreading.' But it will not necessarily bring an increase in power unless that increase in wealth is not only absolute but also relative to the position of other groups. If the landowning class as a whole - king, nobles, gentry - were able to exploit the new situation, would there not be an increase in the wealth of landowners as a whole vis a vis their tenants rather than a shift in the balance of power within the ranks of landowners themselves?

The answer is that there would, and that in order for Professor Tawney to maintain that the gentry 'rose' in relation to the nobility and the crown he must also maintain that only the gentry or the gentry in a unique degree were able to exploit the new capitalist agriculture. This is precisely what he does maintain.

As Professor Trevor Roper comments this is in many ways an odd thesis. 'In general, historical analogy would lead us to expect an opposite result', writes Professor Trevor-Roper, 'Who survived better the economic crisis of the Roman Empire, the great magnates or the small landowners? Who weathered the crises of the fourteenth century better, the great landlords or the gentry? Whose economic situation proved stronger in sixteenth century Spain - which was perhaps not so different as is vulgarly supposed from sixteenth century England - the nobles or the hidalgos? Who withstood the economic crisis of the late nineteenth century in England more successfully - the peers or the gentry? Who in our own day can better cope with rising prices and falling incomes, the great landlord who can sell half his estate to adapt the other half or the small landlord whose property is not so happily divisible?' (I should add here for those whose ability to answer these rhetorical questions is as limited as my own that I am informed by experts that in each case the larger landowner is the right answer.)

Before explaining how Professor Tawney justifies this apparent paradox I must pause to remark on one noticeable feature of the examples cited by Professor Trevor Roper. They are all examples not of rural opportunity but of rural crisis. And here we come to one of the most important aspects of the 16th century scene as it appears both to Professor Tawney and to Professor Trevor-Roper - an aspect which I have not yet stressed but which is fundamental to Tawney's thesis. The 16th century was a period of rural crisis. The reason for this was the great Price Rise, what Professor Tawney calles 'the crisis of depreciation'. Here is Professor Tawney on the effect of the threefold increase in prices during the 16th century. 'The ability of nature to cause confusion with her silver is greatly inferior, we now know, to that of human art, and in view of the dimensions of the movement the lamentations provoked by it seem today overdone. But in judging the effects of this most unrevolutionary of monetary revolutions three truisms must be remembered. It broke on a world which had known within living memory something like a currency famine. The society which experienced it was crossed by lines of petrification, which make modern rigidities seem elastic. Except for brief intervals the movement was continuous, on the Continent for some three generations, in England for nearly four. The wave of rising prices struck the dyke of customary obligations, static burdens, customary dues: rebounded: struck again: and then either broke it or carved new channels which turned its flank. More than one country known a dreadful interlude when anarchy was not remote. In most it was discovered, when the worst was over, that the land system which came out of the crisis was not that which had gone into it.'

We know already the nature of the agricultural revolution so produced in England - the emergency of agricultural capitalism. Here - in the Price Revolution - Tawney has the convincing stimulus which explains how it was that the rural middle class which had grown up within the old order should have become pioneers of the new. In earlier cruder, Marxist interpretations the transformation had been wrought by the urban bourgeois, like a deus ex machina, turning their capitalist techniques to the land. With Tawney it becomes a question of 'Challenge and Response' - the threat presented by a rise in prices to landlords dependent on fixed rentals producing first a desperate turning to the various 'capitalist' methods described above and then a steady exploitation of them once they had proved profitable.

But the Price Rise does more in Tawney's thesis than provide a convincing stimulus. It also provides an explanation for the sharply

differing fortunes of the various classes which Tawney's argument postulates. If one could find the capitalist answer to the crisis then one was much better off than before. If one could not then one was much worse off.

Now, as we have seen, it was the 'enterprising country gentry', 'the owners of small and medium sized estates' who found the answer. The great landowners, says Tawney, on the whole did not. Why was this? It was partly a question of attitudes. The great noble was the heir of a whole set of feudal assumptions - the need for proper display, increasing rather than decreasing in an age of new luxuries; the demands of patronage; a conservatism in matters of land management arising out of a feudal concept of the correct relation of landlord and tenant. All these assumptions made it difficult for the great, aristocratic landowner to adjust himself to the new age. Again, the very nature of his wealth was against him: 'It was locked up in frozen assets . . . the whole structure and organisation of their estates was often of a kind which, once a pillar of the social system, was now obsolescent. Side by side with more lucrative possessions, their properties included majestic but unremunerative franchises . . . a multitude of knight's fees, all honour and no profit: freeholds created in an age when falling, not rising, prices had been the great landowner's problem and fixed rents were an insurance; hundreds of prickly copyholders'. To carry through a capitalist reconstruction was a formidable task for which few aristocrats were fitted.

No, it was the gentry 'not tempted by large estates into the somnolence of the rentier; less loaded than most noble landowners with heavy overhead charges in the shape of great establishments' - men who in short 'owned their property instead of being owned by it'; it was the gentry who succeeded in finding the capitalist answer. And so the gentry rose; the aristocracy - and with it the Crown which had no chance of successfully modernising its estates - fell. Nobles in desperate plights give a tragic ring to Professor Tawney's pages - nobles in debt, nobles marrying city money; nobles angling 'with a kind of amateurish greed' for the pickings of the court.

Here, then, was a decisive shift in economic and hence social and political power. And its relation to the Great Rebellion? Simply this - that in the Great Rebellion the new gentry class demanded and got the political power that its wealth justified. The old feudal aristocracy was swept away; the weakened Crown left at the Restoration to face the new capitalist class.

This was the thesis presented by Professor Tawney in 1941 with a scholarship and wit which extracts cannot hope to adequately display. It was a brilliant restatement of the Rise of the Bourgeoisie theory and an immediately attractive one. Moreover it was backed by proof of two kinds. One was a stream of contemporary comment on the processes Tawney described - comment so persuasive that the enthusiastic Mr. Stone in 1948 was able to write that 'all the most acute and penetrating minds of the late 16th century and early 17th century were aware of the crucial importance of the social transformation that was taking place'. The second proof was provided by statistical evidence. Professor Tawney provides statistics for 2,547 manors in 6⅓ counties. A count shows that in 1560 noble families held 13% of the land: in 1640 they held only 6%. In 1560 the gentry owned ⅔rds: in 1640 4/5ths of the land. Another set of statistics show that in 1560 men who held ten or more of the manors concerned - large landowners - held as a group about ¼ of the land, and small landowners only 57%. By 1640 less than 1/6th belonged to large landowners as defined above: 64% belonged to small landowners. We see clearly, then, an advance of gentry against nobility, of small landowner against large. 'If these statistics will bear analysis', writes Hexter, 'we may write Q.E.D. under Professor Tawney's argument'.

And so for a long time most people did. Then in 1948 Mr. Lawrence Stone produced his article on the Elizabethan aristocracy. Mr Stone

was not critical of Tawney. Far from it. He accepted all Tawney's conclusions; made a few of them more explicit than they had been before; and attempted to add a contribution of his own. 'In the bringing about of this social transformation', he wrote, 'the decline of the aristocracy is perhaps equally as important as the rise of the gentry'. So he examined the economic status of the aristocracy and found even more conclusively than Tawney that they were in desperate financial plight.

Mr Stone's article produced an altogether unexpected result. His little, polished pebble, placed reverently on the cairn of the master brought the whole structure tumbling down. For his article provoked a devastating attack by Professor Trevor Roper. 'An erring colleague', Professor Tawney has since written, 'is not an Amalekite to be smitten hip and thigh'. This charitable view did not occur to Professor Trevor Roper. In what Hexter calls 'a magnificent if terrifying work of destruction' he annihilated Mr Stone's thesis. Mr. Stone was unlucky enough to have relied for many of his figures of noble indebtedness upon a set of merchant records which he had imperfectly understood with the result that he had doubled the amounts actually owed. He was thus relatively easy game for Professor Trevor-Roper. His appetite whetted, however, Trevor Roper began to aim at a more difficult kill. Mr Stone's article answering his attack was brushed aside in a footnote. 'My views', wrote Professor Trevor-Roper in footnote One of the first page of his pamphlet: The Gentry 1540-1640, 'are not modified by Mr Stone's rejoinder in which he anyway seldom quotes me correctly'. So much for the disciple: Professor Trevor Roper was after the master.

It was not surprising that Mr Stone's article should lead on to a re-examination of Tawney's thesis. Those assertions were a little too confident. Was it really true that all the most acute and penetrating minds of the 16th and 17th centuries had seen the truth which Tawney had re-discovered? Or was there not here a danger of a circular argument which awarded the laurels of penetration to those contemporaries acute enough to discern something like what Tawney discerned? Was it really true that the gentry were a class with social, economic and political interests altogether distinct from the nobility? Did the wealthy county gentleman really have more in common with the merchant than with the peer? One might take leave to doubt the validity of the division when one noticed how arbitrary was Professor Tawney's and Mr Stone's treatment of individual cases.

Thus Professor Tawney, as we have seen, counted Sir Thomas Tresham as one of the new capitalist farmers: Mr. Stone counts his sons as members of a decaying 'feudal' gentry. Professor Tawney exempts the Russells, earls of Bedford, from his stricture on conservative landlords, writing of their 'grandiose reconstruction of their estates': to Mr Stone the young earl of Bedford was a follower of Essex because he was a ruined peer: Mr Stone writes of the earl of Clare's grandfather who by excessive eating and drinking 'sent all his revenues down the privy house' as if this was a typically aristocratic excess - yet the earl of Clare's ancestor was plain Holles, a rising gentleman whose descendents were to become peers. If these illustrations were so unreliable and vitiated by the confusion between gentry and aristocracy might not Professor Tawney's statistics also be vitiated by similar built in confusions?

So Professor Trevor-Roper set himself to examine the assertions and statistics. He found that: 'the distinction between aristocracy and gentry as if they were separate social classes is an arbitrary distinction; and secondly, that even if such a distinction be allowed, the conclusion that 'the aristocracy' was being replaced by 'the gentry' in the manner suggested is not only unsupported by such evidence as has been adduced but is positively repugnant to it.'

The importance of Professor Trevor-Roper's denial of the division of gentry and nobility into two distinct classes is obviously very great.

It rests upon two assumptions. The first is more implicit than explicit in the essay The Gentry 1540-1640 but it is really the more fundamental of the two. It is the denial of the validity of the modern - and especially the Marxist - concept of class as an instrument of interpretation for the 16th and 17th centuries. The idea emerges from many of Trevor-Roper's other essays but I will quote here not from them but from a historian who has taken a generally individualist line in the controversy and adheres to neither camp, Miss C.V.Wedgwood. In her admirable pamphlet - The Common Man in the Great Civil War - Miss Wedgwood states clearly a view which has come to be accepted by most non Marxist historians: 'The use of modern terms', writes Miss Wedgwood, 'in describing the society of another epoch can be misleading. It is convenient to use the word 'class' and hard for anyone born in our century to do without it . . . But 'class' in our sense is a 19th century word and suggests a society stratified laterally as ours now is. There was, of course, some lateral stratification in the 17th century and there were social groups that can be described as 'classes' though they did not use the word themselves. The nobility, the larger gentry, the smaller gentry, merchants, yeomen and so on down to the landless labourer - such a stratification of society certainly existed. But the key word in the 17th century social pattern is not class but degree, which suggests not the lateral grouping of society we know, but a pyramidical society rising step by step from lowest to highest'.

Professor Trevor-Roper's second point is that if one is going to use the word 'class' in thelimited and convenient sense mentioned by Miss Wedgwood, it is much more 'convenient' to think of all landowners as a class rather than to stress the differences between large, middling and small landowners. 'Peers and gentry had, on their own different levels, the same problems, the same ambitions, the same tastes. Both were landlords, both had large families, both accepted the rule of primogeniture and the custom of entail; both had to find portions for daughters and younger sons - it was an aristocratic age and the gentry accepted - in general - the standards of value and conduct of the aristocracy'.

These two propositions - that the idea of class is not the key to 17th century politics or society: that in so far as class is a useful concept it should be applied to landowners as a whole to distinguish them from other groups such as merchants: obviously drastically reduce, if true, the significance of Professor Tawney's theory. I think myself that they are true but to demonstrate their truth would take much more time than we have available and I intend merely to say that to my mind the trend of modern research amply demonstrates their truth. But even if they are true Professor Tawney's thesis is not entirely demolished - there may have been, not the rise of one class at the expense of another, but a re-adjustment within a class. Stripped of its wider neo-Marxist implications the idea that the medium sized estate enjoyed economic advantage over the large estate might prove as valid and as useful as Professor Habbakuk's demonstration that after 1660 the large estate owner increased his prosperity to a greater extent than the smaller estate owner. There are still Tawney's statistics; still his citation of contemporary observation.

Trevor-Roper examines both. The contemporary quotation he deals with by balancing it with contemporary quotation on a reverse phenomena - the difficulties and decline of gentry families. As for the statistics they come in for devastating criticism. I am going to anticipate here and quote, not from Trevor-Roper's pamphlet, but from Hexter's article. After the appearance of Trevor-Roper's article other historians examined the statistics and found additional faults which Hexter summarises together with those pointed out by Trevor-Roper. You will remember that Tawney's statistics seem to show an increase in the amount of land held by owners of less than four manors. But as Hexter says, 'a very considerable number of gentlemen with no more than four manors in the six and a third sample counties, owned manors in the other thirty-three and a third counties of England, in Wales and in Ireland. Some of them far from being small landowners were very large

landowners indeed. And of course any assertion about the total number of manors held by small landowners becomes meaningless when we actually have no notion how many of the landowners so classified were really small'. On the other hand the statistics showed a loss of land held by large landowners. Here, as Hexter points out, Professor Tawney included all the land lost by the king. 'In his six and a third county sample the Crown holding of nearly 250 manors in 1561 dwindled to about 50 manors in 1640. This whole loss Professor Tawney appears to have debited to the holders of ten or more manors'. Now no-one disputes the heavy losses of the Crown - it is the losses of the large landowner that are in controversy - and when the Crown losses are removed from the table the loss 'of the large holders drops from the 33 per cent that led Professor Tawney to consign them to bankruptcy, to ½ of 1 per cent - hardly a presage of impending economic catastrophe'. So much for one set of Tawney's statistics. What about the others - those which show an advance of gentry against nobility; statistics which cannot have been distorted in the same way by the inclusion of Crown lands? These, too, are dubious for a variety of reasons. 'For his computations', writes Hexter, 'Professor Tawney classifies as noble only men who held peerages in 1560 and the inheritors of those peerages'. But by 1640 one third of those peerages were extinct due to 'normal demographic attrition'. Moreover in other cases the title itself had descended to a more remote relative in the absence of a son but much of the land had descended through the peer's daughters. As Hexter says these fates befell many gentry families - 'dying without a son to inherit the family estate and making provision for daughters and younger sons out of such an estate are not among the special privileges of the peerage . . . but such losses scarcely ever show in Tawney's statistics as a loss to the gentry. They cannot show because anyone but the inheritor of a peerage of 1560 who acquires the lost manors of the gentry is classified merely by virtue of his acquisition as gentry'. As Professor Trevor-Roper writes, Professor Tawney's aristocracy 'consists of a diminishing group of those families who happened to be noble at the beginning and still noble at the end of the period, while his gentry consists both of the gentry who remained gentry throughout the period and of those men who began as gentry and ended as peers, and of those who began as merchants, yeomen or anything else and ended as gentry. No wonder the gentry, thus calculated, appears to rise at the expense of the peerage'.

Hexter gives the biography - hypothetical but eminently possible - of a grandson of a peer of 1560 to illustrate the deficiencies of Tawney's statistics. 'In this case our subject is a younger son and his father generously settles five manors on him. Then the king ennobles him; he is now a peer. He marries the rich sole survivor of another noble family of 1560, who brings him 25 manors held in 1560 by the head of her family. In Professor Tawney's statistics all the thirty manors our man now holds will appear as a debit against the nobility, a credit to the gentry. Then gradually our man buys up twenty manors of needy squires. In Professor Tawney's statistics - where our man is classified as gentry - these purchases do not register at all since they are transfers within the gentry. So in 1640 this descendent of a noble family of 1560, himself a noble, holds fifty manors, twenty of which he bought from poor gentlemen: and Professor Tawney's table will score the effect of such a career as follows: noble losses - 30 manors, gentry losses - 0 manors; noble gains - 0 manors; gentry gains - 30 manors'.

I have given the various criticisms of Tawney's statistics at length for three reasons - first because they show how difficult it is to distinguish between 'classes' in Tawney's ways: secondly because they show how unreliable most statistical tables built on modern assumptions are for the 16th or 17th century; and third because they must give rise to the depressing conclusion that there must be something wrong with a historical world which has accepted Tawney's statistics happily for a decade although once the voice of irreverence is raised it can be clearly seen that the emperor has no clothes. These three

reflections are worth bearing in mind when one talks of 'scientific history' or demands from a historian the sort of proof that even a social scientist is expected to provide.

So Professor Trevor-Roper demolished Tawney's case. There was no rise of a gentry class against a noble class. There was no rise of the middling land-holder against the great. But there were - within the landowning class as a whole - families reacting in different ways to the rural crisis which Trevor-Roper postulates equally with Tawney. Some of these families - at all levels - succeeded; some failed; some remained where they were. But Trevor-Roper was not content with this revision. He added two new suggestions. One was the suggestion that the families who 'rose' - that is increased in strength and wealth - whether gentry or noble, rose not because of more skilful land management. At best land management could only give stability. 'The improving gentry survived', writes Trevor-Roper, 'weathered the economic storm . . . they were the solid substance of rural society, its soundest members and, because sound, generally unobtrusive'. To rise a family needed to add to land management - indeed a family could rise without land management if it could get 'offices in the household, the army, and - particularly - the law'. The secret of success was 'a risky gamble at court. Those who won that gamble - court lawyers, court officials, court peers and royal favourites', runs Hexter's summary of Trevor-Roper's thesis, 'comprised the rising class in the century before the Great Rebellion'. Here indeed the wheel has turned full circle for these 'rising gentry' of Trevor Roper are identical with the anachronistic 'feudal' survivals of Christopher Hill, survivals who were swept away by the 'progressive gentry' among others in the Great Rebellion.

Trevor-Roper's second addition seeks to replace this theory of the Great Rebellion with another. The true revolutionaries, he says, were not the victors in the gamble but some of the losers. The peers were in a better position generally to achieve court favour and those who did not could live off their great estates even if they had not achieved stability by modernising. But the smaller gentry who could neither modernise nor get court patronage - their fate was desperate indeed. These declining gentry - radical in politics, Puritan or Catholic in religion - were, says Trevor-Roper, the main-spring of the various 'plots' against the Tudor and Stuart monarchy. They were also the revolutionary, radical force in the Great Rebellion. Professor Tawney's thesis, writes Trevor-Roper, 'seems to me quite inadequate when we come to examine the actual course of the Rebellion. For quite apart from the fact that the English peerage, on the eve of the Rebellion was at least as rich as at any time in the preceding century this explanation entirely leaves out of account the men, who, more than any other, made the Great Rebellion - the men whose radicalism converted it from a series of political manoevres into civil war and social revolution: the Independents . . . why, if revolution was simply the least expensive form of foreclosure, were the great creditors - lawyers and City merchants - generally found on the same side (for if not royalists they were generally 'presbytarian') as the peers, whom according to Professor Tawney they were strangling? To imagine the Great Rebellion without the Independents seems to me an absurd speculation; but who were the Independents? They were not 'rising' gentry; they were not a creditor class; nor were they a sudden phenomenon of the 1640s. An examination of their claims, which were loud, and of their previous history, which is long, seems to me to show that the Independents, the men whose spectacular actions have given a revolutionary quality to a whole century, represent a class which Professor Tawney in his interpretation of that period has somehow overlooked, or at least dismissed as insignificant temporary exceptions: the declining gentry'. So Trevor-Roper - who continues in his pamphlet to examine the claims and previous history of his declining gentry group - replaces one economic interpretation of the revolutionary character of the G.R. with another. Instead of the revolution being the hastened climax of inevitable historical developments it becomes

the last, nihilistic, throw of men doomed to failure, by definition negative because merely directed at the destruction of the hated successful - the court, the peers, the lawyers, the monopolising city. Thus Trevor Roper.

Now before we go any further I would like to make a number of clarifying points about Trevor-Roper's thesis. First it is obviously possible to accept the destructive part without accepting the constructive - it is not a question of accepting Tawney or Trevor-Roper. It is quite possible to accept Trevor-Roper's picture of a situation in which some members of each strata ofthe landowning class prosper and some fail without accepting his thesis that prosperity was essentially related to the court rather than to land management. So proof - if it is forthcoming - that some rising families did depend on improved land revenue will not reinstate Tawney's thesis. It is also possible to accept Trevor-Roper's picture of the successful depending on court patronage and not to accept his identification of the Independents with the unsuccessful or his thesis that they caused the Revolution. A demonstration that the Independents were not all gentry of any kind would not demolish the greater part of Trevor-Roper's picture - it would certainly not reinstate Tawney. The second point I would like to make is that Trevor-Roper is giving an idiosyncratic meaning to the old question 'Who caused the Great Rebellion' or 'What was the Great Rebellion about'. Most answers to the question begin by examining the parliamentary opposition to Charles I, or the split in the parliamentary opposition which made war possible. Trevor-Roper dismisses all this as unimportant and counts most of the opponents of these early stages as on the same side once the revolution had begun. You may feel that this is an indefensible position to hold but clearly the discovery that parliament, say, was not composed of declining gentry is of no relevance at all to Trevor-Roper's theory.

So much for the contestants. What, finally, of the future of the controversy? Mr Hexter refers mockingly to the 'appropriate professional reaction to the storm: "On the one hand, this; on the other hand, that. It is premature to arrive at any conclusion. What we need is 37 monographs, fifteen more years of investigation, a research institute and a two million dollar grant from the foundations". There are some signs that the pamphlet controversy is turning into a book controversy and even, horror of horrors, into a research thesis controversy. A book has already been written on the Independents to show that Trevor-Roper is wrong about their social origin: several theses are in preparation about the management of this, that or the other group of estates: Trevor-Roper himself is busy preparing the solid tomes appropriate to his recently acquired professorial status. Mr Hill, who has, it is only fair to say, progressed a long way from the exuberances of that youthful essay and is now one of the best historians of the 17th century, has suggested a list of tasks for historians to complete in order to resolve the 'enigma' of the Great Rebellion. Among the tasks suggested are: a more serious study of the political effects of the 'industrial revolution' of 1540 to 1640: more work on politics in the towns: a closer look at colonial and imperial politics: an analysis of the economic situation of the yeomanry: an examination of the attitude of the 'people': a detailed study of the gentry based on the recognition that ' we still do not know enough about' them: a study of ideas especially at the point where they interact with economics and, finally, the discovery of 'a better explanation of the importance for contemporaries' of religious feeling than is yet available.

Tasks formidable and lengthy enough in all conscience! It looks as if the controversy will stretch on to the crack of doom. And yet there are senses in which it can be held to be already ended. So Hexter, who confesses himself an unblushing Whig, maintains that it will become obvious that both Tawney and Trevor-Roper have failed to explain the Great Rebellion entirely in economic terms and men will turn to the problems of religion and liberty once again. Certainly there are signs of this - and even Mr Hill's latest essay

shows how far we are from 1940. Criticising Trevor-Roper he writes: 'For over a century before 1640 men all over Europe had been suffering, dying and killing for what they held to be high ideals: from the 1620s a great war was being waged on the Continent over ideological issues which aroused the intensest excitement in England and created a profound cleavage of opinion about foreign policy. Professor Trevor-Roper asks us to see in all this only a reflection of the financial difficulties of a section of the English gentry. The spiritual wrestlings of a Milton, a Vane, a Roger Williams, are nothing but the epiphenomena of economic decline'. This is not far in language or spirit from Hexter's sharp comment that Trevor-Roper reduces 'that fairly magnificent upheaval, the Puritan Revolution, to the dimensions of a foolish farce that could conceivably have been brought off by the lowgrade louts and sharpers who people his stage. In the squalid setting of this farce there is not room enough for William Chillingworth or Richard Baxter, for Edward Coke or Francis Bacon, for . . . John Hampden, or John Pym, or John Milton'. The Marxist and the Whig unite to say: 'Economics are not enough'.

But before we dismiss the economic interpretation let us record its services.

For Professor Tawney, Hexter says, 'the motor of history is the great impersonal secular movements of economic change . . . the pattern of history is economically determined'. This has produced too rigid, too doctrinaire an interpretation, forcing past events into present intellectual moulds. But it has also shown up the inadequacies of the traditional Whig interpretation by stressing areas of evidence which do not fit in with it. No-one will be able to 'decline upon the cliche' of the Whig interpretation again and even if men turn away from the rival economic interpretations they will have to construct a new model for themselves. And that is an admirable thing.

Professor Trevor-Roper's services are, in my opinion, the great ones of having suggested the social and economic framework for the new model. His 'economic determinism' is of a different kind. It is not the pattern of history but the motives of individuals and still more of groups which are economically determined. 'The rising court gentry act the way they do', writes Hexter, 'because they have got their snouts into the rich swill box of court favour and intend to keep them there. The declining country gentry join conspiracies, become Puritans, and disport themselves in other unseemly and disruptive ways because they cannot muscle their way to the trough. The great crisis of the 17th century is the consequence of a certain lack of empathy between the little piggies who went to court and had roast beef and the little piggies that stayed home and had none'. However inadequate this simple economic determinism is as a measure of human behaviour it has at least great advantages over Tawney's more dignified variety. For it looks at the 17th century scene with uncommitted eyes: it asks what economic goods men aspired to <u>then</u> rather than what their place was in the march of history towards the proletarian society. In so far as the economic and social structure of society is concerned Professor Trevor-Roper is a great re-discoverer of contemporary realities - this is where he fits in with the prevalent philosophy of the Namier school in English historiography. He has rediscovered the court and its central importance in English society: he has rediscovered the whole apparatus of patronage and clientage which my quotation from Miss Wedgwood hinted at - not of course single handed, for Professor Neale and many others have been at work laying bare the same structure. As a result we are nearer than ever before to understanding the bread and butter politics of the 17th century and although as Hexter so eloquently pleads bread and butter politics are not everything they are a great deal. For my part, as I have suggested above, I believe that one does not have to accept the whole Trevor-Roper thesis in order to profit from his work. I think that his declining gentry are a significant element of the situation - but not so significant as he, with surely some delight in perverse paradox, makes out. To my mind the declining gentry, the stable rural gentry, the court gentry, all have their part to

play - but it is an immense gain to have rid ourselves of the necessity of having to see them as a class in the Marxist sense. As Tawney now admits there is great variety among the gentry: as Hill now urges scholars should set themselves to study how the gentry vary rather than how they approximate to a class. But with all this variety one must hold firmly to the new axioms - that the landowning class as a whole shared common problems and assumptions, and that the society of 17th century England was held together not by the cohesions of class but by the complex strands of the patronage system. Anyone who now wishes to construct a new model must do so bearing in mind as the essential social and economic background the prevailing atmosphere of the patronage system with its ethic and operation so different from that of our own society. To my mind then the controversy has been far from sterile. It has not only resulted in the destruction of Tawney's thesis - 'Even though', writes Hexter approvingly of Professor Trevor- Roper's work, 'even though it leaves doubts about the right road to London it helps if someone rips up, however violently, a 'To London' sign on the Dover cliffs pointing South'. It seems to me that in addition new signposts have been erected which will guide those who follow them to a new, richer, and more convincing interpretation of the society which produced the Great Rebellion, than any we have achieved before.

CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY
31st August - 3rd September 1959.

Lecture given by Mr. Richard Brown of the Department of History.

CAVOUR, BISMARCK AND THE MAKING OF THE NATION STATE

I have chosen this major topic of nineteenth century European history with some misgivings. It is a subject of which I have no direct research knowledge, but I know that many of you teach this subject in the upper school forms and this has encouraged me in my choice. At the same time it has increased my sense of misgiving for I have a healthy respect for the mastery of detail which is the reward of teaching history in schools.

In the history of Europe in the nineteenth century the abrupt formation of Germany and Italy as nation states were events of fundamental importance. Although Italy just failed to achieve her aim of becoming a Great Power, the period from 1871 - 1945 can legitimately be regarded as the German age in European history. The battles of Sadowa and Sedan marked the close of the long period of French ascendancy in Europe.

The making of these two nation states exerted a fascination on the peoples of Europe at the time and subsequently through the writings of historians. Croce writes of the unification of Italy as "the masterpiece of the European liberal spirit" and of the rebirth of Germany as "the masterpiece of political art in union with the military virtues". In the two countries concerned these "masterpieces" have long been matters of intense national pride and have operated as national myths of major political importance. Following the collapse of the fascist regimes German and Italian historians are keenly rescrutinising the steps by which their two countries became unified. Outside Italy and Germany there is also renewed interest and, as Europe slides into the background of world affairs, a greater air of reality is being injected into the discussion.

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There are many ways in which this subject may be discussed, but, with my eye on the needs of the classroom, my main concern is with Cavour and Bismarck in particular rather than with European nationalism in general.

There is, however, one characteristic of most interpretations which needs to be mentioned. They have been subject in their explanations to an unresolved contradiction. At one and the same time it is suggested that Italy and Germany were created single handed by the incredible mastery of political events achieved by Cavour and Bismarck and also that Italy and Germany were the inevitable outcome of the irresistible power of nationalism. Obviously, you cannot have Carlylian heroes manipulating the course of history if determinist impersonal forces are also offered in the explanation. The conflict arises from the vague language and concepts which historians use about causes. In my view, the impersonal forces such as nationalism are not determinist ones. They are rather the background conditions and tendencies which make a given outcome likely or even probable, but it is human beings individually exercising free will and the chance relationship of human actions which explain the exact nature and time and place of historical events. The human being works in the context of the conditions and tendencies of his time, but he is not their complete prisoner. Nor can he escape them altogether. Bismarck and Cavour were not Carlylian supermen anymore than they were the helpless pawns in the hands of the great impersonal forces such as nationalism and industrialism. Both men were more than ordinarily capable, but no man

is omnipotent while he remains unaware of all the consequences of his actions.

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"1848" was the great divide in nineteenth century European history. The 1848 revolutions were made on the basis of an unlimited faith in ideas; they were peculiarly, as Sir Lewis Namier has brilliantly shown, "the revolutions of the intellectuals". Ideas alone were to create a new Europe. The easy victories of 1848, when thrones toppled and ministers went into exile from moral pressure alone, were illusory. The subsequent reverses discredited ideas and in their place substituted force as the prime concept of change. Nationalism, which in the first half of the century had been associated with the pure regenerative idealism of Mazzini and the 'Young Nations' movements and with the notion that it would lead automatically to the harmony of nations, came in the second half of the century to be associated with the prevailing ideas of biology, that is with evolution and the competitive struggle for existence. Nations and states came to be regarded as corporate personalities - personalities with interests, desires and rights of their own. Evolution - the march of history - was the outcome of the struggle for existence between these super-organisms. Even Walter Bagehot caught the prevailing atmosphere and wrote, though with some doubts, "Those nations which are strongest tend to prevail, and in certain marked peculiarities are the best."

The nation-state was itself an expression of European forces. In 1855 De Tocqueville remarked, "the European monarchs all endeavour, within their own dominions, to destroy immunities and abolish privileges. They confound ranks, they equalise classes, they supersede the aristocracy by public functionaries, local franchises by uniform enactments, and diversities of authority by the unity of a central Government". The bureaucratic, centralised state was a response to the socio-economic facts of industrialism. It was also a preparation for the struggle for existence. The symbol of the nineteenth century in Europe was the railway, the basis for industrialism and the consequent traffic in raw materials and finished goods. But the railways also transported the citizen armies of the centralised state. Gone was the apathy of the masses as they herded in towns, gone the supremacy of the landowners, going was the dynastic principle to be replaced by the principle of nationality - what Bismarck called the great sort out of the European tribes. More and more the state came to be run as a limited liability company. Instead of as the private concern of the ruler. The [illegible] still shared [illegible] without rights, but they became [illegible] force in the forty years after 1870 as with a few exceptions [illegible] full or virtually universal suffrage. The state as a joint business enterprise took on the [illegible] of the world of business, its knowledge, efficiency and power. This was the atmosphere in which Cavour and Bismarck worked. Their 'realpolitik' as a philosophy of political action was the complement of these other tendencies in European life.

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The traditional picture of Cavour and Bismarck is of two super-men who came to power with fixed plans for the unification of their countries. Each move on the diplomatic chessboard, each response within the country has been foreseen, weighed and planned for. A.J.Whyte, the author of three books on Cavour, states, "The man to whom the destinies of his country were now entrusted came to his task not only with a clear idea of what was to be done, but with a definite aim as to the steps to be taken to achieve it. Cavour's ultimate aim was the deliverance of Italy from Austria and the formation of an Italian kingdom".

The main purpose of this paper is to examine how far this traditional picture is still valid. I hope to show that in fact the control Cavour and Bismarck had over events was a good deal less sure than is

generally supposed and that the steps by which Italy and Germany became united were as much the result of miscalculation and fortuitous happenings as of conscious planning. Both Bismarck and Cavour derived much of their strength as statesmen from their flexibility, because they were not tied down in advance by rigid programmes, least of all by programmes which foresaw the nation states of 1870 and 1871. In fact, we should note at once that Bismarck's Germany was a divided Germany, for it stretched only to the river Inn and excluded the Austrian Germans.

It is not difficult to see how the legend arose that these two supermen were the sole arbiters of their countries histories. In the years after 1870 the two unifications appeared as glorious triumphs of human wills over the conditions. The underlying conditions which made some form of unification probable were ignored. The first histories, as was natural, were written in the two countries concerned and were glorifications of recently achieved nationhood. In Bismarck's case these early accounts were much under the influence of Bismarck's own Memoirs written while he was in retirement. They have been called "the most misleading work of autobiography ever written". They were dictated at random and without consulting the documents and even Bismarck's hero-worshipping assistant was shocked at his disregard for the facts. Old men in retirement are even more prone to egoism than are younger ones in power. In his Memoirs Bismarck claimed conscious plans skilfully implemented, but his day to day remarks show him to have been much shrewder and more sceptical about controlling events: he said, "Events are stronger than the plans of men", and on another occasion, "Man cannot create the current of events. He can only float with it and steer".

One of Cavour's favourite sayings was "history is wont to improvise" but unlike Bismarck he left behind no retrospective rationalisation of his career. Instead it was done for him. State paid archivists infatuated with the Risorgimento myth, edited his papers by leaving parts of the documents out, rewriting parts and even adding completely spurious matter. Some sentences were turned inside out to mean exactly the opposite of how they were originally written. Mussolini considered himself the culmination of the Risorgimento and appointed a close friend to the ominous sounding post of Director-General of Historical Research. Only since 1945 has it been possible to get free access to the papers which contain the real story of Italian unity.

The First World War caused one great shift. Outside Germany Bismarck began to be regarded as the arch-devil. The previous argument was stood on its head, Bismarck was still super-human but for a false cause. Within Germany, there were those who continued to hero-worship Bismarck in the old way and blamed the German leaders after 1890 for the debacle of 1918. Others actually strengthened the myth and reemphasised Bismarck's role. They regarded the Great War as the result of the encirclement of Germany by hostile powers. By backdating this supposed hostility to 1848, they found Bismarck's achievement an even greater super-human act of will, since he had overcome by his diplomatic skill the hostility which had prevented German unity in 1848 and later conspired against its reality in 1914. (This view has been examined in an important recent book "The European Powers and the German Question" by W.E.Mosse, in which he also reacts against the cult of personality and shows that Bismarck was in fact operating in an extremely favourable diplomatic situation created by events unconnected with the German question and involving the policies pursued by the other European powers.)

Cavour, his documents safe in the hands of the State, and Italy, in any case, on the winning side in 1918, was not given fresh historical treatment: "United Italy" was still seen as "the liberal masterpiece" of which Croce wrote. Even when the nationality problems of east and central Europe were at their most acute and caused a closer analysis of European nationalism, little new work was done on Italy.

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Cavour was the younger son of a minor Piedmontese aristocratic family and therefore had to make his own career. He was first a soldier and then became a progressive and successful agriculturalist and a financier. He sent for agricultural information from Northern Europe, conducted experiments, published his results, and generally helped to bring Turin up to date (for Turin had formerly lagged behind Milan and even Naples). His scientific bent was quite new in conservative, monarchical and clerical Turin.

Cavour was also an intellectual. An important practical disciple of the English Benthamites and the classical economists like Nassau Senior and Adam Smith. He had a doctrinal faith in free trade and, as is well known, was a great believer in the English parliamentary system, though, as is less well known, his practice of it in Piedmont was full of flaws (as I shall describe).

Another characteristic not usually stressed is that in many ways he was un-Italian. He was in fact French speaking and his articles had to be translated into Italian. All in all, he was admirably suited to perform the task of bringing the North European advances in economics, politics, and society, and planting them in Italy.

Cavour's character was singular in its balance and good sense. He was admired throughout Europe by those - like Gladstone and Palmerston - with whom he came in contact. His amiability, his tact, his patience, and his obstinacy made him a superb master of the diplomatic art. Yet he was ruthless too, and it is this ruthlessness together with his likeableness which are unusual: Sir Robert Peel and Machiavelli inhabited the same body.

His views on politics are important, for in the nationalist myth certain aspects are glossed over. For all his protestations, Cavour had few principles. He was an opportunist, looking for the "juste Millieu", the empirical, the possible. For Cavour the ends justified the means: "The thing most to be shunned in politics' he said" is to be taxed with Utopianism."

Cavour's aims, so far as he had any, were two-fold. To increase the power of Piedmont in Northern Italy and to "empecher le debordement de l'esprit revolutionairre" (prevent the upsurge of the revolutionary spirit). It is the second aim which tends to be ignored in the traditional account, for it concerns particularly Cavour's relationship with Mazzini. Italians like to think that their roles were complementary - Cavour the brains, Mazzini the heart. In reality they were not complementary but contradictory. Cavour hated Mazzini and what he stood for. He once sentenced Mazzini to death and disliked him more than he disliked Austria. In 1853 Cavour warned the Austrians of a Mazzinian revolt. On another occasion he borrowed French police in an attempt to capture the elusive revolutionary. In a document never published he wrote to a close personal friend that he was prepared for Civil War with the Mazzinians if public opinion became favourable. Mazzini did not respond to Cavour's propaganda against him and was prepared to compromise his views to work with Piedmont, but Cavour was not prepared to do the same.

The differences in outlook between them were considerable. Cavour believed in diplomacy, Mazzini in insurrection. Cavour had no faith or interest in the people; Mazzini passionately believed that unless the people benefited nothing was worthwhile. Cavour's motivations were materialist, Mazzini's spiritural. Cavour believed in gradualness, Mazzini in immediate action. Cavour believed in limited monarchy, Mazzini in republicanism.

Cavour came into power through a squalid intrique against D'Azeglio. His best work was undoubtedly his contribution to making Piedmont a strong and resonably enlightened state. The dissolution of a group of monasteries led to the enrichment of a reliable class; exiles were welcomed in Turin, which captured the intellectual leader

ship from Florence; the armed forces were built up; economic and financial reforms and the mortgaging of her finances created a minor industrial revolution, led to the importation of foreign capital, and therefore to greater foreign concern for Piedmontese affairs. These reforms were not a conscious preparation for Italian unification which Cavour, in 1856, regarded as "a lot of silly nonsense."

In Piedmontese politics his curious mixture of liberalsim and ruthlessness of Peel and Machiavelli are well revealed. In spite of his passionate belief in the freedom of speech, he suppressed opposition newspaper. In theory he believed in freedom from arbitrary imprisonment, in practice he did not hesitate to arbitrarily imprison people and to keep it quiet. He had a special fund (secret) for bribing newspapers and even privately boasted of having bribed "The Times" In elections local officials were given express orders to prevent the election of certain candidates. Cavour's treatment of Parliament was often extremely shabby - he would get parliamentary approval only after action had already been taken. And although in theory he believed in a system of parliamentary opposition, Cavour in fact helped to destroy opposition parties. Members were ejected from Parliament on fallacious grounds and when out of office Cavour showed his distaste for opposition by refusing to organise it. Instead he would hide away in Switzerland conducting long range political intrigues. In Parliament he favoured the so-called "connubio" system of raising and maintaining a majority. The "connubio" was a marriage of moderate right and left in a centre grouping. As a result important problems get shelved because if they were discussed the government would split. The "connubio" system (or "transformism" as it was later known) helped to ruin Italian politics after unification and prevent Italy becoming a truly democratic state. At the time the "connubio" system helped Cavour to ignore the existence of his Cabinet. He was in fact the first of Italy's long line of parliamentary dictators.

Now I want to examine more closely Cavour's policy as it bore on the making of Italy, from which it becomes clear that Cavour's real aim was the territorial expansion of Piedmont and he only really became involved in the movement for national unification during the crisis of 1860. It also becomes clear that A.J. Whyte's claim that Cavour knew "the steps that had to be taken to achieve" United Italy is nonsense.

To start with - the famous entry of Piedmont into the Crimean War in 1854. The theory that this was a brilliant coup of Cavour's to gain recognition for Piedmont at a subsequent peace treaty is exploded. In the first place entry meant the possibility of siding with Austria - the barrier to Piedmontese expansion - and risking precious resources that Cavour and others wanted kept in readiness for an attack on Austria. Secondly, it was Britain and France who suggested Piedmont should enter the war because they wanted mercenaries. Thirdly, it was not Cavour but Victor Emmanuel who accepted the invitation. Victor Emmanuel did so because he hoped to upset Cavour's government, because he had the mentality of the barrack room and enjoyed war in which he could be supreme; and finally because he hoped it would switch attention from Lombardy. It is now known that the relations between Cavour and the King were at all times far from cordial and Cavour only came out in favour of the war as a means of avoiding dismissal and in spite of the opposition of all the Cabinet.

The Congress of Paris in 1856 has also been mythologised. Cavour is supposed to have gone full of plans and eager to show Piedmont's new status and power. In fact he went to Paris reluctantly and fearful of humiliation. Nor were Italian affairs at all in prominence during the Congress discussions: Italy received one small mention. Nevertheless, when Cavour actually arrived, he did see how hostility to Austria could be played upon (Austria had followed a disastrous policy during the Crimean War and had succeeded in annoying both sides).

Cavour was eventually coerced into a kind of nationalism by public opinion and by his own realisation that it offered an opportunity for Piedmont to seize the initiative in Italian affairs from Mazzini and the revolutionaries. It was only after this realisation that Cavour set his mind upon a war policy against Austria, convinced himself that outside help was necessary and began to take advantage of Piedmont's position as a buffer state between France and Austria which assured her survival whatever the outcome.

Cavour was now prepared to do anything for France to gain his war. He was even prepared to allow Napoleon III the whole of Southern Italy, provided he would allow Piedmont the North.

Napoleon III had his own reasons for supporting Piedmont and often took the initiative in his relations with Cavour. Napoleon sought marriage alliances to make his position secure, and Savoy was the oldest ruling house in Europe. Napoleon also saw a chance to gain Savoy and Nice and he also wanted support against Italian revolutionaries after the Orsini plot on his life.

The famous meeting at Plombieres between Cavour and Napoleon in 1858 was suggested by Napoleon. At Plombieres it was agreed to try and gain a war against Austria the following spring. Nice and Savoy would be France's reward, Lombardy and Venetia Piedmont's. Now although the war was to set in train the events which led to a United Italy, they were not the events or results that Napoleon and Cavour had foreseen at Plombieres.

After a tantalising wait Austria was provoked into declaring war. Expensive victories at Solferino and Magenta evaporated Napoleon's enthusiasm. He gave up the chance of Nice and Savoy and made the armistice of Villafranca behind Cavour's back. Lombardy was gained but only as a gift through the hands of Napoleon.

The King saw in the armistice a chance to rid himself of Cavour (in a private manuscript Victor Emmanuel had denounced Cavour as a traitor for the agreement at Plombieres). When the King accepted the armistice, Cavour resigned and buried himself in Switzerland.

Unforseen and unforseeable was the position in the Central Duchies and it was here that "events were stronger than the plans of men". In fact the events in the Duchies were really the crux to Italian unification. Unexpectedly, and for the first time, national feeling really was really significant in Italy's development as a nation state. After the outbreak of war with Austria, revolutions occurred in the Central Duchies. They contributed little to the war effort. Then came Villafranca with the possibility of a Confederation in Italy of which Austria would have been a member. This left the revolutionaries in the lurch, 1849 would be repeated. Nationalism became a real matter of survival. Absorption by Piedmont had not been regarded as desirable, but after Villafranca, the Central Duchies under Ricasoli and Farina declared for Piedmont as the only way of conserving their gains. The Central Duchies position was purely fortuitous. The revolutions had succeeded in the first place because Britain had proclaimed the doctrine of non-intervention by outside powers in order to keep France out of Italy.

It was after the declarations by the Central Duchies in favour of Union with Piedmont that Cavour began to reassert some control. After Villafranca event had pushed far ahead of him. He had planned for Piedmontese expansion in Lombardy and Venetia and now Central Italy was knocking at her door. He returned from Switzerland, played on nationalism within Piedmont, and by January 1960 was once again Prime Minister. In a secret treaty with France which was highly unconstitutional, he agreed to sacrifice Nice and Savoy in return for French support with the other European powers. Cavour had promised Lord John Russell (the English P.M.) not to do this. All

Cavour's ruthlessness was displayed and Cavour likened himself to Strafford. Garibaldi was furious at his birthplace being sacrificed to France and it was Garibaldi who now took events out of Cavour's hands once more with his invasion of Sicily.

Cavour definitely did not approve when Garibaldi in April 1860 decided to make something of the Palermo insurrection with or without Cavour's blessing. Cavour is supposed to have supported Garibaldi so far as diplomatic prudence would allow. In fact Cavour thoroughly disliked the move and refused him money and arms. Cavour was unable to prevent the expedition because of Garibaldi's popularity; because the King was in favour and would like to rid himself of Cavour if he lost his hold on public opinion; and finally because elections were near in which Cavour had to get support for his French treaty and the cession of Nice and Savoy. Cavour's support was limited to a delayed telegram: he wanted the best of borth worlds. If Garibaldi failed it was good riddance to him; if he succeeded, Cavour needed the excuse to interfere.

Meanwhile Garidbaldi was achieving his astonishing successes in Sicily which have been immortalised in Trevelyan's splendid prose. Unfortunately Trevelyan interpreted the situation solely in terms of the heroism of The Thousand. A proper understanding of the whole situation has become possible with Mack Smith's 450 page book devoted to the relations between Cavour, Garibaldi, and Southern Italy April - December 1860. Garibaldi's success was due to the presence of social revolution in Sicily. His success led on to the annexation of the Kingdom of the Two Socilies to Piedmont, but it is of crucial significance to understand that the situation in Southern Italy had little to do with nationalist enthusiasm. For middle class Sicilians it was part of their age old provincialism against being ruled from Naples. At the same time there was a desperate peasant revolt against the existing social and economic system. Garibaldi was welcomed as a deliverer by the peasantry and it was this fact (of which Garibaldi had an instinctive appreciation) which enabled, what in any other conditions was merely a foolhardy enterprise, to have its brilliant successes.

Cavour's attitude was one of continuing dislike. As soon as, but not before, the fall of Palermo, Cavour sent a second expedition whose job was to take over the rule of Sicily, lessen Garibaldi's power, rule in the interests of the Sicilian conservatives and propagandise for Piedmontese annexation. He opposed Garibaldi's advance on Naples, but again had to follow it up because of Garibaldi's success. At all costs Garibaldi had to be prevented from a march on Rome, which would almost certainly bring Piedmont's expansionist monarchical structure falling to the ground, whatever other form of Italian unification rose to take its place. Cavour was even toying with starting a diversionary war with Austria, rather than allowing Garibaldi to succeed. Eventually he was forced to act. He invaded the Papal States in order to prevent Garibaldi getting any further and talked of hunting Garibaldi into the sea.

The situation was only redeemed by Garibaldi's loyalty to Victor Emmanual, to whom he surrendered his victories. Naples and Sicily were then annexed to Piedmont by means of plebiscites - 'annexed' because the plebiscites were in fact an exploitation of democracy. They involved only a simple choice between Victor Emmanuel or the Neapolitan Bourbons (other features such as the open ballot and the casting of more votes than there were electors were less important). The plebiscites gave the false allusion that Piedmont was really welcome in the South. The sequel is usually glossed over. Within Piedmont nothing was known about conditions in the South. Farina, Cavour's agent there, told Cavour that there were only 100 unitarians (i.e. supporters of United Italy) among the 7,000,000 populace. Cavour replied that unity must be imposed, and by November 1861 half the Italian army was suppressing a rebellion in the South,

where a national spirit and knowledge even of the existence of Victor Emmanuel and Cavour were almost non existent. The only feelings were middle class opposition to the Bourbons and the pro-Garibaldi enthusiasm of the peasants. More Italians were killed in the civil war that followed unification than in all the previous wars, insurrections and executions of the Risorgimento.

My account of Cavour's role in the unification has been hasty and episodic, but I hope it has shown the sort of picture of him that is emerging now that his papers can be properly studied. The jungle of nationalist myth is being hacked away. Far from being "The master-piece of the liberal spirit", Italian unification was part the product of chance and part of Piedmontese ruthlessness. It is far closer to the unification of Germany than Croce would allow. The only real difference is that Prussia did it alone.

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Just about the time these stirring events were tumbling one after another in Italy, a purely domestic crisis brought Bismarck to power in Prussia. He was now 47. Like Cavour, Bismarck was the younger son of a minor aristocratic family. His father was a member of the Junker class of Prussian landowners, but his mother, from whom he inherited his intelligence, was not. For a short time he was a Prussian civil servant, but then resigned in disgust. He next spent eight languishing years working the family estates. Unlike Cavour, Bismarck had no interest whatsoever in agricultural improvement or in any of the new doctrines in economics or science, or, indeed, in any of the normal arts of cultured life: He had few friends and when in power "had no colleagues, only subordinates". There are two features of Bismarck's background that ought to be stressed. He was a North German and a Protestant, that is, he was representative of that part of Germany which looks out towards the North Sea and the world market, rather than to Catholic South Germany, Vienna and the outlet of the Danube.

When Bismarck resigned from the Civil Service (before doing so he had abandoned his official duties to chase after a niece of the Duke of Cleveland and nearly married her - intersting to speculate what would have happened) he made the revealing comment: "The Prussian official is like a member of an orchestra, but I want to play only the music which I myself like, or none at all". Most men in authority love power more for its own sake than they care to admit. In Bismarck's case, love of power determined many of his actions. He held it for twenty-eight years and was furious when he lost it (deservedly) in 1890.

Bismarck was a far less attractive character than Cavour (except to those to whom strength of will and intelligence are in themselves attractive). Cavour gained much of his strength as a statesman from his wide almost common-sense knowledge of the world. Bismarck's strength lay in his power over the men with whom he would come in contact - a power derived from his superior intelligence, but also from his ruthlessness. Cavour's ruthlessness was dissembled under his amiability and his finesse in action, Bismarck's was all pervasive. Here is one example: while he was in the diplomatic service he was an advocate of an alliance with Napoleon III in defiance of the principle of legitimacy on which Prussian foreign policy had hitherto been based. This is what he wrote: "I subordinate legitimism in France completely to my specifically Prussian patriotism. Without any regard to the person at the head for the time being, France counts for me merely as a piece, but an unavoidable one, in the game of political chess, a game in which I am called upon to serve only my own king and my own country .... nor do I believe it possible to carry out a principle in politics as something whose remotest consequences

override every other consideration".

I have not time to do more than summarise some recent thinking on Bismarck, represented at its most extreme by A.J.P. Taylor's biography "Bismarck: the Man and the Statesman", and then consider a few specific issues. Taylor's great virtue is to have avoided the temptation to see the process of German unification backwards, that is, going backwards from the final result instead of forwards with events as they happened. One of the greatest interpretative dangers for the historian, and one that is little stressed, is his prior knowledge of the outcome of events.

Bismarck was first and foremost a Prussian nationalist. He believed that Prussian interests (mainly an increase in her Great Power status) demanded that she should dominate the whole of northern Germany and exclude Austria from German affairs. His policies were guided therefore by the test of whether they suited the interests of the Prussian state. Of course, the statement "the interests of the Prussian state" is too general to be of much significance. But "Prussian interests" meant for Bismarck the preservation of his social class, the junkers, and therefore of the conservative, monarchical political structure in Prussia which emerged from 1848. This meant that at all costs, Prussi must not merge into Germany, but Germany must be Prussianised. Bismarck put this in his usual crude way when he said "Germany does not look to Prussian liberalism, but to her strength". This led finally to the division of Germany at the River Inn. But in any case, German unity was incidental, a by-product of the pursuit of Prussian interests. In this sense German unity was a similar process to Cavour's predominantly Piedmontese considerations resulting in Italian unity, and remarkably similar in that both Cavour and Bismarck had firm practical programmes of expansion, Cavour in northern Italy, Bismarck in northern Germany, which were submerged by the passage of events: the genious of both of them was to recover some semblance of control by their adaption to changed ciercumstances.

At first Bismarck's policy for Prussia differed little from that of his predecessors. Ever since the Erfurt Union of 1849 and the agreement of Olmutz in 1850, Prussia and Austria had been explicitly and implicitly quarrelling in Germany. As Taylor comments "Bismarck did not invent the conflict with Austria. It had been in existence ever since 1849. Every Prussian had insisted that equality was the necessary condition for Austro-Prussian friendship. Manteuffel refused to back Austria during the Crimean War; Schleinitz demanded military supremacy noth of the Main in 1859; Barnstoff repeated this demand in 1861. All three shrank from admitting that they could achieve this aim only by war; and Bismarck, too, did not yet face this hard fact."

Bismarck in fact thought that Austria's difficulties alone particularly in Italy, would enable him to achieve the necessary increase of Prussian power, that is, supremacy in north Germany, equality throughout Germany. And, indeed, had Austria pursued the wisest course she would have conceded this. Instead she acted like a rabbit paralysed by the snake about to strike. She neither pursued the policy of Metternich of cooperating with Prussia, or of Schwarzenburg and dictating to her. Bismarck, too, was foundering in search of the right policy. He had at least three policies for building up Prussian power each involving her relations with Austria. They were -

Firstly: In alliance with Austria against the other German States - tried in Jan. 1864 in the agreement for joint action over Slesvig and Holstein, and repeated in the treaty of Gastein of 1865, and offered as late as May 1866, only a month before the outbreak of war. The demand was: Prussia to command all the armed forces North of the Main. Austria would only agree provided Prussia woul guarantee Venetia.

Secondly: A policy built on German nationalism against Austria and attempted in his proposal of April 1866 for a German parliament elected by universal suffrage. This was not taken seriously by German nationalists owing to Bismarck's treatment of the Prussian liberals in the dispute over the military reforms.

Thirdly: Bismarck never dropped his policy, preached in and out of season, of foreign alliances (with France and Russia) which would enable him to increase the diplomatic pressure on Austria and coerce her into recognising the Prussian claim to equality.

Bismarck's control of events is supposed to have begun in 1863 with the Polish revolt. This disrupted the Franco-Prussian entente which Bismarck had hoped to join, but Bismarck is supposed to have achieved his initial preparatory master-stroke with the Convention of Alvensleben which is alleged to have laid the basis for Prusso-Russian friendship. In fact the Convention was hastily entered into and hastily withdrawn. Russia did not care for Prussian patronage, but more important the Convention in fact gained him the hostility of the other Powers and Bismarck was forced to disavow it. The real significance of the Polish revolt lay in the fact that Russia's successful suppression of it was a defeat for the Polish sympathisers, Britain, France and Austria. It was Prussia's neutrality which earned her Russian gratitude, while Austria's interference earned Austria Russian enmity, thus Prussia's position was relatively strengthened.

At what stage did Bismarck come to believe in a war with Austria undertaken without allies? It is impossible to say, but the fortuitous death of Frederick VII of Denmark opened the Slesvig - Holstein question and as Taylor comments "Bismarck stumbled, without knowing it, through the door that led to victory." He did not foresee this because the decisions and actions of Austria and the other great powers (which historians frequently ignore) counted just as much as those of Bismarck. What is certain is that Austria's actions in the Slesvig-Holstein affair offended both German national sentiment and foreign powers. Once more she weakened herself. The Austro-Prussian alliance of January 1864 was certainly sincere on Bismarck's part and there was no reason to suppose it would lead to the quarrel Bismarck later claimed to have planned or foreseen.

It is clear that after 1864 the attitudes of the powers finally persuaded Bismarck that Prussia could defeat Austria in war without outside interference: he would still have preferred to avoid it.

In the Civil War of 1866 as Taylor comments "Austria fought for her primacy, Prussia for equality." It would be a mistake to believe that the war had much to do with German unification. Like the Italian war of 1859, nationalist sentiment followed rather than preceded it. In any case in 1866, the German states as a whole took the side of Austria against Prussia.

The war achieved Bismarck's aim of a Prussian dominated north Germany. Germany was divided at the Main, Austria was excluded from Germany, and the South German states became independent.

Bismarck was satisfied, "We have done enough for our generation" and he was prepared to leave south Germany till the future. In any case he was chary of swamping northern Germany with south Germany because of its Catholicism and its, to Bismarck, dangerous infection with Gallic ideas.

It is at this point that events surged on and pulled Bismarck along behind. To a certain extent Bismarck was aware of the danger of war with France arising out of her loss of prestige, for Sadowa meant not only the defeat of Austria, but the end of French dominance in Europe because France could no longer play off one German power against the other. Bismarck disliked the idea of war with France as Taylor puts it 'not from

fear of defeat, but because of the consequences which victory would bring." As Bismarck himself said "Even if Prussia wins, where will it lead to? Even if we took Alsace, we should have to defend it, and in the end the French would find allies again, and things could go badly." In 1867 Bismarck thought he had found a means of satisfying Napoleon's need for prestige. Luxembourg could be acquired by France. It was in personal union with the King of Holland who could sell it to pay his debts. This was no trap for France: Bismarck wanted peace while the north German Confederation was made. The Luxembourgers did not consider themselves German. What took Bismarck by surprise and removed events out of his hands was the outburst of German national feeling against France acquiring Luxembourg. Just as after Villafranca Italian national feeling became a force to be reckoned with so, after Sadowa did German national feeling. All Bismarck's instincts were to compromise with new forces in an attempt to alter their character.

As Erich Eyck remarks of Bismarck and the strength of German opinion in 1867: "Until then he had been engaged in a cabinet policy, which did not take account of public opinion and which was merely dictated by the interests of Prussian power politics. Now he saw that public opinion could no longer be ignored. Indeed, Bismarck found that the national feeling of the German people was the strongest weapon in his hand. From now on he brought his public utterances into line with this idea. He spoke and acted as the champion of the German national cause. The Luxembourg affair was the turning point in Bismarck's development from a Prussian to a German statesman."

So far I have roughly followed the interpretation of Bismarck's two latest biographers, Eyck and Taylor. But at this point comes the parting of the ways. Eyck, as a good German emigre liberal now turns on Bismarck for having mercilessly plotted the downfall of France. Taylor's interpretation continues to picture Bismarck coerced by events. Equal certitude accompanies both interpretations.

If I now put forward Taylor's I do so without complete conviction, but because it is certainly the more arresting. We have reached the stage where in France Napoleon is being forced on by demands for a reassertion of French prestige, and in 1870 Gramont became Foreign Minister of France, an extremist who hoped to humble Prussia. In Germany Bismarck has committed himself to the German national cause for his own ends. Did they include also the next stage in the unification of Germany?

The cause of the war was the French reaction to Prince Leopold's candidature for the vacant Spanish throne. The documents for a complete study of this episode have recently been published. They reveal Bismarck's secret complicity in the proposal of Prince Leopold, but they do not throw conclusive light on whether the episode was planned by Bismarck to unleash a major war. Dr. Gooch thinks they do. But there is one curious piece of evidence on the other side which Taylor uses.

Prince Leopold was a Hohenzollern (of the Prussian royal family), as a Catholic and King of Spain he would enhance the prestige of the King of Prussia and thus help Bismarck in his dealings with the south Germans. It would also prevent France from making a satellite of Spain and, by forcing her to keep an army on the Spanish border, reduce her power to interfere in Germany (and so make war either less likely, or easier for Germany - depending on which interpretation is followed).

When France heard of the candidature she insisted on its withdrawal and guarantees that it would not be renewed. Bismarck is supposed to have foreseen this and that it would be a pretext for war. Here is where the curious occurrence fits in. In fact France only knew of the candidature through a fortuitous accident - the blunder of a cypher clerk. Otherwise Leopold would have been

king before the French knew anything about it and too late to do anything about it, or so Taylor argues.

Once the war had become inevitable, Bismarck claimed it as his own. The Ems telegram did not cause the war, it exploded it at a time to suit Bismarck, it was merely used by him to snatch the iniative from the French. Bismarck only claimed to have planned the war and with it unification after it had been won and after unification had been achieved.

Bismarck's original plan for Unification had reached only to the Main: during the war it was extended to the Inn and so brought in the South German States, chiefly as a necessity of the war against France. This is how Taylor puts it 'Far from using the war to promote unification, he sought unification to continue the war.' The prolongation of the war due to the unexpected continued resistance of Paris had created a dangerous situation. Bismarck was distrustful of the South German States and their effect on protestant monarchical Prussia. He brought them in to avoid their making separate peace treaties with France and so prolonging the war with its ever increasing risk of foreign intervention. Once included in the Empire the southern states would have to stay in the war to the finish.

Finally, Taylor argues that at first Bismarck had no desire to annex Alsace and Lorraine because he was well aware of the dangers of including French minorities within the German Empire. The pressure came from the German generals on strategic grounds and from German nationalist opinion of which Bismarck, who had begun his career to defeat it, was now the prisoner. What is undeniable is that Bismarck spent the next twenty years attempting to find stable diplomatic patterns which would stave off the consequences of the vindictive peace treaty with France.

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Cavour and Bismarck were great, but they were not super human. Neither set out to unite their countries, both were swept along by the current of events. And yet the finished forms of the two unifications - however probable some unification was - were peculiarly the products of politics. Not of the politics of individual men alone, but a complicated interplay of tendency, chance, the actions of statesmen - with consequences sometimes and sometimes not foreseen - as well as of the unaccountable reactions of the masses.

As far as Cavour and Bismarck were concerned, their readiness to make compromises with everyday realities gave a false impression of their omnipotence; at the same time these compromises did give to the two statesmen a greater influence on events than more rigid and less able statesmen have. Compromises, however, lead the individual far from his starting point. Cavour died early, but Bismarck lived on. He compromised with universal suffrage, though attempting to limit its consequences, with Catholicism, in a way with Socialism (welfare legislation). By 1890 Bismarckian expedients were at an end: in the political crisis of that year he could only counsel a coup d'etat which threatened civil war in Germany.

I will conclude with a wide generalisation. Both Italy and Germany achieved unification only at the price of an arrested social development. They gained freedom of action as nations, but within the crucial readjustments of power between classes were withheld. In most of the rest of Western Europe these adjustments, however fitfully, were taking place. But Italy was run by pseudo-parliamentary dictators, Germany by Crown and Chancellor. This was partly the result of Cavour and Bismarck: both came to have a shrewd realisation of how national feeling could be exploited to defeat the growth of liberalism. Equally it was the result of the self deception of the masses who followed the path of national glory rather than winning advancement for themselves. The postponed effect of this was the 1920's choice of civil war or Fascism.

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