ARTICLES

Timothy J. McHugh
Hospitals and Huguenots: Confessional Coexistence in Nîmes, 1629–85  

Roger Bartlett
Serfdom and State Power in Imperial Russia  

Mervyn O’Driscoll
‘To Bring Light Unto the Germans’: Irish Recognition-seeking, the Weimar Republic and the British Commonwealth, 1930–2  

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

P. Dwyer
New Avenues for Research in Napoleonic Europe  

BOOK REVIEWS

David J. Siddle, ed., Migration, Mobility and Modernization
Reviewed by John K. Walton  

David Gates, Warfare in the Nineteenth Century
Reviewed by Ian F.W. Beckett  

Marcelline J. Hutton, Russian and West European Women, 1860–1939: Dreams, Struggles, and Nightmares
Reviewed by Corinna Peniston-Bird
Sabrina P. Ramet, ed., *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1989*
Reviewed by Johanna Granville 130

John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*
Reviewed by Johanna Granville 132

Karina Urbach, *Bismarck’s Favourite Englishman: Lord Odo Russell’s Mission to Berlin*
Reviewed by O.J. Wright 136

Robert Gellately, *Back ing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*
Reviewed by Lisa Pine 137

Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain*
Reviewed by John Waller 139

Cécile Laborde, *Pluralist Thought and the State in Britain and France, 1900–25*
Reviewed by David Hanley 142

Herman Schwartz, *The Struggle for Constitutional Justice in Post-Communist Europe*
Reviewed by Johanna Granville 144

Eric Bussière, Michel Dumoulin and Gilbert Trausch, eds, *Europe: The European Idea and Identity, From Ancient Greece to the 21st Century*
Reviewed by Michael Wintle 146

*ABSTRACTS* 149
Hospitals and Huguenots: Confessional Coexistence in Nîmes, 1629–85

Louis XIV’s Edict of Fontainbleau, which was issued in 1685, ended the guarantee of civil rights to the Protestant population of France under the terms of the 1598 Edict of Nantes and restored the official monopoly of faith in the kingdom to Catholicism. However, for over fifty years prior to that, after periods of unrest culminating in the siege of La Rochelle and the Peace of Alès, the confessional peace had lasted from 1629 to 1685. The effects of the Revocation are well known, but the problem of how the Reformed and Catholic congregations interacted during the years when the Edict of Nantes was in effect has been studied to a lesser extent. It has long been assumed that the middle decades of the seventeenth century marked a time when tensions and hostilities between the two faiths remained but went underground. Those interested in finding points of intolerance and conflict within the kingdom are able to list devout organizations, angry publications, isolated riots and disturbances to confirm a long-held view that the two religions inhabited separate spaces. Some, however, have dug deeper into the relationships between communities to search out similarities and toleration. Elisabeth Labrousse argues that, in terms of daily life in the localities, there was no great controversy over coexistence between Catholic and Protestant. In fact, she has found that in many parts of France, it was difficult for the two faiths to stay separate for reasons of family, neighbourhood and professional ties. Gregory Hanlon has argued convincingly that the seventeenth-century definition of toleration included a deep-seated hostility toward the other religion that recognized the inability to destroy it without causing unacceptable damage to society. As he has found in Aquitaine,
after 1629 communities with sizable minorities, fearing the return of violence, chose often uneasy coexistence as an alternative to war. It is not surprising that closely-knit urban populations should seek compromise in order to heal wounds rent open by the wars of religion.

Following the triumph of Catholic forces at the siege of La Rochelle (1627–9), Nîmes, located in the Bas-Languedoc, became the heart of French Calvinism until 1685. The city had a population of approximately 15,000 (of which two-thirds were Protestant) dependent mostly on the manufacture of textiles for employment. A four-man consulate composed of two Protestants and two Catholics (selected strictly from the wealthy citizens of the town) formed the civic government. After the city suffered setbacks caused by the wars of religion, it enjoyed economic growth during the seventeenth-century peace. Although the period under study witnessed the decline of the cloth trade in the city, the more lucrative manufacture of silk replaced it. During the sixteenth century, Calvinism had become the dominant faith in Nîmes, and despite the influx of mostly Catholic rural immigrants during the mid-seventeenth-century boom, Protestants still held a majority in the diocese in 1685 with approximately two-thirds of the population. After 1629, two groups composed the city’s ruling classes: wealthy Protestants who had made their fortune in the various industries of the city and Catholic members of the judiciary in the Présidial court. Despite the religious and occupational differences between them, the city’s rulers were fairly homogeneous in terms of wealth, attitude, aspirations and concerns. As Nîmes did not possess a senior sovereign court, there was little social difference between a wealthy Protestant bourgeois and a Catholic judicial figure. While the presence of a Calvinist majority naturally pushed the Catholic minority toward toleration, there was also a significant pull toward intolerance during the period. Being the de facto capital of Protestant France after 1629, it attracted numerous Catholic partisans who wished to prove the strength of their faith by entering into dispute with the Protestants, making the city a site where religious tensions potentially could erupt into conflict.

This article examines an important factor of urban society in Nîmes, welfare provision for the ill poor, in order to highlight one facet of the interaction between Catholics and Protestants from 1629 to 1685. The history of charity in such a city sheds light on
the relationship between confessions, since, from the earliest
days of the Reformation, both Catholics and Protestants used
their approach toward charity as a way in which to define their
faiths.\textsuperscript{10} The divide over the role that good works played in an
individual’s salvation obscures the fact that both saw charitable
giving to the deserving poor as part of every Christian’s duty
toward God. Charity was a way to profess the strength of the
faith,\textsuperscript{11} especially for those Catholic religious who came to the
city in order to combat Protestantism. The devout of both faiths
viewed charity as a means to prevent the poor (a group perceived
to succumb more easily to conversion due to its ignorance of
proper religious practices) from switching religions. This was
important, particularly to the Catholic minority of Nîmes, since
its population was the most likely to convert in the years before
1679.\textsuperscript{12} For laymen and for secular authorities, poor relief was
essential for the maintenance of civic order.\textsuperscript{13} In this respect, the
study of charitable institutions highlights the value placed by
the city’s ruling classes on their relationships with the poorer ele-
ments of society.\textsuperscript{14} In Nîmes, with its mixed population, there
was great potential for issues surrounding the municipal hospital
to devolve into conflict.

In 1629, the restoration of Catholicism in the city was a
significant turning point for the laymen of Nîmes. Despite the
possibility of civil strife in the city, order was maintained from
1629 to 1685. With peace came a determination to prevent a
return of civil disorder and bloodshed in the future. While many
partisans came to the city in an effort to undermine the fragile
coexistence in the decades that followed, Nîmes’ ruling élites did
what they could to maintain it. This is not to say that the civic
fathers of either faith believed in a modern definition of tolera-
tion. It is likely that neither side was happy about the situation,
but the relative strengths of the two communities meant that both
were forced to coexist.\textsuperscript{15} By means of an examination of the
history of one aspect of this coexistence, charitable assistance,
and the tensions and conflicts around it, the strong desire of the
city’s ruling classes to preserve the religious peace can be seen.
Ever since the medieval period, the focus for nîmois charity had been the municipal hospital. The Hôtel Dieu of Nîmes traced its origins to the foundation of an institution in 1313 to care for the sick poor of the city. Secularized and put under the governance of the city’s four-man consulate, the hospital fell to Protestant control during the early sixteenth century. In an attempt to undo Calvinist control in 1549, the fiercely Catholic Parlement of Toulouse imposed the hospital’s first official constitution which, while confirming the consulate as the board of directors, decreed the administration to be under the authority of the Bishop of Nîmes. However, the Protestant consulate ignored the ruling and met as sole directors of the Hôtel Dieu until the restoration of civil peace in 1629, excluding the bishop from his place on the board.

The public practice of Catholicism, which had been suspended in the city as late as 1628 when the cathedral chapter had fled during the Huguenot rebellion, reasserted its interests following the Peace of Alès in 1629. At the Crown’s insistence, the membership of the city’s consulate was divided equally in October 1631 between the two congregations, resulting in a return to lay Catholic representation on the hospital board. The cathedral chapter re-established itself, and religious orders from other parts of the kingdom founded new houses in the city. The most important of these newcomers were the Jesuits, who had been active in the city as early as the 1590s, but built their college only after the peace was signed. During the 1630s, the regular orders acted in concert with the cathedral chapter in petitioning local, provincial and royal authorities for increased rights for Catholics. At the same time, the strength of Catholicism in Nîmes grew as the Huguenots suffered from serious demographic challenges. The percentage of the Reformed population of the city compared with the Catholic decreased in the 1630s for two reasons: the devastating effects of the plague of 1629–30, and the influx throughout the decade of large numbers of Catholic migrants seeking employment in the silk trade. This growth in their population gave Catholics the excuse to insist on taking part in the administration of charitable institutions to protect the concerns of their poor. To add to their fears, although the population balance of the city shifted slightly away from that prior to 1629, Catholics
still formed the minority and, consequently, were never wholly confident in their position in Nîmes since some workers abjured their faith in order to secure work with Protestant employers throughout the period before 1685.23

Buoyed by the defeat of militant Calvinism in 1629 and the subsequent rise in Catholic numbers, the early 1630s was a period of increased Catholic initiative in Nîmes led by the bishop, Anthyme-Denis Cohon, and the newly-arrived religious orders.24 Cohon was an activist strongly in favour of Tridentine reform. Following his arrival, the church petitioned the civic authorities to comply with existing canon law, much of which followed the Council of Trent in matters concerning the primacy of bishops in hospital administrations. Despite significant Protestant complaints, the bishop secured his place in the administration as a member of the board of directors in 1635.25 As well as having a mixed directorate, the institution derived its finances from both congregations. Financially, the hospital relied on local sources of revenue: legacies, pensions, a customary tax on meat sold in the diocese, occasional door-to-door collections and, in emergencies, a tax on all citizens subject to paying the taille. Although the revenue was divided equally by a consulate decision in 1656 between the Catholic Hôtel Dieu and the new Protestant hospital, these sources remained the basis for the finances with only minor alterations throughout the seventeenth century.26

While the wards continued to be open to Protestants and Catholics alike, as Catholics gained places on the board of directors in the 1630s, the practice of Protestantism in the hospital came under threat. The board dismissed the Calvinist schoolmaster paid to instruct patients and hired a Catholic priest as the hospital chaplain.27 This was done at the request of the bishop, in order to bring the institution in line with his interpretation of French laws which viewed the religious functions of hospitals as his responsibility. This change could have been a flashpoint for civil unrest since the link between religion and healing was very strong; however, it proved to be the only serious grievance for Protestants following the rearrangement of the consulate’s composition. From the late 1630s until the early 1650s the main effects of this change on the poor were not very drastic, because Calvinist ministers and visitors nominated by the consistory, the governing body of the city’s Protestant congregation, continued to visit the hospital at regular intervals.28 For the most part,
during the 1630s and 1640s, the terms of the Edict of Nantes were respected: Protestants were given unfettered access to treatment; there were regular visits by Calvinist ministers; and few attempts were made by the Catholic Church to secure conversions among the poor in the wards.

Despite the agitation of the early 1630s, in the period between 1635 and 1650 tensions over the control of the hospital decreased. Catholic gains in the early 1630s were not exploited during the 1640s to exclude the Protestant consuls from the hospital board. Although the bishop had been successful in securing a place among the hospital directors, there were no serious attempts to challenge the religious armistice following the Peace of Alès. After gaining a seat on the board, Cohon diverted his energies towards other projects in the city, such as the reconstruction of the cathedral and the establishment of various religious houses.29 The Bishop of Nîmes during the 1640s, Hector Douvrier, attended few meetings of the board, which left wealthy laymen (represented by the consuls) to administer the hospital in the way that they thought best for the interests of both faiths. In the early 1650s, however, there was a renewed vigour on the part of Catholic partisans. Beginning in 1653, the regular orders in Nîmes initiated a campaign to preach against Protestantism in an effort to win new converts.30 The Protestant consistory feared that its poor would be targeted for conversion in the hospital since the sick in the wards could prove to be easy prey. At the same time, members of the city’s religious orders ensured that Protestant visitors had difficulties in gaining access to those of their religion in the wards. After a letter of complaint had been sent to the Crown by the Calvinist Synod of Languedoc about Catholic contraventions of the Edict of Nantes in 1654, the Huguenot consuls established an independent Protestant hospital on their own authority.31

II

The creation of Nîmes’ Protestant hospital demonstrates the degree of independent action which a local community on the periphery of the kingdom could take during the seventeenth century. The decision for the Reformed consuls to withdraw from the administration of the Hôtel Dieu and found a hospital of their
own came about in a meeting of the consistory on 29 July 1653. The consuls gave two reasons why they had the right to divide the funds of the hospital. First, they argued that the division of the consulate between the city’s two communities created a precedent for civic institutions, and the funds available to the Hôtel Dieu, being managed by the consuls, ought to be divided as well. Second, they argued that the Huguenots were owed one-half of the municipal poor relief funds, because of the terms of the Edict of Nantes which allowed free access to all hospitals of the kingdom by the poor of both faiths. The basis for creating a separate hospital stemmed from the belief that the activism of the Catholic clergy during the early 1650s prevented the Protestant sick from being treated in the Hôtel Dieu free from harassment, as guaranteed by the Edict. The two Protestant consuls stated that:

le Roy par ses edicts et declarations a accordé aux habitans de lad. ville faisans profession de la religion reformée la moitié de l'hospital et rentes d'icellui pour l'entretien des pauvres de lad. religion. Neantmoins depuis certain temps l'entier hospital a esté possedé par les habitans de la religion Romaine . . . les pauvres de lad. religion souffroient.

The consistory determined that the only course of action to resolve this situation was to take possession of half of the hospital’s assets and to build a new institution for the care of the Protestant ill. The consuls must have understood that their interpretation of the law was unlikely to hold up in any court held by Catholic judges. Since 1579, the foundation of new hospitals in the kingdom had required the sanction of both the local bishop and the Crown. While in theory the government of Mazarin was favourable to Huguenots thanks to their loyalty during the Frondes, no Catholic bishop would have agreed to the foundation of a Protestant hospital in his diocese.

In 1655, the return of a known partisan of the counter-Reformation as bishop, Anthyme-Denis Cohon, served only to increase the tension felt by the Protestants. After his first term as bishop (1633–44), he had been appointed to the bishopric of Dol, and was a supporter of Mazarin in Paris at the time of the Frondes, publishing tracts in favour of the cardinal. Cohon was reappointed at his own request to the See of Nîmes in 1655 by the cardinal, and on his arrival, Calvinist merchants threatened to refuse to cooperate with Catholics in business and to withhold employment from all but Protestant workers. The fear of civil
unrest created an anti-Cohon faction among Catholics as well, disrupting the consular elections in that year. A significant portion of the whole urban community disliked the disruption of the social peace of the city caused by the bishop’s presence. The consuls, recognizing the need for both communities to have a measure of control over such a charged issue as charity, limited the damage done to confessional coexistence by coming to an agreement, against the bishop’s wishes, to divide officially the revenues of the Hôtel Dieu in 1656.

During the middle decades of the century, the two confessions were very interconnected in terms of social life. While the bishop and religious houses might have wished to confront and convert Protestants, lay Catholics preferred to keep the peace with their Huguenot neighbours, relatives, friends and business associates. In addition, members of the Protestant élites accounted for a majority of the employers of the city. Should they have ceased to provide work for the large numbers of mostly Catholic migrant labourers, the system of Catholic poor relief in the city, dependent on fewer individuals for funding, would have been heavily burdened. Neither did the legal professionals who served on the board of the Hôtel Dieu wish the bishop and regular orders to put the social peace of the city in jeopardy, so they agreed to dividing the revenue to ensure the survival of the two hospitals.

Early in 1654, the consistory donated the money necessary to construct an entirely new building organized along similar lines as the Hôtel Dieu. The new foundation was a small institution with space to hold between fifty and 100 patients. Despite the opportunity given by the need to construct an entirely new space for Protestant charity to flourish the building was functional in design and simple in decoration. The wealthy merchants who sponsored the new hospital did not embark on a showpiece of baroque piety similar to that of the new Jesuit College, or the renovated Hôtel Dieu of their Catholic neighbours, because Calvinists believed that charity was an obligation owed by all good Christians without resorting to personal aggrandisement. Additionally, because the legality of the hospital was in doubt (and it was certainly seen by the bishop as a source of irritation) the community had no desire to call attention to it as a rival to the Catholic Hôtel Dieu.

The hospital was administered by the two Protestant consuls
with temporary assistance given to them by members of the faith nominated by the consistory. The men who ran the institution came from the ranks of wealthy merchants or bourgeois of the city. Figures from such a background would have given those who donated money to it as benefactors confidence that their investment would be well managed. To assist the consuls in administering the day-to-day accounts of the institution, a receiver of funds was appointed. This post was always filled by men from a bourgeois or merchant background. The consuls appointed men of these ranks because they were considered to be the most responsible, and because many of them would have also been former consuls with experience in the Protestant hospital’s affairs.

The duties of the board were to pay for the regular visit of a physician and surgeon to the hospital, for food and medicine and for the shelter and clothing of the patients. Medical care in the Protestant institution was limited by the standards of those in larger cities such as Paris and Lyon, but similar to that dispensed in Catholic hospitals in other provincial towns. Jean Chabrier, the local surgeon who attended the patients in the hospital during the 1660s on a weekly basis, seems to have been capable of performing some minor invasive operations, but his main task was to set the broken bones of injured workers. The difference between this level of service and more advanced surgical care provided by the Catholic hospitals in Paris and Montpellier owed more to the presence of colleges of surgery in those cities than to a lack of desire on the part of the Protestant élites.

As with the many hospitals caring for those ill and poor who had no family network to sustain them at home, the governors understood the need to accept patients who had come to the city from other regions. The only two criteria for acceptance of such strangers in the hospital were proof of being a Protestant and a reference of worthiness by the consistory. To the chagrin of the Catholic clergy, who were opposed to the use of the hospital’s charitable resources to aid the growth of Calvinism in the city, the consuls occasionally gave beds in the wards to foreign travellers, many of whom were not ill but were Protestant students or ministers journeying back and forth from France to Reformed centres in Switzerland or the United Provinces.

Besides offering food, shelter and basic surgical care for the sick and injured, from its foundation the Protestant institution
assumed the responsibility to care for orphans and abandoned children. It fulfilled this duty by hiring suitable rural women to house and feed these children. Because the care of abandoned and orphaned children was a great burden on the expenses of the hospital, the consuls developed a network of Protestant women in the countryside who regularly accepted the care of infants from the hospital for a period of up to two years. These rural wet-nurses used their care of urban children as a means of augmenting their family incomes, each earning between three and four livres per year for their services.50

The daily staff of the Protestant establishment was smaller than that of similar Catholic hospitals. However, this did not reflect the regard that wealthy Huguenots had for charity. Unlike many Catholic institutions at the time, because of its religion the hospital did not have access to a female religious order, such as the Daughters of Charity, to provide nurses to serve the sick poor.51 A single porter and his wife took care of all of the daily needs of the patients, including feeding and clothing, administering the medicines prescribed and cleaning and heating the wards. Members of the Protestant community inspected the wards during regular visits organized by the consistory, allowing it to monitor the quality of care. These visits by members of the congregation echoed similar visitations by lay Catholics to their institutions. Those who donated to the poor either through charitable requests or by paying the poor taxes of both the city and consistory did not wish to finance a building which would act, in effect, as a warehouse for the ill and dying. These visits were an important part of the system of poor relief in the nîmois Calvinist community. It gave lay members, particularly women, who would otherwise have no say in the operation of the hospital, a way to participate in the charitable care of the poor. The consuls and consistory encouraged women to see the wards for themselves, in the knowledge that their approval mattered in securing funds for the hospital from their families. The visits by members of the Protestant community were quite different from those made by their ministers for religious reasons. While women inspecting the hospital might pray with selected patients, their true importance lay in maintaining standards and improving the efficiency of the establishment. Women could be very effective in securing change. For example, following complaints made by visitors to the hospital about ‘la mauvaise vie et conduite de
l’hospitalier et sa femme’ in January 1660, the couple were replaced.52 Even after the hospital’s closure the consistory continued to organize visits to Protestant patients in the Catholic hospital by its ‘ladies of charity’.53 These visitations became more important because greater numbers of the Protestant poor wound up at the Hôtel Dieu, which no longer had any Protestant representation on its board.

The history of the hospital’s finances suggests that the community was committed to providing relief to its members who were ill. In 1654, the first year of operation of the Protestant hospital, its finances were derived mostly from charitable sources. The consistory provided the greater portion of the income, granting 1249 livres from its own charitable funds.54 A further 400 livres came from a personal donation from the second consul, Jean Roux. Continuing a strategy which had been successful previously for the municipal hospital, the wives of the Protestant consuls assisted, raising 944 livres for the hospital by means of a door-to-door collection from Huguenot households. Without recourse to the revenues of the Catholic Hôtel Dieu, the Protestant hospital operated in its first year at a shortfall of 880 livres, which was made up by a second door-to-door collection of the Protestant community.55 The permanent revenues were increased with an unofficial tax of 2000 livres placed on Protestant households, which continued to be paid until 1657 when it was deemed no longer necessary due to the strong financial basis of the hospital.56

The shortfall in the revenues of the Protestant hospital in 1654, coupled with the financial difficulties faced by the Hôtel Dieu at the same time, led the city government to impose in 1656 a direct tax on residents of both faiths to be shared equally by the two hospitals.57 In 1661, this single imposition was continued permanently as a 4000 livres per annum tax to be divided between them. In 1656, as has been mentioned above, the Protestant consuls increased the income of the hospital by claiming and receiving one-half of all the revenues from legacies and from the civic meat tax from the Catholic hospital which it had collected since the Middle Ages. The combination of direct and indirect taxes made up the majority of the hospital revenues, for example, in 1660 when the hospital had a total income of 4716 livres, of which 2900 derived from these sources.58 The Protestant institution owed its financial success to a good base of support among the com-
munity, and it continued to meet its expenses until it was closed in 1667. Protestants were willing to pay what was necessary to keep it in operation both through taxation and through the yearly collection. Because of these measures, the hospital, unlike many others in seventeenth-century France, fared well financially between 1656 and 1667, being solvent during its lifetime.

III

For Catholic nîmois the Protestant departure from the Hôtel Dieu’s board in 1654 was seen as a new opportunity. The 1549 constitution of the hospital administration recognized that the four consuls of the city acted as governors, as had long been the tradition. According to these rules, the decisions taken by them were to be approved by the bishop and the Sénéchal, who were to head the board as the senior religious and judicial figures of the city. However, following Cohon’s move to the See of Dol there seems to have been very little participation of either of these important men in the administration. Once the Reformed consuls left, the remaining two Catholic consuls, acting as the hospital administration, soon recognized that there was a need for new members to help them manage the hospital. A revised version of the official constitution was quickly adopted. The new hospital board became more visibly Catholic in orientation, moving its meetings to the newly-built Catholic chapel of the hospital to emphasize the religious purpose of the institution. From 1655 the directors consisted of the bishop (represented by his vicar), the juge-mage of the Présidial (or his deputy), the two Catholic consuls, and a number of intendants invited by the board to serve without fixed term from the ranks of the lawyers in the Présidial court and the Catholic bourgeois of the city.

From the beginning of its existence as a strictly Catholic institution the directors committed themselves to making the Hôtel Dieu a better functioning establishment, increasing its size by building a new ward to admit more poor and to alleviate overcrowding in the old building. To improve the efficiency of treatment, as well as to provide religious instruction for the sick, the administration entered into a contract with an order of serving nuns, the dames religieuses hospitalières de Saint-Joseph. By 1661, the Huguenot departure had allowed the hospital to trans-
form itself into an institution that reflected contemporaneous Catholic values about the religious virtue of charity and poor relief. From the 1654 departure of the Protestant consuls from the administration until long after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the hospital commonly presented itself as a showpiece of Catholic charity to entice the Protestants of the city to convert. A redecoration scheme was begun and artwork commissioned to fill the wards. The board also altered the fabric of the hospital in order to demonstrate their charitable impulses. Much of this seems to have been the inspiration of Cohon, who was very influenced by the ideas of Catholic reform theologians. Financial concerns took second place to the desire to demonstrate the Catholic community’s religious verve in the years after 1654. The board’s building projects created a mounting debt during the 1660s, coming at a time when the institution had lost one-half of its earlier revenues in 1656 as a result of the creation of the Protestant hospital.

After the foundation of the Protestant hospital, as mentioned above, financial problems created the need for a new tax to support both hospitals which was approved by the whole city consolate in 1656. As we saw, the consolate imposed a levy of 4000 livres applied to all the residents of the city, divided equally between the two institutions. The agreement of the Reformed consuls for this tax was secured in return for the division of the other revenues of the Hôtel Dieu and for tacit acceptance of the Protestant hospital’s existence. Each confession wanted this new tax to secure a future for its hospital. The consuls decided among themselves that the fairest and least damaging solution was the division of all the civic poor relief revenues between both institutions in 1656. The Hôtel Dieu earmarked the funds from the new levy to help purchase grain to feed the poor in the wards, which was constantly the greatest burden on its finances. The division of revenues, coupled with the building plans of its directors, proved to be a long-term pressure on the finances of the Hôtel Dieu, however. For example, in 1656, the loss of revenues forced the administration to borrow 10,000 livres, including a single loan worth 7000 livres from the influential Catholic Fabre family. In 1659, the directors borrowed 4734 livres from a Catholic lawyer, Louis Gaillard, and 1000 livres from the city’s Ursuline convent to pay for food for the poor. The fact that the church saw the hospital as a Catholic institution also caused problems. The
desire of the Hôtel Dieu’s administration to emulate other Catholic hospitals in the kingdom by utilizing an order of nursing sisters to tend the sick, required it to contract large loans, not only for the sisters’ accommodation but also to feed them. In order to cover these costs, the Hôtel Dieu borrowed a total of 15,000 livres from local notables and religious houses. Many of these debts were repaid as lifetime or perpetual pensions to the lenders. In the period between 1653 and 1668, the hospital’s debt grew to over 45,000 livres. Money owed to pay for the services of the sisters of Saint-Joseph continued to burden the Hôtel Dieu until the dames de la Visitation of Nîmes undertook the responsibility for the debt in 1676 in return for a substantial pension (which the hospital continued to pay until the Revolution). The pattern of borrowing from local devout notables and religious houses of the city in favour of long-term or perpetual loans financed by hospital revenues continued through the period 1670-1715 and beyond. Despite being high, the hospital’s debt does not seem to have been particularly troublesome for the Catholic élites of Nîmes. Throughout the rest of the reign of Louis XIV, the hospital regularly maintained a debt of around 24,000 livres which was repaid to lenders at an interest rate of 4 per cent. That lenders continued to give money to the hospital, despite its indebtedness, even at points such as 1694 when repayments could be suspended for years, would suggest that they either regarded the institution as a secure risk in the long term because of its assured income through the municipal taxes it possessed, or that they used these loans as charitable donations on which repayments might be excused during troubled financial years in return for spiritual gain.

In the years of the Protestant hospital’s existence, from 1654 to 1667, while points of contention arose between the two confessions there were few open disputes over the assistance of the poor. With the exception of some individuals, each side seems to have preferred to allow the other the freedom to take care of its own sick and unemployed. This peace did not mean that other tensions which lay under the surface disappeared. While the business and social relations between the Catholic and Protestant community of Nîmes were interconnected and encouraged toleration on both sides, each side remained worried about losing members of its faith and sought to prevent abjurations. The new opportunities to Catholicize the Hôtel Dieu after 1654 allowed
lay Catholics to protect their poor and demonstrate the strength of their faith, but the lay élites were careful not to damage relationships with their Protestant neighbours.

IV

The end of the Protestant hospital came in 1667, when it was closed by order of the Parlement of Toulouse. Wilma Pugh argues that it was the end of a significant period of confessional struggle and part of a general Catholic triumph in the city. However, there had been no previous attempt on the part of the Catholic-controlled Présidial or the city consulate to shut it down. The reunification of the two hospitals was commanded on 22 February 1667 by the staunchly Catholic judges of the Parlement of Toulouse at the Grands Jours held at Nîmes. The official reason given for the closure of the Protestant hospital was the illegality of its foundation on the sole authority of the Protestant consuls. They had not gained the approval of the Crown and the bishop, both of which were required by law to found such an institution. Using a different interpretation of the terms under which the Protestants had claimed the right to open the institution, the Parlement decreed the hospital’s existence contrary to the Edict of Nantes because it did not provide shelter for the poor of both faiths:

que les consuls de la ville de Nismes, faisant profession de la religion pretendue reformée, soient condamnés à faire delaissement de l’hospital par eux établi de nouveau pour les seuls pauvres de ladite religion pretendue reformée . . . ledit nouveau hospital sera uny avec tous les susdits biens et revenus et dependans à l’hospital ancien de ladite ville, pour estre le tout administré par les administrateurs dudit ancien hospital, et que dans iceluy, conformément à l’article XXII de l’édit de Nantes, les pauvres et malades de ladite R.P.R. seront traduits indifferemment, de mesme que les catholiques, sans pouvoir estre con- straits ny forcés sur le fait de leur religion.

The Parlement stressed that many of the rentes and pensions which the Protestant hospital used as revenue had been left to the Hôtel Dieu before the Reformation when it had been a Catholic establishment. This went to the heart of the belief of the kingdom’s élites, especially the men of the judiciary, that the intentions of donors ought to have been respected, even after several centuries.
Bishop Cohon was the principal figure who acted to close the Protestant hospital. He had already been vocal in his opposition to its presence in the city, citing it as an institution whose mere existence served to spread ignorance and heresy among the population.80 The Grands Jours sessions of the Parlement of Toulouse in the city in 1667 had been his first chance to use a court of favourable judges to win a legal decision against the right of the Protestant consuls to manage the hospital.81 Until then, neither the consulate nor the Présidial court had been willing to do so in the interests of maintaining harmony between the two faiths. Indeed, the Catholic consuls in particular seem to have been tacitly supportive of the interests of their Calvinist neighbours, for they had not made any attempt to have the hospital closed and had gone as far as making deals that ensured its survival. The bishop understood that the judges from Toulouse were hostile to the interests of the Protestant population of Nîmes. He argued that neither he nor the previous bishop had given the necessary approval for the hospital’s foundation or for its continued existence.82

The Parlement ordered the closure of the hospital and the return of all properties and revenues which had originally been donated to the Hôtel Dieu. However, the Reformed consuls did not relinquish the enjoyment of the half of the imposition made for poor relief nor their half of the meat tax. In the interest of civic harmony, the Catholic consuls preferred not to challenge the Protestant claim to these levies. The simple closure of the hospital was the most important object for the bishop so that the Hôtel Dieu would become the city’s sole institution to care for the ill poor. He believed it would gain considerable advantage in converting Protestant poor who tended to enter the wards more often, even though the consistory began to house the sick of its faith in private homes.

After the hospital closed, with the toleration of the Catholic secular authorities, Protestants in Nîmes continued to manage their own poor relief, concentrating more and more on those forms designed to prevent abjurations. There was no effort to restore some Calvinist representation to the board of the Hôtel Dieu. The congregation chose instead to focus on dispensing aid outside of an institution in the years following 1667. While the consistory managed outdoor relief to widows and to the unemployed, the Reformed consuls continued to use the half-share
in the civic poor taxes originally destined for the hospital to care for the poor who were ill. To prevent the sick from falling into the care of the nursing sisters at the Hôtel Dieu, they organized housing and medical visits for them in private homes. In theory, this was illegal, being contrary to royal laws intended to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, but it protected Protestants from being subject to conversion attempts. The Catholic consuls allowed this situation to continue until pressure from the Crown forced them to put a stop to the practice in 1684.83 In 1676, after the beginning of the Crown’s repressive legal campaign against the Huguenots, the charitable practices of the congregation as a whole came to focus on granting outdoor assistance in secret away from the prying eyes of the Catholic clergy. In the final years before 1685, as little attention as possible was called to acts of charity done by Protestants. The shift away from institutional care did bring about some benefit for the community. In general, it was less expensive to maintain the sick poor in either their own homes or in private residences than it had been to finance the hospital. While costs decreased, the number of people being assisted increased, which led to a direct levy on Protestants to provide for their poor.84 The increase in the number of Protestants on poor relief seems to have been the result of two factors. First, the economy of the city suffered a recession as the wool industry declined in the years after 1670, the effects of which were felt by both the Protestant and Catholic communities of the city. Second, the consistory was put under more pressure after 1679, as Catholic repression increased, to prevent its parishioners from converting by any means necessary.

In the early 1680s, following the exclusion of Protestants from the consulate, the consistory continued to offer most of its various forms of poor relief. By 1683, however, the payment of assistance to keep the Protestant poor away from Catholic sources of charity consumed most of the funds of the consistory.85 The door-to-door collections for the congregation’s poor continued until 1684, which shows that while the bishop and the city’s clergy were opposed to Protestant poor relief, the Catholic magistrates were willing to cooperate with, or at least turn a blind eye to, the activities of their neighbours.86 However, even the city consuls, who had not shown much interest in alienating their Huguenot neighbours by interfering with their system of poor relief, were drawn into the official repression in 1684 when they
discussed removing Protestants who were ill from private homes and forcing them into the Hôtel Dieu. But by that point, decisions made in Versailles put an end to the precarious coexistence of the two faiths. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, lauded as it was by both Catholic clergy and laity alike, dramatically altered the nature of civic society in Nîmes.

The spectacle of a mass public ‘conversion’ of Protestants in Nîmes in 1686 shortly after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes papered over serious problems facing the city which were caused by the end of official religious toleration. Poor relief in those areas of Languedoc possessing large Calvinist populations suffered from difficulties unforeseen by the architects of the Revocation. The newly converted, and most importantly for Nîmes, the wealthy silk merchants who had financed and managed much of the Reformed church’s charities, were reluctant to give money to the Catholic Hôtel Dieu. However, those who were ill among the nouveaux convertis had little choice but to seek admission to the hospital. After 1685, a crisis of social welfare pressed the city fathers who were unable to turn away the increased numbers of poor. Despite the efforts of the intendant of Languedoc, Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, to create a confinement hospital similar to the Paris Hôpital Général the crisis was never wholly solved during the reign of Louis XIV.

The Revocation brought an end to a unique period when most lay Catholics and Protestants in Nîmes sought to coexist. The tolerant attitude that the élites of each faith demonstrated toward the other should not be confused with a modern definition of toleration, however. Neither Protestants nor Catholics believed that their neighbours’ religion had a right to exist. Each side believed that there was only one way to worship God: its own. Indeed, it was commonly accepted that it was impossible to compel religious uniformity without damaging civil society. Coexistence in Nîmes came about, not because of a new belief in freedom of worship, but because of the memories of the bloody civil wars of the sixteenth century. This seventeenth-century toleration that contained within it such distaste for the other side is clearly shown in the care each confession took in caring for its
own poor. The Catholic and Protestant communities considered
the survival of their charitable hospitals to be vital because the
poor who wound up at the wrong one were considered likely to
abjure their faith. Protestant and Catholic alike felt that the
religious commitment to charity justified the heavy financial
burdens of their respective institutions.

That their definition of coexistence had at its basis the fact that
before 1685, neither side was strong enough to eliminate the
other, should not cloud the fact that in order to preserve order in
the locality, the lay élites of both denominations actively ignored
royal and episcopal rulings. It is striking that this peace should
extend as far as cooperation at times bordering on collusion in a
religiously charged aspect of urban life such as poor relief. Those
who held the office of Catholic consul demonstrated their desire
to live alongside their Calvinist neighbours many times over the
years from 1629 to 1685. The otherwise legally-minded consuls
took no action to prevent the foundation of the Protestant hospi-
tal in 1654, and they raised no complaint over the illegality of the
new institution’s existence in any court of law. In many ways the
Catholic judges and lawyers who sat as consuls were willing to
anger partisans among the clergy and population of their own
faith, so long as relations with the Protestant community
remained peaceful. The Huguenots, for their part, went equally
far to ensure the continuance of Calvinist charity in the city. The
foundation and operation of an independent hospital was bound
to enrage such a zealous proponent of Tridentine reform as
Bishop Cohon, and came at a time when the best strategy for the
community’s welfare would have lain in not challenging the
Catholic church’s authority over such matters.

The ‘intolerant’ nature of seventeenth-century tolerance most
likely meant that the type of confessional coexistence present in
Nîmes did not exist in areas of the kingdom where Calvinism had
small and dwindling numbers after 1629. But in regions such as
the Bas-Languedoc where the Huguenots remained the majority
or a significant minority, such peace was likely the rule of inter-
action between the faiths before the Revocation. This kind of
localized toleration, bred by close proximity, must have devel-
oped not only in France, but in many other areas of early modern
Europe after the Reformation.90 Although local relations
between confessions of similar strength gave rise to coexistence,
the power of external forces often forced the issue in the opposite
direction. The outward signs of joy displayed by Catholic nîmois at the announcement of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes may have hidden grave fears that the Crown’s unilateral decision to restore the Roman Church’s spiritual monopoly would have serious repercussions for the social fabric of their city.

Notes


6. Sauzet, *Contre-Réforme*, 359–60. Sauzet’s estimate that there were 8000 Catholic inhabitants and 12,000 Protestant inhabitants reflects the city’s population in 1685.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. The history of charity has been successfully used to study the relationships between various groups in society in early modern Europe, see C. Jones, *Charity and Bienfaisance* (Cambridge 1982); idem, *The Charitable Imperative* (London/

11. For example, F. de Sales, Introduction à la vie dévote (Paris 1641), 232.
14. The nature of the relationships between rich and poor in early modern European cities is best explored in Cavallo, Charity and Power.
16. The institution was known simply as the Hôpital de Nîmes before 1661. It will be referred to as the Hôtel Dieu for the period before its official change of name in order to avoid confusion with the Protestant hospital founded in 1654.
18. Archives des hôpitaux aux Archives départementales du Gard, fonds Hôpital de Nîmes (Hôtel Dieu), archives antérieures à 1790 (hereafter ADG HD) A1, A3 and E1.
19. ADG HD E3.
21. Ibid, 131–9, 204.
23. Quéniart, La Révocation, 28.
25. ADG HD E3.
29. Sauzet, Contre-Réforme, 276–94.
30. L. Ménard, Histoire civile, ecclesiastique et litteraire de la ville de Nîmes (Paris 1755), tom. 6, 108–9; AN TT 260/208; AN TT 431/6.
31. Ménard, Histoire civile, tom. 6, 108 and AN TT 259 and 260. Cf. Pugh, ‘Social Welfare’, 363–4 where it is argued that Protestant loyalty during the Frondes was rewarded with royal permission to found the new hospital. The fact that the institution was closed because it was deemed to have been founded contrary to the law argues against this case.
32. ADG/42/J/39.
33. AN TT 260/208.
34. ADG/42/J/39.
35. ADG/42/J/39. The Protestant hospital claimed one half of the income of the Hôtel Dieu in 1653, but these funds became available to it only in 1656.
40. Ibid.
41. ADG HD E3.
42. An exception to this was the notary Etienne Borrelly, see R. Sauzet, *Le Notaire et son roi, Etienne Borrelly (1633–1718), un Nîmois sous Louis XIV* (Paris 1998).
43. ADG HD E3 and ADG/30/J/82.
44. ADG/30/J/80.
45. ADG/30/J/80–7.
46. Ibid. It should be noted that Protestants who claimed *bourgeois* status in Nîmes were mostly retired merchants or their descendants living off investments.
47. Ibid.
48. ADG/30/J/81.
49. ADG/42/J/40.
50. ADG/30/J/80 and 81.
52. ADG/42/J/40 and 41.
53. ADG/42/J/42.
54. ADG/30/J/80–7.
55. Ibid.
56. ADG/30/J/82. The 2000 *livres* imposition levied on the Protestant community was discontinued after 1656, a year in which the hospital showed a profit of 2886 *livres*. The surplus came after the initial cost of founding the hospital had been fully paid.
57. Ibid. The initial value of this tax was 6000 *livres* (subsequently reduced to 4000 *livres* in 1661).
58. ADG/30/J/84. 2400 *livres* of the total income came from the direct tax and 500 *livres* from the indirect tax on meat. It should be noted that the total expenses of the Protestant hospital between 1754 and 1667 were never more than 3500 *livres*.
59. ADG/30/J/84–8.
60. ADG/30/J/84–8.
61. ADG HD E3.
64. ADG HD E3.
66. ADG HD E22 and E71.
67. ADG HD E3.
68. ADG HD H22.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. ADG HD E22.
74. Sauzet, Contre-Réforme, 311–24.
75. ADG/42/3/40.
77. Toulouse, located at the other end of the province of Languedoc, was the seat of the Parlement that had final authority over legal affairs in Nîmes. The Grands Jours were sessions of the Parlement of Toulouse held in other towns of its jurisdiction.
79. AN TT 260/119 and P. Gachon, Quelques préliminaires de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes en Languedoc (1661–1685) (Toulouse 1899), LIII–LV.
81. AN TT 260/119 and Gachon, Quelques préliminaires, LIII–LV.
82. Ibid.
84. ADG/42/3/42.
85. ADG/42/3/43. The amount of time spent on poor relief in the deliberations of the consistory of Nîmes following 1667, but particularly in the early 1680s, increased dramatically, representing the increased burden as elements of the Catholic church increased their efforts to convert the poor before the final revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.
86. Archives communales de Nîmes, TT8.
87. Ibid.
88. ADG fond Hôpital Général, A1.
89. Ibid.
90. See, for example, R. Po-Chia Hsia, Society and Religion in Münster, 1535–1618 (New Haven, CT 1984). A similar form of toleration that developed in many cities in the Netherlands is covered in J.I. Israel, The Dutch Republic, Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477–1806 (Oxford 1995), 637–76.

Dr Tim McHugh is Lecturer in Early Modern History at Oxford Brookes University. He is a graduate of the University of London and has taught on both sides of the Atlantic. He is the author of several articles on the subject of hospitals and society during the reign of Louis XIV.
Serfdom and State Power in Imperial Russia

The institution of serfdom has been a central and much debated feature of early modern Russian history: it has sometimes been described as Russia’s ‘peculiar institution’, as central to the Russian experience as black slavery has been to the American.¹ It is striking, however, that the rise and dominance of serfdom within Muscovite/Russian society coincided closely in historical terms with the rise to European eminence and power of the Muscovite state and Russian Empire. The subjection of the peasantry to its landlord masters was finally institutionalized in 1649, at a time when for most of the rest of Europe Muscovy was a little-known and peripheral state, in John Milton’s words, ‘the most northern Region of Europe reputed civil’.² When Peter I proclaimed Russia an empire, in 1721, it had displaced Sweden to become the leading state of Northern Europe; one hundred years later Russia was the premier European land power. Its loss of international status after the Crimean War in 1856 helped to precipitate the abolition of serfdom (1861); but the ‘Great Reforms’ of the 1860s did not enable it to regain the international position achieved after the Napoleonic Wars. Thus the period of history from the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, when serfdom became a securely entrenched legal and economic institution, was also the period in which Russia — the Muscovite state and Russian Empire — became relatively more powerful than at any other time in its history before 1945. This article seeks to examine some of the features of serfdom in Russia, to look briefly at its place in the structure and dynamics of Russian society, and to investigate the relationship between the establishment of serfdom in practice and the success of Russian governments both in domestic affairs and on the international stage.
The significance of serfdom has been interpreted in a variety of ways, and an understanding of its principal features is obviously essential to this enquiry. A standard view has seen it as the central cause of Russian ‘backwardness’. Conversely, it has been interpreted simply as a symptom of underdevelopment. One recent Russian study, to which we will return later, defines serfdom as a corporate phenomenon encompassing all social relations in the Empire. Another Russian account has gone so far as to conclude that enserfment of the population was a necessary and inevitable condition for Russian survival on the dangerous and inhospitable north European plain.

Russian serfdom (krepostnoe pravo) was an outgrowth of state power, originating in delegation of certain powers by the Crown to its supporters and noble servitors: as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, it owed its origin to government decree. As with all other variants of the institution, Russian serfdom was a set of relationships enforced by the judicial and coercive power of the state. Peasants’ right of movement, the crucial variable, was abolished by decrees of the 1580s and 1590s which bound them to their place of residence and made them in practice glebae adscripti (dependent through being tied to the land); and the final form of full hereditary subjection was put in place by the 1649 Law Code. In its measures regarding the peasantry, the Law Code was concerned exclusively with means to ensure their subordination to their landlords, and with remedies against peasant flight and landlord harbouring of runaways: it did not provide a comprehensive definition of their legal status. However, its stipulations presupposed that both peasant property and labour were at the disposal of the lord, and the legal enactment of peasant dependence and obligation to render dues and services to their lords left the way open to new forms of exploitation without explicit legal sanction. In fact, Russian serfdom as an institution was not properly defined in law before the nineteenth century. A century after the Law Code, nobles’ peasants had been deprived by discrete enactments of almost all legal rights, except that killing them was forbidden; and without any specific general enabling legislation being passed, they had become chattels of their owners, bought, sold and bequeathed like any other property. Noble owners were at least required by law in 1734 to look after their peasants in times of famine, but there were few other legal restrictions.

However, the completeness of peasant subjection did not mean
that serfdom was inflexible, or that lack of legal rights might not be tempered by tradition or the master’s self-interest. The lack of legislative definition meant in any case that relations and usage differed considerably: in this sense Steven Hoch is right to argue that Russian serfdom ‘was not a system, but a widely varying set of practices’.10 There are well-known cases of wealthy serf entrepreneurs, who amassed fortunes in property and goods held and traded in their masters’ names, and often themselves owned serfs on the same basis. Equally well-known are the serf artists and artistes of Imperial Russia, gifted individuals who received training, sometimes abroad, in many cases achieved high professional standards, and made a major contribution to the growing artistic achievements of post-Petrine Russia.11 These cases are symptomatic, though not typical, of the nature of servile relations; and serfs could be found in a wide range of occupations. It was often in landlords’ interest to diversify estate economic activities, or to facilitate off-estate employment for their peasants, and the servile economy could make use of contractual or ‘free’ labour, as well as compulsory labour: the petty trader, the hired agricultural labourer or industrial worker was often a landlord’s serf on otkhod (travelling to find work), and bearing a passport from his master. The dues of such a peasant, who might be left very much to his own devices, would be rendered by obrok or quit-rent, payments to the lord in cash (or kind), whereas serfs whose obligations consisted of barshchina (corvée or labour rent, providing labour for the demesne) usually led a life closely regulated by the estate administration and were kept on the estate. There was thus scope for variation, change and innovation within the servile system.

Despite a number of notorious cases, it was not in the landowners’ interest to harm their peasants, or ruin them economically: the prosperity, or at least the economic viability, of the peasantry was the guarantor of landlord well-being. Recent research also suggests that Russian peasants under serfdom did not necessarily live much worse than their counterparts elsewhere. This is a difficult area to document exactly, and social status is by no means the only variable. One may at least find contemporary Western commentators comparing the Imperial Russian situation favourably with that of the Irish peasantry under their Anglo-Irish landlords;12 and one scholar has recently declared with reference to the 1780s that ‘the Russian peasant . . .
lived in a state of rude abundance’, with an average per capita income which placed Russia at that time, with Britain, second only to France in the European league tables of national income.¹³

Likewise, it should be borne in mind that serfdom in the strict sense did not encompass the whole of the Russian peasantry. Serfs proper — those termed krepostnye — belonged to noble landlords. The Orthodox Church owned so-called monastery peasants, but its rights over them were less complete and in any event it lost them in 1764. Peter I created the category of state (gosudarstvennye) or treasury (kazennye) peasants who were administered by state officials, but whose dues were paid direct to the treasury. In Peter I’s day (1719 revision) these consisted of some 19 per cent, but by 1858 about 47 per cent, of the empire’s peasantry. It was also the case that differences of law in different regions produced practical differences in peasant status. Peasants in Russian Finland, seized by Peter I in the Great Northern War (1700–21), retained real personal freedom even when the estates on which they lived were granted to Russian nobles. The peasants of Hetman Ukraine remained technically free even after 1783, when the introduction of the poll tax caused them to be bound to their place of residence: though in this case that legislation was merely the last step in fact towards ultimate enserfment.¹⁴ In short, the Imperial Russian institution of serfdom, despite its extreme forms approximating to chattel slavery, and the undoubtedly severe influence that it exercised in general upon the state of the peasantry, was a flexible and variable institution, and was capable of accommodating considerable social and economic variety and change.

The term ‘serfdom’ has so far been applied to one category of the population, the peasantry, and within that category to one sub-group, the landlords’ peasants (pomeshchich’i or krepostnye krest’iane). What distinguished the latter from all other categories of the lower orders was that they could be bought and sold, that they were comprehensively and utterly at the disposal of their masters. The situation of the individual serf was dramatized in the memoirs of August Ludwig Schlözer, German adjunkt of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, in his account of a manservant assigned to him in St Petersburg in the 1760s. This young man, an urbanized, intelligent peasant, appeared one day drunk on duty, and Schlözer upbraided him, exhorting him to make use of
his talents and work hard in order to rise in the world. The valet heard him out impassively and replied simply: ‘Ia krepstnoi chelovek’ (‘I am a serf’). Schlözer was silenced: pride, hard work, self-betterment were instantly irrelevant, since the serf’s world was shaped solely by the lord’s whim, and especially so that of the house-serf who lived directly under his master’s (or her mistress’s) eye. ‘Accursed serfdom!’, wrote Schlözer. ‘Since that time I can never think without bitterness about this invention of inhuman monsters.’ No other category of Russian peasant was so helpless.

The most numerous group of peasants, apart from the landowners’ serfs, were the state or treasury peasants, a body made up of numerous sub-groups. Some historians call these peasants state serfs, equating their status with that of the landlords’ rights-less peasants. In many respects this is clearly a misnomer. State peasants were subject to no private individual; they could not legally be bought or sold, could enter juridical relationships, and could change their social status (become townspeople) on fulfillment of certain conditions. They had an effective right of complaint and petition against the state officials responsible for their administration; and they were recognized by Catherine II in the 1760s as among those subjects eligible for participation in her Legislative Commission. On the other hand, they could not choose their own administrators, who were appointed government officials; they had to meet certain requirements before leaving their community; they paid obligatory dues to the state; and they could be conscripted by the government for whatever purposes it found necessary, not only the army but settlement, labour in factories or special projects. When Peter I assigned areas of forest on the middle Volga to the admiralty, for example, in order to ensure a timber supply for shipbuilding, he created in passing a separate state-peasant sub-category of ‘ship peasants’ (korabel’nye krest’iane) from the local Tatar peasant population, who were obliged thenceforth to provide labour for lumbering and other operations. ‘Ascribed’ (pripisnye) state peasants were assigned to other state industrial enterprises. Moreover, state peasants were not allowed to regard their lands as their own, and were subject to direction in the holding and use of them: the development of repartitional communal tenure among the state peasantry, encouraged by official intervention and legislation, was a significant trend in landholding in the Imperial period.
The state peasants are best described as part of the juridically non-servile but materially obligated part of Imperial Russian society which also included the townsfolk, the army and to some extent the clergy, but not the nobility after 1762 (when they were freed from compulsory state service). But the term ‘state serf’ does correctly reflect the power which the authorities held to control the labour and the lives of state as well as landlord peasants. This leads to a larger consideration of the meanings of servitude. In a recent contribution already referred to above, Boris Mironov portrays serfdom (krepostnoe pravo), or the servile system (krepostnichestvo), as a concept to be applied to the whole of Russian society, including its noble élite, and develops the concept of ‘corporate’ or ‘communal serfdom’: ‘The servile system could exist as a state, corporate or private phenomenon, depending on who was the [juridical] subject of the servile relations (krepostnicheskikh otnoshenii): the state, a [social] corporation or an individual person.’ Mironov distinguishes three main schools of historical thought on the subject. Pre-revolutionary Russian historiography, he says,

dated the emergence of serfdom to the 16th–17th centuries and connected it with the state’s need to tie its population to a particular place of residence and social group in order to facilitate control of tax collection and the fulfilment of obligations [. . .] In the final analysis considerations and requirements of state, above all social order and stability, were [seen as] the principal factors in both the enserfment (zakreposhchenie) and the liberation of all social estates. In Soviet historiography, it was customary to talk of the enserfment only of the peasantry, and to a limited extent of the enserfment of the lower urban strata (the so-called townspeople [posadskie]) [. . .].

Soviet scholars, Mironov continues, sought the causes of enserfment in the intensification of extra-economic coercion, the peasant flight which this provoked, or in the interests of the landowning service classes.

Western historiography in principle supports the pre-revolutionary Russian view concerning the enserfment of all estates of the realm, but when discussion turns to serfdom (krepostnoe pravo) as such, usually the peasantry is seen as the sole enserfed estate [. . .].

This summary of previous scholarship correctly highlights European and American scholars’ awareness of the services required by state authorities from all parts of Russian society at different times, and the separate use of the term ‘serfdom’ to describe the state of the peasantry. The latest Western writings in
the field demonstrate very clearly that the terms ‘serfdom’ and ‘enserfment’ are not generally considered by Western scholars to be applicable to urban and élite social groups. Nor has the usage in fact been common in Russia — historically the term krepostnoe pravo (deriving from krepost', a legal deed of sale or possession of property, and meaning, strictly, law embodied in legal documentation, the document proving the lord’s right over the peasant) was not applied in Russia to any social group except those who could be, in hard practice, the object of deeds of possession and bills of sale. Mironov himself notes that his term ‘corporate serfdom’ has not been used before; and for the Imperial period it represents an historically or terminologically inaccurate invention. Moreover, the broad usage of terms such as krepostnichestvo begs important questions concerning relations between individuals and state power, the limits of acceptable obligation in any society.

The concept of serfdom in Imperial Russia is conventionally applied to the rights of individuals (landowners) over other individuals (peasants) subject to them, and that is an accurate historical usage. But Mironov is correct nevertheless in emphasizing the universality of the duties which the population of Muscovite and Imperial Russia bore in relationship to the Crown: the regime as a whole was based on concepts of hierarchy and obligation. And for this reason his historically inaccurate concept of ‘corporate serfdom’ is a useful heuristic device. At least from 1556, when Ivan IV decreed that ‘all land shall serve’, to 1762 and beyond, Russia was a service state: all sections of society bore service obligations, initially to the tsar, then to the state.

Mironov observes that if one understands serfdom within the [broad] limits sketched above, then it turns out that in Russia at the start of the eighteenth century the only free person was the Tsar, and all others were in one or another degree enserfed.

To the extent that Tsar Peter I considered himself the first servant of the state, and was prepared to kill his own son (Tsarevich Aleksei Petrovich) to ensure the survival of his work on behalf of the state, even this definition may be too limited. And such a view is not new. One of its best-known formulations was that of the statesman Michael Speranskii, who famously wrote in the early nineteenth century that there were no free men in Russia, save beggars and philosophers.
true: everyone bore obligations. In principle nobles were also still obliged to serve if called upon, and to prepare themselves for service. In practice, however, a crucial change had taken place under Peter I. Peter’s extensive social engineering, undertaken exclusively for his own state purposes, affected all groups in society. His measures on the peasantry created new legal categories and decreed some degree of protection for serfs from excessive landlord exploitation, but also imposed new and heavy state obligations of taxation and conscripted military service. One of his purposes was to impose obligations on the state peasantry equivalent to those already borne by the serfs: all should stand in the same relationship to state interests. The old ‘noble’ service personnel was tied to state service more systematically than ever before and for an unlimited period, through the Table of Ranks, but at the same time it was unified into a single corporation with a new name and identity, the shliakhstvo or dvorianstvo (nobility). And critically for our purposes, Peter divorced noble service obligation from landholding. Both votochina (hereditary/family) and pomest’ye (service) holdings now became private property, and service was to be rewarded by monetary salary. Noble service and land were no longer organically connected. The effects were twofold. First, the full burden of state service began to pass from those who owned land to those who tilled it. Nobles who served received direct compensation; after 1762, although theoretically obliged to serve if called, in practice they served or not as they chose. Prestigious military service in officer rank was normally seen as a noble privilege; nevertheless ‘some adjustments in [officer] recruitment were necessitated [after 1762, since . . . ] appeals to altruism failed to persuade many nobles from abandoning service careers for other pursuits’. Peasants had no such choices, and provided the money (taxes) and rank-and-file manpower which supported both the fisc and the armed forces. All the lower classes were subjected to increased taxation, culminating in the poll tax, to compulsory lifelong service in the army, to control of movement through a passport system, and to labour direction for the benefit of Peter I’s new industrial projects. Second, serfdom, being an adjunct of landholding, now became a matter as much of private as of state relations: successive governments increasingly circumscribed the public actions of the serf and left him to the control of his master. It was in the late- and post-Petrine period that decrees deprived the serfs of the
right to pay their own taxes, make contracts, freely engage in trades and swear the oath of allegiance. Practically speaking, by Speranskii’s time the noble élite had gained considerable freedoms and privileges, and also shared many of the ruler’s prerogatives in relation to lesser subjects. They participated in the direction of labour employed by the post-Petrine state throughout the economy, and of which krepstnoe pravo was the most extreme expression. Although, as before, only landlords’ peasants (and after 1721 and under certain conditions, their industrial counterparts, ‘possessional’ peasants) could be directly bought and sold, social relations were not fundamentally different on landlords’ estates, in bureaucratically-run industries or eighteenth-century private manufactories using ascribed labour, or in the post-Petrine army. Serfdom in its strict sense was thus a specific instance and distillation of a general syndrome, and it is both this general syndrome and its particular instance with which we must be concerned here, as they manifested themselves in the life of the Russian Empire.

Russia’s formal status as an empire, and its emergence as a major European power, were both the product of Peter I’s Great Northern War against Sweden. In the course of his reign, Peter geared Russia up to face Sweden and similarly formidable competitors by modernizing and reinforcing the Muscovite service system: a process in which compulsion was central. Peter’s measures imposed harsh new forms of service on all sectors of society, systematizing and intensifying what had existed previously, including the servile peasant regime. The question of the validity of serfdom was raised in his reign; and he has recently been condemned for not abolishing it. It is scarcely surprising that he did not do so: such a step would have been contrary both to the dominant ideology of the time, to Peter’s general line of policy and to his immediate practical advantage. In 1700, both slavery and serfdom were still taken for granted in European élite and ruling circles; in Russia the matter was not a public issue. After Peter’s death, the different parts of his service structure evolved in different ways. As already noted, service obligations on the nobility were lightened progressively until, finally, the Charter to the Nobility of 1785 guaranteed nobles’ property rights in land (and by implication, serfs) without requiring any service quid pro quo at all. On the other hand, the peasantry continued to be principal taxpayers, remained subject to compulsory
recruit levies into the army until 1874 and to labour direction by
the state in different forms well into the nineteenth century.

The middle decades of the eighteenth century and the reign of
Catherine II are often said to be the apogee of the Russian servile
regime: as the peasants lost juridical status, the power and privi-
lege of the nobility grew. At the same time, the position of the
servile peasantry in society gradually became an issue of public
concern in Russia. There was a European context. The develop-
ment of agriculture was making the status of primary producers
more important than ever before, and the cameralist doctrines of
the ‘well-ordered police state’ emphasized the need to protect and
increase population. Across Europe, abolitionist tendencies were
stirring, moral opposition to black slavery as well as white
serfdom, and the new philanthropy of the Enlightenment was
prompting concern for the welfare and improvement of the lower
classes. The values proclaimed by the French Revolution at the
end of the century finally presented choices in stark terms (while
making the Russian governing élite, however, even less inclined
to reformism than before). In Russia it was Catherine II herself,
the pupil of Montesquieu and the cameralists, who first put
the peasant question on the national agenda, where it was to
stay with intermissions until 1861. At her accession in 1762,
Catherine genuinely disapproved of serfdom and wanted to
change matters. It was due to her initiatives that the ‘peasant
question’ emerged as a matter of public debate. But as with
Peter, there were good reasons for her failure to take any decisive
steps in this sphere. She soon found that changing the status of
the peasants, let alone abolishing serfdom, raised major diffi-
culties. Not only was there no consensus in favour of it among
the noble serf-owners, which was not surprising, but without such
a consensus any change would be enormously difficult to imple-
ment administratively, in practice; and moreover, the peasants
themselves were highly resistant to change. When Catherine
tried to carry out reforms on her own estates, her own peasants
resisted, violently. This disorder in miniature was soon matched
by the major Cossack and peasant rising of 1773–5 in the Volga
frontier-lands, headed by the Don Cossack Emel’ian Pugachëv,
which put the security of the whole state in question. After
that date Catherine made no more public gestures towards the
peasant question. But most importantly for Catherine, there was
in fact no pressing need actually to do anything at all in this area.
Majority public opinion in Europe as in Russia was still pro-slavery. And the policies nearest to Catherine’s heart, the goals to which the empress attached the greatest significance, could be pursued effectively without major change in the status of the servile peasantry. Catherine’s overarching aims were to strengthen Russian society and the state, to maximize national wealth, and to develop Russian power and influence in Europe. All of these aims were fulfilled to a considerable degree in her lifetime. Her institutional and social reforms, while not successful in solving all of Russia’s administrative problems, made the system more flexible and responsive to local stimuli. During her reign the economy flourished, even if finances were overstretched by wars abroad and court expenditures at home. Her foreign policy, very successful in its own terms, both brought valuable new lands and commerce in the West and South, and made Russia into one of the most influential European powers. And neither the practical success of her policies internally and internationally, nor her own security and contemporary reputation, required action on serfdom. In other words, in the short term, serfdom was not an insuperable problem of public policy, nor did its abolition have to be a government priority. The rulers whom eighteenth-century Europe revered as exemplary, Henri IV of France and Peter the Great, were seen as warriors, lawgivers, and administrators concerned with the good of their subjects. In all three of these areas Catherine was able to take effective action, and to make a name for herself, without noticeabley improving the position of the peasantry. She established herself early as legislatrix: it was her activity here which earned her the sobriquet ‘the Great’ from the Legislative Assembly and foreign enthusiasts. Her genuine passion for the good of her subjects found expression directly in her public welfare and education policies, more generally in such things as the arrangement of the grain trade. And the successes of her armed forces, systematically built up, and her foreign undertakings, aggressively pursued, confirmed Russia’s position as a European Great Power by land, and by sea. All this could be achieved without changing serfdom.

The same was true of Alexander I: he had to confront the same problem in 1801 after the brief reign of his father Paul (1796–1801), who had viewed serfdom positively, as a valuable institution, since he held that individual owners provided greater welfare for peasants than would unprotected freedom and expo-
sure to the rapacity of officials and outsiders. Alexander agonized over the peasant question throughout his reign, commissioned various projects, sanctioned the first legal mechanism for emancipating serfs with land (the Free Agriculturists’ Law of 1803), and gave a guiding hand to the landless emancipation of the Baltic Germans’ serfs in Livonia in 1816–19. That was all. His motivation was complex; but fundamentally he could also manage perfectly well without changing the peasants’ status, and could subordinate the peasant question to more pressing or personal considerations. Servile Russia defeated, in fact crushed Bonaparte, the greatest soldier with the greatest army of his age. After 1815 Russia was the premier land-power of Europe: there was no pressing need to change this winning formula. Alexander’s successor Nicholas I disliked serfdom just as much as Alexander on moral grounds and for reasons of state: but he followed a similar line of policy with regard to it. In a much-quoted declaration of 1842 to the Council of State, he had ‘no doubt that serfdom in its present situation in our country is an evil, palpable and obvious for all; but to attack it now would be something still more harmful’. For a quarter of a century from his accession in 1825 he was very successful in his immediate aims, until disaster befell, and it was only the discrediting of his entire regime in the Crimean War that brought the issue of serfdom to the top of the Imperial agenda. Serfdom was abolished in 1861.

Thus serfdom in Russia was a flexible and variable institution and, despite growing concerns about it, mainly (but by no means solely) moral, it did not prevent Russian success on the national and international stage. However, to recapitulate: serfdom, and servile relations between Crown and population, grew and flourished in close parallel with the successful development of Russian power abroad and Russian society at home. Did the status of the peasantry and the institution and practice of serfdom in fact support or hinder the relative success of Imperial policies at large? To answer this question, several areas of national life must be examined: the economy, political culture, internal stability and military power.

An approach to the economy should begin with finance. The activities of Peter I and his successors required vast additional sums of money. The expansion of Russian financial resources in the eighteenth century was in the short term very successful, while laying long-term foundations for inflation and instability.
The eighteenth-century taxation system was not intrinsically tied to servile status.\(^{39}\) The soul or poll tax introduced by Peter I, payment of which was required of all lower classes, nevertheless became the great divider, the badge of *podlost* (‘baseness’, low status) and subservience. Townsmen and state peasants, who also paid it, had property rights and were not formally *glebae adscripti*, but neither had full freedom to leave their place of domicile: they were (as already noted) bound to obligation, and the government did not scruple to add to their burdens. One of the clearest examples of this general approach is the introduction of the poll tax into Western borderlands previously exempt from it, under Catherine II, as part of her 1775 reform of local government. For the empress, the primary goals in this case were standardization of law and administration (and élite status), and fiscal advantage.\(^{40}\) But the effect of the measure was not only to enhance central revenues: it also increased Baltic peasant obligations, causing riots, and in the Ukraine the peasants lost their right of departure, which facilitated their final enslavement. The government appears to have been happy with these outcomes (if not the social unrest which they engendered). The maintenance of the poll tax, payment of which was determined by the social estate (*soslovie*) to which an individual belonged, fitted in with the existing hierarchical social structure, which was favoured by both government and élites. The tax censuses (*revizii*), which determined who did and did not pay the tax remained a major indicator of inferior status, and at least initially a significant factor in determining who was categorized as a serf;\(^{41}\) and the responsibility of the landlord for payment of his peasants’ taxes was equally important in consolidating servile relations on the nobles’ estates. Thus the largest single Russian tax, the sole direct one, was closely intertwined with the servile system, which facilitated its assessment and its collection.

During the eighteenth century, in 1754, another major source of government revenue, the distilling of spirits, was made a monopoly of noble estate-owners.\(^{42}\) Just as serf-ownership became a clear social identifier,\(^{43}\) so the *soslovie* privilege of owning landed estates with servile labour brought other privileges in its wake. And the huge profits which the government (and the tax farmers who controlled distribution) made from the liquor trade relied on the low production costs of estate agriculture serviced by serfs.
Closely allied to questions of tax revenue was the development of the economy and the labour force. The problem of labour supply was central to the economics and the origins of serfdom. As Evsey Domar reminded us, serfdom was valuable to Muscovite servicemen and the Muscovite state because while land was relatively abundant, labour was scarce. Russia’s population density was the lowest in Europe: it suffered perennially from ‘that perpetual evil of the Russian land, the physical lack of people, the disproportion of the population to the area of the enormous state’. This situation obtained throughout the eighteenth century, despite rapid population growth: government projects required numerous new personnel, and the territorial consolidation and expansion of the period, the economic development of outlying areas, demanded large numbers of settlers for the border regions of European Russia, not to mention the empty spaces of Siberia. Moreover, population was perceived to be scarce even when in fact it was expanding. It was not until the middle decades of the nineteenth century, after exceptional population increases by European standards, that both state policy and noble opinion began seriously to contemplate problems of land-shortage and overpopulation in the central serf-owning regions of the country. Even so, this relative reversal of the land–labour ratio did not persuade the majority of landowners that they should enter upon new economic arrangements — most still clung to the familiar and tried-and-tested servile model — while until 1856, nineteenth-century governments continued to make use of labour direction, and were concerned more with stability and security than with promoting economic and social change.

Population growth contributed to the considerable expansion of Russian agriculture during the eighteenth century, though this was extensive rather than intensive. These developments reflected, on the one hand, lack of investment capital and the reluctance or inability of most farmers (noble or peasant) to take the risk of adopting new or more intensive crops and methods. On the other hand, despite the first signs of relative land shortage in central European Russia, extensive expansion was also facilitated by the availability of the new lands already mentioned, in the south and south-east. These were the product of conquest, and of consolidation and extension of state control into border areas. The government’s eagerness to expand its territories and its grasp in this way was dictated by a mixture of motives: they
involved international relations (interactions with border peoples in the Trans-Volga region) and defence (especially against the Turks), social control over border regions, and state-led settlement and economic development. But the increasing availability of new lands matched noble aspirations for more landed estates; and the manner of distribution and settlement of much of the newly-developed areas favoured noble estates with servile population. Land grants in the south were routinely made on condition of their settlement with peasants within a stated period; such estates were granted almost exclusively to nobles, and the new landlords frequently made use of their coercive powers to transfer serfs from internal provinces.47

The extensive expansion of agriculture was fuelled by the growing profitability of commercial agriculture, and this was actively promoted by the government. In terms of agronomy and agricultural techniques, eighteenth-century Russia was open to the new ideas of the European ‘agricultural revolution’, and some attempts were made to introduce new methods, crops and approaches.48 But both the harsh conditions under which Russian agriculture had to be conducted, and the peasant conservatism which these conditions reinforced, militated against innovation. The principal area of development remained the existing estate and landowner economy, based upon servile labour and dues. On the other hand, the rising expectations and consumption of the post-Petrine noble lifestyle made ever-growing demands upon the noble budget and economy,49 which encouraged not only agricultural expansion but also diversification into estate industries and entrepreneurial activities: liquor production was simply the most notable example.50 However, landowners as a whole were primary beneficiaries of the opening-up of internal and international markets. They benefited equally from the price revolution which took place in Russia during the eighteenth century, as prices of Russian commodities rose to world levels.51 The volume of agricultural production and of trade in agricultural products rose sharply during the second half of the eighteenth century, to the advantage of the treasury and of all producers, but especially the nobility.52 The primary carrier of this expansion in terms of production was the noble serf-employing estate economy, encouraged by the availability of new land and markets, labour resources and landowners’ direct control over their peasants.53 Not only were landowners able to increase their own production
by seeking new land or engrossing land on their existing estates previously used by peasants; they also competed successfully with towns in the processing and marketing of agricultural produce, exploiting once more the servile labour available to them and the items which it produced. In the contemporary controversy over ‘trading peasants’ who competed with urban traders, the urban population was hard pressed to make its case against invasion by serfs retailing their masters’ or their own produce. And in 1800, one-half of all fairs in Russia were held upon the lands of помещики (estate-owners). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the servile agrarian economy and its related enterprises were still well adapted to prevailing conditions.

If the estate-owning nobility found their power over the labour force valuable in the establishment of estate industries, which were a growing feature of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, industrial development at the national level in the eighteenth century shows a similar pattern. Ascription of labour was a central feature of eighteenth-century Russian industrial growth, used both in the mining complexes of Karelia, the Urals, Siberia and in merchant and ‘possessional’ enterprises in many other branches of industry. Powers of conscription and ascription allowed the government to find workers and to direct labour to otherwise unpopulated sites. State peasants thus compelled to work for the state were dragooned in the same way as landlords’ peasants by their masters. These government policies permitted payment of low wage rates and kept costs down; and if this sometimes took place at the expense of production efficiency and technical advance, that was a problem which had a serious effect only in the mid-nineteenth century. Decline in available labour supply when the ‘possessional’ peasant system was curtailed in the 1760s has been cited as a significant (though not the only) reason for the decline of the precious metal industries at the end of the eighteenth century. The availability of ascribed labour was crucial to the development of the Urals mining complex from the end of the seventeenth century onwards, while lack of free labour became one of its problems in the nineteenth century. The admiralty, the largest industrial complex of eighteenth-century Russia, met its considerable but fluctuating labour requirements by a mixture of conscription and voluntary inducements, in which coercive measures greatly predominated.
In short, in all three areas of the economy examined here, finances, agriculture and industry, the existence of servile relations and coercive direction of labour did not hinder, but rather materially facilitated, both the policy of the Crown and the interest of the élites in developing Russia’s economic potential during the eighteenth century. Also, in the first half of the nineteenth century, despite much discussion in some government and specialist circles, the relatively conservative officials in charge of economic policy found little reason seriously to change existing arrangements.

One reason why the establishment was slow to make changes in servile relations was that these were wholly consistent with Russian political culture for much of the Imperial period. The autocratic political system lacked major structures and institutions for the articulation of social interests or adversarial social relations, the protection of social rights, and the resolution of social conflict. Until the 1864 judicial reform the judicial system and the courts, for example, were notoriously inefficient, slow, corrupt and arbitrary, and peasant society was in any case largely governed by customary law. The attempts of successive eighteenth-century regimes to construct socially independent organs, social institutions dependent less on central government than on their own members, and to encourage autonomous social action, had limited success. It is therefore not surprising that the place of law in determining social action and resolving social conflict was restricted in practice, and that law was largely replaced by a culture of patronage. Patronage and personal connections or influence were fundamental to the workings of both the political and the social systems in Imperial Russia, and underpinned the power of the monarchy and the social pre-eminence of the aristocracy and nobility. The autocratic system has recently been described as the ‘statization’ of personal power.

The political expression of the patronage system was the culture of petitions, which in the Muscovite and Imperial periods became a standard mode of communication between the population, the nobility/aristocracy and the Crown. Indeed, the petition had long been part of the popular Russian ‘moral economy’; the refusal of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich to accept a mass petition, and thereby acknowledge his responsibility in matters of popular grievance, led to the riots of 1648 which compelled composition of the Law Code of 1649. In the eighteenth century, peasants
became skilled in using state laws as instruments to maximize the efficiency of their petitions. But patronage, in Russia as elsewhere in eighteenth-century Europe, was a powerful but unreliable mechanism. Although it implied a certain mutuality, in which the patron was expected to respond to his client’s needs and confer favours when required, it was always an uncertain and unbalanced relationship, in which power was personal and arbitrary, the client was largely dependent on the patron, and little redress was available in case of dissatisfaction. The values underlying the petition culture, even when it had been given structural definition by Imperial decree, were personal, patriarchal, hierarchical and authoritarian.

Serfdom was an integral part of this system of informal power. Advocates of serfdom idealized it as part of a set of paternalistic relationships based upon the love, morality and respect which should characterize both family life and subjects’ devotion to the tsar. Count D.P. Buturlin remarked in 1803, for example, that ‘there is something paternal and gentle in the reciprocal relationship between the master and his born servant, whereas the same relationship strikes me as purely mercenary when between the hired servant and his master’. Despite such views, it is perhaps going too far to suggest that serfdom was itself a form of patronage. Patronage rests upon consent and at least theoretical mutuality. While serfdom could, and sometimes did, operate on this basis, its ultimate foundation was coercion and silent obedience. Nevertheless the servile system encapsulated, underpinned and exemplified the non-legal, personal nature and projection of power in Russian society. The serf was absolutely at the disposal of his owner in the same way that the Petrine nobility was at the mercy of Peter’s government, and this remained the case long after the nobility’s position had been secured with a large measure of legal protection granted by later monarchs. The practical lawlessness of serf–master relations was mirrored not only in the relations (theoretical but not always actual) of noble and tsar, but also in social relations generally. Such despotic and unregulated relations characterized the peasant family which formed the fundamental unit of Russian society. Extreme awareness of rank and hierarchy, grounded both in the Table of Ranks, in the militaristic model of society favoured by so many Romanov rulers, and in the weakness of legal safeguards against abuse, produced a subservience and servility towards superiors and an
inhumane lack of consideration for inferiors which became a standard theme of Russian literature in the nineteenth century. (It also gave rise to, or at least great encouragement to, the noble duelling culture of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which provided a rare escape-route for nobles who sought to preserve their sense of dignity and self-worth against the tyranny of hierarchical social relations.) A.I. Koshelev was correct in the 1850s in denouncing serfdom as a system which corrupted not only the peasants but also the masters.

However, the lack of legal restriction on power exercised from above was an essential component of the autocratic system; and the nature of Russian serfdom both justified this lack, and reinforced the social structure and social relations which helped to preserve it. Observers, from G.F. Müller in the 1750s to S.S. Uvarov in the 1840s, correctly saw that serfdom and servile relations were intrinsic to the existing system. It was precisely this that finally undermined the autocratic regime of Nicholas I: not any diminution or failing in the institutional strength of the monarchy and its social support, but the fatal impact on national life of unaccountable power both at government level and in army, society and administration lower down — 'administrative [and, one might add, social — RB] arbitrariness' and the 'universal official lie'. It was these features of the Russian polity, according to P.I. Valuev in his famous memoir Duma russkogo (Thoughts of a Russian, 1855), which were ultimately responsible for Russia’s failure in the Crimean War. And when in 1856 the regime, so successful hitherto, finally proved to be incapable of fulfilling its own state goals, a failure which called its legitimacy into question, the abolition of serfdom was a logical consequence.

In Imperial Russia the state’s legitimacy was founded upon military power in external relations, and the support or acquiescence of the population internally. Throughout this period, and even in face of the Crimean debacle, the legitimacy of the autocratic system was never seriously challenged from within; and in the 1860s the monarchy led reforms of almost all areas of public life except the political, while keeping its own power and prerogatives largely intact. The same had been true in the eighteenth century, despite the turbulence around the Russian throne: the battles of court factions and frequent palace coups called into question neither the institution of the unlimited
monarchy (except once, in 1730) nor the privileged social position of the service nobility. Peter I, who enforced his personal will both with his cudgel and through the workings of a police state system and the inquisitions of the Preobrazhenskii Prikaz (his secret police office), at once tied his servitor class more tightly to service and made service a correlative of privilege. Peter I’s often-alleged meritocratic tendencies did not prevent him from enshrining noble advantage in his Table of Ranks, and enabling the established aristocratic clans to dominate it. Catherine II was typical of most monarchs of the ancien régime in thinking of the aristocracy as her fellows — ‘je suis aristocrate, c’est mon métier’. Moreover, the nobility was simply too useful, too essential a tool, to be neglected by the Crown. Imperial enactments had the effect of consolidating both noble social dominance and noble property rights. As O.A. Omel’chenko has remarked, despite noble insecurities a solid tradition of civil rights (or at least liberties) evolved in eighteenth-century Russia which was borne by the nobility: under Catherine they enjoyed a good measure of liberty and property. This also consolidated their rights of serf-ownership; and when the western borderlands were brought into line with the Russian centre after 1775, this was made acceptable to their respective élites by the offer of equal access for all nobles to freehold of property in land, and to servile labour. Russian noble credit institutions demanded serfs rather than land as security, and wealth was counted in souls. Government enactments had the effect of entrenching the position of the nobility as the pre-eminent social class and as the sole private owners of populated land between 1764–1801, and the government enjoyed noble support on this basis.

Noble ownership of the servile peasantry also served as a control measure in the countryside. Although eighteenth-century monarchs probably never came to see landowners quite as Nicholas I did, simply as 100,000 rural police chiefs, throughout the Imperial period public law effectively stopped at the gates to the estate. The estate owner bore primary responsibility for good order on his lands, and estate discipline was the first recourse for social control. (Many estate owners were absentee landlords, but in such cases their authority was delegated to a steward, or even to the elder of the peasant community.) Landlords’ control over serfs thus served in some measure as a substitute for local government. The ‘great reforms’ of the 1860s retained corporal
punishment as a penalty for peasants. Traditional views, both liberal and Soviet, have seen a sea of suppressed peasant discontent in the Imperial countryside, with a rising tide of unrest in the early nineteenth century. Peasant resistance was undoubt-edly a common occurrence, occasionally taking violent forms of arson or murder. Against this, Stephen Hoch in his study of a large nineteenth-century barshchina estate has argued that we should be impressed, not that there were so many instances of landlord–peasant conflict, but that there were so few. The conclusions of his analysis of village relations in Petrovskoe have been amplified by subsequent research. He suggests persuasively that these relations operated at grassroots level to maintain the servile system: the village élite and estate management both had privileged positions to defend, they both benefited from the system, and they therefore colluded in defence of their own respective power positions and to maintain the status quo which guaranteed these.74

Peter I’s recruiting system gave both landowners and also state–peasant and urban communities the power to select individuals for dispatch as recruits to the army, and the same groups were given in 1760 the right to exile serfs or community members who incurred their displeasure. Landowners frequently delegated part or all of these powers to the village commune. These mechanisms, which formed part and parcel of the servile system, created an authoritarian system of social exclusion, which contributed to social stability by exerting pressure on community members to conform, and by removing physically those who would not or could not do so.75 To the extent that the servile system militated against peasant mobility, independence and knowledge, it also served the purpose of buttressing a relatively stable social order. Outside the estate, the passport system introduced by Peter allowed serf owners to determine the movements of their peasants; it enabled the authorities to track peasants, and in general to check the legitimacy of any population movement. Religious and ideological beliefs also served to mobilize peasant allegiances in favour of the established regime. Both Orthodox teaching and belief, and peasant conceptions of right social order, hallowed the figure of the tsar; and as nineteenth-century Populist revolutionaries were to find,76 it was very difficult to rouse peasants against the status quo in the name of anything but the tsar’s will. Even Pugachëv presented himself as a replacement...
tsar, and promised freedom only through subjection and service to himself. Moreover, peasant ‘naïve monarchism’ and trust in the ideal benevolence of the tsar was mirrored by what Daniel Field called the authorities’ ‘myth of the peasant’: the frequent readiness of government to pardon peasant rebellion on the grounds that the peasants in their simplicity had been misled, either by misguided loyalty to an imposter or by malicious outsiders. In general, social mechanisms worked powerfully to underpin popular support for the established order. Dissent was usually localized, rarely if ever directed against the system as a whole rather than specific abuses, and normally easily controlled by the forces of the state, by the regular army as the last resort.

Public order was seriously threatened only by major unrest. The most important popular movements of the Imperial period were traditionally treated by Soviet scholars as ‘peasant wars’, expressive of broad class struggle; more recent emphasis has focused on their specific social composition and geographical setting. Kondratii Bulavin (1708) and Emel’ian Pugachëv (1773–5), like Stenka Razin before them (1670–1), were Cossack leaders operating in frontier territory, whom peasants joined in greater or lesser numbers; they might articulate widespread as well as local grievances, but they never seriously threatened the heartland of serfdom and Imperial control. The government’s response to such episodes was invariably military, and invariably successful. The Pugachëv revolt of 1773–4 was probably the greatest popular rising of early modern Europe. But after initial setbacks, and some panic among noble circles, the authorities were able to suppress it comprehensively. Pugachëv was defeated on his own terms, both militarily and ideologically, and physically destroyed. The unrest was contained and the Imperial order re-imposed, although Catherine hastened the implementation of a major reform of provincial administration to improve control of outlying regions. The government also emasculated Cossack autonomy, and integrated the Cossack ‘hosts’ into the regular army structure, which deprived potential future peasant insurgents of access to crucial military experience and leadership and completed the Cossacks’ conversion from potential dissidents to an arm of the ruling power. The government was well aware that serfdom had dual significance for public order, as a method of control and a source of discontent, and after 1775, as already noted, whatever private projects may have been considered, there
was no public discussion of serfdom and the peasant question. Therefore, in terms of the Imperial state’s ability to control and mobilize its population and resources, these social movements were not of great importance. Their significance lay more in the realm of social psychology: ruling élites were always fearful of what rampant peasants might do, and in times of social tension this could become a factor in élite behaviour and state policy. Nicholas I justified his famous statement of 1842 by reference to the fury and unreliability of the masses. The same was true of the French Revolution: the spectre of peasant sans-culottism could be terrifying to Russian nobles, but there is no evidence at all that Russian peasants in the mass were affected by events in France.

Overall, therefore, the existing serf-based social order contained adequate mechanisms for its own defence, including the collusion of the mass of the population. But its final guarantor, of course, remained the military forces of the state. In using armed force to put down civil unrest and peasant disturbances, naturally the government had to rely upon the army. This was composed overwhelmingly of peasants, yet it was used very successfully to crush peasant discontent. The Imperial Russian standing army successfully divided peasant soldiers with military experience from the civilian population. It has been argued that it was this fact above all others which brought Tsar Alexander II to embrace the abolition of serfdom in 1856. Reform which was essential for military purposes — the introduction of a reserve system involving the training and subsequent return home of large numbers of peasant conscripts — posed impossible social dangers without prior emancipation, and its necessity therefore precipitated the end of the servile regime. The old order certainly operated to insulate the Russian soldier from the grievances of his fellow peasants in the villages. The military system depended on the lack of rights of the lower classes who were subject to the recruit levy, and mirrored the servile system. The serf recruit, freed de jure from the control of his master, was in some respects a privileged member of society, but he exchanged subservience in the village to bol’shak (head of household), starosta (elder) and pomeshchik (landowner) for subservience in the regiment to company discipline, artel’ (cooperative), starosta and commanding officer. Service for life (twenty-five years after 1793) meant that the young soldier lost contact with family and village life and
The same features may also help to explain the success of the Russian army on the international battlefield. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Russian Empire enjoyed an extraordinary period of military success. Although Russian international status fluctuated in the short term and suffered some
serious setbacks, these all proved merely temporary (for example, 1700, 1711, 1805, 1812), and the empire’s long-term rise led in 1815 to the pinnacle of Great Power status. This was lost in 1856, and never regained in the same measure. Russia’s Crimean débâcle was due in part to defective diplomacy and bad generalship, in part to other practical defects of the ‘Nicholas system’, particularly the failure or inability to modernize in the sphere of technology, military practice and the economy. Despite extensive reforms of military administration carried out in the 1830s, accelerating changes in the financial, economic and technical pre-requisites of warfare among the industrializing Great Powers proved to have outstripped Russia’s capacities. But in the pre-industrial era, as the research of Walter Pintner and William Fuller suggests, technical advance and sophistication were much less important than they became in the mid-nineteenth century. One of the most crucial determinants of success in eighteenth-century military campaigns was the simple ability to put an army in the field and maintain it there, supplying and replacing it as necessary. This affected various aspects of military organization and fighting technique: manpower, supply, medical provision and attrition rates. For present purposes the most important features are the recruitment, retention and morale of the rank and file soldiery.

In these respects the Imperial Russian system constructed by Peter I and essentially continued by his successors until 1874 had significant advantages. The Petrine military system of a standing army, maintained by involuntary ‘estate’-based conscription and quartered on the land, allowed full access to manpower reserves at relatively low cost. It was not part of the servile system as such: on the contrary, as already remarked, serfs sent as soldiers were removed from the ownership of their lord, they became technically free, and truly so if they survived to old age and veteran or invalid status. Nevertheless, their position within the army remained one of total subordination.

The social dynamics of the soldier’s company, the artel’ system and the personal, social and economic situation of the rank-and-file soldiery which has already been discussed were not only vital factors in the army’s effectiveness against internal insurgency, but probably contributed materially to the fighting qualities for which the Russian infantryman became famous: preparedness to suffer and endure, stoicism in the face of attack and danger, and
readiness to go over to the offensive even under conditions of extreme adversity.

In contrast with the armies of [late eighteenth-century] Europe . . . the Russians had fashioned something approaching a truly national army. The peasants who manned its ranks were illiterate, but they rendered their sovereign a primitive devotion that commanders could readily exploit to build loyalty and confidence without excessive use of the whip and cudgel.91

This must also have been a significant factor in preventing desertion, something which had plagued Peter but which became rarer in the army in the later eighteenth century while still rife elsewhere in Europe.

This military system relied fundamentally on the coercive powers which enabled the Muscovite state to direct all its subjects’ labour and which Peter adopted and adapted in military as in other spheres. The total subordination of the peasantry on which the new Petrine army rested was essentially a reflection of the Muscovite service regime. Despite suggestions, at the time and since, that Peter could and should have abolished the servile relationship between landlord and peasant, the need and ability to direct labour resources, for military, fiscal, industrial or social-economic purposes (maintenance of the élite), clearly out-weighted considerations of humanity or the marginal gains offered by peasant emancipation in other spheres. The Petrine army and its post-Petrine history demonstrated the success of this military model, which was maintained by his successors into the nineteenth century.

To conclude: serfdom and servile relations arose in Muscovite Russia because under the conditions of an undeveloped and underpopulated society and economy, the government found them a convenient tool for the practical realization of its goals, primarily military. Serfdom was one principal manifestation of the power of the ruling élite to control society at large. The recent argument of L.V. Milov92 that the needs of national survival made serfdom an inescapable necessity in Russia is excessively deterministic, and begs the question as to the reasons for continuous Muscovite expansion. Nevertheless, it is clear that successive regimes found the system useful, and that it offered effective means to direct society and control resources. At the same time, the reasons for the domestic and international success of the Imperial Russian governments in the eighteenth and first
half of the nineteenth centuries were various. Social relations were not their sole determinant, nor was government action. Serfdom was only one factor influencing the dynamics of the period: others include the country’s size, location, resources and demographics, or the favourable intellectual and commercial conjunctures of the eighteenth century. Nor did Russian successes derive only from circumstances inside the empire: in the international arena, throughout the period considered, the weaknesses of Russia’s adversaries and competitors were just as important as Russian strength. (If the decline of Sweden, Poland and the Ottoman Empire facilitated Russia’s rise in Europe, the unification and power of Germany was a significant factor in her incomplete recovery after 1856.) The present discussion suggests, however, that the existence of servile relations in Imperial and especially eighteenth-century Russia did not hinder, and in some respects positively assisted, developments which served to strengthen the country’s economic and military capability, support the existing political structure, and realize the ruling regime’s policy goals. The immediate economic and social utility of the servile system to the Imperial ruling élite remained considerable well into the nineteenth century, and outweighed in their eyes serfdom’s acknowledged dangers and disadvantages; these could be fairly easily contained or were not of sufficient gravity to make change essential. The striking economic, cultural and military achievements of successive Russian regimes provided justification for the status quo. From the point of view of the pre-industrial period, the abolition of serfdom, or even serious improvement in the condition of the servile peasantry, was not a prerequisite for Russian achievement of acceptable internal order and Great Power status. Nor was it essential, either, to the good reputation of successive tsars, at least among most contemporaries; it was principally later public and scholarly opinion which was affronted by the Imperial rulers’ failure to act. It is therefore not surprising that for much of the Imperial period, servile relations and the institution of serfdom were considered by government and élites as serviceable tools of social and economic organization and control, and that they commanded widespread support right up until the abolition of serfdom in 1861.
Notes

Parts and versions of the arguments presented in this article have been rehearsed before several scholarly audiences and read by several colleagues: I acknowledge most gratefully their comments and criticisms, also those of the anonymous *EHQ* referee. Needless to say, responsibility for the opinions expressed here, and for any deficiencies, is mine. A short early version focused upon the late eighteenth century appeared as ‘Das Recht der Leibeigenschaft in Russland in der Regierungszeit Katharinas II’, in C. Scharf, ed., *Katharina II, Russland und Europa. Beiträge zur internationalen Forschung* (Mainz 2001), 403–19.

1. The comparison has often been made; a full discussion lies beyond the scope of this article. See further, P. Kolchin, *Unfree Labour: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA/London 1987); M.L. Bush, ed., *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage* (Manchester 1996).


7. M.L. Bush, ‘Serfdom in Medieval and Modern Europe: a comparison’, in, Bush, op. cit., 199–224, 222. The most recent discussion of Russian serfdom, by C.S.L. Dunning, notes that ‘The development of serfdom is one of the most controversial topics in Russian history, but there is no doubt that it was due to state action in response to the crisis of the late sixteenth century.’ Dunning emphasizes financial pressures as motivating factors. C.S.L. Dunning, *Russia’s First Civil War. The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty* (University Park, PA 2001), 67–9.


Journals of Martha and Catherine Wilmot [. . .] 1803–1808 (London 1934), 146.
Further on serf standards of living, see S.L. Hoch, Serfdom and Social Control in
Russia. Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambor (Chicago, IL/London 1986); R. Bideleux,
‘Agricultural Advance under the Russian Village Commune System’, in R.
Bartlett, ed., Land Commune and Peasant Community in Russia. Communal Forms
13. I. Blanchard, ‘Eighteenth-Century Russian Economic Growth: State Enter-
prise or Peasant Endeavour?’, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, Vol. 45
(1997), 547–8; first published in I. Blanchard, ed., Studies in Economic and Social
History: Discussion Papers, No. 95–1 (University of Edinburgh, Dept. of Economic
and Social History 1995).
Hughes and M. di Salvo, eds, A Window on Russia. Papers from the 5th Inter-
national Conference on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Gargnano 1994 (Rome 1996),
83–91; I. de Madariaga, Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great (London 1981),
313–14.
selbst beschrieben. Erstes Fragment (Göttingen 1802), 125–8. However, much still
remains unclear about daily practice in this area, and the practical realities of
servile relations overall.
16. For example, A. Kahan, The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout. An Economic
History of Eighteenth-Century Russia (Chicago, IL/London 1985), 23.
17. Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva Vol. X (St
Petersburg 1872), 285–8; Madariaga, op. cit., 139.
18. V.I. Semevskii, Krest’iane v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II (2 vols, St Petersburg
1900–1), I, 579–92.
19. Ibid., I, 593–676; N.M. Druzhinin, Gosudarstvennye krest’iane i reforma
P.D. Kiseleva (2 vols, Moscow/Leningrad 1946–53), I, ch. 1; S.G. Pushkarev,
Krest’ianskaia pozemel’no-peredel’naia obshchina v Rossii (new edn, ed. M. Raeff,
(Newtonville, MA 1976), passim.
20 Mironov, I, 361 (emphasis in the original), 368–77. See also the extensive
collective review in Slavic Review, Vol. 60 (2001), 550–99, and Mironov’s article,
‘When and Why was the Russian Peasantry Emancipated?’, in Bush, op. cit.,
323–47.
22. See, e.g. Bush, op. cit.; J.M. Hartley, A Social History of the Russian Empire,
1650–1825 (London/New York 1999), 19ff. Dunning, op. cit., 69, writes that
lower status service men bound to the posed found themselves ‘in effect enserfed’
(my italics).
23. ‘Initially this word [krepostnoi] indicated a peasant or slave for whom the
owner possessed a ‘deed’ [krepost’], that is, some written document. In this sense
’servile’ [krepostnye] peasants and people were contrasted with ‘old-established’
one [starinnye]. But ‘old-established’ people also became ‘servile’ when an entry
in a government document became the proof of their old establishment. Alongside
this entry, the [old] free agreement [between lord and peasant] retained its signifi-
cance only for those persons who enrolled themselves in the peasantry from a
free status. The private document [krepost’] was replaced or supplemented by a
government one, and at the same time the concept krepostnoi acquired new mean-


25. Is the modern tax-payer unfree? Were Germans seized by a recruiting patrol for Frederick II’s armies, ‘enserfed’? Such essential questions of status, definition and terminology have confused previous discussions of the origins of Russian serfdom as well as modern social analysis. However, they are unfortunately beyond the scope of the present article.


27. Miranov, Op. cit., I, 370. Jerome Blum in his comparative analysis of ‘The Rise of Serfdom in Eastern Europe’, *American Historical Review*, Vol. LXII (1957) identified as fundamental causes of serfdom throughout the region not royal power, but the political leverage of lesser nobilities, and the absence of countervailing urban communities: he consequently concluded that ‘the history of agrarian institutions in Russia would have taken much the same course without the creation of the absolutist state’. But even if it is true, as Blum asserts, that ‘the new [Russian] absolutism only channelled and intensified already existing tendencies’, he finds the point of divergence from Russia’s neighbours far back in time, when ‘the Muscovite rulers unified the country’, and also points out that in Russia the lesser nobility’s triumph over the peasantry was paid for, exceptionally, with obligations of their own to the ‘service state’, Blum, *Lord and Peasant*, 605–7. The present discussion is concerned essentially with the Imperial period.


29. Muscovite servicemen had also received some cash remuneration; and ownership of land and serfs continued to be a reward aspired to by Petrine and post-Petrine servitors. But the automatic and causal link had been broken.

30. F.W. Kagan and R. Higham, eds, *The Military History of Tsarist Russia* (New York/Basingstoke 2002), 82. In the eighteenth century after 1762, some period of state service seems to have remained the norm, and was often desirable for financial or social reasons (it was also expected by Paul I, 1796–1801); but retirement, if desired, was not difficult to encompass at any age. The ‘superfluous man’ portrayed in classical Russian literature — the educated, economically secure estate-owner who feels no obligation to, need for, nor satisfaction in state service, but also has no other object in life — if real, was a nineteenth-century phenomenon.


36. When the grain trade was liberalized in the 1760s, consideration was given to such problems as control of internal prices and availability of emergency grain supplies. For a judicious review of Catherine’s approach to this area of public life, see R.E. Jones, ‘Morals and Markets: The Conflict of Traditional Values and Liberal Ideas in the Economic Thought and Policies of Catherine II’, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, 45 (1997), 526–40.


39. Although in some respects the dues paid by serfs to state and owners influenced the levels of dues set for state peasants. Madariaga, op. cit., 479.


41. It was not unknown for landowners to enserf members of their own family with whom they had fallen out, by entering their names as serfs in the revision lists.


43. E. Kimerling Wirtschaft, Social Identity in Imperial Russia (DeKalb 1997), 24.


48. On the successes and failures of this development, see M. Confino,


52. Mironov, ‘Vliianie revoliutsii tsen’, 92–8. If we may believe Mironov’s figures, agricultural expansion was one major cause of relative decline in Russia’s urban population in the later eighteenth century, even reflecting in some cases a process of ‘re-ruralization’: B.N. Mironov, Russkii gorod, 227. In general on urban development in this period see M. Hildermeier, Bürgerturn und Stadt in Rußland 1760–1870. Rechtliche Lage und Soziale Struktur (Köln-Wien 1986).

53. P.B. Struve, Krepostnoe khoziaistvo: is sledovanie po ekonomicheskoj istorii Rossii v XVIII i XIX v. (Moscow 1913); Kahan, The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout.


55. Mironov, ‘Vliianie revoliutsii tsen’, 90–4; Kahan, op. cit., 134–6ff. This positive evaluation of the economy in the ‘golden age’ of the Russian nobility masks the fact of extensive poverty at the lower end of the nobles’ social scale. I am concerned here with the landed-estate economy as a whole.

56. Kahan, op. cit., 85; Blanchard, Russia’s ‘Age of Silver’, Part II, highlights the adverse effect of government attempts in 1779 to improve the conditions of ascribed peasants in the metallurgical industry.

57. Kahan, op. cit., 87. The labour ascription system permitted harsh usage of the workforce by managements, and labour unrest was a constant by-product. However, even the most serious episodes were easily contained, by military force if necessary, and did not prevent (though they may in the long term have hindered) industrial growth.


64. See Hoch, 'The Serf Economy and Social Order', 316, and his description of peasant life in Serfdom and Social Change.


68. P. Valuev, Duma russkogo, quoted in M.O. Gershenzon, ed., Epokha Nikolaja I (Moscow 1910), 184. Recently F.W. Kagan has attacked the notion that the Crimean defeat discredited Nicholas' regime, F.W. Kagan, The Military Reforms of Nicholas I. The Origins of the Modern Russian Army (Basingstoke/London 1999), 243. Kagan’s revisionist view of the relative success of Russia in fighting the Crimean War under extremely adverse conditions may be plausible, but his conclusion does not take into account his own observations that the government successfully concealed Russia’s systemic military vulnerability under an image of continuing strength.

69. See, most recently, E.V. Anisimov, Dyba i knut: politcheskii sysk i russkoe obschestvo v XVIII veke (Moscow 1999).


71. O.A. Omel'chenko, ‘Zakonnaia monarkhia’ Ekateriny II (Moscow 1993),
358–9. The 1785 Charter guaranteed a wide range of rights in law and (as already observed) subsequent monarchs found it difficult or inexpedient seriously to diminish these legal rights. There was a difference between the position of nobles in the later eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and that in the first half of the eighteenth century, when the outcome of noble and court faction-fighting frequently meant exile, expropriation of property, and sometimes death. Against this, much emphasis has been placed in the literature on noble insecurity and alienation throughout the eighteenth century. Day-to-day practice in the localities and in personal relations between nobles were a somewhat different matter from government policy and legislation, and here nobles may well have felt insecure or ill at ease, although this view of contemporary noble culture and psychology requires further substantiation: insecurity should not be confused with changing values and self-image. See, most recently, the remarks on this point of Gary Marker, ‘The Ambiguities of the Eighteenth Century’, Kritika, Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, Vol. 2 (2001), 245–7.


73. Mikhail M. Shcherbatov, in his essay opposing serf emancipation, imagined the nobility threatening Catherine with rebellion if their serfs were freed: something she said that she herself feared in the Baltic provinces, were she to push the matter there too far. Bartlett, ‘Defences of Serfdom in Eighteenth-Century Russia’, 73.

74. Hoch, Serfdom and Social Control in Russia. Hoch’s analysis of serfdom as a symbiotic relationship has been developed further by the excellent studies of Edgar Melton in his contribution on Russia to T. Fox, ed., The Peasantasries of Europe from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries (London/New York 1998), 227–68 and of David Moon, ‘Reassessing Russian Serfdom’ and The Russian Peasantry 1600–1930: The World the Peasants Made (London 1999). See also Moon’s recent work, The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia 1762–1907 (London 2001).


76. A situation which drove them in the late 1870s to engineer the abortive Chigirin conspiracy: see D. Field, Rebels in the Name of the Tsar (Boston, MA/London 1976), ch. 3.


79. The Decembrist revolutionaries of 1825 deliberately sought to use military models in order to limit unpredictable popular action, and this was a contributory cause of their failure.


82. A. Rieber, ed., *The Politics of Autocracy: Letters of Alexander II to Prince A.I. Barjatinskij 1857–1864* (Paris 1966), Introduction; Kagan, *The Military Reforms*, 250–1. In 1832 Nicholas I, concerned at the length of time required before new recruits became battle-ready, had personally proposed the introduction of a form of reserve system, as a mechanism to speed up recruits’ integration into the army: recruits would be registered and prepared, but then released back into society to await a further summons to their regiment. However, this was rejected by his military advisers, on grounds of impracticability and potential economic and social damage, including a ‘threat to domestic tranquillity’, (Russian State Military-Historical Archive, Moscow, fond VUA, d. 18027. I am indebted to Alex Bitis who kindly made this material available to me.) However, the furlough system introduced in 1834 for long-serving soldiers seems to have been acceptable. On this, and for the context of the 1830s, see Kagan, op. cit., esp. 212–35. Kagan’s work demonstrates admirably the increasing problems faced by Nicholas and his government in the military sphere, and the inadequacies of responses conceived within the framework of the existing servile system, though Kagan’s use of the term ‘serfdom’ is questionable, and he does not consider such things as Russian railway policy.

83. Wirtschafter, op. cit., 120.

84. W.C. Fuller, *Strategy and Military Power in Russia 1600–1914* (New York 1992), 172; Wirtschafter, op. cit., 34–5. In peacetime, troops spent much time quartered in peasant villages; but this does not seem to have led them to identify themselves with their hosts.

85. On conscription, and village attitudes to recruitment and recruits, see V.A. Aleksandrov, *Sel’skaia obshchina v Rossi (XVIII-nach. XIX v.)* (Moscow 1976), 273–94; Wirtschafter, op. cit., ch. 1.


90. Absolute costs were of course not low; and the ‘estate’ basis of recruitment finally became restrictive as larger and larger numbers were required after 1815. These problems led in the nineteenth century to the creation of Alexander I’s notorious military colonies and were also a major factor in the military reforms of the 1830s. The military colonies were designed to divert costs still further from the treasury onto the land and the soldiers themselves: they combined the economic autonomy of the peasant village with the reserve requirements of the military establishment. Russia already had a number of settled military forces — the Cossack hosts, the Serbian and other military border settlements created in the
1750s, and the militarized settlements promoted by Potemkin in New Russia. The Alexandrine military colonies operated entirely within the assumptions of serfdom: they relied on the model of the peasant village which financed itself while also providing services to lord and Crown, and they deployed to the full the directive powers of the servile regime. The military colonies were undermined by the martinet management which Arakcheev and his successors imposed upon them, but they were maintained until 1857, when they contained altogether some 620,000 troops.

92. Milov, Velikorusski pakhar’, Conclusion.
93. A full consideration of the questions raised here would require further comparative analyses, both of the dynamics of serfdom in other European states, and of the roots of state and military power among Russia’s principal competitors — of particular interest in this respect might be France and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the other two great absolute monarchies of Eastern Europe, Prussia and Austria. This work must be left to another occasion.

Roger Bartlett is Professor Emeritus of Russian History at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London. His research has focused on the social, cultural and economic history of Imperial Russia, especially the eighteenth century: peasant society and its relationship with government and educated society, the ‘peasant question’, foreigners in Russia and Russia’s cultural relations with other countries. His latest publications include Johann Georg Eisen (1717-1779): Ausgewählte Schriften. Deutsche Volksaufklärung und Leibeigenschaft im Russischen Reich (together with E. Donnert, Marburg: Vg. Herder-Institut, 1998) and The German Lands and Eastern Europe. Essays in their Historical, Political and Cultural Relations (ed. with K. Schönwälder, Basingstoke/London: Macmillan, 1999).
‘To Bring Light Unto the Germans’: Irish Recognition-seeking, the Weimar Republic and the British Commonwealth, 1930–2

Our former relations with England have given the impression to the German people that Ireland was to all intents and purposes nothing more than a province of Great Britain. It will take some time before Germany comes to realize that Ireland has really come out of the corner. It is our duty to make our status clear to the German people and not the duty of the German people to go and look for the facts.1

The development of Irish–German relations in the first decade of the Saorstát (Free State) paralleled substantial changes in both the British Empire–Commonwealth and the international system. The first official usage of the term ‘British Commonwealth of Nations’ was in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.2 Unfortunately, as Troy D. Davis relates, after the Anglo-Irish Treaty ‘the exact relationship of the Dominions to Britain and the Crown was not so clearly defined’.3 The precise nature of intra-Commonwealth relations was only eventually clarified after a decade of incremental discussions with the signing of the Treaty of Westminster 1931. Finally the British Commonwealth of Nations came of age. Until then ambiguous relations reigned within the British Empire, as the multifaceted implications of autonomous, co-equal relations between the Commonwealth members in the areas of trade, foreign relations and passports had to be gradually disentangled.4 This induced confusion in the minds of all concerned about the nature of the organizational metamorphosis during the shift from empire to commonwealth proper.

The first decade of the Saorstát witnessed this unparalleled shift in both the internal and external relations of the Empire.5 The formation of the Saorstát occurred at this ‘transitional...
moment’. The Great War had transformed international relations. Though Britain had emerged victorious it was not without financial and political costs. It experienced a ‘mismatch between strategy and actual power’. The British Empire was slowly evolving into a free and co-equal association of Dominions and the Saorstát played a central role in this process. The Anglo-Irish Treaty was the ‘unprecedented midwife for the birth’ of the British Commonwealth, and held wide implications for the ‘wider imperial sphere’. Dominion status consigned upon the Saorstát was an ‘experiment’ to reconcile Irish nationalism with the British Imperial idea. Unfortunately, this new status ‘lacked precision’ since the Commonwealth was in the ‘process of continuing development’. The contradiction between equality in practice and subordination in theory to the British constitution irked nationalists across the Empire. The Saorstát supplemented the ‘reforming zeal’ of MacKenzie King, the Canadian Prime Minister, and the Afrikaaners in an effort to demonstrate dominion autonomy internationally through total self-government. In intra-Commonwealth affairs these ‘revisionist’ dominions advocated decentralization, external autonomy of dominions and voluntarism.

By contrast, the metropole sought to maintain Commonwealth unity and solidarity. In line with its pragmatic political culture, Britain resisted codification and regularization of the practice of the emerging intra-Commonwealth relationship, favouring evolutionary, flexible and adaptable responses to change. This echoed Joseph de Maistre’s maxim: ‘In all political systems there are relationships which it is wiser to leave unidentified.’ Nonetheless, under pressure from the ‘revisionist’ dominions, intra-Commonwealth discussion of constitutional relations occurred in order to reconcile the discrepancy between theory and practice. The piecemeal reforms gained speed after the Imperial Conference of 1926 and climaxed with the Treaty of Westminster to the satisfaction of moderate dominion nationalists.

In sum, between 1921 and 1931 the ‘revisionist’ dominions (Canada, South Africa, Saorstát) had a dual problem in seeking international enhancement. Firstly, they had to devote substantial resources to intra-Commonwealth negotiations to further their status constitutionally in relation to the metropole. The Saorstát had been granted ‘dominion home rule’ in Article 2 of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. But what it meant remained to be
defined. The British position was well put by Lionel Curtis, who played an instrumental role in the Anglo-Irish negotiations of 1921. Dominion status, according to Curtis, ‘can only be described as it is today without attempting to conjecture what it may become’. Furthermore, Curtis claimed the status of a dominion ‘is exactly the same as the status of the United Kingdom’ in domestic affairs.15

But the position of Irish nationalists was somewhat different from that of other dominions with the possible exception of French-Canadians and Afrikaaners. The Irish nationalist movement had reluctantly accepted dominion status at the cost of domestic political unity. According to John M. Ward, it was ‘the only conscript member of the British Commonwealth of Nations’.16 Furthermore, the Treaty settlement had equated the position of the Saorstát explicitly with that of Canada, the ‘senior dominion’. This analogy to Canada occurred at a time when the Canadians were in the process of elaborating and expanding the meaning of dominionhood, thereby adding further ambiguity to the Saorstát’s precise status.17 The Saorstát was an uncomfortable dominion. As Lowry has indicated, the Irish Government ‘wished to approximate a European Christian nation rather than a dominion . . . [but] the Commonwealth dimension was inescapable for defence and economic reasons . . .’18 It was not one of Britain’s ‘daughter nations’. As Curtis admitted, Ireland was ‘one of the most prolific of all mothers’.19 Such considerations led to the Saorstát’s occupation of an anomalous position in the British Commonwealth. It had an old European nation claim, but it was also the ‘oldest overseas possession’ of the British Crown.20 Unlike the non-European dominions, geographical propinquity meant that the Saorstát intruded in British policy towards the continent in the inter-war period.

The ambivalences, complexities and evasions of the ‘becoming’ Commonwealth created a problem for the dominions, in particular the Saorstát. At an extra-Commonwealth level, they had to present their evolving — though still imperfect — incremental gains in the foreign policy sphere to the international community at large, both at a bilateral and a multilateral level (the League of Nations). The Saorstát energetically pursued this proactive form of diplomatic propaganda. In particular, the Cumann na nGaedheal government attempted to demonstrate to a disgruntled anti-Treaty domestic opposition that acceptance of
the Anglo-Irish Treaty as a ‘stepping stone’ to full independence worked.21

This whole problematical process of gaining a greater international and diplomatic profile through painful negotiation within the Commonwealth, and subsequently demonstrating it domestically and internationally, was enormously taxing for the small and inexperienced diplomatic services of the dominions. Therefore, the Anglo-Irish relationship had ripple effects on the ‘wider imperial sphere’,22 and on extra-Commonwealth relations. Irish–German relations were part of a larger interactive modality of relationships that required considerable powers of explication at the diplomatic level.

The opening of the Irish legation in Berlin was part of such groundmaking moves by the Irish Department of External Affairs in an initial phase of self-advertising statehood. It aimed at illustrating and entrenching Irish diplomatic autonomy. Irish–German diplomatic reciprocity was one more step in Ireland’s evolving self-government after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. A full German legation in Dublin symbolized German acceptance of Irish autonomy and co-equality within the British Commonwealth of Nations in accordance with the 1926 Balfour Declaration.23 Thus Berlin was one of the first test areas for a new assertive international policy designed to demonstrate the Irish ability to operate an independent international profile. It is within this constrained, but evolving and nuanced, Commonwealth situation that the establishment of the Berlin legation and bilateral relations with the Weimar Republic must be placed.

The objective of this analysis, therefore, is to trace the negotiations concerning the opening and subsequent functioning of the Irish legation in Berlin. The Saorstát only gained formal recognition from the Weimar Republic in 1929. Previously, during the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, the Irish nationalist movement operated an unofficial mission in Berlin which endeavoured to persuade Weimar to extend official recognition to the Irish secessionists. The mission imploded when the fraternal strife of the Irish Civil War infected the personnel there. It was exacerbated by the instability of the early Weimar regime. But the experience demonstrated that the main difficulty inherent in the Irish position after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty was explicating Commonwealth membership to the Germans in a way that was advantageous to the Saorstát. When the Saorstát
eventually gained the right to formally develop bilateral relations with Weimar, it remained difficult to explain the new state’s Commonwealth role to the Germans and other third parties. The Saorstát’s status raised a number of intriguing questions for the Germans: what did Dominion Home Rule mean? What was the Saorstát’s exact relationship with the Commonwealth and Britain? Could the Saorstát influence British foreign policy by virtue of its Commonwealth membership?

In this light, the entire tenure of the first Irish Minister Plenipotentiary in Berlin, Professor Daniel A. Binchy, merits treatment. This provides insights into how one of the allegedly ‘happiest’24 and most trusted earliest Irish diplomatic appointments explicated and operated the anomalies and ambivalences of this early phase of Irish foreign policy. Attention will be paid to Binchy’s relationship with Wilhelmstrasse (German Foreign Office) and the British Embassy. The local foreign ministry is the main point of contact that a minister has with his host country,25 the welcome and treatment that he receives from it are very important in the diplomat’s mind since they reflect the level of respect with which the host nation regards his home country. The Irish Minister’s initially delayed welcome in Berlin and the failure of Wilhelmstrasse to extend automatic reciprocity, by upgrading its consulate in Dublin into a legation, proved to be a severe test. In light of the domestic crisis in Weimar, Irish–German relations were of minor importance for the Germans. To German eyes the Saorstát was a small distant country peripheral to German interests, and one which could prove to be a destabilizing factor in the pre-eminent Anglo-German relationship. The British Embassy also appeared uncomfortable with the encroachment of Irish diplomacy in Berlin. These triangular considerations added to Binchy’s difficulty in explaining the rich and evolving implications of Irish membership of the Commonwealth to his hosts.

Binchy’s presence in Berlin exposed him to the final phase of the Weimar Republic. It was the transitional period of the ill-fated Weimar democracy that saw the crumbling of fragile coalition governments in the aftermath of the Wall Street Crash. Therefore, Binchy had first-hand experience of the Weimar imbroglio and was a key source of information for Dublin.
Though Germany was not a primary Irish diplomatic objective, it nevertheless attracted attention. Several German universities established celtic studies and partook in the Irish cultural revival at the end of the nineteenth century. Since German academics led the field of philology and linguistics, they also pioneered research into the Irish language. The interest of these ‘leading German scholars’ in the Gaelic language and culture nurtured close contact with Irish nationalism. These cultural exchanges created an intimate community of Irish and German linguists which indirectly fostered political and economic cooperation.

Anglo-German antagonism after the 1890s and the formation of the two rival alliance systems (Germany's Central Powers and the Anglo-French-Russian Triple Entente) led Irish revolutionaries to seek German aid. Irish Republicans now sought aid from the German kaiser rather than from French Republicanism. Cooperation between the Second Reich and Irish nationalist revolutionaries climaxed with Roger Casement’s fatal double failure to establish an Irish Brigade in Germany during the First World War and land German armaments for the Easter Rising 1916. In 1919 the Anglo-Irish War began in earnest. With Germany’s defeat in the First World War, Irish agents concluded that Germany was sympathetic to the Irish cause. George Gavan Duffy, the roving envoy of the Irish independence movement, considered the German attitude to Britain complemented Ireland’s. As he optimistically reported:

They . . . do not trust Albion one inch . . . There is profound distrust of England and ill-concealed anxiety to punish her in all circles . . . I have come back with the conviction that the Germans, who consider the war was lost through bad leadership only, are counting the days till they can start afresh and make no mistake this time.

In January 1921 Eamon de Valera, President of the Dáil, asserted control over the external relations of the Dáil intending to organize Irish foreign affairs effectively for the first time and improve Ireland’s international status. Influenced by Duffy’s analysis, in March 1921 he decided to open a propaganda bureau in Berlin, ‘camouflaged perhaps under a trade title’. Relying on the foundation built up by the pre-existing German-Irish Society in Berlin, an unofficial Irish delegation was established. By early
1922 a sizeable Irish representation was present but it encountered an adverse operational environment. The Weimar Republic refused to extend diplomatic recognition to the Irish Delegation during the Irish War of Independence. Throughout 1921 the infant Weimar Republic deferred to Britain, following Germany’s military defeat in the First World War, in order to defend against the French desire for vengeance. The German people were demoralized by defeat, domestic political turmoil and economic hardship. They were unwilling to provoke ‘the late enemy’ by such an independent move as recognizing the Irish claims for independence. Such compliance with English sensitivities frustrated Irish Republicanism. John Chartres, head of the political/publicity bureau in Berlin, remarked: ‘the Germans have always had that form of snobbery which admires foreign ways . . . There is a sort of feeling that what is English is best.’ To maintain Britain’s favour, Wilhelmstrasse was unwilling to recognize the Irish mission. Chartres adopted a low profile. He reported:

[T]o announce oneself openly as the envoy of the Irish Government would lead to private protests from the English . . . it seems anomalous that in the allied capitals the Irish envoys should be able to announce themselves without restraint while in an enemy capital the envoy should be obliged to remain almost incognito.

His situation was epitomized by the grant of only a temporary visa to reside in Berlin. In the event of a British protest, Wilhelmstrasse would simply not renew his visa. At the outset, the Anglo-Irish Truce done on 11 July 1921, promised an improvement in Irish–German relations. The subsequent Anglo-Irish negotiations were greeted by ‘genuine admiration’ in Germany. The Berlin mission reported: ‘In private conversation one constantly hears it said, “Germany had much to learn from Ireland.”’ Nonetheless, the Berlin mission remained undercover pending the outcome of the Anglo-Irish negotiations. Chartres summed the situation up thus: ‘Their one aim . . . through sheer fear of the consequences of a more independent attitude, is to stand as well with the English as possible.’ The British protest eventually materialized in October and November 1921. By this stage Chartres was recalled from Berlin temporarily and appointed as second secretary to the Irish plenipotentiaries sent to London to negotiate with David Lloyd George. Simultaneously, IRA gunrunning threatened the Berlin mis-
sion and the future of the Anglo-Irish negotiations. A group of IRA covert operatives, namely John T. Ryan, Robert Briscoe, Seán MacBride and Charles McGuinness, were active throughout the entire period of Chartres’ posting in Berlin. Robert Briscoe was gunrunning on the orders of Michael Collins, the leader of the IRA. The IRA gunrunning trawler, the *Anita*, and its cargo of arms were discovered and impounded in Hamburg and its crew arrested on 6 October 1921. The news of Irish gunrunning in Berlin coincided with the British discovery of another IRA gunrunning plot in Cardiff. These escapades produced a ‘very uncomfortable meeting for the Irish’ with Lloyd George during the Anglo-Irish negotiations in October. British pressure on Wilhelmstrasse during the Hamburg crisis threatened the existence of the Berlin press bureau.

Meanwhile, German newspapers demanded an explanation for the Weimar government’s contacts with London during the Hamburg gunrunning affair. They reported Lloyd George as saying that “he had been warned by the German Government of impending importation of arms into Ireland”. Weimar initially issued a ‘semi-official denial’ that it had ‘officially communicated the occurrence to the English Government, official circles here have no idea of the manner in which the English Government was notified of the matter’. Press unhappiness with this ‘weak denial’ eventually led to an official statement in the Reichstag to the effect that the government had sent ‘no communication of the kind suggested . . . ’.

German assistance was forthcoming in the subsequent Hamburg gunrunning trial. Under the Treaty of Versailles the arms had to be destroyed, but ‘sympathetic authorities’ saw to it that they were not. Instead, they arrived at the back door of Briscoe’s warehouse. ‘Those Germans did not like the British at all.’ Briscoe says of his aide-de-camp, Major Hassenhauer, that ‘[s]o great was his hatred of England, that I felt safe in confiding to him in detail the purpose of my mission. He was more than willing to help.’ Therefore, the hostility of demobbed German army officers was invaluable in the IRA’s search for arms during the Anglo-Irish War. However, the feeling was ‘even bitterer against France’ as a result of France’s aggressive interpretation of the Versailles Treaty, and this guided Weimar’s overriding foreign policy of Anglo-German friendship.

Despite Weimar *realpolitik*, successive German governments
tolerated the activities of the unrecognized Irish representatives on condition that they avoided provoking Britain. Privately many Germans were ‘sympathetic’ to the Irish cause. The German press expressed ‘general friendliness’ towards Ireland on the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty (6 December 1921). Weimar welcomed it on the basis of self-interest. Germany surveyed the Treaty and the subsequent Irish Civil War from a continentalist power-political perspective. It considered that the Treaty released Britain from its Irish distractions to combat ‘French designs’ on Germany more effectively.

Unpredictable domestic and international circumstances, complicated by the difficulty of interpreting the Saorstát’s new dominion status, led to Weimar’s continuance of a circumspect policy towards the Irish mission. As late as June 1922 Charles Bewley, the Irish trade representative, warned that ‘the German Government will not and could not afford to take even the slightest step which might risk offending English susceptibilities’. Dr Knecht, the editor of *Germania*, a Centre Party paper, revealed ‘he was full of sympathy with the Irish nation and would do all he could to promote its interests’, but ‘the exigencies of the German situation precluded him from ever printing anything which might look like an attack upon Mr. Lloyd George’. Consequently, even ‘friendly’ papers would only print ‘sympathetic historical articles . . . while observing an attitude not precisely cordial . . . on the current questions . . .’. In the unlikely case that Weimar ‘informally recognized’ the Irish mission, Bewley argued that it would first seek ‘some sort of modus vivendi’ with the British Ambassador.

Though the Irish presence in Berlin grew after the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Irish delegation remained unrecognized and dedicated to basic publicity functions, while the trade representative was simply a travelling salesman. Hence, the Treaty failed to advance Irish–German diplomatic relations and the mission continued to live ‘in a sort of semi-transparent incognito’. The attitude of the Weimar regime was symbolized by its reluctance to appoint a German consul to Cork in mid-1922. The German authorities wanted a guarantee that the appointment would not create difficulties in their relationship with England. In sum, Wilhelmstrasse was dedicated to its ‘policy of conciliation towards England’.
Disintegration, 1922–4

Opinions polarized in Ireland during the first half of 1922, leading to the Treaty split and the Irish Civil War. This undermined the cohesiveness of the embryonic Irish Foreign Service. The representatives in Berlin were now officers of the provisional government. George Gavan Duffy, Minister for External Affairs, believed the Treaty granted too many concessions to England but he refused to join the emerging anti-Treaty party. Consequently, his subordinate Chartres was left without clear instructions about how to present the emerging Irish divisions to the German public. Ernest Blythe, an avowed pro-Treatyite by comparison, closely supervised Bewley. Bewley also was a decided ‘Free Stater’: the Treaty made available ‘wide powers of self-government’ to the Saorstát in his estimation. He presumed that ‘it was far better than we could have hoped to obtain at the beginning of the struggle, and there was nothing which we could not alter, once the executive power was in our hands’.

Bewley complained that no steps had been taken to present the provisional government’s views to the German public. He alleged that the Irish Bulletin of 8 and 10 July contravened Blythe’s instructions whereby the Irish unrest should be presented as a rebellion by a disloyal anti-Treatyite minority against the legitimate pro-Treatyite government. Bewley suggested that the Irish Bulletin took a neutral, perhaps hostile, attitude towards the government. Thereupon, Chartres was chastized for extolling ‘de Valera and his friends at the moment when they are wrecking the country’. Simultaneously, Dublin ordered the Bulletin to halt production in the months of August and September. Both Chartres and his personal assistant, Nancy Power, were recalled to Dublin for an investigation into the alleged anti-Treatyite misdemeanours of their political mission. In late September 1922, Chartres was transferred to the Department of Trade and Commerce. Then in October 1922, Power was formally transferred to the home service.

All commercial agents were brought under the authority of External Affairs. Bewley continued his commercial work. The political arm of the Irish mission was closed. The matter of passports and visas was largely taken over by the British consul in Berlin, and visas were granted in consultation with the British authorities. Bewley became frustrated by what he conceived as
undue Irish deference to Britain, and Josef Marks’s visa application to enter Ireland on commercial business highlighted Bewley’s growing disenchantment.

Josef Marks, a German civil engineer, met Sir Roger Casement in Berlin at the outbreak of the First World War. He was the personal friend of Lieutenant Spindler, who later organized the gunrunning operation for Casement. While interned in Maidstone for espionage he met Irish Republican internees who had participated in the Easter Rising of 1916. He joined their ‘Mutiny’ in Maidstone, earning a transfer to Dartmoor to serve his full sentence. After his release in 1920 he continued close correspondence with de Valera and Dr Richard Hayes (who later became Director of the Irish National Library). Finding himself penniless on his return to Berlin he developed a German–Irish import–export business. Through the good offices of Hayes, he made the acquaintance of Bewley. When Marks applied for a visa to enter the Saorstát in 1923 the Department of Home Affairs could not grant the necessary permission ‘in view of the established fact that he was employed in the German S.S. [Secret Service] in England’. Bewley fulminated at the decision on the grounds that if Marks acted at all, it had been ‘in the interests of our “gallant allies on the continent of Europe” in 1916’. He believed ‘[t]hat the Government of the Irish Free State feels itself under an obligation, whether from motives of principle or expediency, to consider English susceptibilities in deciding such questions as the admission of a foreigner to Ireland’. External Affairs’ response was that Bewley had supplied insufficient information about Marks. They still did not know the exact nature of Marks’s business connections in Ireland. Moreover, even with government ‘goodwill’, Marks could not land in Ireland without a British passport. Bewley was irritated and resigned in February 1923.

Conor Duane succeeded Bewley as trade representative. However, circumstances were inimical to the development of Irish–German trade. The ‘disturbed state in Ireland’ during the Civil War deterred German businessmen. Only a return to ‘peace and quiet’ in Ireland would improve trade. Furthermore, an explanation of the new status of the Saorstát and Irish identity was necessary. Duane believed more attention should be paid to positive propaganda highlighting the distinctiveness of Irish identity. The Germans perceived the Irish to be a derivation of the English
A further obstacle to normal Irish–German trade relations was the commercially unfavourable German political and economic environment. Duane, as a trade representative, had the misfortune to operate in an inflationary unstable German economy.

The impoverished state of the German economy and German restrictions on imports severely limited the opportunity for Irish exporters. Weimar experienced ‘catastrophic’ hyperinflation during 1922 and 1923 as a result of the Republic’s ‘cheap money policy’. Weimar governments used the hyperinflation as an argument for the reduction of reparations. Duane felt that ‘[on] the political side we would have very little to gain at present in Germany as the country is politically sick at heart’. Just as the Saorstát was ‘turning the corner’, in Duane’s parlance, by defeating the anti-Treatyites, Weimar sank to new depths during the Ruhr Crisis of 1923 when France occupied the zone. The German response was a ‘general strike’ and ‘passive resistance’, which completely devalued the German mark and led to hyperinflation. Duane’s salary was worthless. By November 1923, he faced ‘financial embarrassment’ and hunger loomed. Weimar was under serious threat from political extremists. In November, Hitler attempted the takeover of Bavaria and launched a ‘national revolution’ with his ill-fated Beer Hall Putsch. The political instability at the heart of Weimar parliamentary politics showed no sign of abating. After repeated difficulties, the Irish mission was terminated. Duane ended his appointment to Berlin, reporting pessimistically, ‘[t]he political structure of Germany has been shattered and the economy has been in agony since 1918’.

Resurrection

Formal diplomatic relations with European countries were neglected in the mid-1920s, because under the Treaty the external representation role of the dominions was ascribed to the metropolitan power. The Irish Foreign Service had only a consular role. Redefining its Commonwealth and dominion status became the central preoccupation of the Saorstát, but it also evolved a distinctive, though initially limited, role in international bodies. Thus its inadequate resources and personnel
were dedicated to multilateral relations within the Commonwealth and League of Nations, and the bilateral Anglo-Irish relationship. Cumann na nGaedheal’s policy after 1922 was one of a constructive reinterpretation of Commonwealth ties in terms congenial to Irish nationalism and in accordance with Irish interests and aspirations. The 1926 Imperial Conference declared that dominions were autonomous actors within the British Empire. They were ‘equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic and external affairs’ (the Balfour Declaration). This landmark decision gave the dominions an opportunity to extend and upgrade their representation internationally. With the appointment of Professor T.A. Smiddy to Washington, DC in 1927, the Saorstát was the first dominion to accredit a Minister Plenipotentiary abroad. After October 1927 a capable Irish External Minister, Patrick McGilligan, aided by the ambitious secretary, Joseph Walshe, enacted a challenging diplomatic programme. As an intrinsic element of this, the Irish Executive Council authorized the establishment of a legation at Berlin on 31 July 1928. Weimar consented to the Irish proposal to open diplomatic relations on 22 November 1928. By 1930, less than ten years after Irish independence, the Saorstát had founded a complex web of bilateral and multilateral relations ensuring that it was represented in the USA, the main European countries and the League of Nations.

External Affairs and the Cumann na nGaedheal were impelled to undertake this diplomatic expansionism as an illustration of diplomatic independence from Britain for both domestic and international consumption. This projection of Irish sovereignty abroad reinforced Irishness at home. Irish membership of the Commonwealth was both an opportunity and a hindrance. On the one hand, the global dimensions of the British Commonwealth offered continuity and a world stage that other small new European states, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe, lacked. Conversely, this was not a welcome opportunity, in that Commonwealth membership was an anathema in Irish Republicanism, which sought the total severance of the Anglo-Irish link and a republic. As Mansergh has stated:

She had not, like Canada or Australia, moved gradually from colonial to dominion status; on the contrary she had acquired a dominion status her leaders had never sought as a result, not of evolutionary, constitutional processes, but of revolutionary action.
The rise of a democratic republican party, de Valera’s Fianna Fáil, reiterated this point to the government. Moreover, on the international plane, established states such as France and Germany failed to comprehend fully the intricacies of the evolution of the British Empire into a Commonwealth and the implications therein for their relationship with dominions. Lacking a full appreciation of the complexities of the Irish position, they were more inured to British sensitivities owing to the latter’s pivotal role in post-Versailles continental diplomacy.

The Irish challenge was to play to and reconcile these competing and contradictory constituencies, the domestic audience, political opposition, the British government, the Commonwealth and international opinion. Cumann na nGaedheal adopted a gradualist, pragmatic approach whereby it expanded foreign policy freedom within the limitations of the Commonwealth envelope, while maintaining valued economic and political connections with other Commonwealth members. Self-interested constructive ambiguity ensured that the Commonwealth link should be accentuated or downplayed on a case-by-case basis. This led to a dual approach. Ireland’s influence in the Commonwealth was emphasized as appropriate to purchase additional leverage with continental governments that believed ‘the Irish were privy to British policy considerations’, but normally independent Irish political and economic interests were promoted, and any use of the ‘Commonwealth card’ had to be masked from a largely sensitive Irish public. In sum, it was not the ideal context for a small youthful state ambivalent about its Commonwealth links that was seeking to upgrade its diplomatic links, but forced to operate within the realities of power politics.

Initially, the indicators for a fruitful understanding with Germany were positive due to the extensive multilateral, cultural and economic exchanges that had developed between the two countries since the early 1920s. Despite the lack of formal bilateral diplomatic relations in the 1920s, Irish–German contacts flourished. Cultural relations were strengthened after the Civil War and with the achievement of stability in Weimar during the ‘Stresemann Era’. German scholarly interest in Gaelic culture acted as a gel between the academic communities of both states. The National University of Ireland (NUI), the Royal Irish Academy and the Saorstát government encouraged and sponsored academic exchanges. In addition, the German presence
infiltrated other areas of Irish life with the employment of many talented Germans in the service of the Saorstát. In 1923, Colonel Wilhelm Fritz Brase, the music instructor to the First Regiment of the German Grenadier Guards and the former head of the Royal School of Music in Prussia, and his assistant Captain Sauerzweig, were recruited to found the Irish Army School of Music. Aloys Fleischmann spearheaded the Music Department in University College, Cork. Walter Bremen became the Director of the National Museum of Ireland. The Austrian Dr Adolf Mahr was appointed as Keeper of the Antiquities Division of the National Museum in September 1927, and later became the Director of the Museum. Thus a small but significant number of Germans emigrated to the Saorstát in the 1920s, many of them marrying into Irish society.

Irish–German relations also progressed in the commercial or consular area. In April 1923 Saorstát renounced the 26 per cent reparations tax on all German imports, conveying Irish sympathy to Germany. The renunciation of the tax gave German exporters an export advantage to the Saorstát in comparison to the rest of the Commonwealth. A German consulate opened in Dublin in 1923 under Dr Georg von Dehn Schmidt, the former German Consul to Liverpool. Dehn was highly regarded in government circles, and increasing Irish–German trade led to the upgrading of the consulate to a consulate general in 1925. German industry benefited from both Dehn’s good standing and his strong representation of Weimar. The steady improvement in maritime communication augmented trade contacts. Several German merchant companies began to operate regular services from Hamburg to Cobh and Galway.

The Saorstát’s industrialization efforts facilitated German–Irish trade in the mid-1920s. German expertise in electrics, chemicals, steel structures and plant machinery won contracts from government and semi-state bodies such as the Electrical Supply Board. In 1925, Siemens-Schuckert was awarded the contract to build the Shannon hydroelectric plant at Ardnacrusha. Dublin Corporation and the Tramway Company of Dublin also granted German firms large contracts. As a result German imports to the Saorstát grew.

Following the precedent-making Canada–United States Hali-but Fisheries Treaty of 1923, the Imperial Conference of 1923 recognized the right of a dominion to negotiate and sign a trade
treaty without the involvement of Britain. This ‘opened the way in a vital aspect to separate dominion control over foreign relations’. The Saorstát and Weimar began negotiating a commercial treaty in 1925. The negotiations were one of a series begun with Irish trading partners in 1924 and 1925. Until then, commercial treaties concluded by Britain prior to Irish independence had regulated Irish trade relations. External Affairs advocated the negotiation and conclusion of separate bilateral commercial treaties as a reinforcement of Irish sovereignty and international status. These bilateral trade negotiations, therefore, had a distinct political dimension. In anticipation of the Irish–German commercial negotiations in 1925, the Minister of External Affairs assured Weimar that the Saorstát did not intend to ‘to seize the property of German nationals’ as was its right under the Versailles Treaty. After prolonged negotiations, the Saorstát signed a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Weimar on 12 May 1930. This was a watershed in Irish commercial relations as it was the first such treaty negotiated successfully. It was doubly significant, since Weimar was the Saorstát’s second largest trading partner after Britain which remained the Saorstát’s predominant trading partner in the 1920s and the 1930s, accounting for over 90 per cent of Irish foreign trade.

At the international level, the Saorstát adhered to the view that, ‘it was essential that Germany be brought into the international community’. In the winter of late 1924 and early 1925, Stresemann prepared the ground for German membership of the League of Nations. Dehn canvassed the Saorstát as a possible supporter of Weimar’s application. Although the Saorstát was a minor state, it was an active League member and a revisionist small power in favour of equality of rights for all nations. The Irish nationalist lens perceived British jurisdiction over the Treaty ports as paralleling the allied occupation of the Rhineland. Though the Saorstát had little influence or input into the ongoing League of Nations’ disarmament negotiations, its line in the assembly was broadly similar to that of Weimar. Like Weimar, it saw the Versailles system as territorially unjust and dictated by the victors of the Great War. French security concerns had resulted in the enforced disarmament of Weimar, rendering it defenceless. The Versailles Treaty stated that the disarming of defeated powers was ‘to render possible the conclusion of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations’. Un-
fortunately, this proved impossible to implement because France wanted 'security before disarmament'. With the lack of will among the victors to pursue general disarmament, Weimar felt victimized. The Minister for External Affairs promised Dehn that he would lobby for an alleviation of Germany’s situation.

Germany applied for membership of the League in February 1926 on condition that it gained a permanent seat on the League Council in recognition of her equality as a Great Power. The Irish external minister was a member of the Extraordinary Assembly’s political commission which ‘unanimously’ recommended Weimar’s admission. Like Weimar, the Saorstát demanded the calling of a general disarmament conference and backed the Kellogg–Briand Pact.

The general growth in Irish–German interaction attracted the indignation of Alfred Blanche, the French Consul in Dublin. Blanche felt humiliated that Weimar’s upgrading of its consulate to a consulate general in 1925 pre-empted France’s corresponding elevation. His persistent contention was that the Germans had disproportionate influence in Irish affairs. He feared the extension of German influence in the Saorstát to the detriment of French economic and strategic interests. During this period, Irish–French trade remained static. In his more lurid outpourings to the Quai d’Orsay in Paris, Blanche held up the spectre of the Saorstát as a protectorate of a resurrected German Reich. As a proponent of the anti-German mindset that afflicted inter-war French foreign policy, he interpreted any evidence of greater Irish–German intimacy as ‘confirmation of the Irish government’s pro-German sympathies’. Blanche was concerned about the relative failure of France to influence the Saorstát. To an extent this Irish antipathy towards France was explained by the secular and anti-clerical nature of the French state, which was abhorrent to the Catholic conservatism of Cumann na nGaedheal. The fundamental obstacle towards improving Irish–French relations was the application of French continental logic to the Saorstát. After 1918, France’s primary foreign policy goal was to prevent the revival of the German threat. It sought Britain as an ally in this policy and ‘French foreign policy towards the Saorstát in the 1920s was dominated by a prudent desire to avoid any controversy with Great Britain’. A robust Commonwealth counterbalanced prospective German recovery. The Saorstát’s drive as a ‘revisionist’ dominion to increase intra-
Commonwealth autonomy was a potential threat to the cohesion of the Commonwealth in French eyes.

By 1929, therefore, the Saorstát had developed a ‘continentalist’ perspective, despite the neglect of this facet in publications relating to its external relations. Franco-German antagonism on the European mainland intruded upon Anglo-Irish ‘offshore’ relations and the Commonwealth calculus. These were the problems that an Irish legation would have to deal with in Berlin.

Recognition

Professor Daniel A. Binchy was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary at Berlin by the Irish Executive Council on 8 January 1929. He had extensive knowledge of Germany. Following his education at Clongowes Wood College and University College, Dublin, he studied law and history at the universities of Munich and Paris in the early 1920s. He later studied at The Hague and Geneva, concentrating on special legal studies. A professor of jurisprudence and international law in University College, Dublin from 1924 to 1928, he had extensive experience of German and continental life. Binchy was initially ‘reluctant to go as Minister to Berlin because he did not like the Germans’. This convinced the Executive Council that Weimar was perfect for Binchy who, it was widely believed, could be counted on for ‘mannerly discretion’, objective reporting and diplomatic behaviour.

The official welcome that Binchy received when he arrived in Berlin was ominous. Binchy thought the Wilhelmstrasse’s ‘attitude throughout . . . was one of complete unconcern mixed with a great deal of prevarication’. Before 1928 the German consul-general to the Saorstát, Dehn, had repeatedly indicated that Weimar circles were anxious to have an Irish Minister in Berlin. However, Binchy suspected that Dehn had played External Affairs and Wilhelmstrasse off against each other to upgrade Irish–German relations and to gain promotion. When Binchy visited Berlin in July 1929, he discovered that Wilhelmstrasse was unprepared for his arrival and was anxious that he should not present his credentials immediately. He returned to Dublin temporarily, before departing for Berlin again in October 1929. Binchy’s presentation of his credentials to President
Hindenburg was arranged ‘only with considerable difficulty’ for 26 October 1929. A perturbed Binchy noted: ‘This delay, which would have been unusual in the case of an ordinary new Minister, was still more remarkable in the case of a completely new Legation, and does not fit in very well with Dehn’s description.’

Subsequent German tardiness to extend diplomatic reciprocity compounded Binchy’s and Dublin’s annoyance. Although Binchy presented his credentials in October 1929, Dehn’s corresponding credentials as German minister to the Saorstát were presented nearly a year later on 2 September 1930. Binchy considered the German ‘excuses’ for this lapse ‘incoherent’ and ‘even contradictory’. Undoubtedly, the political and economic turmoil of Weimar inhibited the smooth upgrading of diplomatic relations. Dr Gustav Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister, died on 3 October 1929 and was hurriedly succeeded by Julius Curtius, who was unfamiliar with the portfolio. Later in October, the Wall Street Crash exacerbated the unstable and unpredictable political and economic environment of temperamental coalition and sectional politics. Binchy concluded that the delays in extending diplomatic reciprocity ‘may be one of the consequences of the present panic about financial reform which . . . may even lead to the fall of the present Government’. To expedite the situation, he reminded Wilhelmstrasse that the French would anticipate them and establish a legation at Dublin first. However, Binchy judged that the ‘acute political crisis in Germany’ meant that there was ‘little chance of much attention being paid to the matter’. The financial crisis and the controversy generated by the ratification of the Young Plan was the central German preoccupation.

On 27 March 1930, Chancellor Müller resigned and the Grand Coalition fell before the foreign affairs estimates could be ratified. The succeeding government, Brüning’s non-party administration, was a minority one. As an interim measure, Dehn was appointed as chargé d’affaires. By 27 May 1930 a disillusioned Binchy suggested he should ‘enter a very sharp protest’. The Saorstát was a low priority on Weimar’s agenda, especially during this period of acute domestic crisis. Binchy admitted that he had fallen into the error of overestimating German interest in us . . . Apparently the Foreign Office thinks that it has salved its conscience by appointing a Chargé d’Affaires ad interim and that the question of a full Legation can be conveniently shelved until more important matters have been dealt with.
Eventually, the repeated failure of elections to generate workable government coalitions led President Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag, allowing Brüning to govern with the support of presidential decrees. In July 1930, a Presidential decree sanctioned the long awaited upgrade of the Dublin consulate-general. Thus, the German legation in Dublin had the dubious honour of being established by one of the first acts of Weimar ‘presidential government’. It was part of the general process undermining democracy in Germany and easing the path to dictatorship.

Gaining accreditation and reciprocity were not the only impediments to the establishment of formal relations: the choice of a German minister created difficulties. External Affairs, satisfied with Dehn’s performance both as consul-general (1924–30) and chargé d’affaires (1930), assumed he would be automatically promoted to Minister Plenipotentiary. This was not the ideal of the Catholic Centre Party (Zentrum), which ‘energetically pushed’ Baron von Ow-Wachendorf, the Wilhelmstrasse official responsible for Irish–German matters. The baron was appointed to the post without consulting the Irish authorities and even received a briefing from the chancellor. Unaware of this, Binchy made ‘strong representations’ on Dehn’s behalf. Binchy preferred Ow-Wachendorf to Dehn on a personal level, but the Baron had anglophile inclinations. Binchy suggested: ‘To him the Dublin Legation might only seem the sure stepping stone to the London Embassy.’ Moreover, Ow-Wachendorf was closely associated with the Zentrum, while Dehn was a proven and balanced career diplomat well acquainted with the Irish situation. On instructions from Dublin, Binchy intervened and secured Dehn’s appointment. But this had negative repercussions. First, it damaged Binchy’s relations with what should have been the most cooperative German political party from the Irish viewpoint, the Zentrum. Second, a disgruntled Baron Ow-Wachendorf remained Binchy’s main contact in the Wilhelmstrasse. Attempting to repair this vital working relationship, Binchy invited Ow-Wachendorf to dinner at the legation to discuss the matter, and indicated that he would not have intervened if the baron’s appointment to the post had been publicized. Binchy’s approach soon led to improved relations with Ow-Wachendorf. However, Binchy remained troubled about ‘the general attitude’ of the Wilhelmstrasse officials towards Ireland.
Explaining the Commonwealth

Although the legation’s relations with the Wilhelmstrasse officials were ‘of the happiest’, Binchy was agitated by their attempts to ‘ignore’ Irish membership of the Commonwealth and by their treatment of the Saorstát as ‘a small completely isolated state’:

[T]he Foreign Office is not really interested in us any more than it is in any small unimportant state situated a considerable distance from its frontiers. It thinks of us in precisely the same terms as it thinks, say, of Bulgaria or a small Central American Republic. It is concerned to maintain the most friendly relations possible with us, but it apparently has no appreciation whatever of our importance as a member of the British Commonwealth.

Ironically, ‘the whole policy of the Foreign Office seems to be to treat us as if we were a republic in name as well as in fact’. Overall, this suited Irish foreign policy. It reaffirmed Irish sovereignty and meshed with Binchy’s wider efforts to publicize Irish independence within the Commonwealth. On the other hand, Binchy considered that it underplayed the Saorstát’s larger significance as a player in the British Commonwealth.

Diplomats of ‘small and more distant powers’ led an ‘exotic existence’ of unceasing entertainment. The concomitant danger, according to Binchy, was that ‘the smaller and more unimportant the country which a particular Minister represents the more conscious he is of his great dignity and the more sensitive about its acknowledgement’. To avoid this danger of diplomatic pomposity, he sought not to allow Irish powerlessness relative to the Great Powers to stifle his initiative. He built up a useful network of contacts in the highest political and diplomatic circles in Berlin. Although he was successful in this wider sphere, Binchy’s primary objective was ‘to bring light unto the Germans’. He was in frequent contact with the successive Staatssekretars of the Foreign Office (von Schubert and von Bülow) and the chief of the section dealing with the British Commonwealth (Herr de Haas). He also had close contact with the Chancellor, Heinrich von Brüning, his vice-chancellor, and the former Socialist Chancellor Hermann Müller. Binchy’s academic credentials were catalysts in achieving widespread ‘clubability’ in the six months following his accreditation. He communicated easily with fellow intellectuals such as Brüning.

Binchy realized that the German upper classes indulged in ‘a cult of English ways and English fashions which amounts almost..."
to a religion’, and that this made his job of representing Ireland in élite circles difficult. Englishmen set the standards of ‘good breeding and smartness’. Berlin’s socialites believed that Ireland was the ‘next best thing’ to Britain, mainly for its imitative qualities. However, Berlin society was not a typical cross-section of the German people. Public opinion was crucial. The general German attitude towards Ireland was, according to Binchy, one of ‘uninformed sympathy’ and ‘[t]he average German, while sharing to a certain extent the respect of his “betters” for England, is exceedingly friendly to Ireland, though he knows little or nothing about us’.

Binchy therefore opted for ‘a steady campaign of publicity’. He maximized the exposure that his appointment received and used the occasion to emphasize the status of the dominions, ensuring all interviews were published and ‘widely circulated’. Once initial mass media interest waned, he wrote articles for German newspapers, magazines and journals, as well as delivering numerous lectures to important societies and clubs. These included the American Chamber of Commerce, the League of Nations Society of the University of Berlin, the Society for the Study of Foreign Affairs (Aussenpolitisches Kommittee), the Deutsche Herrenclub and the Juristische Gesellschaft. He concentrated on Irish political affairs, especially the state’s ‘constitutional and international status’. For example, at the League of Nations Society of the University of Berlin he spoke about the ‘Dominions in the League of Nations’, focusing on dominion status. He demonstrated the degree of independence that Ireland possessed as a dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations, attempting to destroy any false notions held by Germany that Ireland was a British colony or a British province. This work was appreciated by his superiors.

In the Berliner Tageblatt of 9 February 1930, Binchy emphasized that each dominion had a separate diplomatic service, and that it was free and co-equal to Britain. The dominions legislated and governed themselves. A theoretical question of ‘subordination’ did not even arise. The Berliner Tageblatt, ‘perhaps the most widely read newspaper’ in Berlin, drew the conclusions that the Crown was the ‘only legal bond’ between the dominions and Britain, and that its power was severely curtailed. Its value was symbolic as,
the king has in each Dominion a separate Government, and in all questions concerning a Dominion, he has to be advised by the Government of the Dominion concerned and act upon its advice, both in domestic and external politics.174

He hoped that such publicity about dominion status emphasized Irish autonomy, and hence the legitimacy of a separate diplomatic service.175

The minister for external affairs was ‘exceedingly gratified’ with the success of Binchy’s publicity campaign.176 Patrick McGilligan congratulated Binchy on the execution of the primary part of his task: ‘that of securing the goodwill and esteem of the German people for the Saorstát’. The cabinet was in ‘the fullest agreement with the line of policy you have followed concerning our position in the Commonwealth’. The general attitude of the German press since Binchy’s arrival was ‘most hopeful’.177

It was valuable that the German public was fully aware of Ireland’s independent position. But Irish membership of the Commonwealth should have meant that Wilhelmstrasse would pay more attention to Ireland than to other isolated, small and distant nation states. Brüning’s intense questioning of Binchy regarding the position of the dominions within the Commonwealth in February 1931 corroborated Binchy’s belief that Ireland could rate far higher in German foreign policy priorities. The chancellor ‘was chiefly anxious to know whether we were in a position to influence the policy of the British Commonwealth as a whole and of Great Britain in particular towards Germany’.178 If Ireland was to influence Weimar, Binchy surmised that it must convince Wilhelmstrasse that it exercised an influential role in the Commonwealth.179 The British Embassy was the one major obstacle to utilizing the Saorstát’s membership of the Commonwealth to greater effect in Berlin.

The British Embassy

Binchy’s interpretation of the role of the British Embassy in Berlin offered an interesting commentary on Irish suspicions about the actions and role of the former imperial power, and the difficulties that a small emerging state encountered in projecting an autonomous foreign policy as part of the loose multinational Commonwealth association. In the Irish minister’s view,
Wilhelmstrasse and the British Embassy treated the legation similarly. Undoubtedly, considering the position of power that the Embassy maintained in German politics, and the Anglophile character of Wilhelmstrasse, Britain had the means to influence Weimar’s attitude towards the Saorstát. According to Binchy, British practice contravened the spirit of the 1926 Agreement and the subsequent Westminster Agreement (1931). Contrary to the Commonwealth decision that consultation should occur on ‘matters of common concern’ between local British embassies and dominion legations, the British Embassy in Berlin interpreted the terms of reference ‘in the most restrictive sense possible’. No consultation ever occurred, and Binchy conjectured:

Now that an Irish Legation has come to stay in Berlin, the only thing to be done from the ‘Imperial’ point of view is to circumscribe and localize its activities as much as possible, and to secure that, while dealing with all questions exclusively connected with Germany and Ireland, it should be carefully kept out of discussions of all important general matters which, as hitherto, should be settled between the Foreign Office and H.M. Embassy.

He continued:

The idea of this policy of isolation is, of course, to convey the impression that the Irish Legation is only competent to deal with exclusively Irish matters, and that matters involving the Commonwealth as a whole are still the inviolable preserve of the British Embassy.

The Embassy’s members were ‘personally agreeable and easy to work with’. For example, the press secretary, Tim Breen, assisted Binchy in his search for ‘suitable Legation premises’ in 1929. Nonetheless, the Embassy maintained almost ‘complete political detachment’ from the legation. According to Binchy, ‘[t]he rule seems to be that all political matters are tabu in conversation unless I introduce them, and then they are to be treated with polite reserve’. Nevertheless, he persevered in cultivating ‘good relations’ with the Embassy. He attended many functions there, and invited its members to legation functions. Binchy informed the Embassy in advance of all the public lectures that he delivered on the subject of the Commonwealth. The Embassy sometimes failed to reciprocate when they delivered their own lectures on the Commonwealth, even though the Irish minister found these to be largely inoffensive in content.

In May 1930 Leopold Amery, Dominions Secretary, addressed the Pan-European conference on the topic of Pan-Europe and
the British Empire. Binchy attended and was ‘very favourably impressed’ by Amery’s thesis that a Pan-European organization should model itself on the Commonwealth, not on the US federation. Binchy stated: ‘there was practically nothing in his description which I could not have said myself in a lecture here’. Nevertheless, when Binchy rang the Embassy prior to Amery’s lecture, he was informed that the Embassy did not know whether the dominion secretary had arrived. Yet, Ambassador Sir Horace Rumbold later told Binchy that Amery had lunched at the Embassy earlier. In February 1931, Binchy was not invited to a widely attended lecture entitled ‘An Apology for the British Empire’ by Duff Cooper, a young conservative. Binchy felt that the ‘omission was deliberate’. Leo T. MacCauley, the Irish legation secretary, was in constant contact with the Embassy about other matters, and he had not been informed. The Embassy might have been afraid of Irish sensitivities. Although inoffensive on the whole, Amery’s lecture failed to mention Ireland and assumed that all dominions were distant from, and uninterested in, European affairs.

Though Binchy found most of the Embassy staff ‘personally agreeable and easy to work with’, the ambassador initially proved problematical. Rumbold ignored Binchy at social functions, behaviour which Binchy was unable to explain. Perhaps it was personal, or ‘a certain sense of awkwardness in regard to me, as a strange and uncomfortable phenomenon for the treatment of which no diplomatic precedents existed’. Binchy was concerned that Rumbold’s rather cool relationship with him could have deleterious consequences if ‘other members of the Diplomatic Corps might notice it’. As he wrote: ‘Rumbold’s personal feelings towards me, as long as they did not effect good relations with the Embassy in general, were of course a matter of complete indifference to me.’ He invited the ambassador and his staff to a dinner party at the legation on 11 March 1930, to return the hospitality they had extended to the legation, in particular Tim Breen. After Rumbold dined at the legation his attitude changed and Binchy welcomed this ‘for the sake of appearance’. Irish and British diplomats were slowly adapting to the evolving Commonwealth intricacies.

In June 1930, Binchy believed he had found a public means to assert Irish membership and co-equality within the Commonwealth. He sought, and received, permission to flag the legation
for the king’s birthday (3 June 1930), hoping to emphasize Ireland’s Commonwealth significance with both the Embassy and his poorly-informed German hosts in an ostentatious display of tactical royalism. As he wrote:

I am inclined to think that it would be a useful purpose, in opening people’s eyes to the real nature of the Commonwealth and the separate personality of the crown in each State. I should say that the only people likely to be shocked here by our flagging would be the members of the British Embassy, who, as I describe in my detailed reports are most anxious to keep the King entirely and exclusively for themselves.

Though flagging the Irish legation was designed to prove a diplomatic point to the Germans and the British Embassy, Binchy overlooked the potential embarrassment that it could cause to the Cumann na nGaedheal government, which had to face down the Fianna Fáil opposition. The legation gained acceptance from the Embassy, but amicable tensions were clearly in existence between the two. One final instance of this occurred during Binchy’s attendance at an embassy dinner for Prime Minister MacDonald and Henderson on 28 July 1931. He again noted the Embassy’s ‘lack of appreciation of the nature of the British Commonwealth’. Binchy sarcastically reported MacDonald’s belittling humour:

The Prime Minister was pleased to be humorous: he asked me if I was returning home for the Horse Show and on my replying that I had no leave to spare, suggested laughingly that I should ask leave from him and thereby precipitate a constitutional crisis!

Conclusion

The establishment of the Saorstát’s separate diplomatic identity was inseparable from changes in the Empire–Commonwealth. As Donal Lowry has indicated, a simplistic linear perspective in much of the recent historiography lionizes an ‘intrepid’, talented Irish administration and diplomatic corps which is held to have single-handedly established Irish sovereignty on the international plane. While the commitment of the Irish personnel in the first decade of the state is largely indisputable, an interpretive error arises in not viewing the Irish foreign posture holistically. The narrow linear approach tends to disregard the commonality of
interests that existed with other ‘revisionist’, but moderate, dominions. It also largely disregards the significance of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in the transformation of Commonwealth. Just as Ireland affected, and was affected by, the British Empire prior to independence, it continued to do so subsequently, particularly in the 1920s. Therefore, Irish non-Commonwealth relations cannot be detached from the Commonwealth consideration.

In the post-independence decade the situation in which the Saorstát found itself, as a member of a changing Empire–Commonwealth, deprived its status of both certainty and clarity and complicated its international profile. The tendency in the existing literature is to focus on one aspect of Irish foreign relations, either a bilateral relationship or the Irish position in the League of Nations. This article argues that these were not discrete spheres of action. Ireland made its first breakthrough in the League because of backing from the Commonwealth. Ireland was prepared to utilize its Commonwealth membership, if necessary, in bilateral relationships to increase its influence on its bilateral partners. As Binchy discovered, its bilateral non-Commonwealth partners viewed the Irish as significant by virtue only of their relationship to the British or of their membership of the British Empire–Commonwealth. Any increase in Irish influence which emphasized its Commonwealth membership implied a moderation of British influence in foreign capitals, which the British senior diplomatic corps were understandably loathe to relinquish. The Irish position in European capitals such as Berlin was further undermined by the weak or absent presence of its sister dominions in these cities, owing to their largely extra-European interests. Ireland was thus a lone dominion overshadowed by the power, prestige and reputation of its former ruler. Commonwealth membership did not translate into significant influence in European capitals because of the reality of Ireland’s small power status and the traditional primary role of Britain in the European ‘balance of power’.

In actuality, the Irish position on the Commonwealth was not clear cut — it had to work within the constraints of the evolving Commonwealth, appease domestic opposition, and deal with third-party perceptions of its unique and opaque Commonwealth status. The early Irish diplomatic service had the problem of explicating its membership of a new sui generis multinational experiment, that of the Commonwealth. There were no com-
parable precedents for the Irish position. Together with the other dominions it was actively creating a new model of international behaviour within the constraints of the Commonwealth. The ‘[c]entral role of protocol and legalism in understanding the progress of the dominions to international sovereignty’, 200 complicated international perceptions of the dominions’ foreign policy roles.

In a sense, the Cumann na nGaedheal Government acted like other dominions at the time and displayed a Commonwealth focus. They were determined to justify their stance during the Irish Civil War, namely that the Anglo-Irish Treaty was workable and that the embryonic Commonwealth could be adapted to suit Irish nationalist aspirations. Thus they were implicitly in favour of the Commonwealth in theory and practice and operated within the rules and conventions of that evolving entity’s configuration. Their overriding objective was to transform the British Empire into a Commonwealth of Nations amenable to full Irish national independence. The career of the first Irish minister to Germany demonstrates how difficult the new diplomatic service found it to represent this delicate process of redefining Ireland’s international profile. The gradual expansion of the Irish diplomatic service in Berlin, following the initial stillbirth of its consular mission in 1924, is indicative of the enhancement of the state’s international role through constructive renegotiation of the Empire–Commonwealth calculus.

Following the signing of the Statute of Westminster, Patrick McGilligan, the Irish Minister for External Affairs, was thus prompted to proclaim euphorically that the British Empire was ‘finally demolished’. 201 Though there was some justice in this assertion, even after a decade of discussions the newly redefined intra-Commonwealth relationship remained complex and practically unintelligible to outsiders and laypeople. This was, indeed, its greatest weakness. Cumann na nGaedheal believed that it had succeeded in its overriding objective and the British government hoped that the Irish ‘bugbear’ was now largely appeased. However, the Commonwealth ‘experiment’ was not explained satisfactorily (if at all) to the Irish electorate, substantial sections of which saw it as a humiliation. The resurgent nationalism of Eamon de Valera’s Fianna Fáil governments after 1932 upset the equation. Ultimately, the faction that had lost the Irish Civil War won the peace and left their indelible imprint on the Irish state for
the succeeding two generations. A Commonwealth compromise could no longer salve the collective Irish nationalist psyche. Cumann na nGaedheal retained its Commonwealth sympathies into the Second World War, but was powerless. The first Irish minister to Berlin, Binchy, shared a similar mindset.

Binchy resigned on 23 March 1932. Though he was well regarded in Berlin’s diplomatic and social circles, he decided to return to his academic interests. Explanations for Binchy’s resignation vary considerably. According to Dermot Keogh’s exposition he was frustrated by his evident powerlessness as an envoy and was concerned that his reports on Weimar were not treated with due seriousness in Dublin. Undoubtedly, Binchy’s reputed Germano-scepticism, which has been recorded by John Duggan, may have played a role. As for Elsasser’s implicit suggestion that Binchy was a disorganized academic don unsuited to the diplomatic world, this is speculative.

Instead, a hint at the most plausible primary cause for Binchy’s resignation can be drawn from the timing of his resignation. He resigned just after the announcement that de Valera’s Fianna Fáil party gained the most seats in the Irish general election of 16 February 1932, and was negotiating a coalition with the Labour Party to form a government on 8 March 1932. Binchy left the service later that month. This is hardly coincidental, since Binchy, like many of the past pupils of the middle-class Clongowes Wood School, in County Wicklow, who were strongly identified with the Cumann na nGaedheal government and the Department of External Affairs at the time, felt an antipathy towards those whom they believed had tried during the Civil War to ‘wreck’ the nascent Saorstát. Therefore, the timing of Binchy’s decision to leave the Foreign Service is instructive and was politically motivated rather than a matter of job satisfaction. The anti-Commonwealth ethos of Fianna Fáil and the consequent threatened ‘revolution’ in Irish foreign policy were an intrinsic part of Binchy’s calculations.

Notes
1. National Archives of Ireland (hereafter NAI), Department of Foreign Affairs (hereafter DFA), DE, box 34, file 240, Duane to DFA, 19 October 1923.


11. Ibid., 97.


17. Mansergh, Nationalism and Independence, 97; Lowry, ‘New Ireland, Old Empire’, 167; Davis, ‘Diplomacy as Propaganda’, 123.


19. Ibid., 170.

20. Ibid., 168.


27. For a survey of Irish–German links see Martin Elsasser, Germany and Ireland: 1000 Years of Shared History (Dublin 1997), especially 26–9.


29. Ibid., 40.
32. DIFP I, doc. 64, 116.
33. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 232, E.S. memo, 5 September 1921.
34. Ibid., 1.
35. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 232, E.S. memo, 5 September 1921, 3.
36. Ibid.
37. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 032, E.S. memo, 4 July 1921; NAI, DFA, ES, box 14, file 96, Robert Brennan to de Valera, No. 121, 25 July 1921.
38. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 232, Chartres to Brennan, 5 September 1921, 2.
39. NAI, DFA, ES, box 14, file 96(11), USFA to President, 28 September 1921.
40. Ibid.
41. Brian Murphy, John Chartres: Mystery Man of the Treaty (Dublin 1995), 51.
42. Ibid., pp. 48–9. NAI, DFA, ES, box 23, file 140, memorandum, 6 March 1922 throws some light on the shady underworld of arms trading and the setting up of entrapment operations by the British Embassy in Berlin.
43. Robert Briscoe (with Alden Hatch), For the Life of Me (Boston and Toronto, 1958), 99.
45. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 233, Power to De Valera, 5 November 1921.
46. DFA, ES, box 33, file 233, Chartres to USFA, 26 November 1921.
47. Briscoe, For the Life of Me, 100–1.
48. Ibid., 92.
49. NAI, DFA, ES, box 233, S.E.O. to DFA, 10 February 1921.
50. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(3), C.S. minute, 5 September 1921; NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(2), Bewley to Aireacht Trachtála, 1 June 1922.
51. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(3), J.C. minute, 4 February 1922.
52. NAI, DT, S 2305, Bewley to Trade, 8 August 1922.
53. NAI, DFA, D/PG/Saorstát Berlin 1922–24 (Berlin 1922), Bewley to Trade, 1 June 1922.
54. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239, Chartres to Duffy, 7 March 1922.
55. NAI, DFA, ES, box 36, file 255, Bewley to Trade, 21 September 1922.
56. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(3), John Chartres report, 4 February 1922.
58. NAI, DFA, D/PG/Saorstát Berlin 1922–24 (Berlin 1922), Bewley to Trade, 1 June 1922.
59. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(6), Bewley to Blythe, 29 March 1922.
60. Keogh, Ireland and Europe, 14–15.
63. NAI, DFA, ES, box 31, file 234(2), Bewley to Blythe, 11 July 1922.
64. The Irish Bulletins were publicity publications produced by the publicity section of the Berlin mission, namely, Chartres and Power.
65. NAI, DT, S 2305, Bewley to Blythe, 17 July 1922.
66. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 234(2), Bewley to Blythe, 11 July 1920.
67. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 234(1), file Duffy to Chartres, 21 July 1922.
68. NAI, DFA, D/PG/IFS Berlin 1921, 1922, 1923 'Berlin Office', Walshe to Chartres, 8 August 1922.
69. Power to Walshe, 3 August 1922, op. cit.
70. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 234(2), Chartres to President, 28 October 1922.
71. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(5), Walshe to Power, 2 October 1922.
72. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 238(1), Walshe to Bewley, 30 September 1922.
73. NAI, DFA, ES, box 33, file 238(1), Gearóid Ó Lochlainn's report on Brussels and Berlin (November-December 1922), and Bewley, Memoirs, 88.
74. Ibid.
75. NAI, DFA, GR289, report by the German Consul, 16 February 1925.
76. NAI, DFA, GR289, Marks to O’Higgins, 9 March 1926.
77. NAI, DFA, GR289, Marks to FitzGerald, 6 July 1925.
78. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 239(6), Blythe (?) to Bewley, 5 November 1921.
79. NAI, DFA, GR289, Marks to O’Higgins, 9 March 1926.
80. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 241(4), Bewley to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 February 1923.
81. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 241(4), Undersecretary to Bewley, 10 February 1923.
82. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 241(4), Bewley to DFA, 10 February 1923.
83. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 240(4), O’Duffy’s memorandum, undated.
84. NAI, DFA, DE, box 34, file 240, Duane to DFA, 19 October 1923.
85. NAI, DFA, GR 149, Walshe to von Dehn, 11 November 1925, pp. 2–4.
87. NAI, DFA, DE, box 34, file 240, Duane to DFA, 19 October 1923.
89. NAI, DFA, ES, box 34, file 240(1), Duane to DFA, 13 November 1923.
90. Ibid., 2.
91. The government party between 1922 and 1932.
94. The Canadian government made similar parallel moves and opened legations in Washington DC (1927) and Paris (1928), bolstering the Irish initiative.
95. NAI, DT, S 5736A, Executive Council minutes, 31 July 1928.
96. NAI, DT, S 5736A, Rumbold to Cusack, 23 November 1928.
104. Ibid., 106.
105. Ibid., 106–7.
107. NAI, DFA, 314/88, Memo on Commercial Treaties, signed SM/MCK, 6 March 1928.
108. NAI, DFA, DT, S. 4825, Walshe to Secretary of Executive Council, 8 April 1928.
110. Elsasser, *Germany and Ireland*, 44.
113. NAI, DFA, LN 37, Dehn to FitzGerald, 1 January 1925 and Dehn to FitzGerald, 7 March 1925.
117. NAI, DFA, LN 37, untitled and unsigned memorandum, c. December 1924/January 1925.
118. NAI, DFA, LN 37, FitzGerald to Dehn, 3 January 1925.
120. NAI, DFA, D/T, S 8176, Report of the Delegate of Saorstát Eireann to the Extraordinary Assembly of the League of Nations (March, 1926); NAI, DFA, LN 37, MacWhite to FitzGerald, 13 February 1926.
123. Ibid., passim.
124. Ibid., 111–12.
125. Ibid., 103.
126. Ibid., 41.
127. NAI, DT, S 5736A, Decision of the Executive Council, Item No. 5, 8 January 1929.
131. NAI, DFA, 18/10, Binchy to Walshe, 12 August 1930.
135. NAI, DFA, 18/10, Binchy to Walshe, 11 December 1929.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. NAI, DFA, 18/10, Binchy to Walshe, 7 March 1930.
139. NAI, DFA, 18/10, Binchy to Walshe, 8 April 1930.
144. NAI, DFA, 18/10, MacCauley to Walshe, 31 July 1930.
145. NAI, DFA, 18/10, McGilligan to Curtius, 1 January 1930; NAI, DFA, EA 231/4, Walshe to Binchy, 27 August 1930.
146. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy to Walshe, 21 August 1930.
147. NAI DFA, Confidential Report Series, 19/10, Binchy to Walshe, 14 March 1931.
148. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy to Walshe, 21 August 1930.
149. Ibid.
151. NAI, DFA, 231/4B, Binchy to Walshe, 21 August 1930.
152. Ibid.
153. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy to Walshe, 21 August 1930.
155. Ibid., 7.
156. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy minute, 27 May 1930, 28.
159. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy minute, 27 May 1930, 28.
160. Ibid., 10–11.
161. NAI, DFA, Confidential Report Series, 19/10, Binchy to Walshe, 2 March 1931.
162. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy to Walshe, 15 May 1930.
163. NAI, DFA, Confidential Report Series, 19/10, Binchy to Walshe, 2 March 1931.
165. Ibid., 14–15.
166. Ibid., 15, 28.
167. Ibid., 15, 28.
168. NAI, DFA 231/4.
169. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy minute, 27 May 1930, 15.
170. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4, Binchy to Walshe, 8 February 1930.

173. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4, Binchy to Walsh, 14 February 1930.
175. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4B, Binchy to Walsh, 9 April 1930.
177. Ibid.
178. NAI, DFA, Confidential Report Series, 19/10, Binchy to Walsh, 2 March 1931.
179. Ibid.
180. Ibid., 18.
181. Ibid., 8.
182. Ibid., 8.
184. Ibid.
185. Ibid., 18.
186. Ibid., 17.
187. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4, Binchy to Walsh, 19 May 1930.
188. Ibid.
189. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4, Binchy memorandum, 27 May 1930, 27.
190. NAI, DFA, Confidential Report Series, 19/10, Binchy to Walsh, 2 March 1931.
192. Ibid., 30.
193. Ibid.
194. NAI, DFA, EA 231/4, Binchy to Walsh, 26 May 1930.
195. Ibid.
196. NAI, DFA, Confidential Report Series, 19/10, Binchy to Secretary, 29 July 1930.
197. Lowry, ‘New Ireland, Old Empire’, 178.
199. See also Michael Kennedy, ‘Our Men in Berlin’, 53.
200. Lowry, ‘New Ireland, Old Empire’, 171.
202. NAI, DT, S. 5736A, Walsh to Secretary of the Executive Council, 2 March 1932.
204. Duggan, *Neutral Ireland*, 27, 34.

Mervyn O’Driscoll (MA, NUI, PhD Cantab) is College Lecturer at the Department of History, NUI University College Cork. His research and teaching interests lie in the areas of modern European history and politics,
David J. Siddle, ed., *Migration, Mobility and Modernization*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000; ix + 225pp.; 0853239630, £14.95 (pbk)

David Siddle, whose work over many years on early modern Savoy has embraced issues relating to migration as well as (for example) family structures and relations, inheritance and literacy, here edits and introduces an important collection of essays on this theme across Western and Central Europe from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Three of the chapters deal with north-west England (Langton on coal miners in eighteenth-century south and central Lancashire, Ascott and Lewis on eighteenth-century Liverpool, and Pooley and Turnbull on north-west England from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries). Two others present material on Ireland (Smyth on the rural parish of Clogheen-Burncourt in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, by contrast, Prunty on women in nineteenth-century Dublin), while Fontaine and Siddle reinterpret the migration experience of Alpine societies over three centuries, Fauve-Chamoux provides a detailed study of women, migration and the life course in eighteenth-century Rheims, and Ehmer offers another densely-textured analysis, this time based on what guild records can tell us about the movement patterns of artisans in and through nineteenth-century Vienna.

This is a strongly-themed collection, whose contributors combine quantitative and qualitative approaches with (at times) fascinating results. The quality of individual contributions is (almost inevitably) uneven, but the book as a whole is decidedly successful. Recurrent themes highlighted in the editorial introduction involve the ways in which individual life-stories can be constructed, linking an ever-widening array of records, to challenge and complicate the over-simplified patterns that have been drawn using data on birthplace and current residence from official censuses, and to emphasize the importance of migration within towns, between towns of similar size, and from town to country as well as up the urban hierarchy. As Siddle reminds us, this kind of work has been pursued for a quarter of a century, but this collection marks a welcome reaffirmation and extension of such approaches. As Pooley and Turnbull point out, Ravenstein's original 'laws' of migration took account of circulatory
and return migration within an overall context of strong ‘net’ popula-
tion flows from ‘country’ to ‘town’ (one of several binary oppon-
tions which the contributors are at pains to challenge), although his
followers did not always take this on board. These essays are par-
ticularly valuable for the ways in which they extend the remit of
historical demography to pursue understanding of the complex
circumstances in which decisions about mobility were taken or
imposed, looking especially at family ties, survival strategies, the
impact of government surveillance and welfare policies, and the
terms under which charitable assistance might be made available.
The big problem is to find ways of reconciling the chaotic and
ultimately indeterminate characteristics (as regards motives) of the
individual stories, with ways of generalizing that do justice to the
complexity while enabling us to make provisional sense of it.

The extent to which this conundrum is resolved is the most impor-
tant variable in assessing the quality of the individual contributions.
Outstanding in this respect is the chapter by Pooley and Turnbull,
which uses life-histories made available by family historians to
generate a large sample of personal migration histories based on
north-west England. It discriminates convincingly between pre-
dominantly work-related motives for longer-distance migration and
housing quality and convenience motives for shorter-distance moves,
while bringing out the enduring importance of the family (especially
for single women), demonstrating interesting patterns of change over
time. Another virtue of this study is its scrupulous attention to the
problems presented by the evidence, especially as regards repre-
sentativesness and the attribution of motive. The chapter by
Fontaine and Siddle which reassesses Alpine migration patterns by
pointing to the existence of prosperous and well-connected itinerant
businesses based in mountain villages, and setting this evidence
convincingly against the assumption that out-migration from Alpine
settlements was overwhelmingly poverty-driven, is also very effec-
tive. Towards the other extreme, Ascott and Lewis are much less
successful in making their record linkage database on eighteenth-
century Liverpool deliver at the crucial intermediate level between
the large generalization and the individual life-history. The two
chapters dealing specifically with women and migration, by Prunty
on Dublin and Fauve-Chamoux on Rheims, work better because of
the careful way in which they attempt to classify the experiences of
their subjects, although Prunty’s database is smaller and less reveal-
ing than that of Fauve-Chamoux.

What no one succeeds in resolving is the problem of motivation.
We can infer the balance of probabilities from the patterns that we
see, and the greater the availability of intimate material, the more
plausible the approximation; but here, perhaps, we approach the point at which further enquiry runs into the sand. The work of Pooley and Turnbull, in particular, seems to offer the best ways forward from the advanced position that these chapters, in general, occupy; and we must hope that future work will look beyond national and linguistic boundaries, as this collection encourages, to transfer ideas, insights and approaches to sources across academic communities, bringing about a truly European history of migration and mobility.

John K. Walton  
*Department of Historical and Critical Studies, University of Central Lancashire*


Having previously contributed a volume on the Napoleonic Wars to the Edward Arnold 'Modern Wars' series, David Gates has now turned to a study of the development of warfare between 1800 and 1904. Just as his earlier volume was rivalled by Charles Esdaile's contribution to the Longman 'Wars in Modern Perspective' series, so Gates's new study is matched by Geoffrey Wawro's *Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792–1914* published in Routledge's 'Warfare and History' series. The fact that Gates's study appears not in one of the main military series but in Palgrave's 'European History in Perspective' series is in itself suggestive of the renewed attention being paid to studies of warfare and its relationship with society.

Gates's earlier study of the Napoleonic Wars was not always sufficiently broad in its scope compared to that of Esdaile. Happily, however, whereas Wawro emphasizes 'warfare' rather than 'society', this time Gates displays an impressive command of the broader social, economic, political, cultural and philosophical canvas. Indeed, even Mrs Beeton makes an appearance. There is perhaps almost too much coverage of military influences on music — though the exploration of the concomitant influence of music on war is interesting — and less than might be desirable on the institutional role of armies and navies within the state in the period between 1815 and 1854. Nevertheless, the balance between the tactical and logistic implications of developing weapons systems on the one hand, and the impact of war upon societies on the other is about right. The treatment of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War is generally impressive although some individuals mentioned only in
passing, such as Montgomery Meigs and Edwin Stanton, needed some additional explanation as to their precise offices. Gates gives equally good coverage of both military and naval developments and is generally sound on technological aspects. Lack of space perhaps prevented more coverage of military and naval theorists, but luminaries such as Jomini, Du Picq, Mahan and Corbett all make their due appearance. Clausewitz is less well covered, doubtless on the grounds that his influence was not pronounced until comparatively late in the century and then primarily only in Germany, though his increasing popularity was enhanced by Moltke’s endorsement. Colonial warfare also gets its due, with particularly good coverage of the French experience in Algeria while there is a nice, but sadly brief, discussion of totality in warfare in the first chapter, which could have been profitably revisited in the last, which covers the period between 1871 and 1904–5.

There are some errors. McClellan was not superseded by Pope, since the army of the Potomac remained separate from the army of Virginia. Nor was there any such weapon as the Lee Enfield in the 1860s, the rifled musket being rather the Enfield. However, these are only minor distractions compared to the irritating modern habit of copy editors and publishers in rendering all measurements such as calibre of gun and weight and length of bayonets in metric rather than imperial. Generally, however, the book is very well written and Gates has the great merit of making some welcome intellectual demands upon his readers.

Ian F.W. Beckett
US Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia


There are still relatively few comparative histories, and even fewer comparative histories of women. Studies such as Sheila Rowbotham’s A Century of Women draw together material from different countries, but leave much of the comparison to the reader. Marcelline Hutton draws together material from Russia and Western Europe, specifically France, Germany and England, under the overarching themes of continuity and change. Despite the
emphasis on nations, Hutton points out that prior to the First World War, class and occupation often defined identity to a greater extent than nationality. The dreams of the title are suggested by such activities as cinema-going and reading; the struggles by women’s efforts to acquire the vote, an education and equal wages; and the nightmares range from sexual harassment and abortion to interrogation by former childhood friends (289).

The approach is more chronological than thematic however. *Russian and European Women* is organized into twelve chapters covering society, education, employment and political activity in the late nineteenth century, the First World War, the 1920s and 1930s. Each section is ushered in by a clear introduction and concluded by detailed endnotes. There are some repetitions within the text, and misspellings of many of the German terms. The volume includes a lengthy bibliography organized into government and public documents, newspapers and journals, and intermingled primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include statistical handbooks, censuses, novels, plays, poems, cookbooks, childcare manuals, housekeeping guides, memoirs and *belles lettres*. These are used to add colour and illustration, such as the quotation by Osip Mandelstam on poetry in Russia: ‘Poetry is respected only in this country . . . There’s no place where more people are killed for it.’ However, the nature and impact of cultural representations are incorporated without critical reflection, Hutton simply indicating ‘it is hard to know how accurately literature reflects life’ (214).

The author concludes that between 1860 and 1939, women made inroads into government and politics; that access to higher education permitted career development and led to limited political and economic power; that large numbers of women entered white-collar work and service industries in the 1920s and 1930s; that greater educational and economic opportunities created more leverage in marriage; and that the greater availability of divorce allowed increasing numbers of women to escape abusive marriage. The overall summation is that women proved incredibly resourceful in surviving difficult social, educational, economic and political situations in both centuries . . . they proved they were not the fragile flowers many thought they were, but hardy, nurturing women who lived respectable lives, survived hard times, and employed a variety of social, economic, and political strategies to obtain the lives they cherished. (408)

As these conclusions indicate, there is an emphasis on breadth rather than depth and, a peril of this type of approach to comparative history, frequent recourse to generalization — so that the reader is informed that ‘most women of all classes dreamed of marrying’, for
example. *Russian and West European Women* would serve as a possible introductory text for undergraduates (a debt to whom the author acknowledges), but its value lies in presenting an overview in one volume rather than in the sophistication of its analysis.

Corinna Peniston-Bird
*Lancaster University*

Sabrina P. Ramet, ed., *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1989*, University Park, PA, Penn State University Press, 1999; 383pp.; 0271018119, $22.50 (pbk)

*The Radical Right* is a collection of fifteen essays originally presented at a conference on ultra-conservatism and nationalism at the University of Washington in Seattle on 21–23 March 1996. An eminent Europeanist, Sabrina Ramet, edited this volume, in addition to thirteen others. She has written seven books, including *Coming In From The Cold War: Changes In U.S.–European Interactions Since 1980* (Rowan & Littlefield, 2002); *Balkan Babel: the Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the War for Kosovo* (4th edn, Westview, 2000); and *Eastern Europe: Politics, Culture, And Society Since 1939* (Indiana University Press, 1998).

As typical scholars, the presenters at the conference, as well as students of fascism who did not attend, disagree on the definition and causes of radical rightism. In her classic work, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, the late Hannah Arendt traced twentieth-century totalitarianism to medieval antecedents in anti-Semitism (5). However, Michael Shafir (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), author of the essay ‘The Mind of Romania’s Radical Right’, contends that ‘there were no historical precedents for the intolerance characteristic of radical right movements in the twentieth century’ (4). Moreover, whereas Markus Birzer, Herbert Kitschelt and Wilhelm Reich have identified the radical right with irrational nationalism, David Ost (Hobart & William Smith College) characterizes the radical right as ‘rational’ in his essay ‘The Radical Right in Poland: Rationalist of the Irrational’ (107). Although Stanley Payne in his *History of Fascism* (Wisconsin University Press, 1996) concludes that ‘fascism was a historical phenomenon primarily limited to Europe during the era of world wars’, Christopher Williams (University of Central Lancashire) states in his essay ‘Problems of Transition and the Rise of the Radical Right’ that there is a ‘growing fascist/radical right constituency in the former USSR and East-Central Europe today’
Finally, whereas Ramet maintains that ultra-rightists are usually ‘past-oriented’ and defend their intolerance by appealing to ‘tradition’, Roger Griffin (Oxford Brookes University) posits in his ‘Afterword — Last Rights?’ that fascism, even when radically anti-urban, anti-secular and historically nostalgic, must be seen as an ‘alternative form of modernism rather than as a repudiation of modernity’ (300). In her opening essay ‘Defining the Radical Right’, Ramet deftly synthesizes all these differing views and then subsumes radical right politics within the larger phenomenon that she terms ‘organized intolerance’. She defines this term as ‘that segment of the political landscape which arose, historically, as a dimension of cultural “irrationalism”, and is inspired by intolerance (or any defined as “outsiders”), and hostility to notions of popular sovereignty or popular rule’. This intolerance can manifest itself in diverse places, she states, but when it emerges from ‘the Right’ it is ‘characterized by ideological and programmatic emphasis on restoring supposedly traditional values of the Nation or community’ (4). Ramet differs from others in maintaining that intolerance need not be limited to the national or racial sphere but may manifest itself in the spheres of ‘sexual norms, religious practice, and elsewhere’ (7).

The other essays present more detailed data on the radical Right parties in specific countries such as Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia, Germany, Poland, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, and the Ukraine. In his essay on Hungary, László Karsai (Attila József University of Szeged) finds strong continuity between the current right-wing parties such as István Csurka’s Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (MIÉP) and the fascist parties before the Second World War such as the Arrow Cross Party led by Ferenc Szálasi. Karsai explains that anti-Semitism continues to prevail in Hungary, where more Jews live today (approximately 50,000–80,000) than in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia combined (142). While it may be true, as he and other contributors to this volume state, that various anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and racist movements and parties appeared throughout Eastern Europe with ‘surprising vigor after the collapse of the Soviet empire’, it should be noted that some rightist parties have fared poorly in the most recent parliamentary elections, which took place after this book was published. In the April 2002 Hungarian elections, for example, MIÉP did not receive enough votes to earn even one representative in the 386-member parliament, whereas in 1998 the party had fourteen representatives, or 3.63 per cent. Moreover, in the October 2000 parliamentary elections in Slovenia, the right-of-centre party SLS/SKD won only nine seats in the National Assembly (Državni Zbor), whereas in 1996 it had nineteen seats. In his essay ‘Radical Right
Politics in Slovenia’, Rudolf Rizman (Ljubljana University) refers to the Slovenian People’s Party (Slovenska Ljudska Stranka or SLS) and Slovenian Christian Democrats (SKD) as two separate parties in the rightist bloc; actually, these two parties merged in April 2000 (after this book was published).

Despite these and other outdated parts, however, Ramet’s book is a key theoretical contribution to the literature on radical conservatism in East-Central Europe. Although it lacks essays on the Czech Republic, Greece and Albania (only because the designated authors could not complete their assigned chapters on time), no other edited volumes of this type exist in print. The Radical Right would be a useful text to assign in both undergraduate and graduate courses on East-Central European political history, perhaps supplemented by books such as The Extreme Right: Freedom And Security At Risk (1997) by Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg, and Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics And Property In East Central Europe (1998) by David Charles Stark and László Bruszt.

Although reading about these ultra-rightist exclusionary parties that preach the ‘politics of hate’ may induce in readers a healthy indignation, they must remember that such extreme parties have a right to compete in free elections. To be exclusionary toward rightist groups is to become like them. Two wrongs do not make a right, but understanding is a useful guide to action.

Johanna Granville
Clemson University


The Soviet High Command is a classic work by a distinguished scholar, sadly recently deceased. It traces the growth of the Soviet military machine from the formation of the Workers-Peasants Red Army and its performance in the Civil War (1918–21) to its secret collaboration with the German Reichswehr, its abysmal war with Finland (1939–40), and finally its struggle against the Nazi invasion of 1941, beginning the Great Patriotic War (1941–45). First published in 1962, and then reprinted in 1984, this third edition contains a new preface by the author, as well as a foreword by Colonel David Glantz, noted military historian and editor of the Frank Cass Series on Soviet and Russian Military Institutions. Unfortunately, this third edition was posthumously published; John Erickson, 72, passed away in February 2002.
The book is organized into six parts, each of which contains three chapters: (1) the Revolutionary Military Command (1918–1920); (2) military debates and political decisions (1921–6); (3) foreign adventures and strategic priorities; (4) the politics of mechanization; (5) the military purge and reconstruction of the Command; and (6) the beginning of the ordeal (1941).

Despite the craftiness of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Erickson reminds us, the multi-million mass of peasant infantrymen in the Imperial Russian Army in the revolutionary year of 1917 was so war-weary and unruly, that ‘no military or political group could either control it or be held responsible for the army’s final disintegration’ (3). As Lenin cynically observed: ‘The Army voted with its legs.’ While the history of the Bolsheviks’ early struggles is well known, Erickson’s analysis focuses closely on the plight of the ordinary infantryman as well as individual military leaders such as Trotsky, Tukhachevsky, Zhukov and others. In March 1917, for example, while the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers’ Deputies were trying to govern after the tsar’s abdication, soldiers on each of the five Russian battlefronts ‘tasted for the first time the hitherto forbidden fruits of political activity’. Soldiers could enjoy all the rights of an ordinary citizen. For example, no longer did they need to salute when off duty. On the other hand, officers were stripped of their privileges; they lost their exalted titles and were prohibited from treating soldiers rudely. Thus, the social class struggle emerged. An officer came to be regarded as merely ‘the land-owner in military uniform’.

The Russian offensive, scheduled for 29 June 1917, ‘fizzled away’, thus sacrificing the few remaining disciplined troops (7). By November and December 1917, the army was in no condition to be used against the Bolsheviks, who were consolidating their power in the northern and central regions of Russia. At the end of November 1917 the Chief of Staff of XIIth Army, General Posokhov, reported that ‘... the army just didn’t exist’ (13).

Initially suspicious of Lenin, who was dispatched by the Germans to Petrograd in a sealed train, the disillusioned soldiers and workers eventually warmed to the Bolshevik views as circulated by so-called ‘military organizations’, as well as by agitation and propaganda. At the end of June 1917, the Bolsheviks assembled in Petrograd for their first large-scale conference: the All-Russian Conference of Front and Rear Military Organizations of the RSDRP. After the sluggish ‘July days’, when Lenin was forced to go into hiding, the Bolsheviks were finally able to launch the Revolution, beginning at 2.00 a.m., on 7 November 1917. When the Kerensky government closed the Bolsheviks’ printing presses and cut the telephone link...
with their headquarters (the Smolny Institute), the Bolsheviks responded by calling upon the soldiers of the garrison to re-open the presses and by countermanding the order for the cruiser *Aurora* to put to sea (11).

Erickson’s skilful use of details and broad descriptions helps one to realize the tremendous odds that the Bolsheviks faced. It was one thing for the Bolsheviks to launch a revolution successfully in the capital city of Petrograd: issuing a decree for general mobilization, seizing the War Ministry and all military schools and isolating all military personnel. It was another thing entirely to register the victory throughout Russia. The head of the Provisional Government, Kerensky, left for the front, hoping to rally resistance in the army. Bitterly hostile anti-Bolshevik senior officers travelled to the south to form a volunteer army. ‘Red’ and ‘white’ forces first played out the first scenes of the Civil War in the Ukraine (13).

Erickson paints an especially vivid picture of the dilemma that Leon Trotsky, People’s Commissar for War, found himself in as he sought to transform the Red Army into a real fighting machine. Given the dearth of high-ranking military experts loyal to the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky had to resurrect non-communist officers from the Imperial Army. To ensure their loyalty, Trotsky then arranged to have two armed ‘commissars’ flank each tsarist officer on a continual basis. Trotsky was heavily criticized for this policy by other party leaders who claimed that loyalty to the party, not military expertise, was the primary criterion.

In parts two and three of the book, Erickson draws on the unpublished captured German military documents to describe the secret military collaboration between the Soviet Red Army and the German Reichswehr. He states that several factors induced the two armies to help each other in the 1920s. Just as the Versailles Treaty imposed stringent demands on Weimar Germany and removed some of its territory, so the Brest–Litovsk Treaty reduced Soviet Russia to the original size of Muscovy. Both countries were also planning for a possible attack by Poland, which had received considerable military aid in its alliance with France. (This common Polish threat would bring the two countries together later in 1939 when the Nazi–Soviet Pact was drafted, containing its secret protocol for the partition of Poland.) On 7 April 1921 Viktor Kopp (a former Menshevik and associate of Trotsky in Vienna before the First World War) reported to Trotsky that German firms such as the Krupp Works, Blohm and Voss and the Albatross Werke were interested in supplying artillery, submarines, and aircraft to Soviet Russia. Later that year the Gesellschaft zur Förderung Gewerblicher Unternehmungen, or GEFU (‘Trade Enterprises Development
Company’) opened offices in Berlin and Moscow to handle the military-industrial arrangements (151). By the late 1920s special training schools had been established in the USSR, including an aviation school in Lipetsk, a tank school in Kazan and a submarine school on the Black Sea. German advisors travelled regularly to the USSR, while German army and naval commanders participated in Russian military exercises. Bolshevik officials launched plans for the production of artillery, optical and precision instruments, and poison gas (249). The Red Army chemical warfare arm owed much to German assistance. In fact, according to Erickson, its director, Y.M. Fishman, had served at one time as Soviet military attaché in Berlin. His German hosts observed him to be ‘adroit, energetic, and unscrupulous’ (266). On 18 May 1927, the Reichswehrminister Dr O. Gessler announced plans to set up gas experiments in the Soviet city of Orenburg. The Russians had shown such keen interest in the German chemical and biological warfare programme, however, that the Reichswehrminister did have reservations about siting these experiments in the Soviet Union. Ever the realpolitician, he considered the possibility that the Russians might one day become Germany’s enemies once again. Bearing this in mind, he also issued a proviso that no Reichswehr officers on the active list were to be sent in 1927 for training in the USSR, and they were forbidden to participate in the ‘scientific gas experiments’ (256).

Dr Gessler’s reservations were confirmed of course with the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June 1941, where Erickson ends his narrative. In sum, The Soviet High Command is a valuable and prodigious research effort. In David Glantz’s words, ‘it captures the immense and elusive intricacies of a system that few then [in 1962, when the first edition was published], and even now, fathomed’ (xii). In comparison to other classic histories, such as Richard Pipes’s The Russian Revolution (1990) and Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime (1994), or Adam Ulam’s The Bolsheviks, Erickson’s book covers a longer historical period (1917–41) and probes more deeply the establishment and force structure of the Red Army, as well as Soviet strategic thinking. Given the eleven detailed military maps, five separate appendices of additional charts and figures, extensive bibliography, and detailed biographical index, this book remains a key reference source for any serious student of Soviet military history. It is ideal for graduate courses in Soviet foreign policy, and selected portions could be assigned even in undergraduate courses.

Johanna Granville
Clemson University
This study, principally focusing on Odo Russell’s Versailles mission (1870) and his subsequent embassy to Berlin (1871–84), is a multifaceted work. It combines an indepth analysis of the British–German relations of the period, and their place in the wider context of international affairs, with a broadly biographical examination of the British diplomat himself, his life and career. Karina Urbach describes Odo’s Whig family heritage, along with the events of his early career in Paris and the Holy See in Rome, to build the background for the central feature of her work, his role as British ambassador to Germany.

Throughout, much is made of Odo’s love of all things German, and his tendency to use German phrases in his writings and everyday speech. Urbach describes how he and his wife, Emily, became thoroughly immersed in the culture of their host nation, and were enthusiastically accepted into the colourful society of 1870s Berlin. But she is careful to point out that although many at home suspected Odo Russell to have fallen irredeemably under the spell of Otto von Bismarck and his new empire, the ambassador always remained a patriotic Englishman, who could soberly lay aside his personal attachment to Germany when reporting back to London. Thus Urbach leaves the reader in no doubt as to this particularly interesting diplomat’s suitability for the position to which he was elevated, as something of a surprise choice, in 1871. The chapters on Odo Russell’s years in the new German capital are both readable and informative, and they shed a good deal of light not only on the man himself but also on the activities, with regard to foreign representatives, of the German chancellor. Urbach asserts that Odo was capable of making ‘extraordinary insights’ into the man at the helm of the Wilhelmine Reich, and the most important and interesting aspect of the study is its close and thorough examination of his professional and personal relationship with Bismarck. This is complemented by occasional glances at Odo’s contacts with the German emperor.

The author often refers to Odo Russell’s frustration that his own sense of amity and constant desire for greater cooperation between the new empire and his homeland were not shared in London. He is portrayed as far less cynical towards the methods of Bismarck in the German unification process than politicians at home, and nowhere is this more in evidence than during the ‘war-in-sight’ crisis of 1875. Urbach uses the affair as an indication of how finely-tuned were
Odo’s diplomatic senses at Berlin, and how much more in touch he was than the British government he served, which appeared reluctant to listen to his assurances that the German chancellor was not bent on further conflict; only when the crisis had passed did it become clear that Odo’s belief had been correct all the time.

Urbach is careful to stress that, although Odo found Bismarck something of an ‘irresistible phenomenon’, particularly after their first encounter at Versailles when the German leader was at the peak of his career, the diplomat did not become the chancellor’s creature during his subsequent years in Berlin. Despite his stance during the ‘war-in-sight’ crisis, it took Odo some time to be completely convinced that the new Germany was of peaceful intent, and during the Kulturkampf of the 1870s, the ambassador thoroughly disapproved of Bismarck’s policy, despite not fully understanding the chancellor’s motives in the matter.

Finally the author considers how far Odo Russell was able to influence the British policy while at Berlin. During his lengthy tenure of the Berlin embassy, she concludes that his main achievement was in enabling Britain to understand the new German empire, and thus he succeeded in removing its status as the ‘unknown quantity’ of Europe. Urbach attributes Odo’s success in this matter to the special working relationship which the diplomat forged with Bismarck, stemming from his fascination with the Iron Chancellor, and the unusually high regard with which the Englishman was held by Bismarck in return.

O.J. Wright
Department of History,
Lancaster University


Robert Gellately’s excellent book is both wide-ranging in scope and detailed in analysis. It covers important subjects including law and order in the new Nazi regime, ‘police justice’, the fate of Jews, ‘Gypsies’, ‘asocials’, foreign workers and internal ‘enemies’. It investigates the public side of terror in Nazi Germany and examines the nature of the relationship between coercion and consensus in the Third Reich, with fascinating conclusions.

While Hitler wanted popular backing, the Nazis did not need more than a ‘mini-wave of terror’ in order to establish the regime in
1933. Terror was not required against the population in general. Gellately argues that the Germans convinced themselves of the positive side of the Nazi dictatorship and accepted a ‘surveillance society’ in exchange for crime-free streets, economic recovery and law and order. From his new research into the press in Nazi Germany, Gellately has demonstrated that the coercive side of the dictatorship was widely publicized, with much coverage of the activities of the ‘People’s Court’ and the concentration camps. The use of ‘police justice’ and special courts for dealing with specific ‘enemies’ throughout the 1930s was overt. Gellately suggests that there was a great deal of popular support for their use, particularly against political enemies, criminals and ‘asocials’. The relationship between the police and society was fostered by publicity events such as the ‘Day of the German Police’ held for the first time in 1934 (43). The mission of the police in Nazi Germany to cleanse the nation of ‘harmful’ or ‘degenerative elements’ was carried out rigorously and publicly (50).

Building on his earlier work The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945 (Oxford 1990), in which he demonstrated the largely reactive nature of the Gestapo, in this book Gellately further investigates the issue of denunciation. He shows that the motivations of informers were ‘clearly mixed’. There were affective motivations, such as anti-Semitism, but also a vast array of instrumental or selfish motivations that provided the impetus for denunciations. Indeed, there was proportionally a higher rate of German-on-German denunciations than racially-inspired ones. Denunciations were often used to settle family conflicts or disputes between workmates. Gellately argues that this showed a growing social consensus and acceptance of the system. He goes on to suggest that many Gestapo cases reflected the development of a kind of ‘therapeutic system’ in the Hitler dictatorship, that is, that the state or its organs were utilized by members of the public to regulate aspects of social life and to settle personal disputes. Informing was used to gain personal advantage. There were examples of denunciations by spouses and siblings. A case is cited of a girl who lodged a complaint against her brother ‘to show him he’s not always right’ (194). This denunciatory atmosphere was the result of citizen collaboration, notes Gellately, but not always the product of racism or belief in Nazism. Regardless of the motives, however, denunciations were all ‘system-supportive’.

Once the war began, Nazi terror took on new dimensions. One indication of the extent of the radicalization of the justice system during the war was the increased use of the death penalty. In 1939, there were three offences punishable by death; by 1945, there were
forty-six. In 1944 alone, the People’s Court sentenced more than 2000 people to death (86). In addition to this, military courts also handed out the death penalty with increasing frequency throughout the wartime period.

During the course of the war, there was a vast expansion of the concentration camp system to take in ever greater numbers of Jews and foreign slave labourers. Particularly interesting is the example of the camp at Flossenbürg in north-eastern Bavaria, which was set up in the spring of 1938, as a camp for ‘asocial’ and other non-political prisoners. From a prewar camp population of approximately 1500, by 1945, the camp held 52,000 prisoners, of which the largest contingents were Poles and Soviets. Flossenbürg grew so much in size during the wartime period that by 1945 it had ninety-two subcamps linked to the main camp.

Gellately also details the Gestapo’s ‘educative work camps’ (209) and the exploitation of concentration camp prisoners as workers for private companies including Heinkel, IG Farben, Siemens, Volkswagen, Daimler-Benz and BMW. The book ends with an examination of the last six months of the dictatorship, with its increasingly desperate measures, including ‘drum-head justice’ (230) and the final tragedy of the death marches. It is an outstanding account of the nature of terror in the Third Reich and of the degree of social consensus for the Nazi regime, and an important contribution to the secondary literature.

Lisa Pine

South Bank University

Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain*, Liverpool, University of Liverpool Press, 2002; 197 pp.; 0853239878, £39.50 (hbk)

Dan Stone’s *Breeding Superman* is an important contribution to the literature on the motivations, influences and objectives of the British far Right in the first half of the twentieth century. Stone’s core thesis is that the affinities between German fascism and the British right wing of the Edwardian and inter-war years have been seriously under-emphasized. He argues that the far Rights of both countries were strongly attracted to interpretations of Nietzsche that esteemed anti-Semitism, the creation of a superior ruling caste, and a racist-fuelled advocacy of eugenics. By the early decades of the twentieth century, *Breeding Superman* contends, the British far Right had a
well-honed ideological platform, several influential opinion-formers, a solid commitment to anti-Semitic beliefs, even a willingness to speak of the introduction of ‘lethal chambers’ for the eradication of the socially and racially ‘degenerate’. The British Nietzschean far Right, Stone claims, has not received the attention it deserves from historians.

In challenging the prevalent assumption that the British far Right of this period was a relatively inconsequential grouping of hopelessly reactionary and politically-effete individuals, *Breeding Superman* makes two thoughtful historiographical points. First, Stone observes that the failure of far Right principles to win legislative expression in Britain does not mean that fascist ideologies themselves were politically marginal. Stone argues, for example, that eugenical ideas, infused with Nietzschean and anti-Semitic value-systems, enjoyed widespread support in Britain even if they were never translated into legislative form. Second, Stone maintains that the history of ideas has neglected certain important figures because it has proven to be hard to locate them within single intellectual traditions. *Breeding Superman* especially emphasizes Oscar Levy and Anthony Mario Ludovici, both committed Nietzscheans, anti-Semites (albeit in different ways) and aristocratic revivalists, who may have lacked dedicated followings but whose ideas appealed in different ways to many sections of the British Right. If we are to fully understand British political life, Stone believes, we need to take the attitudes of such leading right-wing authors much more seriously.

Not all historians of the period will significantly revise their interpretations of the far Right in light of Stone’s analysis. But *Breeding Superman* does offer a powerful antidote to the arguably Whiggish assumption that British fascists were always doomed to political isolation. Stone raises the genuinely important question: was British political culture really as immune to fascism as historians have for so long assumed? And his book may usefully encourage scholars to consider whether Levy and Ludovici might not have achieved greater legislative influence had various contingent factors altered, even slightly, the trajectory of British political life. At the very least, Stone shows that certain elements of fascist ideology were embraced by a wide range of political conservatives and that interlocutors of Nietzschean philosophy, such as Levy and Ludovici, were often published and discussed in popular, mainstream journals.

However, this book does have a few weaknesses. In particular, at several junctures Stone seems to overstate his case. *Breeding Superman* presents a picture in which the first stage of ‘fascist formation’, the creation of ideologically-driven movements, was largely accomplished in Britain by the early 1930s and Stone argues that extremist
beliefs could have gone on to become rooted in the political system, had circumstances been different. This is a debatable claim. That such far Right objectives as eugenical legislation never appealed to more than a tiny clique of politicians strongly indicates that the ideology itself was never very palatable. Thus, in the debates preceding the introduction of the Mental Deficiency Bill 1913 most eugenicists kept a low profile because they knew that any association between their objectives and this bill would only harm its chances of winning the assent of the political nation. The fact that Stone often cites the same handful of names in support of his thesis further implies that far Right ideologies were never more than a weak counterpoint to prevailing liberal sensibilities.

Stone’s assertion that the British eugenics movement was profoundly influenced by Nietzschean writings and racist values is also in some respects overplayed. Several British eugenicists did cite Nietzsche as an important source of inspiration. But for most of those who invoked Nietzsche, his appeal was largely cosmetic. The British eugenicists’ belief in the need for a new aristocracy of strong, intelligent and moral beings was above all driven by the longstanding fear of a volatile urban underclass, and an aspiration cultivated by the professional middle classes for greater political authority in many ways embodied in Thomas Carlyle’s anti-egalitarian notion of a governing clerisy of the nation’s best. Similarly, while Stone is perhaps right to say that historians have underestimated the degree to which British eugenicists were animated by racism, his claim that eugenics was a fundamentally ‘racist worldview’ goes too far. Especially after the passage of the Aliens Act 1906, eugenic goals in Britain were very largely directed at the lower class; and if many of the poorer members of society were of foreign extraction, most were not. British eugenics, in other words, was a response at least as much to national circumstances as to imported ideologies.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Stone’s claim that historians have paid too little attention to the British far Right warrants being taken seriously. His argument that there are many ideological parallels between British and German fascist ideologies will also provide a useful complement to existing analyses that focus primarily on local context and indigenous political traditions. In sum, Breeding Superman is a valuable book and it deserves a wide readership.

John Waller
Wellcome Trust Centre For the History of Medicine,
University College London

At a time of much debate about the scope and competence of the modern state (often encapsulated in the juxtaposition of government and governance), when the state’s relationship with groups is increasingly questioned, this study offers a comparative view of a number of early twentieth-century theorists of pluralism. The concept is defined along two axes: groups are seen as either organic or contractual, and state attempts to regulate them are seen under the headings of coordination or integration. In the tradition of the doctoral thesis, which this work clearly once was, a number of theorists from either side of the channel have been selected and slotted into the above theoretical framework.

This makes for a tidy, if at times repetitive, analysis. Readers are guided thoroughly through the theory of organicists as different as Figgis and Duguit, or contractualists as opposed as Berth or Laski. One might argue with the choice of some theorists rather than others. Why is Pelloutier only briefly mentioned? He was a key activist in the *Bourses du Travail* movement, and his writings were informed by grassroots praxis, unlike some of the lawyers and other apparatchiki who theorized elegantly about working-class revolution. The treatment of Duguit, on the other hand, is a bonus for English readers. The book’s best pages are devoted to him, and they show a decisive, fairly ruthless thinker, aware of the problems faced by the Third Republic and with clear ideas (heavily corporatist) for addressing them.

What all these figures have in common is that they fit the definition of pluralist, that is, they are concerned with the nature (ontological as well as political) of social groups and how they relate to the state. The author’s broad definition and her dialectical skills enable her to postulate fundamental similarities between her subjects. Readers may wonder, however, how much real relationship there is between a stuffy, middle-class, ethnocentric conservative such as Figgis, clearly terrified of any kind of change, and enthusiasts of class war and revolution such as Berth. One might equally wonder how much there is in common between a compulsive libertarian such as Cole and an unsentimental professional jurist such as Duguit, who sought to ensure that state employees served the Jacobin Republic uncomplainingly, under the guidance of élites rather like himself.

One answer to these questions might be that all these figures were professional intellectuals, whose engagement with the politics of their day was ideological rather than participatory (though Cole and
Laski should be exempted from this). One wonders therefore how important they actually were. Studies in the history of ideas can sometimes get so close to their subject as to assume that these ideas had a real effect on the politics and society of their day. This is indeed implied in the book, but not really substantiated. When the author discusses, for example, how French theorists saw the state, it would have been helpful to discuss which state. The Third Republic was a peculiar artefact, not just by virtue of the ‘absolute parliamentarianism’ which provided its governments, but also because of the subtle social compromise which underlay it and which Hoffmann called the ‘Republican synthesis’. There is little hint of the specificity of this state and how it may have affected thinkers in this discussion which, for all its lucidity, remains at a very abstract level. Thus, on p. 29, the ‘levelling pretensions of the Republican state’ implies some impulse of social reformism among mainstream republicans. This was far from being the case, as American historians such as Stone and Elwitt have shown. Republicans sought mainly to ensure the rule of the middle groups which they represented. They would integrate lower groups and their representatives only in so far as they thought it necessary (cf. the gradual incorporation of the SFIO as a potential coalition partner), often by subtle means. The author seems uninterested in these processes, but consideration of them might have helped in asking why syndicalism emerged as such a radical, oppositionist current (p. 134ff.). The inept attempts of Guesdist socialists to manhandle the labour movement are one explanation. However, equally important are the attitudes of mainstream republicans. Could it have been that they knew how to evaluate a rapport de force and that they simply never saw syndicalism as having enough momentum to cause a threat? Such crudely instrumental considerations do not figure much in this clear, well written study of ideological debates. Yet they are the stuff of everyday politics. As so often happens with ideological histories, one always feels compelled to look beneath the surface and ask how these ideas engaged with the real struggles and conflicts of the French polity.

David Hanley
Cardiff University
In *The Struggle for Constitutional Justice*, Herman Schwartz chronicles the rise of constitutional courts in Poland, Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria and Slovakia. Schwartz, a lawyer and professor in the Washington College of Law at American University, is also the author of *Packing the Courts: The Conservative Campaign to Rewrite the Constitution* (Scribner 1988) and the editor of *The Burger Years: Rights and Wrongs in the Supreme Court, 1969–1986* (Penguin 1987). He has advised numerous East-Central European and former Soviet bloc countries on constitutional and human rights reform. In *The Struggle for Constitutional Justice*, Schwartz shows how these novel courts have performed during the first years of their existence. He raises the question: have the courts contributed significantly to the transition from authoritarian communism to constitutional democracy and the rule of law? (5). After offering the caveat that ten years is too soon to judge definitively, Schwartz concludes that progress has been uneven. Some countries such as Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and the Czech Republic, have made great strides. Others, such as Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia, have had some serious setbacks. Still shaky are Russia, Georgia and Armenia. The rest of the former bloc states have either lost interest in democracy or never even tried to establish it (3). To be sure, democracy is a difficult form of government under the best of circumstances. Even in the advanced democracies in the West, constitutional tribunals naturally arouse resentment in performing their duty as a key check on the executive and legislative branches of government. Since the court’s function is to oversee, and if necessary curb, the exercise of power, it will often have to say no to powerful private entities, in addition to the legislature and executive branch. As Schwartz writes: ‘If any of these groups believe the issue is important to them, they will inevitably challenge the right of this coterie of lawyers to tell them what they can do’ (4). Lacking the power of the purse or the sword, the court has little power to defend itself.

Fledgling courts in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union face additional obstacles, however. First, as Schwartz points out, communist legal philosophy itself is inconsistent with the notion that a state should be governed by the rule of law. Communist societies have long considered either executive authority or parliamentary sovereignty as the primary source of law; judges were regarded as mere bureaucrats (4).

Second, the entrenched mafia has reinforced the lack of faith in the
efficacy of legal rules (3). In most of the former communist countries, much of the bureaucracy, the working apparatus of every modern government, remained in the hands of the *nomenklatura*. Many of those who were privileged under the communist regimes entered the private sector and used their former connections to attain key posts and amass wealth, usually by corrupt means. Third, the continuing economic misery hinders growth and gives opponents of constitutional democracy an opportunity to exploit the situation in self-serving ways (3). Finally, Schwartz has discovered that in some of these countries, few people are even aware of the constitutional court’s existence.

*The Struggle for Constitutional Justice* is well constructed. In the Introduction, Schwartz carefully defines key concepts such as ‘constitutional democracy’, ‘liberalism’, and the ‘rule of law’. He then explains his methodology, selection of case studies, and source material, admitting forthrightly that he did not base his assessments on the full texts of the courts’ decisions, except in the rare cases when they were available. Rather, his analysis stems from the reports of the courts’ decisions from summaries, articles, news reports and similar abbreviated sources (10). Not knowing Russian or other East-European languages, Schwartz had to rely on foreign translations, which often proved unreliable. Politically, he considers himself to be ‘a conventional liberal of the New Deal variety and in Europe would probably be considered a Social Democrat’ (11). After a brief history of judicial review and another lengthy chapter on its formal aspects, Schwartz then devotes the next five chapters to Poland, Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria and Slovakia. He argues that courts in Poland and Hungary fared the best, in part because neither faced a serious threat to its existence (9). (The Polish Constitutional Tribunal, established in 1986, was the very first tribunal set up in the Iron Curtain countries.) By contrast, courts in Russia, Bulgaria and Slovakia came under direct attack. One will recall, for example, that Russian President Boris Yeltsin suspended the Russian court from October 1993 to February 1995.

While a plethora of books on legal reform in the former communist states abound in Russian, Italian and other languages, Schwartz’s book is the first comparative case study in English. Cogent and timely, *The Struggle for Constitutional Justice* is an ideal text for graduate courses in comparative law; selected portions would also enhance undergraduate syllabi for courses in comparative politics, international relations, or Russian and East European politics.

Johanna Granville
*Clemson University*
This is a book in two halves: the text, and the illustrations. There is some integration between the two, but not enough. The text is satisfactory; the illustrations are quite wonderful. Together they make a very beautiful volume, from a publisher which specializes in this kind of luxurious and lavish book-as-art.

The subtitle, to do with idea and identity in Europe, promises more than it delivers. The fifteen chapters are all from different hands, some of them highly distinguished, coordinated from several different countries by the Institute of European Studies at the Catholic University of Louvain, where Michel Dumoulin holds sway. The book was published simultaneously in four languages, and the translation into English is generally excellent. The first seven chapters are roughly chronological, from the ancient world (of which more later) to the nineteenth century; they are broad histories of Europe, concentrating on a particular theme such as the Vikings, the idea of empire (a thoughtful and wide-ranging essay by Wim Blockmans) the churches, commerce or the Enlightenment. These are sound enough, but they have little or nothing to say about the idea of Europe, or European identity. This is, for the most part, old-fashioned European textbook history. The eighth chapter, by Dumoulin himself on ‘Europeanism’, performs a fulcrum function between the two parts of the book: here, finally, we get to grips with the idea and identity of Europe. He rejects any teleological notions of European history, which so often are used to give an ancient lineage and legitimacy to the European Union, and indeed ends with Sorel’s sentiment of ‘this cemetery called Europe’. He understands the importance of ‘the Other’ for European identity, and has a section on the Turkish threat; he then lists a number of early schemes for possible (and thoroughly utopian) European unity. The problem (and it is one that permeates the genre of the history of the idea of Europe) is that, despite denials of teleology, there is an imperceptible and almost effortless shift from talking about the idea of Europe and about what makes up a European identity, to very specific European projects, such as a Latin Monetary Union of 1864, and of course the European Union itself. The ensuing essays compound this elision between ‘Europe’ and what was to become the EU, often to the exclusion of the rest of the continent, and the EU’s circle of twelve stars is deeply embossed on the front cover. There are four solid narrative chapters on schemes for European unity since the
First World War up to the 1980s, which focus — increasingly and inevitably — on the EU. This book is too expensive (and too heavy) to be a textbook, but students of history, European studies and politics will find these pieces particularly useful. The last three chapters deal with the 1990s and the future, and are of less interest to the historian. The painfully slow reintegration of Europe since the 1989 revolutions receives attention, as does the defence that the EU can offer against the dangers of globalization, and some notions of what European (or is it EU?) core values might be as opposed to those held in America, or elsewhere. The editorial team has succeeded in achieving a degree of cohesion, and there is little repetition, but neither is there a unified vision presented about what Europe has been, or how we should approach European history, let alone about what should be done about Europe’s present and future.

If the texts in this collection are worthy but, as a whole, not especially remarkable, the ‘other half’ of the book, consisting of literally hundreds of illustrations, certainly makes up for it. Even without the text, every library should hold this book for the brilliance of the picture research and presentation. I have never seen such a wonderful collection, and the quality of the colour reproduction is superb. This is the kind of project that the Mercatorfonds delivers really well. And they are more than just pretty pictures, although some of them are just that, of course. The picture research team has evidently been handed the written chapters, and told to ‘illustrate’ them after the event. If there was ever any dialogue between the authors and the picture editors, then there is little evidence of it: there almost never is in such works. The pictures are ‘tacked on’ to ‘beautify’ the prose, or at least to break it up a little. The team has done its best: a huge range of imaginatively chosen visual representations of the continent has been spliced into the text, more or less appropriately, but nowhere do the other authors discuss the pictures (with the exception of the first chapter). When they do discuss images, they are often not among the illustrations. Text and image exist independently, which is a sadly lost opportunity.

However, the crowning glory of the book forces these rather run-of-the-mill faults into the background. The picture-editing team has been given a licence to produce something really special here, and they have excelled themselves. Odile Wattel-de Croizant is the author of the first chapter of the book, on antiquity, and she has chosen to concentrate on the portrayal of the legend of the Rape of Europa as a way of approaching the question of the idea of Europe. She shows a clear link between the legend about Zeus in the form of a bull, and the thinking of Greek and Latin poets about geographical concepts, and even continents. The subtle shifts in the presentation
of the myth in art and literature are picked out in a way which informs us about the mentality and cultural assumptions of the Ancients. She has the collaboration of Elisabeth Lauwers-Derveaux and of Jacques-René Rabier in assembling photographs of a wondrous range of ceramics, mosaics, coins, pots, vases and frescoes, all decorated with Europa and her bull. But there is more: after each and every chapter, in addition to the illustrations inserted into the text, Wattel-de Croizant and her team have compiled sections of a few pages of visual representations of the continents, with short but highly informative captions about the transition from one type of image to another, throughout the ages. Many of these are of the Rape of Europa, but many others are of maps, personifications of Europe and the other continents, the Minotaur, cartoons, banknotes, stamps and buildings, all speaking of or for Europe in one form or another. We are shown the unbroken tradition of this kind of representation for nearly 3000 years (albeit with a weak link in the Middle Ages), and the nuances are inexhaustible. It is a ravishing but intelligently and coherently presented set of images, and — improbably — it makes the very high price tag worth every penny.

Michael Wintle
University of Amsterdam
New Avenues for Research in Napoleonic Europe

The approaching bicentennial of the founding of the Napoleonic Empire is an appropriate occasion to review the state of research and to suggest possible avenues for further study. Despite two hundred years of historiography, it is safe to say that there is virtually no part of Napoleonic Europe, or any aspect of the Napoleonic Empire, that does not cry out for further research (or at least the dissemination of foreign scholarship by means of English-language synthesis). Generally speaking, the history of the Napoleonic period lags behind that of the French Revolution, but it has also suffered from short-term, relatively narrow approaches that focus on the somewhat artificial timeframe of 1799–1815. Some of the following suggestions, therefore, point to themes that take into account much broader time periods including the late eighteenth up to the mid-nineteenth centuries. They have been provided by a number of specialists in the field, who were asked to contribute ideas based on their extensive knowledge of both the archival and secondary material. It goes without saying that the avenues for future research into Napoleonic Europe are by no means limited to what one can find here.

The wars are as good a place as any to start. Though the narrowly military aspects of the period have been thoroughly trawled over — of very uneven quality, there are countless studies of generals and battles — there are many others crying out for further research. For example, the structure and personnel of Napoleon’s officer class could benefit from systematic study, in the manner of Jean-Paul Bertaud. This is also the case for the various satellite armies where it would be nice to know a lot more about the
social composition of their officer corps. The wars themselves have been quite well covered although, with a few exceptions, there is no good general history that aspires to be anything other than a 'campaigns of Napoleon'. One can also point to the absence of any study of the popular experience of either French occupation or the wars in general. How did the French armies behave? What was the experience of women at their hands? To what extent did the civilian population suffer the ravages of starvation and disease? How many people actually died in the wars? What is needed here is some sort of 'people's history', even if it has to be said that setting about such a work might well present insuperable difficulties. In short, interest has tended to be too narrowly focused on the armies in their role as fighting machines, a role generally viewed from above. We also need to know more about the history of the military from below — the perceptions of ordinary soldiers and of their morale during the long years of campaigning. Nor are armies merely fighting machines. Throughout this period they were used extensively for civilian policing duties, which implies a whole raft of different relationships with civilians. These could usefully be the subject of further research, both in France itself and in the annexed territories.

Law, order and policing in Napoleonic Europe were bound up inextricably with problems of conscription, and there is no doubt
that this subject has been the one that has done more than any
other to open up the domestic history of the Napoleonic period
to serious study. Conscription was to dominate so much of the
political agenda and arouse much opposition among ordinary
people. The most profound, seminal work has been done by
Anglo-Saxon scholars, most notably by Alan Forrest in his indis-
pensable work on conscription and desertion in France, and the
crucial article by Isser Woloch. Forrest’s work ranges over the
whole Revolutionary-Napoleonic period, and is based on inten-
sive archival work in French departments, thus — almost for the
first time — giving students a study of the regime ‘on the ground’,
and yielding valuable insights into popular resistance to the state
at the local level. By contrast, Woloch’s article (which was later
followed by his wider book length study) views the history of
conscription from the centre. Whereas Forrest senses that con-
scription sparked fierce, deeply-rooted resistance to authority
in many communities, Woloch sees it as a catalyst for change
and the advance of the state into hitherto isolated, autonomous
areas.

The progress of conscription, and popular reactions to it, may
be well-known for France itself, but we know far less of the
territories which France annexed. The production of Forrest-
style studies with regard to military affairs in every part of the
Empire is, in fact, badly needed. Charles Esdaile has dealt with
the Spanish case, but Holland, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw,
Central Europe (although we can look forward to the work by
Michael Rowe, who is currently doing research on conscription
in the Rhineland), southern Italy, and the Illyrian Provinces are
all areas that would be worth examining. Was resistance in the
annexed territories born of the same impulses as in metropolitan
France, or did ideology play a greater part? Did anti-French feel-
ing or proto-nationalism help to explain it? This in turn raises the
important question of perceptions of the French army outside
France. Did French propaganda about bringing liberty to the
oppressed bear any fruit, or was their vision one of suffering, as
the victims of French conquest, of soldiers bringing fire and
slaughter in the tradition of any invading force in early modern
Europe? Work on popular images of the army (in folklore, popu-
lar prints and caricatures) is well advanced for France itself;
again, it would be interesting to see how others perceived and
represented the French, and whether the image of soldiering
generally was undergoing any sort of transformation during the Napoleonic years.

The militarization of French and European society under Napoleon also spills over into social history. Some years ago, Theodore Zeldin highlighted ambition as a category of analysis for French history, and that is particularly apt in assessing society during the Napoleonic experience. We need to know a great deal more about the hold of military values and ambition on the population at large, or their indifference to all of it. There is also the abrupt discontinuity of ambition that had to be negotiated after 1814, when the army’s size and role shrank dramatically, and when domination of the upper officer corps largely reverted to the old aristocracy.

Quite naturally, Napoleon’s vast military machine and the durable interests created by it do not stop in 1815. This is reflected in Jean Vidalenc’s rather old study of the demobilized officers of the ex-Napoleonic army who were involuntarily put on half-pay after the Restoration. More generally there is the question of national pride after 1815, the continued love affair of some elements of the French population, despite all the carnage and disasters, with the military ‘glory’ of the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies. This mystique, for example, captivated Lazare Carnot, and led him to rally to Napoleon during the Hundred Days even though he generally loathed Napoleon as a tyrant.

Some areas of social history invite further research specific to the Napoleonic years, while others have trajectories reaching back into the revolutionary decade or the ancien régime, and going past Napoleon’s abdication well into the nineteenth century. As an example of the former, the everyday life of both French and European men and women has been neglected, despite the fact that there is an abundance of archival material that could potentially help researchers to portray a more accurate picture of imperial Europe. Justice, finance and education are areas where state control most affects the lives of ordinary people and yet, despite the abundance of archival material, studies have rarely gone beyond analyses of institutions. For example, we do not really know how justice was able to contribute to the consolidation of the bourgeois order on an everyday level.

An example of research transcending the traditional timeframe of the period is Judith Miller’s work on the grain trade in
Northern France. She situates the serious subsistence crisis of 1812 in a much broader context, both before and after that traumatic episode. Similarly, one might study how changes in family law codified by the Civil Code affected actual practice in different regions, not only during the short period of the Empire, but during the cycle of family life that continued after 1815, as exemplified in the work by Margaret Darrow on family, class and inheritance in the south of France. We still do not know, for example, how the establishment of political stability under Napoleon affected the character of urban life during and after the Empire.

We already have dependable and generally sufficient scholarship on such subjects as the local Napoleonic notables (though here, too, there is need for deeper treatment), the imperial nobility, governing state institutions, marshals, prefects, mayors, and certain cultural, professional and educational institutions. But there are also blank spaces or question marks. The most obvious concerns the networks of patronage and nepotism in the regime. One way to think of this is from the ‘bottom up’, as a question of individual family strategies and connections. Friendship and kinship alike could bring an entrée to government service. At the higher reaches of the government, blatant nepotism could be found on behalf of brothers, nephews, in-laws, and sons (the Portalis family comes to mind). But how, in particular, did well-connected young men begin their ascent? The recruitment of auditeurs for the Council of State and the ministries was a prized entry point for advancement, and a hothouse for patronage and nepotism. This institution has been mapped by Charles Durand, but his book could be used as a starting point or as a resource for further research on particular families or patterns of influence. Of course no regime before or after Napoleon lacked elements of nepotism, but by virtue of its relatively artificial nature, the Napoleonic regime seems highly prone to that influence.

For the study of local society, a remarkably rich collection of source material is available in the over fifty departmental handbooks compiled under the direction of various prefects. Few of the local monographs in which the French generally excel actually deal with Napoleonic social history, as opposed to administrative and political developments.
Some progress has been made in the area of cultural history, but here much more remains to be done. Annie Jourdan’s examination of the construction of Napoleon’s public image, and Werner Telesko’s analysis of contemporary paintings, are good starting points. Some recent work has also been done on Napoleonic caricature. We can look forward to Pascal Dupuy’s forthcoming monograph on representations of France and the French in English caricature (1750–1815).

As well as the politics of culture, the culture of politics is another area that has begun to be explored in recent times. Isser Woloch’s splendid book on Napoleon and his collaborators falls into that category. Malcolm Crook has begun to make some inroads into the plebiscites and elections during the Napoleonic era, not in terms of their outcomes (which were pretty predictable), but in terms of the way in which voters regarded the process and how they responded. The plebiscites were an ingenious way devised by the regime of managing popular sovereignty so that the will of the people could still be invoked.

Compared to the eighteenth century and the later nineteenth century, women and gender issues have received very little attention in studies of the Napoleonic period and have only very recently begun to be explored. It is common for historians to remark on the anti-feminist, if not downright misogynist character of the Napoleonic Code, but that is usually the extent of the analysis. Jennifer Heuer has looked at the ways in which the institutionalization of the Civil Code changed the application of citizenship law, while Denise Davidson is currently preparing a study on women and urban life in France between 1800 and 1830. Davidson argues that women’s behaviour became a yardstick for measuring the health of French society in the aftermath of the turmoil of the Revolution, and that gender norms were integrally connected to the construction of a stable social order. Steven Kale has worked on women and salon culture in the aftermath of the Revolution, and has some interesting things to say about Napoleon and the revival of salon sociability. Much of the existing work, however, focuses on the prescriptive such as the Civil Code and its restrictions or on medical discourse, but also on prominent figures such as Josephine and in a different context Madame de Staël. This is partly a question of sources, partly an assumption that the drama of the Revolution is played out (or at least that struggles for women’s rights are temporarily
quiescent), and partly a continuation of the emphasis on great men and armies, but there is still a lot of space open for further investigations. One avenue worth exploring is gender and the Napoleonic Empire outside of France. Here we are beginning to see some interesting work appear. John Lawrence Tone has written on women and the Spanish resistance, while Karen Hagemann has studied the construction of a German (and manly) identity during the Wars of Liberation. In this context, much more could be done to use gender to illuminate resistance to Napoleon and Napoleon’s armies, the nature and role of ‘nationalism’ or religion in resistance in different parts of conquered Europe, the impact of war and conscription, and the extent to which the Napoleonic Code was implemented in the Empire and what social changes that brought about.

Religious life in Napoleonic France remains appreciably under-examined by comparison with either the pre-1799 or the post-1815 eras, although it is one of the potential growth areas. As Gérard Cholvy has already noted, we have little on religious activities in the years following the Concordat. To begin with, there is scope for an authoritative study of church–state relations in France building on the recent work of Michael Broers and Edouard Leduc. How much did the regime’s later anti-sacerdotalism diminish popular affection for the Empire within France? To what extent was there an attempt to exert centralized imperial control over other Catholic churches outside France where concordats formed an essential part of the Napoleonic settlement of religion? The Concodatory Church of 1802 (Église concordataire) represented a genuinely new creation, an attempt by the consul to end the religious rupture caused by the civil constitution of the clergy. But how did the Église concordataire actually operate? How successful was this attempted junction between refractory and constitutional clergy? We need more local studies comparable to Thierry Blot’s study on the church in Bayeux to make sense of events. Diocesan studies are one way into this area, and with the excellent Privat series complete, the springboard is in place. There is also the recently submitted Cambridge doctoral dissertation by D.O.A. Hawes on the Constitutional clergy and the Concordat in the diocese of Dijon, which argues that popular disaffection owed much to the marginalization of the constitutional clergy within the post-1802
united church. That church made a precarious start. Scholars found it recovered during the Restoration, but how far had that recovery gone before 1815, and in what regions? Why did the challenge from the Petite église, potentially so serious in 1801–2, turn out to be a damp squib. The last collective study of that Catholic remnant dates back to the 1890s. Above all, there is an acute need for a study of male religiosity in the Napoleonic period. This would better permit us to gauge and understand how much the militarization of the male population continued to act as an agency of de-Christianization, and the extent to which Catholics, Protestants and Jews were able to counteract it.

Remaining within France, not enough attention has been given to the post-1809 breach with Rome; the weight tends too much to stay with the restoration of the church in the early years. There is a wealth of archival material in the Archives nationales on the unease in many areas (usually previous centres of counter-revolution) in the last years of the empire. The Concile Nationale of 1810–11, and the second Concordat of Fontainebleau (1813) also need examination, in the same context. Indeed, Michael Broers’s emphasis on the importance of the Concordat of Fontainebleau as a landmark in imperial–papal relations suggests that this deserves a book in itself. These aspects of the subject and period paint the late Empire in a rather more ‘radical’, revolutionary light than it usually receives — it was anything but crypto-monarchist!

Finally, the Concordat was a real, if short-lived, revolution outside France — the Rhineland, Italy and the Belgian departments. Few seem to have grasped the potential for opposition until recently, or the capacity of clergy and laity to ally against many of its terms (even if sometimes their objections were to different aspects of the Concordat, the Concordat came as a package deal, so it welded opposites together). The capacity for religion to act as a politicizing catalyst needs examination, at the grassroots level.

As a general rule, historians have tended to neglect the Napoleonic administration, although there have been a number of French theses and articles on the prefectural system in various parts of France. In addition, a number of older studies are still of some use. The French departments too remain very neg-
lected. The 1970s saw a string of local revolutionary studies appear but the Napoleonic period was simply passed over. Gavin Daly’s recent study on Rouen and the Seine-Inférieure illustrates the various approaches open to scholars, which could be applied to any number of imperial departments.29 The same argument applies with even greater force to the annexed departments within the Empire. An in-depth analysis of the type written by Clive Church could be applied with great value to subjects such as taxes, state expenditure, financial administration and public debt which, despite their central importance, have not received the appropriate attention they deserve in both Napoleonic France and throughout the Napoleonic Empire.30 An even greater problem than the departments is neglect of the communal perspective, although John Dunne is currently trying to rectify that lacuna, at least for selected annexed departments.31

There is no recent synthesis of the French state’s financial and fiscal institutions, which is possibly the least-researched topic in Napoleonic France and Europe. Indeed, the most comprehensive work on finances in Napoleonic France is more than seventy years old.32 Clearly, there is need for a more updated study on that area. Alexander Grab and Donald Sutherland are good starting points.33 Francois Crouzet deals specifically with Napoleonic finances at the end of a recent book, but his treatment is really quite slight (it ends in 1804).34 However, it does at least establish the importance of the ‘franc de germinal’ of 1803 as a bimetallic standard that brought lasting monetary stability to France for over a century. Specific works on finances are also necessary for most of the satellite states which, after all, were forced to help pay for a large portion of the huge military expenditures of the French emperor. Legislative history is also an area that could do with further research. For most of the Napoleonic satellites, studies on financial policies have yet to be written.35 There is little or nothing, for example, on the Secrétariat d’Etat.36 There is nothing on the history of Napoleon’s supply service.

There is a need for discussions of the French and European economies under Napoleon, and the implementation and impact of such policies as the emancipation and the expropriation of the church. Further studies of the Atlantic ports and the impact of the Continental Blockade in the Empire and in the lands of the ‘Grand Empire’ are needed.37 François Crouzet has done this in a general sense, while Paul Butel has focused on Bordeaux, and
Gavin Daly on Rouen, but much more needs to be done on the commercial classes, and indeed the fate of maritime ancillary industries.38

The dearth of current research into Napoleonic agriculture is also notable. Was there stability or growth during the Napoleonic era? What were the effects of the Revolutionary land sales? Did they hold back both an agricultural and an industrial revolution in France? Did peasants acquiesce in Napoleon’s regime? Was there simply a ‘luck factor’ of generally good harvests during the Empire? The relevant entry in Jean Tulard’s *Dictionnaire Napoléon* says very little, and the further bibliographical leads that it cites are all pretty old. The challenge is finding researchers who are prepared to delve into these subjects which are not exactly scintillating.

There is a real irony in the fact that, despite the traditional labelling of the Napoleonic regime as a ‘police state’, and frequent references to Fouché’s ubiquitous network of spies and informers, it is only comparatively recently that scholars have turned to this aspect of the Napoleonic period in earnest. Even then, a great deal of the recent research centres on non-French parts of the Empire, especially Italy, although in the context of policing there is a need for more work in English on the states of the Confederation of the Rhine.39 There is also a definite need for scholarly biographies in English on the Ministers of General Police, Fouché and Savary. The history of the gendarmerie, on the other hand, is well served.40

Many of the central problems of the period associated with policing were traced best by Colin Lucas in a series of seminal articles on the Directorial period, which have done much to set the agenda for those who followed.41 Building on this is the perceptive article by Howard Brown, which widens these issues beyond a regional perspective.42 A clear area for further study is to follow in the footsteps of these people and to provide more detailed studies of France itself. The lack of such work is odd, given the real and easily accessible riches of the Archives nationales de Paris for the Napoleonic period.

The archival material can be used in a multiplicity of ways. Police bulletins, for example, give not only an abundance of information regarding common crimes, but also detailed information on the movement of travellers, the population of Paris
prisons, the situation of prisoners of war and deserters, the state of the roads, internal and external commerce, the price of wheat, and the levés of conscripts. They provide information on the state of public opinion, the maintenance of law and order, the reaction to religious policies and information on intercepted foreign correspondence.43

The Archives nationales also hold thousands of cartons of police records and there is also considerable material on policing to be found in France’s many departmental and communal archives. It would be useful to have an institutional study of the Ministry of General Police and its dealings with local officials throughout the Empire. Police archives could be used in conjunction with France’s rich judicial records (held in the departmental archives) to study various aspects of crime, criminality and criminals. An examination of municipal archives would also reveal much about policing in the Empire’s towns and cities.

Much research still remains to be done on the many conspiracies against Napoleon by royalists and republicans and on the machinations of foreign (especially British) agents and spies in France.44 The opposition to Napoleon by liberal intellectuals, returned (royalist) émigrés, priests who sided with the Pope in his quarrel with Napoleon, and the many thousands of ordinary men and women who resented high taxes and heavy conscription, offers many possibilities for fresh and exciting research. Linked in with this, of course, is the need for much more work on collaboration, especially at the lower levels.

The history of the Napoleonic Empire is mixed in terms of output. We are relatively well provided for in English works on Napoleonic Italy, thanks to the research of scholars such as Stuart Woolf, Michael Broers, John Davis, and Alexander Grab. There are also encouraging signs that Spain is beginning to attract more interest (we can look forward to Charles Esdaile’s forthcoming work on the Peninsular Wars). However, if we can turn to Simon Schama for his magisterial treatment of Holland,45 we still lack similar detailed accounts of Napoleonic Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. English writings on Poland (the Duchy of Warsaw) are even thinner on the ground, apart from the general histories, and there is nothing substantial at all on the ‘Illyrian Provinces’. What we need is a series of syntheses in English of the major and prolific research published in most of
the main European languages on all those countries over the past forty years or so. Only then will we understand how the instruments of French rule (administration, justice, financial exactions, military recruitment, the Continental System) were applied in the subject and allied states of the ‘Grand Empire’, and with what effect. Only then, in particular, will we be able to assess the full impact of the sale of property confiscated from the church, of the Code Napoléon, of French ‘cultural imperialism’ in the more and less receptive conquered lands, and of Napoleon’s ‘politics of grandeur’ and ‘spoils system’ in his larger imperial scheme. The issue at stake is much bigger than Napoleon himself. It reaches well beyond old questions, such as: was he the true heir of the French Revolution? What did he owe to his Revolutionary inheritance? Was he the last of the enlightened despots or a prophet of the modern state? Was he a radical or a conservative at heart? Was he ultimately a force for good or ill? The issue we face is nothing less than how his imperial system actually worked under the administrators and military commanders who were called upon to implement it, how the various subject peoples actually reacted to that system at the time, and what institutional legacy it actually left, or did not leave, in all parts of the former ‘Grand Empire’ after 1815.

Linked to the Empire is of course foreign policy that, along with military aspects, is another area where there is a great deal of research of uneven quality. While relations between the great powers and France have largely been examined — Paul Schroeder provides some thought-provoking alternative interpretations of relations between the major powers, and the European states system — we could still benefit from more research on the middle and smaller powers such as Prussia, Spain, Sweden, Denmark and various Italian and German states. The role of the various interest groups in the formation of foreign policy in France — French (proto)-industrialists, the military, the imperial family, Napoleonic élitists — has received little or no attention from scholars (assuming of course they actually had a role to play). In this vein, it would be worthwhile examining the notion of an ‘ideological consensus’ formed in favour of France’s bid for hegemony in Europe (and indeed the world) among, not only the French élites, but also the military, businessmen and the French people. Some attention should also be given to the perceptions and prejudices of the statesmen and officials who advised
Napoleon, especially with regard to Britain. In short, a study of Napoleon’s foreign/military objectives, which does not get bogged down in the operational history of individual campaigns, and which incorporates factors such as domestic pressures, finances and manpower, would be invaluable. What is needed, in fact, is a counterpart to Rory Muir’s study of Britain, but which focuses on the French perspective.47

Indeed, there are a number of other important questions that may lead to new insights into the ways in which foreign policy was formulated and implemented in France under Napoleon. These include: the family/dynastic aspect of expansion; the charismatic nature of Napoleon’s leadership; the apparent self-destructive nature of his behaviour; the continuing, almost obsessive, unresolved conflict with Britain; Napoleon’s relations with Alexander I of Russia; the increasing distance that Napoleon placed between those (including the French) over whom he ruled; Napoleon’s inability to cope with defeat; his inability to accept responsibility for his actions along with the tendency to blame subordinates or simply circumstances for his failures; his sensitivity to criticism; the tendency to bear grudges for long periods of time; the uncertain foundations of Napoleon’s power and the belief that he was obliged to produce victories in order to maintain power; and his seemingly boundless aggression.

Popular responses to foreign policy in France, and the role of public opinion in general, is lacking. Something similar to Arlette Farge’s approach to eighteenth-century public opinion could be used profitably to study both the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods.48 This would most certainly benefit an analysis of the last years of the Empire. The apparent absence of an insistent popular clamour for peace — the lack (to use an anachronism) of any ‘peace movement’ in the later years of the Empire — has always been puzzling. From the government’s prefectorial and police reports, we know of widespread war weariness and the fervent hope for a durable peace in the wake of French victories as late as Lützen in 1813. The desire for peace was no doubt all the greater, in light of the remarkable success of the regime in suppressing most draft evasion by 1810 through bureaucratic pressure and coercive techniques. The question is: how did this war weariness express itself? And why did it not have a greater impact until the game was over, during the final ‘Battle of France’? The flow of official reports and correspondence (at various local as
well as national levels) could be combed systematically with an eye on this question.

On this point, perhaps the clergy should be reconsidered. Certainly, priests had generally become Napoleon’s ‘moral prefects’ and part of his propaganda machine. But was any anti-war sentiment finding expression in the pulpit or elsewhere in the clergy’s rounds? Mercantile communities, particularly in the hard-hit Atlantic ports, might also be revisited with this question in mind. And related to this, how did the families of the soldiers who perished in the Russian debacle, and who were mostly unaccounted for, react to the news or the lack of news about their kin?

The Empire brought with it popular resistance, another area that is crying out for research. The material is neither abundant nor particularly satisfactory, and it is only in recent years that historians have begun to examine the problem in terms other than those of narrative military history. Recent introductions all stress the importance of such issues as banditry, social unrest and resistance to enlightened reform, whether Napoleonic or absolutist. Here again, Charles Esdaile is looking at Spain, but it is a shame that John Tone has not gone on to analyse some other region of the country than the quite exceptional example of Navarre. As to other parts of the Empire, we really do know extraordinarily little, the one exception being the Kingdom of Italy and, to a lesser extent, Holland. Milton Finley provides a basic narrative and quite a lot of suggestive detail, but we really must have some decent works on the nature of the Calabrian revolt.

However scant, coverage of popular resistance in Italy is princely indeed compared to that accorded to Germany and the Tyrol. Insofar as the former is concerned, there is almost nothing in English other than an extremely suggestive chapter in Tim Blanning’s study on the Rhineland. It would be very helpful to know why the attempts to stir up revolt in Germany 1809 failed so conspicuously? Was the disorder described in Blanning’s study replicated in such comparable districts as the Black Forest? How widespread was draft evasion? Discussion of the revolt in the Tyrol is confined to a couple of narratives, although the 1980s
saw a spate of German works. It may well be that these contain fresh insights.

The growth of the state seems to dominate recent research on Napoleonic Central Europe, especially on the Confederation of the Rhine. Up until about the 1970s, research into Napoleonic Germany was geographically skewed in favour of Prussia. Since then, much work has been done on the ‘Third Germany’. The Habsburg monarchy, by contrast, is neglected for this period, which falls between the two stools occupied by Joseph II and Metternich.

The rise of the bureaucratic, centralized, sovereign state in Central Europe is connected to several debates, including the nature of the transition from the enlightened absolutism/privileged estates of the eighteenth century to the constitutional liberalism of the nineteenth. To what extent did the intervening Napoleonic period (marked, perhaps, by ‘bureaucratic state absolutism’) represent natural progression from the one period to the other? To what extent was it a deviation or a break? Related to this, in turn, is the question of which reforms were the most progressive in the Napoleonic period: those of Prussia, which Thomas Nipperdey argues went beyond the enlightened absolutism of the eighteenth century and prefigured nineteenth-century developments; or the reforms of the south German states, which many argue were more progressive because they subordinated the nobility to the state more thoroughly than in Prussia, thereby paving the way for constitutional liberal developments later on? According to this last interpretation, the subordination of the nobility (and, indeed, other intermediate bodies such as independent cities, guilds, etc.) was a prerequisite for constitutional liberalism. This failed to occur in Prussia, hence its ultimately disastrous Sonderweg.

Within these wide competing interpretative frameworks, the fate of the nobility and other intermediate bodies standing between state and citizen assumes importance. While much has been written about the Prussian Junkers, less research has been done into the nobility in the western states. Granted, Elizabeth Fehrenbach has shown how Confederation of the Rhine nobles successfully fended off or watered down the Napoleonic Code, while Christof Dipper has done some work on the fate of the ‘mediatized’ nobility. Yet lacunae still remain in numerous other areas, especially the relationship between the old nobility
and the new bureaucracies of the south German states (although this gap in our knowledge is closing fast with several recent publications on bureaucracy in these states).

The nobility was not the only formerly privileged estate challenged by state building in Central Europe. The formerly independent imperial cities and hometowns, with their patrician élites and fractious guilds, were another. Despite Mack Walker’s seminal contribution, more research could be done on the relationship between this group and the bureaucratic states to which they found themselves subordinated in the Napoleonic period. Again, this area is linked to the origins of nineteenth-century German liberalism, the focus for Lothar Gall’s recently completed large-scale research project that examined seventeen German cities in this period from the perspective of the role of the urban middle class (Bürgerum) in the transition to nineteenth-century liberalism. Further east, in Hungary, where a substantial Bürgertum did not exist, a similar unresolved debate centres on the connection (or lack of one) between the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that infused much of the nobility, and the nineteenth-century liberal nationalism that was also sustained by this group.

Another privileged ancien régime institution that has been neglected to an even greater extent is the Catholic Church in Germany. This is surprising, given that the Napoleonic era was a crucial period in its development. After all, 1803 marked the end of an institution (the Reichskirche) that had existed for almost a millennium. Arguably, the destruction of this institution paved the way for the resurgence of the Catholic Church in Germany on the spiritual plane in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, it is hard to envisage the emergence of another important nineteenth-century movement, political Catholicism, in a context where the Catholic Church had remained as institutionally important as before 1803. The exact nature of this transition has not been adequately explored.

The ‘perspective from below’ to state-formation is generally neglected. What did the interface between state and locality look like in those areas that experienced rapid state formation? Were local élites undermined, preserved or reinforced by the intrusion of the state? To what extent was progress made in transforming peasants into Bavarians, Westphalians or Badenese? This last question is potentially interesting. Central Europe’s bureaucrats
were not only destroyers of existing privileges and exploiters of ordinary people. While the actual state and legal institutions that they created are relatively well known, less had been written, until recently, on their attempts to create new identities to underpin these institutions. This vein — containing material on public opinion and the formation of identity by newly-emerging states — is now being mined actively, but no doubt has much more to yield. This particular area of research is also linked to the transition from medieval/early-modern concepts of civic rights to the modern notion of state citizenship. The ‘symbolization’ of this transition, and efforts by the German states to forge a new state identity out of the various local allegiances and supranational (Catholic and Reich) identities that had existed earlier, appears to be an especially fruitful area for future research.

Perhaps the best covered of all the countries under Napoleon’s rule is Spain, although here also there is much room for improvement (alas, Portugal has by contrast been absolutely ignored). However, if we know a great deal about the war in Iberia in terms of big names, big battles and high politics, we know very little about such issues as popular motivation and mobilization — the very issues, indeed, that could be said to be most important to an understanding of the conflict. With regard to Spain, in particular, this is the result of a combination of a variety of factors. Thus, until comparatively recently, in Spain academics have shunned the military aspects of the War of Independence, while the majority of foreigners who have looked at the conflict have been ‘old’ historians who, in addition, have lacked both the language skills and the financial resources necessary to pursue research in the Spanish archives. In recent years, however, a number of scholars have shown that researchers willing to do the demanding work of the social historian can make an enormous difference. Certainly, the issue is not want of information insofar as such issues as conscription, collaboration, irregular resistance and the emergence of new forms of political authority are concerned. Important collections of material may be found in a number of provincial archives, good examples being the Archivo General de Navarra, the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Cádiz, the Archivo del Reino de Galicia at La Coruña, the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Badajoz, and the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón in
Barcelona. Many municipal archives also contain much of interest, for example, the Archivo Municipal de Zaragoza, which houses a very large collection relating to General Palafox’s administration of Aragón.

There is, however, a persistent myth that because the struggle against the French was by definition local, it can most effectively be studied at the local or municipal level. This is simply untrue. From the very beginning of the war, successive Spanish governments struggled to remain in close touch with the provinces, whether or not they were free or occupied by the enemy, while the local authorities were in their turn keen to stay in contact with the centre. As a result, the national archives are just as indispensable.

Two sources of particular importance in this respect are the papers of the Junta Central, which are held by the Archivo Histórico Nacional, and the papers of the cortes of Cádiz, which are held by the Archivo de las Cortes. Nor to be scorned are collections of private papers such as those of General Francisco Copons y Navia, the latter being held by the Real Academia de Historia and the Servicio Histórico Militar respectively.

An especially rich source on all matters relating to the Spanish war effort may be found in the extensive pamphlet literature of the period. Important collections here include the holdings of the Colección Documental del Fraile (Servicio Histórico Militar), the Colección Gómez Imaz (Biblioteca Nacional) and the Colección Gómez Imaz (Biblioteca del Senado). For the burgeoning press, meanwhile, a good place to start is the Hemeroteca Municipal de Madrid.

Just as Anglo-Saxon historians have tended to neglect the Spanish provinces, so Spanish scholars have tended to neglect the British ones. While Britain’s archives are obviously primarily used for matters relating to the operations of Wellington and Moore, this is unfortunate since they contain much useful information on the Spanish war effort. Housed at the University of Southampton, the Wellington Papers, for example, are of particular interest for the study of the Spanish army and guerrillas in the period 1812–14, while the situation in 1808 is well covered by the reports of such liaison officers as Charles William Doyle in the War Office Papers (Public Records Office). Last but not least, there are important collections of private papers at the British Library (Moore, Lord Wellesley, James Willoughby Gordon), the University of Nottingham (Bentinck), the Uni-
iversity of Liverpool (Blanco White), and the University of Manchester (Clinton).

Armed with material culled from these sources, it should be possible to arrive at a much more accurate picture of Spain’s resistance to Napoleon than the one offered by current orthodoxy. No more, for example, will it be possible to generalize about the people of Spain rushing to take up arms for God, king and country, or maintain that the populace fought the French while the upper classes collaborated. Through the use of such material as notarial records and parish registers — in which most provincial archives are extremely rich — it should be feasible to examine the impact of the war on Spanish society, this being another area on which much work could still be done.

The possibilities for future research that focuses either specifically on the Napoleonic era, or which transcends the traditional timeframe to incorporate the Revolution and even the Restoration, are abundant. It is evident in the last decade, since the appearance of Charles Esdaile’s piece in this journal, that research has moved away from the traditional limits placed on the period by diplomatic and military histories. Nevertheless, progress has been slow and much remains to be done. Indeed, in terms of scholarly research, it is safe to say that the Napoleonic era is one of the most under-exploited periods in French and European history. There is no longer any reason for it to remain the poor cousin of the French Revolution.

Notes

This article is a compilation of suggestions and comments made by Nigel Aston, Michael Broers, Malcolm Crook, Gavin Daly, Denise Davidson, John Dunne, Geoffrey Ellis, Charles Esdaile, Alan Forrest, Alexander Grab, Jennifer Heuer, Michael Rowe, Michael Sibalis, John Lawrence Tone, and Isser Woloch. I would like to thank them all for their valuable suggestions.


3. Alan Forrest, Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society During


10. Friendship ties, for example, are evoked in Pierre Marot, Recherches sur la vie de François de Neufchâteau à propos de ses lettres à son ami Poullain-Grandpré (Nancy 1966), and in the valuable Mémoires de A.-C. Thibaudeau, 1799–1813 (Paris 1913).


13. The exceptions, to one degree or another, include Maurice Agulhon, La vie sociale en Provence intérieure au lendemain de la Révolution (Paris 1971); Jean-Pierre Jessenne, Pouvoir au village et révolution: Artois, 1760–1848 (Lille 1987); Fernand L’Huillier, Recherches sur l’Alsace napoléonienne (Paris 1947); and Peter Jones, Politics and Rural Society: The Southern Massif Central c. 1750–1880 (Cambridge 1985).


29. Gavin Daly, Inside Napoleonic France: State and Society in Rouen, 1800–1815 (Burlington, VT 2001); and Jeff Horn, ‘Building the New Regime: Founding


36. Other than the book by Baron Ernouf, Maret, duc de Bassano (Paris 1893).


51. Schama’s *Patriots and Liberators* has quite a lot about anti-conscription riots.
Abstracts

Timothy J. McHugh, Hospitals and Huguenots: Confessional Coexistence in Nîmes, 1629–85

This article examines the relationship between Catholic and Protestant communities in mid-seventeenth century Nîmes. During the period under study, the city’s ruling classes were divided almost equally between the two faiths. Traditional historiography asserts that the period between the 1629 Peace of Alès and the 1685 revocation of the Edict of Nantes was a time of underground hostility between the two communities. The history of poor relief in the city would suggest otherwise. Despite pressure from outsiders, the city’s Catholic and Protestant elites shared an uneasy toleration of each other’s efforts to administer their own community’s hospital. Even after the ultra-Catholic bishop and the Parlement of Toulouse succeeded in closing the Protestant hospital, the Catholic city fathers allowed their Huguenot neighbours to continue to levy municipal taxes for more informal forms of social welfare. The article argues that, in similar communities both in France and in the rest of Europe, localized toleration developed despite external forces acting to incite intolerance.

Key Words: Edict of Nantes, France, Louis XIV, poor relief, toleration

Roger Bartlett, Serfdom and State Power in Imperial Russia

The rise of Russia to Great Power status and European pre-eminence in the period between 1650 and 1850 was contemporaneous with the consolidation of the institution of serfdom. Russia lost her dominant position in 1856; serfdom was abolished in 1861. This article enquires into the relation between the two phenomena, and the ways in which the servile system may have
enhanced Russian effectiveness as a Great Power. The initial section examines some of the features of Russian serfdom, including its lack of any determining legal definition, its variety and flexibility in practice, serf standards of living, the semantics of serfdom in Russia, and its place within the dynamics of the Russian ‘service state’. Serfdom’s contribution to the regime’s ability to develop and project its power, both internally and externally, is then examined in relationship to the economy, political culture, social structure and military system of the pre-reform Empire. The investigation concludes that serfdom did not hinder and in some respects materially enhanced Russian power projection before the mid-nineteenth century, which helps to explain its retention until 1861.

Key Words: army, monarchy, patronage, peasants, social relations

Mervyn O’Driscoll, ‘To Bring Light Unto the Germans’: Irish Recognition-seeking, the Weimar Republic and the British Commonwealth, 1930–2

This case study of the first years of the Irish Legation in Berlin (1929–1932) sheds light on the challenges created in the transition from Empire to Commonwealth. It serves as a counterbalance to the existing work which has tended to focus almost exclusively on the relationship between the metropole (Britain) and the dominions. This approach neglects a third set of actors, namely third states with which Britain and the dominions had diplomatic relations, such as Weimar Germany. How did the Saorstát represent its co-equal status within the British Commonwealth and how did Weimar perceive the Irish role in the Commonwealth?

This article demonstrates that the Saorstát encountered difficulties in explaining the Commonwealth experiment and expressing their national autonomy in the face of incomprehension by the pre-existing European state system and the resistance from the local British embassies. Established power relations and perceptions were ingrained, inhibiting the international recognition the Free State considered that it warranted.

Key Words: Commonwealth, diplomacy, dominions, empire, Ireland
P. Dwyer, New Avenues for Research in Napoleonic Europe

Despite the vast number of books and articles on Napoleon and the Empire that have been written over the last two hundred years, there is virtually no aspect of European history during this period that does not cry out for further research. During the last decade or so, research has moved away from the traditional limits placed on the Napoleonic era by diplomatic and military history, but progress has been slow and much remains to be done. The possibilities for future research suggested here not only point to a number of lacunas in the historiography, but also encourage researchers to apply recent historical methodologies, and to transcend the traditional timeframe (1800–15) to incorporate the French Revolution and even the Restoration.

Key Words: 1787–1830, First Empire, Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte