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History,
Historians, and
Conservatism
in Britain and
America

*From the Great War to
Thatcher and Reagan*

REBA SOFFER

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REBA N. SOFFER

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Introduction

While British conservatism had a 200-year-old heritage, its American counterpart appeared in the twentieth century largely as a response to the challenges of a post-Second World War world. In both countries, conservatism was contested, evolving, and amorphous. How should so intellectually elusive a phenomenon as twentieth-century conservative thought be studied in each country? By what methods can the contents and coherence of the concepts, their intentions and effects, their changes and continuities, and the historical conditions to which they belonged be made transparent? Who were the most representative and influential people who held and promoted those ideas? Any attempt to grasp the meaning of conservatism and its various contexts tends to be frustrating because political ideas, embedded in competing traditions of analysis, judgement, and memory, are intrinsically enigmatic. Most historians agree that there are no models or lists of desiderata for finding the method that will probe political thinking most competently. Model-like hypotheses are useful only when applied to one case, while each project undertaken may elicit different principles of selection, procedure, and judgement. Every approach to history has a working, if chronically shifting, consensus about what constitutes an appropriate enquiry and acceptable explanations. The most satisfying, least distorted, most probable resurrection of events, material and mental, relies on eclectic, imaginative methods. In attempts to examine the substance and effect of conservative ideas, different scholars from different disciplines have chosen very different methodologies. In this book, I rely upon the interdisciplinary approach of intellectual history to illuminate five decades of twentieth-century conservative ideology in Britain and two decades in America.

The idea of ideology is often used, even by non-Marxist historians, in Marx's sense of a rationalization, or justification, or encoding of interests. Boyd Hilton has asked, provocatively, is temperament the same as ideology? Does a given personality, shaped by psychological or aesthetic or cultural preferences, lead ineluctably to preference for a particular ideology?²¹ Or are ideologies chosen pragmatically or even randomly from among competing complexes of ideas according to what appears most accessible or perhaps most familiar at any given cultural moment? Independently of the motives for certain ideological preferences over others, ideology may be best understood, I think, as a systematic ordering of concepts that allows heterogeneous and confusing events to become

comprehensible. That constructed order is possibly, but not necessarily, rational and often is derived from habitual or cultural organizations of experience. Political ideologies tend to share with religion a moral core seated in the believer's understanding of 'the good'. Rather than simply representing interests or personalities, political systems of ideas may be fundamental to an individual or a group's larger view of the meaning and purpose of life, or at least to the immediacy of their own lives. In spite of the differences that separated particular conservatives in Britain and in America, a repeated conservative emphasis upon character, instincts, attitudes, institutions, religion, nation, traditions, and habits was essential to a conservative ideology.ⁱⁱ

As an intellectual historian, I presume that ideas are most clearly attached to historical circumstances when they occur in the conversations and practices of intellectual communities. In earlier periods it may have been possible to be an isolated thinker working privately and secreting results for considerable lengths of time. Intellectual seclusion became almost unthinkable in the twentieth century because of the enormous proliferation of knowledge and, perhaps as important, the continuously growing number and kind of intellectual communities. Those communities, although often independent of each other, interact and overlap at the juncture where ideas receive some measure of public clarification. Within those collegial bodies, very often defined by profession or by what Thomas Bender has called the 'cultures of intellectual life', an internal grappling with ideas enables an examined life.ⁱⁱⁱ Traditional concepts can be rearranged and refurbished, and newer ones can be introduced and tested for their capacity to explain and endure. Accounts of those struggles, their causes and their consequences within any one "culture" and without it, have been among the most valuable achievements of historical enquiry.

Conservative thought has been studied through a variety of disciplines, often reliant on implicit and unstated methodologies. Philosophers have inquired about epistemological, ontological, or ethical issues; students of politics concentrate more on the uses and abuses of power and place. The boundaries among various approaches can dissolve into one another or they can turn out to be impermeable. Scholars sometimes pursue one method through historical inertia—it is what they have learned and it seems efficient to them. Others attempt syntheses among various methodologies that appear to open new perceptions. Among those forms of inquiry, an exploration of conservatism that looks at the intellectual community of conservative historians, who were also polemical public intellectuals, appears to be especially promising.^{iv} Beginning in 1913 in Britain and 1940 in America, conservative historians played a prominent role in the debates about the heart, soul, and mind of conservatism. Although concentrating on differing sequences of time, different individuals, and disparate groups in two countries, this is not a book of independent essays. Instead, each part and every chapter is connected to the others by constant themes, recurring actors, impinging historical events, and the pursuit of common questions and concerns.

Part I, 'Intellectual History, Political Thought, and Conservatism', is meant to serve two purposes. First, it explores the advantages of intellectual history in comparison with other approaches to political thought generally, and to British and American conservatism particularly. It is not meant to be either an exhaustive or even a reasonably complete view of the purposes or historiography of intellectual history. Instead, this discussion is both an introspective affirmation of the special perspectives of intellectual history and an attempt to make explicit the ways in which political ideas have been considered and valued. Why should intellectual history be an especially perspicuous approach to conservatism in twentieth-century Britain and America in preference to other types of historical inquiry? Does intellectual history have particular advantages as a pellucid view of our recent and overwhelming past? One of the goals of intellectual history, especially when reliant upon historiography, is a revelation of the presumptions and organizing principles that inform a particular study. Possibly more than other approaches, a history of ideas seeks multiple dimensions that satisfy intellectual, emotional, and even aesthetic criteria—we take pleasure in finding that thinking in the past had a discernible, coherent meaning. The study of thought encourages the dismantling of familiar ideas so that they can be deconstructed, reconstructed, and appropriated in ways that allow us to understand them in a new way. Even in our own particular work, widely diverse methods are possible because access to different subjects ranges from the seemingly simple and obvious to the difficult and uncomfortably obtuse. Ideas are inextricably cerebral, imaginative, intuitive, and material events. What we can know about historical events of every kind, whether apparently random or clearly attributable to identifiable causes, is determined by our selection of time, place, and participatory agents.

The second purpose of Part I is an explanation of why, among all the conservatives writing during these inter-war and post-war decades, I chose four British and four American historians as central figures in the definition, representation, and propagation of conservative thought. These figures were selected because of their coherent and accessible statement of conservative ideas, and because of their demonstrable success in reaching large and varied audiences. The validity, or coherence, or rectitude of their historical writing is not at issue here, nor is the immediate or recent appraisal of their work within the historical profession. I am only interested in the ways in which their presentation and interpretation of the motives, activities, and effects of their subjects provided a cautionary narrative that justified their conservative causes. The British conservative historians F. J. C. Hearnshaw (1869–1946), Keith Feiling (1884–1977), Arthur Bryant (1899–1985), and Herbert Butterfield (1900–79) were praised by many of their professional peers, but their reputations suffered with the passage of time. In America, both Daniel Boorstin (1914–2004) and Rowland Berthoff (1921–2001) were accepted, and Boorstin even acclaimed, by other historians, but they, too, have not survived subsequent professional

judgement. Peter Viereck (1919–2006) and Russell Kirk (1918–94) were always considered to be polemicists and social critics more than historians because they were not pursuing what was approved professionally as ‘objective’ history. No matter what the profession thought, it was their standing as ‘historians’ with an identifiable, often popular, following that gave them the authority to adopt, develop, and propagate conservative ideas and policies. The British and American conservative historians were heard additionally by powerful politicians, and there is considerable evidence of a reciprocal relation between political leaders and these conservative historians especially in Britain, as Parts II and III reveal. The periods of concentration are different for the British and the American historians because the contexts varied significantly.

British conservative historians drew upon established conservative ideas and rhetoric already familiar to most of their audience since at least the 1870s. In America, conservatism had little lineage. It was the conspicuous achievement of the American conservative historians to introduce conservatism into American political conversations that transcended small group of intellectuals speaking to each other. Although courted infrequently by statesmen, in contrast to their British counterparts, the American conservative historians enjoyed two large and sometimes overlapping audiences. Their first and greatest audience was popular readers, who turned Boorstin, Viereck, and Kirk into bestselling authors and media personalities. A second constituency, perhaps more important because more impressionable, was that of students enrolled in institutions of higher learning where they were compelled to study ‘great minds’, a subject characteristic of American curricula in the three decades after the Second World War. Beginning in 1953, students in these general education courses were very likely to discover a historical, coherent discussion of conservatism in Viereck’s *Conservatism. From John Adams to Churchill* or in Kirk’s *The Conservative Mind. From Burke to Santayana*, both published that year and reprinted many times subsequently. While we cannot know how many of those students were persuaded to become conservatives, let alone how many actually read what was assigned to them, we do know how many copies were sold to universities—with many more being read as they were recycled from one student class to another—and we have some testimony about their influence as Part IV demonstrates.

Part II, ‘The Inter-war Decades’, is set within Britain when, to the educated and even semi-educated reading public, the study of history carried the same patina of truth-telling that was to shift to the hard sciences by the 1950s. Historians were understood as purveyors of disinterested truth who presented the given, inescapable facts.

At the end of the nineteenth century and just before he became his party’s prime minister, A. J. Balfour, that most philosophical of Conservative politicians asked: ‘Will anyone who has studied our national history not admit that it is an upward progress, from which, so far as the conscience of the nation could

achieve it, tyranny, corruption, and injustice have gradually been banished?’^v Balfour may have been the last conservative intellectual to accept an essentially Whig view of British history. The Great War was the beginning of the end of that national and international order which had given British conservatives their personal and professional identities and their privileged status. From their perspective, a political, social, economic, and cultural *dénouement* had changed Britain irrevocably for the worse. As Richard Thurlow and many other historians have pointed out, the Great War deepened a sense of crisis for many ‘who felt threatened by the continued decline of British pre-eminence’.^{vi} It was felt that the flower of an entire generation of young men had died tragically, a catastrophic loss with negligible gain, and that the Armistice did not bring peace, honour, or prosperity. Instead, there was a devastating economic depression, unemployment, and the appearance of new totalitarian regimes that defiantly rejected traditional solutions for national cohesion and European stability. An increasingly precarious society before 1914 was transformed for the worse, conservatives generally believed, by the demands of the war and the awkward adjustments to an even more precarious post-war society. Conservatives feared social, economic, and political anomie at home and growing tyranny, corruption, and injustice abroad.

Among those transformations, the most troubling were the appearance of entirely unprecedented social, economic, and political tendencies, suspect because historically untested. In the two decades following the Armistice, many felt uneasiness and guilt about the punitive nature of the settlement. Additionally, conservatives worried about the future of the Empire; the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany; and, the successes of socialism and communism in Russia and, briefly, in Spain. They also resented America for exacting a financial burden from Britain in payment for the war. International costs, which damaged Britain’s finances and its national pride, were exacerbated by cumulative domestic problems such as unprecedented strikes and labour unrest, the uncertainty of the gold standard, threatening class conflict, the electoral reality of a Labour Party, and the abdication of Edward VIII. In the Boer War, huge crowds had poured into London streets to celebrate the British victory at Mafeking.^{vii} It was not lost on liberals as well as conservatives that a similar crowd might have filled the streets in angry protest rather than in joyful commemoration. Demonstrations in the streets, hardly a novelty, were used for at least 400 years to sway or intimidate the powerful, whose attention was otherwise preoccupied. What was new about ‘mafficking’ was its size and extent. By 1918, when the suffrage was amended, almost everyone in those crowds, including most women over 30, could use their vote to change political institutions and challenge those who controlled them. Eight years later, sporadic working-class protests were translated into a nationally paralysing General Strike.

British conservatives saw another unwanted consequence of the Great War in the introduction of a quasi-managed state, which imposed limited, ad-hoc

planning. Conservatives resented state intervention in the economy as an intrusion upon personal privacy and, even more seriously, as a weakening of individual spheres of action and responsibility. For them, war accelerated the erosion of a traditionally hierarchical society and those institutions meant to restrain and guide the destructive forces of human nature. The war had confirmed the most basic conservative assumptions about human nature and its limitations. More lamentable yet, the inter-war years demonstrated the triumph of statism in the communist Soviet Union and the emergence of socialism as a political reality in Britain. While communism was considered too foreign to be acceptable to the British people, conservatives abhorred the Labour Party, which had adopted a socialist constitution in 1918. Labour emphasized common ownership and presented itself as a class government, which challenged the natural and disinterested leadership that conservatives identified with their ideal of national unity. It is not surprising to find a variety of conservative polemics, attempting to define the desirable qualities of conservatism in opposition to socialism, prominent from the mid-1920s to the late 1930s when the reality of Labour governments was no longer simply a topic for Conservative club rooms and dinner parties. Apprehension about socialism grew when the Labour government achieved its first, if brief, ministry in 1924, and again in 1929, when a Labour minority government was formed that lasted to 1931. Although conservatives supported national governments in the inter-war years, they distrusted them as dangerous liaisons with a Labour Party dedicated to socialist, and then, possibly, communist agendas. Conservatives found Spanish and Soviet experiments with communism chilling, cautionary tales bound to have violent, unhappy endings.

When the emergence of successful totalitarian regimes in the 1930s added to the depression's economic, social, and political precipitate, new political movements developed within Britain. They included a rising radical Left, articulate but small in numbers, and a still smaller, less reputable, radical Right. Idealists found the Left especially promising. Those few British historians who admired the radical Left in the 1930s, such as the young A. J. P. Taylor, argued that a more just society depended upon a reconstruction of British political, social, and economic institutions.^{viii} The larger confrontations between the Left and Right, magnified in importance by the Spanish Civil War and the rise of Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, and Stalin in the Soviet Union, led to a new debate about the meaning of justice, citizenship, the state, and the origins and exercise of power.^{ix} Conservatives set out to win that debate.

A clear legacy, that constituted a 'conservative' attitude towards politics and society, had begun in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and developed consistently in defence of hierarchical authority, paternalism, deference, the monarchy, Church, family, nation, status, and place. Conservatives in Britain possessed power, throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, derived from land, local authority, money, inheritance, and religion.

In great part, British conservatism coalesced in defensive reaction against the appearance and extension of new classes, a shift from land to capital as a means of measuring wealth, and the steady erosion of privilege and power. In 1836 Benjamin Disraeli had defended the monarchy, privilege, property, and the exercise of ecclesiastical, educational, and cultural authority by the Church of England as the basis of national strength. That Conservative understanding of nation was extended to embrace Greater Britain with the adoption of imperial ambitions during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In his famous Crystal Palace speech of 1872, Disraeli brought his party up to date by adding Empire to the Conservative standard.^x As late as the Abdication Crisis of 1936 Stanley Baldwin was cheered by a receptive audience of the faithful when he attributed the endurance of conservatism to an alliance of Church, throne, Empire, and Christian truths.^{xi} For at least six decades of the twentieth century, Disraelian Tory democracy was invoked to define and defend the Conservative right to ascendancy. Even though the Conservative Party had made great efforts to broaden its membership, the selection of Harold Macmillan as prime minister in 1957 was still presided over by an impeccable aristocrat, the fifth Marquis of Salisbury. Those who believed in the rectitude of Conservative ascendancy continued to exercise prerogatives through more than half of the twentieth century.

A distinction has to be made in Britain between the appeal and success of the Conservative Party and 'conservatism' as a fundamental mediator of beliefs and practices. Throughout the twentieth century, the Party represented itself as the historic protector of law, order, and property rights within a nation unified by ancient institutions. Between 1880 and 1991 that message won the Conservatives sixteen of the twenty-eight general elections. The Party's electoral success rested, in great part, on its compliance with changing circumstances. A slow shift from landed to commercial wealth, begun in the nineteenth century, continued during the inter-war years to allow Conservative MPs to remain a plutocracy. Although many post-war changes were not really effective until the 1980s, the post-war Party moved from 'both local and Parliamentary elites of squires and business magnates to leaders and representatives drawn from professional and managerial backgrounds'. By the 1970s, these groups were joined 'increasingly by the ranks of professional politicians'.^{xii} 'Christianity' continued to inform conservative political thought and to be 'seen as essential for the bonding and well-being of society'.^{xiii} Protestants, who were not Anglican, as well as Catholics and even Jews found the religious emphases of the Conservative Party congenial. While the Conservative Party demonstrated considerable pragmatism in its appeal to a changing electorate, 'conservatism' as a basic set of beliefs endured remarkably unchanged. At the heart of those beliefs lay a continuing understanding of history as a significant narrative about the maintenance and transmittance of those institutions, laws, prescriptions, and proscriptions that guaranteed a distinctly British society. The conservative historians' exposition

and elaboration of this historical narrative makes them especially important as transmitters of conservative values and policies.

While its fundamental commitments were remarkably constant, conservatism was never monolithic or unchanging. On the contrary, while a consensus was crafted by Conservative policy-makers who needed to present a coherent programme to voters, individual conservative thinkers moved from their shared assumptions to often divergent analyses of the current state of the nation and the most appropriate responses to national problems. In the making of myth and ritual about the Great War, that continued well into the 1930s, conservative historians reflected and promoted the inconsistent and ambivalent attitudes towards that war characteristic of all shades of political opinion. Attitudes towards the war included various mixtures of public sanctification, grief, and reprehension as was evident in the best-selling novels A. S. M. Hutchinson's *If Winter Comes* (1921), Ernest Raymond's *Tell England* (1922), and Warwick Deeping's *Sorrell and Son* (1925), as well as R. C. Sherriff's play, *Journey's End* (1928).^{xv} On one hand, there was a patriotic national mood that celebrated heroism and resurrection. At the same time and often in the thinking and activities of the same person, there was also a strong revulsion against the Great War based on its mismanagement, terrible personal toll, and the seeming ineptitude of the whole misadventure. That revulsion drove many conservatives to argue persistently for peace with Nazi Germany so as to avoid another devastating war and the further decline of Britain.

Although the great depression created a crisis of faith for politicians and for those without prospect of work, established historians were less apprehensive. J. H. Clapham, who still dominated the Cambridge teaching of economic history in the 1920s and 30s, was notorious among his students for dismissing the economic crisis as a historical mishap, sobering, but transient. Historians, like Clapham, who were assured of Britain's historically successful trajectory, found reassurance within the 1930s of Britain's economic stability and flexibility in comparison to the Continent.^{xv} Britain, they maintained, continued to dominate the world's economy because its Empire, and subsequent Commonwealth, spanned the earth to encourage and guarantee trade, international community, and power. Domestic ingenuity and imperial power demonstrated successful British national strengths. Conservatives especially welcomed these assessments. In the inter-war years, many conservatives hoped that the rise of fascism and communism would remain political marginalia alien to the larger scheme of British national evolution. These revolutionary movements reflected, they wanted to believe, what could go wrong in countries that lacked political and institutional stability developed throughout its history by great and selfless leaders. In their attitudes to what they perceived as political aberrations and to politics generally, conservatives prided themselves on their sensible, non-ideological positions.

That deliberately commonsensical stance led many historians of Britain, until very recently, to treat conservatives as supporters of a 'stupid party' to whom ideas were anathema. Even though British conservatives said repeatedly throughout the first six decades of the twentieth century that they distrusted all ideologies, that was unequivocally an ideological position. Systematic ideas mattered for conservatives, as they did for liberals and labour, often more than personalities, habits, interests, or institutions. Conservatives and conservatives, in common with everyone else, depended upon 'ideas' to understand, discuss, and hold their beliefs; to discover and act upon standards of conduct; to establish enduring relationships; to interpret the past and plan for the future; and, most importantly, to communicate meaningfully with others. Any kind of identity, and especially a political one, has rarely been created or maintained successfully through merely utilitarian, expedient, or even customary practices.

Hearnshaw, Feiling, and Bryant, all born before the twentieth century began, were conspicuous in their persistent and committed combination of scholarship and polemics that attempted to address the dramatically challenged years between the two world wars. Each of them felt themselves to be living in unprecedented times, characterized by multiplying crises. Their special knowledge and their elite status obliged them, they were convinced, to explain to wide audiences the causes of economic failures, social upheaval, national and international political instability, and the rise of totalitarian regimes. Although their membership in an 'elite' was, for some, an accident of birth, wealth, or family connection, they each attributed their status rather to their own accomplishments, and especially to their demonstrated merit as historians. They believed that their understanding of current problems was derived from an expert knowledge of the past. They were all convinced that a necessary connection existed between the study of history and the direction of practical affairs. Setting out to make the substance and consequences of historical events intelligible to the largest possible public, they considered themselves fit to give advice on policy in public lectures, newspaper columns, on the BBC, and in popular books and essays. Their study of history confirmed, for them, the rectitude and inevitability of their principles by revealing the essential meaning of the historical record. In their choice of subjects, research, and writing, they concentrated upon the actions of great men and the resolutions of historical conflicts from the Middle Ages through the centuries that followed, to provide lessons for the treatment of contemporary national failings and the qualities required for national leaders. Each one thought that their polemical conservatism rested on objective scholarship and they tended to support the same broadly conservative principles, but their positions were complex and often internally contradictory in keeping with the fluctuations within inter-war conservatism that they reflected and shaped. During the inter-war decades, the conservative historians' common themes illuminate broad areas of agreement within twentieth-century conservative thinking before the

Thatcher era, while the ways in which they differed expose the fault lines. In Britain, in spite of fundamental disagreements about what conservative principles ought to be, there was, from the early twentieth century, a growing rhetorical and theoretical currency that intellectuals and Party leaders used to evaluate the conservatism in which they believed. The conservative historians made this currency more solvent by setting consistent conservative doctrines within a broad historical context that reached out to a much wider audience than the few conservative intellectuals often more concerned about strategies than about the underlying ideas, policies, and practices that conservatism represented.

The third Part of this book considers conservative responses in Britain to the unimagined cataclysms of the Second World War and its Cold War aftermath through the 1960s. Although post-Second World War conservative historians had been deeply affected by the unprecedented developments of the inter-war years, the Great War had become increasingly mythical. The Second World War, in the immediate present, was far more traumatic. It was not only holocausts, genocides, and atomic and nuclear weapons, terrifying as they were, but additionally the new historical contingencies that they created. British conservatives gloomily perceived the post-Second World War legacy as the final erosion of Britain's status as a great power. There was no longer any question about the disappearance of the Greater Britain exemplified by the British Empire. Especially after the Labour victory in 1945, conservatives experienced a lacerating crisis of confidence. Until 1951 and even after their electoral victory that year, the Conservative Party was threatened by a weakened political position and conservatives faced the possibility of becoming a minority force in British politics while their country became a peripheral player in world affairs. After the Second World War, Hearnshaw and Feiling had become historical figures themselves without a message appropriate to the new times. Bryant's popularity with his public remained, but his discontent with the Conservative endorsement of the European Economic Community estranged him from Party circles and he drew nearer to Labour leaders who were rejecting Britain's overtures towards the Continent. For many conservative intellectuals, especially after the Second World War, the marginal victory of good over evil became a further cautionary lesson about the futility of optimistic future goals.

An extension, elaboration, and revision of inter-war conservatism was exemplified by Herbert Butterfield (1900–79), who diffused an important strain of conservatism, even more explicitly Christian and with a stronger emphasis on 'realism', in both domestic and international affairs. Although born at the beginning of the twentieth century, and a well-established historian before 1939, Butterfield did not become a polemical Christian conservative historian until the Second World War, when his deeply Augustinian pessimism informed everything that he said and wrote. At Cambridge, that reading of conservatism was perpetuated by Butterfield's personality and powerful academic reach. A distinctive

spiritual and political itinerary informed and transcended his technical subjects, and his agenda was carried out in his lectures in British, American, and European universities and on the BBC; in his writing; in his remarkable personal influence within British and American intellectual life; and in his seminal contributions to policy-making think-tanks on both sides of the Atlantic. More than any other historian of his time, Butterfield set out deliberately to transform the post-war study of history according to his fundamentally religious and conservative views of both past and present.

The Second World War accelerated Butterfield's genuine suffering from the consequences of historical introspection, and he returned continuously to the dilemma of the historian's part in 'the drama of human life in time'.^{xvi} That was not true of other conservative historians at Cambridge such as his colleagues Geoffrey Elton (1921–94) at Clare College, and George Kitson Clark (1900–75) at Trinity, who are also treated in this Part. Butterfield joined Kitson Clark, Elton, and other conservatives in relying upon corrective and restraining institutions produced by a selective constitutional process that determined the uniqueness of English character. But beyond human contrivance, Butterfield put his greatest trust in the mysterious hand of God. His Christian conscience and fear of human nature led him to discover historical confirmation for the desirability of reconciliation and compromise in place of rigid ideological stances.

Unlike the British, whose position after the Second World War was marked by defeat as well as by victory, America emerged as the world's unchallenged superpower. The definitive role played by a uniquely American conservative historiography in launching a new discussion about conservatism in Cold War America is the subject of Part IV. During the early twentieth century and throughout the inter-war years, conservative idealizations of national harmony had little resonance. Although there was never a significant socialist party that attracted large numbers of working-class adherents, the expanding gulf between rich and poor, and the inequity many suffered as ethnic immigrants, was all too apparent to those at the bottom. The American Left, as embodied in the Progressive movement, both populist and intellectual, found, as the Left did in Britain, a national historical record marred by injustice, inequality, and greed. In contrast to working-class perceptions as well as to those of Progressives, post-Second World War conservative intellectuals, including the rare conservative historian, described America as an open society with increasing economic opportunity and independence for its citizens. Socialists, and especially communists, increasingly became the target for conservative attack because they were seen as advance agents for the collectivism and central planning that was occurring in post-war Europe and Britain. Those statist activities were seen as alien to the American experience. America, the conservatives argued, promised all its citizens and immigrants extraordinary opportunities for a satisfying life. Rejecting the legacy of the New Deal, which had translated such promises

into federal legislation, American conservatives attempted, without great success, to find an alternative conservative tradition with which to ally. America had no consistent conservative legacy that persisted from earlier centuries and no Conservative Party. Without an accepted conservative political party until the 1980s, some conservatives valued ideas as aggressive weapons in a political and cultural warfare for national, moral authority. Other conservatives concentrated on pragmatic experiment and empirical strategies to achieve similar ends. Conservatives generally, including conservative historians, had far less influence on political leaders than did their British brethren because, until the late 1970s, there were few politicians within or without the Republican Party in search of a 'conservative' set of principles. It was only with the rise of Ronald Reagan that ideology became important to his Party. The Reagan era, and especially the intensification of the Cold War from 1981 to 1989 made an ideological Right politically tenable.

In 1940 Peter Viereck was the first conservative to define what conservatism meant. Thirteen years later, Viereck and Russell Kirk attempted to reach a much greater audience by placing their messages in an explicit historical tradition that imported and superimposed British conservatism upon recalcitrant American development. Eristic public intellectuals, they independently overcame the lack of an authentic American conservative intellectual legacy by finding a Burkean historical tradition and an identifiable conservative mind in the history of ideas. The contents of those ideas contained, for them, values that were originally developed by the British, but subsequently became distinctly American in application. Other conservative historians, such as Daniel Boorstin and Rowland Berthoff, insisted upon an unequivocally American conservative inheritance that explained the uniqueness of American experience as well as its hegemony. Boorstin, a major figure, and Berthoff, a minor one, provided a celebratory, exceptionalist reading of American history and traditions. Rejecting British and European models and the role of abstract ideas, each man produced an often personal and proudly patriotic conservative historiography, eulogizing the unprecedented achievements of American empiricism. Between 1940 and the 1960s, these two parallel traditions of conservative historiography developed in reaction, above all, to the spectre of communism. Each tradition represented the divisions and conflicts that characterized American conservative thinking and they were, simultaneously, protests against departures from essential social and cultural values.

A brief Epilogue, while disavowing any historian's ability to predict, reflects upon the future of the conservative past by considering the effect of the conservative historians on British and American political thinking, attitudes, values, and policy. Despite very different chronologies, the similarities of American and British conservative values, analyses, prescriptions, and failures are as striking as their differences. While conservatism was essentially a reactive doctrine, based largely on the preservation of the successes of the past and the structures

and institutions that protected and continued them, each of the conservative historians in both countries attempted to anticipate policies that addressed the problems of the present and future. They were each critics of contemporary values, mores, and political positions, who based their authority on their standing as historians. I stop before the Thatcher and Reagan years, when conservatism, its most influential advocates, and the world changed irrevocably.

Although each conservative historian in both countries wrote about different subjects and times, their historical studies and their expositions of conservatism were governed by their common assumptions about human nature, society, the state, and religion. They were not the only conservatives writing about the meaning of conservatism, but as prolific, influential historians, who were also self-conscious and polemical public intellectuals, they drew upon what appeared to be expert knowledge for their pronouncements, whether historical or political. Religious faith, which they found essential to human achievement, taught them about human limitations and powerlessness. In great part, they all distrusted change from a fear of clumsily interfering with God's greater design. They attempted to apply what they perceived as immutable principles of human nature and society to nations irretrievably transformed by the experiences and consequences of twentieth-century warfare.

Convinced of the reality of human incapacity either to plan competently or actually to carry out such plans, they found communism and socialism morally feral. For limited progress to occur, they trusted genuinely conservative institutions and statesmen whose education, status, and personal commitment led them to understand and achieve what was best. Although admitting that such natural leaders were not necessarily different from ordinary people, conservatives endowed them with a superior ability to recognize and control their own failings, while strengthening their characters, capacity for work, and sense of duty to others. History demonstrated to the conservative historians that a few individuals had greater merit and virtue than others. This conviction led them to write about the intelligent, hard working, energetic, strong, and dependable who were models of what could be done with human material. Repudiating optimistic expectations, they attributed social, economic, and political evils primarily to human weaknesses that, unlike the environment, were implacable. Their understanding of historical successes and failures, they believed, made them additionally fit to guide others. They all trusted a competent, socially responsible, patriotic and meritocratic few, inspired by religious morality, to lead the weaker majority. In describing a desirable governing elite, the conservative historians were describing themselves.

While philosophy, political science, or politics provide revelations about conservatism, a study of systematic historical writing has a deeper and more ambient historical terrain. Among the various strategies pursued by intellectual historians, the most accessible may be a tripartite exploration of how history is written, who wrote it, and why it was written. The subjects, motives, and

personal and intellectual origins of historians who were also successful public intellectuals, as well as an appreciation of their historical setting, reveal their historical moment, so that its contours and contents become better defined. The richness of that context enables us to move inquiringly among the individuals, institutions, traditions, texts, pretexts, and audiences that contributed to an understanding and acceptance of conservatism. Intellectual history, I believe, and especially its subgenre of historiography, is adept at treating these components in elite and in popular thinking contextually rather than in isolation from each other. Contemporary historians of the twentieth century have described and defined conservatism through many different and valuable perspectives. Historiography, which is singularly revealing in an attempt to understand British and American conservative thought within historically explicit times and places, has been neglected.^{xvii} This book remedies that neglect.

NOTES

- i Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Preface.
- ii See Soffer, 'British Conservative Historiography and the Second World War', in Benedikt Stuchtey and Peter Wende (eds.), *Traditions, Perceptions and Transfers. British and German Historiography, 1750–1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); 'The Long Nineteenth Century of British Conservative Thought', in George Behlmer and Fred Leventhal (eds.), *Singular Continuities: Tradition, Nostalgia, and Society in Modern Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); 'Commitment and Catastrophe: Twentieth-century Conservative Historiography in Britain and America', in Fred M. Leventhal and Roland Quinault (eds.), *Anglo-American Attitudes: From Revolution to Partnership* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); and E. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism and Ideologies of Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- iii Thomas Bender, *Intellect and Public Life. Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. xiv.
- iv In Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), there are 473 pages of interesting text covering the earliest historiographies, the medieval world, early modern historiography, the modern age, and contexts for the writing of history. While other countries and regions throughout the world receive a chapter, including Italy, India, the U.S., Japan, the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and others, there is not a word about Britain. Two years later, Bentley's *Modern Historiography: An introduction* (London, 1999) provided an account of historiography from the Enlightenment to the present with two chapters devoted to British traditions. In 2005, Bentley's *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) remedied earlier omissions in its devotion entirely to English historiography.

- v Lord Balfour of Burleigh, 'University Training and National Character', the Rectorial Address delivered by Lord Burleigh of Balfour, 14 March 1899, *The Student Supplement*, 5.
- vi Richard C. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain, A History, 1918–1985* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 20. See, too, Colin Holmes's important *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876–1939* (London, 1979), which discusses the long and shameful history of attitudes towards Jews in Britain and contends that Anti-Semitism was increased after the Great War as a means of identifying 'the causes of unrest and instability in an uncertain post-war world', 151.
- vii See Soffer, *Ethics and Society in England: The Revolution in the Social Sciences, 1870–1914* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978), 229–30.
- viii A. J. P. Taylor, *A Personal History* (London, 1983), 124.
- ix For a discussion of the 20th-century meanings of citizenship in Britain, see Michael Freedon, 'Civil Society and the Good Citizen: Competing Conceptions of Citizenship in Twentieth-century Britain', in Jose Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- x In 1836 the young Benjamin Disraeli wrote 'England has become great by her institutions. Her hereditary Crown has in a great degree insured us from the distracting evils of a contested succession; her Peerage, interested, from the vast property and the national honours of its members, in the good government of the country, has offered a compact bulwark against the temporary violence of popular passion; her House of Commons, representing the conflicting sentiments of an estate of the realm not less privileged than that of the Peers, though far more numerous, has enlisted the great mass of the lesser proprietor of the country in favor of a political system which offers them a constitutional means of defence and a legitimate method of redress; her ecclesiastical establishment preserved by its munificent endowment from the fatal necessity of pandering to the erratic fancies of its communicant, has maintained the sacred cause of learning and religion, and preserved orthodoxy while it has secured toleration; her law of primogeniture has supplied the country with a band of natural and independent leaders, trustees of those legal institutions, which pervade our land, and which are the origin of our political constitution'. 'The Spirit of Whiggism' (1836), in William Hutchison (ed.), *Whigs and Whiggism. Political Writings* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 327–8. See, too, 'Vindication of the English Constitution' (1835), in *Whigs and Whiggism*, 111–232, and the Crystal Palace Speech, 24 June, 1872, in R. J. White (ed.), *The Conservative Tradition* (New York: New York University Press, 1957), 238–40.
- xi Baldwin's 'Albert Hall Speech' also brought him a large 'fan mail', which included statements of gratitude from all the Christian faiths' leaders. See *Baldwin Papers: A Conservative Statesman, 1908–1947*, ed. Philip Williamson and Edward Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 435–6.
- xii Byron Criddle, 'Members of Parliament', in Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds.), *The Conservative Century. The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 166, 165. See tables indicating occupations of MPs on 147, 152, and 160. For the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Peter Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government: Lord Salisbury's Domestic Statecraft*

1881–1902 (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978); Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World: Conservative Environments in Late-Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics, and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London, 1995).

- xiii Peter Catterall, 'The Party and Religion', in *The Conservative Century*, 670.
- xiv For a discussion of this literature, see ch. 4, nn. 11–12.
- xv See Soffer, *Discipline and Power. History, the University, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), esp. 46–52 for a discussion of the reactions of various historians to the Great War; and for J. H. Clapham, 156.
- xvi Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (New York: Scribner, 1950), 23; 'conservative historian', without at the same time acting as a conservative polemicist, is unique. See ch. 7.
- xvii See Part I.

PART I

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY,
POLITICAL THOUGHT,
AND CONSERVATISM

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1

Intellectual History, Political Thought, and Conservatism

The study of the twentieth century—the most recent and rapidly changing of all centuries—is far less manageable than the study of more remote periods. The successively overwhelming events of the twentieth century took place in our immediate past. Massive wars and their terrible tolls were simultaneously justified and denounced. Proliferating and conflicting ideas overflowed into aesthetic movements, experimental literature, religion, science, technology, and attempts at social science. Perceptions and politics simultaneously responded to, and attempted to, control changing relations among men and women and families in the midst of a transformation of opportunities, as well as of social, economic, and educational institutions. The erosion and emergence of new kinds of status as well as of mutating religious and secular identities were aided and abetted by the increasingly rapid manufacture and distribution of opinions. Lost certainties created unprecedented opportunities for the development and adoption of new ideological movements which competed for political acceptance and ascendancy.

A wide diversity of twentieth-century studies contributes to increased understanding of the substance and trajectory of those movements. Every historian, no matter what their disciplinary preference, struggles to wrest significance from their studies. That struggle, while always problematic, occurs for some in a much smaller physical and intellectual world. The medievalist, for example, suffers from a paucity of evidence; the twentieth-century scholar is buried in avalanches of information. The differences between them are not a matter of kind, since both have to evaluate and use evidence in the same way. Even so, the modernist, confronting an overwhelming quantity of different kinds of evidence clamouring for equal attention, faces the troubling decision of which categories of material to accept and which to reject.

Intellectual history attempts to organize evidence and explain its significance by borrowing liberally from the other disciplines within history in order to create as broad a context as possible. Ignorance of the kinds of insights provided by these other disciplines severely limits any grasp of the forms and contents of ideas under study. Each kind of study, including intellectual history, has its proprietary virtues, vices, and predilections. When we have some understanding

about the *modus operandi* of these other approaches, we are in a better position to adapt or reject their applicability to the enquiry we are pursuing. The most obvious problem is the decision about a methodology for collecting and ordering evidence. Amongst the variety of importunate voices, which kinds of testimony are essential and which peripheral? Choices, always contestable and personal, are governed by the subject studied. That will, in turn, decide the meanings eventually attributed to that subject.

One of the goals of intellectual history, especially when applied to historiography, is a revelation of the presumptions and organizing principles that historians bring to a particular study. An understanding of the ways in which intellectual history offers a perspective different from that of other disciplines can begin by considering what intellectual historians imagine that they are doing. To reveal the hidden imperatives that animate other historians, it is helpful to consider our own undeclared commitments. Historians today, as in the past, may deceive themselves and their readers about the unexamined agendas they bring to their work. An introspective and historiographical reckoning with our motives, intentions, and subjects for study involves unpacking the ideological baggage intellectual historians carry so that the enterprise becomes visible both to the authors and their audience.

Intellectual history interrogates individuals who live within identifiable cultural communities and cope with particular historical events by assigning them some sort of meaning. These varieties of meaning and their forms of expression can be pursued by examining the connections between their origins, reception, influence, competition, corroboration, and consequences. Ideas and their representations have inertial powers of endurance, but within historical time they are constantly challenged by circumstances that require either reaffirmations or altered perceptions and formulations. While historians of all kinds tend to be attracted to a period of time when it promises to fulfil lacunae in knowledge, understanding, experience, or, perhaps, teleology, these promises are seldom fulfilled for intellectual historians because they tend to ask questions for which there are few unimpeachable answers. If satisfactory answers remain elusive, partial understanding is greatly to be preferred to ignorance.

When intellectual historians read discursively, they are often compelled by new information and perceptions to jettison or at least re-examine what they believed they had understood. Close examination of our own habits of thought, although essential, can be daunting. If the result is concentrated brooding, no matter how delusional it may occasionally be, that is part of the process. Uncomfortable reflection sustains born-again scepticism, the faith necessary to historians of ideas. Intellectual history is hardly a reified practice with a contents and methodology accepted by all its adherents, but it has distinct advantages in offering a flexible, self-conscious entrée to the disparate kinds of ideas that complicate political thinking. Intellectual historians concentrating on the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries have pursued this kind of fruitful exploration. In marked contrast,

students of twentieth-century political ideas have tended to be almost exclusively philosophers and political theorists.¹

Why choose a particular subject and a particular organizing principle and eliminate others that may have similar utility or strong demands for attention? Aside from gratuitous, but not unimportant, factors such as personal taste, or the ease of finding sources, or familiarity with a foreign language, there may be unacknowledged compulsions. Even the most conventional and least speculative historian is hardly free of presuppositions. Historians need tentative hypotheses, often unstated and still more often unconsciously held, to begin their search and then to organize what they find. Without such hypotheses, we would be awash in a torrent of apparently unrelated incidents. For intellectual historians, there is the additional problem of confronting intractable problems of definition and organization more easily solved when history is pursued as chronological narratives. When compared to historians of politics, society, economics, and even culture, intellectual historians are at a still greater disadvantage. Other historical disciplines can evoke an existing structure, often already given in the subjects studied. The separations between political, social, economic, cultural, and intellectual history are not clearly defined and the borders are very permeable. What does separate them are their intentions and their perceived purposes—they set out, often, to address very different kinds of historical problems. In so doing, they ask different questions and the answers they receive are largely determined by the contents, forms, intentions, and limits of the questions asked.

For the intellectual historian, unlike the political philosopher or theorist, putative thinking about politics is tested for its success empirically. Empiricism is a tarnished, but still sterling, standard in intellectual history because empirical events, although mediated by levels of perception and interpretation, are all that we can agree to agree about. Political thought, no matter how abstruse in origin, is a vital component in an actual world rather than in any imagined one. In both past and present, political concepts serve specific interests and ends. Our pragmatic appraisal of political issues enables us to navigate the slippery realities of the world, past and present, in which we cannot help but live practically as well as intellectually. To study political thought, the intellectual historian must invoke the larger intellectual, social, political, economic, and cultural events of the time in which that thought occurred. Even though intellectual history shares boundaries with political theory, it is firmly rooted in the historical experience of real, identifiable people. Political theory can soar among all kinds of hypothetical political situations and normative desiderata, while political thought is anchored to given historical realities. This book is about conservative political thought, not conservative political theory. In contrast to the canonical view of political thought as essentially theoretical, J. A. Pocock correctly defined a history of political thought as the history of ‘men and women thinking’.²

Political thought is an aspect of a larger political life traditionally studied by historians who often rely upon a pre-existing, continuous plot told as a series or

sequence of events. If the narration itself becomes an explanation, the historian may avoid any explicit theoretical or thematic apparatus to impel their story. Although historians do not have a historical text 'given' to them in the sense that the story already exists in the objective world, they tend to construct their reports within familiar boundaries recognized by other scholars and by educated readers. Political history achieves a certain privileged perspective by permitting armchair scholars to move intimately or even aggressively through the talking and killing fields of power. This is especially true of the traditional studies of high politics, with its emphasis upon those figures that wield genuine political power. Political historians, whose opinions are rarely heeded today by those who actually make history, can imagine themselves powerful by illuminating how, why, and to what ends authority and power are organized, exercised, justified, and received.

Whenever we compare American and British historical writing about twentieth-century political thinking, the problems of scale and size of audience intrude. There are more studies of iconic political figures by American historians because there are so many more American historians studying twentieth-century American history, as well as a greater consuming public among other scholars, university students, and general readers who remain interested, especially, in political biographies.³ In Martin Gilbert's impressive and monumental political biography of Churchill, told nearly in real time, his richly detailed account makes the author appear almost a participant in the events he describes.⁴ Among American biographers, Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s three-volume study of Franklin Delano Roosevelt comes closest to Gilbert in its richness of detail, but may be more significant in the breadth of its analysis, but that, too, has been challenged by Robert Dallek in his studies of Roosevelt.⁵ If we compare the number of serious studies by American historians of FDR to those of Churchill by British historians, there are over 730 American authors writing about FDR and 78 British authors who have written about Churchill.⁶ Given the commonality of language and the ease of professional discourse, it is not always easy to separate American and British scholars. Dallek, who spent his academic life at the University of California in Los Angeles, at Columbia University, at Boston University, and at the University of Texas, was also the Harmsworth Professor at Oxford, 1994–5 and received an Honorary MA there.

Alternative narratives of political history tend to place politics within specific social and economic contexts.⁷ Before the Second World War, twentieth-century American political history was dominated by the Progressive historians, whose social and economic purposes shaped their political studies. After the war, American political historians challenged the 'conflict' tendency of their predecessors to find a greater 'consensus', in their country's recent development, while still later recent studies find neither synthesis acceptable. Persistent concerns for American political historians in the twentieth century have been: America's involvement in the two world wars; the relationship between the three branches of government; the conflicts between the states and the federal government; the meaning of the

constitution; demographic shifts; voting patterns; and the role of the city. In each of these areas, American historians compete with political scientists.⁸

Other departures from high politics in both Britain and America discuss literature or religion or art or even science as essentially political issues.⁹ In some cases, evidence is considered empirically persuasive because it can be organized demographically, prosopographically, or statistically.¹⁰ A weaker form of empiricism occurs in studies of institutions, sub-structures, administrations, voters, political parties, political factions, citizens, and the relationships among opposing and co-operating interests. Some political historians examine the ways in which political entities originate, become established, and then function; others rely on group biographies. Those political historians, who find theoretical inquiries more congenial, organize their investigations around the meanings and uses of class, or gender, or various kinds of marginalized and hidden political assumptions and processes.¹¹

In Britain, a 'new political history', sometimes combining the perspective of Gareth Stedman Jones and post-structuralism, seeks to replace a social and economic interpretation of politics with a recognition of 'political culture' where 'discontinuities between political and popular visions and the way in which the relationship between political language and practice and the wider society is constantly renegotiated'.¹² This is most evident in the work of Stephen Fielding, Lawrence Black, Jon Lawrence, James Epstein, and James Vernon, who have disparately combined social and linguistic interpretation to concentrate on the construction and reception of political language.¹³ Scholars like Philip Williamson analyse political rhetoric to provide impassioned defences of 'high' politics as a sophisticated study of political leadership, while others such as Patrick Joyce attempt, through a 'material turn', to incorporate more varied forms of social history into political history.¹⁴

Even though the subject of political history has become more disputatious, most political historians in America and Britain continue to assemble their arguments, evidence, and conclusions in a form recognizable as a story.¹⁵ For intellectual historians, too, a narrative form of exposition remains an essential organizing principle because ideas and events occur concurrently and serially, in specific historical time and place. Chronology is as important in intellectual history as in any other approach for the obvious reason that events, whether mental or material, have consequences whose origins and explanations can be pursued from the present back to the past as well as from the past forward to the present. For the conservative historians, who all confronted the immensely accelerated time that characterized the twentieth century, chronology and the selection and elevation of particular dramatic events within that process was especially critical. They all discarded a Whig or Progressive view of history and their major concern, as historians and polemicists, was to extract from history the lessons that would prevent the erosion or direct challenge to those institutions, practices, and traditions they believed were essential and exceptional to Britain or to America.

The appropriation and exploitation of power, explored by diverse approaches to politics, also remain central to any study of political ideas. Moreover, the concept of 'political culture' has always interested intellectual historians who look as well for 'social cultures', and every other kind of 'culture' that appears pertinent to an enquiry, because they tend to understand a 'culture' as a thick, coherent, retrievable context that can be identified and investigated. Intellectual historians of the twentieth century are interested, additionally, in social history that differentiates layers of dense social realities in which thought develops and disperses; in economic studies that address behaviour and motivation as essential components within economic institutions and processes; and in a cultural history that adopts a reflective stance and reveals perspectives neglected by historians of ideas. This species of cultural history keeps company with intellectual history in studying the manufacture, diffusion, and consumption of art, images, and values, and most especially the ways in which these phenomena and epiphenomena reflect, and are created by, thought.

Ideas are not autonomous events. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine independent or unrelated events because they all belong in an interwoven tapestry with material, psychological, and conceptual texture. Although often interacting and overlapping, ideas have identifiable, historically specific contexts that cannot be reduced to universal myths. Obscurity need not be confused with incomprehensibility. As an intellectual historian, in common with other kinds of historians, I recognize that absolute objectivity and complete disinterestedness are neither possible nor desirable. That recognition is compatible with a treatment of ideas as real entities with substance and meaning independent of, and often antagonistic to, relationships of power or rhetorical confrontations. The stability of a bridge between a conceptual construction of the past and present worlds in which we live and have lived depends upon foundational definitions, or interpretations, of the meaning of political ideas such as 'conservatism' in the changing circumstances under examination. In America, far more so than in Britain, there was, and still is, a great deal of confusion about what 'conservatism' means.¹⁶

We may not be able to recover precisely what individuals or groups have thought, because the testimony that remains is always partial and often false. The fugitive past, no matter how far or near in time and memory, eludes us as we attempt to understand it. Sometimes, the remaining records were intended to delude us; at other times, the creator of those records deluded themselves. That does not mean that the motives for their thinking, as well as its form, content, essence, and consequences are irrevocably lost. It is undeniable that attempts at recovery blunder over all sorts of unknowable and unpredictable obstacles. Although stymied by the randomness of what remains, the accident of what we stumble upon, and by our own cultural and personal limitations, we are far from helpless.

As a distinct category of study, the history of ideas often disappears into sub-disciplines that subsume or elide cultural history. These genres include not

only historiography but also the history of science, literary criticism, law, and religion, along with excursions into anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Studies of the construction of language can conclude in an attempt to find the meaning of historical ideas and experiences in the interpretation of images.¹⁷ Any separation of these different fields and methodologies in history is bound to fail because boundaries among the disciplines and sub-disciplines are porous and constantly shifting. Moreover, humanistic studies do not agree upon well-defined prescriptive procedures that all investigators follow faithfully. Intellectual history has neither a unique or a defining methodology and I have borrowed liberally where I found instruction and rejected what appeared as tangential or irrelevant. Whatever we learn is sifted through inherited traditions of professional practice, which guide our research and inform our writing. As we understand the origins and purposes of those practices, as well as of their consequences, we become more able to adopt, adapt, or ignore them. In a book that focuses upon historiography, the historiography of intellectual history provides a critical review of the field that we have decided to rely upon. When searching for insights and methods, it is important to understand the failed approaches as well as those that have succeeded. There is no comforting Whig historiography of intellectual history and later developments are not always better.

Within the Anglophone world, intellectual history or the 'history of ideas' accepted by historians, began first in America when James Harvey Robinson, the pioneer of the 'New' or 'Progressive History', issued a manifesto to the profession in the decade before the First World War. Robinson called for an alliance of history with science, subordination of the past to the needs of the present, and commitments to social reform. At the heart of his appeal was the conviction that ideas should be studied as revelations of the reality of progress.¹⁸ A generation later, in 1933, Arthur Lovejoy gave the William James Lectures at Harvard on the historical construct of a great chain of being. That was not what Robinson had in mind, and Lovejoy's lectures had little effect upon other historians.¹⁹ It was not until after the 1940s, as Thomas Bender recently indicated, that intellectual history came to prominence within American history as the 'synthesizing subfield' representing a 'national mind or culture'.²⁰ The *Journal of the History of Ideas* was first published in 1940 and twelve years later, the American *émigré* Peter Gay began a sophisticated project in European intellectual history and politics that he gradually expanded to include avant-garde cultural and psychological history.²¹ Fifteen years after that, Hajo Holborn's presidential address to the American Historical Association urged historians to think more introspectively about the practice and viability of intellectual history and 'the need for social history in conjunction with the history of ideas'.²² A more theoretical effort began in 1960 with publication of the journal, *History and Theory*.²³

The kind of appeal made by Holborn had no resonance in Britain, either before the 1940s or in the two subsequent decades.²⁴ Literary scholars such as Basil Willey in 1934 and E. M. W. Tillyard in 1943 pursued the history of thought, as

Lovejoy was doing, as an empyrean dialogue among the great thinkers occurring at the edge of the empirical world.²⁵ R. G. Collingwood, the classical historian and philosopher of history, asserted provocatively in 1936, that all history was the history of thought, which the historian was compelled to 'rethink'.²⁶ British historians largely ignored Collingwood's challenge to conventional, essentially political history, and few showed any interest in the history of ideas as defined by Lovejoy or by the literary scholars. Recently, there has been a call to revive the 'great texts', although modified by the negotiations of recent years, as a dialogue between the past and the present. This process is explained as an effort to see how people have made sense of their perceived worlds, through a 'concern' with 'the internal coherence and logic of the structures of mental reference or the languages which it studies'.²⁷ It is not clear if this is a post-modernist return to the kind of enterprise advocated by Lovejoy, Willey, and Tillyard. Would a resurrection of the internal architecture of great texts be a significant rejection or an affirmation of the emphases begun in the mid-1960s by Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock? Intellectual history began relatively late for British historians with the advent of Skinner and Pocock, and it diverged, initially, from social and political history as well as from literature.²⁸

Quentin Skinner, trained in the University of Cambridge, proposed a methodology for intellectual history in 1965 that depended upon philosophy as much as upon history. A student of seventeenth-century political thought and subsequently Regius Professor of Modern History at his university, Skinner attempted to create a manual for the study of ideas that transcended the conventions of social and political history as well as the more traditional and historically disembodied grand narratives of ideas perpetuated by Willey, Lovejoy, and Tillyard. Skinner tested his proposals in two kinds of essays—one examined the epistemology of ideas, and the other applied that epistemology in studies of Hobbes' political thought. Both efforts discarded four traditional approaches found in studies of ideas: the search for a descent of ideas that contributed to a canon; attempts to find coherence in incoherent thinkers; the imposition upon the past of concepts which belong to a subsequent time; and the anachronistic assumption that the past and present are similar. Additionally, he rejected emphases upon text and context to urge instead that the crucial elements in understanding were the intention of the author and the intellectual conventions of the time that governed the use of language.²⁹ One of the difficulties with Skinner's persuasive argument is that traditions of political thought persist so that ideas continue to have influence beyond their original purpose or the author's intentions. In those traditions, the work of earlier authors continues to interest later generations because of the important issues they invoked.³⁰

In 2002, Skinner published *Visions of Politics*, a three-volume collection of new and rewritten essays, with emendations, afterthoughts, and responses to his critics. In the first volume, *Regarding Method*, he attempted to clarify his views on the role of an intellectual historian, or perhaps it would be more accurate

to say a historian of philosophy. Although he writes 'mainly' as 'a practising historian', he starts with theories of epistemology and meaning derived from philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, W. V. O. Quine, John Searle, and A. L. Austin. Skinner was particularly impressed by Wittgenstein's contention that 'words are deeds' and by Austin's inquiry into the 'use of words as opposed to their meaning'.³¹ Skinner's method makes three important assumptions. The most basic one, that language is a form of social power, is hardly contentious.³² Skinner is especially interested in the 'normative vocabulary available to us for the description and appraisal of our conduct'.³³ The second assumption, about a necessary relationship between language and reasoned contrivance, is more controversial. Skinner's disinterest in his subjects' psychological and emotional life is rooted in a rationalist bias that expects people to use language to accomplish calculated ends. Their success in an enterprise, he argues, as was true for Max Weber's early capitalists, required a rational use of language to make their behaviour legitimate.³⁴ Most intellectual historians tend to believe that in the reading of texts, questions should be asked about what a text means and about what its author may have meant. This is insufficient for Skinner because his third assumption is that any complex text 'will always contain far more in the way of meaning than even the most vigilant and imaginative author could possibly have intended to put into it'.³⁵ David Wootton's review of the three volumes maintains that while Skinner was undeniably seminal, he failed to consider religion, social and technological change, and the reciprocal relationships between ideas, emotions, psychology, and behaviour.³⁶ Still, an understanding of those relationships, as well as of their historical contents and contexts, remains undeniably dependent upon an understanding of the words in which they were conducted. Intellectual history, because it deals with the expression, as well as the formulation, of ideas, can hardly be indifferent to linguistic turns and twists.

Many directions in intellectual history, including this book, share an interest in the different uses of language as they occur in historical conversations and in the construction (or deconstruction) and dissemination of intellectual information. Another member of the 'Cambridge school', the New Zealander J. G. A. Pocock, has been enormously influential since 1960 in urging an approach to political thought that recognized the 'plurality of specialized languages' about politics characteristic of a 'complex plural society'.³⁷ Pocock identified himself with 'Cambridge' historians of historiography who 'see historians as situated at moments in history, which present them with narratives to be told and with the need to retell them'. Although concerned with what Oakeshott has described as the 'practical past', historians of historiography will discover, he expected, that 'pasts did not exist as relevant to presents but to themselves'.³⁸

Recently, Jonathan Rose has tried to reverse 'the traditional perspective of intellectual history' and concentrate on 'readers and students rather than authors and teachers'. His 'audience history' asks 'how people read their culture' to include all aspects of their experience. Rose does this by using library and

educational records and opinion polls to check the testimony in autobiographies and archives of oral histories. In response to the debate about 'whether meaning is inherent in the text or created by the reader', Rose concludes: 'obviously, it is a matter of one working on the other'.³⁹

Rose's conclusion is useful as a beginning because one of the greatest difficulties in the study of thought, and particularly in the study of political ideas, is the demonstration that ideas actually have influence within their own time or in a later period. It is a formidable, often unattainable, undertaking to prove that expressed ideas actually reached particular audiences. It is a further speculative leap to discover what those audiences wanted to hear, what they actually heard, and further still what they made of what they imagined they heard. While an author's intention may be stated explicitly in a preface or introduction, or in some other sort of testimony, there is generally room for ambiguity, so that different kinds of audiences and different members of the same audience will find a variety of meanings, often contradictory, in any writing or speech. A distinct advantage in studying conservatism through the work of conservative historians is that demonstrable connections exist between them and distinct, recognizable audiences.

Since the 1970s, there has been an ongoing series of methodological re-examinations in intellectual history, largely by historians studying countries other than Britain.⁴⁰ These experiments have included adaptations of such post-structuralist ideas as Roland Barthes's dictum about the 'death of the author'. In the U.S., David Harlan has argued that an analysis of either authorial intention or context is impossible, and that the intellectual historian should rather let 'the present interrogate the past'.⁴¹ Among the newer European methods of approaching ideas, Germans have emphasized 'Begriffsgeschichte', a revision of idealistic or Hegelian intellectual history, and the related pursuit of 'conceptual history', popular especially in Holland, France, and Finland. They can be seen as alternatives, or national variations, or descendants of both the Skinnerian tradition of 'speech acts' and Pocock's concern with linguistic discourses. Within Germany, these emphases are most evident in the seven volumes published between 1972 and 1992 of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, edited by Reinhart Koselleck, Otto Bruner, and Werner Conze, and the fifteen volumes published since 1985 of the *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich*, edited by Rolf Reichardt and Eberhardt Schmitt.⁴² In Britain these movements have proved interesting to Michael Freeden who has adapted, expanded and transformed them intriguingly.⁴³ In America, Melvin Richter made a 'case for conceptual history' as 'a unique form of knowledge, providing detailed information about key shifts in the vocabularies of politics, government, and society'.⁴⁴ Apart from Freeden and Richter, the German project has had only a marginal effect upon the study of British or American intellectual history. Quentin Skinner found common ground with the German group, but he suggested that if a history of conceptual

changes 'were to have any explanatory value, the explanations would have to be given at the level of social life itself'. But Skinner readily admits that he 'lacks any talent' for writing a social history that covers long-term transformations.⁴⁵ Whether transformations in ideas are short term or long term, they are always embedded within a social and cultural context that often requires excavation of layers of strata before it is clearly seen.

Methodological issues, such as those discussed above, may ultimately be epistemological and even ontological, and a considerable literature attests to that.⁴⁶ Those issues are intriguing, but the actual procedures that enable us to do research and write about them are more immediately practical in their demands. A particular method proves its suitability, at least in the instance under examination, when we understand more at the end of the inquiry than we did at the beginning. The utility of any method and the results it yields can only be tested through trial and error. Ultimately, assumptions are validated by the thoroughness of research; the coherent organization of what is known; sustained and consistent argument; scholarly consensus; and even the elegance of an interpretation. None of this is foolproof because we can be tempted to ignore critical qualms when seduced by the intellectual promise of a novel approach. The kinds of evidence that enable intellectual historians to grasp historically specific but evasive ideas have to be extracted from a combination of texts, contexts, and other representations of thinking which may be implicit rather than explicit. A reading of these various kinds of 'texts' depends upon the reasons that lead us to them. In the study of political thought, it is helpful, and perhaps even necessary, to appreciate how other scholars arrive at credible explanations of a concept and practice such as conservatism.

The current historiography of conservatism reveals that some scholars pay attention to the thought of specific individuals, while others emphasize the ideas held collectively by a delineated group. Some, either in individual or collective biographies, deal exclusively with political thought; some with political thinking within the larger setting of people's lives; and others with the still broader stage of complex issues affecting the various intellectual communities in which these thinkers thought and moved. The biographical technique, when sufficiently contextual, may tell a great deal about the figures studied and about the practical and intellectual worlds to which they belonged as participants or as acute observers. Julia Stapleton's *Political Intellectuals and Public Identities in Britain since 1850* (2001) is an example of an engaging, provocative collective study in the broad and meaningful context of the life and times of a variety of political thinkers whose instincts were conservative. In America, Jeffrey Hart, a senior editor since 1969 of the leading conservative journal the *National Review*, believes that the history of modern American conservatism is coterminous with the history of the *Review* since its founding in 1954.⁴⁷ Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (1988), an ambitious and successful treatment of American historiography, set a new

standard for elegant and revelatory reflection about intellectual biography and its larger cultural environment.

Other scholars have arrived at definitions of conservatism by studying traditions of political thought they believe exist implicitly awaiting the analytic scholarship that will make them explicit. Michael Freeden and John Barnes have each tried, with interesting results, to define persistent qualities and attitudes that they believe differently make up a consistent 'conservatism'.⁴⁸ A similar method, used by George Nash, collects and compares disparate strands of American conservative thought to determine whether they are coherent, consistent, or evolving in some discernible pattern.⁴⁹ Both of these approaches may be useful initially in providing working hypotheses. The common problem they present is that they require continuous adjustment to make sense of them as time and issues change.⁵⁰ Another approach isolates a major element persistent throughout an extended period of political thinking such as Phillip Lynch did for Britain in his study of the Conservative politics of nationhood.⁵¹ Other analysts, such as Ewen Green, effectively integrated a discussion of politics, economics, and ideology, as is evident in his absorbing study of the weakened Conservative Party of the Edwardian period. Then, in his treatment of the history of Conservative thought in relation to the party's political economy, Green explained the *Ideologies of Conservatism* through a series of case-studies of individuals like Balfour and Arthur Steel-Maitland; of political events centred on the phenomena of Thatcherism or the Treasury resignations of 1958; and, by analyses of the relation between correlative sets of ideas such as conservatism, the state, and civil society.⁵²

Some students of conservatism question the value of examining conservative ideology on the grounds that conservatism is inherently anti-ideological. Instead, they argue that common interests, rather than common ideas, determined conservative political loyalties. In his perceptive studies of twentieth-century British institutions and politics, John Ramsden has maintained that conservatism was a pragmatic, often opportunistic, response to changing social, economic, and political circumstances. Robert Blake shares that perspective.⁵³ Jonathan Schoenwald has argued that the rise of 'modern' American conservatism after the Second World War depended upon the translation of conservative ideas into social and political action that appealed to ordinary Americans.⁵⁴

It is the historian's intentions as much as those of the author being studied that determine an interpretation of a text and its context. Selection of both appropriate methodologies and the criteria for judging conclusions in intellectual history require the investigators to consider the purposes that underlie their particular research and writing. The value of any method depends upon both the historian's interests and the uses to which that method will be put. That does not mean that distortions or eccentric readings are acceptable, but rather that we have trouble understanding what we are unprepared to understand. Different readings result if we search for the author's intention and meaning; or for a

particular kind of testimony contemporaneous to that text; or for the effect of a text upon subsequent inspiration, or reflection, or activity. To understand and explain twentieth-century conservative thought in Britain and America, I intend to do all three kinds of reading.

The history of conservative ideas may benefit from a personal encounter with the interior lives of these historians who lived in what L. P. Hartley called 'another country'.⁵⁵ As John Burrow has shown admirably, we can enter that foreign place and put 'the reader in the position of an informed eavesdropper on the intellectual conversations of the past' while recognizing that there is no unifying coherence but rather 'thematically overlapping circles'. Burrow advises historians to deal with any piece of evidence by 'uncovering' the 'layers of its intellectual archaeology'.⁵⁶ We know further that the mental geography of the historian's time and place can be charted and known to a satisfying degree of approximation. Assuming that some aspects of the past are more transparent than others and that degrees of transparency can be achieved, we conclude that their ideas mattered, as much if not more, than interests, personalities, or economic, political and gender imperatives.

Accepting these caveats and the relative intransigence of obstacles, how then should intellectual historians study political thought? It is relatively easy to eliminate the unsatisfactory strategies: neither general models nor paradigms illuminate the historical realities of conservatism in twentieth-century Britain or America. To recreate the context in which conservative thinking occurred, it is necessary to expose hidden assumptions, identify different kinds of thinking, and suggest why that thinking responded to, or anticipated, particular events. A disconcerting complexity of conversations and discourses, disconcerting when they occurred and even more so now, attempted to define conservatism. Conservative ideology was never concealed in a sacred text perpetuated by the faithful few. Instead, conservative thought had constant, contradictory, and mutating components, some appealing to specific issues and others to more general values. Those components were selected, adopted, and transformed by disparate people with conflicting interests who were often unaware of the reasons that led them to hold particular political views. Among those groups the conservative historians merit special attention because of the substance of their thinking, its representative qualities, and its effect upon a variety of elite and popular audiences. As historians, they described, explained, and justified what they believed was the historical inevitability and fitness of quintessential conservative ideas.

Conservative historians were not all of equal importance in terms of either the content of their thought or its influence. Among those conservatives which ones merit the most attention? On what grounds should certain 'conservative' historians be selected as subjects while others are eliminated? What are persuasive criteria for inclusion and exclusion? How does a study of conservative political thought avoid arbitrariness or even personal favour in studying particular

thinkers, while dismissing others who may have compelling claims to attention? Why study historians instead of other kinds of academics, or public intellectuals, or journalists, or politicians, or party leaders, or local constituency workers, or opponents?

Obviously, some thinkers are more conspicuous than others for altering the ways in which issues are understood and treated. These kinds of original speculators subvert conventions and substitute new beliefs and possibly policies. They can set the agendas and discourses for contemporaries and successors, even though they may have been myopic, or deluded, or just plain wrong. Alternatively, they can also provide bulwarks for retaining existing opinions and practices. The worst possible outcome for their ideas is that, even if inspired and incisive, they become unheard cries from the lonely and neglected periphery. Other thinkers, while not necessarily novel or even profound, represent the common denominators of thinking at any given time. They are important because they can summarize prevailing thoughts and opinions and present them lucidly and systematically. In an enquiry that is historical and not essentially theoretical or philosophical, original thinkers and popularizers both deserve the same reception that they had when they were heard in their time. What mattered most, for me, was whether they successfully developed and delivered 'conservative' messages.

Before I decided to write about conservative historians, my first criterion for choosing conservative thinkers was the nature and extent of their influence. Was it more important to affect the leaders of a political party, the party faithful, independents, the greater voting public, the media, or powerful elites? Three conditions for inclusion appeared promising to me. First, the candidate had to have an effect that was both practical and intellectual. Influence solely on disciples, no matter how important they were, was not sufficient. The conservative theorists also had to be heard by the public, policy-makers, and other engaged thinkers. Whether they were accepted did not seem as important as whether they had a wide and diverse audience. Those who disagreed as well as those who applauded might be part of an ongoing discourse that addressed both continuing and new problems. Contemporaries had to find these conservatives' written texts and oral performances persuasive, and there had to be concrete evidence that they did, indeed, reach the constituency for whom the message was intended. Bestselling authors, with a loyal readership certainly had a following. Sometimes, readers and listeners recorded their responses to these authors in the local press or as minutes of regional political party meetings or in pamphlets meant to solicit support for contentious issues. If the conservative wrote weekly leaders or regular columns for major newspapers and journals, it is not too great a stretch to infer that a significant proportion of subscribers read them. When they consistently addressed local political meetings throughout the nation, it is again reasonable to believe that they were heard by those present, and that their speeches, printed verbatim in the local and national press, were read by even more people. Those

who spoke regularly to the BBC or to other captive audiences in Britain and America cast an even wider net.

In some instances their contributions might be entirely or largely normative suggestions to guide what they considered to be appropriate conduct; in others, they provided prescriptions for contemporary disorders. Independently of the question of the connection between rhetoric and activity, it is helpful to have a measure for gauging what an audience accepted among the ideas presented to them. If policy-makers and those with demonstrated access to the shaping of public opinion tell us directly, through private papers or public admissions, that they acted upon some of the ideas of these thinkers, then the problem becomes simpler. Occasionally, there is dramatic evidence of a thinker's broad public appeal in the enormous quantity of fan mail received, and saved, from prominent and ordinary people, as was true for a figure like Arthur Bryant. For the major conservative historians that I chose—Hearnshaw, Bryant, Feiling, Butterfield, Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin—written texts, personal actions, and the testimony of political leaders corroborate a reciprocal intellectual relationship between these thinkers and varied constituencies.

Besides the question of influence, my selection of important conservative thinkers considered the kinds of justification they offered for the substance and conclusions of their conservative assumptions. The historians that I eventually chose presented their ideas as objective realities proven through the historical survival of tradition, their ultimate pragmatic test. Interestingly, it turned out that their conservatism shaped the ways they acted within their professions and within the greater world. Adherence to conservative principles affected the ways in which they thought about issues that were not political: there was no separate intellectual compartment labelled 'politics'. Instead, these conservatives held fast to a systematic set of values that were the bedrock of their political views as well as of their larger understanding of ethical, social, political, economic, and cultural issues. In common, although their ideas were developed disparately, they viewed their political convictions as essential to the accomplishment and maintenance of a moderately good life for them and for the rest of the British or American nation.

While these disparate historians often differed in their policy prescriptions, they shared at least three common qualities that made them unequivocally conservative. The first and most fundamental characteristic binding them together was the traditional conservative's profound suspicion of human capacities for reason, planning, and amelioration. The second common act of faith was their understanding of history as the story of survival against overwhelming odds. Those odds were weighted against the individual's reason and will by the religious burden of the problem of evil, compounded by secular ineptitude. The past was the testing ground for sorting out those institutions and qualities of character that were historically resilient. History was, thus, a more trustworthy guide to understanding what was possible in human life than any utopian belief

in a future that would supposedly correct the mistakes of the past. The third shared trait, their professions as historians, explained their reliance upon history as a guide to a reasonably sustainable life. Their sharp distinctions between what was practically reasonable and what was an unrealistically rationalized ideal were corroborated for them by what they believed to be their informed exposition of their national pasts.

The study of history was especially congenial to conservatives because the validation of conservative ideas is rooted in the past. The conservative historian's choice of careers, then, is hardly surprising. It is also hardly surprising that I was drawn to them since my most recent work was historiography, and historians choose to study what they think they know least badly or what most interests them. That does not mean that my choice of representative conservative thinkers was a sleight of mind. On the contrary, the thought of these historians represented the range of conservative thinking for two generations in Britain and one in America. Although not the only writers about the meaning of conservatism, they were certainly among the most persistent, dedicated, and prolific. They were not part of a special group, but belonged rather to a wider, more diffuse, intellectual community. Although known to each other by their work, some were additionally friends, others were acquaintances, and a few loathed each other. Each of them spoke, wrote, and acted as individuals who expected to gain a hearing because they possessed extraordinary knowledge. The conservative historians provided an allegedly authentic record that supported, transmitted, and often reified controversial political thought as if it were accepted political fact. Their passionately promoted faith was presented as an unequivocal reading of the past.

Finally, there is a fourth factor. Except for Berthoff, who had a narrower audience, Hearnshaw, Bryant, Feiling, Butterfield, Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin were what Julia Stapleton has described so well as 'public' or 'national intellectuals'.⁵⁷ In addition to their recognized reputations as historians, they participated ubiquitously in national affairs as prolific and popular authors and lecturers, who spoke as specialists to students, to the public, and to political leaders. Among them, Bryant and Butterfield played important parts in the larger arena of international relations within Britain, other English-speaking countries, and Europe. Each of the historians in both Britain and America was convinced that the exceptional qualities of their nation were historically demonstrated. In both their irenic and their historical work, they crafted paeans of tribute to their country's just and well-balanced institutions; the heroic, ethical, hard-working, and self-sufficient character of her people; her unique social culture; and, the virtuous self-sacrifice and practical wisdom of those who ought to be her leaders. They attempted, through the historical record, to prove to a wide educated audience that thinking and policy, rooted in conservative thought, were superior to competing liberal, socialist, or communist formulations. In common, they set out to prove that the individual and communal values of conservatism were historically irresistible.

The consistent conservative meaning extracted by these historians from their studies was not the product of isolated individual speculation. Instead, it was part of the conservative vocabulary and culture familiar to Conservative leaders as well as to intellectuals seeking an alternative to the ideas of the Left, university graduates aiming for a career in politics, letters and journalism, and some of the upwardly mobile young intending to improve their prospects and status by aligning themselves with the traditional side.

Why have I included Hearnshaw, Feiling, Bryant, and Butterfield but not other equally conservative British historians active during these six decades? In America, inclusion and exclusion were not problematic because except for Viereck, Kirk, Boorstin, and Berthoff, there were no other conservative historians until the late 1970s. In Britain, there were many conservative historians but only the four studied here had the audience and influence that mattered.⁵⁸ G. M. Young and Lewis Namier immediately come to mind as possible candidates for consideration. Young, best known for his *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (1936), was omitted because he was a nineteenth-century parochial Englishman. Born in 1882, he survived to 1959 with his insular, Victorian sensibilities intact. Classically educated, Young was briefly a Prize Fellow at All Souls before becoming a civil servant at the Board of Education, a diplomat, and a man of letters. His contributions to conservative causes included an approving biography of Baldwin in 1952 and, that same year, a lecture on conservatism at Oxford.⁵⁹

Lewis Namier, a more serious candidate, and unlike Young a professional historian, was left out because he never climbed to the higher echelons of the intellectual and political elite. As a Jewish *émigré* from a wealthy Polish family, he struggled for income and status among the English elites he admired so deeply. His longing for a fellowship at Balliol was denied. Neither his expectations nor his ambitions were appeased by his chair of modern history at Manchester University.⁶⁰ As late as 1953, after receiving recognition and honours, he still thought of himself as 'the doyen of the rejected.'⁶¹ While the other conservative historians were 'insiders' either by birth or acceptance. Namier's robust identification with a secular Judaism, in common with problems of personality, kept him outside of those circles of power and influence that he wanted so desperately to enter. The Namierite School of interpretation and methodology was often discussed and debated, and Namier's name came to be synonymous with a structural and quantitative analysis of interests represented in Parliament. Even so, his effect upon historical studies was significant essentially for its methodology rather than in the definition and perpetuation of a new field.⁶² Namier repudiated, as Butterfield was to do, the Whig narration of history as an erroneous celebration of the progressive shaping of English liberties in spite of the recalcitrant attempts of monarchs and Tories to resist this natural direction. Instead, in common with the other British conservative historians (except for Hearnshaw, who, uniquely, believed in the value and causality of

ideas), he lauded the empirical, sober, political traditions of England, which he attributed to the pursuit of practical interests. When he did try, repeatedly, to act upon a larger world stage in passionate pursuit of Zionism, he failed humiliateingly.⁶³

Another obvious conservative historian, Max Beloff, born in 1913, with considerable influence in international and Conservative Party affairs, is omitted because he did not become a Conservative until the early 1970s, when he resigned from the Liberal Party over education policy. The decades after the 1960s, with markedly new directions for conservatism, lie outside my purview. It is worth mentioning Beloff's career briefly because he shared so many of the values of his predecessors. Until his death in 1999, he advocated conservative traditions of liberty, common law, and constitutional evolution. Staunchly in the libertarian conservative camp, he vigorously opposed both state intervention and the movement towards a federal Europe that would deny British exceptionalism. In common with Butterfield, he extracted from history demonstrations of the efficacy of a balance of powers, nationally and internationally. Unlike Butterfield, his understanding of human nature and the state were not infused with the Augustinian problem of evil, but depended instead on a pragmatic reading of the evolution, structure, and administrative functions of the British state. In 1981 he went to the House of Lords and his extraordinary activity there and in journalism and historical writing led his obituarist in *The Times* to describe him in 1991 as 'one of the leading lights of what was then called the New Right'.⁶⁴

The enterprises of influential conservative historians in twentieth-century Britain until the late 1960s, as historians and as conservative propagandists, contributed to a widely accepted definition of 'conservatism'. While there was no invariant list of conservative beliefs subscribed to by each historian and accepted by their audiences, there were fundamental, defining ideas that recurred consistently among both Conservatives and conservatives. The disparate views that separated them and the common ideas that ultimately defined their reading of conservatism reflected and influenced conservative thought and policy in Britain. A correspondence, hardly coincidental, exists between those ideas and the principles elaborated by the historians.

Did the historians influence the politicians or did the politicians propose the ideas for which the historians then found historical evidence? Sometimes, and these instances can be documented, historians did influence specific political figures such as Stanley Baldwin and his right-hand man, Lord Davidson, as well as Neville Chamberlain, Quintin Hogg, Rab Butler, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, and media moguls such as Beaverbrook. At other times, historians made a case for the historical authenticity of ideas expressed by these political leaders, as Bryant did for Baldwin and Chamberlain. The evidence for their influence upon Conservative leaders and conservative public opinion appears in journalism, Conservative Party tracts, and national and regional efforts

to disseminate conservative ideas within the constituencies. Private papers, correspondence, and the records of Conservative politicians document the remarkable access of the British historians to those in power. In common, they emphasized the value of existing institutions that had grown gradually through a selective constitutional process that determined the uniqueness of English rather than 'British' character. They also produced historical evidence for the values of reconciliation and compromise in place of rigid ideological stances. Further, they demonstrated an ideological affinity between politicians in need of considered concepts and the means for translating them into political support and conservative historians eager to provide both ideas and strategy.⁶⁵

In America, the dearth of an ideologically conservative position among aspiring conservative leaders and among those looking for viable conservative causes made the work of the conservative historians even more important than that of their British counterparts. The American evidence points to the primacy of the historians as political polemicists and cultural critics whose ideas were borrowed and endorsed by politicians and other conservative opinion-makers. Apart from an extremist conservatism, represented by groups such as the John Birch Society, moderate conservatives had no organized or appealing set of principles and practices before the early 1950s. Conservative historians in America were also not thick upon the polemical ground. Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin were the only post-war historians who held and promoted bellicose conservative views that reached a popular, professional, and political following. A fourth conservative historian, Rowland Berthoff, had a much smaller and less significant audience, but he is worth considering because he proudly and uniquely declared himself 'a conservative historian'. The articulation of powerful conservative ideas by Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin, echoed by Berthoff, were heard, remembered, and adopted by conservatives in search of a coherent set of beliefs and policies, as well as by political leaders, intellectuals, and influential journalists. Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin each became cultural, as well as political, icons for national leaders as well as for lesser but powerful politicians locally and nationally. Kirk was a confidante of Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan and, as Viereck did, transmitted his ideas in the leading newspapers and journals of opinion, as well as through radio, television, and lecture circuits. In so doing, they created an American conservatism of the faithful, who have testified to the enduring impact that their words had. Boorstin, as a bestselling author of popular American history and, subsequently, as Librarian of Congress, had a consistent bully pulpit. The American conservative historians' versions of a 'usable past' provided American conservatism with a historical pedigree that succeeded for many in conferring a new legitimacy and respectability to their assumptions about human nature and society.

An understanding of each conservative historian's thought requires a critical examination of what that particular person said and did. While such an examination is necessary, it is far from sufficient. Unless we also appreciate the ways in

which their backgrounds and experiences informed their responses to historical and contemporary events, we miss the full dimension of their intellectual life in its time. All of these factors, when mediated by circumstances, opportunities, and choices, fashioned their conservative world view and its application to their thinking as well as to their professional and political activities. Of course, they thought and acted within an environment governed in great part by fortuitous events and the determinism of habit and tradition, but their appreciation of the tribulations marking their times and their reactions to them have a personal as well as an ideological history. Appreciation of their predicament does not require a penetrating psychological analysis, a formidably difficult enterprise best left to those fit to do it. Instead, the discussion of their ideas can be located within the specific social and cultural milieu to which they belonged. Although they shared an ideological context of preconceptions, perceptions, and prescriptions that were identifiably and confessedly conservative, each one had a distinct and unique background that affected and informed their conservatism.

Only two of the conservative historians, both in inter-war Britain, were unequivocally 'insiders'.⁶⁶ Feiling and Bryant, with elite families and backgrounds, defended the values and history of their intellectual caste as an essential part of a just and satisfactory social and political order. In contrast to them, Hearnshaw and Butterfield in Britain, and Boorstin, Viereck, Kirk, and Berthoff in America, were rank 'outsiders' both in the kinds of history they chose to write and in their social and economic status. Their welcome into the heart of the English and American conservative establishments, unlikely as that might initially appear, was almost inevitable.

In Britain where class, education, and religion mattered far more than they did in America, the conservative historians each grew up in social and economic circumstances that ranged from the deprivations of poverty through the advantages of aristocratic connections. A commitment to Christianity, with the exception only of Geoffrey Elton, who is discussed but was a minor figure in national circles, was integral to their shared views of the past, present, and future, but their religious affiliations also differed. Butterfield, a practising Methodist began as the poorest with the most clearly non-established religious tradition as a Methodist lay preacher. Hearnshaw, a rung higher in status, came from a lower middle-class family. Also a Non-conformist in religion, he supported the national position of the Church without becoming an Anglican. Both Feiling and Bryant were Anglicans, who came from privileged families and were given the best possible opportunities. In the small world of British intellectual life, despite the fact that Hearnshaw and Butterfield were 'outsiders' and Feiling and Bryant were 'insiders,' once they were established as historians and conservative pundits, they lived in the same professional, political, and social circles. Those contacts provided an elite status; mutual intellectual and financial support through appointments, lectures, and mutually laudable book reviews; and provision of work.

All of the conservative American historians began as 'outsiders' who were warmly embraced by conservative political leaders and intellectuals because they were historians with polemical credentials. Viereck had to overcome the disadvantage of a father imprisoned during the Second World War for his active Nazi sympathies, but he had a mandarin education and very comfortable social and economic circumstances. Kirk came from a poor working-class family and, even with a scholarship, had to work strenuously to complete a third-rate college. Both Viereck and Kirk began as Protestants who believed in a Providential determinism, although Kirk converted to Catholicism when he was in his mid-forties. Boorstin was a Jew and Berthoff was partially Jewish at a time when Jews were unwelcome both in higher education and in political life. Their abilities and their conservatism made it possible for them to become prominent and for Boorstin, uniquely influential.

A general explanation of why these historians succeeded so well in entering positions that might have been expected to exclude them depends upon an understanding of their situations and development. In any explanation of ideas, contexts of thought are as important as seminal or typical texts. Those contexts include communities of practice; relations among elites; connections between elite and popular thought; the setting of standards of judgement and value; the adaptation of ideas within professions and institutions; and the contents of varying kinds of opinion and practice. Within these varied settings, identifiable people propagated specific ideas and, when they were effective, those ideas were disseminated to identifiable audiences. Another level of discrimination examines the intrinsic consistency and coherence of those ideas as well as their effect. The circumstances and ideas which allowed even Methodist scholarship boys and small-town Jews to become as much a conservative pundit as those born and reared to privilege are explored in the remaining chapters of this book.

NOTES

1. There have, of course, been notable exceptions such as John Burrow, Stefan Collini, and Ewen Green, discussed in this chapter.
2. J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1–2. Pocock's distinction, which has made converts throughout the Anglophone world, did not appear compelling to the editors of *The History of Political Thought in National Context*. Instead, this volume attempted to locate the history of political thought in its 'more natural place' within British academic life as part of the discipline of 'politics'. They argued further that the history of political thought has become political theory, a form of 'discourse through which a society asks itself philosophical questions about politics'. A 'vertical' dimension in the history of political thought, although 'tempered' by the 'contextualist revolution', addresses questions asked by predecessors quite differently from the more 'horizontal' interests of cultural

or intellectual history. Dario Castiglione and Ian Hampshire-Monk (eds.), *The History of Political Thought in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6–7. Both editors hold university positions in political theory. In the concluding essay to this volume, Stefan Collini's discussion of the ways in which political thought has served contemporary political interests demurs from the editors' view by suggesting that 'the less tight the connection with the contemporary practice of a particular discipline, the readier its historians have been to recognize that they are inescapably involved with a wider intellectual history'. Stefan Collini, 'Postscript. Disciplines, Canons, and Publics: The History of the History of Political Thought', 297. See, too, his 'Discipline History' and 'Intellectual History': The History of the Social Sciences in France and England', *Revue de Synthèse*, 109: 3–4 (1988), 387–99; *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); *English Past: Essays in History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

3. The Organization of American Historians, the professional body founded in 1907, had, as of June 2007, 11,000 members, and it publishes the *Journal of American History*, the *OAH Newsletter*, and the *OAH History Magazine*.
4. Martin Gilbert, *The Challenge of War, 1914–1916* (London, 1971); *The World in Torment, 1916–1922* (London, 1975); *Prophet of Truth, 1922–1936* (London, 1990); *The Wilderness Years* (London, 1981); *Finest Hour, 1939–1941* (London, 1983); *Road to Victory, 1941–1945* (London, 1963); *Never Despair, 1945–1965* (London, 1988).
5. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt*, 3 vols., vol. I *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919–1933*; vol. II *The Coming of the New Deal*; vol. III *The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1957–9). Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); *Franklin D. Roosevelt as World Leader: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered before the University of Oxford on 16 May 1995* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1995). Dallek's reputation is based on his original work as a historian of presidents.
6. After eliminating hard- and soft-core sensationalism, family memoirs, vanity presses, repeated citations, and the contributions of both Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, I extracted these numbers from the random entries of the combined libraries of the University of California campuses, a reliable and usually exhaustive reference. The search for Churchill went through all 858 titles provided and my count revealed that slightly less than 10% were by British authors. The hunt for FDR indicated that 3,660 titles were available. I counted the first 1,000 to discover that about 20%, or 191 fit my criteria. The figure of 732 was reached by taking 20% of the complete 3,660 listings.
7. Marxist- or class-based explanations of economic determinations of politics are at their best in British scholars and especially in Eric Hobsbawm. See, e.g., his *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London, 1994) *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (London, 1999). There are very few American Marxist historians who have survived. Those who

describe themselves as Marxists tend, as Eugene Genovese has done, to study earlier periods in American history such as the Civil War. For sophisticated studies of high politics within a context of British political economy and economic history, see esp. Peter Clarke, *The Keynesian Revolution in the Making, 1924–1936* (Oxford University Press, 1991); *The Keynesian Revolution and its Economic Consequences: Selected Essays by Peter Clarke*. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), *A Question of Leadership: From Gladstone to Blair* (London, 1999); *The Cripps Version. The life of Sir Stafford Cripps, 1889–1952* (London, 2002); and, *Hope and Glory: Britain, 1900–2000* (London, 2004). Among American historians, since the decline of the congratulatory consensus school in the 1960s, there have been fractious conflicts which have tended to separate scholars into narrower fields of specialization and interest. For an analysis of that division and the various culture wars it entailed see esp. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* and Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect. Facts, Fictions, Fraud—American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

8. In America, the 38 ‘Organizing Sections’ of the American Political Science Association (APSA), provide appropriate networks and journals that directly addressed each of these issues through networks of scholars and appropriate journals. They covered such topics as 5. Political Organizations and Parties; 8. Representation and Electoral Systems; 13. Urban Politics; 33. Race, Ethnicity, and Politics; 34. International History; and 24. Politics and History. The APSA was founded in 1904. See their website: www.apsanet.org I am reserving my discussion of American historiography for ch. 8, where it serves best as an introduction to American conservative thought.
9. These kinds of study tend to be done by scholars of periods earlier than the twentieth century. For the conflation of religion and politics, see esp. Jonathan Clark, *Samuel Johnson: Literature, Religion, and English Cultural Politics from the Restoration to Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); for the politicization of religion, Geoffrey Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London, 1955); and for science as politics, Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
10. In Britain, see e.g., David Butler and Gareth Butler, *British Political Facts since 1979* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). In America, political scientists tend to pursue these approaches.
11. See esp. Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), and *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).
12. Lawrence Black, ‘Popular Politics in Modern British History’, *Journal of British Studies*, 40:3 (July 2001); 432 and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History, 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
13. Stephen Fielding, esp. *The Labour Governments, 1964–70*, Vol. I. *Labour and Cultural Change* ((Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); and Lawrence Black, esp. *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951–64: Old Labour*,

- New Britain?* (London, 2003). James Epstein, *In practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003); and for the 19th century, James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c.1815–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
14. See esp. Philip Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin: Conservative Leadership and National Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
 15. John Horst's *Victorian Labour History: Experience, Identity and the Politics of Representation* (London, 1998), is among the exceptions.
 16. A forum in the *American Historical Review* in April 1994 attempted, without overwhelming success, to sort that out. See Susan M. Yohn, 'Will the Real Conservative Please Stand Up? Or the pitfalls Involved in Examining Ideological Sympathies', *The American Historical Review*, 99:2 (April 1994), 430–7, for a revelation of the chronic difficulties. Yohn was responding to Alan Brinkley's the 'Problem of American Conservatism', in the same issue.
 17. Simon Schama, in *Landscape and Memory* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1995), 18, tried to show 'that the cultural habits of humanity have always made room for the sacredness of nature'. The Dutch practitioners of conceptual history are especially interested in the relation between language and images. See n. 42.
 18. James Harvey Robinson, *The New History: Essays Illustrating the Modern Historical Outlook* (1912) and reissued repeatedly until (New York: Free Press, 1965), almost 30 years after Robinson's death; and *Essays in Intellectual History, Dedicated to James Harvey Robinson by his Former Seminar Students* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1929). John Higham, in *History. Professional Scholarship in America* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), reported that Robinson's course at Columbia, 'The History of the Intellectual Classes of Europe', was called by his students 'The Downfall of Christianity', 112.
 19. Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being, A Study in the History of an Idea. The William James lectures, 1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936).
 20. Thomas Bender, 'Strategies of Narrative Synthesis in American History', *The American Historical Review*, 107:1 (electronic version), 1–2.
 21. Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).
 22. Hajo Holborn, 'The History of Ideas' (delivered in 1967) *The American Historical Review*, 73:3 (February 1968), 692, 694; Gay had already launched that project in his essay on 'The Social History of Ideas: Ernst Cassirer and After', which appeared a few months before Holborn's address in Kurt H. Wolff and Barrington Moore, Jr. (eds.), *The Critical Spirit: Essays in Honor of Herbert Marcuse* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1967), 106–20.

23. Scholarly journals dealing with intellectual history have proliferated and no matter where they are published they have an international roster of contributors and readers. See, e.g., *Intellectual History Review*, published in Britain with British and Australian co-editors and an advisory Board from nine different countries.
24. As late as 1989, when Peter Catterall examined 'The State of Literature on Post-war British History', in Anthony Gorst, Anthony Lewis Johnman, and Lucas W. Scott (eds.), *Post-war Britain, 1945–64: Themes and Perspectives*, (London, 1989), he never mentioned intellectual history and described cultural history as best served by biography, 229.
25. Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth-century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1934), and *The Eighteenth-century Background: Studies in the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940); and, E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944).
26. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (lectures written in 1936) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946).
27. Anabel Brett, 'What is Intellectual History Now?', in David Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Now?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 127.
28. Isaiah Berlin, who was interested in philosophy, Russian studies, music, Judaism, and many other things, published his *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* in 1939. It was not, however, until 30 years later that some of Berlin's important essays were revised for publication as *Four Essays in Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). In the interim, he wrote scores of essays and reviews, many in obscure journals, and from 1958, when two of the *Four Essays* had served as his inaugural address, he became Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at Oxford. Was he a major force in the development of intellectual history in Britain? Perhaps, but it may be argued that occurred only well after the 1960s.
29. See esp. Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Explanation in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), 3–53. See, too, 'Hobbes's Leviathan', *Historical Journal*, 7 (1964), 321–33; 'Hobbes on Sovereignty: An Unknown Discussion', *Political Studies*, 13 (1965), 213–18; 'Hobbes and Ideology in the English Revolution', *Historical Journal*, 8 (1965), 151–78; 'Thomas Hobbes and his Disciples in France and England', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8 (1965–6), 153–67; 'The Ideological Context of Hobbes's Political Thought', *Historical Journal*, 9 (1966), 286–317; 'The Limits of Historical Explanation', *Philosophy*, 41 (1966), 199–215; 'Thomas Hobbes and the Nature of the Early Royal Society', *Historical Journal*, 12 (1969), 217–39; 'Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy', in G. E. Aylmer (ed.), *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement, 1646–1660* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972); and 'The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Obligation', in Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters (eds.), *Hobbes and Rousseau* (Garden City, NY: 1972), 109–42.
30. See Gordon Schochet's criticism in 'II. Quentin Skinner's Method', in 'Political Thought and Political Action: A Symposium on Quentin Skinner', in *Political Theory*, 2:3 (1974), 261–76. Skinner replied to the symposium in 'III. Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', *ibid.*, 277–303. Skinner

has repeated and elaborated his arguments in 'Hermeneutics and the Role of History', *New Literary History*, 7 (1975–6), and *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). A discussion between Skinner and philosophers and political scientists occurs in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context. Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988).

31. Quentin Skinner, 'Introduction: Seeing Things their Way', 1–3, 'Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts', 103 (this chapter was adapted and developed from the final section of 'Reply to my Critics', in *Meaning and Context*, 259–88), *Visions of Politics, I: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
32. Skinner, 'Introduction: Seeing Things Their Way', 7.
33. Skinner, 'The Idea of a Cultural Lexicon' (a revised article under the same title in *Essays in Criticism*, 29 (1979) 205–24) in *Regarding Method*, 174.
34. Skinner, 'Moral Principles and Social Change' (essentially a new essay, but 'germ of it' in 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', in *Political Theory*, 2 (1974), 277–303), *Regarding Method*, 145–57.
35. Skinner, 'Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts', 113.
36. David Wooton, 'The Hard Look Back', *TLS* (14 March 2002), 8–10. A more sympathetic reading occurs in Kari Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003). Palonen's 'thesis' in the book is that 'in his singular manner of being a historian of political theory Skinner also becomes a first-order political theorist himself', 174.
37. J. G. A. Pocock, 'Languages and their Implications: The Transformation of the Study of Political Thought' (1971), in *Politics, Language and Time. Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), See, too, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (1957), reissued with a retrospect (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); *Obligation and Authority in Two English Revolutions*, The Dr W. E. Collins lecture delivered at the Victoria University of Wellington, on 17 May 1973 (Wellington, The Victoria University, 1973); *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1989); and, most recently, *Barbarism and Religion*: vol. I, *The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737–1764*; vol. II, *Narratives of Civil Government*; vol. III, *Decline and Fall*; and, vol. IV, *Barbarians, Savages and Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999–2005).
38. Pocock, 'Review of Donald R. Kelley, *Frontiers of History: Historical Inquiry in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006)'; *JBS*, 46:3 (July 2007), 734.
39. Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the Working Classes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 3, 7.

40. Daedalus devoted its winter 1971 issue to 'Historical Studies Today', and the essay on 'Intellectual History: Its Aims and Methods', 80–97, was written by Felix Gilbert, a historian of modern Germany with a broad interest in the relationship between politics, history, and culture.
41. David Harlan, 'Intellectual History and the Return to Literature', *The American Historical Review*, 94:3 (June 1989), 585, 608. This is still another of the laudable attempts made by the editors of the AHR to encourage historians to think about the nature of their profession.
42. Keith Tribe introduced the subject to Anglo-American intellectual historians in his review essay 'The Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe Project: From History of Ideas to Conceptual History', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31 (1989). For a fuller treatment, see the essays in Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans, and Frank Van Vree (eds.), *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* (1998), an international compilation, sponsored by the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies. Two Anglophone essays in the volume are Iain Hampsher-Monk's 'Speech Acts, Languages or Conceptual History', which examines the work of Pocock and Skinner; and Terrence Ball's 'Conceptual History and the History of Political Thought', which ties concepts to agents and to the political conflicts in which they occur. Together, Ball and Pocock edited *Conceptual Change and the Constitution* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1988). See, too, Reinhart Koselleck's *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002).
43. Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
44. Melvin Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 143.
45. Skinner, 'Retrospect: Studying Rhetoric and Conceptual Change' (revised and extended version of 'Rhetoric and Conceptual Change', in *The Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 3 (1999), 60–73 in *Regarding Method*, 181).
46. See the work of Hayden White, esp. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), and *Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, c.1987); Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), *History and Criticism* (1985), and *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), *Rethinking Modern Political Theory: Essays, 1979–1983* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and *Interpreting Political Responsibility: Essays 1981–1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); and the pages of *History and Theory*.
47. Jeffrey Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind. The National Review and its Times* (Wilmington, Del.: Intercollegiate Studies Institute Books, 2005), 344.
48. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, and John Barnes, 'Ideology and Factions', in Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century. The Conservative Party since 1900* (1994).

49. George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976) (reissued, unchanged, by the Conservative think-tank, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (Wilmington, 1996)).
50. See the eclectic Peterhouse philosopher Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (London: Macmillan, 1980).
51. Philip Lynch, *The Politics of Nationhood. Sovereignty, Britishness and Conservative Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. xii. Lynch examines the evolution and difficulties of both Conservative statecraft and the Conservative concept of the nation, especially after Heath and Powell.
52. E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism and Ideologies of Conservatism*.
53. John Ramsden, esp. *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin, 1902–1940* (London: Longman, 1978); *The Making of Conservative Party Policy: The Conservative Research Department since 1929* (London: Macmillan, 1980); *The Age of Churchill and Eden, 1940–57* (London: Longman, 1995); *Winds of Change: From Macmillan to Heath, 1957–75* (London: Macmillan, 1996); ‘Britain is a Conservative country that Occasionally votes Labour’: *Conservative Success in Post-war Britain* (The 1997 Swinton Lecture) (London: Conservative Political Centre, 1977); *An Appetite for Power: a History of the Conservative Party since 1830* (London: HarperCollins, 1998); *Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and his Legend since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). Robert Blake, who was a tutor in politics at Christ Church and was active in Conservative politics, made his reputation with *Disraeli* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966) and then gave the Ford Lectures at Oxford in 1968 that were published as *The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1971) and subsequently extended to include Thatcher (London: Methuen, 1985) and then Major (London: Arrow Books, 1998). Blake, then Lord Blake of Braydeston, took over Arthur Bryant’s column in the *Illustrated London News*.
54. Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing. The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
55. L. P. Hartley, *The Go-between* (London, 1953). The first sentence of the book is ‘The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there’.
56. J. W. Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason. European Thought 1848–1918* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. v, 234. Although this book is about Europe rather than Britain, Burrow has managed to carry off this feat in everything he has written.
57. Julia Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics. The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); ‘Political Thought and National Identity in Britain’, in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young (eds.), *History, Religion, and Culture. British Intellectual History 1750–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); ‘Cultural Conservatism and the Public Intellectual in Britain, 1930–1950’, *The European Legacy*, 5:6 (2000); *Political Intellectuals and Public Identities in Britain since 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); ‘Sir Arthur Bryant as a Twentieth-century Victorian’, *History of European Ideas*, 30:2 (2004), 217–40; ‘Citizenship versus Patriotism in Twentieth-century England’, *The Historical Journal*, 48:1 (2005), 1–28; and

Sir Arthur Bryant and National History in Twentieth-Century Britain (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005).

58. I left out Michael Oakeshott, a powerful and original thinker, because he had a limited impact on conservative thinking before and after the Second World War. Oakeshott came to belated prominence as a guru of the New Right during the Thatcher years, a period whose altered definitions and conditions are being studied by other historians. For a perceptive view of Oakeshott as a historian, see Luke O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2006), as well as Oakeshott, *What is History?: and Other Essays*, ed. Luke O'Sullivan (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004).
59. G. M. Young *et al.*, *The Good Society: Oxford lectures 1952* (London: Conservative Political Centre No. 122, 1953); *Stanley Baldwin* (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1952).
60. See Linda Colley, *Lewis Namier* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989); Trevor Roper described Namier, together with Frederick Lindemann, the 1st Viscount Lord Cherwell, as 'not, after all, entirely English', in 'Sir Keith Feiling,' *Christ Church Supplement* (1977), 32.
61. Quoted by Stefan Collini, 'Idealizing England: Elie Halevy and Lewis Namier', *English Past*s, 83.
62. John Brooke carried on Namier's prosopographical methodology as did Ian Christie. See Namier's and Brooke's biographical and constituency history of *The House of Commons, 1754–1790*, 3 vols. (London: Published for the History of Parliament Trust by HMSO, 1964); and Ian R. Christie, esp. *The End of North's Ministry, 1780–1782* (London: Macmillan, 1958).
63. For a discussion of Namier's Jewishness, see Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
64. *The Times*, 24 March 1999, 23.
65. See Arthur Bryant Papers, Basil Liddell Hart Centre, King's College, London; 1st Viscount Davidson Papers, House of Lords Record Office; Arthur Bryant Papers (Alanbrooke) Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum; Arthur Bryant Papers (Montgomery) Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum; and Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords Record Office.
66. To see the effect of an intellectual historian's involvement with his subject as an 'insider' or an 'outsider', it is propaedeutic to look, for example, at Owen Chadwick's collection of essays on Acton and history. These essays reveal Chadwick's decades-long fascination with Acton's ideas and his motives for writing about such a figure. Chadwick's own life as an Anglican priest and as a distinguished historian of European, as well as of English, thought have made him especially sensitive to the relationship between character, will, religion, and conduct that Acton exemplified. The result is a scrupulous, perceptive, and erudite reading of Acton that would not have been possible for scholars without Chadwick's special background and intellectual interests. Chadwick is a deeply religious man who also wrestles with the temptations and obligations of the historian to judge the character and conduct of those he writes about. See Owen Chadwick, *Acton and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

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PART II
THE INTER-WAR DECADES
IN BRITAIN

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Conservatism as a Crusade: F. J. C. Hearnshaw

In 1918, a particularly climacteric year for British conservatives, a substantial number of women entered the electorate and the British Labour Party adopted a socialist constitution. A small and disorganized radical Left in Europe and Russia had appeared irrelevant to British political, social, and economic traditions. But the left swing of Labour at home and the emergent communist powers abroad appeared to conservatives as a messianic threat to the way of life that they considered distinctively British. Five months before the Great War was brought to a problematic close for Britain, the new Soviet government had signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. That treaty ended the Soviet's war with Germany and left them free to establish their new and potentially powerful Bolshevik state. The Bolshevik Revolution played a decisive role in Fossey John Cobb Hearnshaw's repudiation of the socialistic emphases of Fabianism, which had attracted him as a young man. When, in early January of 1918, he began his *Democracy at the Crossways: A Study in Politics and History with Special Reference to Great Britain*, he was concerned essentially with the 'extinction' of democracy by 'victorious Prussian militarists and treacherous Bolshevik fanatics'. By the time he concluded the book, in September 1918, 'Bolshevism', which included for him, 'Marxian Socialism, revolutionary Syndicalism, and communist anarchism' had 'rapidly' become the 'graver danger' to be confronted by democracy. Bolshevik success in Russia appeared to him as a licence to 'poison patriotism, to foment class war, to foster sectional interests, to stimulate syndicalist strikes, to destroy national unity, to discredit the democratic cause' in the countries outside their borders, including Britain.¹ In December 1922, when the USSR was established, many conservatives, including Hearnshaw, feared that the horrors of the Great War could be resurrected by the expansionist ambitions of the Soviets. Hearnshaw was always deeply affected by contemporary history and his conservative polemics were each responses to particular crises.

The oldest of the inter-war conservative historians by a generation—born in 1869 and still an active conservative polemicist to 1942—Hearnshaw did not belong to that intimate community that worshipped, inter-married, and largely governed Britain and the Empire. Feiling was a blood member of the Anglican intellectual aristocracy and he joined the titled classes when he was knighted

in 1958. In marked contrast to Feiling's easy access to greatness, goodness, and power by virtue of his connections to Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, Hearnshaw was the son of a Wesleyan minister very much outside the religious and intellectual establishment. Fortunate enough to attend grammar school in Manchester, Hearnshaw matriculated as a Historical Scholar at Peterhouse, a small, then undistinguished, college at Cambridge, with a Master and 10 Fellows, many of whom were non-resident, and 55 undergraduates.²

While a Cambridge undergraduate, Hearnshaw was deeply affected by J. R. Seeley, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge from 1868 to 1894. Hearnshaw accepted Seeley's identification of history as past politics with lessons for the present and future, as well as Seeley's insistence that studying contemporary history involved active participation in contemporary affairs.³ Attempts to demonstrate that teachers influenced students are always problematic because students focus their attention promiscuously. Hearnshaw appears to have heard Seeley clearly and critically. He rejected his mentor's view of history as 'merely past politics . . . in the narrowest sense of that term' and stressed instead 'religious moral intellectual social economic' factors in 'historic development'.⁴ At the same time, he endorsed Seeley's argument that historical research had already produced reliable knowledge on the basis of which university graduates could 'take a side' on controversial national issues.⁵

At the beginning of his career, in 1900, Hearnshaw was not yet in a position to take a side with any effect. Instead of moving into a post at either Cambridge or Oxford, as Feiling did easily, Hearnshaw became Professor of History at the Hartley Institution in Southampton, which, two years later, became University College, Southampton. During his ten years there, he published six books—four of them based on Southampton's rich, but neglected, city archives—and he founded and directed the Southampton Record Society. From 1910 to 1912, he was in the Chair of Modern History at Armstrong College in the University of Durham, and from 1912 until his retirement in 1934 was Professor of Medieval History at the recently secular King's College, the University of London.⁶ Until the Great War, with the exception of a series of lectures on colonial affairs that he co-edited and introduced, Hearnshaw's historical work was centred on traditional research and writing.⁷

After Hearnshaw moved to London to take up the Chair of Medieval History in 1912, he transformed himself into an even more prolific and wide-ranging writer, editor, and teacher, who was ready and able to achieve greater national ends. Leaving behind his youthful affiliation with Fabian socialism and a brief interest in free trade liberalism, he adopted a life-long allegiance to a meritocratic reading of conservatism in which a small, effective elite was to be responsible for leading the weaker majority. That principled position was consistent with his own advancement and his achievement of a status that appeared to him commensurate with his own capacity, drive, performance, achievement, and merit. At the same time, his early admiration of

Fabianism was retained in his emphasis upon the state's managerial capacities, and upon the reciprocal relation between meritocratic paternalism and communal obligation. To fulfil his paternalistic responsibilities, he became an enthusiastic and committed intellectual impresario who organized and delivered public lectures on historical and contemporary subjects. Those lectures were attended, from their inception, by 'notable assemblies of lawyers, bankers, and city men generally, on the way from their offices to their homes' and by political figures.⁸ Hearnshaw intended to provide a varied, interested audience, beyond the historians and students who had been his primary focus, with a historical context that would allow them to act knowledgeably. His 'Social and Political Ideas' series, analysing the intellectual biographies of great men, influential in politics, were edited and published to reach an even greater audience so that they could learn to participate more effectively in responsible citizenship.⁹ Hearnshaw assumed that most people, when properly informed, would support the right or historically proven conservative 'side' and reject liberalism, radicalism, socialism, or communism because they were historically inadequate or just plain wrong.

Hearnshaw's public lectures, novel because of their scope, contents, and often contemporary emphasis, were approved and encouraged by the new Principal of King's, Montague Burrows. The year that Hearnshaw arrived, King's began its effort to be the centre of imperial studies in the University of London, with lectures on colonial problems as the first in a new public lecture series. In his Introduction to the published lectures in 1913, Hearnshaw wrote that the colonial 'lectures taken together present a typical and representative picture of the kind of problems, legal, social, constitutional, economic, historical, and administrative, that imperial statesmen are called upon to face to-day. They help us to make clear that close connection between history and practical affairs in which such a pioneer as Professor Seeley was never tired of investigating. They show that it is by means of a careful and unprejudiced study of the past that the future can be faced with confidence.'¹⁰ Hearnshaw understood Seeley's injunction that the study of history should be 'the school of public feeling and patriotism . . . the school of statesmanship', to mean that education for citizenship, whether in schools or public forums, should be directed towards every individual.¹¹ In addition to extending Seeley's project of civic education, Hearnshaw attempted to realize Disraeli's goal of preserving valuable traditions and encouraging timely reforms. History teachers at Oxford and Cambridge, until well after the Second World War, turned out the governors of Britain, the Empire, and the Church, as well as leaders in finance, commerce, industry, and the professions.¹² As a Cambridge graduate, Hearnshaw was well aware of the top-level positions that most Oxbridge graduates entered. That left, in Hearnshaw's mind, a national and imperial obligation to educate the second-order elite, who would become teachers in public and state schools as well as clergymen, lawyers, bankers, local councilmen, magistrates, and other professionals.

King's College, London was uniquely qualified, he believed, to fulfil that responsibility not only for men but for women, too, because women were unable to receive degrees from Oxford until 1920, or from Cambridge until 1947.¹³ Hearnshaw envisioned King's, with its propitious central location on the Strand, as able to accommodate students of both sexes and any age. It appeared to him that those who came to learn at the University of London deserved every encouragement because they were the most self-improving part of the most populous, vital, and rapidly growing city in Britain. Moreover, graduates who studied in London and lived and worked there were uniquely placed to exercise influence among the interconnecting networks of people in the metropolis to which they belonged. Hearnshaw wanted that influence to be conservative. When A. F. Pollard was planning his long and successful campaign to make the University of London the centre for advanced historical research in England, he rightly saw Hearnshaw as an ally.¹⁴ As soon as Hearnshaw arrived at King's in 1912, Pollard put him on the Board of Studies then involved in establishing a curriculum and direction for historical studies.¹⁵ While Oxford and Cambridge still were reluctant to teach history past the 1870s, the colleges of the University of London were providing the public with lectures on recent history.¹⁶ Hearnshaw, at King's, was critical in this effort. The Cambridge History Faculty considered itself, with some justification, more 'modern' in its curriculum than Oxford. Even Maurice Powicke, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1929, the first Regius Professor to attempt to understand the thinking and purposes that led his predecessors to define historical studies, never succeeded in moving the History curriculum forward in his university.¹⁷ As late as 1944, Powicke was complaining still that he envied Cambridge for their 'broad and liberal interests'.¹⁸ Before 1928, those interests at Cambridge could not compete with the University of London. In spite of Seeley's eminence and his insistence upon history as the training of statesmen, and the European interests of his successor, Lord Acton, it was not until 1928 that the Special History Subjects for Part II of the History Tripos at Cambridge were finally were extended from 1878 to 1914.¹⁹ Hearnshaw was providing public lectures in contemporary historical problems as early as the Great War.

Hearnshaw was too old to be drafted, but in 1915, as part of his war effort, he wrote his first explicitly polemical work—three essays for the *Morning Post*—intended as a historical explanation and endorsement of conscription to a reluctant, disaffected public. The following year, together with three additional essays, his patriotic appeal appeared as *Freedom in Service. Six Essays on Matters Concerning Britain's Safety and Good Government* (1916).²⁰ In that book and in all of his subsequent work he struggled, as did most other thoughtful conservatives, liberals, and labourites to resolve the problematic conflict between the individual and the state. That conflict became increasingly pertinent during the Great War when the state exercised extraordinary powers over individuals, beginning with the first compulsory draft of 1916. *Freedom in Service*, in

which 'freedom' meant political freedom and 'service' universal military service, departed conspicuously from earlier conservative formulations about 'liberty'. Salisbury had maintained consistently that a new generation would turn to the Conservatives 'to whom has fallen the defence of individual liberty and the rights of property, of the sacredness of religion, and of those institutions by which liberty, property, and religion have hitherto been so marvelously preserved'.²¹ Instead, Hearnshaw developed a historical and pragmatic case for the death of *laissez-faire* individualism and the limitation of liberty and property rights in favour of state supremacy during wartime.

The first three essays, because they originally appeared in the *Morning Post* and because the first was adopted by the National Service League, received the greatest circulation as part of the contentious discussion about whether the imperatives of war required new relations between individuals and the British state. In the first essay, 'Ancient Defence of England', Hearnshaw tried to prove that the historical origins of military service developed as 'the mark of freedom' and were therefore a right as much as a duty.²² The second, 'Compulsory Service and Liberty', compounded from both Hearnshaw's study of intellectual history and his conservative dilemmas, considered the possible meanings of political liberty. He described the characteristics of liberty as freedom from foreign control, a responsible government guaranteeing its citizens certain protections, and a general absence of restraint. He then argued that any plea for absolute freedom would result in a chaotic Hobbesian state of nature from which people were saved only by 'restriction' and 'compulsory law'. Natural liberty, within society, yielded to 'civic liberty' and became in Montesquieu's 'luminous definition' the 'right to do all that the law allows'. English liberty was perfectly consistent with compulsory registration just as it was with 'vaccination, education, taxation, insurance, inspection and countless other legal coercions'. This discussion was too vague to be controversial, but when he continued that opportunity for military service became a positive aspect of liberty, he asserted the more debatable position that freedom must be understood as a communal and not an individual need. Only 'in an organized society' could man 'attain his highest development'. Hearnshaw characterized government as an organizing as well as a restraining power, which places its subjects where they can 'most effectively aid one another and work together for the common weal'.²³ The other side of the meritocratic paternalism that Hearnshaw advocated was not voluntary but rather requisite communal obligation.

In the third essay Hearnshaw dismissed 'The Voluntary Principle' as the 'disreputable relic of the extreme individualism of the Manchester School of the early nineteenth century which taught a political theory that has been abandoned by all serious thinkers'. Everyone now admits, he maintained, 'that it is the function of the State to secure as far as it can the conditions of the good life for its citizens'. The 'logical and inevitable corollary' of that alleged consensus was that it was the 'duty of every citizen to support and safeguard the

State'. Moreover, the 'State does not and cannot submit the validity of its enactments to the private judgement of its subjects'. To reconcile the interests of the individual and the state, Hearnshaw's approving perception of Hobbes found that the state expressed and enforced the 'general will and it does not leave to the choice, or even to the conscience, of the individual an option as to which of its commands must be obeyed, and which not'. Conflict between individual assertions of rights and the needs of the state would 'bring to an end the reign of law' and 'plunge the community once again into that primal chaos of anarchy from which in the beginning it painfully emerged'. Hearnshaw made his case even more strongly by asserting that the 'State demands, and must necessarily demand, implicit obedience'. Admonishing those who, like Bertrand Russell, were willing to go to prison rather than support the war, Hearnshaw maintained that passive resistance was rebellion and never justified against a democracy. Pacifists were suspect on 'mental and moral grounds' because they did not understand that force had a 'proper and necessary place in the ethical sphere' because it was impossible to reason with men who 'have deliberately chosen evil to be their good, and have made a binding compact with the powers of darkness'. War 'has once again quickened . . . the idea of the State, has revived the spirit of patriotism, has restored the national unity, and has enforced the principle of civic service'. Hearnshaw's study of the history of ideas, and especially of political theory, convinced him in 1915 that men naturally organize themselves into groups—families, clans, tribes, sects, societies, churches, guilds, trades unions, clubs. The 'state', then, was not to be feared or distrusted because it was nothing more than 'a federation of groups rather than an association of isolated individuals'. There is a logical gap between Hearnshaw's admiration of an authoritarian 'general will' and his definition of the state as a loose organization of organizations. To close that gap, Hearnshaw explained that as 'constituent members of the community' all its members have autonomous powers in 'virtue of the permission of the general will'. What that meant in practice was that the 'Democratic National State', in the last resort, was 'supreme'.²⁴ Although the purpose of *Freedom* was to persuade Britons to a patriotic sacrifice of traditional freedoms and possibly of their lives, the argument could easily be extended into any civil conflicts during times of peace.

The relations between the individual and communal groups, including the state, remained a troubling conundrum for Hearnshaw throughout his life. In 1916, when there was a need for a unified national community to resist German aggression, he argued for the autonomy of the state. Then, increasingly after the late 1920s, he became apprehensive about the rise of authoritarian and dictatorial states, especially in Nazi Germany as well as the possibility of a socialist state at home. In 1925, when the pressing needs of the war had disappeared, Hearnshaw worried about peacetime emphases upon the priority of the state, and he examined Machiavelli critically to repudiate a glorification of the state as an end in itself. The state, Hearnshaw argued fifteen years after he wrote

Freedom in Service, was 'merely the means to the good life of its members individually and collectively. It is a moral institution whose supreme purpose is the definition and maintenance of justice.' Moreover, Machiavelli's estimate of human nature, which justifies an authoritarian state, was radically mistaken because while men were weak and unreliable they were not 'entirely bad'.²⁵ After the General Strike of 1926, he deplored the trades unions for dictating false communal values instead of fostering realistic individual opportunities. Real communal values, he suggested in his *Conservatism in England* (1933), were endorsed by conservatives because they were based upon reverence for the past; an organic conception of society; national unity; constitutional continuity; opposition to revolution; cautious or evolutionary reform, which accepted and applied the doctrine of organic evolution; a religious basis for the state; a recognition that legitimate authority had a divine source; the preference of duties to rights; the importance of exceptional English character; loyalty to religion, king, country, and Empire; and last, but far from least, common sense, realism, and practicality.²⁶

Hearnshaw never satisfactorily solved the problem of potential clashes between the state's claim to sovereignty and an individual's appeal to conscience. In his lectures of 1930–1 at King's on *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Age of Reaction and Reconstruction 1815–1865*, Hearnshaw followed John Austin in deciding that 'ultimate sovereignty must reside, and ought to reside, in the State' because it was the only institution to represent the community as a whole. However large an autonomy the state 'may leave to Churches, to trade unions, to universities, and to other voluntary associations of a sectional kind, in the last resort its authority must, in the interest of the community as a whole, override them all'. What happened when the alleged interest of the community conflicted with individual moral judgement? Hearnshaw wrestled with that dilemma to conclude that the 'supreme values of truth and righteousness' concern 'the individual conscience alone'. The 'lonely soul will have to decide whether or not the ineluctable claims of truth and righteousness demand that the authority of the community be defied and the higher authority of the individual conscience be obeyed'. Hearnshaw assumed that a lonely soul who was aware of such a conflict was also introspective, intelligent, and governed by a 'well-balanced mind' which would not 'lightly challenge an authority upon which so much that is essential to human felicity depends as the State'. Even though he believed that no 'sane' person would 'wantonly precipitate the anarchy that any formidable defiance of the will of the Government necessarily entails', Hearnshaw left the last word to the supremacy of the individual conscience.²⁷ In 1942, when it appeared that the authoritarian state of Nazi Germany might triumph, he joined Ernest Benn, C. K. Allan, Lord Leverhulme, and F. W. Hirst in writing a *Manifesto of British Liberty* for the Individualist Press, in which his plea for 'the higher authority of individual conscience' is strong and unequivocal.²⁸

During the Great War, Hearnshaw increasingly defied the conventional wisdom among historians that 1870 marked the appropriate limits for study of the modern period. His *Main Currents of European History, 1815–1915* was written to teach the reading public about the conditions that led to the just war in which they were engaged. His historical writing, as evident in the *Main Currents*, consistently reflected his conservatism both in the choice and treatment of the subjects that he selected. Following Seeley, Hearnshaw saw himself as providing the kind of objective facts, arrived at inductively, that only a historian could present properly. Hearnshaw shared with the other inter-war conservative historians the belief that they had extracted such obvious truth from history, no sensible, reasonable person could dissent from their view. On the basis of their coherent and reasoned historical account, people would be able to choose how to act most effectively and most accountably. When Hearnshaw concentrated upon the ideas of great men, he was providing injunctions to patriotism, arguments for the importance of Empire, and prescriptions for national failings. While admitting that circumstances fixed the broad arena in which great men could function, Hearnshaw insisted that ‘within those limits personality is creative and supreme’. Although ‘Caesar, St. Paul, Muhammad, Luther, and Napoleon have been the products of their times, they have also been the makers and moulders of history—the pioneers of a veritably creative evolution’.²⁹

At the same time, and unlike either Feiling or Bryant, Hearnshaw jettisoned his Victorian and Edwardian preconceptions about the most trenchant approach to both history and the post-war world. Among the conservative historians, Hearnshaw became the most introspective about the writing of history, the most innovative in the kinds of history he taught and wrote, and the most idiosyncratic in the contents of his conservatism. Unlike the mainstream of historians of all political persuasions, who studied history essentially as constitutional and high political narratives, Hearnshaw promoted an unorthodox study of ideas in an effort to segregate those conservative values he found historically viable from those he discarded as politically, socially, economically, psychologically, and ethically corrosive. Feiling, who faithfully followed the Oxford tradition of political and constitutional history and high political biography, worried about his own impartiality in his biography of Neville Chamberlain, a contemporary figure, but he convinced himself that he could remain independent and objective. Bryant was essentially a military historian who enlivened his political story with anecdotal social history. Hearnshaw was unique in admitting that no matter how historians strove for impartiality, they could not, and should not, ignore the intrusion of the present into their research and writing. When writing about the years 1931–6, Hearnshaw admitted that as a medievalist writing about contemporary history he was ‘oppressed by the consciousness that, however he may strive to be impartial, he cannot escape from his political prepossessions’.³⁰ That realization did not prevent him from relying upon history to demonstrate the implicit and explicit truth represented by conservative principles.

To explain both the past and the present, and to shape a more desirable future, he turned especially to a history of social and political ideas as developed by particular thinkers addressing particular issues within the unique context of their times. That was a discipline rare for British historians until the 1960s. Lord Acton, during his problematic tenure as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, 1894–1902, had equated history with a diffuse and ill-defined history of ideas that transcended national borders and chronology.³¹ In common with the cosmopolitan Acton, Hearnshaw wanted the British to study and understand European history, but he was most interested in the uniquely British appropriation and development of ideas. Just like Feiling and Bryant and the American post-Second World War conservative historians, he had no doubts about the exceptional and particular qualities of his country.

Beginning with the political theory he had learned as part of the [History] Honours Tripos at Cambridge, Hearnshaw pushed it towards greater contextual analysis. Sharing a preference for Disraelian paternalist assumptions with both Feiling and Bryant, Hearnshaw tried to demonstrate their validity through intellectual history, as well as through newly emerging disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and biology. He advocated new subjects and methods in historical study as avenues to greater understanding of the past and present, and as a means of controlling events. Hearnshaw, in common with Feiling and Bryant, considered all the lecturing and writing that they did as educational rather than as polemical. They were using their special knowledge as historians to present a historically accurate account of contemporary problems and their solutions to a public that required that kind of knowledge. Hearnshaw's advocacy of conservatism was sometimes eccentric, but he generally reflected conservative attempts in the inter-war years to refashion a set of beliefs into a broad, attractive, and feasible appeal to a new electorate. The dominance of the Conservative Party during those decades is a testimony in part to the success of Conservative organization, but also to the acceptance of conservative ideas and values by voters looking for representation of their interests. As a historian with disciplined access to the past, Hearnshaw wanted to make it clear that the post-First World War world could never return to its pre-war institutions, social and economic structures, or to a privileged and irresponsible class system. These survivals were no longer tenable in an altered world.

Beginning in 1915, to Hearnshaw's great satisfaction, the public lecture department at King's College, London, expanded in response to demands by a 'large section of intellectual London' who 'came to King's College for guidance and information' about the 'many and intricate problems raised by the great conflict'. 'Typical' lectures included: 'The Spirit of the Allied Nations' and 'International Problems' in 1915. The following year 'Aspects of the War' and 'The War and the Problems of Empire' were offered, followed in 1917 by 'The University and the Nation' and 'The Sentiment of Empire'. The year that the war ended featured 'The Empire and the Outer World' and 'The Visions of

a World Peace'.³² Hearnshaw also travelled energetically throughout Britain delivering blistering conservative popular speeches to trades unionists and other working-class groups about contemporary political issues such as the dangers of socialism, a topic heartfelt by conservatives in the inter-war and post-Second World War years. Intrigued by the emerging disciplines in the new social sciences, he used the new insights to justify a paternalistic conservatism that included every social and economic class whether historical or contemporary. Although Hearnshaw may have suffered at the beginning of his career because of his background and education, he readily adopted the unquestioned confidence of Cambridge and Oxford History graduates in their competence to undertake successfully any historical project that interested them. He wrote and lectured about every period in history, including his own, to both academic and popular audiences. Until 1941, he wrote thirty-seven books and edited another twenty, almost all of which contained essays written by him that ranged from medieval through immediately contemporary subjects. Those books were reprinted in many editions and used as university textbooks in both Britain and America to 1983, nearly four decades after his death. Perhaps his most important effort to reach those with influence was as a passionate missionary for a forward-looking conservatism that met the imperatives of a challenged Britain, especially after the Great War.

In addition to his teaching, public lectures, polemical efforts, and administrative work, Hearnshaw was actively involved in the operation of the Historical Association as its honorary secretary and eventually president, 1936–8, as well as in the contents and administration of its journal, *History*. In 1906, the Historical Association began as an organization to serve history teachers in schools and training colleges. University teachers of history were quick to recognize that it was clearly to their advantage to have influence over the teaching of history in secondary education, and they supported the Association as presidents, other officers, and as active members. When *History*, first published in 1912, became the organ of the Association in 1916, Hearnshaw became the 'most prominent member' of the editorial board as well as the Publications Committee Chair, 1916–22 and again 1930–1. In 1923 the Board of Education's *Report on the Teaching of History* in the schools applauded the part played by the Historical Association in 'increasing the opportunities of historical research, in assisting and stimulating the teachers, and spreading in a wider circle among the general public a sense of the profound and increasing importance of history in the national life'. As part of his missionary work for the Historical Association and his attempt to bring the lessons of history to the greatest possible numbers of people, Hearnshaw developed the study of local history in London as D. M. Stenton was doing for Reading.³³

Local history, which carried meaningful and immediate lessons about public obligations both for ordinary people and statesmen, was part of Hearnshaw's project of making history serve the present. He never entered political life as a

candidate, but admired Conservative statesmen such as Baldwin who perpetuated the values he defined as essentially conservative in his leadership towards a better future. By the 1930s Hearnshaw lectured at Conservative institutions such as Ashridge College, which hoped to train future Conservative leaders, and often wrote about ways to reform and invigorate the Conservative Party. In a course of lectures at Ashridge, to define and defend conservatism, he admitted to being a 'conservative' but disavowed any 'official' connection when he published the lectures in 1933 as *Conservatism in England. An Analytical, Historical, and Political Survey*. But the contents of those lectures clearly made plain which of the existing parties was the one to support. Throughout history, Hearnshaw told his Ashridge audience, there were always two parties, one representing order and the other progress. Order was the more desirable because it 'reveres and cherishes the institutions of religion and politics as they have been established by the genius of generations past. It respects tradition and social custom; it reverences law and morality; it exalts authority; it lays stress on civic duty rather than on individual right; it distrusts the unknown and the untried; it is suspicious of unverified and abstract theory; it prefers to follow the guidance of ancestral instinct rather than the lure of youthful logic.' In an analysis of the psychology of conservatives, which he found instinctively correct, he suggested that they tend to see the best in existing institutions, because they fear that events may become worse rather than better. 'Unless it is necessary to change', he warned, 'it is necessary not to change'.³⁴

As a historian, he felt compelled to turn to history for remedies for the domestic catastrophes that were the residue of the Great War. For Hearnshaw, as for Feiling and Bryant, an understanding of the past confirmed the rectitude and inevitability of their principles by exposing the essential meaning of the historical record. To them that record demonstrated a number of interdependent truths that were historically irrefutable. They each started with a distrust of human nature, which led them to oppose abstract ideas and especially socialism with its utopian, visionary, and unobtainable goals. These were not new ideas for inter-war conservatism but had appeared as early as 1909 in *Fighting Notes for Speakers with a Few General Directions Upon Canvassing*, a pocket-size book of 109 pages printed by the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations. The *Notes* were arranged by topics and the section on 'Socialism' began: 'The Unionist Party is pledged to fight the evil doctrine of Socialism with all its power.'³⁵ Frans Coetzee suggests that before 1914, the 'Anti-Socialist Union was perennially weak' within the Unionist Party, but that eventually anti-socialism would 'enable the Conservatives to reestablish, preserve and profit from . . . a two party system'.³⁶

That eventuality occurred after the Great War when the Labour Party adopted socialist principles in their constitution of 1918. Labour theorists such as R. H. Tawney and Harold Laski believed that they had provided persuasive accounts of the steps necessary to reconcile social, economic, and political

divisions.³⁷ For the conservative historians, the socialism that Labour offered was perceived instead as aggressive, divisive, and fundamentally wrong because it ignored the infirmities of human nature and the necessary structures of society evolving historically to restrain and direct unpredictable people. While conservatives believed they were pursuing a harmonious and unified society, they understood socialism to insist that the needs and interests of the working classes were opposed to those of every other class. It followed for conservatives that reconciliation of the presumed conflict between classes was abjured by socialists who preferred rather a revolution or a radical rejection of older traditions and institutions. Conservatives feared that socialists wanted to create a new society based upon standards of social, economic, and political equality. The conservative historians found these aspirations historically and empirically absurd. The 1923 general election gave Labour a chance, although constrained by the government's minority status, to introduce some of the reforms that their theorists had advocated. Although the Labour Party won only 191 seats to the Conservatives' 258, Ramsay MacDonald agreed to head a minority government, becoming the first Labour Prime Minister. In 1924, Hearnshaw's *Democracy and Labour* predicted that socialism would 'depress labour, discourage enterprise, damp initiative, discountenance forethought, prevent the accumulation of capital, encourage recklessness and extravagance, foster parasitism, ruin industry'.³⁸ Those were expectations most conservatives shared and Hearnshaw devoted himself to combating the expected consequences.

In October 1924, British intelligence intercepted a letter allegedly written by the Chairman of the Comintern in the Soviet Union. This 'Zinoviev Letter' was addressed to British communists, encouraging sedition and revolution. The letter, which turned out later to be a forgery, was leaked to the press and published in both *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* four days before the general election of 1924 in which the Labour government was defeated, as the Conservatives won 412 seats to Labour's 151. Although Labour's defeat may be better explained by its inability to deal with economic problems, the identification of Labour with Soviet communism was not insignificant. In 1928, as unemployment and the depression were becoming increasingly insurmountable political problems, Labour campaigned, and won, an electoral victory in the general election of 1929 with 288 seats, sufficient for the formation of a majority government.

Between 1915 and 1941, Hearnshaw set out to demonstrate the superiority of conservatism to all other political creeds then on offer, but he made socialism his special target, and took his case directly to trades unionists throughout Britain. His intention was to persuade them that they had the most to lose from socialism, and its embodiment in the growing Labour Party, and the most to gain from an alliance with a reconstructed conservatism that responded to their interests and needs. For his popular talks to a marginally educated public, he combined historical narrative, a sustained apology for

conservative principles, common-sense experience, and scathing polemics. Most of Hearnshaw's popular lectures were translated into books and reprinted many times to reach even more people. His touring speeches dealt with: democracy and the Empire; democracy at the crossroads; democracy and labour; the development of political ideas; a condemnatory survey of socialism; and the advantages of conservatism in Britain. He attempted to reach readers who did not normally buy books because of their expense, with such publications as *The Development of Political Ideas* (1927), an 80-page contribution to Benn's Sixpenny Library, the popular precursor of the paperback, intended to provide 'a reference library to the best modern thought, written by the foremost authorities' at a minimal cost.³⁹

Before the election of 1929 occurred and to prevent Labour from winning, Hearnshaw mounted a sustained attack against socialism and its proposed remedies in lectures to working people all over the country. Those lectures were published as *A Survey of Socialism: Analytical, Historical and Critical* (1928). Why should Hearnshaw and the conservatives who read and cited him have imagined that the Labour supporters towards whom the lectures and book were directed would find any of it convincing? In part, as a 'teacher' of history to any group who would come to hear him anywhere in Britain, Hearnshaw saw his lectures and writing as a crusade against the ignorance of those attracted to socialism. His offensive set out to prove that socialism was not only politically and economically untenable, but socially, psychologically, and morally pestilential.⁴⁰ Hearnshaw's catalogue of the undesirable and dysfunctional qualities he attributes to socialism bears a close reading because it reveals almost every aspect of conservative thinking in the inter-war decades, even when his claims are tendentious and sometimes spurious. Relying upon his authority as a historian, a main theme was that socialists distorted objective facts.

Drawing upon psychology, he found socialists naïve in their estimates and expectations of human nature, particularly because they exalted an imaginary community of equals over the deserving individual. Liberty and equality were incompatible for Hearnshaw and almost all other conservatives who have left testimonies to their faith. The notion that liberty often had to take precedence over demands made by the state was generally part of a larger conservative assumption that insisted upon the incompatibility of liberty and equality. Hearnshaw's ideal of a just, practical, and realizable community, impermeable to destructive class wars, required a hierarchical society. Instead of the traditional landed aristocracy, he endorsed a meritocratic elitism based upon character, education, will, and hard work, which, inspired by Christian moral values, should provide security for all its members, including the weakest.

As part of that meritocratic elite, Hearnshaw's major grievances against the Left came from his unwavering and often self-serving belief in unalterable human inequality. Socialism could not possibly succeed in redistributing wealth because equality and merit were not the same. Merit would have to be recognized and

the 'clever, the industrious, the thrifty' would once more 'emerge from the ruck of the stupid, the lazy, and the improvident; and class divisions will ensue'.⁴¹ Would Hearnshaw have taken this stance if he had been born into the lowest classes and denied the opportunities available to him? There is no doubt about Hearnshaw's intelligence, ability, energy, and determination. Would that have been enough for him to become a Professor at King's College, London, if his family had been poor and unemployed? Hearnshaw believed that he had earned, and would continue to earn, acknowledgement of his value, character, and expert knowledge. It had been far easier in the nineteenth century to be a cloistered, invisible, and incompetent academic than in the decades after the First World War. The inter-war conservative historians, including Hearnshaw, set out to prove their worth through visible activities that included not only teaching, scholarly writing, and publishing, but also every medium from public lecturing to journalism. They believed that the undeniable evidence of their well-earned merit set them above those lacking their accomplishments and principled commitments. Hearnshaw's good fortune, and especially his attendance at Manchester Grammar School, which provided entrance into Cambridge, opened a profession to him where his public position inclined his audience to believe in his merit before they met, let alone heard, him.

Since merit was rare and needs were infinite, Hearnshaw reasoned that a distribution of wealth based on 'needs' instead of merit would never work. If the proletariat had sufficient merit, he would no longer be a proletarian, just as the socialist, if he understood the world better, would not be a socialist. Members of the proletariat without merit, he concluded, naturally favoured a redistribution scheme based on needs. For Hearnshaw and most inter-war conservatives who expressed their views on this issue, it was human weakness that was the ultimate source of social evils rather than economics or the environment. The new discipline of sociology substantiated for Hearnshaw the fallibility of socialism as a system that 'creates and fosters, pampers and propagates, a decadent and demoralized proletariat' unwilling 'to work in insubordination to any sort of authority'.⁴² Socialism's 'essential individualism' and anti-social stance resulted in economic acquisitiveness and, even more seriously, in administrative chaos since socialists were unwilling to accept any sort of authority or to 'agree on any sort of common policy'.⁴³ For Hearnshaw, as for other conservatives, the 'wrong' and misleading ideas represented by socialism would uproot the practical social arrangements established throughout British history to combat dangerous human behaviour.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Hearnshaw was drawn increasingly to the individualism championed by Ernest Benn, but he did not follow his friend and publisher in urging greater free market capitalism. Instead, he depended upon the paternalism of the most able, and therefore most privileged, who were obliged to pay for their abilities and privileges by responsibility for those with lesser gifts. Paternalism was meant to encourage self-help and to stop short of sapping independence, ambition, and effort; qualities that even the most

unfit could be encouraged to have, although at a comparatively lower level. Given the inherent inequality in people, utopian proposals were not only impractical but, worse yet, illusory in pretending that people without character and a willingness to work deserved the same rewards as those with character, talent, and diligence. Although opposed to social injustice, the conservative inter-war historians accepted a fundamental view of human inequality in intelligence, aptitudes, attitudes, talents, capacities, and will. As late as 1950, the Conservative election manifesto, *This is the Road*, describes the conservative faith in opportunity as analogous to a public school playing field. There, the field is level and all players benefit from the rules and are prepared to play the game, but there are clear and justifiable winners on the basis of background and, even more important, their inheritance of advantages.⁴⁴ Conservatives saw socialists and their Labour Party as dangerous because they were visionary ideologues, while they valued conservatism for its safe reliance upon common sense. Although it was a lesson often reasserted in history, it never occurred to the conservative historians that sensible pragmatism could be as self-deluding as idealistic theory.

Socialism was to their disadvantage, Hearnshaw tried to explain to trades unionists in 1928, because of undeniable and irrefutable historical, psychological, economic, logical, religious, moral, sociological, political, and even biological constraints. In trying 'to extinguish private enterprise and to eradicate competition', socialists ignored the biological imperatives that drove individuals to succeed. Socialist planned economies were 'mortal blows to those creative, combative, and acquisitive instincts which—however much they have been abused when unrestrained by conscience—are the very mainsprings of man's most effective economic activities'. 'Conscience', a pivotal conservative concept, was the invisible hand promoting social and economic justice by propelling instinct-driven individuals, especially with superior qualifications and capacities, to contribute to a larger national good. Liberty was no abstract concept for Hearnshaw, but rather another kind of 'instinct' which sought 'freedom of self-development' and longed for power and for the expansion of 'personality by means of property, inherent in every normal and vigorous member of the human race'. The laudable human instinct to secure property and its corollary of self-development was violated, for Hearnshaw, by socialism's unnatural elevation of the 'underman' and his 'cult of incompetence'.⁴⁵ Socialism and worse still communism were 'wrong' because they did not recognize that authority in the historical, institutional form of a hierarchical social order was the only means for checking destructive human propensities. Every social group had its place in that order, which had to be universally recognized and respected. Those who knew the most knew best. Consequently, they belonged at the apex of the hierarchy and everyone below them should recognize the rectitude of their position.

When Hearnshaw changed his audience from working men and women to the educated, potentially conservative, attendees at Ashridge College retreats

in the early 1930s, he appealed to future leaders with similar anti-socialist arguments that were tailored especially for an elite. To them, he explained that the theory of socialism was futile because it accepted Rousseau's trust in human goodness. Instead, he told his Ashridge audience that social questions were always questions of generally dubious 'personal character, and the patent defects of society were the accumulated consequences of the defects of human nature'. 'Man', was an 'uneliminated ape as well as an undeveloped angel'. While the 'angelic element' demanded 'freedom and opportunity' the 'bestial element calls for the exercise of authority and for the stern enforcement of law'.⁴⁶ This argument led to his conclusion that the 'bestial element' needed to be managed for their own good by those who were more 'angelic' than others. History, for Hearnshaw, demonstrated that great men, endowed with superior characters, intellects, and wills, could overcome human irrationality and incompetence. The harmonious society that Hearnshaw wanted all groups to enjoy, was, he believed, the product of the best minds. When the sixteenth-century jurist Hugo Grotius described the ways in which the sovereign law of nature was known, his standard was his own mind, Hearnshaw tells us, against which he measured other minds to arrive at criteria for civilized behaviour.⁴⁷ Ordinary people, Hearnshaw assumed, recognized their own limitations, and were willing to accept governors who answered to empirical tradition, historically validated institutions, and Christianity. Hearnshaw understood a united nation to depend upon a small number of effective people competent to guide everyone else. A year after the Armistice, in a series of lectures delivered throughout Great Britain on democracy and the British Empire, Hearnshaw told his various audiences that Britain was not a direct democracy in which the people have final power because the actual work of government—making laws, administering departments, and the constitution of courts of justice—'has been entrusted to responsible agents'.⁴⁸

A life-long allegiance to a meritocratic reading of conservatism accepted progress, although limited, when achieved by a small, effective elite who, through hard work, ability, education, and altruism, would lead the weaker, less able, majority. A well-educated elite, dedicated to national leadership, would provide opportunities for talented, ambitious, and industrious individuals to improve or, at the very least, maintain the status into which they happened to be born. For those without the ability to succeed, there would be a secure place and the conditions for a satisfactory life. National leadership did not mean the continuing dominance of a traditional aristocracy, because Hearnshaw's study of history revealed to him that the older governing groups, whose wealth was based essentially on the land, were increasingly obsolete in a society where capital accumulation and investment increasingly required industrial and imperial growth, dependent on vitality and intellectual leadership. It is hardly surprising that his model rejected the older hereditary aristocracy because Hearnshaw was a card-carrying member of the new, university-produced, middle-class intellectual

elite. Hearnshaw's justification of an elite based upon talent, education, and social commitment was consistent with his public pursuits and his personal success.

Hearnshaw's indictment of socialism for working people emphasized different potential dangers, warning that sovereign power would pass into the 'hands of an unintelligent, highly emotional, acquisitive, easily corruptible, and readily perverted electorate'. Why would he imagine that such a warning could be persuasive to the working-class audience who made up that electorate? His assumptions and his appeal continued the nineteenth-century dichotomy between the deserving and the undeserving poor. Hearnshaw spoke directly to those within the working classes who were actually working and worried about what they might lose from those whose weakness of character was demonstrated by their unemployment. These unemployed, underclass groups, he contended, threatened jobs and personal freedoms by attempting, through socialism, to benefit parasitically from other people's work. Socialist leaders, in Hearnshaw's estimate, were wedded to fanatical ideologies. A socialist government's attempt to increase wages, extend pensions, and enlarge doles would not benefit the working classes, he insisted, because it would result in national decadence. Since jobs were hardly secure in 1928, and were to become increasingly less secure as the depression grew and persisted, Hearnshaw never considered that wages, pensions, and doles might represent a promise of security that might be more immediately compelling than worries about 'national decadence'. The characteristics attributed to socialism by Hearnshaw were: 'pacifism, defeatism, conscientious objectionableness, cosmopolitanism, anti-patriotism, anti-nationalism, anti-imperialism' and 'an irresistible fascination for cranks and eccentrics'.⁴⁹ It is difficult to imagine that his message resonated as deeply among trades unionists as it did among upper- and middle- class conservatives.

Hearnshaw tried to persuade skilled workers that their well-being depended on technological advances possible only with the investment of capital in industrial growth. The restriction of such entrepreneurial capital through taxation or demands for unreasonable wage increases meant not only the decline of the economy but also the decline of the family, which was 'bound up with the bourgeois institutions of private property, inheritance, saving, capital, investment, landownership, and other incidents of the existing order of society'.⁵⁰ Socialist attempts to control the economy would remove incentives to the production of wealth. Socialism excluded a profitable exchange of wealth, which stimulated individual effort. In place of the optimistic expectations of Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* (1894), Hearnshaw dismissed the value of communal spirit and of public opinion in encouraging any kind of industry. 'The instinct to loaf', he warned, 'is stronger than the instinct to go on toiling without any hope of gain' and worse still, 'the desire to excel in a flat world is non-existent'. The consequence of such disincentives would be, he warned, the kind of compulsion characteristic of Bolshevik Russia. The other

unpalatable alternative was that those at the bottom of the economic and social scale led by 'the unscrupulous or the fanatical demagogue' would be given 'a golden opportunity . . . to . . . establish a predatory tyranny under the name of the "dictatorship of the proletariat"'.⁵¹ The result would be the exploitation of successful social and economic groups by those below them, culminating in the disintegration of society.

The best safeguard against erratic social experiments as represented by both fascism and socialism was, for Hearnshaw, to rely upon Christianity to provide a higher law. Christianity was the soul of conservatism, in its provision of absolute values as guidelines for behaviour. Conservatism was based, Hearnshaw argued together with the other conservative historians, on a higher ethical and spiritual standard that subordinated every form of political and economic organization to moral law. Socialism was incompatible with religion because socialist ethics, merely utilitarian, opportunistic, and materialistic, failed the test of the higher imperatives of truth and right. Moreover, they exaggerated the influence of environment and of economic factors to subordinate duty to hedonistic and relative standards. The harmonious and fair polity that Hearnshaw envisioned could not occur in an atmosphere that he described as ferocious and merciless animosity. Although socialism sought to help ordinary people, the result of their ill-considered policies would be to debilitate and demoralize because socialism discourages 'enterprise and initiative, forbids self-help, discountenances inventiveness, prevents thrift, suppresses personality'. By opposing private enterprise, socialism was also antagonistic to industrial peace and prosperity. Hearnshaw expected that scientific management, inventiveness, and novelty, together with the speculation that promoted economic development, would result in the discovery by capital and labour of a common ground for co-operation and prosperity. Hearnshaw was far from exonerating industrial and business interests for taking advantage of those who worked for them, but he reasoned that conflict between employers and employed resulted in the greatest loss to workers because employers formed trusts which diverted wealth from reinvestment and introduced a 'harshness and callousness' into social life. Socialism, Hearnshaw's indictment concluded, worsened undesirable economic directions because it had no constructive policy; wherever it was attempted it had failed in practice.⁵²

In place of socialism, Hearnshaw wanted to solve Britain's economic problems by borrowing from the successes of American industry, which he saw as benefiting both capital and labour. Although much of Hearnshaw's polemic attacked an underclass that was not employed, he was genuinely concerned that working people should be treated fairly, and saw the American system as providing the 'highest possible wages; highest possible output; highest possible profits'.⁵³ In a prescient anticipation of late twentieth-century conservative attitudes prevalent in the Reagan-Thatcher era, Hearnshaw side-stepped old-world traditions for the new-world model of technological innovation. It is not clear if those

conservatives who happened to be employers either in America or Britain found the 'highest possible wages' an engaging goal, but that phrase could have been interpreted to mean that level of wages compatible with the level of profits that an employer thought necessary. All of the conservative historians wanted labour dealt with justly within an organic and hierarchical society, and they all opposed excessive profits in land, finance, commerce, and industry at the expense of a reasonable standard of living for the lower orders. Hearnshaw urged conservatives to promote 'a property-owning democracy', a slogan introduced by Noel Skelton in 1923, emphasized by Hearnshaw in 1933, and adopted by Eden in his speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1946.⁵⁴ Some kind of plan for providing working people with a vested interest in their nation was not an idea new to conservatives in the early 1920s. At the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations Annual (NUCCA) Conference in Newcastle in 1894, 1,100 Conservative delegates unanimously adopted a resolution, confirming earlier resolutions of the preceding two years, that it was time that 'Parliament may well afford facilities for the acquirement by working men of their own homes, and it appeals to Her Majesty's Government to give facilities for passing the Bill dealing with this subject'. In London, in 1895, the NUCCA told the London County Council that they 'would cordially co-operate in an extension' of powers relating to the housing of the working classes so as to enable them 'to purchase the freehold of their dwellings'.⁵⁵

Hearnshaw appropriated the concept of 'a property-owning democracy' and made it part of the restoration of what he understood to be Britain's temporarily lost economic prosperity. To ensure an economic revival, he urged conservatives to support a stable currency, secure credit, industrial efficiency, sound agriculture, and the preservation and extension of markets. Those measures were meant to increase the employment essential to economic recovery and to reduce taxation. If unemployment were not addressed, the unemployed would succumb to the 'disease' of socialism 'to which the wretched and the ignorant are peculiarly liable'. Even worse than socialism, the unemployed might be attracted to communism, a 'cancer-generated by Jewish atheism in the morass of German economics'.⁵⁶ The anti-Semitic assertion that Jews accumulated wealth deviously and at everyone else's expense to secure unfair economic advantages was widely held among Conservatives and conservatives, including Arthur Bryant.⁵⁷

Hearnshaw's published academic lectures, especially in his volumes that covered 'Social and Political Ideas' from the Middle Ages to the present, were intended to reveal the historical origins of a sensible conservatism, without the polemical rhetoric that marked his popular forays into political persuasion. Hearnshaw returned to the fourteenth century to discuss John Wycliffe, who arrived at theory 'by way of practice'. Wycliffe—a national hero for someone bred in Nonconformity—was an important forerunner of conservatism for Hearnshaw because he discovered that nationalism and the state were part of

the divine scheme for controlling human aberration.⁵⁸ The two most crucial thinkers in Hearnshaw's history of conservatism were Burke and Disraeli. Burke was distinguished from his contemporaries, and in Hearnshaw's appraisal, from most political thinkers of any period, in that he lived prominently in the world 'of great affairs' and took his ideas from his experience. Sceptical of an uncritical acceptance of the contents of ideas, Hearnshaw always considered the mentality of an age when explaining historical events. When considering the causes of the French Revolution, he emphasized the importance of both intellectual discontent and spurious ideas. Hearnshaw admired the conservative Burke's wise repudiation of French radical thought and his reliance upon real life as the fount of his ideas. In Burke's appreciation of reality Hearnshaw unearthed the founding and sustaining principles of conservatism: avoidance of abstract political speculation; an insistence on the empirical nature of government; administration rooted in history and experience; emphasis on expediency, rather than on rights in decisions about policy; and essentially moderate opinions, even when expressed passionately.⁵⁹ Moreover, Burke was profoundly religious and believed that the foundations 'of society were laid deep in the doctrines of God, free will, and immortality'. In place of the individualistic, conventional, legalistic, contractual, and semi-secular system of Locke, Burke emphasized the religious basis of society.⁶⁰ Burke's influence continues, Hearnshaw noted approvingly, on those who want to 'combine devotion to liberty with respect for authority; hope for the future with reverence for the past; support of party with service of the nation; profound patriotism with sincere goodwill to all the "vicinage of mankind"; essential moderation with zealous enthusiasm; a sane conservatism with a cautious reform'.⁶¹

Disraeli was even more admirable than Burke in his rejection of empty abstractions and affirmation to stress instead 'principles', or 'operative ideas; ideas in action; intellectual conceptions applied continuously to practical affairs; thoughts impelled by emotion, will, and even conscience'.⁶² That section of the Conservative Party that Hearnshaw respected concentrated on 'affairs rather than theories' and was the party of 'strong and efficient administration rather than of incessant and ill-digested legislation; the party which adopts policy to circumstances instead of attempting (like the Bolsheviks) to fit circumstances into the procrustean bed of fixed obsessions'.⁶³ The dependence of conservative ideology on practicality, evident still in the title and contents of R. A. Butler's autobiography, *The Art of the Possible* (1971), was a recurring message in conservative apologetics from the 1920s. Hearnshaw well understood the historical impact of theory, but he rejected untested constructs. When he opposed 'ideals,' he was railing against abstractions, overarching principles, or what he imagined as utopian dreams.⁶⁴ Any theory not derived from practice was dismissed as an arbitrary and self-serving rationalization of instinctive, usually destructive, tendencies in which the highest ideals often became excuses for satisfying the lowest desires. Theories such as socialism and communism had to be denied and

destroyed because social and economic problems could not be solved by any grand scheme that ignored the facts of life.

Liberals and utopian radicals had tempting visions to offer; being a conservative was far more difficult. Conservatives were much duller, Hearnshaw admitted, because they lived within the restrictions of the working world. Conservatives had 'to seek their weapons in the sealed armouries of history, to gather heavy masses of protective statistics, to dig in the rock of reason rather than to fly on the wings of fancy'.⁶⁵ When Philip Williamson described Halifax as a 'Christian realist', he pointed out that from 1937 Halifax repeated that ideals have to be adapted to facts in the real world that, in turn, have to confront 'moral complexity'. That empirical assessment led Halifax to attempt the achievement of international peace. This understanding of 'realism' was especially important for conservatives both in the inter-war and post-war periods. Between the wars it meant acceptance of the Nazi Anschluss, British neutrality towards the Spanish Civil War, recognition of the possible Italian conquest of Abyssinia, and the Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland and of Prague. But 'realism' could have other interpretations. Halifax was also mainly responsible for the Cabinet's military guarantee to Poland, which, six months later, took Britain into war.⁶⁶

The realist test was supplemented by Tory democracy, which all the conservative historians found attractive. Hearnshaw found a cure for the illusory tendencies of socialism and the vagaries of democracy in Disraelian Tory democracy, which transformed conservatism from a 'class confederacy into a national organisation' that welcomed the working-man and directed the power of the state to the 'interest of the community as a whole'.⁶⁷ Tory democracy could be traced even further back, he argued, to Bolingbroke. While disapproving of Bolingbroke's immorality, Hearnshaw admired his combination of conservatism and radicalism which, like Disraeli and Randolph Churchill, offered a 'patriotism' that asked for personal freedom; for loyalty to the Crown; for national unity; and for the subordination of the interests of party, class, and clique to the interest of the people as a whole.⁶⁸ But it was Disraeli, above all, who combined the continuity of tradition, custom, and law with a recognition that constant reform was necessary to keep ancient institutions in harmony with new wants and new conditions. Alistair B. Cooke's reflections about Conservative Party election manifestos from 1900 to 1997 finds from 1924 a 'marked emphasis on social reform which subsequent manifestos were to enlarge still further with regular Disraelian incantations, making "One Nation" the most wearisomely familiar slogan in the Tory vocabulary'.⁶⁹ Conservatives led by Disraeli were, for Hearnshaw, non-socialistic collectivists who, 'while continuing to believe in the sanctity of private property, the superiority of individual enterprise, the rightness of rent for land, and the justness of interest on capital, yet held that the organised might and wisdom and wealth of the community could properly be employed to relieve poverty, redress grievances, and provide an environment

for the higher life of the nation'.⁷⁰ Conservative historians found in Disraeli confirmation for their belief that all the social classes either prospered or declined together, but they worried that government intervention in social and economic life would diminish the 'personal freedom' necessary for cultivating moral capacity. Conservatives, Hearnshaw insisted, had to undertake the improvement of the condition of the people through 'intelligent self-help, cultivated ability, enhanced skill, increased specialisation, bettered physique, elevated character, enlarged faith'. Those goals were all assumed to be within reach of the autonomous individual. When, in 1936, Hearnshaw recognized the impending conflict in Europe between dictatorship and democracy, he argued that democracy could survive only by 'imposing upon itself the discipline that has given such success to its rivals'.⁷¹

The essential roles of character, discipline, and authority in the making of civilization were a running motif in Hearnshaw's lectures on 'Europe in the Middle Ages', his special subject for twenty-three years at King's College. The Roman Empire declined, Hearnshaw taught, as a result of internal decay when the Romans lost their 'ancient virtue and valour'.⁷² Before the Second World War brought human wickedness into much sharper relief, Hearnshaw believed that the most able and energetic could be guided at least towards greater well-being, if not necessarily moral improvement, through higher wages, greater productivity, and increased profits. Even after the war, in the spring of 1946, Anthony Eden used rhetoric very similar to Hearnshaw's to explain that progress depended on 'better men and women', and in 1947 Quintin Hogg stressed the inherent limitations of policy when dealing with imperfect man and the 'streak of evil as well as good in his inmost nature'.⁷³

Although a conservative who bemoaned the loss of traditional values and institutions, Hearnshaw's historical lectures and writing revealed a view of history in which both progress and regress occurred simultaneously, resulting in small, incremental gains. Hearnshaw's belief in the inherent weaknesses of human nature did not prevent him from a cautiously optimistic view of historical direction. Since human nature was 'substantially unchanging' and circumstances 'essentially recurring', knowledge of the errors and misfortunes of the past meant that we could learn 'to steer a straighter and a safer course in the future'.⁷⁴ Especially in his lectures on the Middle Ages, Hearnshaw traced the regular advance of civilization and of ideas and religion 'finer and purer than the paganisms that it had superseded' providing a rise in moral standards, the solidarity of men and their equality before God, the only kind of equality Hearnshaw and the other conservative historians were prepared to accept. The evolution he discerned also provided social mobility, the dignity and just rewards for labour, and the 'infinite value of the human soul'. In political life he applauded the development of national states; the growth of representative institutions; and, development of the democratic idea of majority rule, through feudalism and social contract. At the same time, he pointed to the period's

defects: religion 'superstitious and persecuting; its morality slack and superficial; its politics fantastic and unreal'. The most lamentably stagnant areas in the Middle Ages, for Hearnshaw, were in science, literature, and art. In 1928, when he examined the phenomenon of chivalry, he found a considerable gap between chivalric theory and its regrettable practices, but concluded that it was an advance over preceding savagery when judged by standards of that day. Even though chivalric knights left a great deal to be desired by their behaviour, they left a tradition valuable to the twentieth century that 'stressed duties and obligations rather than rights and privileges'. Even more relevantly, they inculcated 'an ideal of social service . . . of the weak by the strong . . . of the poor by the wealthy; service of the lowly by the high'.⁷⁵

In the inter-war decades, Hearnshaw eulogized Britain as a modern chivalric force uplifting underdeveloped populations into a higher level of civilization. As early as 1920, Hearnshaw had lectured throughout Great Britain on 'Democracy and the British Empire' to avow that the Empire represented peace, freedom, justice, equal law, health, wealth, religion, and humanity. In arguments similar to those advocated by Seeley, he described the Empire 'as the nursery of self-government among backward peoples and the guardian of the oppressed'. Hearnshaw went beyond Seeley to suggest, in an imperial argument eerily familiar again since 2002, that democracy became possible throughout the world because 'the British Empire, with its defensive fleets and armies, has set a term to tyrants'.⁷⁶ Conservatives, Hearnshaw urged, must preserve the imperial community from threats, whether 'by a fanatical minority in India or by a handful of republican conspirators in Ireland'. India, like Egypt, lacked proper leaders and was aware of its lack. Both dependent countries, Hearnshaw reckoned, preferred to be governed by a superior British elite until they, too, became competent to enjoy 'individualism' and 'personal freedom'.⁷⁷ Independence movements in both Egypt and India had to be postponed, he maintained, because they had not yet reached an appropriate stage of development.

Consistently, Hearnshaw resorted to an argument based upon a 'general' or 'real will', which, in 'the inarticulate multitudes' would reveal that what they 'ardently desire is not the setting up of a constitutional apparatus which they have as yet neither the mental nor the moral capacity to work, but rather the continued maintenance of the just and ordered rule of the British administrators, who enable them to enjoy peace, prosperity, and opportunities of self-culture'.⁷⁸ Government, he continued in familiar conservative rhetoric, 'is not an end in itself', but merely a means 'to the realisation of the good life'.⁷⁹ An emphasis on humanitarian benefits did not prevent him from arguing for the economic and political value of the Empire to British interests. Hearnshaw thought of the Empire as a triumph of Disraelian pragmatism and he expected the imperial countries to provide increasingly expanding markets for British goods as well as to supply 'inexhaustible stores of raw materials for home industries,

fields for emigration and enterprise, invaluable aid in days of difficulty and danger'.⁸⁰

In common with many inter-war conservatives, Hearnshaw tried to settle conflicts whether of ideas or interests, including the clashes between imperial subjects and the mother country, by defining them as false antitheses rather than as irreconcilable opposites. Hearnshaw endorsed Disraeli's treatment of the Church of England as a national, reconciling institution, even though he was not an Anglican. The conservative institutions of Britain, including the Church of England, were venerated especially for balancing authority and freedom, orthodoxy and toleration, to create harmony domestically and internationally. To continue and strengthen what he perceived as the distinctive conciliatory essence of modern conservatism, Hearnshaw wanted to purge his Party of reactionaries and install instead the 'young, the energetic, the far-sighted, the men of intellectual eminence' who were most likely to find new common grounds for conservatism.⁸¹ Hearnshaw wanted the Empire, America, and the League of Nations to work together to make the world safe for a democracy managed by the best qualified. When he published *The Development of Political Ideas* in 1927 for a mass readership, the common thread that he found among the new political theorists was that they were all concerned with personal freedom in a 'revolt among the pioneers of political philosophy against the collectivism and the socialism of the latter half of the nineteenth century'. He concluded with the 'hope that it will carry mankind one step forward along the path whose ultimate goal is the final solution to the aeonian problem of political science—viz., the reconciliation of law and liberty, order and progress, authority and conscience, individual and community, Man and the State'.⁸²

This overriding emphasis on national and international conciliation, which lay behind the broad conservative support for *rapprochement* with Hitler, is often overlooked in analyses of conservative ideas and prescriptions. The inter-war conservative historians vigorously promoted reconciliation of all competing political, social, economic, imperial, and international interests. Hearnshaw, Feiling, and Bryant were unwilling to subordinate their conservative principles to labourites or liberals, but they felt that under conservative leadership, there could be a genuine settlement of differences. That leadership required both an understanding of capitalist economics and a reassertion of traditional ethical values. While those commitments appeared antithetical, Hearnshaw and the other inter-war conservative historians resolved them by resorting to Victorian prescriptions. They accepted capitalism as a requisite for national prosperity because it developed capacities for hard work and competence that both provided employment and made people employable. At the same time, they insisted that only non-materialistic aspirations, resting upon religion and divinely created morality, encouraged a good life. The resolution of the conflict between economics and ethics depended on the inherently redeeming nature of work. People rarely rose to meet God's expectations, but

they could aspire to a more noble life through energetic efforts to improve themselves.

The reconciliation of material ambitions, necessary to economic growth, with moral law was satisfied by their image of an ordered society necessarily based on authority. Society, intrinsically imperfect because it was the creation of imperfect people, could be improved because the latently subversive forces in human nature could be redirected to productive ends within an organic and unified nation. A national community should, and could, make arrangements, both public and philanthropic, for limited social mobility in which everyone would receive the well-being appropriate to their particular station in life. Disraeli was a model for Hearnshaw and other Tory democratic twentieth-century conservatives because he had attempted to transcend social, economic, political, and imperial conflicts by seeking to balance equitably the competing claims of classes; economic interests; the elements in the constitution; the electorate; local and central government; the mother country and dominions in the Empire; and, finally, between the British Empire and other great states.⁸³

Hearnshaw saw the most divisive economic phenomenon domestically as unemployment because it concluded in class conflict. In 1938, he wrote an extended essay 'The Paradox of Unemployment: A Utopian Study', which he never published, possibly because he decided that some of its recommendations would be too controversial. In that essay, he opposed public works as mostly unnecessary, undesirable, extremely expensive, and only transient in relief of unemployment. He criticized social services for being excessive in number, burdensome in cost, and demoralizing in influence. Welfare policies were economically and morally repellent to Hearnshaw because he believed they kept wages uneconomically high, while making the trades unions intractable and unreasonable in negotiation. Additionally, he opposed policies that distributed the wealth more evenly because the result would be the risk of 'having none to distribute'. Although the intentions of those proposing such interventions were 'excellent', their effect was anti-social because it impeded labour mobility, restricted desirable immigration, fostered 'idleness and insolence', and created serious administrative abuses.⁸⁴

While these contentions were familiar to, and accepted by, many conservatives, his other recommendations were less conventional. Hearnshaw had argued earlier that, if society became sufficiently prosperous, there could be state support for greater leisure and the opportunity for self-development by the lower classes—that is the lower classes would come to enjoy those cultural advantages that gave so much pleasure to Hearnshaw. But he worried that, as a result of mechanization and scientific attempts to reduce costs of production, unemployment would become the principal problem of the future, and the mass of the unemployed would never again be absorbed into the workforce because they could not meet 'rapidly rising and complex demands for skill and

intelligence'.⁸⁵ He also had maintained that unemployment was a valid cause of industrial unrest creating an 'urgent need' to either 'establish new industries in depressed areas', or 'to move their inhabitants to new regions of activity and hope'. What made him uncomfortable about such interventionist measures was that no amount of public money could help the economy unless it revived 'individual energy and initiative'. Nothing, he cautioned, could be more fatal than the inculcation of habits of 'passive submission to adversity' combined with 'an active expectation of everlasting relief from funds supplied by other people.'⁸⁶

By the time he wrote *The Paradox of Unemployment*, Hearnshaw's solution to this impending social crisis had become a state-managed paternalism. The government was to treat the unemployed as members of a national family, and provide them with the 'necessities of a moderately comfortable existence'. If they wanted more, then they would have to perform a useful service to the community.⁸⁷ This model of a harmonious domestic life as the core of a unified national life, now called 'family values', and accepted by Tories and Liberals since at least 1870, became an essential part of conservative discourse in the late 1930s. Hearnshaw left the major streams of inter-war conservatism when he found in 1928 that the major problem of civilization was overpopulation of the 'lower grades of community, especially of the feeble minded and criminal'.⁸⁸ Consistently, he encouraged conservatives to champion opportunities for 'intelligent self-help, cultivated ability, enhanced skill, increased specialisation, bettered physique, elevated character, enlarged faith'.⁸⁹ How they were to do that was never discussed, but he was attracted to eugenics and the possibility of segregation or sterilization of the unfit, so that the national stock would be preserved, coupled with a growth of temperance and self-control for those who were fit. The means for identifying the 'genetically unfit' did not seem to trouble him, and throughout his writings he treated extreme poverty as the severest of moral failings. Although all three conservative historians blamed deficiencies in individual character for social problems, eugenic remedies were peculiar to Hearnshaw.

Throughout his writing of history and aggressive promotion of conservatism, Hearnshaw vacillated often between state intervention and individualism in his analysis of economic problems and their solutions. The one area where he remained absolutely certain of the validity of his position was in his condemnation of Germany. Unlike many conservatives sympathetic to Germany after 1918, including Bryant and Feiling, Hearnshaw labelled Germany 'The Aggressor' throughout history, and derided the 'amiable but misguided sentimentalists who consider that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were too severe'. While conceding that Germany had historic virtue such as courage and 'a powerful though narrow intelligence, which has enabled them to make many additions to abstract knowledge, though few to practical wisdom', he concluded that it was a country always 'warlike, always aggressive, an Esau among nations . . . torn

internally by truceless feuds, lacking in unity, devoid of political sense, addicted to violent crime and bottomless treachery . . . isolated from the Commonwealth of Christendom . . . fundamentally pagan' and 'out of touch with the culture of the modern world'.⁹⁰ In another unpublished typescript, *Pathway to Permanent Peace*, Hearnshaw reiterated his conviction that there was no question in 1939 as in 1914 about Germany's 'war guilt'. What concerned him more, though, was the post-war period, which had to recognize the strength of national feeling, which, like personal liberty, needed 'to be guided and restrained'. Peace could only be guaranteed, he thought, through a 'rehabilitation of the League of Nations' free of former defects and with an international police force 'sufficient to make it effective in the future'.⁹¹

In spite of Hearnshaw's inconsistencies and prejudices, he did genuinely want every English citizen (he rarely said 'British') to have the opportunity for living a good and satisfying life, and he was convinced that conservatism should offer the best means for achieving that goal. In order for conservatism to be effective, he reasoned, the contemporary Conservative Party had to reform itself. Within the Party, too much power was still held by reactionaries 'whose only claim to distinction is title or wealth'. Moreover the Party was not offering the working man a career in conservative politics. As a party of 'national unity', the Conservatives must be devoted to improving the condition of the people. That did not mean welfare programmes, as Hearnshaw explained in 1937, because not 'even the most lavish flow of public money' could restore languishing localities unless it serves to revive the individual energy and initiative of their inhabitants. For democracy to be a sufficient form of government, there had to be 'first, some considerable amount of knowledge and of mental capacity; secondly, a fairly high standard of moral integrity; thirdly, a strong sense of communal solidarity; and finally, a clearly defined and powerful public opinion'.⁹²

Although the oldest of the inter-war conservative historians by a generation, Hearnshaw was the first to recognize the power of public opinion and he cultivated it assiduously. His targets were both the educated middle and upper classes, which could claim merit for their position, and working people who had an obvious interest in securing and maintaining employment. He wanted both groups to become individuals of exemplary character who would assume political, social, and economic obligations to make their nation strong, prosperous, and united. In a lecture series at King's in 1931–2 and at Ashridge the following year, Hearnshaw chose Edward VII as a representative of the type of person England required. At King's he enumerated Edward's character and virtues, lauding him as 'an expert in the business of constitutional kingship' with 'his intense patriotism; his large humanity; his cosmopolitan sympathy; his sincere devotion to the cause of peace'. When Hearnshaw spoke to the eagerly conservative audience at Ashridge, he extended his eulogy of Edward to explain that dictatorship had occurred in Germany because that country, unlike England and America, did not have 'that long apprenticeship in local self-government, which seems to be

indispensably necessary if self-government on a national scale is to be successful'. The only dictatorial threats to England that Hearnshaw warned against were the Trades Union Congress, because it existed to restrict necessary capital investment, and the Socialist League, because it offered false and impractical promises.⁹³ In 1937, he repeated his fear of 'malignant' strikes as a threat to democracy and urged that no 'strike of any kind should ever be allowed to succeed'.⁹⁴ Instead of internal discord, Hearnshaw wanted a meritocratic government concerned with the well-being of all its peoples who would live together in a hierarchical order that maintained peace, security, success, and morality within every station of life. He wanted to persuade both popular and educated audiences, that conservative principles were historically proven lessons necessary for private motivation, public policy, and a harmonious national life.

NOTES

1. F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *Democracy at the Crossways: A Study in Politics and History with Special Reference to Great Britain* (London, 1918), 493–4.
2. Christopher N. L. Brooke, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, Vol. IV, 1870–1990 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52. Hearnshaw received a B. A. in 1897 and an LL. M (Master of Laws) in 1900. In 1934 Oxford gave him an honorary Litt.D.
3. For a discussion of Seeley, see Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, esp. 90–7, and 'J. R. Seeley and the Burden of History', R. Davis and R. Helmstadter (eds.), in *Religion and Irreligion in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1992). Seeley intended not only a public role for history, but also the historian's active involvement in the achievement and maintenance of imperial federation. Hearnshaw agreed.
4. Hearnshaw, *Main Currents of European History, 1815–1915* (London: Macmillan, 1917), 22. This book began in 1916 as extemporaneous lectures to teachers under the auspices of the London County Council.
5. *Ibid.*, 315.
6. Gordon Huelin, *King's College London, 1828–1978* (London: University of London, King's College, 1978), 40. As of 21 July 1903, religious tests for students and faculty were abolished. In 1908, when the Theology Department separated from King's College to be governed by a council, King's College was incorporated into the University of London.
7. While at Southampton, Hearnshaw edited: *Relics of Old Southampton* (Southampton: Cox and Sharland, 1904), *The Court Leet Records of Southampton A.D. 1550* (2 vols.) with D. M. Hearnshaw (Southampton: Cox and Sharland, 1905 and 1908), and *On the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France: Letter I* (London, 1906), and he wrote: *Leet Jurisdiction in England, especially as Illustrated by the Records of the Court Leet of Southampton* (Southampton: Cox and Sharland, 1908), *The Life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger, Puritan Idealist* (Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1910), and *A Short History of Southampton*, Part I: *The Story*

of *Southampton in Relation to the History of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910). Between 1912 and 1914 he wrote: *Legal Literature of the Age of Dryden* (1912), *England in the Making* (London, 1913), *Court and Parliament, 1588–1688* (1913), and *A First Book of English History* (1914). He also introduced Edmunds Burke's *Speeches on American Taxation and Conciliation with America*, ed. Arthur D. Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), and began his long series of published lectures at King's by editing *King's College Lectures on Colonial Problems* (London, 1913).

8. Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College, London, 1828–1928* (London, 1929), 459. Other faculties adopted public lectures, too, and the total number attending rose from a few hundred in 1913 to over 33,000 in 1928–9, 460.
9. For an appreciation of Hearnshaw's prolixity, see the 'Bibliography' at the end of this book, which lists only those volumes pertinent to this study.
10. Hearnshaw, 'Introduction', *King's College Lectures on Colonial Problems*.
11. J. R. Seeley, 'The Teaching of Politics', his inaugural address as Regius Professor of Modern History in Cambridge in 1867, *Lectures and Essays* (London, 1870), 298–9.
12. For a statistical and qualitative analysis of the professions pursued by first- and second-class History Honours graduates from King's College, Cambridge, and Balliol College, Oxford, see Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, ch. 8.
13. Although women could take degrees by 1920 in Oxford, they were excluded from most university clubs, including the Union; their five colleges were not recognized as full University colleges until 1959; and they could not take part in university administration until the 1970s. In 1905 and 1908, Hearnshaw's wife was joint editor with Hearnshaw of the two-volume *Court Leet Records of Southampton A.D. 1550*.
14. A. F. Pollard, in his appeal to his colleagues in London, 'The University of London and the Study of History' (1904), had written that a history school serves its time by broadening the meaning and uses of history: 'For history should record the whole life and not merely the political life of nations; it should devote as much space to the evolution of thought as to the development of events.' Quoted in Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College*, 283. Hearnshaw enthusiastically endorsed Pollard's position.
15. Pollard consistently worked towards establishing a University School of History among the colleges of the University of London. On 8 December 1912 Pollard wrote to Tout to explain his strategy, which included using Hearnshaw. Tout Papers, John Rylands Library, Oxford Road, the University of Manchester. By 1914 there were 186 men and women reading for a History Honours Degree at the University of London and they formed the nucleus of a postgraduate school. See A. T. Milne, 'History at the Universities: Then and Now,' *History*, 59 (1974), 42.
16. In 1915 Pollard lectured on the war and then published his lecture as *The War, its History and its Morals: A Lecture* (London, Longmans & Co., 1915).
17. In 1915 the compulsory final papers on English History in Oxford added questions about the Victorian age to 1885. See M. G. Brock, 'Epilogue', *The History of the*

University of Oxford, Vol. VII: Nineteenth-century Oxford, Part II, ed. M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 857.

18. F. M. Powicke, 'Three Cambridge Scholars: C. W. Previte-Orton, Z. N. Brooke, and G. G. Coulton', *Modern Historians and the Study of History* (London, 1955), 108–9. It is interesting to note that the three historians admired by Powicke in this memoir were all medievalists rather than students of the more recent past.
19. History Board Minute Book: 1918–28, Seeley Library, Cambridge University. J. H. Clapham, Professor of Economic History moved and carried unanimously the motion that in every year, the Special History Subjects for Part II of the History Tripos should include at least one period before AD 200, one 200–1500, and two 1500–1914. G. M. Trevelyan was then Regius Professor. Even though Clapham's reforms appear late in date, they are slightly misleading. Powicke was right about Cambridge because the spirit of the Tripos was captured by the Special Essays which covered a wide spectrum of topics, including such contemporary subjects as, for example in 1913, 'In National History Opportunity is as Important as Purpose', and, in 1915, 'German v. English Methods of Government'. Soffer, *Discipline and Power*, 165–6.
20. Hearnshaw, *Freedom in Service. Six Essays on Matters Concerning Britain's Safety and Good Government* (London, 1916), was dedicated to 'The Glorious and Immortal Memory of Lord Roberts', pp. ix–x. The first three essays were: I. 'Ancient Defence of England', 20 August 1915; II. 'Compulsory Service and Liberty', 28 September 1915; III. 'The Voluntary Principle', 28 December 1915. The remaining three were: IV. 'Passive Resistance', V. 'Christianity and War', and VI. 'The State and its Rivals'. Many other historians attempted to rally national support for the war. See *Discipline and Power*, 46–50.
21. 'The Growth of the Radical Party', at Edinburgh, 23 November, 1882, *Speeches of the Marquis of Salisbury. With a Sketch of his Life*, ed. Henry W. Lucy (London, 1885), 29.
22. 'Ancient Defence of England', 3.
23. 'Compulsory Service and Liberty', 20–8.
24. 'The Voluntary Principle', 39, 45–7, 75, 66–7, 87, 94–5. See, too, Hearnshaw's introduction to *Christ and the Sword. Words for the War-Perplexed* (London, 1916).
25. Hearnshaw, 'Niccolo Machiavelli', in Hearnshaw (ed.), *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Thinkers of the Renaissance and the Reformation* (New York: Brentano, 1925?), 118, 121.
26. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England. An Analytical, Historical, and Political Survey* (London, 1933), 22–32, was based on lectures given at Ashridge College. For a discussion of Ashridge College, see ch. 3.
27. Hearnshaw, 'John Austin and the Analytical Jurists', *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Age of Reaction and Reconstruction 1815–1865. A Series of Lectures Delivered at King's College, University of London during the Session 1930–31*, F. J. C. Hearnshaw (ed.) (1932) (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), 188–9. When Michael Oakshott reviewed this volume for the *Cambridge Review*

- in 1932, he found that Hearnshaw's essay on Austin led the list of the three best essays. Reprinted in Oakeshott, *The Concept of a Philosophical Jurisprudence: Essays and Reviews 1926–1951*, ed. Luke O'Sullivan (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2007), 87.
28. Deryck Abel, *Ernest Benn, Counsel for Liberty* (London, 1960), 52–3. Benn, a libertarian individualist and capitalist, left Liberalism in 1929 and moved to the right, while his brother Wedgwood Benn moved to Labour in 1927 to serve in the second MacDonald Ministry of 1929–31 and the first Attlee Ministry of 1945–6. Ernest Benn's two volumes of memoirs were called *Murmurings of an Individualist* and *More Murmurings of an Individualist* (1942), both published by the Individualist Bookshop, Ltd. in London. Hearnshaw also wrote pamphlets for the Individualist Press on *The Socialists' New Order* (London, 1942), reissued as a 2nd edn. in 1943.
 29. Hearnshaw, *The 'Ifs' of History* (London, 1929), 19.
 30. Hearnshaw, *Prelude to 1937. Being a Sketch of the Critical Years A.D. 1931–1936* (London, 1937), p. v.
 31. What Acton wanted historians to study were concepts such as: 'toleration, conscience, credit, sorcery, criticism, education', which were always subservient to a moral structure. See 'Notes for Romanes Lecture, 1900'. Acton Papers, Add. 4981 F, 77 and 33, 23, 6, 21, 73, University of Cambridge Library. Acton had few students, exercised no influence upon the History Faculty, and was largely neglected until the late 1930s. Then, the anomalies of fascism made a moralistic view of history engaging and the four volumes of Acton's lectures and essays, published posthumously by J. N. Figgis, perhaps Acton's most important student at Cambridge, together with R. Vere Laurence, were revived and read. Both Butterfield and Owen Chadwick grappled with him for the rest of their lives.
 32. Hearnshaw, *Centenary History of King's College*, 463–4.
 33. *The Historical Association, 1906–1956* (London, 1957), 56, 6, 8, 19, 56, 27. From 1922 to 1923 there were 92 branches with a membership of between 4,738 and 826 associates, falling to 4,272 and 493 associates in 1926–7, 30. Charles Firth was elected the first president and Butterfield served in 1955. Keith Robbins, "'History' and the 'National Past'", *History*, 66 (1981), 413–25, reprinted in *History, Religion, and National Identity in Britain* (London, 1993), 1–14. Members and most notably its presidents, from founding in 1906, 'have by their own words and writings in part made the past which we seek to understand. History has been an important vehicle for such debate and discussion. The articles selected by its editors can be seen to have reflected, to some degree, a national mood or obsession . . . its presidents are, and have been, public men and so also, but much more modestly, are its editors.' Some of Robbins' dates and figures appear to be at odds with those given by the historians of the Historical Association.
 34. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, pp. v, vi, 14, 18. This was exactly the rhetoric used by Russell Kirk. See ch. 7.
 35. *Fighting Notes for Speakers with a Few General Directions Upon Canvassing* (The National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, Westminster, 1909), 18.

36. Frans Coetzee, *For Party or Country. Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 162.
37. For R. H. Tawney, see esp. *Education: The Socialist Policy*, with Preface by Charles Trevelyan (London: Independent Labour Party, Publication Department, 1924), and *Equality* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931). In the second month of the Second World War, Harold Laski surveyed the years after 1918 to observe that while the Great War had raised great expectations among the masses, those expectations were largely unfulfilled: 'Great economic insecurity; grave numbers of unemployed; the increasing revelation of the abyss which separated the political, from the control of economic power; the seemingly unbelievable gap between the depths of frustration felt by the masses and the inadequacy of the remedies proposed by the political parties . . . ; the unwillingness of any government to attempt any fundamental experiments' were the characteristics of democratic governments in the inter-war years. *Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London, 1943), 130. To prevent those phenomena from occurring in Britain, Laski was actively involved with Labour Party governance from the late 1930s until 1949.
38. Hearnshaw, *Democracy and Labour* (London, 1924), 171.
39. Hearnshaw, *The Development of Political Ideas* (London, 1927), 52. The quote is taken from the back jacket. An American edition appeared in 1928 (Garden City, NY). This book was reissued by Benn in 1931 and then revised and enlarged in 1937 and translated into Czech in 1938 just as the Nazi Anschluss engulfed Austria. In 1955 the book was translated into Japanese and published in Japan. Benn's Sixpenny Library had the 'revolutionary aim of providing a reference library to the best modern thought, written by the foremost authorities, at the price of sixpence a volume' (from back jacket of small paperback of 80 pages with a Morrisian border on cover and title page). The Library anticipated more than 250 titles and by 1932 had 150 on every subject—including *Fungi* and *A History of Music*—in print.
40. Hearnshaw, *A Survey of Socialism: Analytical, Historical and Critical* (London, 1928), written nearly 40 years after he was an undergraduate at Peterhouse and then sympathetic to socialist aspirations for reform.
41. *Survey of Socialism*, 365.
42. *Ibid.*, 366, 392, 396.
43. *Ibid.*, 392.
44. *This is the Road* (London, 1950), 22.
45. *Survey of Socialism*, 344, 348.
46. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 19, and *Survey of Socialism*, 428.
47. Hearnshaw, 'Hugo Grotius', *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Thinkers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1927) (Port Washington, 1967), 149.
48. Hearnshaw, *Democracy and the British Empire* (New York, 1920), 8.
49. *Survey of Socialism*, 399, 403.
50. *Ibid.*, 382.

51. *Ibid.*, 358, 399.
52. *Ibid.*, 390, 407.
53. *Ibid.*, 433.
54. The term 'property-owning democracy' was used first by Noel Skelton in the *Spectator* in 1924. In 1935, he became Secretary of State. See Anthony Eden, 'A Nation-wide Property-owning Democracy', speech at Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 3 October 1946, *The New Conservatism. An Anthology of Post-war Thought* (London, 1955), 76–8.
55. *Conservative Municipal Programme. Notes for Speakers* (The Metropolitan Division of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, London, 1895) This publication was intended for contesting the London County Council Elections in 1895, 20, 4.
56. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 293, 303–4, 297.
57. See ch. 4.
58. Hearnshaw, 'John Wycliffe and Divine Dominion', in F. J. C. Hearnshaw (ed.), *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Medieval Thinkers. A Series of Lectures Delivered at King's College, University of London* (London, 1923), 216. The lectures were given in autumn 1922.
59. Hearnshaw, 'Edmund Burke', *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Revolutionary Era: A Series of Lectures Delivered at King's College, University of London*, during the session 1929–30, Hearnshaw (ed.) (London, 1931), 72, 89.
60. *Ibid.*, 95.
61. *Ibid.*, 99.
62. Hearnshaw, 'Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield', in Hearnshaw (ed.), *The Political Principles of Some Notable Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century* (1926) (London, 1936), 216. Considering Disraeli's popularity, it is not surprising that these lectures attracted larger audiences than any similar course ever given at King's College up to 1926, p. v.
63. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 33.
64. For the continuity of this theme, see Kenneth Minogue (ed.), *Conservative Realism. New Essays in Conservatism* (London, 1996).
65. Hearnshaw, 'Edmund Burke', 8.
66. Philip Williamson, 'Christian Conservatism and the Totalitarian Challenge, 1933–40', *EHR*, 115 (June, 2000), 635.
67. Hearnshaw, 'Benjamin Disraeli', 226–7, 221.
68. Hearnshaw, 'Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke', *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age, 1650–1750* (1923) (New York, 1950) 215, 246.
69. Alistair B. Cooke, 'The Conservative Party and its Manifestos. A Personal View', introduction to Iain Dale (ed.), *Conservative Party General Election Manifestos 1900–1997* (London, 2000), 3. Cooke was Deputy Director of the Conservative

- Research Department 1985–97, and Director of Conservative Political Centre 1988–97.
70. Hearnshaw, 'Benjamin Disraeli', 202.
 71. Hearnshaw, 'Hugo Grotius', 149; 'Benjamin Disraeli,' 208, 228; *Conservatism in England*, 303; *Prelude to 1937*, 174.
 72. Hearnshaw, Lecture IV: 'The Beginning of Decline, 180–284 A.D.', Lectures on the Middle Ages, Fossey John Cobb Hearnshaw Papers, King's College Archives, K/PP13/12, Typescript, 25. Hearnshaw gave these lectures between 1913 and 1935 on the basis of notes and only wrote them out fully after his retirement. Part I concluded in AD 604 and Part II is not in the Archive.
 73. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 304; Anthony Eden, 'Free Enterprise and State Power', 7 March 1946, quoted in *The New Conservatism: An Anthology of Post-war Thought* (London, 1955), 72; and Quintin Hogg, *The Case for Conservatism* (London, 1947), 11.
 74. Hearnshaw, *The 'Ifs' of History*, 11.
 75. See esp. Hearnshaw, Part III 'Europe in the Middle Age 1303 on: Transition from Medieval to Modern History, Lecture 237 'The Waning of the Middle Ages', 1924–6, Lectures of the Middle Ages; and, 'Chivalry and its Place in History', in Edgar Prestage (ed.), *Chivalry. A Series of Studies to Illustrate its Historical Significance and Civilizing Influence by Members of King's College, London* (dedicated to the Prince of Wales, 'exemplar in our own day of the ideals of chivalry', who honoured the University of London by becoming Honorary Doctor (New York, 1928), 32–3. In the 1920s 'no less than ninety-six students' attended Hearnshaw's course of lectures'. Huelin, King's College, London, 55. Professors at both Oxford and Cambridge during the same period would have been delighted with a fraction of that number.
 76. Hearnshaw, *Democracy and the British Empire*, 22–3; See, too, his *Sea-Power and Empire* (London, 1940).
 77. Hearnshaw, *The Development of Political Ideas*, 78–9.
 78. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 305; *Democracy and the British Empire*, 150.
 79. Hearnshaw, *Democracy and the British Empire*, 149–50.
 80. Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 305.
 81. *Ibid.*, 293.
 82. Hearnshaw, *The Development of Political Ideas*, 79.
 83. Hearnshaw, 'Benjamin Disraeli', 219, 221.
 84. He was very interested in the American economy but it is unclear whether he knew much about F. D. Roosevelt's successful use of public works in America. 'The Paradox of Unemployment: A Utopian Study' (1938), Hearnshaw Papers, K/PP13/16, Typescript; *Survey of Socialism*, 142–3, 69, 71.
 85. *Survey of Socialism*, 444.
 86. *Prelude to 1937*, 175.
 87. Hearnshaw, 'The Paradox of Unemployment', 111, 113.

88. *Survey of Socialism*, 444.
89. *Conservatism in England*, 303.
90. Hearnshaw, *Germany the Aggressor throughout the Ages* (London, 1940), dedicated to Alfred, Lord Milner and to Lady Milner who suggested the book, 247, 271. See ch. 7 for Viereck's very similar description of German history and character.
91. Hearnshaw, 'Pathway to Permanent Peace' (probably written in 1941), typescript in Hearnshaw Papers, K/PP13/16, 8, 69–70. As part of Hearnshaw's anti-German crusade, he wrote an article in *Sight and Sound* in 1937 on the cautionary film 'Fire Over England' together with his colleague at University College, London, John Neale.
92. Hearnshaw, *Democracy and the British Empire*, 151.
93. Hearnshaw 'King Edward VII' (first lecture in 'The Man of the Hour' series at Ashridge in 1933), in Hearnshaw (ed.), *Edwardian England, 1901–1910. A Series of Lectures delivered at King's College, University of London, during the session 1932–33*, (1933) (New York, 1968), 6.
94. Hearnshaw, *Prelude to 1937*, 174–5.

3

The Attraction of Tory Democracy: Keith Feiling

Beginning just before the Great War in 1913 and continuing actively through the 1950s, Keith Feiling attempted to salvage Tory traditions by adapting them to the consistently changing world of the twentieth century. Fifteen years younger than Hearnshaw, Feiling emerged as the first of a new generation of conservative polemicists with his *Toryism. A Political Dialogue* (1913). For the next forty-seven years, he continued writing as a paternalistic Tory democrat.¹ Conservative intellectuals and politicians in both Britain and America cited, repeated, and praised his formulation of conservative ideas until the mid-twentieth century. Beyond conservative ideologues and political figures, the greater public read his columns for *The Observer*, *The Times*, and the *Sunday Times*, listened to his lectures throughout the country and on the BBC, and were taught Tory virtues exemplified by great men. Through the late 1960s, Feiling's national histories provided 20th-century British conservative thought with a moral, romantic, and philosophical basis. A quintessential Oxford political historian, his teaching and writing celebrated the character and conduct of political leaders and the greatness of the British nation, while simultaneously explaining the origins, contents, and rectitude of conservatism. Within Oxford, he exerted a personal and extraordinary influence upon two generations of Conservative statesmen and public figures who were undergraduates at Christ Church. Feiling's students became the leading Conservative politicians of their day and he maintained close contact with them.

Feiling's role as a successful purveyor of Toryism was acknowledged both among leading Conservatives and Labourites. In July 1941, his well-known view that a better life could be offered to ordinary British people led R. A. Butler, then the innovative President of the Board of Education and chair of the Conservative Party's Post-war Problems Central Committee, to invite Feiling to join the Committee.² As late as 1953, even influential political figures on the Left still considered Feiling the major spokesman on conservative ideology. Leonard Woolf and William Robson, then co-editors of the *Political Quarterly*, asked Feiling to lead off a special number devoted to 'conservatism', because Feiling was conservatism's 'historian and philosopher'.³ Five years later, he was knighted for his services to conservatism. Within his university and in the

greater world, Feiling provided twentieth-century British conservatives with an expanded Disraelian Tory democracy—an ideological construct that resonated even beyond the Thatcher era.

Feiling's family ties and his privileged education prepared him for the complementary roles of conservative historian and pundit. By birth, schooling, and inclination he belonged to the comfortable, intellectual, middle-class elite where intellect mattered as much, and possibly more, than money. His father was a stockbroker and his mother was the sister of the novelist Anthony Hope (Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins), who was the pseudonymous author of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and a cousin, Kenneth Grahame, wrote *The Wind in the Willows*. Feiling went from Marlborough School to Balliol, the most successful of the Oxford Colleges in winning first classes in modern history, and there received his brilliant first class in 1906. Feiling attended a College that imbued its students with a sense of public obligation and provided them with an entry into the top tiers of public service and administration, where they could put their training into consequential practice. Feiling took from Balliol an elitist commitment to social reform and political activism, and a commitment to teaching the values that he believed history demonstrated. A. L. Smith, the history teacher and then Master of Balliol, whose teaching and personality dominated the College, was an engaged, engaging, and proselytizing liberal. Feiling championed a version of conservatism that he believed had absorbed liberalism. His perception of that synthesis allowed him to reconcile many of Smith's social welfare principles with his own version of Tory paternalism. When Feiling became established at Christ Church, Oxford, he was remarkably successful in adopting the Balliol tradition of preparing graduates for statesmanship.

Feiling rarely left the Oxford orbit and then only when he had to leave. After a prize fellowship at All Soul's College, he taught at the University of Toronto for two years. Except for the severity of the climate, he might as well have been in Oxford since the History Faculty there were almost all Oxford graduates. That was followed in 1909 by his return to Oxford as a lecturer and tutor in Modern History at Christ Church, where he spent the rest of his professional life. In 1911, he was elected a Student at Christ Church and held that position for the next thirty-five years to make Christ Church the most conspicuously conservative College in Oxford, as Butterfield was to do with Peterhouse in Cambridge.⁴ After 1912, Feiling was chairman of the University Appointments Committee set up in Oxford in 1898 largely to find jobs for schoolteachers. But under Feiling's chairmanship, an increasing number were seeking and finding civil and colonial service appointments. Additionally, after 1911, those selected for the Egyptian or Sudanese Civil Service remained at Oxford for a short course directed by the Appointments Committee.⁵ At the beginning of the First World War, Feiling was commissioned to the Black Watch. In 1916, he was posted to India and from 1917 to 1919 served as Secretary to the Central Recruiting Board of India. Leaving the military with the rank of Captain, he returned to Christ Church after

collecting an OBE in 1918 for his services. In 1924, he founded the Oxford University Conservative Club. From 1947 until his retirement in 1950, he was Chichele Professor of Modern History, and in 1952 was elected to an honorary Studentship at Christ Church.

The year 1913, in which Feiling published his *Toryism. A Political Dialogue*, came in the midst of difficult times for the Unionist Party. The Unionists had lost three elections in the preceding ten years and faced the threat of civil war in Ireland, the militancy of the Suffragists, mounting labour unrest, the divisive issue of Tariff Reform, and the threatening European conflict. There was no 'Conservative' or 'Tory' Party, and as late as 1922 the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had no entry for either term. Throughout his career, Feiling never mentioned 'Unionism' and consistently rejected 'Conservatism' for 'Toryism'. He wrote his dialogue to air the major views held by different sections of the Party and to propose, instead, a unifying vision. In a classical form, familiar to those educated in public schools and the university, Feiling asserted the principles which he wanted his Party to adopt and to which he remained steadfastly consistent: a religious basis for the state; principled politics that shunned expediency; absolute morality and absolute values; a recognition of the limits of both reason and human nature; the rejection of abstract and a priori thought; the propriety of a hierarchical society based on authority and order in which rights and duties were correlated; and, centrally for him, improvement in the condition of the people by combining capitalism with conservatism. Until the Thatcher era, his strain of Tory historiography identified itself with the myth of Disraelian, paternalistic Tory democracy.

Feiling, in common with the other conservative historians, wanted a responsible, educated elite to provide opportunities for the formation of character, which would then become the engine for whatever progress was available at a particular historical time. Throughout his career as a historian he wrote about men who had qualities either to emulate or to avoid. In the book that made his reputation as a historian, *A History of the Tory Party, 1640–1714* (1924), Feiling singled out the 'high-souled idealists' among the Cavaliers as the forerunners of the enduring Tory Party.⁶ Throughout history, he discovered great, but often flawed, men such as the Earl of Clarendon, the founder of the first Tory Party. In Feiling's judgement of human nature, everyone, including the most able, had weaknesses. Clarendon deserved to be remembered because in the early 1660s he 'incarnated some perpetual elements in English conservatism', including 'those private virtues which were to be of such public importance'.⁷ Clarendon fell because after '1644 his every utterance shows incapacity to realize that times have changed. Clarendon's major accomplishment was to have transmitted an ideal of government in Church and State from the pragmatic Hooker and the Cecils to future generations'.⁸ Clarendon's failure in character and political policy was a cautionary warning to Feiling's contemporaries of what they might lose because of their reluctance to accommodate to new conditions. The Tory Party that

ended in 1714 was worth a book-length treatment because it developed the lasting ideas of English politics: 'the divinity of the state, the natural sanctity of order, the organic unity of sovereign and people, and the indisputable authority attaching to the work of time'.⁹

Feiling's history of the origins of Toryism repudiated a conservatism identified with the defence of the existing order that he associated with Clarendon, Blackstone, Eldon, Burke, and Peel. Instead, he praised the Toryism of Harley and Bolingbroke, Pitt and Canning, Coleridge, Young England and Disraeli, leaders characterized as forward-looking Tories. Their ability to consider what might lie ahead allowed them, he maintained, to transform a Party threatened by the intellectual and political revolutions of the preceding hundred years. What he admired about these 'pioneers' is that they chose radical responses from inside the conservative frame and thought less of the present than of the future. Instead of viewing their Party as representing dominant classes, they attempted to further the interests of people as a whole. A viable conservatism was less interested 'in maintaining fixed institutions' and more interested 'in acting in tune with the conservative spirit'.¹⁰

A *History of the Tory Party* was published as the first Labour ministry was formed, a time even more difficult and dangerous for the Conservative Party. The journalist Harold Begbie, fearful in 1924 that an ignorant democracy would return a majority Labour government to power, wrote his *The Conservative Mind* to demonstrate that 'Conservatism is the very breath of English history'. In contrast to this uniquely English phenomenon, he found socialism to be alien, 'a mushroom forced by Russian atheism on the dunghill of German economics'. To prevent socialism from being smuggled into England, he tried to define the 'authentic principles' of both conservatism and socialism. In conservatism, Begbie found a 'solid foundation of political principle, a strong unity of purpose' which continued Disraeli's commitment to maintaining institutions, preserving the Empire and improving the condition of the people. Begbie described himself as interested in politics 'only so far as they touch English character'. Since he perceived socialism as the subversion of what was characteristically best about England, he felt compelled to reveal its true nature. Behind the apparently 'respectable' Labour Party, Begbie discerned 'the inflaming of sectional passion and the fomenting of class hatred'. While appearing to be moderate, Labour was 'counting on a majority at the next election which will enable them to begin gradually the constructive work of establishing a slave state'.¹¹ Begbie's revulsion against the possibility of a Labour government was shared in varying degrees by all three inter-war conservative historians. Going beyond the journalist Begbie, Feiling and the other conservative historians could invoke history to confirm their brief.

Although the first attempt by Labour to govern failed abysmally, they got a second chance in 1929 to form a minority government. To both encourage and empower conservatives, Feiling collected and published a series of

nineteenth-century biographical 'sketches', largely from *The Times* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. This book, together with the more pedagogic and polemical *What is Conservatism?*, both published in 1930, were the most important of Feiling's attempts to intervene in the contents and direction of inter-war British conservatism. *Sketches in Nineteenth Century Biography* were meant to teach Conservative leaders and ordinary conservatives about those qualities that had prepared leading nineteenth-century statesmen to be 'good' Tories able to lead the country according to its best practical and moral traditions. Through a study of the nineteenth-century leaders' thinking and acts, Feiling explained the lessons that the Conservatives had to learn in order to thwart Labour. The implicit subtext underlying the *Sketches* was that, unless valuable Tory values were protected and strengthened, they would be challenged and repudiated by the socialism that Labour could introduce nationally when they had real legislative power.

What is Conservatism? was Feiling's attempt to continue the precedent of nineteenth-century reformers who had expanded Toryism to accommodate critical changes in their nation's development. Responding to his fear that the second Labour ministry was incapable of coping with the detritus of the continuing social and economic depression, Feiling defined a practical and conciliatory conservatism intended as both a defensive and aggressive political, economic, and moral weapon. Labour wanted to remedy the corrosive effects of capitalism on the working classes by a more equitable distribution of wealth and of educational and cultural opportunities. Feiling replied by urging conservatives to welcome industrialism and its financial and commercial infrastructure as the best means of maintaining a hierarchical, but principled, society. Conservative receptiveness to the newer forms of wealth and its uses was not a blank check. Feiling expected social and economic institutions and practices, old and new, to be fair to those who had no option but to depend upon them. All the conservative historians stressed the pressing need for social reform. They saw a more just society not only as a social good benefiting all classes but also as a principal means of containing the potential for evil. Each of them interpreted that imperative differently. Feiling wanted to give scholarships to local schools and trades unions to provide that measure of educational opportunity that allowed the lower classes to reach the potential that their background allowed them. Social opportunity within the lower classes was not intended to lead to either social mobility or social, economic, and political equality. In common with Bryant and Hearnshaw, Feiling was hardly suggesting any kind of economic parity or the elimination of privileged interests. People were not created equal, nor could they be made so. When he sought national guarantees such as the assurance of 'a minimum, an even chance' and urged that social nets be made 'so wide that all classes, all interests, all districts come into it', he was arguing that the higher orders were obliged by their position and standing to provide a decent life for the lower.

Paternalistic reciprocity was essential to conservative ideas of justice, which most conservatives, including Feiling, opposed to ideas of 'equality'. Prosperity was a necessary condition for Feiling's social benefits, and he warned industrial and business interests that capitalism could not survive, 'unless it can make every worker, in some degree, a capitalist', still another formulation of the 'property-owning democracy' that Conservatism embraced so conspicuously after the Second World War. But the ownership of property certainly did not imply any kind of levelling. The hierarchical structure of society, which he endorsed, rested on class. Feiling's case for an unequal, ranked society assumed, as did Hearnshaw's and Bryant's, differences in 'intellect and character'. These prime movers in human progress were determined by inherited values and inherited endowment, biological and material. For all three conservative historians, the ascendancy of responsible people in the highest classes began with their superior qualities and their deliberate cultivation of elevated values. Feiling wanted conservatives to restrict anti-social or wholly unearned wealth, while actively helping ordinary people, who sought to improve themselves, to achieve a satisfactory life. He worried that the 'idle class of great wealth and no felt responsibilities' was 'offset by a parasitic half-employed class of unceasing poverty and no possible public obligations'. To remedy the predicament of those responsible working people who were not a dependent part of this emerging underclass, Feiling recommended that 'the National Service should be accompanied by the minimum wage'.¹² Unlike libertarian conservatives who opposed government intervention, Feiling believed that the state could, and should, 'redeem a man from foul housing which muddies his life, or it can arm a child with the education that any citizen should have'. While citizenship required the ability to participate in civic life, it did not mean that everyone was able to exercise the same influence. His last word was that any possibility for individual and national improvement depended upon moral fibre, in greater supply among the upper classes, who bore the burden for the most responsible conduct. To give his point historical weight, he returned to George Canning. More than a century earlier, Canning had made clear the importance of 'intelligence working old institutions' and 'showed to posterity how much social reform may be advanced within the bounds of an ancient fabric'.¹³ Except for his discussion of wages and greater access to what was essentially vocational education, Feiling's prescriptions were vague and rhetorical.

Whenever Feiling sought to explain his beliefs precisely, he retreated to the 'moral law' and relied upon biography in which particular exemplary lives set higher standards as lessons to be learned and practiced. He had considerable difficulty in explaining the meaning of Toryism, and argued that a philosophical defence could be found only in history. Much as he appreciated thinking, he conceded that Toryism could not have an intellectual base but depended rather on 'a concreteness in history, and a prerogative in time. . . . Toryism is thus dogmatic, and claims its dogma as *ex cathedra: infallible*, not as voicing one party or one age, but as the deposit of a long life, a tested revelation, a living

society'. But there were certain indispensable ideas such as liberty, which Feiling understood in a religious sense as the freedom to make moral judgements. Every few generations, history taught him, traditions were reinterpreted. His explanation of sharp divergences among Tories was that they were due essentially to the absence of an agreed-upon programme and the acceptance only of 'a temper or a spirit'. That spirit was clear in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when there were 'Tories' with very little relation to Party.¹⁴ To find a 'true' Toryism, which adapted radical changes to perpetuate the conservative frame, Feiling turned to the political biographies of the most effective Tory leaders.

In the *Sketches*, Feiling concentrated upon those figures that could be models for conservatives in 1930. Canning, Coleridge, and even Newman, who Feiling represented as progressive or transitional conservatives, taught important lessons for the present because they were able to prevail both over intellectual and political revolutions. Feiling associated the conservatism appropriate to Britain's early nineteenth-century years of difficult passage especially with Canning, who stood apart from reactionary figures such as Clarendon, Blackstone, Eldon, and Peel in his willingness to change with the times. Feiling advocated a Toryism that did not justify the status quo but, in the tradition of Burke, stood rather for 'the proved interest of the whole'. Feiling was drawn to Canning, because he saw an analogy between Canning's time and his own. The Toryism exemplified in Canning, which Feiling found especially pertinent to the decades following the Great War, deliberately adopted liberal principles by acting on the 'golden mean between freedom and order which empowers ancient institutions to maximize national energy and happiness'.¹⁵ Canning appealed to Feiling as a compound of Burke and Pitt, empirically resisting revolution, reaction, and abstract ideas to trust to a 'rational mind' rooted more deeply 'than in intellect alone' in national experience and 'the whole nature of man'.¹⁶

Hearnshaw and Bryant believed that the historical and pragmatic irresistibility of conservatism had triumphed over earlier and contemporary forms of political challenges, including liberalism. Although Feiling agreed with his colleagues that socialism was entirely antithetical to everything that Tories held dear, he saw liberal thinking as an historical contribution to the formation of Toryism as Butterfield was to do. Even in the seventeenth century, Feiling found that the ideas and interests represented by Tories had more in common with Whigs than the issues temporarily separating them. Feiling admired Bryant's *Samuel Pepys: The Years of Peril* (1934), but he chided Bryant for allowing his bias against the Whigs to result in a 'settled' but unconvincing 'conviction of Whig iniquity' in his treatment of the Popish plot.¹⁷ When he himself dealt with particularly admirable Whigs, such as the Holland family, he emphasized their passion for liberty, which conservatives shared. Their advocacy of freedom led them to measure and condemn the 'slave owner, the persecutor of conscience, the grinder of the poor, the corrupt power of the machine, the easy and ever-erring sword,

and the rule of a despot whether king or mob'.¹⁸ Feiling also respected Coleridge for seeking to weave liberal values into a conservative fabric by arguing against the 'anarchists of intellect' that some things must be fixed and unquestionable, and against reactionaries, that 'not only progress, but permanence also, was best safeguarded by allowing the development of a nation's mind'.¹⁹ In the inter-war years 'anarchists of intellect' meant for Feiling the socialists who had committed Labour to abstract and unrealizable principles in 1918, while the contemporary 'reactionaries' were those conservatives who resisted every change reflexively no matter what its merit.

Coleridge was a central figure in Feiling's pantheon of responsible and far-sighted Tory leaders. The homily taught by Coleridge and repeated throughout the nineteenth-century development of Tory thinking and practice was that the only way genuinely to lead and move large numbers of people was by appealing to first principles 'rooted in religion or morals'. A study of Coleridge and of other perceptive and effective Tories revealed that expediency was 'a useful empirical guide in the prudential sphere of politics'. Beyond empiricism, which Feiling agreed was necessary, he invoked an 'inner light, which formed man at his beginning and pointed his goal'. The 'core of Toryism' was a 'faith (so far as it is consciously held) based not on present prejudices so much as on the entire history of the realm'. History demonstrated that institutions ought to endure even when those in charge of them make mistakes about their direction.

Newman was also part of Feiling's commemoration of conservative forebears because the Cardinal understood that reform was not always a good. Newman accepted the Catholic Church's doctrine of infallibility in 1870 for sound practical, conservative reasons: he did not want to destroy an 'institution or body of teaching, on the whole beneficent, by tearing apart its connected strands'. Instead, he saw perceptively the 'general advance in spite of partial retreat—the steady flood tide, in spite of the tired waves breaking'. Moreover, as an authoritarian thinker, Newman was rightly sceptical of 'unaided reason, and of facile chatter about progress'. He knew that man's intrinsic nature did not change greatly with time, and found that forms of government had little effect upon that nature. Feiling endorsed Newman's conviction that there were 'tangible realities—God and nature, good and evil—on which rested the living, lasting, systems of law and theology which outlived and transcended individual Popes and parliaments'.²⁰ Recognizing the reality of evil, Feiling chose from 1913, and throughout his writing, to emphasize social and economic melioration that could promote some measure of individual and communal morality to check the overwhelming tendency away from the good.

When Feiling turned to a specialist subject based on archival study, *British Foreign Policy, 1660–1672* (1930), the heroes are again those with strong character who worked for a continuity in national life that preserved what was best in English institutions and traditions. The Empire was being created and maintained by those individuals who used Britain's dominion of the seas to

pursue trade, commerce, finance, and protestant freedoms. Simultaneously, 'the level of Brain and integrity in the public service rose steadily'.²¹ The 366 pages of this book are devoted to a detailed analysis of the vices and virtues of the principal actors in the setting of British foreign policy during the twelve-year period from the return of Charles II to the end of the Dutch War, in 1672.

Although he never succeeded in clearly defining either 'character' or the ways in which superior capacity for work and moral commitment were demonstrated, he insisted that these were the qualities that counted. Genuine conservatives, he was convinced, had more of these attributes than other people had. The national work he required of conservatives had to be done because they were best equipped to do it, and because they recognized the conditions and limitations imposed by a real, rather than an idealized, world. Remembering the weakness of human nature, they could accept some progressive movements, if, in so doing, they subordinated reason to faith. In order for political activity to be effective, it had to be determined by Feiling's trinitarian belief in the divine, in history, and in ethical obligations. 'Character' involved a steadfast allegiance to those three imperatives. In a review of Arthur Bryant's *King Charles II* (1931), which established Bryant as a historian, Feiling was disturbed by Bryant's approval of Charles II. Bryant, Feiling felt, had treated Charles too heroically even though the king had failed what ought to be a conservative's test for leadership. He had 'abilities without character, and good intentions without fixed purposes'. Charles acted badly when people were 'not unworthy to be led'. Typically, Feiling found greater fault with the quality of leaders than he did with ordinary people, because the leaders had the greater responsibility for the condition of England.²²

Although he often wrote and spoke for the Conservative Party, Feiling was willing to support Liberals who had the national interest at heart. In 1931, he endorsed the Liberal John Simon as a National candidate because of his services 'to the whole state'. Simon's view of a National government as the best antidote to socialism was probably a factor in drawing Feiling's support. Feiling endorsed Simon's belief that the '*Real* issue of the election is not tariffs: it is national policy v. Socialism'.²³ Twenty-five years later, Feiling resigned from the Conservative Party over Suez.²⁴ Feiling did not welcome controversy, but he never avoided it when he felt that confrontation was morally required. Controversial figures such as George Curzon had merit for him especially because of their energy and ability to get things done. For all the conservative historians, character, capacity for work, and moral engagement were the most vital and valuable of human qualities. Even when conservatives erred, as Feiling thought Curzon did in his judgements about India, they were usually excused because they were inspired by the right motives. Curzon was moved by a 'sense of the ordained fate and duty laid upon great peoples and ruling classes to inherit the earth'.²⁵

Another problematic Tory leader was Neville Chamberlain. In a marked departure from the reluctance of most Oxford historians to write contemporary history, Feiling, in common with both Hearnshaw and Bryant, felt that a

scrupulous historian could deal objectively with the near past and even with the present. In August 1941, he accepted a commission from Anne Chamberlain to write a biography of her husband. Feiling's acceptance of this commission and the biography that he wrote from 1941 to 1944 fulfilled his convictions about the contemporary obligations of historians. He attempted to be scrupulous and to acquit Chamberlain of the guilt that had been assigned to him. In spite of his intent to be objective, Feiling began work on the biography with great compassion for Chamberlain. As an unhappy young man, Chamberlain had failed to resurrect a family business in the Bahamas, where his father had sent him. 'I confess', Feiling wrote to Anne Chamberlain, 'that I sometimes burn inwardly when I read what Neville had to put up with, and with what occupy his mind, on that lonely island'.²⁶

Feiling was given all of Chamberlain's papers, and 'complete freedom' from any Chamberlain family scrutiny of the manuscript before publication. As he explained to J. L. Garvin, editor of *The Observer*, for whom Feiling wrote occasional pieces and regular columns, he felt 'impelled to try as a historian this grim and great piece of contemporary history . . .'.²⁷ In addition to collecting documents and working closely with the Chamberlain family, he interviewed 55 people, including: King George VI, Baldwin, and Churchill; the surviving members of the governments which Chamberlain led; the MP s close to him; and his friends. Feiling also consulted Lord Kemsley, owner of the *Sunday Times* among other newspapers; Garvin; and Geoffrey Dawson, editor-in-chief of *The Times*, all active supporters of Munich and Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, as Feiling had been.²⁸ The journalist Claud Cockburn had published a leaflet on 8 September, 1938 accusing *The Times* of collusion with the Nazis because of their lead article demanding the secession of the Sudetenland.²⁹ Three weeks later, Feiling, in complete approval of the secession, had written to congratulate Dawson on the 'superb lead given by the Times' in supporting efforts to achieve peace.³⁰ Even when Britain was already at war in 1940, Feiling hoped that a peace could be reached. 'I begin to think,' he wrote to Bryant, 'that the neutrals can force a joint basis of settlement'.³¹

A month before accepting Mrs Chamberlain's offer, on 31 July 1941, Feiling had written to Sir Horace Wilson, the civil servant who had been Chamberlain's right-hand man, that everyone had 'bias in history' and during the past ten years he had 'leaned' to 'reconciliation with Germany'. As 'at present informed the vacillations of our policy stick in my gizzard, so does disarmament, so probably will the form and date of our guarantee to Poland. Yet I cannot, as yet, see myself explaining such things by any individual responsibility, and much less any conclusions I might come to obscuring a great public figure, or dulling what to me seems a historic theme of great grandeur and tragedy'.³² After he completed the biography, Feiling told Anne Chamberlain: 'This book must, at all costs, not be mealy-mouthed or leave Neville's (or my) strong views weakly expressed, but neither must it wound unnecessarily. Yet I remember always that millions have

died, and that if I think men were wrong or errors made, I should not conceal my view.³³ Part of his explanation and defence of Chamberlain's 'policy and position' was to provide the 'whole set of overwhelming difficulties he had to face', including 'the wooden obstinacy of the Czechs for many years'.³⁴ In July 1945, while still waiting for Foreign Office permission to include certain Chamberlain papers in the biography, Feiling wrote to Anne Chamberlain 'the condition of Europe seems a pretty good vindication of those who tried to avert the outbreak of total war'.³⁵ In the spring of 1946, when he was reading proofs of the book, Feiling repeated the three principles that had guided him: his independence as a historian; the provisional nature of the book, since 'the whole truth cannot be told, or known'; and, while attempting to avoid damage to living men, he had tried 'to err on the side of giving candidly Neville's expressed opinions'.³⁶ The book was passed by the Foreign Office in 1944 and published in 1946 only after the Labour government, which welcomed any potential embarrassment for the Conservatives, allowed publication.³⁷

Among Feiling's correspondents who knew Neville Chamberlain well, the Shakespearean scholar J. Dover Wilson told Feiling in 1942 that Chamberlain refused to become president of the Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft, a position held by Edward VII in 1914, because Chamberlain had learned that all Jewish members had been compelled to leave the society.³⁸ There is no reference in Feiling's eventual biography to Chamberlain's protest against anti-Semitism and it is remarkable that none of Feiling's published work, or any of his available extant correspondence, ever mentions Jews or the Holocaust. In the Chamberlain biography and subsequently in his *History of England. From the Coming of the English to 1938* (1948), Feiling's main concern was to explain that the Conservative leader tried to avoid heavier national and Commonwealth burdens by buying time for Britain and its allies to arm while trying to persuade the Italian and German peoples to abandon war.³⁹ While Chamberlain's judgements, like those of Curzon, may have been too inelastic, Feiling concluded that he tried to do what was right for the nation.⁴⁰ Feiling may not have represented a consensus about Chamberlain after the war, but in 1938 the great majority of the country did welcome their prime minister's attempts to avoid war.

After the Second World War, the inherent defects of human nature and the barriers to progress that Feiling had consistently displayed in his historical and political writings appeared far more accurate than the idealism characterizing the more hopeful inter-war decades. In his inaugural lecture as Chichele Professor of Modern History in 1947, Feiling set the historian's task squarely within the boundaries of his own Tory sensibilities. His audience heard that virtue was rarely rewarded but 'vice and weakness' were eventually punished; that politics were inseparable from religion; that the inheritance of traditions was not necessarily understood by the heirs; that the political process was not always rational; and finally, an unusual caution from a working historian, that intellect was governed

by moral habit.⁴¹ The approval of suppressing reason in favour of morality was evident in Feiling's biography of Chamberlain.

In Feiling's last attempt to define conservatism in 1953, he repeated and expanded the themes that had guided him since 1913. Beginning with the assertion that the Conservative Party was an 'amalgamation' that had 'taken in the Burke and Portland Whigs, Irish Whig landowners and Liberal peers, the radicalism of Birmingham, and . . . thought returned from dominions overseas', he emphasized his earlier argument that the conservative cause 'represented many coalitions' that were, in common, sceptical of 'any purely intellectual process as the means to explain rights and duties, or to justify political obligation'. Human nature, complex and unpredictable, was beyond legislation because of 'atavistic and subconscious powers, the enormous preponderance of custom, the animal that glares from the civilized cage'. When Feiling and other conservatives expressed their distrust, and often fear, of human nature, it is not clear whether they recognized their own images through a mirror darkly or were separating themselves from alien and disturbing groups that they wanted kept away from them.

One of the ways in which a distance was created between those who were potentially trustworthy and those who were not was by what Feiling called 'inheritance'. He admitted that it was unclear how the 'best' people were to be discovered, but assumed that some indispensable criteria such as 'character, ability, moral standard—are inheritable'. As Feiling understood it, every individual inherited a fundamental biological and ethical system that he described as 'all hopes, all passions, all delights, all morals and all powers'. That legacy, Feiling believed, also included property, which provided a 'prudential test' of the character and qualities necessary for leadership. Feiling agreed with Bagehot that if property 'has been inherited, it guarantees education; if acquired, it guarantees ability'. Feiling wanted the rule of the best and since people were unequal in their aptitudes and characters, 'a classless society' was a 'contradiction in terms'. Although he recognized 'the spiritual and potential equality of all beings' and urged a legal provision for the equality of opportunity, he was unwilling to level 'down the quality by which societies are raised and preserved'. The Christian message of the 'Fall' dictated pessimism about unaided human efforts. Even so, Feiling concluded on his usual note of cautious optimism that 'the high road' had to be 'kept in constant repair' but he preferred to see that it 'leads uphill; yes, to the very end'.⁴² History taught that it was difficult, but possible, to achieve high-minded goals.

In 1960 Feiling's 'brief unlearned essays' about several centuries of Christ Church undergraduates, said that a voice might almost be heard in the Hall saying 'they shall perish but I shall endure, the finest flowers shall be cut down and withered, but while Church and State last, let me serve them forever'.⁴³ He might have been writing his own epitaph. When Hugh Trevor-Roper, later Lord Dacre and Master of Peterhouse, wrote Feiling's obituary in 1977, he paid

tribute to his teacher's role at Christ Church by pointing out that the History School there received more first-class degrees during the inter-war years than any other Oxford College. He described Feiling further as the 'historian of the Tory party' who came into College and 'went out again into the company of politicians, great men, men of letters; a historian who wrote books and knew the world'.⁴⁴ It is telling that the *Essays in British History* presented to him in 1964 were all written by Oxford men.

Today's more global, mobile, amorphous, and heterogeneous intellectual world makes us forget the potency of the small and select circles in which Feiling moved with such conspicuous success. Teachers like Feiling and a College like Christ Church exerted enormous personal influence, especially upon those who left the universities and almost immediately entered professions in commanding positions. Few of Feiling's students became academics, but those who did carried many of his conservative concepts with them. A. L. Rowse, the Elizabethan scholar and a student of Feiling, became a historian. Rowse, who was a radical on many issues, disliked Feiling, but he always retained his teacher's emphasis on British national exceptionalism, a concept central for Feiling and the other conservative historians.⁴⁵ David Cecil, part of the politically influential Salisbury family, a distinguished biographer and Goldsmith Professor of English Literature at Oxford, said of Feiling: 'I owe more to him than to any other teacher . . . His mind and spirit were such as to enable him to interest and inspire pupils of very different kinds, including many who would never become successful professional historians.'⁴⁶ It is hardly surprising that Robert Blake, the mid-twentieth-century historian of the Conservative Party, the biographer of such Conservative leaders as Disraeli, Andrew Bonar Law, and Churchill, as well as a Conservative city councillor, became a Fellow at Christ Church. When Blake contributed an essay to Feiling's *Festschrift*, his choice of 'The Rise of Disraeli' was entirely in keeping with the Tory democratic beliefs identified with Disraeli and applauded by Feiling.⁴⁷ Blake, too, was more a historian than a politician, but almost all of Feiling's students were in careers where they enjoyed positions that allowed them to pursue the goals that were in such prominent display in Christ Church. Almost all of them moved with effect among the great and the good. In the election of 1950, which brought the Conservatives back to power, 29 Christ Church men were returned.⁴⁸

Among the most politically important of Feiling's students, Alec Douglas Home (then Alec Lord Douglas) came up to Christ Church in October 1922. Home, who became Conservative prime minister on 18 October 1963, was the thirteenth prime minister to come from Feiling's college. Friends do not remember him attending any lectures, but 'tutorials with Keith Feiling . . . and J. C. Masterman were experiences' he long remembered, and Feiling and Home became life-long friends. Home felt that living and working in 'the House' (as Christ Church was called), he had assimilated 'traditions of history and the great

men of the past'.⁴⁹ 'It was impossible', Home later recalled in his autobiography, 'to live one's undergraduate life in Christ Church . . . without soaking up the tradition of England'.⁵⁰ If we look only at Douglas Home's contemporaries, they included an eminent writer and aesthete; a high commissioner in Kenya, who was later Chairman of the Colonial Development Corporation; a minister under Ernest Bevin, and head of the printing industry; a minister of the interior in the Federal Government of Australia; the pioneer of the dictionary of basic English; the colonial secretary who granted independence to many African territories and transferred the Empire into the Commonwealth; a brigadier; and, an ambassador to Washington.⁵¹ Noel Skelton, who coined the phrase 'property-owning democracy' in a *Spectator* article in 1923 and advocated an extensive house-building programme by the government had also been at Christ Church and, in turn, greatly influenced Home and Eden. Skelton's *Constructive Conservatism* (1924) was read by Home while he was at Oxford.⁵² On 12 November 1963, when Home gave his first speech as prime minister in the House of Commons, he stressed domestic policy and especially plans for education, housing and development.⁵³

We know that Feiling influenced Alec Douglas-Home because Home tells us so. What should we make of the career of other Conservative undergraduates at Christ Church who appear to be influenced by Feiling but never explicitly acknowledged his effect upon them? We do know that the ideas championed by Feiling, as well as by Hearnshaw and Bryant, were widely held, written about, and discussed within the Conservative Party, so that any young undergraduate interested in Conservatism would have heard them. Baldwinite Conservatism had supported a rapport with liberalism as well as the Tory democracy that Feiling championed. Even so, undergraduates interested in conservatism at Oxford would have come into Feiling's orbit, especially if they were at Christ Church, where those ideas were emphasized both in common-room discussion and in their actual study of history. When the rhetoric and policy proposals of statesmen who were graduates of Christ Church as well as other contemporary writing about conservatism are scrutinized, much of it could have been written by that historian and polemicist who dominated conservative thought in Oxford from the end of the Great War through to the mid-1960s.⁵⁴

John Boyd-Carpenter, the Conservative MP for Kingston-upon-Thames, wrote an election manifesto, *The Conservative Case*, to persuade the electorate to vote Conservative in 1950. Boyd-Carpenter was a Balliol graduate in History who had been President of the Oxford Union in 1930, while Feiling was the most distinguished conservative among the Oxford history dons. Boyd-Carpenter's manifesto might have been mistaken for a polemical piece by Feiling, especially in its insistence that conservatism had absorbed most of the practical and empirical features of liberalism in contrast to the dogmatism of socialism. Conservatism was an attitude of mind, Boyd-Carpenter wrote, based 'on a proper understanding of history'. Respecting the accumulated wisdom of the past, conservatives believed

in the essential unity of the nation and they understood the purpose of government to be the individual and his welfare. Boyd-Carpenter insisted, as Feiling did, that the welfare of all individuals was necessary for the spiritual well-being of each individual soul.⁵⁵

Timothy Raison, who entered the higher offices of the Conservative Party, doesn't explain the undergraduate origins of his Toryism, but the career that he pursued might have been designed for him by Feiling. Raison was a member of the Bow Group founded in February 1951 by ex-members of University Conservative Associations to bring young Conservatives together in an independent Research Society that would pursue political problems and publish their results. Influential in Conservative policy, they attempted to represent all the political varieties of conservatism. They held regular meetings throughout England, Scotland, and Wales, and published *Crossbow, the Quarterly of Tory Ideas*, beginning in 1957. Raison was editor for two years from the spring of 1958 and then editor of *New Society*. In 1961, the Bow Group published a series of essays, 'Principles in Practice', for which Raison contributed 'Conservative Thought Today'. While earlier Bow publications dealt with factual analysis of particular problems and proposed solutions, these essays were novel in considering conservative principles in relations to specific areas of policy. While admitting the importance of Tory democracy and one nation within conservatism, Raison argued that they were insufficient because the major contemporary issue was individual freedom and government paternalism. If the state's 'part in moral welfare should be reluctant, its predominant role in the field of social welfare is inevitable and proper'. The state, he argued, carrying Tory democracy and one-nation thinking forward, should do those things that nobody else could, such as national insurance, the compulsory educational system, the road system, and national defence. As conservatives and Conservatives were debating what to do with the welfare state that had emerged after the Second World War, Raison, like Feiling, was urging the state to increase its interference in areas such as town planning so that decent housing would be available to working people.⁵⁶ In 1964, as the Conservatives were facing a general election, Raison was asked by Penguin to present 'one man's view of contemporary Toryism'. The resultant *Why Conservatism?* includes a chapter 'About Conservatism', in which Raison attributes the necessary argument for a historical conservatism to Feiling.⁵⁷

Prominent Conservative statesmen like Anthony Eden and Quintin Hogg, while undergraduates at Christ Church, read subjects other than History. Although neither of them explicitly say in their autobiographies or other writings that Feiling's ideas inspired them, they wrote in rhetoric very similar to Feiling's and pursued policies that were fostered by him, as is evident in the discussion below. Both statesmen reinforced Feiling's emphasis upon moral obligation and social responsibility in their prominent roles within the Conservative Party. Eden, Prime Minister, 1955–7, who read Oriental Languages, went from Eton to Christ Church and entered parliament in 1923. His tutor was J. C. Masterman, famous

for lack of interest in politics.⁵⁸ Eden, in common with Feiling then, was very active in Conservative Party affairs at Oxford. Although his anti-appeasement stand in parliament was opposed to Feiling's endorsement of appeasement before the Nazi invasion of Poland, Eden's principal domestic policies—a property-owning democracy; the expansion of educational opportunity; the provision of good, inexpensive housing; workers participation in industrial decisions; and an equitable industrial policy—were consistently emphasized by Feiling.⁵⁹

Quintin Hogg, later Viscount Hailsham, read Greats and also followed the traditional route to Christ Church via Eton. Hogg, who ended his career as Lord Chancellor, just as his father Douglas had done, came from a prominent Conservative political family, in which his brother Edward became an MP and his brother Neil went to the Foreign Office. In his two autobiographies, Hailsham does not tell us about the content of the political views held by his family. On the rare occasion when he does mention his father's beliefs, he makes a point of his disengagement from them.⁶⁰ Hogg was top scholar of Christ Church and a double first who took his Final Honours Exams in 1930. Eight years later, with a Bar qualification and a legal Fellowship at All Souls, he entered political life as the successful Conservative candidate for Oxford. He ran 'unreservedly, even passionately, on the side of Chamberlain and appeasement' to defeat A. D. Lindsay, the vice-chancellor, who ran as an Independent on an 'an avowedly anti-Munich programme'.⁶¹ After the war, in which Hogg enlisted, served with the Middle East Forces and was wounded, he wrote *The Left Was Never Right* (1945). Hogg was answering attacks, especially by 'Cato', the pseudonym for Frank Owen, Michael Foot, and Peter Howard, on the pre-war Conservative policy of appeasement. His central argument, which Feiling emphasized in his biography of Chamberlain and his *History of England*, was first that everyone in all parties thought of peace and the avoidance of war as their main goal until after Munich. Second, again in concert with Feiling, Hogg insisted that the maintenance of peace had been essential before Munich because the country was unprepared for war: if 'one side of the Munich policy was appeasement, the other was rearmament'. The statesmen of the inter-war years, he argued, 'closely' represented 'the British point of view'.⁶²

Beginning in 1947, when Labour was in power and the Conservatives had to present themselves as a viable alternative, Hogg was the Conservative Party spokesman who made the 'case for Conservatism' as Feiling had done in 1913, 1930, and would attempt again in 1953. Hogg continued in that role throughout the Conservative years in government from 1951 through to 1963. A generation before that important manifesto, when he was the undergraduate President of the Oxford Union Society, Hogg had begun his attack upon socialism and his identification of conservatism and freedom, a theme often reiterated by Feiling.⁶³ In his mature writing and speeches, many of the concepts and even language that he relied upon might have been taken almost verbatim from both Feiling and Hearnshaw. The aim of politics and of every other activity Hogg

proclaimed in the *Case for Conservatism* was a satisfying, moral life. I believe, he testified, 'in my country; . . . in the British Empire; . . . in liberty; I accept the secular authority of the state; profit and property and private enterprise are institutions I support; I desire to increase the material wealth and prosperity of my country'. These aspirations and beliefs were anchored in religion, which made the other aspects of conservative faith possible. That faith emphasized 'patriotism, constitutionalism, continuity, and tradition', which he expected would yield humanism, social reform, the 'kindliness of classes to each other', and only moderate controversy.⁶⁴

Economic freedom meant sharing economic power through a 'property-owning democracy', the concept adopted by Hearnshaw in 1933 and then stressed by Eden in his speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1946. To achieve a vested working-class interest in property, Hogg proposed, as did all three conservative historians, the mitigation of both great wealth and great poverty. Large independent fortunes held either by great corporations or by individuals were acceptable only when they provided 'an indispensable counterpoise to the vast complex of economic power controlled by the modern state'.⁶⁵ Progress and continuity were 'complementary political conceptions' whose origins Hogg admitted discovering in both Burke and Hearnshaw.⁶⁶ Rights of property owners, although legitimate, were to be restrained in the public interest. Hogg cited the Acquisition of Land Acts and the Housing Acts as evidence of the Conservative Party's commitment to public good and as examples of the right of government to acquire land for public purposes, while compensating owners sufficiently. And, finally, he emphasized education as the means for achieving equality of opportunity.⁶⁷ Everything else that Hogg said, wrote, and did as a spokesman for the Conservative Party, who almost became prime minister, repeats these principles.

On 10 October 1957 at the Party Conference in Brighton, Hogg, now Hailsham, had just become Chairman of the Conservative Political Centre. He used the occasion to reiterate arguments that Feiling and Hearnshaw had made familiar in conservative circles. While the ideology and religion of the Conservative Party were derived from eternal concepts, its political philosophy was empirical 'and at times even frankly experimental'. The Labour Party was bound to fall because they obstinately adhered to 'a fixed political philosophy', which justified a class policy while Conservatives attempted a 'national policy'. Hailsham told his audience that they must make life tolerable for the middle classes, while taking care not to depress working-class standards. Hailsham was a working politician, unlike either Hearnshaw or Feiling, who had to support particular policies, which would be accepted by other Conservative politicians in order to secure the ends that he advocated, and in 1957 he urged halting the inflationary spiral and defending the pound as an international currency.⁶⁸ Two years later, Hailsham was Chairman of a Conservative Party facing the electoral battle of 1959. As an election manifesto, he published a new edition

of *The Case for Conservatism*. Although he claimed that it was 'completely revised', there was no substantial change in the rhetoric or principles of the first seventeen chapters dealing with Conservative ideas, although he added chapters on: 'Social Provision', the 'Inter-war Myth', 'Socialism in Practice', 'Conservative Achievement', and 'The World Challenge'.⁶⁹ The election of 1959 gave the Conservatives a solid majority. It is difficult to assess the role played by Hailsham in winning that victory.

In 1963, a year before the Conservatives lost narrowly to Labour, Hailsham warned the Party Conference in Blackpool that they must counter Labour's charges that Conservatism encouraged a materialistic and acquisitive society. In his address on 'National Excellence', he pursued the theme of reconciliation that was so prominent in both Feiling and Hearnshaw. Conservatives, he warned, had to pursue a balance between 'the various diverse but not incompatible objectives, which a nation legitimately proposes for itself, between material and moral objectives, between physical construction and educational advance, between security and enterprise, between individual enjoyment and public advantage'. A theme of modernization was not sufficient. He repeated the conclusion to his Conservative Party Conference speech of 1957, which urged the Party to 'appeal to deeper instincts in the national conscience. For we are concerned fundamentally with the defence of spiritual values when they are in danger of being overwhelmed by the powers of darkness.' The Party's victory in 1959 he argued had been 'in this spirit and not in any spirit of materialism or self-seeking'.⁷⁰

Hailsham, Boyd-Carpenter, Raison, Eden, and the other Conservative statesmen who went through Feiling's Christ Church never represented a unified Conservative position, but their lucid and often quoted statement of conservative principles, especially by Hailsham, dominated conservative rhetoric and often actual political accomplishments. In America, where conservatism hardly flourished before the post-war period, the first historian to declare himself a conservative was Peter Viereck, who took advanced degrees in History and in Literature in 1939 at Christ Church. There, he developed a 'conservative' position far more in accord with Feiling's British reading than with any contemporary American thinking.⁷¹ Within Britain, Feiling provided a conservative discourse, rooted in a successful national history, that inspired and enabled conservatives in search of a coherent and humane conservatism applicable to new political, social, and economic circumstances, while still retaining traditions, institutions, and social arrangements that they valued. Oxford undergraduates who became politically active, including Conservative statesmen, left their university armed with a pragmatic Disraelian Toryism intended to create national unity through paternalistic guarantees of social justice rather than of social mobility. Those were the principles that Feiling initiated, echoed, reinforced, and promoted together with the other conservative inter-war historians.

The quality of Feiling's influence is well summed up in Max Beloff's reflections on the role of the intellectual in politics. Beloff, who was a scholarship student at Corpus Christi and received a First in the Modern History School in 1934, began his active political life supporting the kind of liberalism that Feiling believed was entirely compatible with conservatism. Although Beloff moved to conservatism in 1972, he continued, as did Feiling, to value the institutions and traditions that he believed had made England unique. In his Ramsay Muir Memorial Lecture on 19 July 1969, after considering the advantage and disadvantages of intellectuals in government, Beloff concluded that intellectuals seeking to serve the public good should do that 'outside political life itself or only on its margin' where they could create 'opinion on subjects of vital concern but not yet fully ripe for positive legislation'.⁷² At Oxford and in the greater world, Feiling fulfilled that role.

NOTES

1. Keith Feiling's *Toryism. A Political Dialogue* (London, 1913); and *What is Conservatism?* (Criterion Miscellany No. 14) (London, 1930), were his most influential polemical writings.
2. See Anthony Howard, *RAB. The Life of R. A. Butler*, (London, 1987), 142.
3. Leonard Woolf and William Robson, Introduction, the *Political Quarterly*, 24:2 (April–June, 1953). Feiling's essay, was 'Principles of Conservatism'. The preceding issue of the *Quarterly*, edited by Woolf and Robson, its Fabian founder, had been devoted to Labour and the issue following Conservatism in July–August, to 'The Liberal Party'. The *Quarterly* was founded by Robson in 1930 and Woolf joined him a year later as joint editor and continued until 1959, while Robson's term ended in 1975. Their perspective was 'centre left' and the *Quarterly* was described in 1960 as 'dedicated to political and social reform' and as a long acting 'conduit between policy-makers, commentators and academics', 'The Prospectus of 1960', advertising the *Political Quarterly*. Robson was another political figure who had been formed by the Great War when he served in the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force, 1915–19. He gained a B.Sc. (Econ.), First-class Honours from the London School of Economics in 1922; a Ph.D. in 1924; and an LL.M. in 1928. He was called to the Bar (Lincoln's Inn) in 1922. From 1926 to 1933 he was a Lecturer in Industrial and Administrative Law at the LSE; a Reader in Administrative Law from 1933 to 1947; and the first Professor of Public Administration at London University from 1947 to 1962. He also played a major part in the creation of the Greater London Council in 1963. During the Second World War, he had worked in the Mines Department and other government ministries. From 1950 to 1953 he was President of the International Political Science Association. His publications include: *Aircraft in War and Peace* (1916); *The Town Councillor* (in collaboration with Clement Attlee, 1925); *Justice and Administrative Law* (1928); *Civilization and the Growth of Law* (1935); *The Government and Misgovernment of London* (1939); *Great Cities of the World* (1954); *Local Government in Crisis* (1966); *Nationalized Industry and Public Ownership* (1960); and *Welfare State and Welfare Society* (1976). The members of the editorial

board were Noel Annan, H. J. Beales, G. D.H. Cole, R. H. S. Crossman, Kingsley Martin, Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, and Barbara Wooton. The other essays on conservatism, following Feiling's leader were: Angus Maude, MP, 'The Conservative Party and the Changing Class Structure'; Robert Boothby, 'The Economic Policy of the C.P.'; J. Enoch Powell, 'Conservatives and Social Services'; Julian Amery, 'A Conservative View of the Commonwealth'; Henry Brooke, 'Conservatives and Local Government'; Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, 'How Conservative Policy is Formed', and Captain Colin Coote (managing edition of the *Daily Telegraph* since 1950), 'Conservatism and Liberalism'. Bulmer-Thomas's essay discusses the Conservative Committee on Party Organization presided over by Sir David Maxwell Fyfe in 1948 and 1949, which concluded that 'Party principles are stable; the Disraelian principles are as valid to-day as when they were first propounded', 190.

4. J. C. Masterman, the other History tutor at Christ Church during most of Feiling's tenure, took a First-class Honours degree before becoming a Student of Christ Church. He was drafted during the Second World War to become the chairman of the Twenty Committee, which developed the Double Cross System to turn German spies into double agents working for the British. See n. 58.
5. F. B. Hunt and C. E. Escrib, *Historical Notes on the Oxford University Appointments Committee (1892–1950)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 5–6.
6. Feiling, *A History of the Tory Party, 1640–1714* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924), 61.
7. *Ibid.*, 68
8. *Ibid.*, 123–4.
9. *Ibid.*, 493.
10. Feiling, *Sketches in Nineteenth-century Biography* (London, 1930), 88–9.
11. A Gentleman with a Duster [Harold Begbie], *The Conservative Mind* (London, 1924), 9, 10, 11, 152, 153. Begbie was born in 1871 and died in 1929.
12. Feiling, *Toryism. A Political Dialogue* (London, 1913), 149; *What is Conservatism?* (London, 1930), 23, 19; *Sketches*, 51; *Toryism*, 125, 126.
13. Feiling, *Sketches*, 51. See, too, *A History of England. From the Coming of the English to 1918* (London, 1950), 813–14. *A History of England. From the Coming of the English to 1938* was published initially by McGraw Hill in New York in 1948. The 1950 London edition appeared with the concluding date of '1918' in the title, but it contains a 43-page 'Aftermath', which covers the period to 1938. This is the edition that I am citing.
14. Feiling, *Sketches*, 176–7, *The Second Tory Party 1714–1832* (London, 1938), 2, 9.
15. Feiling, *Sketches*, 48.
16. *Ibid.*, 41, 51.
17. *The Observer*, 27 October 1935, 4. Although he admired the book, Feiling felt that Bryant had allowed his bias against the Whigs to influence him unduly.
18. Feiling, 'Review of the Earl of Chichester's *The Home of the Hollands, 1805–1920*', *The Observer*, 9 May 1937.

19. Feiling, *Sketches*, 48, 62, 104–5. See, too, *The Second Tory Party*, 318–24.
20. Feiling, *Sketches*, 97–8, 62, 116.
21. Feiling, *British Foreign Policy, 1660–1672* (London, 1930), 16–17, 21.
22. *The Observer*, 18 October 1931, 9.
23. Feiling, Letter to Sir John Simon, 1931, MS Simon 68, fols. 142, 160, New Bodleian Library, Oxford.
24. At the same time and over the same issue, A. L. Rowse resigned his life-long membership of the Labour Party, Richard Ollard, *A Man of Contradictions. A Life of A. L. Rowse* (London, 1999), 298, n. 1.
25. *Sketches*, 162.
26. 16 August 1941?, in Neville Chamberlain MSS, Special Collections, University of Birmingham Library, NC/11/15/11 (hereafter cited as NC). I am very grateful to Martin Killeen, the Reference Librarian of Special Collections, for sending me copies of this correspondence.
27. Feiling to Garvin, Garvin MSS. Recip, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, 25 August 1941. *The Observer* was then owned by Waldorf, Second Viscount Astor.
28. The list of those consulted is in NC/11/5/1.
29. Claud Cockburn was a correspondent of *The Times*, 1929–32, editor of *The Week* 1933–46, and Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Worker*, 1935–46, Letters to Geoffrey Dawson, New Bodleian Library, MS Dawson 80, fol. 38. I am also grateful to Steven Tomlinson for locating these letters for me.
30. Feiling to Geoffrey Dawson, 30 September 1938, MS Dawson 80, fol. 45.
31. Feiling to Bryant, from Christ Church, Oxford, 1940 (21st of illegible month), Bryant Papers, Correspondence with Historians, E 1, A–G, ‘I begin to think that the neutrals can force a joint basis of settlement.’
32. To Sir Horace Wilson, 31 July 1941, NC/11/15/129.
33. Feiling to Anne Chamberlain, 5 May 1944?, NC/11/15/10.
34. Marked ‘Confidential’ and no salutation, but presumably to Anne Chamberlain, 22 March 1945, NC/11/15/4.
35. To Anne Chamberlain, 20 July 1945, NC/11/15/5.
36. To Anne Chamberlain, 14 April 1946, NC/11/15/7.
37. See David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London, 2004), esp. 32–4, suggests that Bridges, as Cabinet Secretary, was the key figure in this decision.
38. J. Dover Wilson to Fielding, 6 June 1942, NC/15/139.
39. Feiling, *A History of England*, 1120.
40. Feiling, *Life of Neville Chamberlain* [1946] (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970), 398–402.

41. Feiling, *The Study of the Modern History of Great Britain, 1862–1946* (Inaugural Lecture as Chichele Professor of Modern History) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 16, 19.
42. Feiling, 'Principles of Conservatism', 130, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136.
43. Feiling, 'Preface', *In Christ Church Hall* (London, 1960).
44. Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Keith Feiling,' 22 October 1977, *Supplement to Christ Church Magazine*, 32, 30. William Palmer reports that Trevor-Roper told him in 1996 that of his two tutors in history, Feiling was the 'serious historian' who was 'much more rigorous' than was Masterman. *Engagement with the Past. The lives and Works of the World War II Generation of Historians* (Lexington, Ky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 56, n. 7. Palmer adds that Trevor-Roper 'felt a bit failed by Oxford' and that 'his history tutors were uninspiring', 58. Trevor-Roper's complaint to Palmer appears at odds with his obituary of Feiling, his editing of the festschrift for Feiling, and with his affectionate guidebook to the College, *Official Guidebook to Christ Church Oxford* (published by authority of the Governing Body of Christ Church, 1950).
45. A. L. Rowse, *Historians I have Known* (London, 1995).
46. David Cecil, Foreword to Hugh Trevor-Roper (ed.), *Essays in British History Presented to Sir Keith Feiling*, (London, Macmillan, 1964), p. v.
47. Robert Blake, 'The Rise of Disraeli', in *Essays in British History*. Blake, who became Baron of Braydeston, undertook a rehabilitation of Conservative leaders and their party in *Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858–1923* (London, 1955) (published the same year in the U.S. as *Unrepentant Tory: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858–1923* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1955); *Disraeli* (London, 1966); *The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill*, based on the Ford Lectures, 1968 (London, 1970), updated in 1997 to conclude with Thatcher; and *Winston Churchill* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997).
48. D. R. Thorpe, *Alec Douglas-Home* (London, 1996), 136.
49. Quoted *ibid.*, 30, 33.
50. Baron Home, *The Way the Wind Blows. An Autobiography* (London, 1976), 39.
51. These men were: Harold Acton, Evelyn Baring (later Lord Howick), Malcolm McCorquodale (later Lord McCorquodale), Wilfred Kent-Hughes, Jim Pitman, Alan Lennox-Boyd, Peter Acland, and Roger Makins (later first Baron Sheffield). In the foreword to *Essays in British History*, David Cecil, who became Goldsmith Professor of English Literature at Oxford, said of Feiling 'I owe more to him than to any other teacher . . . His mind and spirit were such as to enable him to interest and inspire pupils of very different kinds, including many who would never become successful professional historians,' v.
52. D. R. Thorpe, *Home*, 40–1. See, too, Noel Skelton, 'The Conservative Task: A Property Owning Democracy', *Yorkshire Post*, 23 January 1930. Skelton also admired John Wheatley's Housing Act of 1924, passed by the minority Labour Government

and, in the election of 1929, commended the achievements of Neville Chamberlain as Minister of Health and Housing.

53. Thorpe, *Home*, 334.
54. See, e.g., *A Declaration of Tory Principles. Essays by Undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1929), and esp. the essay by Ralph Parker, of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on 'Reason and Instinct in the Conservative Philosophy', which asserted that Conservatism 'studies history because it is interested in what man does, it expels ideologues because they tell only what man should do'. The study of history, and especially of institutions revealed that what has lasted of man's works is an 'extension of his ethical nature', 8, 9. Harold Macmillan's *Reconstruction* appeared in 1933, and his very influential *The Middle Way. A Study of the Problem of Economic and Social Progress in a Free and Democratic Society* in 1938. See, further, Lord Eustace Percy, MP, 'The Conservative Attitude and Conservative Social Policy', *Conservatism and the Future* (London, 1935) (by 6 Members of Commons and Lords, together with the editor, E. Thomas Cook, who conceived the idea for the book). Percy preferred to think of himself 'as a Tory', 1. Percy had been Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education; Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, President of the Board of Education, and a Minister without Portfolio. In 1953, he was created the first Baron Percy of Newcastle. After the war, see Nigel Birch, *The Conservative Party* (London, 1949) and the Party's election manifesto, Conservative and Unionist Central Office (Great Britain), *This is the Road, the Conservative and Unionist Party's policy, General election 1950* (London, 1950), as well as Robert Blake's biographies, and esp. *The Unknown Prime Minister*.
55. John Boyd-Carpenter, *The Conservative Case*, with Foreword by Anthony Eden (London, 1950), 5, 7, 9, 13.
56. The Bow Group took their name from their first meeting place, the Bow and Bromley Conservative Club. Timothy Raison, 'Principles in Practice. Conservative Thought Today', in Leonard Beaton, Alec Campbell, David Fairbairn, Geoffrey Howe, Godfrey Hodgson, David Howell, James Lemkin, Russell Lewis, and Timothy Raison *Principles in Practice. A Series of Bow Group Essays for the 1960s* (CPC for Bow Group: London, 1961), 11, 13, 16, 17. Raison was 31 when this book was published. He was a journalist at the *New Scientist*, a member of United Kingdom Committee for World Refugee Year, and was awarded the Nansen Medal for working with refugees. In 1959 he had written a pamphlet on *The Missile Years: Thoughts on the Evolution of British Defence Policy* for the CPC and wrote extensively on Conservative issues, serving as a Minister of State, 1970–83. See, too, James Barr, *The Bow Group. A History* (London, 2001).
57. Timothy Raison, *Why Conservatism?* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), Preface, 36–7. To show 'the true nature' of conservatism, Raison turned as well to Peter Viereck's *Conservatism Revisited*, 32.
58. In the 1920s, Masterman played cricket, tennis, and field hockey internationally, and in 1931 he toured Canada with the Marylebone Cricket Club. He became Provost of Worcester College, Vice-Chancellor of the university in 1957–58, and received a knighthood in 1959. Masterman was apparently far more interested in sports, administration, and mystery writing. *An Oxford Tragedy* (London: V. Gollancz, Ltd.,

- 1933), was one of his mystery novels. More importantly, he was involved, during the war, with genuine mysteries—the breaking of Nazi codes. See his *The Double-cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).
59. See D. R. Thorpe, *Eden. The Life and Times of Anthony Eden, First Earl of Avon, 1897–1997* (London, 2003) esp. 43–54, for a discussion of Eden’s undergraduate days at Oxford.
60. See Viscount Hailsham, *The Door Wherein I Went* (London, 1975), especially when he relates his parents’ insistence upon the duty of respect for legitimate authority, which he points out is more complex and paradoxical than they imagined and his disagreement with his father’s position that international law did not exist because it was unenforceable (90, 102).
61. C. M. Bowra, *Memories, 1898–1939* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 353. When Chamberlain became disillusioned about the Germans, Bowra reported, ‘Hogg was much too intelligent not to see how real the danger was, and when war came, joined the army as a fighting soldier’, 354. Bowra, at 40, was elected Warden of Wadham in October 1938, a few months before the by-election. Hogg was President of the Oxford Union in 1929, became Fellow of All Souls in 1931, and was called to the Bar in 1932. From the by-election of 1938, he was MP for Oxford City until he succeeded his father, the first Viscount, in 1950. Additionally, he was Joint Under-Secretary for the Air, First Lord of the Admiralty, Minister of Education, and Lord President of the Council. Appointed Chairman of the Conservative Party in 1957, his career culminated with the Lord Chancellorship.
62. Hogg, *The Left Was Never Right* (London, 1945), 208, 214. See, too, *A Sparrow’s Flight. The Memoirs of Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone* (London, 1990), 229–30.
63. Hogg, ‘Quo Vadis? A Question for Socialists’, *A Declaration of Tory Principles*.
64. Quintin Hogg, *The Case for Conservatism* (London, 1947) (Written before the end of December 1946 and sent to the printer in March 1947), 18–19, 34.
65. *Ibid.*, 63; Hearnshaw, *Conservatism in England*, 304.
66. Hogg, *The Case for Conservatism*, 86.
67. *Ibid.*, 144.
68. Hailsham, *Toryism and Tomorrow* (Conservative Political Centre, London, 1957), 6, 7, 11.
69. Hailsham, *The Conservative Case* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959).
70. Hailsham, *National Excellence* (Conservative Political Centre, 1963), 19, 29, 30.
71. For a fuller discussion of Viereck, see ch. 7.
72. Max Beloff, ‘The Intellectual in Politics’, The Ramsay Muir Memorial Lecture, 19 July 1969, in *The Intellectual in Politics and other Essays* (London, 1970), 15.

4

The Phenomenon of Arthur Bryant: Patriotism, Conservatism, and the Greater Public

In the autumn of 1967, the journalist David Grosvenor described Bryant as ‘probably the most widely read—and readable—historian writing in Britain today’. Bryant, he continued fulsomely, was a ‘rarity: a popular historian whose meticulous research wins favour with scholars too.’ Grosvenor pointed out, quite accurately, that Bryant’s fans included Lord Attlee and the prime minister, Harold Wilson. Bryant described to Grosvenor his methods of writing: a single paragraph, which he wrote and rewrote twenty to thirty times represented about fifty or one hundred typewritten pages of notes extracted from boxes of notes that filled the spare room and three bedrooms in his London house and many more in his country house. Seventy or eighty hours a week were devoted to writing, while he breakfasted alone and had lunch and dinner on a tray.¹ Even accounting for some hyperbole on Bryant’s part, his enormous output and the loss of two wives to divorce testify to a large measure of truth in Bryant’s account. What sort of obsession compelled him to pursue such a life?

The answer has to do with two deficiencies in his character, which, paradoxically, may have accounted for his popularity as a historian and his effectiveness as a conservative polemicist. First, Arthur Bryant never expressed the slightest doubt about his own judgement, while categorically dismissing opposing views. If his positions, that he always believed had historical validity, were absolutely correct, then those who challenged them were regrettably ignorant. Historians who found his work wanting in rigour and method, and political adversaries among the Left intelligentsia, were absolutely wrong. That conviction about the rectitude of his conservatism enabled him to speak for it convincingly and with effect. Second, Bryant’s understanding of history and of the present was skewed by his deep-felt nostalgia for a supposedly simpler, more secure, more predictable, rural idyll. Among the huge audiences who read his history, many may have also found the present less than satisfactory. Bryant idealized the past without discovering any persuasive remedies for the problems of the present, but he did provide an exceptional English, if not British, history that belonged to everyone. Bryant had a gift for positioning inchoate feelings of individual and

communal displacement within a convincing historical context that justified a generous social and economic vision often remote from the changing structure of the real world.

During the inter-war decades, as the Conservative Party recognized that it had to strengthen its appeal to the new electorate, Arthur Bryant became a major asset to Conservatism and conservatism. Among all the conservative historians, Bryant's influential reach is the easiest to demonstrate. Especially through his historical writing, Bryant readily surpassed every other contemporary historian in finding and keeping the widest audience during his long and prolific lifetime. A popular historian and journalist rather than an academic, his historical writing and conservative polemics were inseparable from each other. Bryant took a vigorous and aggressive part in defining, explaining, and justifying conservatism by calling upon history to appeal to those seeking self improvement; or the possibility of effective political and social commitment; or, most of all, a patriotic reaffirmation of national values. His greatest number of readers turned to him for reassurance about the soundness, security, unity, inclusiveness, and exceptionalism of England and the English people.

Young men of Bryant's class and background generally went from a public school to either Oxford or Cambridge. In Bryant's case, the Great War intervened and, in 1918, he went from Harrow into the Royal Flying Corps. Only 18, he flew over France as a pilot who bombed the Rhineland towns.² That was the definitive experience of his life.³ After the war, instead of enjoying the normal, extended years of university study and then moving into a Fellowship in history at one of the Oxford Colleges, he took the shortened course for ex-servicemen at Queen's College, Oxford, with a BA in 1920. At Harrow, where Baldwin had also been a student, George Townsend Warner, the senior history master had both Bryant and G. M. Trevelyan as pupils. In Bryant's case, that teaching encouraged and fostered a romantic love of history.⁴ Then, as an undergraduate, he read J. R. Seeley's *The Life and Times of Stein; or, Prussia and Germany in the Napoleonic Age* (1878) and his *The Expansion of England* (1883).⁵ From the former, he took an admiring view of a nation-builder, which he later confused with the activities pursued by Hitler from 1936; and, from the latter, an appreciation of England's necessary and mutually beneficial relationship to the Empire. His evaluation of the Empire, which in the post-Second World War years led him to find new allies in Labour in his opposition to Britain's entry to the Common Market, was formed, too, by J. A. Froude's *Oceana; or, England and her Colonies* (1886) and by the writings of Kipling.

After Oxford, Bryant had a chequered career trying to find a place for himself in a post-war world that ill fitted his ideas of what England (he rarely said 'Britain') ought to be. First, he taught young boys at a London County Council school and was then called to the Bar. Instead of practising law, at the age of 23 he accepted an appointment as Principal of what later would be called the Cambridge Technical College. From 1925 to 1936, he also taught Oxford

University extension classes. Bryant moved towards his true vocation in 1926 when he produced the first of his historical pageants to celebrate England's traditional values. The following year, he discovered how to serve his country as well as himself as a conservative polemicist. In 1929, he became educational adviser, later a governor, and, from 1946 to 1949, Chairman of the Council for the Bonar Law College, Ashridge, founded to disseminate conservative ideas to an audience wider than consecrated Conservatives, with lecturers and students from many political persuasions. Beginning with Stanley Baldwin, Bryant made every effort to remain close to Conservative leaders and to become a Conservative Party spokesman. He succeeded remarkably in both ambitions until 1940. Determined to create a conservative readership to rival the 50,000 subscribers to the Left Book Club, Bryant edited and produced books for the conservative National Book Association from 1936 to 1939. As part of his role as a Party policy-maker, Bryant was a prolific Conservative publicist, whose prodigious writing, lecturing, and organizational work included preparing material for Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, burnishing the defence of Munich, becoming Chamberlain's point man with the BBC, preparing the government's statement on war aims in 1939, and negotiating with the Nazis in 1940.

Bryant's first book was polemical rather than historical. *The Spirit of Conservatism* (1929) was written mainly for the students at Ashridge College, where Hearnshaw and Feiling also lectured occasionally. Three years later, his *King Charles II* (1931) established his standing as a historian and he retained that reputation, even with many academic historians, for most of his other historical writing. After these two initial successes, Bryant's books and other writings combined history and conservative messages, no matter what their subject. He never held a real academic appointment and tended, consistently, to be critical of ivory-tower dons comfortably detached from the problematic world in which he tried to live and act with effect. The closest Bryant came to the protected position he mocked was in 1936 when elected to the Alfred Watson Chair of American History, Literature, and Philosophy to deliver lectures for one year at the University of London.

In addition to historical writing and explicitly conservative tracts, he found his numerous and most faithful followers in the *Illustrated London News* (*ILN*). In 1936, he succeeded G. K. Chesterton and continued for nearly fifty more years to write the 'Our Note Book' column, which was read by a variety of people, ranging from the upper to the working classes.⁶ Bryant's column was the leading feature in the *ILN* until the late 1960s, when, as a result of a decline both in readers and deferential attitudes towards the upper classes, it was relegated to a more minor position in the journal.⁷ Additionally, he produced an unceasing torrent of newspaper and magazine columns, essays, homilies, and articles. In 1937 he deputized for J. L. Garvin, editor of *The Observer* on the leading page of the paper, and over the years wrote leaders and articles in both major and minor newspapers and journals including *The Observer*, the *Sunday Observer*, the

Sunday Times, *The Times*, the *New York Times Magazine*, the *News-Letter*, the *Regimental Journal*, *Time and Tide*, and scores of local Conservative publications such as the *Greenwich Gazette*, the *Tory Forum*, and even the *National Labour Fortnightly*. After the Second World War, he also wrote for the *Daily Express* and the *Sunday Express*, the *Daily Dispatch*, the *Farmers' Weekly*, the *Sheffield Telegraph*, the *Newcastle Journal*, the *Glasgow Daily Record and Mail*, the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, the *Western Mail*, *The Tablet*, and *Everybody's Magazine*.⁸

It is especially fitting that portions of one of Bryant's most enduring books, *The Story of England: Makers of the Realm* (1953) should have been serialized, with illustrations, in *Everybody's Magazine*, because Bryant's sentimental, patriotic, and national rhetoric resonated among such a wide array of people. Julia Stapleton is certainly correct in finding that, although Bryant believed that he was fulfilling his role as a scholar, his work was an 'assiduous cultivation of "middlebrow" opinion' that 'indulged the taste of a wide public for literary works that defended a view of English identity as timeless, homogeneous, and unique'.⁹ Rosa Maria Bracco's study of middlebrow literature after the Great War, especially by participants in that war, argues that these writers were carrying a 'message of reconstruction'. Concerned to find 'meaning', they described the 'lessons learned in the ordeal of war' and also emphasized 'values which would reaffirm the strength and importance of links with the past. Morality, religion, tradition: such words made up a litany of appeals for post-war regeneration.'¹⁰ At the same time, there were popular, bestselling novels dealing with the war, such as A. S. M. Hutchinson's *If Winter Comes* (1921) and Warwick Deeping's *Sorrell and Son* (1925), where the rhetoric of despair and bitterness was more pervasive.¹¹ Bryant used all these vocabularies and the concepts that they encoded with proficiency and passion.

In great part, Bryant's particular strength in capturing and retaining his audiences rested on his literary skills. He was helped in his missionary zeal by his ability to write very colourful and readable prose. Even his polemics were always cast in the form of a rousing story. That was especially important in the inter-war years, when the nature and numbers of the electorate had increased so dramatically. From 7.6 million in January 1910, when all male voters constituted 27 per cent of the adult population to 1918, when some women over 30 were enfranchised, the electorate grew to 21.3 million, or 78 per cent of the adult population. In 1929, with extension of the vote to women at the age of 21, the numbers grew to 90 per cent of the adult population, or 28.8 million voters.¹² Along with the growth in the electorate, there was an expansion of the reading public. Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday have claimed that the coming of democracy provided the Conservative Party with 'an opportunity rather than a peril' and the result was a sustained 'mass' party 'rather than just a "class" party'.¹³

Bryant understood very well that, among these masses, there were many different local and regional constituencies not served by the major publications, and he made every effort to engage as many of these readers as he could. His

topics included natural history; current events; contemporary causes, including preservation and the environment; the quality of housing; diet; gardening; transportation; literature and music; religion; biography; and the rights of animals. Disparate as these subjects appeared to be, they were all a coherent part of his fantasy about what England had been in the pre-industrial age and what he wanted it to become again. His considerable political, social, and cultural influence was enhanced through thirty-seven bestselling, romantic, didactic, and patriotic books, filled with robust heroes, despicable villains, praise for hard-working ordinary people living in a 'Christian land', obedient to law, a 'conservative but essentially practical race' valuing political liberty and a balance of power.¹⁴ Those books sold over 3 million copies.

A pervasive national anxiety about clamouring, incompatible demands upon familiar habits of thought and practice may have contributed significantly to Bryant's enormous appeal for so many people of every class and background. Bryant tried to assuage that anxiety by presenting a reconciling historical narrative, which encompassed everyone. While most historians increasingly wrote and spoke to each other, Bryant's bestselling books aimed successfully at the greatest possible reading public. He taught his readers that they were participating in an exceptional historical tradition, which gave them a unified national character. In everything he wrote and said, Bryant tried to convince ordinary people that there were good historical reasons for patriotic pride in their country. Increasingly old-fashioned, his political and military narratives demonstrated equitable and evolving institutions, the rule of law, and the unifying principles of a central monarchy and a national Church.

Prodigious writing was complemented by Bryant's participation, beginning in 1931, in BBC talks, almost all printed and widely circulated, as well as in BBC programmes and plays, that entered the homes and daily lives of most of the classes and many of the masses. Bryant also served on the BBC's Talks Advisory Committee.¹⁵ Audiences were created and maintained through a strenuous schedule of lectures all over Britain to political clubs, self-betterment societies, the Bonar Law College at Ashridge, Oxford University extension classes, and any association able to pay and willing to listen to him. There was no end to those able and willing. As his papers in the King's College Archives amply demonstrate, Bryant was flooded with invitations that he had no time to accept because he was already filling so many. Bryant also lectured tirelessly to the troops during the Second World War on military history and strategy, political science, and sociology. Beyond his histories and lectures, Bryant's voice was heard in epic historical pageants that he conceived, organized, and produced—including one at Greenwich in 1933 that had a cast of 2,500 costumed volunteers and an audience of 12,000 with the entire cabinet and the king and queen in attendance for one of the ten nights that it ran.¹⁶ An actor in Bryant's first pageant, no doubt surpassing all Bryant's expectations about the character-creating aspect of participation in such a national celebration, became the future Governor-General of Canada.

Remarkable for his prolificacy by any standard of measurement, Bryant wrote, spoke, and travelled incessantly from 1929 to 1985, the year he died at the age of 85.

A practised capacity for friendship sustained, in considerable part, by his habit of outrageous flattery, served Bryant very well, especially since it was accepted gratefully and reciprocated. He also knew how to make himself well regarded by and useful to those he considered important. That group included historians and other intellectuals, even among the Left, because he wanted his historical work to be recognized and admired. But his higher objective was those statesmen who would ensure that Conservatism followed what he understood as conservative or, as he sometimes described them, 'Tory' principles. While he often expressed contempt for what he believed to be most academics privileged isolation and Left leanings away from his more realistic concentration on practical affairs, he wanted recognition equal to the approbation that he mistakenly believed university dons received. Bryant's academic correspondence embraced almost every historian who was his contemporary during the inter-war years, but declined in numbers as a new generation dismissed his work after the 1950s. He even courted those who were critical of his work. His friend A. L. Rowse reported, waspishly, that Bryant 'had the habit of feeding the hand that bit him'.¹⁷ His correspondents also included decisive figures who were press barons, journalists, novelists, scholars in other disciplines, military leaders, industrialists, bankers, and both European and American statesmen.¹⁸ To make his presence even more widely felt, he belonged to prestigious political clubs and often helped to run them, as his father had done before him, and he chaired charity groups such as the St. John and British Red Cross Hospital Library Department, which brought him into contact with the two groups he most courted: the powerful and influential; and ordinary people who he saw as instinctively conservative.¹⁹ He carefully kept detailed lists of those to whom he sent his work and kept their replies in multiple copies, none of which appears to have ever been discarded. Bryant presented copies of all his books to those he cultivated, including the royal family and all the leading politicians of both parties. In reply, his recipients wrote effusive notes of thanks and appreciation, which he treasured.

Although academic historians were increasingly critical of his historical writing, especially after the Second World War, Bryant's view of himself as a methodical, revisionist, and original historian was supported by the large public, which devotedly bought his books.²⁰ He always saw his commitment to purvey his patriotic conservatism as consistent with his scholarship, and the combination of both efforts afforded him the pleasures, as he saw it, of doing good and living well. The other inter-war conservative historians, who also pursued historical and polemical aspirations, generally endorsed Bryant's view of himself as an effective conservative historian. Beginning in 1931, with the publication of Bryant's *Charles I*, Hearnshaw consistently admired the polemical implications of Bryant's historical works and found no flaws in any of Bryant's inter-war histories.²¹ In

Bryant's biography of Baldwin in 1937, Hearnshaw admired the 'noble tribute to a noble man, and incidentally a strong plea for a sane conservatism as against a revolutionary socialism'. In January 1938, when Hearnshaw received a copy of Bryant's *Humanity and Politics*, he wrote generously that Bryant had 'done much at a particularly difficult and anxious time to produce a sane and sober public opinion . . . it is strange how our Socialist pacifists, whenever Communism is menaced, try to rush us into war . . . You have rapidly risen to be a national force, and one on—In every sense—the right (or Right) side.'²² Feiling also found *Charles I* commendable, but he was critical of the unbalanced effect of Bryant's treatment of the Whigs.²³ Eventually, Feiling, too, came round. When Bryant received his knighthood in 1954, which followed his Companion of the British Empire in 1949, and preceded his Companion of Honour in 1967, Feiling wrote to him that since Trevelyan 'no one in this country has done so much to prove that Clío is a Muse. I shall always hope that your Pepys and the Years of Endurance and Victory may live very long and continue their benefit to national morale and true history.'²⁴

Conservative inter-war historians contributed effectively to the capture of the new electorate by providing them with historical values and traditions that they could identify as their own. Both Hearnshaw and Feiling were respected, consulted, and used by Conservatives in positions of power. Bryant went much further in courting and winning the consistent approval and support of Britain's governing elite. His patrons included two inter-war Conservative prime ministers—Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain—and the post-war Labour prime ministers, Harold Wilson, who had him knighted and awarded him the Companion of Honour, and Clement Atlee, who shared Bryant's idealization of 'national life'.²⁵ Initially, he entered those elevated circles through his father's standing with the royal family, but he remained among the Conservative elect until the 1950s because he shared and tirelessly promoted goals that they all shared. Baldwin's public statements were 'polished' by Bryant, at least on one occasion in 1936 and throughout Baldwin's tenure as prime minister they saw and wrote to each other extensively.²⁶ Bryant's correspondence with Conservatives at the top reveals his intimacy with them. Sir John Davidson, Baldwin's principal secretary, asked Bryant for help in writing a speech in the summer of 1936, and the following year Douglas Hacking, Chairman of the Conservative Party, 1936–42, defended Bryant's choice of books for publication by the National Book Association by describing him as 'a very great friend of ours' certainly not 'likely to do damage to Conservative principles'.²⁷ That year, Bryant was also closely involved with Rab Butler, and he wrote a draft for Baldwin's presidential message to the National Book Association at Christmas 1937.²⁸ An active supporter of both rearmament and peace from the early 1930s, Bryant was the most consistent spokesman for the Conservative Party's policy of appeasement and, through 1940, he conducted a series of secret meetings with Nazi representatives in an attempt to conclude a peace.²⁹

A month after war broke out, Richard Crossman, then assistant editor of the *New Statesman*, began his notable service in the Psychological Warfare Department. Crossman was well on the Left and he became a major force in shaping the Labour Party after 1945. Although admitting to be a 'vituperative' critic of Bryant before the war, Crossman asked him to take part in the Home Publicity Division of the Ministry of Information because of the crucial part he played in 'forming public opinion'.³⁰ Even Leo Amery, a committed anti-appeaser before the war and then the wartime Secretary of State for India, offered to back Bryant's candidacy for the House of Commons in 1941.³¹ When the king gave his Christmas message in 1946, Bryant was asked to help write it. Montgomery also relied on Bryant for help with his speeches.³² Bryant's two-volume history of the Second World War, *The Turn of the Tide, 1939–1943* (1957) and *Triumph in the West, 1943–1946* (1959), although based on his idiosyncratic reading of Field Marshall Viscount Alanbrooke's diaries and memoirs for 1939–45, was enthusiastically approved by Alanbrooke, who was sent all the chapters to read before publication.³³

Bryant often held views that appeared to be diametrically opposed to each other on many critical issues, including appeasement, German fascism, anti-Semitism, and the aristocracy. Bryant's vacillation marked his response to changing events and he was often, as in the case of Hitler's unification and expansion of Germany, wilfully naïve. Although seemingly contradictory, Bryant's views were all part of his larger conservative understanding of human nature and society, an understanding shaped in great part by the aristocratic and governing communities in which he moved by birth and above all by choice. For over half a century, his father, Sir Francis Bryant, served the royal household of King Edward VII and King George V, and was George V's sergeant-at-arms and the chief clerk to the Prince of Wales.³⁴ Growing up surrounded by royal trappings, Bryant learned to venerate order, place, rituals, historic tradition, religion, and the monarchy as the essential symbol of national unity. From his father's example, he inherited an obligation to serve his country in some meaningful way. While his father gave him an appreciation of the wealthy and powerful and access to them, he did not provide Bryant with the funds common in those circles. Bryant's wealth, which became considerable by the last decades of his life, came entirely from his books and journalism, and although his views were principled, he never forgot that he was earning his living by them.

Two overwhelming convictions in Bryant's early life—one empirical and the other ideological—coloured and drove his conservatism. The first resulted from Bryant's unforgettable year in the Great War, and the second was his dread of socialism, and especially of communism, as doctrines of class war and hatred. As many scholars have demonstrated, memory and judgement about the First World War varied over time, and disillusionment competed with participant's memories of the war as an idealistic effort.³⁵ For Bryant, the lessons learned were that the military forces, and especially the novice pilots—brave and honourable—were

let down during the war by incompetent leaders, both civilian and military. Then, even more shamefully, the returning service men were abandoned after the war by the government and by commercial interests motivated by greed rather than social responsibility. Those who survived were ignored or greeted with a diminished standard of living when they returned. Instead of being integrated into a restorative land made fit for heroes, the young veterans found a 'world designed for stockholders and rentiers and civil servants'. Instead of fulfilling their 'image' of an 'apocalyptic dream', it was the reality of 'the utilitarian labyrinth of the money-changers from which they had gone forth in 1914'. As a pilot, Bryant never endured the infantryman's experience of the trenches in the Western Front, but he was well aware of their suffering. The shunting aside of those soldiers violated Bryant's sense of justice, because these patriots had made what he considered the supreme sacrifice for their country, while the politicians who decided their post-war lives had selfishly stayed at home. In the rebuilding of the post-Great War world, the old standard, Bryant complained, remained exclusively the multiplication of the wealthy. The only just criteria for policy were a plan of action that would integrate all classes into a unified society by making 'better men and women'.³⁶

Whatever limited progress was possible for Bryant required the 'remaking' of people. Socialists and Labourites as well as conservatives believed that there must be basic changes in behaviour, but the means and ends of those changes were to be achieved very differently. For the Left, some kind of redistribution of wealth, a permeating notion of equality in all spheres of life, and opportunities for social and economic mobility were prerequisites. Many conservatives, from at least the 1920s, believed that there should be a minimal standard of living, educational and employment opportunities, justice, liberty, and security of status. For the Right, those achievements were contingent upon individual self-help and a national commitment to the acquisition and maintenance of property, not equality. Those with the best educations and the most wealth had an obligation to provide those minimal standards of living and opportunity that made self-help possible.

Bryant complained that after the First World War, instead of committing themselves to civic responsibilities, 'a few, but gifted with unusual powers of expression and persuasion went to College Common Rooms and such-like oases, and a life of ceaseless talk and shuttered contemplation of abstractions'. Bryant contrasted his romanticized image of ordinary men to 'intellectuals', whom he distrusted and equated particularly with socialists and generally with abstract thinkers who had no knowledge of practical affairs. That distrust may have been fostered at the end of the Great War, when Bryant became an undergraduate at Oxford. There he found an artificial, isolated, irrelevant, and safe haven in dramatic contrast to his thrilling and terrifying bombing flights over Germany in rickety, dangerous aeroplanes that offered no protection from either the elements or the enemy. Those who fought in the Great War learned 'that scarcely any

abstract cause is worth the human wastage, torture and degradation that arise out of modern war . . .'.³⁷ From his activist position outside the universities, Bryant condemned those still within its walls as self-indulgent, passive, and wilfully ignorant of the nature and extent of urgent social and economic problems in their preference for theoretical speculation. Bryant resented the academy for its isolation, secularism, and left-wing inclinations, and he derided 'endowed University dons and the dividend-supported men of higher education of the British bourgeoisie of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, who, entrenched in their studies and seemingly immune from almost all the ordinary ills the flesh is heir to, evolved an intellectual philosophy which, however well suited it may have been to the comfortable life of the Common Room and the Woodstock Road, was singularly ill-fitted to the rough and uncertain lot of the great bulk of mankind'. Bryant associated this 'comfortless creed of the higher intelligence' with a rejection of religion and, even more seriously, with a dereliction of civic responsibilities.³⁸ There were exceptions that Bryant found to his characterization of academics, especially from Oxford, as indifferent and selfish. In his *Sunday Times* review of Douglas Jerrold's *England*, on 28 April, 1935, Bryant observed, with mock surprise, that although Jerrold was an Oxford First and a Fellow of All Souls, he was opposed to 'the ranged forces of big business, cartelisation, and monster trades unionism, bureaucrats, bankers and party bosses'. Instead, he pleaded 'for the alignment of a new and yet traditional Conservatism of the vast majority of Englishmen who love liberty and would, if they could, be what their forebears were, small freemen. With the plain man of the suburbs, the shires, and the provinces, he has a sympathy very uncommon in an intellectual.'³⁹ Many of Bryant's contemporaries, including the left-wing intelligentsia that he condemned, also had seen themselves as ill-prepared participants in the devastating death and maiming of a whole generation of innocent young men. Together with Bryant, they believed there could never be another reason to go to war again.

In addition to his horror of war, everything that Bryant valued was threatened by the social and economic dilemmas of the inter-war years. He vehemently opposed Britain's failure to respond to the domestic and international consequences of that war, which included the establishment within Britain of a socialist Party alien to his idealization of English character. Driven by his desire to avoid another war at almost any cost, and despite mounting evidence to the contrary, Bryant saw Hitler as both a reasonable statesman who restored German pride and territory and a bulwark against the greater threat of communism. His motives for appeasement and fellow-travelling included guilt about the Versailles settlement; winning time to remedy Britain's military weakness; a fear of aerial bombardment; and the devastating finances of war that could better be directed to domestic social programmes. History demonstrated to Bryant that Britain should connect its future to the Empire rather than to Europe. As Reynolds Salerno has suggested, during the inter-war years all the European powers, including Britain,

were often 'motivated principally by their imperial interests and ambitions' and 'frequently subordinated their continental and alliance policies to imperial priorities'.⁴⁰

Bryant's approbation of the Empire was defined by patriotic ends in which personal sacrifice testified to conservative virtues. At the centre of his approval of British institutions, lay Bryant's concept of what was undeniably right. He was convinced that every person should know what the 'right' ideas or courses of action were and then, as a responsible individual, they were required to put them into practice. Bryant devoted what appears to be every waking moment to doing just that.⁴¹ Britain's history revealed to Bryant that, while national crises traditionally stimulated the renunciation of purely selfish ends, modern life provided few opportunities for people to devote themselves to higher ideals. That deviation from Britain's historic direction, as he saw it, came in the 1840s when industrialization deprived ordinary people of their rural heritage, the source of their strength and character. While Feiling and Hearnshaw took nineteenth-century conservative principles and adapted them to a rapidly changing industrial world, Bryant saw industrial capitalism as the greatest threat to the rural life that he idealized.

A mythical agricultural past was summoned by Bryant as the antidote to the divisions between rich and poor, the problems of unemployment, the indifference to beauty, and the solipsism that allowed wealth to be used essentially to satisfy greed. A romantic, sentimental, and nostalgic retrieval of a past that had never existed except in Bryant's longing, portrayed an Arcadian landscape in which satisfying hard work produced self-respect and a fair standard of living. The most basic English desire, he wrote in July 1938, for 'fresh air, contact with the soil, the natural and restorative environment of green fields, and trees. . . that sense of possessing room of one's own and breathing-space. . . so essential to the fostering of that English individualism and love of liberty of which we are so justly proud, seems pathetically lacking'. In contemporary world movements such as Bolshevism and fascism, he found the same revolt against a life defined by the industrial system and *laissez-faire*.⁴² That autumn, Ernest Baker wrote to Bryant to complain that he was bothered by the 'abstract intellectualism' of old associates and by 'conventional lip service to phrases in my old Party—the Liberal Party. I admit more and more the practical wisdom of the good ordinary Englishman, facing the facts and "feeling" the right way through them—as a good countryman should. This means that I am getting nearer and nearer to you.' At the age of 64, Barker conceded that it was 'a late change. . . But I am glad that it is coming'.⁴³

As a testimony to their pragmatism, the inter-war conservative historians recognized that nostalgia for a simpler rural England could never be satisfied except as a rhetorical device; but when their image of what England was, and ought to be, conflicted with their understanding of existing conditions, the romantic construction often took precedence. Of the three inter-war conservative

historians discussed here, only Bryant, who was still writing patriotic paeans to British values the year that he died, never relinquished his Victorian worldview. Bryant continued to extol the virtues of rural character and the countryside; to attack commercial and financial capitalism; to praise the strengths of ordinary people; and to regret that a paternalistic aristocracy had vanished. His account of the exceptional historic development of Englishmen, rarely extended to include the rest of Britain and never to women, accepted industrialization and its potential benefits grudgingly and with caveats, while still romanticizing rural life. People developed strength, he argued in a mixture of metaphors, when bred in an organic community with roots in the soil. The English countryside may have been a refuge for the patriot defending assaults on 'Englishness', but it also attracted J. M. Keynes and literary, Left-leaning intellectuals like D. H. Lawrence, J. B. Priestly, E. M. Forster, and Raymond Williams.⁴⁴

Feiling and Hearnshaw viewed capitalists and industrialists not so much as consumers but as creators of wealth, with the potential of benefiting great numbers of people. Bryant, too, recognized the irreversible realities of an industrial age, and urged employee involvement in the governing of large companies as a means of avoiding industrial conflict. In spite of that grudging recognition, Bryant's Buckingham Palace background and his aesthetic preferences led him to distrust new money and the kind of people it created. Industrial employers and those they employed could never match, by Bryant's standards, the plain, sensible countryman whom he imagined as sounder and morally superior to other social and economic groups, including the aristocracies of birth, wealth, or brains.

Above all in Stanley Baldwin, Bryant found a Conservative leader who was a man of the land and people. Bryant appears to have forgotten that Baldwin was the son of an ironmaster who worked for twenty years in his family firm. What Bryant especially admired was the way in which Baldwin triumphed over the 'clever men who sneered at him' to restore 'character in public life'.⁴⁵ Identifying himself with the tradition of Bolingbroke, Pitt, and Disraeli, Bryant urged his party to devote itself to 'the general body of the nation' rather than to 'its own privileged supporters'.⁴⁶ Neville Chamberlain, scion of the Birmingham manufacturing family, was also identified by Bryant as having an affinity for the rural virtues. In 1936, while chancellor of the exchequer, Chamberlain wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* about hearing a blackbird imitate a thrush in the gardens of 10 Downing Street. Bryant devoted a column in the *Illustrated London News* to praising Chamberlain's character on the grounds that any man so close to nature was not in politics merely for his own sake.⁴⁷

For Bryant the life-enhancing qualities of the agricultural countryside were always superior to the life-denying vices of the city, industry, capital, and commerce. While the former fostered what was the best in the English character, the latter produced an idle and selfish intelligentsia, a political class interested only in power, and a soulless materialism. In a review of John Scanlon's *Very Foreign Affairs* in December 1938, a year after his 'tribute' to Baldwin appeared,

Bryant applauded the Clydeside worker's denunciation of 'those comfortably-off gentlemen of the rentier and professional-political classes who, pretending to represent' the working classes 'have transformed the Labour movement (which men like Mr Scanlon's father founded) into a machine for maintaining them on one or other of the Front Benches. A Popular Front, in fact, for seating public school behinds.'⁴⁸ The welfare of the nation over the selfish interests of politicians, and especially socialist politicians, was common to Hearnshaw and Feiling, too.

None of the three inter-war conservative historians gave hereditary place or wealth priority in their ideal of a just and stable society, even though Feiling was the son of a stockbroker and Bryant the son of a high-ranking royal servant. 'The historic polity of England', according to Bryant, 'was one which conferred privilege on men as an inducement to civic duty'. The concept of 'duty' as a distinctively conservative value, understood paternalistically as an obligation to the lower classes, appeared in almost every definition of conservatism during the inter-war years.⁴⁹ Although the elitist appeal of all three historians was directed to those with the greatest demonstrated ability, ambition, and sense of national obligation, Bryant retained a reverence for the kind of responsible aristocracy that he believed had disappeared in the eighteenth century. It was not only men such as himself, he insisted, but ordinary Britons, too, who preferred 'aristocratic decision to that of a man of his own class . . . That is an extraordinary phenomenon.' That is why they chose Winston Churchill, 'cadet of the bluest blood in England', to be their leader in the Second World War. Their preference for Churchill was based on 'a racial instinct for the qualities of real, as opposed to sham, leadership'. Bryant dismissed aristocratic leadership based on feudal titles, as well as democratic or Civil Service formulas, but welcomed the qualities that someone like Churchill possessed: 'moral courage, unrelenting will and the readiness to take responsibility without thought of self, fear or reelection'. The working classes, through no fault of their own, lacked, he lamented, a 'social background for leadership'.⁵⁰

Bryant's assessment of both the historical and contemporary roles of the 'working classes' or 'ordinary people' alternated between idealization and disapproval. To understand his ambivalence, we have to consider the structured social, economic, and political hierarchy upon which his conservatism depended. In the *English Saga, 1840–1940* (1941), a rallying cry for a beleaguered and ill-prepared nation, and a paean to social and economic values that he believed had been lost in the Industrial Revolution and should be restored in a post-war England, the context was more pastoral than industrial.⁵¹ The best teacher for Bryant was always the land, which 'disciplines to duty and virtue all her servants'. In his later years, although attached to London life, Bryant bought into his own mythology and became a farmer interested in forestry. The farmer was the prototype of integrity because of his responsibility for the care of helpless and dependent animals. Bryant's sturdy countryman, for all his 'muddy boots and

rough, stained hands', or better yet because of these visible marks of virtue, was 'a man of honour'.⁵²

When conservatives, including the conservative historians, reacted to the miasma of unease created by accumulating crises that began in the 1920s, one of their less effective solutions was to attempt to improve the poor material that characterized human nature. The lower an individual's place in the social scheme, they assumed, the poorer that material turned out to be because those classes lacked the education, skills, culture, and status of the meritocratic elite with whom the conservative historians identified. In that identification, they shared a general consensus among conservatives. When Harold Begbie interviewed leading Conservative statesmen in July 1924, he extracted from them a Disraelian rebuttal to the Labour Party's historical first ministry. Begbie explained their Conservatism as the paternalistic guardianship of the lower classes intended to foster 'the evolution of man's moral and spiritual nature'. Conservative leaders took part in that evolution by establishing 'security, confidence, and peace; to create . . . the only atmosphere in which men can do fruitful work; and it seeks the prosperity of British trade and the union of the British Empire because it desires to increase the independence, the self-respect, the security, and the domestic happiness of the working-classes, and to possess revenues sufficient for the three great branches of its social policy—better houses, better health, and better education'.⁵³

Although advocating the social reforms that Begbie attributed to national leaders, especially in housing and employment, Bryant often despaired about natural human propensities. He repeatedly stressed the stalwart virtues of ordinary people, but saw those virtues as historically and nationally derived rather than as attributes of human nature. In the spring of 1940, when the phony war came to an end with Hitler's attack on Norway, Bryant reflected that 'the Creator apparently intended His creatures to be miserable and, what is more, to behave to one another in such a manner as to make misery inescapable'.⁵⁴

Bryant turned to conservatism in repugnance against the divisiveness and destruction of 'English' traditions represented by socialism and the emergence of a Labour Party that had replaced Liberalism as an increasingly feasible opposition. Bryant had established himself as a major conservative polemicist with his *The Spirit of Conservatism* (1929), written when the Labour government set up its second ministry. Two years later, in a newsletter of very limited circulation, he confessed that he had not been a Conservative ten years earlier. His conversion came when he became convinced that socialism destroyed what was unique and valuable in English character. Although he never repeated his approval of the controversial Anthony Ludovici in any other published or remaining private papers, that year he accepted Ludovici's definition of conservatism as 'the preservation of the national identity throughout change'. A true Conservative, he wrote three months later, must always ask 'is this ideal or programme compatible with human nature as it is and with existing conditions or is it merely practicable

on paper or in a world where men and things are different from what they are here'. The test for Conservatives was 'what are the actual facts and how can the object in view be made to fit the facts'.⁵⁵ Among those facts was the intractability of human nature.

In Bryant's first column for the *Illustrated London News*, on 4 July 1936, he wrote about physical cruelty as part of human nature, which 'like any other natural tendency to vice, can only be repressed by punishment'. He referred, approvingly, to *Old Oak*, written by a country parson, Jack Linnell, and based on the recognition that humans were born in original sin and meant to 'bear inevitable pain, suffering, and ceaseless disappointment', but also that through the goodness of God and one's own struggles, they could purge their nature of baser elements. 'The fear of the Lord', Bryant testified, 'is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the rod is the beginning of humane dealing.' No matter how much Bryant extolled good old English character and virtues, he was well aware of the dark and dangerous depths of human nature.⁵⁶

The year 1936 was especially conspicuous in the troubled and troubling 1930s, because the Spanish Civil War began then, and, for some with clear retrospective vision, the Second World War as well. Bryant's responses to the events of that year reveal the prevailing concerns that characterized inter-war conservative thinking. Those events were especially dramatic because they were made visible through new forms of representation, exciting and exhilarating in themselves irrespective of their content: the first BBC regular television public broadcasts with improved higher definition began; and the Agfacolor process of colour photography was invented. Although these new forms of communication were not widely introduced until 1953, people had an opportunity, for the first time, to view directly and almost immediately what was happening in their own country and in the intruding world around them.

For the great majority with limited access to television, there were the newspapers, the cinema, and especially weeklies like the conservative *Illustrated London News*, which brought national and international crises into their homes. So did the BBC radio broadcasts, but the printed page had the great advantage of visual impact, often in vivid and memorable colour. The news that everyone read, heard, and saw in Britain during 1936 was especially disconcerting. The monarchy was repeatedly threatened, first by the death of King George V, then by an unsuccessful assassination attempt against King Edward VIII, followed by his scandalous abdication five months later, and finally by the accession of his ill-prepared brother as George VI. Together with the unprecedented circumstances marking the succession to the throne, the Crystal Palace, another potent symbol of Britain's once unchallenged dominance of world industry and trade, and a popular recreational venue, burned to the ground.

Among the reactions to these events, a Conservative MP, Arthur H. Baker, formed the Oxford Group, which held house parties all over England to 'remake people' in a Christian revolution for 'remaking the world'.⁵⁷ While the Oxford

Group hardly had major consequences for British political and religious life, it represented one aspect of an important impetus for national regeneration in a time perceived as degenerate. Ever since Bryant had survived his year in the Great War and returned to a country unprepared for a successful peace, he was convinced that people could only be made 'better' if both material as well as spiritual conditions were improved. When he began his conservative career, he put social justice at the heart of the 'Conservative creed'. That was not understood as an abstract statement of rights, but rather as the beginning of a concrete plan of paternalistic interventions designed ultimately to improve human behaviour within those narrow limits where improvement could occur. The 'poor man's health and recreation are held to be forms of property', he wrote, 'as sacred as the rich man's dividends'.⁵⁸ The poor must have 'a high standard of bodily living; good beef and ale, warm blankets and woollen clothes, the maintenance of the aged, impotent, or unemployed poor, not as a charity but as a right'.⁵⁹

Abroad, in 1936, Britons watched the establishment of socialism in France and in Spain. The Radical Socialist Albert Pierre Sarraut was returned as the French prime minister, to be followed by another Socialist, Leon Blum. The Left Popular Front consolidated power in Spain and as the Spanish Civil War began, Britons saw images of bombings in photographs and artists' renditions that contributed to widespread sentiment against any possibility of another European war. As part of that anti-war sentiment, Ralph Vaughan Williams, who had enlisted in the Great War as a private at the age of 40 and served in the trenches as a stretcher-bearer, composed his prayer for peace, 'Dona Nobis Pacem'. The other major international crises of the year were the Japanese invasion of China; Italy's annexation of Abyssinia (Ethiopia); an Arab revolt in the British mandate of Palestine; the Nazi remilitarization of the Rhineland and the dramatization of Hitler's power in the Berlin Olympics; a successful military coup in Greece; and the conclusion of the Berlin–Rome axis. There was no relief to an anxious British population in the three successive years until war was declared against Nazi Germany.

When the Second World War began, Bryant thought obsessively about the future and what could be done to promote the kind of unified English nation that he envisioned. Repeatedly, he returned to the solution that had struck him after the Great War: the material, moral, and spiritual improvement of individual and national character. The proper 'test of all legislation, of every political programme and economic activity, is not "Does it pay?" or "Does it enrich this class or that?" but "Will it make better men and women?"'⁶⁰ During and after the Second World War, he continuously emphasized the part the state would have to play in creating a satisfying standard of living for the returning servicemen so that they could develop their latent potential for being responsible and satisfied members of the community. It is no use, he wrote in a *Sunday Times* leader in 1944, 'telling men who have fought their way through the flak to Berlin . . . and matriculated through the Battle Schools . . . that we cannot afford to clear the

slums, build decent and comely houses, give every child a decent education, keep our soil in full cultivation, humanize factory life by adapting our machines to suit human nature and find creative work for every willing man'.⁶¹ Britain could not afford 'bad homes and bad slums' because they produced 'inefficient and weak human beings'. He warned that no legislation or administration would 'work without contented and willing men and women'.⁶² While adult opportunities for a good life depended primarily on individual energy, initiative, and hard work, he urged the state to fulfil the needs of 'every child for the stability of home, education, medical care and nutrition, without which it cannot easily become a good citizen'. The state could only encourage 'men to abolish want by their own voluntary efforts', but everyone ought to have 'status' and be 'recognized for what he is at his best'.⁶³

Bryant was hardly arguing for fundamental social change, let alone equality, but rather for restoring the kind of secure social place that he imagined had existed before industrialization. Unlike Hearnshaw, who feared the dispersion of central power as a threat to national unity, Bryant and Feiling wanted greater local government exercised through various intermediary groups that would encourage participation by local people. When Bryant produced his pageants, he was struck by the 'pathetic eagerness with which unemployed men and women, who, in the eyes of the State, were only dole-drawers and economic encumbrances', assumed self-respect and dignity because of their small part in the performance. 'It has convinced me', he said, 'that the ideal State is one in which the largest possible numbers enjoy some special importance and responsibility'.⁶⁴ People needed to be assigned those obligations that would bring out the noblest in them. When Bryant talked about the necessity of a meaningful system of education for everyone, he was not advocating expanding access to the universities, or even the access to general elementary and secondary education that his pre-war colleague Rab Butler introduced through his Education Act of 1944, but rather specific training to reinforce traditional roles within society by teaching everyone those skills necessary to their security in a fixed place. For all three conservative historians, the imperatives of duty, based upon Christian virtues, were of a higher order than claims for rights. Although Bryant put a high priority on the alleviation of material want, the most powerful national need for him remained the elimination of spiritual malaise. In 1982, the 83-year-old Bryant reaffirmed his pre-war conservative convictions to conclude that England had evolved more successfully than other countries because it was a Christian country.⁶⁵

Bryant's experiences during the Second World War showed him that ordinary people, when fortified by Christian faith and ethics, could understand and take an active part in politics and public affairs. In 1947, Bryant told an Ashridge audience that communal civic centres should be created all over the country so that 'common folk' could study the facts about the political issues that interested them and learn how to discuss and debate the merits of proposed solutions for pressing problems. During the Second World War, the Army Bureau of

Current Affairs and the RAF both sponsored the communal study of politics and public affairs as preparation for participation in local self-government. Bryant was a lecturer in these classes that showed him 'to what heights of responsibility, enthusiasm and civic intelligence the ordinary man and woman can rise if trusted and given a chance'. It is revealing of Bryant's paternalistic attitude towards the working classes that he was satisfied by the administration of these centres by officers rather than by ordinary service men from within the ranks.⁶⁶

In spite of Bryant's romantic idealization of the 'soundness' of ordinary people and their ability to take part in their own government, he was no advocate of an unqualified democracy. Instead, he maintained that politics was the art of accomplishing the practicable in public affairs. British politicians know that 'good government in a world where human beings are left free to express their own foolish preferences is unattainable'. It was difficult, he asserted further, to 'secure the consent of some millions of fools and at least a proportionate number of knaves . . . to the complicated business of legislation. The more obvious its need the more the fools will oppose it, and the wiser it is the more will the knaves.'⁶⁷ By the Second World War, especially after ordinary people were acting bravely and responsibly in the war effort, he reappraised democracy by distinguishing between 'will' and 'opinion' in politics. Will 'ascertained aspiration of a people for some great object. Opinion, as ascertained at the polls, is the majority's choice of the method to be pursued for attaining the object.' In will, which Bryant understood as a national propensity for pragmatic idealism, the people were always right. Bryant's definition of will as a higher form of noble, communal ambition, translated potentially irrational forces or stubborn wilfulness into an amorphous disposition towards good, a credit to the exceptional character of the English 'people'. When it came to the expression of opinion, he still argued that the many, with 'imperfect education and limited knowledge', were too absorbed in earning a living to exercise the best judgement. Political wisdom, for Bryant, was 'usually the prerogative of a very few'. Instead of measuring majority opinions through an electoral process, democracy meant preserving 'the right of minorities to say what we do not want to hear'.⁶⁸ By 'minority', he meant the observant critic like himself who had the greater good at heart.

In his histories, his explicitly conservative messages were packaged in colourful, gossipy, racy stories, enlivened by witty anecdotes about both ordinary and extraordinary people. Readers were drawn into the text as if they were actually present at the events he described, and they shared the emotions and predicaments of his characters, as many of his reviewers observed. In his first genuinely popular history, *King Charles II* (1931), he explained that he did not include any explanations or arguments because 'a simple narrative is the historical method best suited to the English genius'.⁶⁹ Bryant's supposedly simple narrative always extolled romantic Tory patriotism set within a Coleridgean structured society governed by Disraelian Tory democracy. Concentrating on high politics, military

history, and biography, Bryant also incorporated social history that described the context in which exemplary people made history significant. As part of Bryant's efforts to make history real to ordinary people, he wrote a play called *The Golden Hind*, which appeared on stage and radio in the summer of 1937. One of the best examples of Bryant's ability to tell a page-turning story was his three-volume account of Samuel Pepys, the seventeenth-century servant of the state who Bryant believed, had created the British navy. In addition to the two million books published and sold by William Collins and Sons, the Pepys volumes published by Macmillan sold an additional million copies.⁷⁰

Bryant admired the seventeenth-century public and private Pepys as the embodiment of all the qualities, gross and subtle, that together contributed to English individual and cultural ascendancy. Those qualities included Pepys's insatiable sensual appetites; the pleasure he took in life; his unremitting curiosity; his psychological and literary ability to observe, fathom, and describe people's motivations and behaviour; and, most importantly, his absolute commitment to duty. Bryant saw Pepys as an altruistic and judicious statesman, an inquisitive scholar, an honest and self-revealing writer, and an efficient administrator who managed to live a good and rewarding life. Samuel Pepys was especially a heroic figure to Bryant because of his selfless, effective, and unceasing dedication to public responsibilities. Contemporary public figures, in the lacklustre 1930s when Bryant wrote this study, could not, he felt, rise to the standards that Pepys had set and met. When he saluted Pepys, Bryant also saluted his own better self.

In part, Bryant wanted to rehabilitate Pepys as an exemplary Tory, maligned by subsequent historians whose heroes were Whig. Another motive was that it allowed Bryant to call attention to Britain's history as the exceptional story of an oceanic Empire whose epic beginnings and continued progress depended on British military and commercial mastery of the seas.⁷¹ It was under Pepys, Bryant believed, that Britain learned to walk upon the waters. In the concluding volume, *The Savior of the Navy* (1938), written as Britain was threatened by German sea power, Bryant emphasized the historical and deterrent role of the navy in Britain's defence. He also stressed two of his favourite themes: the need of an efficient and apolitical civil service, whose origin he ascribes to Pepys; and his regret for the consequences of the Revolution of 1688, a necessary and perhaps inevitable step in the evolution of the country. The 1688 Revolution, he claimed, weakened the authority of the monarchy unduly; and, worse still, it exposed the English people to 'that unchecked greed and exploitation of the poor by the strong which accompanied the industrialisation of the next century'.⁷² Three decades after Bryant completed his Pepys, Britain stood poised to enter the Common Market, and Bryant opposed the Conservative Party to plead that Britain was still an oceanic power allied by common language, common historical traditions, and common causes to the Commonwealth rather than to Europe.⁷³

Although Bryant was certainly valued by the Conservative political elite for his skill in furthering their common causes, and by a conservative public, who read his books and essays and listened to his talks, he never influenced specific policy because his prescriptive views rarely met particular problems. No matter what subject Bryant discussed, his fixed purpose was to appeal to those national sentiments which revered an organic society based upon robust national character. His historical writing, his essays and leaders in newspapers and journals all over Britain, and his columns in the *Illustrated London News* presented a chronicle of unique national selflessness in which war was an instrument of unity that rejuvenated all that was best in the British temperament. When, in 1666, the French and Dutch appeared to be winning their war with England, a 'confident' country rallied and the enemy was defeated.⁷⁴ While critics of the government saw the British retreat from Dunkirk in 1940 as a forewarning of Britain's possible defeat by Nazi Germany, Bryant's natural audience lay with those who thrilled to his description of a 'miracle' which restored the British army and 'revived the nation's soul. It made the islanders realize themselves, to know, under God, of what they were capable, and to resolve to do it.' Although Britons faced destruction: 'Doubts, divisions and sloth, blindness and fear, fell away from them at that hour like the mists of morning at the rising sun. Britain was herself again.' The England of the 'Peace Pledge Union and the dole queue had been changed in a flash of summer lightning into the England of Nelson and Alfred'.⁷⁵ Patriotism, war, disasters, and the Empire inspired Britons to unite and subordinate themselves to a greater good.

Despite proclaimed insistence upon wartime unity by Bryant and many others, Sonya Rose has demonstrated persuasively that there was no agreement upon what citizenship meant or who were the full participants in the fight against a common enemy.⁷⁶ This confusion may account in great part for Bryant's popularity during and immediately after the war. Bryant nurtured and sustained the trope of one people united in their heroic self-sacrificing cause in both his historical and polemical work. His emphases on individual and national pride, patriotism, social justice, order, and security of work, housing, and place resonated widely especially in the middle-brow, middling audiences that jealously and uneasily identified with the values and traditions he advocated. That audience, enhanced by diverse groups seeking a good read, flocked to the bookstores to buy his books. Bryant used history to recreate the sense of national identity, which he felt was under threat from materialism, individual selfishness, an absence of genuine local communities, social anomie, and the irresponsibility of privileged groups. By the time of his death in 1985 he was still writing historical books to convey his conservative faith and two more, in process then, were issued posthumously.

After the Second World War, Bryant gradually lost his Conservative and conservative audiences because rhetoric alone could not provide the kinds of simplicity, security, and predictability that he assured his public they ought to have. While Bryant continued to press his inter-war remedies, the Conservative

Party responded to the challenge of Labour by modifying their programme to appeal to a larger, forward-facing electorate who expected to benefit more from the future than from a revival of a past in which so many had so little part. In 1946, when it was clear that agriculture would never be able to fulfil British demands for consumption, Bryant still insisted that the importation of food be curtailed and agricultural independence encouraged. He was more in tune with both Conservative and Labour ends in his argument that since the highest form of wealth was 'human health, skill, virtue and industry', the slums had to be cleared because 'in the long run' they created 'inferior human beings'. His remedy for sub-standard housing was the benevolent, if vague, plan to provide, somehow, for 'every British family' to live in an 'adequate house in a comely environment with a near-by garden or allotment for growing fresh vegetables and flowers. Remembering what we achieved between Dunkirk and D-Day, I can see no reason why, if we make up our minds to it, we should not achieve this.' Even more vaguely, he continued to champion an educational system, appropriating some of the language, if not the larger message, of the Beverage Report, in which the 'development of skill and virtue was a continuous process from cradle to grave'.⁷⁷

Bryant's greatest weakness—his incapacity to understand the minds and motives of people whose assumptions and ideas were entirely different from his own—was also an enigmatic strength, because the real world rarely intruded on his obsessive pursuit of causes he was entirely convinced were right. His simplistic reading of the Left as a homogeneous and unified group encouraged him to mount campaigns against a supposedly monolithic political, cultural, and intellectual enemy. 'Bloomsbury', 'intelligentsia', Fabians, Labour leaders and politicians, and university dons were lumped together indiscriminately. One of his consistent accusations against the Left was that they were infuriatingly and futilely 'dogmatic', while conservatives realistically and practically relied upon 'commonsense'. Another grievance was about the Left's intellectual 'foreignness', which meant they had no understanding of the historical evolution of England.⁷⁸ The Left was better understood by Butler, Macmillan, and Eden as made up of fluctuating, discordant, and incompatible interests, unable to coalesce and act effectively when Labour had a chance to exercise power in 1924 and 1929.

Another of Bryant's failures to appreciate seismic shifts in domestic and international affairs was especially conspicuous in his fatal incomprehension of the character and ends of Hitler and Nazi Germany. After Hitler took the Sudetenland, Conservative and Labour politicians both began to repudiate Chamberlain's strategies. Bryant did not join them. In mid-November 1938, he urged Sir Joseph Ball, Director of the Conservative Research Department after 1930 and a close adviser to Neville Chamberlain, to speed up the publication of Chamberlain's peace speeches, which Bryant edited and introduced. He explained opposition to the prime minister's appeasement policies as the 'perfectly appalling confusion of so-called intelligent opinion'.⁷⁹ Whenever Bryant encountered

opposition to his views, his response was to explain them to as many listeners as possible so that their rectitude would become undeniable. Since Bryant recognized that he could not do this alone, he used all his connections to cajole, entreat, praise, and organize the great on the Right who wanted to do what was politically right. Bryant offered them the opportunity to participate in schemes that would counter the influence of the Left and extend that of the Right. Although he despised the ideology of the Left, he envied their abilities to organize and attract adherents. It never occurred to him that the attraction, especially in the economically difficult inter-war decades, might lie in the optimistic, egalitarian, and redistributionist ideology of various Left groups as much if not more than in their organization.

To defend his country from what he saw as corrosive assaults from the Left, Bryant devoted enormous amounts of time and energy to two connected projects meant to preserve the national character of Britain's traditional organic society. The first venture into which he plunged wholeheartedly was the Bonar Law College at Ashridge in Hertfordshire, purchased by Sir John Davidson, the Conservative Party Chairman in 1928, and opened for adult education the following year. Bryant, appointed Secretary of the Education Department in 1928, created the five broad areas of curriculum—Conservative principles, citizenship, economics, the history of modern industry and agriculture, and the British Empire—that the College adopted.⁸⁰ In 1930, he became editor of its quarterly, the *Ashridge Journal*, and subsequently the Director of Studies and a governor, remaining involved with the College until it was taken over by the Conservative Central Office in 1954.⁸¹ Although enrolments and finances were never what they were expected to be, the Conservative Party continued to support the College secretly while the College tried to give the impression that it was an autonomous body serving national and not Party ends. Bryant attempted to catch an audience wider than Conservative stalwarts, by appealing to those likely to adopt and advocate the ideas and policies of the Right. To strengthen that appeal Baldwin, seen by many as a national figure, was induced to become chairman of its governors. Ashridge, Bryant hoped, would create 'an intelligent reading public of the right and a school of popular writers to cater for it'.⁸²

The second project, explicitly aiming at the 'right' reading public, was the National Book Association (NBA), a largely unsuccessful effort to rival the 57,000 subscribers to Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club.⁸³ Bryant edited and produced NBA books from 1936 to 1939, but was never able to exceed a subscription of 5,000.⁸⁴ In addition to the paucity of readers, and constant financial problems, Bryant had to compete with the Right Book Club (RBC), founded in 1937. Although an advertising brochure boasted of 20,000 members, the *Observer* credited the RBC with 10,000 in April 1937.⁸⁵ More importantly, in terms of Conservative backing, the RBC had an endorsement from Austen Chamberlain. Its 'patrons' were prominent members of the Right, including Ernest Benn, Waldorf Astor, Duncan Sandys, Viscount Halifax, and Lady Mount Temple.

Anthony Ludovici, active in almost every extremist group on the Right, was one of the three 'selectors' of books.⁸⁶ Ewen Green, in his perceptive essay 'The Battle of the Books,' indicated that the principal supporters of the RBC and the NBA shared very similar views on appeasement as well as an interest in Ashridge, and that many of them endorsed both clubs, although the RBC received far more official Conservative Party encouragement.⁸⁷ Unlike the NBA, which commissioned and published its own books through Hutchinson's, the RBC chose its book of the month from different publishers and offered them in copies reprinted by Foyles at a substantial discount from the original published price.⁸⁸

In an effort to attract greater Conservative support, Bryant prevailed upon his friend Baldwin to become president of the NBA upon his retirement in the spring of 1937. Baldwin was a logical choice because he had always attempted to reach beyond Party, as did Bryant. In May Davidson assured Bryant that Baldwin would 'come out hot and strong' for the NBA as soon as he left office and would then personally approach such men as H. G. Wells or Bertrand Russell, whose names Bryant had suggested as possible authors, because he wanted co-operation 'from as wide a circle as possible who are all prepared to agree that the common enemy is Communism and that those who stand for democracy must stand together'.⁸⁹ When Bryant prepared Baldwin's presidential address to the NBA at Christmas 1937, he wrote that the NBA was formed as a 'co-operative venture to seek for the truth, at a price within the reach of all and in a form which we believe to be national, unbiased and free from propaganda'.⁹⁰ Hutchinson's advertisement for the NBA in February 1938 followed Bryant's and Baldwin's purposes in having as its 'main object' the combating of 'all dangerous and revolutionary propaganda from whatever source . . . Books are designed to appeal impartially to all, whether Liberal, Labour, or Conservative'.⁹¹

Seventeen months later, in July 1939, Baldwin severed his connection with the NBA. Philip Williamson finds that Baldwin's resignation was caused by the accusations of fascist sympathies against Bryant;⁹² 1939 certainly was a year in which Bryant's pursuit of an accord with Germany, in spite of the atrocities the Nazis were committing against their neighbours, ethnic groups, and their own people, became increasingly conspicuous. Bryant's continued pro-Nazi activities stood in marked contrast to other appeasers, such as Chips Cannon and Lord Mount Temple, who had turned against Germany by the end of 1938, or those who, like Lord Londonderry, Sir Philip Gibbs, George Ward Price, the foreign correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, or the journalist Francis Yeats-Brown, could not accept the invasion of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939.⁹³ Bryant visited the Nazi leadership in July 1939, wrote constantly to the government urging acceptance of Hitler's expansion in Europe; deepened his contacts with notorious, but well-placed extremists, such as Lord Brocket; and wrote *Britain Awake* and *Unfinished Victory*, all fraternal towards the Nazis, although that friendliness was tempered by some criticism of their treatment of Jews.

The final book to be published by the NBA in 1939 was none other than an abridged edition of *Mein Kampf*. Bryant attempted to justify that decision by explaining to Chamberlain that the selection committee, chaired by Geoffrey Ellis, chose it unanimously not 'of course' because they agreed with it, 'but because it is a work which every political student would naturally want to read and to possess, if possible, in a cheap edition'.⁹⁴ Privately, in an editorial note to Ellis, Bryant wrote that whether 'we like it or not', *Mein Kampf* 'has caused one of the great revolutions in history'. It was not important, he went on, for its prophecies about foreign affairs or for 'its harsh intolerant attacks on Jewry'. Instead it was the 'social reform' Hitler proposed to 'restore rights and social justice'. It is surely revealing of Bryant's ideological obtuseness that he should laud Hitler's proposals as allegedly close to the old 'ideal of English Toryism, abandoned in favour of bourgeois laissez-faire in the nineteenth century but later restarted by the great Hebrew genius of Disraeli'.⁹⁵ It never occurred to him that he was making a singularly inappropriate juxtaposition of both ideas and men.

NOTES

1. David Grosvenor, 'The British. What Makes Them What They Are', *Daily Express*, 14 September 1967. Pamela Street, Bryant's secretary, further documents the frantic pace of her employer's life in her eulogistic *Arthur Bryant. Portrait of a Historian* (London, 1979).
2. Arthur Bryant Papers, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London (hereafter ABP) C51, untitled typescript, written when Bryant was 40, apparently to introduce the American version of *The English Saga* in 1941, 3.
3. In his column in the *Illustrated London News* (hereafter *ILN*), beginning in 1936, the Great War and its regrettable consequences were Bryant's template for what to do and what to avoid doing in the present and future. See, e.g., 5 March 1938, 372; 21 October 1939, 602; 25 November 1939, 768; 9 December 1939, 846.
4. Arthur Bryant reviewed his career in 'On Discovering the Past Was Real', *The Lion and the Unicorn. A Historian's Testament* (London, 1969).
5. ABP, Bryant to his mother, 8 June 1919, B13; *ILN*, 9 October 1965, 20.
6. Julia Stapleton, *Sir Arthur Bryant and National History in Twentieth-century Britain* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), ch. 10, for an appreciation of Bryant's audiences. See, too, her 'Sir Arthur Bryant as a 20th-century Victorian', *History of European Ideas*, 30 (2004) 217–40.
7. Bryant's work for *ILN* is discussed in Soffer, 'Political Ideas and Audiences: The Case of Arthur Bryant and the *Illustrated London News*', in Nancy Lo Patin (ed.), *Political Life and Political Lives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007). See, too, Stapleton, *Sir Arthur Bryant*, 8–10.

8. ABP, Bryant's Articles P 8 Box 1 of 4 very large boxes. Bryant contributed to local conservative newspapers such as the *Greenwich Gazette: The Official Organ of the Greenwich Conservative Workers' Corps*. A typical contribution was something like a 'Message from Mr. Arthur Bryant', 1:1, 38. This was a new organization founded by Edward Mayer to allow the real needs of ordinary citizen to be represented in the Conservative Party. In an editorial, the purposes are explained as the mobilization and activation of 'anti-socialists' opinion in the constituency of Greenwich': Mayer wanted to 'gather together the convinced, To educate the unconvinced, To inform Socialists of the good work of the National Government and the objects for which it stands.'
9. Stapleton, *Sir Arthur Bryant*, 7.
10. Rosa Maria Bracco, *British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919–1939* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1993), 197.
11. For the contents, audience, and influence of *If Winter Comes*, see Billie Melman, *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties* (London, 1988), ch. 3. Hutchinson, who had started as a medical student, became a journalist, editor of the *Daily Graphic*, 1912–16, and a novelist. Warwick Deeping was a Cambridge-educated doctor who served in the Great War in the Royal Army Medical Corps. In *If Winter Comes* (London, 1921), 1, the anti-hero, Mark Sabre, says 'The conventions are all right, moral, sound, excellent, admirable' so long as they are not confronted. 'But come out and stand in front of them and they'll . . . smash, grind and devour you.' The war veteran in *Sorrell and Son* (1925) (London, 1947) begins the novel by recalling how, for the past three years since his demobilization, life had been 'like some huge trampling beast, and he—a furtive thing down in the mud, panting dodging, bewildered, resentful and afraid'. Once a gentleman and a captain in the service, Sorrell has lost everything. I am very grateful to Billie Melman for calling my attention to these novels.
12. Andrew Taylor, 'Speaking to Democracy: The Conservative Party and Mass Opinion from the 1920s to the 1950s', in Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Mass Conservatism. The Conservatives and the Public since the 1880s* (London, 2002), 79.
13. Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday, 'Introduction', *Mass Conservatism*, 2.
14. Arthur Bryant, *The Spirit of England* (London, 1982), 221, 226, 228–9.
15. ABP, C 65, BBC Correspondence: Between 4 July and 26 September 1938, B went through 13 of Harold Nicolson's 'past Week' broadcasts to identify pro-Czech, anti-German, anti-Chamberlain, and anti-Munich agreement bias, and then prepared a report for R. C. Norman, Chairman of the BBC, to ask that he correct the anti-government position.
16. See Stapleton's very interesting discussion of Bryant's pageants in *Sir Arthur Bryant*, ch. 3.
17. A. L. Rowse, 'Sir Arthur Bryant', *Friends and Contemporaries* (London, 1989), 119. Rowse was reporting what Bryant's publishers had allegedly said.
18. ABP, Bryant's Academic correspondence: BP E1–2. Bryant corresponded with H. G. Wells, well on the Left as well as with A. L. Rowse, a radical and virulent

anti-appeaser. Rowse became a close friend and dedicated his *The Early Churchills, an English Family* (New York: Harper, 1956) to Bryant.

19. Sir Francis Morgan Bryant had been secretary of the elite Confreres, for 35 years. In 1951 Bryant joined Grillion's Club, a prestigious dining club founded in 1812, and was joint secretary for 30 years. The St. John and British Red Cross Hospital Library Department tried to provide adequate library service for hospital patients.
20. A. J. P. Taylor was one of his few contemporaries, beginning in the 1940s, to attack him for both his historical writing and his political views. See esp. 'A Nazi Apologist', a review of *Unfinished Victory* in the *Manchester Guardian*, 9 February 1940.
21. ABP, Bryant's Correspondence with Academic Historians H–O, Hearnshaw to Bryant, 10 December 1931, thanking him for *Charles II* and praising it extravagantly.
22. ABP, Bryant's Correspondence with Academic Historians H–O, Hearnshaw to Bryant, 21 January 1938.
23. Keith Feiling, 'Review of *Charles I*', *The Observer*, 27 October 1935, 4.
24. ABP, Bryant's Correspondence with Academic Historians E 1, F, Feiling to Bryant, 10 June 1954.
25. See Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951–1964* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 145.
26. Sir John Davidson Papers, Parliamentary Archives, HL/DP/225–232/226 (hereafter HL/DP). Davidson's secretary, Miss Hanson, to Bryant, 17 July 1936, sending him a rough draft of a letter for Baldwin's signature so that Bryant could 'apply the polish'. Davidson was then Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin. For Bryant's correspondence with Baldwin, see ABP.
27. When Davidson came to speak at Ashridge, he wrote to Bryant asking for suggestions for his speech and on 16 June 1936 Bryant replied that he was preparing them. HL/DP/225–232/226. See, too, ABP, Correspondence with Conservative Central Office, 1936–9, NBA, Bryant C41: Douglas Hacking to the Conservative Duchess of Atholl, known to many Conservatives as 'the red Duchess', for her support of the Spanish Government against Franco.
28. ABP, Bryant C41: Butler expressed his appreciation for Bryant's lecturing at Political Schools in different parts of the country and invited Bryant to his flat. Butler to Bryant, 26 October 1937 and 23 November 1937. Bryant 9 November 1937 to Hacking recounts that Baldwin has asked Bryant to prepare his speech for him.
29. ABP, C68. See, too, the correspondence between Bryant and Baldwin and between Bryant and Neville Chamberlain in the ABP.
30. ABP, B 50, RHS Crossman to Bryant, 10 October 1939: Crossman wrote that 'deep though our political differences were in pre-war days, we have common ground now to fight on' and in his response to Crossman, 13 October 1939, Bryant agreed to co-operate. When *Unfinished Victory* came out, Crossman wrote to Bryant,

29 January 1940, that he found the book 'dangerous' because 'its sympathy with Germany seems to me indiscriminate. You don't stress the very large part played by men like steel industrialists, the Hindenburg clique, etc., in pushing Hitler by the back door into power.' In spite of this disagreement, Crossman continued to have relations with Bryant.

31. ABP (Political) C 70 Leo Amery 1939–55: Amery to Bryant, 5 December 1941, said that he was happy to support Bryant's candidacy for parliament.
32. Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM), Montgomery Collections, Ancillary collections 8: Field Marshall Montgomery Letters to Bryant, 1945–70, 20 June 1948, Montgomery asked for Bryant's help on a draft of a talk to 3,000 mothers of the Empire Mother's Union scheduled for 15 July. Bryant responded on 24 June with corrections and clarifications. Much of this correspondence has to do with *Triumph of the West* in which Montgomery was one of the chief figures. Folder: later additional deposit, Mar. 1956 to Nov. 1960: Montgomery wrote to Bryant on 18 Dec. 1962, supporting Bryant's stand on the Common Market. Whenever new books by Bryant appeared, Montgomery wrote to praise them.
33. IWM Ancillary collections 7, Alanbrooke letters, Sir Arthur Bryant 1. Bryant worked on these books, advertised correctly as written with Alanbrooke's co-operation, 1955–7. Alanbrooke also depended upon Bryant for help in writing his memoirs. Bryant and Alanbrooke Correspondence: Folder 1955, Allanbrooke to Bryant. 7 August 1955: 'I feel a tremendous debt of gratitude for all you have said about what I did, and this gratitude is all the deeper owing to the fact that in all you have written you have shown such a wonderful understanding of what I was trying to achieve and of the difficulties I met. It is a wonderful feeling having a historian dealing with one's diaries who has such astute strategic sense and such wide vision . . . many thanks for a perfect visit.' Allanbrooke to Bryant, 19 February 1955: Allanbrooke was afraid that in the 1944 diaries Bryant would find that Allanbrooke was 'rather embittered against Winston, I do hope that you will make allowances for the fact that they were written at a time when I was getting very tired, and also at a time when repeated doses of Pneumonia . . . made him very difficult to handle. There is no doubt that at this time my criticism of him was often unkind and unfair.' When the two volumes appeared, they became notorious for their attack on Churchill's competence.
34. In part, *A Thousand Years of British Monarchy* (London, 1973) was Bryant's expression of gratitude for that connection.
35. Janet S. K. Watson claimed in *Fighting Different Wars. Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 307–8, that 'For many of the British men and women who were active participants in the First World War, the languages of honour patriotism and self-sacrifice for a greater good never lost their currency . . .'. For a different view, see J. M. Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) and *Sites of memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919–1946* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1994).

36. Bryant, 'The Painful Plough', taken from columns on 29 November 1958, 19 August 1961, and 3 October 1963, in *The Lion and the Unicorn. A Historian's Testament* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 265; *idem*, *Pageant of England (1840–1940)* (New York: Harper Bros., 1941), 311, 329. Published in England as *English Saga (1840–1940)* (London, 1940).
37. *ILN*, 27 March 1937, 520; 5 March 1938, 372.
38. *ILN*, 27 March 1937, 520.
39. Bryant, 'An Analysis of Modern English Politics for the Plain Man', review of Douglas Jerrold's *England*, in the *Sunday Times*, 28 April 1935. In 1934 Jerrold, who became the literary editor of the conservative *New English Review*, had joined the January Club of Mosley supporters and in 1937 organized support for Franco in the Spanish Civil War.
40. Reynolds M. Salerno, *Vital Crossroads: Mediterranean Origins of the Second World War, 1935–1940* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).
41. HL/DP/225–232/226: Bryant to Davidson, 23 July 1936. Bryant objected to Macmillan's lack of passionate involvement in Conservative causes: 'what a curse the lofty detachment of a FELLOW LIKE Macmillan can be and what is the use of having the right ideas if one always acts in a way that makes it impossible for oneself or anyone else to carry them out!'
42. *ILN*, 30 July 1938, 182.
43. ABP, Bryant's Correspondence with Academics; Sir Ernest Barker to Bryant, 7 October 1938.
44. See Joshua Esty, *A Shrinking Island. Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); and John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses. Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939* [1992] (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 36–7.
45. Arthur Bryant, *Stanley Baldwin; A Tribute* (London, 1937), 88–9.
46. *Ibid.*, 104.
47. *ILN*, 29 July 1936, 340.
48. ABP, Observer Book Reviews, 1938–40: 'Up the Garden Path. Political Alice-in-Wonderland', John Scanlon's *Very Foreign Affairs*, Scanlon was a worker on the Clydeside, while Bryant had been at Harrow.
49. See, e.g., the collection of 'young' Conservative essays, David Makgill Crichton (ed.), *Tory Oxford. Essays in University Conservatism* (London, 1935) and esp. Patrick Anderson, 'A Freshman Looks at the Political Clubs', 19, and John Dundas, 'Conservatism: Its Theory and Past', 39. The only one of the authors to achieve a distinguished career in the Conservative Party was John Boyd-Carpenter, made a life peer in 1972 as Baron Boyd-Carpenter; one other, Ronald Bell, became a Conservative MP.
50. *ILN*, 8 February 1941, 166. Bryant's public admiration for Churchill, expressed often in the *ILN* after 1940 was repudiated in the late 1950s in his controversial two-volume history of the Second World War, *The Turn of the Tide* (London, 1957) and *Triumph in the West* (London, 1959), based on Bryant's skewed appropriation of

the diaries of Field Marshall Allanbrooke. A more reliable and more complete version of the Alanbrooke diaries has been published and introduced by Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman in *War Diaries, 1939–1945: Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke* (London, 2001). For a full and revealing examination of the historiography dealing with Churchill, see John Ramsden, *Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and his Legend since 1945* (London, 2002).

51. *English Saga, 1840–1940* (London, 1941). The frontispiece is a quote from Jeremiah 30 to the effect that the British are God's chosen people and He will punish those who oppress them. Bryant, in company with a substantial number of his countrymen and women, believed that God was British. The book was written as Britain went to war against Hitler.
52. Arthur Bryant, 'The Painful Plough', 29 November 1958, 19 August 1961; 3 October 1963, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 265.
53. Harold Begbie, *The Conservative Mind*, 52, 148, 152. The Conservative leaders interviewed by Begbie were: Stanley Baldwin, who became Prime Minister again when the Labour government fell later in 1924; Sir Robert Horne, who headed the Ministry of Labour and defeated the Miners' Strike; Edward Wood, who became Lord Irwin in 1924 and Viscount Halifax in 1934; Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister in 1937; the Duke of Northumberland; Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame, former President of the Board of Trade; Sir Douglas Hogg, former Attorney-General and father of Quinton Hogg; Captain Algernon Fitzroy, Deputy-Chairman of Ways and Means; Sir William Joynton-Hicks, MP; and Oliver Stanley, MP, 2nd son of Lord Derby.
54. Arthur Bryant, *ILN*, 5 May 1940, 578. Bryant was not only thinking about the war and similar sentiments occur throughout his weekly columns from 1936 through the 1960s.
55. ABP, I. 'Why am I A Conservative?' *The Imperial Conservative (A Newsletter)*, taken from Ludovici's *A Defence of Conservatism: A Further Text-book for Tories* (1927), II. 'The Test of Reality', (April 1931). Richard Griffiths, in *Patriotism Perverted. Captain Ramsay, the Right Club and British Anti-Semitism 1939–40* (London, 1998), 53 n., identifies Ludovici as 'a fervent anti-Semite', who, under the pseudonym 'Cobbett', wrote *Jews, and the Jews in England* (1938).
56. *ILN*, 4 July 1936, 4. Bryant had not yet succeeded the dead Chesterton.
57. HL/DP/225–232/226: Brochure for a house party at Oxford, 3–13 July 1936.
58. Bryant, *The Spirit of Conservatism* (London, 1929), 7.
59. *ILN*, 5 September 1936, 380.
60. Bryant, *Pageant of England (1840–1940)*, 329. See, too, 'Needs of Social Man', (October–November 1941), in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 115.
61. Bryant, 'Target for Tomorrow', the *Sunday Times*, 23 January 1944.
62. Bryant, 'The Preservation of Liberty' (extract from an address) Part II, Ashridge *Journal*, 127 (May, 1946). See, too, Bryant, 'After the Tumult', the *Sunday Times*, 9 June 1946, where he argued that good men are 'made by good homes, good food and good education'. The building of houses and not 'concrete rabbit-hutches, with

space, amenity and dignity, is as important to us as a nation as the building of tanks and aircraft was during the war’.

63. Bryant, ‘Needs of Social Man’ (October–November 1941), in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 115–16. For similar views, see Eustace Percy, ‘The Conservative Attitude and Conservative Social Policy’, Eustace Percy *et al.* (eds.), *Conservatism and the Future* (London, 1935), 10–15.
64. Bryant, ‘Needs of Social Man’, 117.
65. Bryant, *The Spirit of England* (London, 1982), 221–8.
66. Bryant, ‘Community Centres’, *The Ashridge Journal*, 137 (March 1947), 1–3.
67. *ILN*, 25 August 1936, 136.
68. *ILN*, 20 September 1941, 357.
69. Bryant, *King Charles II* (London, 1931), p. xii. Bryant acknowledged his great debt to Feiling’s ‘brilliant’ work in the period, p. xi.
70. Bryant, *The Man in the Making, 1663–1669* (London, 1933), *The Years of Peril, 1669–1683* (London, 1935), and *The Saviour of the Navy, 1683–1689* (London, 1938). William Collins and Sons, according to Lord Blake, reported that that they had sold more than 2 million copies of Bryant’s works. These figures were reported by Lord Blake at Bryant’s memorial service in Westminster Abbey, 15 March 1985, reprinted as an obituary for Bryant in *England, the Journal of the Royal Society of St. George* [RSG] (1985), 7–8. It is fitting that the RSG, a patriotic society founded in 1894 to promote the English way of life, should have offered their readers Bryant’s obituary because he devoted his entire life to that goal. For an account of the memorial service, see Stapleton, *Sir Arthur Bryant*, 1–3. Macmillan also published Bryant’s catastrophic, pro-Nazi *Unfinished Victory* (1939), which had to be pulled from bookshelves.
71. Bryant, *The Years of Peril*, p. vii.
72. Bryant, *The Savior of the Navy*, 353, 381.
73. See esp. ABP, H1, H3–5, for the letters to newspapers and talks Bryant gave to oppose the Common Market on the grounds that it was an alienation of English liberties and autonomy to submit to a potentially authoritarian body; and H6, 1968–72 for Bryant’s leadership of the Common Market Safeguards Campaign and of the National Common Market Petition Council.
74. Bryant, *King Charles II*, 144.
75. Arthur Bryant, ‘The Summer of Dunkirk’, *Daily Sketch*, 3 and 4 June 1943, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 72–3.
76. Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
77. Bryant, ‘The Britain I Want’, *The Daily Dispatch*, 27 September 1946.
78. ABP, C48, General Correspondence c.1936–9, National Book Association Meeting of Committee, 14 July 1938. The subscription form, written by Bryant, describes the policy of the NBA as ‘the Golden Mean, the practical way of commonsense, preserving the traditional values natural to our country and seeking improvement

the whole time by evolution. We present all the necessary facts and realities in a good humoured way to counter the intellectual foreign suppositions and dogmatic catchwords of the Left.'

79. ABP, C41, copy of letter from Bryant to Sir Joseph Ball, 18 November 1938, marked 'confidential'.
80. ABP, C13, Bryant, 'Memorandum,' 13 June 1928.
81. For a brief history of Ashridge and its finances, see Clarisse Berthezene, 'Ashridge College, 1929–54: A Glimpse at the Archive of a Conservative Intellectual Project', *Contemporary British History*, 19: 1 (Spring 1905), 79–93, and *Les Conservateurs britanniques dans la bataille des idées, Le Ashridge Bonar Law Memorial College: 'des conservateurs fabiens' à la conquête des esprits, 1929–1954*, Ph.D. thesis, Université Paris–III/La Sorbonne Nouvelle (2003). See, too, her 'Creating Conservative Fabians: The Conservative Party, Political Education and the Founding of Ashridge College', *Past and Present*, 182 (February 2004). Although Berthezene recognizes Bryant as 'the moving spirit behind the creation and activities of the NBA', 182, she appears unaware of the essential role that he played at Ashridge. That omission may be due to her reliance largely on the Davidson Papers held in PP/HL. Although she does refer to some Bryant Papers, she does not appear to have consulted systematically the large archive in those papers that reveal Bryant's influence upon the foundation and maintenance of the College, and most important, upon his selection of the lecturers who gave courses and talks there.
82. ABP, C39, file 2, typescript, 'Memorandum on the Means of Combating Left-wing and Communistic Propaganda in Literature and in the Universities', 22 April 1937, 4.
83. In 1936, after only one year, the Left Book Club had 40,000 subscribers. By 1939 the figure was 57,000. See Paul Laity (ed.), *Left Book Club Anthology* (London, 2001).
84. ABP, C47, 2. This is the figure given by T. N. Graham, the Principal of Ashridge on 20 November 1938, in typescript 'Confidential. National Book Association. Memorandum re Present Position with Suggestions for Reconstruction.' Hutchinson claimed the number as 5,000; C 44, W. Hutchinson to Sir Geoffrey Ellis, 15 May 1939. Ellis was chairman of Ashridge's Educational Committee.
85. *The Observer*, April 1937.
86. See the Right Book Club brochure in ABP, committed to 'oppose and fight against Socialism, Communism, and Left Propaganda'. For Ernest Benn, see ch. 4. Waldorf Astor, who sat in parliament as a Conservative until he inherited his father's title in October 1919 was, with his wife Nancy, at the centre of the appealing Cliveden Set; Duncan Sandys, who married Churchill's daughter Diana in 1935, served in the Foreign Office in Berlin in the 1930s; Halifax succeeded Eden at the Foreign Office in 1938; Lady Mount Temple was the wife of the Chairman of the Anglo–German Fellowship who resigned that post after Kristallnacht. For Lord Mount Temple, see Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right. British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933–39* (London, 1980), esp. 338–9.
87. E. H. H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, 135–56.

88. ABP, Right Book Club brochure. For books originally published at 7s 6d, 10s 6d and 12s 6d, the Club charged only 2s 6d.
89. Davidson to Bryant, Davidson Papers, PP/HL/NB 28, 14 May 1937.
90. ABP, NBA, Correspondence with Conservative Central Office: Bryant to Hacking, 9 November 1937.
91. Quoted in 'Book Club Boom', *News Review*, 17 February 1938 in ABP, C41.
92. Philip Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin*, 323–4.
93. Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, 338–9; and Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London, 2004), 277–80.
94. Bryant to Neville Chamberlain, 14 February 1939, ABP, C62, Baldwin Correspondence, 1929–60, via Geoffrey Fry, Secretary to the Prime Minister.
95. Bryant, 'Editorial Note', ABP, C48, 1.

5

Arthur Bryant, Appeasement, and Anti-Semitism

Just before Bryant's prestige and influence as a conservative began to decline, in the 1960s, Orville Prescott, the book reviewer for the *New York Times*, described *The Story of England: Makers of the Realm* (1953) as a book which 'glows' with 'a patriotic pride which is never narrow or arrogant. It is a deep and generous emotion born of Sir Arthur's natural love for his native land and reinforced by his conviction of the importance of the contributions English genius has made to mankind.' That is a fair judgement of the book and of what Arthur Bryant desperately wanted to be as both a historian and a conservative spokesman. That eulogy has to be tempered by Bryant's blinkered admiration of Hitler, his unswerving belief in the justice of Hitler's conquests even after he took Poland, his continued attempts to reach an accord with the Nazis through at least the summer of 1940, and, finally, his acceptance of specious justifications for anti-Semitism.

Four years later, in the *Sunday Express*, Robert Pitman asked: 'Who enters the coming year as Britain's most influential author? Inevitably my answer must be: Sir Arthur Bryant.' Pittman went on to say that Bryant was more than a historian because on 'great issues he has become the chosen Laureate of the Establishment. When the views of the Best People are given to the public, it is Arthur Bryant who does the giving.' Then, he points out the discrepancy between Bryant's condemnation of Baldwin's Britain as following the 'policy of the ostrich', by 'allowing totalitarian powers to march to world dominion' and Bryant's own very active support of Baldwin and the foreign policies of the 1930s. 'While the totalitarian powers were stridently marching', Pittman complained, 'historian Bryant was stridently denouncing anyone who wanted to stop them.'¹ Pitman was wrong about Bryant's continuing influence within the political establishment, but he was right about Bryant's approval of appeasement even though Bryant was a genuine patriot committed to the defence and extension of his country's exceptional strengths and virtues, as Julia Stapleton's definitive biography demonstrates.² In 1994, Andrew Roberts claimed that Bryant's *Unfinished Victory* (1940), in conjunction with his private papers, proves that the patriot historian was a fascist travelling much further with Hitler than were the other appeasers, and changing direction only when faced with arrest,

in 1940.³ An understanding of Bryant's position towards Hitler, the Nazis, and Jews turns out to be far more complex than either Pittman or Roberts indicated.

By the time of Munich and until at least Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, almost all conservatives were appeasers, and many preferred fascism as a lesser evil to communism and sought to make peace with Hitler for diverse reasons. But appeasement was hardly a Conservative artifact.⁴ The most important factor for politicians of all parties and the public alike was the vividly remembered horrors of the First World War, and especially home-front memories of German planes bombing Britain then and killing several thousand of people. Unease over the Versailles settlement was also felt widely, as was concern about the effect of rearmament on Britain's economy. After Munich, in late September 1938, the Conservatives' hard-headed view, shared by National Labour leaders such as H. E. B. S. de la Warr and Malcolm Macdonald, National Liberals such as J. A. Simon, *the Observer*, and *The Times*, was that Chamberlain could not have been able to resist the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia. British weakness, in many politicians' minds, meant that *détente* with Hitler was necessary, if unpalatable. Even after war had been declared, 'peace-front' activities continued. Beaverbrook, who would be part of Churchill's 'Kitchen Cabinet', 'flirted' with pacifist socialists such as Richard Stokes, Labour MP for Ipswich, about the possibilities of a negotiated peace as late as the spring of 1940.⁵

Conservatives led by Chamberlain, supported by Feiling and Bryant, argued that peace would buy time for proper rearmament and American involvement.⁶ Other conservatives hoped that peace would allow Hitler and Stalin to disagree and then destroy each other. Then in 1940, many conservatives, including Bryant and Feiling, and members of the Left, too, were still prepared to negotiate peace with Hitler to prevent Britain from the financial strain and loss of life that another destructive war would bring.⁷ Some conservatives, including Bryant, were attracted to fascism in the 1930s because they wanted to believe that the Nazis were trying to imitate British social, economic, and political stability. Eustace Percy, a conservative individualist with whom Hearnshaw would later find common ground in the 1940s, argued in 1935 that the fascists were trying to emulate Britain through a historically compressed effort that accelerated the steady evolution and trial-and-error characteristic of the British process.⁸ An even smaller number, again including Bryant, admired Hitler, even after his invasion of Prague, for imposing order and uniting his nation in a common cause that transcended class interest or selfish individualist ends. Others, even though opposed to Hitler, thought that Germany legitimately needed room to expand in the Balkans. Bryant read the principle of self-determination as a moral mandate for the reunion of the Sudetenland Germans with Germany, as Munich decreed, especially since the Czech government had denied the Sudeten Germans full rights of citizenship. Conservatives and conservatives, publicly and even more so privately, applauded Hitler's stand against Jews, feared as international financial conspirators or as socialist intellectuals.

In order to clarify Bryant's writing and his activities in relation to the rise of the Nazis and the beginnings of war, we have to consider three interdependent factors: the rapidly accelerating chronology of events that begin around 1934 and concluded in the summer of 1940; the conflicting and confusing perceptions of those events and their context to most British participants; and, perhaps most important of all, the political and social circles in which Bryant lived, thought, and worked. His ideas about the avoidance of war were hardly original or unique, but belonged rather to a common currency whose credit was almost exhausted only when war began in late 1939. The relation between his deeply felt patriotism and his desire to avoid war with Germany was complicated by the ambivalent anti-Semitism he shared with so many Conservatives in the circle into which he was born and to which he cleaved. Bryant worked tirelessly to be recognized among the aristocratic ranks as a landed gentleman. He may have written sympathetically and romantically about ordinary people, but he always thought of himself as belonging to a much higher link in the social, cultural, economic, and political chain of being.

Among the aristocrats and public figures who were Bryant's most immediate friends, there was an often reiterated agreement that Hitler's successful nationalism was admirable; that appeasement was the correct response until the Nazi invasion of Poland; and, that Jews were untrustworthy. Jews, especially outside Britain, were suspected of either being linked to a global economic conspiracy, designed to undermine national governments, or to left-wing and revolutionary movements designed to overthrow them. Introspection on Bryant's part, an activity rare for him, as well as some opposing views among his wide circles of acquaintances and friends, some of whom were Jewish, might have prepared him to question all three assumptions about an alleged Jewish global conspiracy. To do so would have meant distancing himself from those who mattered most to him and choosing another career than that of patriotic historian and conservative polemicist.

How should we assess Bryant's committed attempts at appeasement as well as his often strident anti-Semitism at the same time that he was publicly sponsoring Jewish interests and defending Jews against anti-Semitic slurs? If we begin with appeasement, the larger issue in which Bryant's attitudes towards Jews belong, the condemnatory meaning of the term, as a policy of surrender to Hitler and Mussolini through an ineffectual and misguided attempt to avoid war, only gained circulation after the war had begun.⁹ Then, after 1945, when there were horrific revelations about the Holocaust and the whole apparatus for the organized extermination of at least six million Jews and an unknown number of other unwanted peoples, appeasement became a discredited and inappropriate policy for Britain to have pursued. As Ian Kershaw points out: 'Appeasement—avoiding war by making concessions to Hitler—became, once its failure was evident, a dirty word.'¹⁰ The evidence of Bryant's support for Hitler and his government through 1940 in both his published work and in

his private papers is undeniable but problematic because it belongs to a period in which the great majority of the population on both the Right and the Left wanted to avoid war. While many people throughout the political spectrum changed their minds after Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939, Bryant could not give up his conviction that war would destroy Britain and had to be avoided, whatever the cost to other peoples.

Bryant was unable to accept the kind of argument his friend Ernest Barker made about the right side winning in a fair debate. In 1937, Barker told a distinguished Chatham House audience that he was untroubled by the conflicting ideologies then sweeping through the Continent. Communism and fascism were, he said, complex 'oversimplifications' containing both sympathetic and unsympathetic qualities. Fascism supported the nation, private enterprise, and Christianity, as opposed to communism's trust in common ownership, internationalism, and scientific materialism. The most important conflict for Barker was not between political ideologies but rather between reason and anti-reason. That confrontation would be won, Barker was certain, by reason. Barker belonged to that liberal tradition initiated by John Stuart Mill in the mid-nineteenth century, which assumed that when all the competing ideologies stated their positions, the rational would prevail. 'Let the causes have their say', Barker continued, they 'have to express themselves . . . Our continent is a richer thing in the treasures of the mind than it was thirty years ago. It is not altogether evil that great gusts of doctrine should sweep over it and vex it. It may even be counted for good that Europe should be so much one that it can be vexed, like a single sea, by all these embattled winds of conflicting ideologies.'¹¹ Bryant, who took pride in his 'realism' as did the greater number of his conservative friends, believed that he had to act forcefully to make sure that the right side won.

Bryant's motives for appeasement were hardly idiosyncratic or simple. There were many disparate reasons why individuals and groups supported appeasement. On the benign side, there was appreciation of Britain's weak military position and regret about the punitive effects of peace upon the Germans. Both of these inclinations were often accompanied by an increasing revulsion against the brutal events occurring in Hitler's Germany. At the extremist end of appeasement, there was the sinister expression and organization of fascist fellow travelling. Where does Bryant belong on this spectrum?

Together with many other conservatives, liberals and labourites, Bryant felt that an unnecessarily harsh Versailles settlement had plunged Germany into severe economic depression. Bryant was certainly not alone in his belief that the Armistice had punished Germany excessively with the imposition of massive reparations that caused enormous suffering and disunity, and, worst of all, an opening for communism. Moreover, the German people, he argued, were entitled to have their lands returned from the Sudeten and other parts of Central Europe. Benny Morris' study of the weekly press in the 1930s argues that with the exception of *Time and Tide* (and only for late 1938 and 1939) and the

New Statesman, all the other weeklies, across the Left to Right range supported appeasement essentially because they feared war with its new technological innovations in arms—especially in air warfare—and recognized ‘Britain’s geopolitical and military weakness’.¹² In February 1938, Arthur Henderson, who clearly represented the more benign support for appeasement, spoke for the Labour Party when he told the House that there ‘is no hon. Member’ on the Labour side ‘who has any objection to the policy of general appeasement to which the Prime Minister referred’. Henderson was referring to the European situation and not to buying off Hitler. When parliament met on 28 September 1938 and learned of Hitler’s invitation to a four-power conference (Britain, France, Germany, and Italy) at Munich on the following day, the whole house, with the exception only of Harold Nicolson and the Communist MP William Gallagher, ‘rose to its feet in gratitude’.¹³

After the war began, the pursuit of peace continued to attract advocates from the left as well as the right. Among prominent Labour politicians, George Lansbury, a life-long pacifist and the former leader of his Party, in what his biographer describes as his last act as a politician, called for a negotiated peace after the outbreak of the Second World War.¹⁴ For Bryant and so many of his countrymen, Hitler’s reclamation of those lands which were essentially ‘German’ did not seem a sufficiently just cause for Britain entering a war again that they feared as the death of civilization.¹⁵ Hitler appeared to have brought unity and prosperity to his country instead of the divisiveness and disintegration that Bryant saw as the main characteristic of left-wing, revolutionary approaches to social, economic, and political problems. An important reason for Bryant’s approval of Hitler’s Germany was that the Nazis were the ‘National’ and unifying party, which he equated, despite all the evidence to the contrary, with Britain’s Conservatives, although at an earlier stage in their political evolution. It seemed to him a timeless proposition that at the heart of Conservatism and conservatism alike was the unifying concept of ‘nation’. Although Conservatives, and Bryant especially, often maintained that this was a goal transcending Party, they also represented their Party as uniquely equipped to realize it.

If we consider the chronology and context of events, Bryant’s reasons for supporting appeasement so unwaveringly will become more apparent if not necessarily more plausible or acceptable, even by the standards of his own time. In the inter-war decades a new rhetoric had developed that was appropriated by many different groups, with very dissimilar ends, to promote those ideas they believed were best suited to the altered post-Great War circumstances. While the vocabulary appeared to be the same, the messages that it carried were often diametrically opposed. To take one reiterated slogan, a ‘classless national community’, we find it used by Edwardian radical social imperialists such as Milner into the early 1920s; by socialists; by fascists in Britain and abroad; and by conservatives. These different groups not only had disparate purposes but very different contexts of meaning. A ‘classless national community’ for Milner

meant an almost mystical 'noble socialism'; for socialists, a redistribution of wealth to achieve greater social and economic equality; for fascists, a subsuming of the individual within an ultra-nationalist, organic society. British inter-war conservatives, including those inclined to appreciate Hitler's accomplishments in Germany, used that phrase to describe a unified hierarchical society in which everyone had a place and a part.¹⁶

By the first half of 1934, Hitler impressed many Conservatives as a strong leader whose government defeated the anarchic forces of international communism to restore national order and achieve economic recovery. Special Branch reports during those months reveal that 'Conservative Party members all over Britain were flocking into BUF branches encouraged by Lord Rothermere in the *Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Dispatch*.'¹⁷ Besides the British Union of Fascists, there were a variety of pro-fascist organizations such as the Anglo-German Fellowship, the Link, and Captain Ramsay's Right Club. At the end of 1934 in a series at Ashridge, Ernest Tennant's lecture on 'Hitler' reflected the often expressed and increasingly myopic views of the wealthy and politically powerful. The lectures, edited by Bryant, were published that year as *The Man and the Hour. Studies of Six Great Men of Our Time*. Tennant, a British merchant banker and cousin of Margot, Lady Oxford, was frequently in Germany between 1932 and 1938. A close friend of Ribbentrop, Tennant introduced him to Baldwin in November 1933 after J. C. C. Davidson, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and chair of the Conservative Party, heard Tennant's speech at Ashridge and asked for some notes to give to Baldwin. These were not positions shared by the more benign appeasers.

Tennant defended Hitler essentially as a necessary product of his time and as the retaining wall against the floodwaters of Bolshevism. 'Despite some deplorable excesses which have made certain features of the Nazi movement repugnant', Tennant declared, 'I believe that the proper policy for Britain is to try to understand and make friends with Germany. Even for the excesses there is an explanation. Liberal ideas and public freedom of thought and speech are to some extent luxuries in that they require a certain minimum standard of living in which to exist. The general standard of living in Germany has sunk below that level.' Tennant had been in Germany in 1919 and many times thereafter and he was convinced that the situation was so desperate that without a unifying figure like Hitler, 'nothing could have saved Germany from Bolshevism. Hitler was only just in time.' While conceding that the 'story of the first few weeks of the Nazi regime makes ruthless reading', it was 'just to remember that you cannot crush armed Communism with gloved hands'. It was 'unfair to accuse the Nazis of wanton brutality without recognizing that the alternative—a Communist revolution—would have been immensely worse'.¹⁸ To Tennant's credit, he was very disappointed when Hitler broke his word over the Munich agreement. On 31 July 1939, he sent a memo to Chamberlain warning of German intentions towards Poland, but still hoping that British influence might be regained

through friendship.¹⁹ Through Tennant, Ribbentrop met British businessmen and helped to set up the allegedly non-political Anglo–German Fellowship, and its German counterpart the Deutsch–Englische Gesellschaft, in October 1935. The fellowship’s objectives were: ‘to promote good understanding between England and Germany and thus contribute to the maintenance of peace and the development of prosperity’.²⁰ The Anglo–German Fellowship, conspicuous for its success in courting and winning the great but not necessarily the good, had a considerable number of members from both houses of parliament, three directors of the Bank of England and other bankers, generals, admirals, bishops, corporate members such as Unilever and Dunlop and the directors of firms such as Imperial Chemical Industries and the Distillers Company.²¹

Bryant, too, was a member of the Anglo–German Fellowship, but not of the BUF or other avowedly fascist groups. Although dismissing the relevance of fascism to Britain, he worked closely with some members of these groups, including Baron Brockett, to try to keep Britain out of war with Germany. Does that make Bryant a fascist, too? Dan Stone has maintained, interestingly, that a number of British groups and publications, including the Social Credit Movement, Distributism, the Right Book Club and the *English Review* cannot ‘be seen simply as fascists’ though many of them were fellow travellers. All, he contends, ‘tried to introduce at least what they perceived as the beneficial aspects of Nazism into Britain whilst being aware that such a move was counter to the general perception of Nazism as a potentially dangerous ideology’.²² Bryant was not affiliated with any of these groups, and although certainly a fellow traveller long after nearly all the others had understood the real ambitions and inexcusable conduct of Nazi Germany, he never attempted to apply fascist principles to Britain. On the contrary, he mistakenly imagined that the fascists were slowly moving towards the values held historically by the British.²³ Did he ever entertain the idea that fascism might, or ought to, succeed in Britain? In a manuscript written sometime in the 1930s, which compared communism, fascism, and democracy, Bryant argued that since England has never faced a ‘blood-drenched anarchy’, characteristic of a communist revolution, it was absurd, to ‘dress up . . . in a black shirt and make ridiculous gestures with the right arm at the mere sight of Sir Oswald Mosley’. That was hardly rational in England where there was ‘not the slightest present danger of a violent suppression of law, order and liberty by Communists. Indeed it is a very foolish proceeding’.²⁴

That still leaves the question of Bryant’s support for fascism abroad. In the autumn of 1936, when Hitler’s ‘peace’ strategy was ignored, Bryant wrote that the ‘average Britisher’s attitude towards continental Fascism’ was the greatest threat to peace. As a historian, Bryant located the historical origins of Hungarian, Italian, and German fascism in ‘the desperation of peaceable and orderly folk who felt it better to die than to see every decent rule and tradition of civilisation trampled underfoot by the brute force of an unthinking mob’. He conceded that it was ‘in one sense a denial’ but not a ‘suppression of liberty, for liberty had

already ceased to exist'. It has no resemblance whatever, he continued, 'to the foolish, provocative, and completely unnecessary play-acting that passes by the name of Fascism we know in England'.²⁵

Was the point of appeasement pursued by the government, with Bryant's active participation, the postponement or rather the avoidance of war? Scott Newton points out that on 22 July 1939, with the government's approval, Tennant went to Ribbentrop to offer 100 million pounds of credit to the Reich as financial compensation for their abandonment of violence. Tennant's trip followed the discussions begun on 6 June between Sir Horace Wilson and Helmut Wohlat, a channel to Goering, with offers of 'full-blown economic partnership'. Additionally, Tennant and the Labour peer Charles Roden Buxton met Deputy Fuhrer, Rudolph Hess, and other prominent Nazis between 8 and 21 August, with the backing of Wilson, Halifax, and Rab Butler, to offer a settlement for German grievances arising out of Versailles. They proposed to recognize German hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe, and some African territories under a system of international co-operation. By 1940, although Chamberlain refused to negotiate any further with Hitler, other Conservatives did not abandon hope for an agreement with Germany. According to Newton's formidable evidence, throughout the period of the 'phony war', from the defeat of Poland in September 1939 to April 1940, 'Halifax, with the support of that part of the Conservative Party most closely linked to the City, large-scale industry, and the land-owning aristocracy, repeatedly tried to come to an agreement with Germany, Hitler or no.' Moreover, Newton contends, this influential minority of pre-war Conservatives never supported war, and after war was declared they worked sometimes openly and sometimes behind the back of the prime minister to end hostilities and rebuild the 'Anglo-German connection'. This came to an end in 1941 when Britain committed to total war and both the Soviet Union and then the U.S. also declared war against the Nazis.²⁶

Bryant's role in these activities will not be fully known until his papers relating to these events are opened in 2016. What his existing archive at King's College, London reveals is that from 1941, Bryant either concealed or disavowed his earlier attempts at appeasement. He tore up, but didn't discard many private papers that documented some of his activities through the spring of 1940. Those papers were deposited at King's College by his secretary, Pamela Street. When in 1968 the prime minister, Harold Wilson, wanted to send papers about Bryant's visits to Austria and Germany to the Public Record Office for release in 1970, Bryant argued that even though he was acting under Chamberlain's orders, his visit to Nazi Germany might be misunderstood and the release was postponed.²⁷

If we go back to 1935, we can see the evolution of Bryant's thinking about Nazi Germany and the positions that he took. In the spring of 1935, Bryant returned from travelling 5,000 miles through Spain to provide Baldwin with impressions about the Spanish Civil War. Except for Catalonia, he wrote in his report, 'on the walls of every village I visited' there were 'symbols of the hammer and the sickle

and in the streets the undisguised signs of class hatred . . . Everywhere the agents of Soviet Russia are at their work of destruction.’ How odd that in Catalonia, which was certainly on the Left, Bryant should have found what appeared to him as support for Franco. Always mindful of status, Bryant added that the ‘better type of Spaniard feared above everything the permanent alignment of Britain against Germany, the two countries which now that France is also sliding to the left, seem to him to constitute the remaining bulwark of western civilization, against an oriental despotism which, by levelling every institution and ancient standard, is for the second time in history attacking Europe at its two extremities.’ As Bryant and many other conservatives viewed developments in Europe, the Soviets wanted a ‘second world war’ to ruin European civilization, leaving Soviet Russia ‘its residuary legatee’.²⁸

It was not only the threat to the existing world order that Bryant feared. He insisted consistently that the devastating cost of war would prevent investment in domestic social programmes necessary for maintaining both British competitiveness abroad and economic incentive and class harmony at home. From the 1930s through his long life, Bryant praised his countrymen for indifference to politics, and especially international affairs, and for concentration instead on daily life. England’s ‘Statue of Liberty’, he wrote in the *Illustrated London News* in 1936, ‘is the parish pump’. Instead of fighting for a ‘philosophic conception of freedom’, England ‘never stirred for anything but her own material interests’. Justice and the well-being of the greatest number were best served by a community that ‘dispassionately and rationally’ follows ‘its best advantage’. This was, he argued, the best way to help England as well as other nations.²⁹ Bryant never admitted that ‘realism’ could be understood as nationalist opportunism, because he believed that complex times meant that it was often necessary to choose lesser evils to protect the possibility of greater good.

Hitler’s atrocities at home and abroad made Bryant’s view of the Nazi leader increasingly untenable. But Bryant could not abandon his justification of Hitler as a statesman who restored German pride and territory in service to a just cause, if not by the best means, because he welcomed Hitler’s erection of a bulwark against the greater threat of communism. Although Bryant attempted to justify Hitler’s renewal of the German state domestically and his restoration of Germany’s legitimate borders, he was aware of Nazi inhumanities and did not condone them. When writing about the Berlin Olympics in August 1936, he said that the German people ‘are proud and solemn at the thought of her resurrection, and that they regard the humble corporal and housepainter who has achieved this miracle with feelings that amount to adoration’. There were also, he admitted ‘features in the German revival that are disturbing’, although he did not say what they were.³⁰ A year later, he attempted to explain the abridgment of liberties in Nazi Germany by arguing that democracy was not as suited for every country as it had been for England, where people had learned to govern themselves for centuries. Because England was surrounded by the sea, it did

not have to face that threat and could enjoy democracy 'continuously practised and sustained' and the most 'effective of all forms of government, because being in its nature educative, it trains men and women to act for themselves and to take responsibility'.³¹ If Germany was to be secure, her people had to 'submit themselves to a strong, centralized, and swiftly efficient control such as alone can ensure success in war when rapid decisions are essential'. That was the same argument supporters of the British Empire, including Bryant, used to justify their rule of India.

In addition to the prevention of an international communistic victory that he was convinced could spread like an infectious disease from Spain, Italy, and Germany, the other major reason that Bryant offered for avoiding war was to win time to rearm and remedy Britain's military weakness. Before and after the war, Bryant emphasized that his position towards appeasement was governed by a recognition that Britain was unprepared for war. While he did indeed talk about rearmament, he saw it essentially as necessary for Britain's defence rather than as a means of temporarily avoiding war until Britain was ready to fight successfully. A dread of aerial bombardment was magnified by memories of the British victims of German bombing in the Great War, and, for Bryant, by his own participation as a bomber pilot. That dread, widely shared throughout Britain, was reinforced by the images of aerial devastation in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9, and of the Japanese bombing of China after 1937, familiar to every film viewer and newspaper reader in Britain. In March 1936, Hitler had remilitarized the Rhineland and followed that with a 'peace plan' some weeks later, on 31 March, about eliminating the 'dangers of bombing', an increasingly acute concern for the British since the Germans had obtained air parity with them a year earlier. In February 1938, as part of his continuing campaign to forestall a devastating war, Bryant urged readers of the *ILN* to see Hitler as the German people did as 'the restorer of a tortured, disunited and discouraged nation' instead of only 'the outward form—the hysterical raised arm, the absurd and intolerant prejudices about Jews and Aryans'.³² Bryant would not admit to himself, let alone to his various audiences in Government and the public that the 'outward form' was the essential Third Reich. As a peace plan became increasingly problematic, Bryant still welcomed rearmament as a protective act but not as a prelude to world war. He used his access to the *Illustrated London News* audience to tell them that as 'a nation of realists, we are right to rearm, but we shall go down in history not as realists but as suicides if we lightly assume that our recovered strength makes a world war the less a calamity for ourselves and for the rest of mankind'.³³

Bryant took advantage of every outlet available to him to press for peace. His leader on 'The Threat to Peace', in *The Observer* on 13 June 1937, concluded that in 'their insensate hatred of Germany and Italy, and of all who have any truck with these countries, these new war-mongers are like the Bourbons: they forgive nothing, they forget nothing, they learn nothing. Theirs is the one sure way to

bring about another world war while the world is still trying to recover from the last.’³⁴ Two weeks later, Bryant’s leader in *The Observer* defended Franco and elicited grateful letters from German Nazis and from Franco’s supporters in Spain.³⁵ Bryant’s last involvement with Franco was in the winter of 1939, when he wrote to the Marquis del Moral, an adviser to Franco living in England, to tell Franco that Bryant admired him for fighting for all of European civilization. It is a measure of Bryant’s fundamental and intractable misunderstanding of Franco, as of Hitler, that he asked Moral, additionally, to urge Franco to end the war by declaring a unifying political amnesty for everyone not ‘proved guilty of actual crimes’ such as murder and rape. ‘A few like myself know’, he added, ‘and have long known that this is Franco’s intention.’³⁶ In 1940, when H. G. Wells challenged Bryant’s figures on Republican massacres in Spain in the summer and autumn of 1936, which may have been accurate, Bryant replied that he regretted Wells’s disapproval and suggested that their views were ‘not quite so far apart as you must suppose’. Bryant then sent Wells his *Unfinished Victory*, which he admitted would cost him friends and popularity, but to ‘the best of my knowledge it contains nothing that isn’t true, which is why I send it to you’.³⁷ Perhaps the most tragic thing about Bryant’s persistence in promoting peace with Hitler is that he was absolutely convinced that he was doing the right thing for his country.

Many conservatives worried that the economic consequences of the Armistice had made communism appealing to a punished and demoralized German people. In common with other conservatives and Conservatives, Bryant feared communism not just as a harbinger of class war, but even more seriously as creator of world wars, since the explicit aim of communism was worldwide revolution. That meant that the emergence of communism in any one country was a threat to every other country. Even among those who recognized the evils in Germany in the late 1930s, especially the concentration camps and loss of civil liberties, many thought it was worse in the Soviet Union.³⁸ Catholic and Anglican media both supported Bryant’s controversial leader in *The Observer* of 19 September 1937 attacking the League of Nations because they agreed that the League was leaning too far to the Left and saw communism as more threatening than fascism.³⁹ As Tom Lawson has maintained, communism was a worse enemy to many Anglicans than was Nazi Germany because the latter professed ‘Christianity’, while the Soviet Union was aggressively atheistical. Those Anglicans saw the Nazis as an anti-communist force until the Allied declaration of December 1942 acknowledged the Nazi attempt to murder Europe’s Jews.⁴⁰ The increasing persecutions of Jews in Nazi Germany became a major problem by 1937 for Bryant and for others who were attempting to defend Hitler so as to avoid war with him. A negotiated peace with Hitler was, for Bryant, to England’s best advantage, even though that meant overlooking conduct that he recognized as unsavoury, reprehensible, abhorrent, and even, as it undeniably was, genocidal towards the Jews.

'Anti-Semitism' within Britain included a wide divergence of attitudes towards Jews and conflicting policies that Conservatives and conservatives were willing to consider or to pursue. Most myths, no matter how absurd, capture and retain the attention of educated and otherwise reasonable people because they have some small element of credibility. Jews were condemned widely as a dangerous cartel of global bankers and capitalists, while gentile global financiers such as the merchant banker Edwin Tennant, or the head of the Bank of England, Montagu Norman, were admired by some of the same people. In addition to discovering some apparently objective basis for prejudice, the success of a national myth depends upon principles of inclusion and exclusion, between separating 'them' from 'us'. As Austen Chamberlain wrote to his sister in July 1920, after Edwin Montagu, the Jewish Secretary of State for India, suspended General Dyer following the massacre at Amritsar in India: 'A Jew may be a loyal Englishman & passionately patriotic, but he is intellectually apart from us & will never be purely and simply English.'⁴¹ In his pioneering study of long-term anti-Semitism in Britain from 1876 to 1939, Colin Holmes lists the prevailing reasons for fearing Jews: 'Anarchism, Bolshevism, Conspiracy, Crime, Disease, Domination, Economic competitiveness, Exclusiveness, Finance, Freemasonry, Ritual murder, Socialism and White slavery.'⁴²

Very few conservatives, if any, would have subscribed to Holmes's entire list. Instead, many conservatives condemned Jews for two principal reasons: an economic attempt at world dominance; and the leadership of a revolutionary Bolshevism. The charge of economic malfesance was bolstered by Jewish financial involvement in the Marconi and Indian Silver scandals of 1912, and it fed further on the English publication of the fraudulent Protocols of the Elders of Zion in 1920, alleging a plan by the Jews to take over every country. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Jews were stigmatized as the vanguard of left-wing attempts to overthrow individual nations and the British Empire. A denunciation of Jews as simultaneously capitalist manipulators of money and markets and revolutionaries intent on overthrowing those capitalist instruments rested on a class analysis: rich Jews were likely to be manipulative capitalists; while poor Jews tended to be committed revolutionaries. British conservatives also distinguished between 'our' Jews, that is British Jews who were assimilated and exemplary Britons, and, in countries such as Germany and Russia, 'their' Jews who were perceived as a threat to the traditional order both from above and from below.

Bryant also distinguished between Jews in Britain who were an integral part of the British nation, such as Disraeli, and German Jews who had threatened national unity and economic revival immediately after the Armistice. His condemnation of the economic and political activities of German Jews did not include arguments based on 'racial purity'. Among the ideals which looked good on paper but turned out badly, Bryant pointed in 1936 to 'the ugly form of a mob of bullies harrying a defenceless Jew or negro'.⁴³ He also supported Zionism, despite the growing unpopularity of that concept with Conservatives, especially

after the Arab revolt of 1936 led to the controversial Royal Commission Report of July 1937. On 25 July Bryant's weekly leader for *The Observer* accepted the Commission Report in which the Arabs were to be given part of Palestine, but reminded the government that the Jewish 'right to a place in Palestine rests not only on history and a British promise but on their own achievement'. The Jew was promised a national home within Palestine, and not Palestine itself, because of the rights of existing non-Jewish communities there: 'Jew and Arab; each is the legatee of a noble civilisation. Both have suffered persecution and both are indestructible.'⁴⁴ It is revealing that Bryant kept an article from 28 October 1937 about the invitation issued by the staff of the German Embassy to several British journalists to meet their counterparts in the German press. The visitors were told that no article could be published in Germany unless the author held a card from the National Association of the German Press, a safeguard against any Jewish work being published. One of the British group asked what if a certified Aryan handed in an article under their name that was actually written by a Jew. That would never be published the Embassy official replied, because if the Editor 'received something unusually intelligent, he would see the need of making a special investigation'.⁴⁵

While Bryant remained committed to peace for Britain in spite of the predicament of peoples threatened by Germany, unwelcome events intruded repeatedly. Nearly nine months before Kristallnacht, Bryant condemned Nazi 'intolerant prejudices about Jews' in the *Illustrated London News*.⁴⁶ His disavowal of Nazi anti-Semitism did not prevent him from writing in September 1938, one month before Hitler took the Sudetenland, that 'it would seem a far lesser disaster to mankind that the Sudeten Germans should for ever languish under what they consider tyranny or that Czechoslovakia should vanish altogether under the hammer-blows of Hitler's army, than that men of every race in the world should be pitted against one another in an all destructive and, for most of the victims, utterly meaningless conflict'.⁴⁷ Then on 9–10 November, the Nazi government orchestrated Kristallnacht's brutal, murderous, and successful rampage that destroyed synagogues, businesses, and hapless individuals and families in alleged retaliation for the murder of a minor Nazi official in Paris by a Jewish adolescent. The incident was used as an excuse for launching the systematic destruction and exportation of Jews in Germany and Austria, and for the confiscation of their property and assets.

Bryant condemned the German government for 'wreaking vengeance on hundreds of thousands of its own Jewish nationals, already long subject to a cruel persecution', in which it has been 'now long difficult for many Jewish Germans to enjoy anything, even bodily safety'. Acknowledging his consistent efforts to advocate peace with Germany, Bryant admitted that 'this savage outburst against the Jews is like a blow between the eyes'. Britons could not ignore the fate of the Jews, Bryant maintained, because Christ was born and lived as a Jew, and the Old Testament was most responsible for 'all that is finest and most idealistic

in the English character'. Moreover, in modern times, Jews contributed nobly to British life, including the creator of contemporary political Conservatism. If the Germans insist that Karl Marx was a Jew, 'we can reply that so too was the author of "Coningsby" and "Sybil"'. Bryant praised the cultural, commercial, and military successes of the Germans, and regretted that they did not have their just role in the world, but he lamented their inability to see things from other people's perspectives: 'Leaving aside the sickening cruelty inflicted on poor sentient fellow creatures whose only fault has been to be born Jews as Germans are born Germans, the persecution of a helpless minority already down and out can do nothing but alienate those with whom a great power would most wish to be on friendly terms'.⁴⁸ He never questioned the Nazi assertion that a half million Jews then in Germany had, in the decades after the Great War, enjoyed greater prosperity than other Germans, an assertion accepted by the prominent Conservatives who formed Bryant's immediate intellectual and social world.⁴⁹ Even so, he protested after Kristallnacht that the Jews in Germany were 'subject to poverty, humiliation and violence' just as the 70 million Germans had been after the war. He asked if Hitler, 'the great leader' who knew so much suffering himself has forgotten that misery. The 'Jewish leaven is no longer a menace to Germany and the Children of Israel in her midst are poor and powerless and without protection'. History teaches, he concluded, that the ultimate blow 'is on the head of the persecutor'.⁵⁰

Bryant's outrage at Jewish maltreatment by the Nazis sits uncomfortably alongside his acceptance and repetition of anti-Semitic rants, especially in *Unfinished Victory* (1940), about the role of Jews as exploitive capitalist conspirators and Bolshevik revolutionaries in Germany who provoked the treatment, regrettably extreme, that they received and, by inference, deserved.⁵¹ It is interesting that Bryant appeared to be ignorant of Hitler's 'two-hour rant' to the Reichstag on 30 January 1939, the sixth anniversary of his assumption of power, in which he promised to exterminate the Jews who had launched their global power against him.⁵²

When the new year began in 1939, some commentators in the press began to question the Chamberlain government's acquiescence in Hitler's seizure of territory. As a journalist, Bryant was committed on both financial and principled grounds to an untrammelled press. But his aversion to war was so overwhelming that he advocated curbing the freedom of the press. If Britain went to war, he warned, civilization might perish 'and we with it, over some well-nigh unintelligible dispute arising out of a pothouse broil in some obscure village whose name is utterly unknown to nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand out of a million victims of the conflagration it will light. That the game is simply not worth the candle will not by itself prevent its being played.' Once again, he reiterated his position that the Sudeten Germans were exercising their 'right of self determination' in returning to Germany. They were Germanic and were subjected, as result of 'humiliating peace treaty, to the rule of an alien race,

whom, rightly or wrongly, they had been accustomed to regard as a younger and less sophisticated people'. In an appeal to British national sentiment, he asked his readers to imagine that, as a result of a German victory in 1918, the people of Kent had been placed under the majority rule of Belgium.⁵³

On 4 March 1939, Bryant wrote to Halifax asking to meet so that he could talk to him about *Unfinished Victory* that he was then writing to make people realize that Chamberlain's policy was 'based on an idealism that comprehends the facts. The purpose of my book is to remind people who have forgotten them what those facts are, going back . . . over twenty sad years.' Halifax responded that he would be glad to see Bryant at the Foreign Office, and Bryant should telephone Halifax's private secretary for an appointment.⁵⁴ On 25 March, in the *Illustrated London News*, Bryant continued to stress historical, and even moral, reasons for German expansion, but he now qualified that argument by repudiating Hitler's use of force in Poland. Bryant had no difficulty in explaining and accepting the fall of Czechoslovakia. After a period of profound suffering, 'Germany has restored herself to the nationhood that is her manifest and inalienable right. Her frugal, law-abiding and hard-working people, inspired and guided by a great revolutionary leader, have by prodigious efforts recovered all they have lost—all that is except the confidence and good will of the rest of mankind.' In the Czech invasion, Hitler had 'more than a modicum of right on his side' because the Rhineland, Austria, and the Sudeten Germans were lost unjustly by the Treaties of Versailles and Trianon. Even though the Germans restored their lands 'in a rough and lawless manner', their actions could 'be partly defended in a court of abstract law, for Germany had been foolishly denied justice by any other method'. Chamberlain had been right not to go to war to preserve the status quo in Czechoslovakia because England would not have been certain that 'we were fighting for right'. Now Hitler has changed everything by an act 'of force as regardless of the standpoint of others as it was violent and sudden'.⁵⁵

In spite of Bryant's public denunciation of Hitler in the *Illustrated London News*, he went to Berlin on a peace mission in April. Before he left, Bryant wrote a letter to *The Times* on 1 April supporting the British unilateral guarantee of Poland because that proved to the British people that the government's policy was to seek peace by peaceful and mutual means. He repeated his often-stated argument that before Munich, German militarism was the only method 'available to Germany to affect revision of an unjust status quo'. Germany was not to have anything she wants but the British must be aware that the Germans, 'like ourselves a strong race, are so constituted that they can never respect arguments that seem based on fear and weakness. The Prime Minister has now placed our relationship on a new and realist footing. A realization in both countries of what will inevitably produce war, coupled with a readiness to seek an adjustment of existing differences by every other means, is now attainable . . . It is worth trying for the alternative is the almost certain destruction of our common civilization'.⁵⁶ At the same time, he contacted R. C. Norman, chairman of the Board of

Governors of the BBC, 1935–40, asking that he suggest to the prime minister that Hitler be allowed to speak directly to the British people through a translated speech, ‘stating Germany’s case, her needs and her grievances, and that a similar opportunity be given to the Prime Minister to speak direct through the German wireless to the German people’. Norman replied that he had already done that, and had even suggested further that Mussolini, Daladier, and Roosevelt speak.⁵⁷

Bryant was in Berlin on 15 April, shortly after the annexation of Albania by Italy. It is highly unlikely that Ribbentrop would have welcomed him if Bryant had been no more than a well-intentioned private citizen, nor is it likely that the British Foreign Office would have welcomed Bryant’s report upon his encounter when he returned to England. According to his report, Bryant told Ribbentrop that ‘tension in London’ was high and people were expecting that the imminent invasion of Poland, Romania, and the Ukraine would lead to the beginning of a general European war. In reply, Ribbentrop ‘emphasized Hitler’s consistent opinion that friendship and peace with Britain are of the utmost importance. I do not think this need be doubted.’ The Nazi view was, Bryant related, that ‘we interfered far more than we were entitled to do in their sphere and on their frontiers and that we were always trying to block them . . . He and others pointed out how much it would help to improve relations if we could be more reasonable in keeping out of their way just as they did in the case of Ireland and our empire.’ Ribbentrop definitely hinted ‘that a word from Britain to Poland might encourage a settlement and I certainly feel this is more to the advantage of those who want to preserve peace.’ Hitler wanted only the return of Danzig and freer transportation facilities, and was not asking for return of the large amount of territory taken from Germany after war. The German position, for Bryant, was ‘moderate and reasonable’. When Ribbentrop said that Germany was interested in Romania only for trade and had no designs in the west against Holland, France, or Britain, Bryant found that perfectly credible. Bryant accepted Ribbentrop’s assurances, and spoke to the Nazi leader as if they were classmates at Harrow and Ribbentrop had to be reminded to play fairly in a game where all the rules were known and acted upon: ‘I emphasized in particular how much they have let down Mr. Chamberlain and how impossible they have made it for him and his Government to go against public opinion, and that our more vigorous defensive policy was the least to be expected, and that it was up to them to be more friendly and restore confidence before we could be expected to meet again. It was agreed to do everything possible to secure moderation in Hitler’s speech and to open the door for negotiation.’ It seemed reasonable and just to Bryant that a very strong and powerful Germany should recover or incorporate Austria, the Sudetenland, Bohemia, Moravia, Memel, and Danzig. ‘Our chief quarrel seems to be with their method, but there is perhaps some justice in their argument that no results have ever come from asking or from

conferences and other methods. It seems inconsistent to admit many errors in the Versailles Peace Treaty and to put the whole blame on Germany for what has occurred. Their methods and ours will never be the same.' Moreover, he accepted the German version of their dealings with Czechoslovakia and Memel in which the Czechs requested Germany to take over their country while Memel was an entirely voluntary arrangement with Lithuania.⁵⁸

While in Germany, Bryant refused to witness what George Mosse has called the abolition of the 'boundaries between public and private activities . . . just as the dividing line between politics and the totality of life had ceased to exist'.⁵⁹ Those boundaries and dividing lines were among the traditions and institutions that Bryant most cherished about Britain, not to mention as essential to the most desirable individual and communal relations. No matter how many times he visited Nazi Germany, he avoided seeing what would have appalled him. When he was invited to visit a 'Work Camp', he declined and chose instead to visit a local café, which he compared to a Lyons Tea House and to admire healthy young people and their 'cheerful' and 'energetic' elders.⁶⁰ Bryant persisted in preferring a fantastic image of Nazi Germany to the disturbing ruthless reality because such a reality, had he admitted its existence, was irreconcilable with the values that he professed so consistently. What he found most acceptable and attractive about Nazi ideology was that it appealed to what Mosse described as a basic human need for organic community, historical continuity, and 'the shelter of a firm and established morality'.⁶¹

As result of an exchange of letters and conversations between Lord Kemsley in London and Dr Fritz Hesse, of the German Foreign Office's England Committee, on 14 July 1939, Dr Otto Dietrich, the Third Reich's press chief, invited Lord and Lady Kemsley to visit Germany. Lord Kemsley owned the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Graphic* in addition to eight morning, nine evening, and six other Sunday papers, and eight weeklies throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Sir Horace Wilson, acting on behalf of the prime minister, got in touch with Bryant and asked him to write an article from the 'English point of view' to be published in the German press under the signature of Lord Kemsley. Bryant originally declined because of his publishing deadline for *Unfinished Victory*, but when again pressed as the person best fit to write it, he agreed.⁶²

Even though the Kemsley article was never published because Hitler and Stalin signed their non-aggression pact in August, it is worth attention. There is no deviation in the essay from Bryant's sentiments and even phrases that were so widely condemned in *Unfinished Victory*. Yet those views did not prevent the prime minister and Kemsley from soliciting the article and approving of its contents.⁶³ In the essay, Bryant tried to explain to the German people the attitudes of 'ordinary Englishmen' towards them and towards the threat of war. He begins by pointing out the unanimity of British public opinion based in part on the 'occupation of Prague by armed forces less than six months after the Munich agreement', which made them fear Germany's 'old aggressive manner

towards her neighbours'. While it would be possible for ordinary Englishman 'to fight the Germans again: it would certainly never be possible for him to hate them'.⁶⁴ Could he really have meant that given the unprecedented atrocities committed by Hitler's regime or was he attempting to find common ground for peace talks? Even though this essay was designed to demonstrate implicit English good will towards a Germany willing to negotiate a peace, should Bryant have ignored the hateful and hate-provoking tactics and reasoning of the Nazi apparatus which was destroying populations of Jews, gypsies, and other groups deemed undesirable, while trampling on every civilized right of the German people themselves?

Bryant protested that ordinary Englishmen knew little about what was happening in Germany after the Armistice in 1918. When Jews and other refugees fled to England after 1933, 'They naturally did not minimize their sufferings'. Conceding that these refugees did suffer, Bryant assumed that ordinary Englishmen did not understand the 'cause of that persecution', implying once again that Jewish behaviour solicited persecution. Bryant explained further that British Labour 'was antagonized by the persecution of the prominent German Trades Unionists and so overlooked the great and beneficial social reforms that the National Socialist Party was achieving for German Labour. The left-wing Intellectuals who had hitherto advocated friendship with Germany were antagonized by the glorification of military virtues, which they disliked, and by the banishment and imprisonment of their Social Democratic friends. And the man in the street was shocked by the drive against the Jews whom in his own country he had never had any cause to regard as a social menace.'⁶⁵

The article vacillates between reproving the Germans for unacceptable behaviour within and without Germany, and acceptance of the prudence and beneficial consequences of that behaviour. Hitler's 'drastic methods of coping with threatened rebellion in the summer of 1934 by shooting several hundred suspects without the formality of trial appeared to an Englishman as an act of lawless and brutal tyranny that no expedience could justify', Bryant wrote in apparent criticism, but then continued that the 'Führer's rapidity of action may have saved the lives of tens of thousands of peaceful citizens'. Fascism, Bryant could believe even for a year after Hitler's invasion of Poland, was effective in Germany, which had rightfully, if too brutally, regained lands unjustly stripped from her at Versailles, whereas communism was a worldwide movement interested in fomenting civil war in every western country. The British people were unaware, he suggested, that Austrians regarded themselves as Germans, and had wanted union with their fellow Germans or that three million Sudeten Germans, subjected against their will to rule by seven million Czechs, were now happily reunited with their countrymen.⁶⁶ In contrast to the negative stories related by refugees, some British people, relying on the accounts of Englishmen travelling in Germany, began to realize that Germans were 'achieving in their own peculiar, vigorous and sometimes over-rough way much that, for all the

sufferings of the minority in exile and concentration camps (which profoundly shocked them) was benefiting the bulk of the German people and might one day benefit the whole human race'.⁶⁷ Why didn't the concentration camps and the accumulated horrors of Hitler's government shock Bryant? If we consider what Chamberlain and Bryant both said privately and publicly, it did repel them, but they were concerned essentially about the ruinous human and material costs of war. Moreover, Chamberlain saw little hope of reaching a peace while Hitler was in power, or for a military victory by Britain, and hoped instead for a 'collapse of the German home front'.⁶⁸ Neither of them accepted the British Union of Fascists' slogan of 'Britain First'.

When Bryant referred to Kristallnacht in the Kemsley article, there was no indication of the moral outrage he had expressed for his English audience in the *Illustrated London News*.⁶⁹ Instead, speaking for Kemsley, Bryant said that while his countrymen had no particular love for the Jews, the English 'hated cruelty, and the further flight of penniless and frightened refugees, many of them quiet and inoffensive citizens who had committed no crime but that of possessing Jewish blood, brought that cruelty very close home to England'. That such activities had occurred in Germany, nearest to his own civilization, made the Englishman feel that something was wrong with the Third Reich. When Germany annexed Bohemia and Moravia, the English lost faith in the Munich Agreement. Worst of all, those who gained most from 'the lightning blow at Prague were the Bolsheviks and the advocates of world revolution, since the chances of another war were brought infinitely nearer. Then, he explained further, the annexation of Prague caused British guarantees to Poland and Romania and the present chain of defensive alliances. All was not lost yet because 'once the battlefield is clearly abandoned and the council table substituted, the British People and Government will change their temper as wholeheartedly as the German. Now that British opinion has been thoroughly aroused from its native insularity, it will be found to be one of understanding and generous friendship towards kinsman who are ready to extend like understanding and generosity towards Britain'.⁷⁰

In 1939, before the war began, Bryant edited and introduced each of the speeches collected in Chamberlain's *In Search of Peace*. On 24 June 1939, Chamberlain had told a Cardiff audience that 'if confidence could be restored', Britain and Germany 'could well co-operate in developing the resources which still lie latent and which would bring in returns of solid value to us both'. That statement was followed by applause, and Chamberlain went on to say that 'happy future must remain a dream until Germany drops her unjust suspicions and shows that she is sincerely ready to talk reason with reasonable people'.⁷¹ A dream it remained. Chamberlain had made a British guarantee to Poland in an address to the House of Commons on 31 March 1939. Less than a month later, on 28 April, Hitler made a Reichstag speech which renounced the Non-Aggression Pact with Poland and Naval Agreement with Britain. Then, on 21 August 1939, Hitler and Stalin concluded the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, and Hitler

invaded Poland on 1 September. Two days after that Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand declared war on Germany. On 17 September, the Nazis occupied Poland and on 29 September, the Nazis divided that country with the Soviets.

In spite of Chamberlain's declaration of war, on 3 September, Bryant had still not abandoned his determination to secure an accommodation with Hitler that would halt a world war. That determination was shared and encouraged by Rab Butler, then under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, and an opponent of the British treaty with Poland as well as by Horace Wilson, the liaison to the prime minister, and by Halifax.⁷² On 22 July 1940, three days after Hitler made an unacceptable peace offer, Lord Halifax, as foreign secretary, denounced it in an official broadcast speech.⁷³ Until then, Bryant found encouragement for his peace mission. From 1939, Bryant was involved with Henry Drummond-Wolff, a former Conservative MP, who was the son of the founder of the Primrose League. Drummond-Wolff was also a Tory Imperialist, a member of the British Fascist Party, and a friend of Goering. From 1934, Drummond-Wolff had sat on the Committee and Council of the Empire Industries Association (EIA), founded fifteen years earlier to encourage closer economic links between Commonwealth countries. In the month that Britain declared war, the Duke of Westminster and other peers, including the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Arnold, and Lord Rushcliffe, heard Drummond-Wolff read a 'highly defeatist paper' that opposed peace with the Soviets because they were controlled by 'the Left and the Jews'. The group met again on 26 September together with some MPs, including Lord Charles Roden Buxton, the Labour pacifist and Quaker, and his brother Lord Noel Buxton.⁷⁴ For the rest of the phony war, this group collected other Rightist pro-peace advocates such as Lord Aberconway, a member of the delegation which had met Goering in August 1939; Baron Brocket, chair of the Land Union and, before the war, close to Chamberlain; Buckmaster, on the London Stock Exchange Committee; and Baron Sempill, aviator, industrialist, and member of the Right Club; as well as the Conservative MP, Captain A. H. M. Ramsay. By 3 September, the 200 members included Colonel Harold Mitchell, vice-chairman of the Conservative Party, and two Government whips, Charles Kerr and Sir Albert Edmondson. Sir Alexander Walker, chairman of the Distiller's Co, Britain's fifth largest manufacturing concern by estimated market value in 1930, provided financial backing.⁷⁵

In the autumn of 1938, Drummond-Wolff, together with Edward Grigg, wrote to the government to present the proposals that later became part of Drummond-Wolff and Bryant's reconstruction project. Through May 1940, and possibly later, Drummond-Wolff provided Bryant with funds to pursue their common aim of Union and Reconstruction expressed in Bryant's anonymously published *Britain Awake* (1940). On 10 January 1940, Lord Arnold, a stockbroker who had resigned from the Labour Party in 1938 because he feared that their foreign policy was 'in the direction of war', wrote to Chamberlain insisting that Hitler

wanted a negotiated peace. The prime minister responded that he did 'not believe that until Germany gives proof of a change of heart a negotiated peace would be a lasting peace or provide us with those stable conditions which we all so earnestly desire'. Arnold sent a copy of this letter to Bryant, who remained unwilling to give up pursuit of negotiated peace.⁷⁶ His new idea was that Czech and Polish independence could be restored, leading to the fall of Hitler. Bryant also worked closely with Ronnie Brocket, as well as with Charles Roden Buxton towards this end.⁷⁷ On 18 January, Bryant wrote to Halifax urging him to meet Drummond-Wolff and consider his suggestions.⁷⁸ Bryant was also trying to persuade Halifax to consider the economic principles embodied in Union and Reconstruction.⁷⁹ Brocket had been trying secretly, allegedly with Halifax's knowledge and co-operation, to communicate through the British Delegation in a 'neutral country' with a man named 'Berg' to sound out peace possibilities. Brocket also suggested that Bryant get in touch with Basil Liddell Hart, who had written in the *Sunday Express* that since neither side could win a military victory, both should consider the question of a *modus vivendi* before the destruction started.⁸⁰

Almost immediately after the war began, Butler asked Bryant to prepare a statement of British war aims. On 16 September, 1939, Bryant sent Butler his 'Memorandum'. The first draft, written by hand on 15 September, asserted that Britain was fighting only 'to enforce the neglected rule of law and to re-establish a more just and stable order of international society' and would 'be ready to forego the triumph of crushing our enemies if our object could be attained as certainly by any other means'. He suggested that the aims should be stated very generally so that no commitment was made to specific and perhaps unattainable ends, but stipulated that a 'superior international order' be established to include international arms control; self-determination of frontiers; and international control of economic frontier restrictions and tariffs. While every European country would retain unfettered sovereignty in all internal matters, that sovereignty would be limited externally. Membership would be optional, but once assumed could not be discarded. 'A declaration by Britain, with her vast imperial resources, of her readiness to join such a European union and of her belief that by such means alone would a repetition of the present tragedy and its predecessor be averted, would appeal to the imagination of the whole world, demonstrate the integrity and disinterestedness of her purpose and offer a hope of peace that should not merely be one of exhaustion and revenge.' The final typescript was essentially the same, although he added that these war aims would particularly appeal to the US, and he again repeated his conviction that a cause of the war was that a large proportion of the German people regarded the rule of Hitler as their emancipation from the economic sufferings and political humiliations of Versailles. He concluded with the platitudinous truism that a German defeat in the field would lead to the destruction of the Nazi leader and his regime and thereby accomplish British ends.⁸¹ In October, Butler responded

that Bryant would have 'immediate access to me and to those I serve if you desire to approach us'.⁸²

Bryant's naïveté may have been wilful, self-deluding, and unwarranted in so worldly a journalist and historian, but he cannot be dismissed as unequivocally a 'fascist'. It is not that he was as uncritically pro-Hitler as he was unabashedly pro-England, which meant, for him, accepting a limited role for Hitler within Europe through 1939 and then in 1940 finding a basis for Hitler's fall. Bryant was hardly an isolated figure on either the Left or Right in these attempts. As the dreaded war became a 'phony war' of waiting in 1940, influential British fascist sympathizers, like Baron Ronnie Brockett, were still finding fascism in Spain, Italy, and Germany consistent with their understanding of traditional British conservatism. Writing to Bryant on 26 February 1940, Brockett urged Bryant, in his forthcoming, anonymously published *Britain Awake*, to stress 'the good, patriotic and essential part played in the life of the countryside by the old landowners fulfilling their obligations, financing farming, keeping buildings in repair, giving employment, being social leaders in their districts, doing all the unpaid jobs of J. P., County Council, Churchwarden, etc. etc., etc., be brought out a bit more and then the cause of Death Duties & high taxation causing unemployment, bad farming, and depopulation of the countryside be emphasized—all this in contradiction to the rich financiers or city manipulator who has no upkeep, no obligations & no responsibility to his fellow countrymen.'⁸³ These were ailments that Brockett and others believed Hitler to have cured, and by doing so moved Germany closer to their ideal of a paternalistic Britain, free from class conflict and the irresponsible power of industrial and financial interests. Brockett's complaint was very similar to the message often reiterated by Bryant in his attempts to persuade the government and the public that war had to be avoided.

At the same time that Bryant was trying to ensure peace between Britain and Germany, his papers during 1939 and 1940 reveal that he was especially troubled by the prospect of weakening the mutually advantageous connections between Britain and the Empire inaugurated by the adoption of Imperial Preference at the Ottawa Conference in August 1932. Economic and political nationalism led him in the post-war decades to mount a campaign against the Common Market and to break with the Conservatives on this issue. The national debate in economic and financial as well as foreign policy circles about whether Britain should turn increasingly towards the Empire and away from Europe was never resolved, as Neil Forbes demonstrates, before the Second World War began.⁸⁴ For Bryant, ties with the Empire were stronger nationally and racially than any with Europe. Within Europe, Germany was England's most important trading partner. That was one crucial reason for him to find a *rapprochement* with Germany, because the higher standard of living that he advocated for ordinary people depended on flourishing trade.⁸⁵ In Bryant's draft for *Union and Reconstruction*, the published statement of war aims that he wrote in 1939,

he argued that the major reason for not wanting war with Germany was that it was a distraction from her imperial interests. Instead of taking care of her Empire, Britain 'UNDER PRESSURE FROM VESTED INTERESTS', seeks 'TO INTERFERE IN EVERY QUARTER OF THE GLOBE . . . THIS IS THE CAUSE OF WAR even if aggression by a frustrated country is the occasion'.⁸⁶ 'Vested interests' was certainly a common code word for Jews, but Bryant condemned all financial profiteers who had made fortunes from the Great War and whom he saw as having an economic advantage in any war.

Bryant's suspicion of Jews who were not British was extended to America, and in the spring of 1939, he wrote to the Foreign Office that the *Continental New York Herald* of 17 April had a headline on the front page, 'Wanted for Murder', followed by a story describing violent attack on Jews by Hitler. 'The President's Appeal Calling for a Halt to Dictators' was in the adjoining column. Bryant did not deny the accuracy of this press coverage, but he complained that at a delicate moment in negotiations with Hitler, it was hardly 'helpful'.⁸⁷ By the beginning of 1941, when there clearly was no further chance of reconciliation with Hitler, Bryant wrote with compassion about the 'trembling Jew in the concentration camp at Dachau', who 'shares no common ground with the stony hearts of his captors' and concluded that the Christian religion which binds all men together was the best hope for the future.⁸⁸ In the spring, his column in the *Illustrated London News* praised Rhodes, who, although believing in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race, supported every race who had absorbed 'British ideals of peace, justice, respect for law, and the lawful liberties of others'. Unlike Hitler, Rhodes 'embraced' Jews and 'his closest friends were chosen from among their quick, apprehending ranks; many of them devoted their wealth and labour to the service of the imperial ideal he inspired in them'.⁸⁹ As an example, Bryant named Alfred Beit, the German-born South African mining magnate, who, among other significant philanthropies, founded the chair of Colonial History in Oxford. Beit fit a further criterion that Bryant adopted for accepting Jews as British models: Beit's purposes in life were not devoted exclusively to material interests.

Bryant had close Jewish friends, including the historian Lewis Namier, whose causes he supported publicly and financially, and Jewish acquaintances such as Joel Hurstfield, Percy Cohen, and Neville Laski.⁹⁰ From mid-June of 1938 to at least 1954, Bryant maintained a close relationship with Lewis Namier and his family.⁹¹ The friendship was launched by Bryant's support for a Jewish home in Palestine.⁹² Bryant donated signed copies of his books to the Palestine Exhibition and Fair in aid of the Jewish National Fund. In response to Namier's note of gratitude, Bryant acknowledged 'sympathy for your cause', and offered to give a lecture for Namier, 'say on Disraeli,' if he was organizing a series to raise money.⁹³ They met for lunch, at Namier's invitation, on 23 June at the Athenaeum, and later in the year Namier lectured at Ashridge. By 1950, Namier was reading page proofs for Bryant's *Age of Elegance* and arranging for it to be reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and Bryant was inviting the Namiers

to dinner and signing his letters 'With our love'.⁹⁴ It is not surprising that Namier and Bryant were drawn together because both were conservatives, although their historical methods were very different. Neither Namier's committed 'Jewishness' nor charges against Bryant of anti-Semitism, especially in his *Unfinished Victory*, appeared to affect their friendship.

When the Second World War began, *Unfinished Victory* appeared as a last-minute plea to the British to avert what Bryant believed was the precipitous decline that began for Britain with the First World War. Instead of telling Bryant's signature story of British greatness, *Unfinished Victory*, which ended his history of Nazi Germany in 1933, set out to explain, very sympathetically, why the defeated, demoralized, and economically ravaged Germany of 1918 became the prosperous, proud, and ordered Germany of 1940. Bryant believed that the Third Reich, 'despite many revolting cruelties and the unjustified sufferings of the persecuted minority in exile and concentration camps', might produce 'a newer and happier Germany in the future'. At the same time, when he wrote that under Hitler's 'forceful leadership Germany was no doubt regaining a just confidence in her old powers', he added that Germany was also regaining 'her old arrogant and brutal manner towards her neighbours'. Bryant swallowed the Nazi description of rich German Jews as asset-gatherers who had benefited parasitically from Germany's economic crisis in the inter-war years. Although those Jews were less than 1 per cent of the population, Bryant was willing to believe that, as the Nazis claimed, they controlled national wealth, power, and the artistic and learned professions to the detriment of German values and well-being. While accepting the German Jews' culpability in Germany's financial and political troubles, he condemned the 'revolting and sickening' destruction of Jewish shops and synagogues, and the organized Nazi beating of defenceless Jews, as well as Hitler's 'mystical and irrational hatred of all Jews' as the fatal flaw in his reasoning.⁹⁵

The reviews of *Unfinished Victory* indicate the shift in sentiment away from appeasement, although there was still some warm reception for Bryant's views. Writing in the *Cambridge Review* on 9 February 1940, E. M. Butler, acknowledged Bryant's 'magnanimous and far-sighted aim' to prevent a second Treaty of Versailles by impelling public opinion to be sympathetic with Germany and its past sufferings, but 'this piece of special pleading for the case of Germany, emotional in style and lurid in colouring, is too clearly the result of listening to Nazi oratory and reading Nazi books not to have been adversely affected in tone and even (especially in the naïve chapters on Hitler) affected in the tenour of his thoughts'.⁹⁶ That same day, A. J. P. Taylor in the *Manchester Guardian* called Bryant 'A Nazi Apologist', who 'has the duty of an historian to weigh evidence not to write emotional political tracts'. Taylor challenged all of Bryant's facts and the interpretations to which they led.⁹⁷ The review in *The Listener* on 7 March 1940 found that Bryant 'exaggerates the sufferings of Germany during 1914–18 and afterwards, and belittles or ignores the sufferings the Germans inflicted on others. It resurrects the plea for "magnanimity" towards Germany, but seems to

think small and defenceless countries can get along without magnanimity.’⁹⁸ The rare review supporting the book was typical of the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* columnist who found the book, despite some minor caveats about the historical accuracy which could have been better had Bryant relied more on German and less on Anglo-American sources, ‘Brilliantly and persuasively written . . . very fair.’⁹⁹ Feiling, who certainly cannot be considered a ‘fascist’ and who never reviewed the book publicly, supported Bryant’s efforts at peace as late as 1940.¹⁰⁰

In 1945, Bryant praised those ‘whose hackles rose when Hitler tore up the Munich Agreement and marched into Prague . . . who declared war almost unarmed in September, 1939, who refused to make peace in 1940.’ If ‘ever England allows the denial of human dignity—in other words, the spirit of Belsen—to triumph in the world, England, as we know it, will cease to exist.’¹⁰¹ Was this a statement of Bryant’s regret for his appeasement activities, which went far beyond those of other appeasers, or was it an attempt to conceal activities that, if known widely, would have diminished both his reputation and the lucrative sales of his books? When the radical, anti-appeasing historian A. L. Rowse visited his friend Bryant in the early 1950s, they ‘wrangled about politics’, and after Rowse reproached him with *Unfinished Victory*, ‘Bryant was moved to admit that I had been right and he wrong about the danger from Germany in the thirties’.¹⁰²

Bryant dedicated *The Years of Endurance. 1793–1802* to Rowse. It is clear from the Preface in June 1942 that he meant to draw a hortatory lesson about the defeat of France by the British a century and a half earlier and the coming British defeat of Hitler. Bryant identified two constant forces in the struggle that were also evident in 1942 if the word ‘Nazi’ was substituted for the word ‘French’: ‘the French resolve to create a New Order’ and ‘the British refusal to admit any Order not based on law’. He praised Churchill at Dunkirk in 1940, and for those readers who were not quick enough to see the parallels, he told them that: ‘Within these pages the reader will find many of the familiar phenomena of our own troubled time.’ His aim was ‘not to present new facts but old ones focused in the light of present experience’. In the third chapter, ‘The Failure of Appeasement’, the prime minister, William Pitt, emerges as a surrogate for Chamberlain, determined to find peace. In the ‘Epilogue’, he asserts that the British defeated the French and Napoleon because they had the ‘enduring strength of a people who subordinated self-will to the decencies of conscience . . . in the light of our own apocalyptic experience, we can see that Britain’s supreme asset was the innate respect of her people for moral law’.¹⁰³ Bryant failed to show the same principled concern with the decencies or moral law when both were so contemptuously abrogated by Hitler and the Nazis from at least 1934.

Bryant’s volumes appeared on the bookshelves of British reading families of every class until two generations ago.¹⁰⁴ In the late 1990s, a new publishing house, Stratus Press, set out to reprint all of Bryant’s works, with Introductions by contemporary scholars. Although a few handsome volumes were reprinted, the project failed and Stratus closed its Mayfair doors. Bryant was no longer able

to speak persuasively to a reading public that wanted to understand a post-Cold War world. His rhetoric of Empire, hierarchical order, Church, and monarchy had become unfamiliar. Bryant's solutions, when confronted with relatively unprecedented problems, especially after the Second World War began, were drawn from an earlier and supposedly simpler time. When, in 1941, he began to consider what Britain should be after the war, he warned that any scheme of reconstruction depended upon reconstructing ourselves, because 'every form of humanitarian progress was due to the courage and resolution of some individual citizen', who behaved as a virtuous Christian.¹⁰⁵ Ordinary men, he wrote two years later, had not identified sufficiently with their society. Although he was willing to allow the state some minimal interference, essentially in the lives of children, he cautioned that human nature, although sometimes noble, was selfish and governed by 'instincts that are deeply rooted, instincts which can be tamed and disciplined, but instincts which are free all the same'. Initially and ultimately, in common with the other inter-war historians, he left it to the individual to 'make themselves a decent person'. The six fundamental requirements for this self creation had become platitudes for both political parties before Bryant stressed them: the provision of a basic standard of life, including food, housing, and health; reasonable security from local and international violence; domestic and job stability, especially for one's children; liberty as a certain freedom of choice that results in self-respect; industrial conditions that satisfied pride and satisfaction in work well done; and faith in an ideal greater than one's self.¹⁰⁶ What Bryant did so uniquely was to translate those political slogans into a literature that was historical, sentimental, gripping, uplifting, and meant to be transformational.

NOTES

1. Orville Prescott's review is in ABP, PB Box 1 of 4. Robert Pitman, 'Flattering for Sir Arthur but Hard on the Taxpayers', the *Sunday Express*, 29 January 1957. Pitman continues that those who opposed Baldwin and wanted to oppose Hitler in Europe above all included Churchill: 'An odd coincidence, isn't it, that it should be Sir Arthur Bryant who should win such attention by beginning the Alanbrooke v. Churchill controversy in 1957?' Pitman was referring to Bryant's edition of the *Alanbrooke Diaries*, in which Bryant worked very closely with Alanbrooke to present the general's complaints against Churchill's intervention.
2. See Stapleton's *Sir Arthur Bryant* for a discussion of his patriotism, esp. ch. 3.
3. Andrew Roberts, 'Patriotism: The Last Refuge of Sir Arthur Bryant', *Eminent Churchillians* (London, 1997), although clever and witty, often cites quotations from Bryant partially, selectively, and out of context by stressing Bryant's undeniably egregious attack upon German Jews whilst ignoring his condemnation of the Nazis for such attacks. See, too, Roberts's Letters to the Editor, *Times Literary Supplement*, 2006, attacking Julia Stapleton's biography as well as her measured response. Richard Griffiths's very interesting *Patriotism Perverted: Captain Ramsay, the Right*

- Club and English Anti-Semitism, 1939–40* (London, 1998) tends, regrettably, to accept Roberts's reading of Bryant, esp. 210–11, as does his also interesting 'The Reception of Bryant's *Unfinished Victory: Insights into British Public Opinion in Early 1940*', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 38:1 (2004), 19.
4. In his *Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline, 1933–39* (New York: Norton, 1961), 38, A. L. Rowse argued that many of the appeasers such as Geoffrey Dawson and the Liberal John Simon were decent men who did not know the kind of men Hitler and his associates were because they 'were ignorant of Europe and European history', 116.
 5. *My Dear Max. The Letters of Brendan Bracken to Lord Beaverbrook, 1925–1958*, ed. Richard Crockett (London, 1990), 48, 50, n. 7.
 6. Along with their constituents, Attlee, Dalton, Eden, Macmillan, Mosley, and many other MPs had served in the trenches, 1914–18.
 7. See Benny Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement. The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany During the 1930s* (London, 1991), for a discussion of the arguments for appeasement offered in many Liberal and left-leaning weeklies.
 8. Lord Eustace Percy, MP, 'The Conservative Attitude and Conservative Social Policy', *Conservatism and the Future* (London, 1935) (by 6 Members of Commons and Lords, together with the editor, E. Thomas Cook, who conceived the idea for this book), 37.
 9. Neil Forbes, *Doing Business with the Nazis. Britain's Economic and Financial Relations with Germany 1931–1939* (London, 2000), 4. There is a vast literature on appeasement from the immediate post-war attack on 'The Guilty Men' through to the extreme revisionism of writers like John Charmley. For a partial list of the range of scholarly literature, see the bibliography in this book.
 10. Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, p. xv.
 11. Ernest Barker, 'The Conflict of Ideologies', *The Citizen's Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938) (essays written 1933–7), 5, 7, 14, 21.
 12. Benny Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement. The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany during the 1930s* (London, 1991), 179–80.
 13. Neville Thompson, *The Anti-appeasers. Conservative Opposition to Appeasement in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1971), 40, 180–1, for the argument that the inter-war years were dominated more with concern about Empire, especially in the Far East, and uncertainties about how to deal with Japan, rather than with Germany. See, too, Keith Neilson, 'The Defence Requirements Sub-committee, British Strategic Foreign Policy, Neville Chamberlain and the Path to Appeasement,' *EHR*, 18:44 (June, 2003), 447.
 14. John Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). In 1937 Lansbury's visit to both Hitler and Mussolini to urge peace cost him his position as leader of Labour. He died in 1940.
 15. Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*.
 16. Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918–1939. Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 21–3, 29, argues that there

was an 'ideological convergence' between Edwardian radical social imperialism and inter-war fascism in that both groups repudiated economic and political liberalism for a 'national regeneration' dependent 'on forging a spirit of national harmony, a spirit that would unite all strata of society in a common patriotic front against the perceived forces of internal disintegration'. This vision of a classless national community, Milner's 'noble socialism' or the integral, organic ultra-nationalism of the fascists, represented a repudiation of free-market liberalism and orthodox socialism, both of which were condemned as confrontational and divisive 'internationalist' doctrines which worked against the national interest.' Tariff Reform imperialism and fascism both advocated social reform to eliminate causes of class animosity by emphasizing a common history, patriotism, and improved health for the working classes. He finds, too, that both views found urban life inferior to the 'authentic' qualities of rural England. Linehan is certainly correct in his comparisons, but many inter-war groups used some or all of these slogans and concepts for their own purposes.

17. Martin Pugh, 'Lancashire, Cotton, and Indian Reform: Conservative Controversies in the 1930s', *Twentieth-century British History*, 15:2 (2004), 143–51, 148–9. Pugh was only interested in fascist supporters from textile areas.
18. Ernest Tennant, 'Hitler', in A. Bryant (ed.), *The Man and the Hour. Studies of Six Great Men of Our Time* (London, 1934), 122–7. Bryant contributed an essay on 'Edward VII'.
19. Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, 363–4.
20. Quoted in Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, 143.
21. Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, lists the number of Anglo–German Fellowship Members of Parliament as fifty, 35–9. N. J. Crowson, *Facing Fascism. The Conservative Party and the European Dictators, 1935–1940* (London, 1997) lists 34 members, 1936–7: 22 in the House of Commons, and 12 in the House of Lords, 207–8.
22. Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933–1939. Before War and Holocaust* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 114.
23. Lord Eustace Percy, then an MP whom Bryant admired, wrote in 1935: 'To the conservative, continental totalitarianism is, at best, an attempt to achieve, by one sudden and hectic effort, the mobilisation which his countrymen have been steadily achieving in the course of centuries, and especially in the last hundred years, by the maintenance of their fundamental tradition of dualism. For such Fascist movements abroad he must, from this point of view, feel considerable sympathy, however much he may dislike some of their manifestations; but he knows that any attempt to reproduce them at home would result in the drying up of a thousand existing springs of enthusiasm and public spirit.' 'The Conservative Attitude and Conservative Social Policy', *Conservatism and the Future*, 37, 38. See Bryant's 'Conservatism and the Nation. A Book for the Times', a review of *Conservatism and the Future* in the *Sunday Times*, 20 January 1935, that especially singles out Percy for praise.
24. *ABP*, C41, 2. Arthur Bryant, 'Communism, Fascism or Democracy', n.d.

25. Bryant, 'Personal View', *Manchester Evening News*, 23 October 1936: See, too, ABP, Observer Book Reviews, 1938–40, 'Man and His Governments. An Art or a Science?' Bryant's review of J. A. Spender's *The Government of Mankind*, 6 November 1938: 'Not only like most of his English intellectual contemporaries, does he grossly underestimate the degree of anarchy which preceded and caused the Fascist and Nazi regimes, with all those features which we justly condemn in them, but in his hatred of the outward forms of tyranny he fails to see the germinating ideas, planted deep in the rich earth of tradition and racial consciousness that are silently and slowly coming up beneath the hard protective soil of the German and the Italian national state. It is under the frozen mantle of March . . . that nature prepares her fairer face for the coming of spring.'
26. Scott Newton, *Profits of Peace. The Political Economy of Anglo–German Appeasement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 87, 122–3, 126–7, 151.
27. ABP, C68: 1939. After Bryant's death, in July 1985, when going through his manuscripts, Pamela Street rescued and pieced together evidence of Bryant's efforts at appeasement in 1939. 'It seems likely', she wrote on 15 August 1985, 'that he tore them up himself and then changed his mind, not wishing to throw them away'. She thought that he 'probably wanted to disassociate himself from all this at some point'. Pamela Street kept other torn-up papers with nothing on them. Bryant to John Hewitt who was acting for the Prime Minister, October 1968, H1, H3–5.
28. Report to Baldwin, ABP, 13 April 1935, MS, 1–2.
29. *ILN*, 1 August 1936, 180.
30. *ILN*, 15 August 1936, 260.
31. Bryant, 'A History of Democracy', *Ashridge Journal* (September 1937), 29–30.
32. *ILN*, 19 February 1938, 286.
33. *ILN*, 6 March 1937, 378.
34. Bryant, 'The Threat to Peace', *The Observer*, 13 June 1937, ABP, Articles and Reviews, 1932–7.
35. *The Observer*, 27 June 1937. The congratulatory letters are in ABP, C64, 1935–40.
36. Bryant to the Marquis del Moral, 8 February 1939, 4–5; Moral responded to Bryant, 9 February 1939, 'I know that several of the points mentioned by you were put to the P.M. on Friday last . . . in an informal manner and were accepted by him in full sympathy' ABP, C64, 1935–40.
37. Bryant to H. G. Wells, 18 January 1940, ABP, C64, 1935–40.
38. The Right Book Club published William Teeling's *Why Britain Prospers* (London, 1938). Teeling was a failed Conservative candidate in the late 1920s and a journalist who spoke on the BBC and wrote for *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post*, and *The Spectator*. He travelled widely and attempted to compare political, social, and economic conditions in a variety of countries and especially between Germany and Britain. See ch. 3, where he discusses Nazi excesses and finds, from his admittedly limited knowledge of Russia, that the Russians suffered more under communism than did the Germans under Nazism.

39. Bryant, 'Shadows over Geneva: The League Assembly: Ideal Founded on Injustice: Destruction of a Great Hope', *The Observer*, 19 September 1937. See, too, the *Church of England Newspaper*, 10 September 1937, and the *Catholic Times*, 24 September 1937.
40. Tom Lawson, 'The Anglican Understanding of Nazism, 1933–1945: Placing the Church of England's Response to the Holocaust in Context', *TCBH* 14:2 (2003), 112–37. In *Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England. Liberal Anglican Theories of the State between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Matthew Grimley argues that the 'Anglican critique of Nazism' was based on two arguments: 'that the national community was something separate from the state, and that it was essentially Christian', 173.
41. Quoted in Harry Defries, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, 1900–1950* (London, 2001), 5. Defries goes on to point out that Montagu's family had emigrated to England in the 18th century, that he was a third-generation Englishman, and that his father had sat in both Houses of Parliament, 6.
42. Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876–1939* (London, 1979), 326. G. W. Prothero Papers, The Paleography Room, the Senate House, the University of London. Prothero, the editor of the *Quarterly Review* and a former president of the Royal Historical Society, wrote to Claude Montefiore, 20 April 1940, saying, as quoted by Montefiore in his response, that Jews ought to 'investigate thoroughly and impartially the causes which lead to this general dislike [of Jews] and even persecution that unfortunately exists . . . It is horribly unjust and brutal . . . but I do not believe that there is nothing to be said on the other side, or that the only cause of the trouble is unreasoning and ignorant hate on the part of the persecutors. Whole nations are not carried away by these odious feelings without some cause. What is it? You ought to find out, and try to remove it.' Montefiore, who laboured throughout his life to find common cause between Jews and Christians, responded in a double-spaced 23-page letter that objected to Prothero's 'one cause' argument and asserted instead that if the many causes were known, they would not include special Jewish fault. Whatever the perceived faults might be, they were caused, he maintained, by factors beyond the control of Jews such as their religion, which meant they were not Christians; their alien presence and separateness in the communities where they lived, that is, religious prejudice reinforced by racial or national prejudice. To those stigma he added jealousy of the hard work or success of Jews, and the association of Jews with revolutionaries, Bolsheviks, and anarchists. Montefiore insisted that Jews were, by nature, conservative.
43. *ILN*, 1 August 1936, 180.
44. Bryant, 'Judgment of Solomon. A Tragic Dilemma. The Peace of Jerusalem. The Rights of Two Historic Races. Imperial Necessity for Order', *The Observer*, 25 July 1937.
45. *World's Press News*, 28 October 1937, ABP, P 8, Box 1, reprinting an article from *Time and Tide*, a left-wing Liberal weekly, owned by Vicountess Rhondda, that was from 1935 to the spring of 1938, 'almost wholehearted' in 'its support of positive appeasement'. See, too, Benny Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement*, 22.
46. *ILN*, 19 February 1938, 286.

47. *ILN*, 10 September 1938, 432.
48. *ILN* 26 November 1938, 968.
49. *ILN*, 10 December 1938, 1086. See Defries, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews*, 5.
50. *ILN*, 26 November 1938, 968. In March 1935, along with other university chancellors, Baldwin, who had spoken in the House of Lords during the Munich debate in October 1938 to rally Conservative opinion behind Chamberlain's agreement with Hitler, appealed for funds to aid Jewish scholars fleeing from Germany. After Kristallnacht, he headed a 'Lord Baldwin Fund for Refugees' that, in seven months, raised over £522,000 (£17 million in modern terms) used to help adults and 100,000 Jewish children. Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin*, 58–9.
51. Bryant, *Unfinished Victory* (London, 1940), pp. xiv, xx, 136–52.
52. The quote is from Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, 269.
53. *ILN*, 14 January 1939, 46.
54. Bryant to Halifax, 4 March 1939, Halifax to Bryant, 16 March 1939, ABP, C66, Appeasement Correspondence-General, 1939.
55. *ILN*, 25 March 1939, 456.
56. Bryant to *The Times*, 1 April 1939, ABP, C66, Appeasement Correspondence-General, 1939.
57. Bryant to R. C. Norman, 5 April 1939 and Norman to Bryant, 8 April 1939, *ibid.* R. C. Norman was the brother of Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England, 1920–44, a close friend of the German Central Bank President Hjalmar Schacht, a member of the Anglo-German Fellowship and, together with Schacht, of the Bank for International Settlements.
58. Bryant, 'Berlin, 15–18 April 1939: Some notes and impressions following conversations with the Foreign Minister and others', *ABP*, Typescript, C66, 1–4.
59. George Mosse, 'Introduction', *Nazi Culture. A Documentary History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), pp. xx, xli.
60. Bryant to Lord Halifax, handwritten MS describing an alleged holiday and research visit to Germany and Austria, not dated, but probably 9 July 1939, *ABP*, C68, 3–4. On 3 July Bryant had sent a 'Memorandum' to the Foreign Office indicating that he would go to Germany as a private citizen but would attempt to use his influence with Dr Walther Hewel, who, he reported, 'is credited with being the most intimate adviser of the Fuhrer in English affairs and who is always at his beck and call'. Although Bryant recognized that he was 'risking' his 'professional career and livelihood, and realize very clearly the personal consequences that may follow', he thought the risk for peace worth while. He concluded by saying that unless he was 'expressly forbidden to go, I shall go if I am asked' *ABP*, C68, 1–2, 8. He was asked and he was, apparently, not forbidden to go.
61. Mosse, 'Introduction', *Nazi Culture. A Documentary History*, p. xli.
62. Bryant to Sir Horace Wilson, *ABP*, C 66, 19 July 1939.
63. July 1939, typescript with comment by Bryant: 'Article written at special request of P.M. & Sir Horace Wilson for publication by Lord Kemsley in German Press, July

1939. Approved by PM & Lord Kemsley but never used owing to the situation.' *ABP*, C68-Blohm.
64. Kemsley MS, 1, 12, 2.
 65. Kemsley MS, 7–8
 66. Kemsley MS, 9, 15.
 67. Kemsley MS, 11.
 68. 10 September 1939, quoted in Feiling, *Life of Neville Chamberlain*, 418. On 8 October Chamberlain wrote in his diary that he had 2,450 letters in the preceding 3 days and 1,860 of them asked him to 'stop the war'. In response to Hitler's 'proposals' for peace, he asserted that 'I was clear in my own mind that it offered no real advance in mind or spirit towards a reasonable peace', 424. A week later, he complained: 'We have to kill one another just to satisfy that accursed madman. I wish that he could burn in Hell for as many years as he is costing lives', 419.
 69. *ILN*, 26 November 1938, 968.
 70. Kemsley MS, 23–6, 29.
 71. 'Extract from Prime Minister's Speech at Cardiff, 24th of June, 1939', *ABP*, C, C66, 1. For Bryant's role as Chamberlain's editor, see Chamberlain MS, NC 10/4.
 72. Anthony Howard, Butler's biographer, points out that Butler was not a staunch supporter of appeasement in order to buy time, as he later said in his autobiography, but because he believed coexistence was possible. He never 'saw a challenge to the dictators as a national obligation' and opposed the Treaty of Alliance with Poland on 25 August 1939 because, as he said, it 'would have a bad psychological effect on Hitler and would wreck any negotiations'. As late as June 1940, Butler still approved of appeasement. *RAB. The Life of R. A. Butler*, 75–6, 81, 85, 100.
 73. Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936–45: Nemesis* (London, 2000), 155, 189, 306.
 74. Charles Roden Buxton had been Chairman of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Relations and his brother Lord Noel-Buxton was the former Minister of Agriculture in the Labour administrations. Charles wanted to go beyond Chamberlain's 'concessions in 1938 in redistributing territory to Germany' but as soon as war began in 1939, 'Both brothers became active in the pursuit of a peace settlement', Kershaw, *Making Friends*, 309–10.
 75. Scott Newton, *Profits of Peace*, 151–3.
 76. Sidney Arnold, First Baron Arnold, to *The Times*, 18 December 1939; Neville Chamberlain to Lord Arnold 10 January 1940, copy from Arnold to Bryant, *ABP*, C69 'Appeasement and War Aims Correspondence'.
 77. Baron Brocket to Bryant, 22 January 1940 thanking him for an article pursuing peace: 'I Hope that you will become a perfect nuisance to N. C. & RAB. . . What about bearding Winston? Could you knock some sense into his bald head?' Brocket to Bryant, 9 February 1940, suggesting that Queensborough be induced to support 'peace without destruction' [their motto]. Brocket commented that Chamberlain's 'outlook' was no wider than Birmingham and he should 'have remained there as permanent Lord Mayor'. To get 'p w d', Brocket argued, we must offer Germany a 'carrot', *ABP*, C69.

78. Bryant to Halifax, *ABP*, 18 January 1940. Halifax responded on 15 February, that he had no time to see Drummond-Wolff but Butler would, and did, see him. Sir Joseph Ball, the first Director of the Conservative Research Department Conservative (hereafter CRD), interviewed Drummond-Wolff on 11 October 1938 to note that his guest had 'outstayed his welcome by about one hour'. David Clarke, a policy adviser at the CRD, who was to become its Director in 1945, dismissed Drummond-Wolff to Ball on 21 December 1938 as 'ignorant'. CRD Archives, the New Bodleian Library, 23: Note of Interview by Sir Joseph Ball; Clarke to the Director of the CRD.
79. *ABP*, Halifax to Bryant, 9 February 1940, answering Bryant's memo on the 'relative advantages of a return to a comparatively free-trading system and the continuance of a system of economic nationalism and preferential groupings'. Halifax indicated that he did not know enough about this and sent Bryant to Lord Stamp. Josiah Stamp, who had also been a member of the Anglo-German Fellowship, was a specialist on taxation, the Chairman of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, a governor of the Bank of England, and from 1930 until 1939, a member of the Economic Advisory Council. Brocket to Bryant, 18 February 1940.
80. Brocket reported Halifax's support to Bryant on 18 February 1940. The intermediary with Goering was a Dane whose full name was Bengt Berg. *ABP*, C69. Lidell Hart had been the military correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph* (1925–35) and the London *Times* (1935–9). An early advocate of mechanized warfare, he developed infantry tactics and training methods that were adopted by the British army. From 1937 to 1938 he was personal adviser to the British war minister, Leslie Hore-Belisha, and suggested a programme of reorganization and reform that was partly instituted.
81. Bryant to Butler, 15 September 1939, indicating that he is sending the requested statement on war aims, offering his further services, and pointing out that No. 10 'used me a great deal this summer'. The Memorandum was sent to the Foreign Office on 16 September *ABP*, Handwritten MS, 2, 4a, 4b. Typescript, 8, 9, 11.
82. Butler to Bryant, 16 October 1939, *ABP*, C69.
83. Brocket to Bryant 26 February 1940. Brocket was reading some of the chapters in Bryant's draft of *Britain Awake*, which was written anonymously and distributed by Queensborough. The book sold 7,000 copies in its first two weeks.
84. Neil Forbes, *Doing Business with the Nazis*, 230.
85. *ILN*, 4 February 1939, 160.
86. Bryant, draft of appeal for 'Union and Reconstruction,' *ABP*, Add/misc III c.1939–40, 3.
87. Bryant, Visit to Berlin, 15–18 April 1939, 3.
88. *ILN*, 11 January 1941, 34.
89. *ILN*, 1 March 1941, 268.
90. Professor Joel Hurstfield, University College, London, December 1967 to Bryant: 'We as historians are in a way writing mainly about the people who count. This is not snobbishness, but simply that a minority of Englishmen had any influence

upon their society and left any record. . . . Hence our difficulty in writing “social” history in a fundamental sense.’ He added that he hoped that they would have the ‘opportunity of exchanging ideas about this and related topics’, and that he was ‘delighted’ to give Bryant whatever help he could. *ABP*, Correspondence with Historians.

91. There are 35 letters between Bryant and Namier, 1938–54, in the *ABP*.
92. In response to Bryant’s manuscript of *Britain Awake*, T. N. Graham disagreed with Bryant’s proposal of a national home for the Jews because Graham believed that Jews preferred to remain where they were and work behind the scenes to wield power and take little risk. Maintaining that Jews were without scruples or ‘moral-ethics . . . Hitler had ample ground for the action he took against the race, though not for the methods he used.’ T. N. Graham to Bryant, n.d., 1940? Responses to *Britain Awake* in *ABP*, F/3a 1940.
93. L. B. Namier to Bryant, 2 June 1938; Bryant to Namier, 3 June 1938, *ABP*, Correspondence with Historians: Namier.
94. Namier to Bryant, 12 July 1950; Namier to Bryant, 1 November 1950; Bryant to Namier, 17 November 1950; Bryant to Namier, ?December 1950, *ibid*.
95. Bryant, *Unfinished Victory*, pp. xiv, xx, 136–52.
96. E. M. Butler, ‘The German Tragedy’, *The Cambridge Review*, 9 February 1940, *ABP*, R2, box 1 of 4.
97. A. J. P. Taylor, ‘A Nazi Apologist’, *Manchester Guardian*, 9 February 1940. *ABP*, R2, box 1 of 4.
98. ‘Review of *Unfinished Victory*’, *The Listener*, 7 March 1940, *ibid*.
99. ‘What are We to Do about the Germans?’, ‘Reading for Black-out Nights’, column in *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 2 February 1940.
100. Feiling to Bryant, n.d., probably in early 1940, *ABP*, Academic Correspondence: Feiling.
101. Bryant, ‘There’ll Always Be an England’, *The Sunday Times*, 4 November 1945, reprinted from ‘*News Guardian*’, the only daily newspaper issued for the British Army of the Rhine.
102. *The Diaries of A. L. Rowse*, ed. Richard Ollard (London, 2003), 23? October 1953, 158; and Richard Ollard, *A Man of Contradictions*, 142. When living in Cornwall in 1941, Rowse ‘befriended’ King’s School, Canterbury, evacuated there during the war and he brought Arthur Bryant there, among others, to talk to the boys, 173. In discussion of Rowse’s *The Spirit of English History* (1943), ‘the most optimistic of all his historical works’, Ollard observes that it ‘does not quite glow with the Christmas card cheerfulness of his friend Sir Arthur Bryant’, 320. In Rowse’s Pocket Memo Book, after his defeat for the Wardenship at All Souls, he wrote: ‘Now at 48 no wonder it sours me to think of the chances of Shaw & Wells & John Buchan—or even Arthur Bryant or Charles Morgan had before the War—not with envy of them. Admire and applaud their gifts and their well-earned success. I am merely sick at my own luck. . . .’ Appendix A: ‘Memorandum of Wardenship Election 1952’.

103. Bryant, *The Years of Endurance, 1793–1802* (London, 1942), pp. ix–xii, ch. 3, 358–9.
104. See the ‘Conclusion’ to Stapleton’s *Sir Arthur Bryant*.
105. Bryant, ‘The Rock of Human Nature’, 20 December 1941, in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 121–2.
106. Bryant, ‘Reconstruction’ (summary of address delivered at headquarters, Technical Training Command, R. A. F., on 10 December, 1943) *ABP*, Typescript, H1, LH, 1, 4, 7–8. See, too, ‘Some Human Problems of Reconstruction’, an address to the members of the Economic Reform Club and Institute, 17 February 1944 in *ABP*, LH, H2, which covers the same topics as did all of Bryant’s thinking about reconstruction after the war.

PART III
POST-WAR BRITAIN

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Christianity and Conservative Historiography: Herbert Butterfield, Cambridge, and the Greater World

When the Committee of Electors for the chair of Modern History at Cambridge met in 1963, Hugh Trevor-Roper, a member of that committee, assumed that the potential candidates would be Jack Plumb, Geoffrey Elton, and Kitson Clark. Dismissing each of them as unsuitable, he was especially disdainful of Plumb's '*arrivisme*'.¹ The man who was vacating that chair to assume the Regius Professorship in Modern History was Herbert Butterfield. In spite of all his eventual achievements and fame, it would have been hard to find another holder of a chair in Cambridge or Oxford more *arriviste* than Butterfield. Among the British conservative historians, all committed to the defence of historical traditions which included a social hierarchy, Butterfield alone left a working-class family that often knew privation to climb to the highest positions that an elite university could offer. Although Hearnshaw came from what most well-connected Anglicans, including those in the universities, considered an unsatisfactory background, he was much higher on the social and economic scale than was Butterfield. Raised in a provincial Nonconformist home, Hearnshaw was fortunate to become a student at the extraordinary Manchester Grammar School. A generation older than Butterfield, Hearnshaw received a Historical Scholarship at Peterhouse, which was then among the most undistinguished colleges at Cambridge. Never offered a position at either Cambridge or Oxford, he worked his way upwards to a professorship in the new King's College, London. Butterfield, despite his very lowly origins, lived his adult life entirely at a now distinguished Peterhouse, where, from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, Dom David Knowles, Denis Brogan, Munia Postan, and Tony Wrigley were also Fellows. An awkward and ill-prepared undergraduate, Butterfield became a remarkable historian, teacher, mentor, and administrator. Beyond the university he spoke to the wide audience that listened to the BBC, lectured throughout Britain and America, participated in planning international policy in both countries, and exerted personal influence through a voluminous correspondence with prominent people all over the world.²

Butterfield grew up in Oxenthorpe, an industrial village of 2,000, where the views from the top of moors on sunny days gave him 'an impression of the sublime which nothing in my adult experience has quite equalled'.³ His pious, Methodist-preaching father, whom Butterfield regarded 'as a saint' and upon whom he 'always most sought to model' himself, went to work as a wool-sorter at the age of 10 and, after many years of 'self-improvement', eventually became his firm's bookkeeper. Albert Butterfield taught his son local history before he was 10 and gave him access to his 40 books, which included Harmsworth's *Self-Education* and the 'Penny Poets' series. John Parker, his father's employer, sold the Butterfields a piano for 8 pounds, initiating his great love for music.⁴ When he was 11, he was given a scholarship to the Trade and Grammar School at Keighley, hardly a university preparatory institution, and from there a Cambridge Exhibition at Peterhouse in December 1918. Harold Temperley's reputation drew Butterfield to Peterhouse, which by then was establishing itself as an important centre for historical study. Temperley found Butterfield unsatisfactory and inadequate, and sent him to an outside supervisor. After Butterfield wrote an essay on 'Art is History made Organic', Temperley relented and took him on as his student. Although Butterfield's interests diverged widely and he explored new fields in historiography and the history of science, his early exposure to Temperley's diplomatic studies, in combination with what he perceived as a Christian obligation to foster conciliation, persuaded him that diplomacy was the most historically and morally valid approach to the threat of conflict.⁵ He also acquired the conviction that favouring one side over another prevented the resolution of competing claims.

Butterfield may have lacked confidence when he arrived in Cambridge, but from 1923, when he became a Fellow of Peterhouse, he collected honours. From 1944 to 1963, he was Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. Then for the succeeding five years he served the History Faculty as Regius Professor. Simultaneously with both professorial appointments, he was Master of Peterhouse from 1955 to 1968 and, from 1959 to 1961, Vice-Chancellor of the University as well. University College, Dublin, staffed by history teachers taught by Butterfield, became very nearly an Irish extension of Peterhouse, and Butterfield became the External Examiner of the National University of Ireland. In 1965, very late in his career, he was elected to the British Academy and in 1968 received a knighthood. Noel Annan described Butterfield as a 'fascinator whose chief pastime was academic intrigue'.⁶ Whether or not this is a fair assessment, he was certainly in positions where he exercised considerable patronage. During his career, he also edited the *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 1938–52; chaired the University Committee for the Establishment and Teaching of the History of Science in 1947; was president of the Historical Association, the professional body of history schoolteachers, 1955–8; served as Vice-President of the International Society for the History of Ideas, founded in 1959; and, from 1958 until his retirement a decade later, he chaired the Rockefeller-funded British Committee on the Theory

of International Politics.⁷ He was an internationally respected historian, with an interest in esoteric fields that included China, the origins of civilizations, the Middle and Near East, and the history of science, as his papers and published writings demonstrate. Of equal importance to his professional life, he was an active university and college politician with influence throughout the academic world and a major figure in international policy studies. Although he maintained that his life as a historian was detached from his life as a non-historian, those spheres were inseparable.

Butterfield's prestige and centrality at Peterhouse allowed him to pursue his interests without distraction. While other Cambridge Colleges contained conservative historians, Butterfield's Peterhouse was unique as a magnet for conservative historiography and as an enduring school of high politics that tilted increasingly to the Right. The Peterhouse school included Maurice Cowling, Edward Norman, John Vincent, Jonathan Clark, A. B. Cooke, Andrew Jones, and Michael Bentley, as well as the political philosopher Roger Scruton. Cowling, a Butterfield student and a Fellow of Peterhouse while Butterfield was Master, begot Michael Portillo, the great hope of the Conservative Right in July of 1995. Jonathan Steinberg, who became a Cambridge don, an adjudicator in Holocaust reparations, and eventually a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, remembered Butterfield in the 1960s as a great historian with a broad vision and a pioneering interest in historiography. Steinberg also recalled his personal kindness and helpfulness to students, as did many others, including Frank O'Gorman. Additionally, Steinberg thought Butterfield's Peterhouse unique among Cambridge Colleges for representing 'an intellectual way of looking at the world'.⁸

Cowling saw his mentor as an 'Asquithian' and despaired because Butterfield never belonged to the 'bloody-minded' Right that Cowling admired and fostered.⁹ Butterfield was undeniably Asquithian in always preferring conciliation to confrontation, but for very different reasons from the Liberal leader. Asquith brought opponents together as a matter of political expediency; Butterfield saw reconciliation as a means of forestalling latent violence and, even more crucially, as a requirement of the Christian conscience. Even though air power had clearly turned the tide against Nazi Germany by 1943 to make an Allied victory possible, Butterfield urged the British government that year to make a separate peace with Hitler.¹⁰ Unlike Bryant, Butterfield never admired either Hitler or the new Germany created by will, force, and genocide, but he believed that neutrality was the strongest moral commitment in a universe where only God judged.

The subjectivity of memory and the retreat of past events can lead us to appraise those we knew as we would have liked them to have been, rather than as they actually were. Although many former students remember Butterfield as an inspiring historian, teacher, and caring mentor, there was some harsh criticism among his colleagues. Tony Wrigley, bursar at Peterhouse in the 1960s and subsequently Professor of Economic History, Master of Corpus Christi

College, and President of the British Academy, looked back at Butterfield in the late 1990s as a good chairman when Master of Peterhouse because he never stifled discussion. At the same time, Wrigley also recalled when Butterfield wanted something his way, he introduced it as a matter of ‘high policy’. Very ‘economical of words in public’, Butterfield feared publicity and would not do anything ‘decisive’. When David Knowles retired, life Fellowships had been long abolished. Knowles had nowhere to go. Butterfield, who would not return to the divisive issue of life Fellowships, did nothing for Knowles.¹¹ Just before he retired, Butterfield confessed ‘I have loved being a Master (apart even from the pleasure of living in this Lodge) and perhaps I have been in danger of loving too much the administrative side of the work (or at least the diplomacies, consultations the umpiring etc which give me my real role)’. Although he could have remained as Master until he was 70, he decided that at 68 ‘one has a right to do what one likes—assuming one still has a decent object in life.’¹² It was characteristic of Butterfield immediately to moderate any suggestion of pleasure, let alone hedonism, with a declared commitment to duty.

That recognition of obligation went back to his adolescence, if not earlier. From about the age of 16 until he was 37, Butterfield served as a ‘local preacher’ for Methodism. In his village, as in many others during the inter-war years, Church and Chapel were the centre of social and community life, providing libraries, lectures, theatre, and music. The Methodist Chapel was Butterfield’s introduction to a world outside Oxenhorpe. Butterfield reflected that his father had inspired him to study and ‘infected me with his passionate desire to “preach the Gospel” . . . we must all have something to live for, and the desire to “preach the Gospel”, though it has been submerged on occasion, has perhaps been my most constant motor.’ Butterfield remained a ‘preacher’ all his life in at least two senses: his secular interests were inseparable from his religious imperatives; and he felt obliged to testify for the truths he extracted from Christianity. At the same time, he admitted to himself that in the ‘case of secular subjects as well as sacred, I am terrified of influencing anybody in case I should be wrong . . .’. He worried that God would strike him dead ‘for pretending to setup as a preacher or a teacher in this whole realm of human thinking. But then I come to wonder whether God would not strike me dead for refusing to speak at certain moments when I might feel that I could help somebody over a hurdle. I think that for each of us a time may occasionally (come) when what Christ would require of us would be that we shouldn’t refuse just to make confession of faith; and by such confessions I feel sure that (provided there are not too many of them) we can perhaps enrich one another’s faith, or just encourage one another. But I don’t know whether I’m fit to be trusted with the work of explaining the faith, or justifying it, or even properly describing it.’¹³

In spite of his doubts, Butterfield continued to be a passionate missionary for faith. He learned from his ‘gentle’ father to ‘make allowances’ for other people and ‘to hunt out the ultimate’ responsibility that his father felt ‘for

another's sins'. When Butterfield became a historian, that lesson informed his treatment of historical actors and events. Because of the ways in which his religious convictions permeated everything that he thought and did, Butterfield's thinking was often inconsistent, a predicament he often recognized and tried, unsuccessfully, to overcome.¹⁴ Additionally, his father's example taught him that 'even in these days of anonymous trends and general tendencies, a single man, who finds the position that enables him to get leverage, can make a considerable difference to the world'.¹⁵ At the same time, he believed that the inscrutability of Providence meant that even the best and most selfless people were unable to carry out their well-intentioned acts. He had no difficulty condemning fascism and communism, both of which he described as the 'Anti-Christ', but would not judge individual fascists or communists and treated the movements as if they had an historical autonomy independent of those who created and carried out their ideas and practices.¹⁶

Although well known before the war, especially for his *The Whig Interpretation of History* in 1931, his major offices and influence came to Butterfield after the Second World War. If we examine Butterfield's publications and his activities in the decades after 1940, the war appears as the decisive influence in making his conservatism more explicit and polemical. As a boy and then as Paul Velacott's student at Peterhouse, Butterfield nurtured a conservatism rooted in his wholehearted assent to Christianity, and his equally wholehearted scepticism about everything human. But it was the trauma of Dunkirk that led him to reconsider his accountability as a historian who was also a Christian. The Second World War only made sense to Butterfield if he approached it with Christian resignation. Looking back in 1948 on the multitude of human tragedies in history, Butterfield took refuge in the mysteries of Christianity that made the burden of the modern historian bearable. The historian could write and explain history only if he accepted 'the doctrine of original sin, which affects any notion of history as judgement; the idea of a future life, with a redistribution of fortunes in another world; and the Christian scheme of salvation'.¹⁷ Butterfield assumed four axioms that rested upon his faith. First, that historic institutions and habits must be maintained because their soundness was tested by their survival; second, that practice always had greater virtue than ideas; third, that human nature was a formidable barrier to a better future; and, finally, that the role of circumstances was more compelling than the role of individuals. Butterfield was able to study and write about history because he could explain even the most incredible inhumanity as due to the evil that underlay all human nature. That evil, uniform throughout time and place, meant that it was impossible for the historian either to praise or blame, functions reserved exclusively to God. The comfort of absolution was not to be sought in the study of history, but was found rather through emotional and spiritual investment in an internal spiritual life.

All of Butterfield's ideas sprang from, and returned to, the conviction that history is incomprehensible unless approached through religion. It was, he wrote,

‘the combination of history with a religion . . . which generates power and fills the story with significances’.¹⁸ After 1940, Butterfield’s lectures in universities throughout Britain, America, and Europe and on the BBC, his writing, and his remarkable personal influence within international academic life were all guided by conservative spiritual commitments that transformed his technical subjects. Butterfield began and ended his study of history with the tragic effect of original sin upon moral freedom. Every person, without exception, was to Butterfield what his friend George Kennan called a ‘cracked vessel’.¹⁹

The argument for moral neutrality that followed from Butterfield’s belief in divine judgement and human frailty drew him repeatedly into a troubled dialogue with the long dead Lord Acton.²⁰ When Butterfield’s lectures on *Christianity in European History* were published in 1952, John Raymond’s review in *The New Statesman* pointed out that the second lecture was a gloss on Acton. Historical events, for Acton, were to be judged by whether they promoted or failed to promote ‘the delicacy, integrity and authority of Conscience’. Professor Butterfield, Raymond wrote, ‘would probably regard this dictum as an example of what he calls the ‘crude, moralistic approach’. Raymond pointed out that the effect of Butterfield’s dictum that ‘Tout comprendre c’est tout pardonner’ was that in ‘a fallen world, the saint and the research scholar are somehow complementary’.²¹ To Butterfield, the human condition meant that research scholars, saints, and everyone else necessarily lived in the same ignorance of the direction of their lives. Butterfield was always ambiguous about Acton, whom he saw as neither a saint nor a genuine research scholar because he never explained the results of his research. On the one hand, he liked Acton’s ideal of presenting all sides of every issue, his ‘historical sympathy’. But, on the other hand, Butterfield disliked his predecessor’s certitude about the historian’s moral role as a judge of historical events, people, and ideas.

Beneath Acton’s appeal to high ideals, Butterfield suspected a ‘militant purpose’ of making a historical case for liberal Catholicism.²² Butterfield also accused Acton of misusing historical evidence because driven by his moralistic zeal. The Christian humility that Butterfield advocated was uneasy with what he considered Acton’s rigidity and intellectual arrogance that sometimes ‘forgot the shifting sands upon which much of our history is constructed, and regarded the student of history as the person who ought to be the real Pope’.²³ To Butterfield, every human being and institution, including religious leaders, churches, and historians, suffered from the same frustrating impotence. Ranke, rather than Acton, offered Butterfield a more kindred mind because Ranke argued that each generation was equally close to God and because he tried to reconcile freedom and necessity, the unique and the general. And when Ranke explained how decisions about life affected views about history, he turned to religion, as did Butterfield.

Religion taught Butterfield that free will was an illusion. Even the most intelligent and powerful men were likely to fail. Whatever succeeded was usually

produced by the worst elements in human nature rather than by the best. Whenever anyone acted, the most likely consequence was calamity.²⁴ There was 'a whole universe of countless alternative futures', but men were thrown into that universe with a will that was bound to be defeated even when well intentioned. A 'small handful of men' after the Great War had great confidence in their reformist plans. But the results of their planning were not peace and progress but rather the Second World War.²⁵ These convictions led Butterfield to defend the conservative position that the world was probably the best that it could be.²⁶ He dismissed secular and utopian systems and system-makers such as the Marxists because they believed that significant changes could occur in society to improve the human condition. These system-makers were doomed to fail because they believed, mistakenly, that they could understand and consequently control events. The historically reoccurring 'new men' such as Napoleon or Hitler or Mussolini, who also believed they could master history, were bound to miscarry.²⁷ What was to be valued in history, and in the historian who studied it, was moderation, conciliation, and compromise. Butterfield's reading of history supported his religious belief that moralistic ardour always led to excess and violence. The historian's role was to accept that what was given was unsatisfactory and then to provide a 'reconciling mind that seeks to comprehend'. When Butterfield wrote in 1949 that the historian's reconciling understanding allows us at last perhaps to be a 'little sorry for everybody', he urged us to be a little sorry for Hitler as well as very sorry for his victims.²⁸

It was not so much compassion as necessity that limited free will for Butterfield. George Kitson Clark, who shared Butterfield's strictures about free will and the historian's inability to judge moral conduct, also worried about the rush to judgement as Britain entered the Second World War. In 1940, he warned against the habit, adopted in the Great War, of 'a continuous indulgence in moral condemnation'. Accepting that the men who controlled Germany were morally evil and that an 'ugly strain in German history and German thought' has 'prepared the way for them', he argued that Nazi Germany must be crushed. At the same time, he urged that Britain must 'exercise what self-restraint we can, to give morality a rest, and to leave the attribution of moral guilt to God, or his very humble servants, the Historians'.²⁹ Unlike Butterfield, Kitson Clark believed that historians could achieve sufficient objectivity to understand history from a neutral perspective. Twenty-seven years later, he re-examined the problems of moral guilt and judgement. Unless, he wrote, 'the tribunal of history is a phantasy and a myth, it must pass judgement; though a study of the trials of some of the war criminals, particularly of some of the minor ones, may suggest how difficult are some of the moral problems which judgment involves'. That led him much closer to Butterfield's position, and he concluded that 'it is desirable to stigmatize evil deeds but not to condemn people, and that in general the historian serves the general interests of mankind better if he tries to understand and explain than if he assumes the position of a judge'.³⁰

Providence governed history for both Kitson Clark and for Butterfield, as well as for their Dominican colleague, Dom Knowles.³¹ But Butterfield went further to argue that the best exercise of free will that any person could attempt lay in the Christian virtues of 'humility, charity, self-judgement, and acceptance of the problem Providence sets one; also a disposition not to direct affairs as a sovereign will in the world but to make one's actions a form of cooperation with Providence'.³² In the English, Butterfield found a historically tested national genius for such cooperation.³³ Calling upon the Gospels, he pointed out that God knows about the fall of a sparrow 'but it isn't said that He stops the fall'. Butterfield reconciled Providence and free will by asserting that God lets men 'make their own messes' in history, while at the same time, the 'play of human free will . . . the working of law in history . . . and the operation of chance are all embraced together in His Providence, the world and all its history lying in the hollow of his hand'. God achieves his purpose through 'those people whose personalities have been transformed by Christianity', while 'tugging at all men with the cords of love'. The important point was that God was not responsible for our sins and Butterfield's best solution for the inconsistencies in his position was the 'ultimate mystery of things'. God's inherently mysterious programme meant that history could never attribute any particular event to God's judgement. A historian can discover only general trends and say that 'empires fall, churches become corrupted, wars occur, as a judgement embodied in the constitution of things, part of the providential order itself'.³⁴ If God decided for His reasons to destroy humanity, compliance with history implied that people would become God's means in carrying out that destruction. It would be typical of human history, Butterfield wrote in *Christianity and History* (1949), 'if—assuming that the world was bound some day to cease to be a possible habitation for living creatures—men should by their own contrivance hasten that end and anticipate the operation of nature or of time' because Divine judgement in history made men its agents.³⁵ To deny the role of divine Providence and to believe instead that human beings were in control was moral hubris, another subversive consequence of original sin and a constant source of grief to Butterfield as a historian and as an individual.

In his first book on historiography in 1931, Butterfield rejected a Whig interpretation of history because it was entirely secular and written 'on the side of the Protestants and the Whigs, to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasize certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present'.³⁶ The Whig tradition violated Butterfield's conservative, fundamentally religious, pessimism and his sense that each period was unique in the eyes of God, the only view that mattered. Justification of the present was an approach that always distorted the past. Instead, Butterfield insisted, as Ranke had, that every time was unique to God, the only possible interpreter of history. Since we cannot really understand the meaning, let alone direction of the historical process, we cannot

let our current concerns affect our approach to the past.³⁷ His second treatment of historiography, *The Englishman and His History* (1944), was based upon a series of lectures given in Germany before the war. After Dunkirk, the lectures were recast as a patriotic paean to a Whiggism consistent with a conservative emphasis on practical, non-doctrinaire continuities within English history. In 1944, Butterfield celebrated the Whig tradition that emerged in the eighteenth century as 'a moderate pace of reform, a cautious progress to whatever end may be desired: the whiggism which, abhorring revolutionary methods, seems now mildly left-wing, now almost indistinguishable from conservatism'.³⁸ The Whig tradition that he had repudiated in 1931 was a liberal tradition; the one he celebrated in 1944 was conservative. In a pamphlet on Lord Acton, written for the Historical Association in 1948, Butterfield again made the point that the British constitution was made by Tories and Whigs. He criticized the liberal Acton for not recognizing that 'between the fanaticisms of right and left' there was a conservative kind of whiggism, that steered 'the country through perilous seas, measured the limits of what was practicable and prevented catastrophe by a maturer kind of political wisdom'.³⁹

Although Acton was a committed Catholic, Butterfield treated him as if he were in the secular camp because he saw Acton's thought as contributing to the displacement of religion by self-serving scholarship and moral vanity. Instead of the liberal ideal of individuality that Acton championed, Butterfield proposed a religious image of distinctive 'personality', or soul, given to everyone by God. Without the essential qualities of their personality, no historian could write a properly complete historical narrative. Personality was the beating heart of history compelling the historian to discuss mind and motive, hope and fear, passion and faith. In the depths of personality lay self-consciousness, intellect, and the only kind of freedom that human beings possessed. Unpredictable and singular, personality was the sole arena for struggle between good and evil that allowed a person real freedom. Moral conflict did not occur between nations or creeds but within a 'deeper realm' out 'of reach' for the historian because it is 'within the intimate interior of personalities'.⁴⁰ Personality, neither submerged in the herd nor unrestrainedly free because of the force of events, flourished for Butterfield only in combination with Christianity. In his Riddell Memorial Lectures of 1951, *Christianity in European History*, he made his position unequivocal: 'Since human beings are so willful, it may be true that the modern western world, by giving so much rein to individuals, is a civilization perpetually in jeopardy through an excess of liberty. There is grave danger for humanity if, in the new situation, individuals do not by an autonomous act of judgement go over to the Christian religion.' An emphasis on human personality made no sense unless 'accompanied by a powerful affirmation on the spiritual side'.⁴¹

In the same year that Butterfield died, the American novelist Stanley Elkin tackled the problem of evil that Butterfield never satisfactorily solved. In *The Living End* (1979), Elkin's God does not justify His ways, but He does explain

them. He tells Heaven that interest in the sanctity of the human will or in goodness was irrelevant to His actions. He did what He did rather because 'it makes a better story . . .'.⁴² In Butterfield's reading of that regrettable story, the Second World War was a continuation of the First World War, that 'dismal birthday of modern battle and hatred', the first modern war to abandon the concrete and attainable objects of limited warfare. Instead of turning to diplomacy and compromise, 1914 launched wars of righteousness and moral hubris that led to the Second World War and its Cold War aftermath.⁴³ Butterfield's Christian conservatism led him to read history as a series of warnings against any activity undertaken for moral purposes and carried out by sadly flawed human beings in a world that always overwhelmed them. He was equally unsympathetic to those who mistakenly believed in the beneficent presence of God, and those whose narrow secular experience prevented them from understanding the Augustinian God that governed Butterfield and his world.

As a Christian, Butterfield imagined that very little good could come from any enterprise initiated in the name of moral zealotry and carried out by frail human beings in a world they could never control. Butterfield's constant protagonist, Sir Lewis Namier, a Jewish convert to Anglicanism, once told A. J. P. Taylor a story to illustrate the futility of discussions about free will and determinism. A Galician priest, trying to explain God's intervention through miracles asked a peasant, 'If I fell from the Church tower and landed unhurt, what would you call it?' 'An accident.' 'And if I fell again, and was unhurt?' 'Another accident.' 'And if I did it a third time?' 'A habit.'⁴⁴ Butterfield was equally unsympathetic to the priest, who looked for the beneficent presence of God in the world, and to the peasant, who was limited by narrow secular experience. There was, for Butterfield, 'a certain system of necessity in which human beings at any place and period are not imprisoned but more or less involved'.⁴⁵ For Butterfield, God made history but He did not choose to reveal its structure or meaning to His agents or to His historians. Together with other conservative historians such as Elton, Kitson Clark, and Max Beloff, Butterfield turned to history to disprove moral idealism; to create an acceptance of historical experience as the only satisfactory guide to policy; and to argue for institutional restraints against the implicit violence and destruction present in everyone's nature.

As a conservative, Butterfield blamed secular liberals for deposing religion and setting up arrogant scholarship and science in its place. In his most original book, *The Origins of Modern Science, 1300–1800* (1951), Butterfield denied the Whig–Liberal reading of science as a story of steady progress, and offered instead a history mitigated by regress and blunder. The history of science, he argued, was like the history of everything else. The same innately conservative tendencies set new discoveries into a 'realm of "established facts"'. We 'must wonder', he speculated, 'both in the past and the present that the human mind, which goes on collecting facts, is so inelastic, so slow to change its framework of reference'.⁴⁶

Secular, liberal meliorism distorted the study of history, including the history of science, because it assumed that a dramatic improvement of the human condition was a realistic goal. That sanguine, evolutionary view depended upon blind faith in the rehabilitation of human nature. It was as pernicious as ignorance to Butterfield because it provided a specious justification for dismantling those safeguards set up, and administered, by government to constrain the essential evil in human nature.⁴⁷ Control and containment were reasonable strategies for Butterfield; optimistic progress was a disappointing illusion.

In a correspondence with Butterfield, Isaiah Berlin attempted to understand Butterfield's position so that he could represent it fairly in lectures that he was intending to publish. It quickly became apparent that their views about agency and responsibility were so opposed as to be irreconcilable. Berlin commended Butterfield for urging a climate in which 'disagreements need not lead to bigotry or efforts at mutual extermination; the danger of indulging in the application of general principles to specific situations of vivisection of human beings because of some fixed idea of how things ought to be: and ad hoc solutions, each in its own time and place, none hoping for finality'. At the same time, Berlin disagreed with what he understood as Butterfield's diminution of the role of individual influence within history and his unwillingness to 'blame or denounce'. Instead, Berlin was 'continually impressed' by two apparent truths. The first was that individuals and moral ideas had much greater effect than did approaches such as Marxism, theology, 'economically inclined histories, or, for that matter, those which stress biological or other non-rational factors'. The twentieth century, with its Hitlers and Stalins, demonstrated that lesson for Berlin. The second truth was that knowledge led to moral judgement. 'We judge as we judge', he wrote to Butterfield, 'on the basis of whatever is the best knowledge available, and that to abstain from judging morally distorts the picture that we have, both as historians and as human beings, a duty to understand and explain as far as we can, but that to understand is not to excuse . . . '.

Butterfield did not respond directly to either of these criticisms, but he did ask Berlin to change the attribution to him that 'men and nations always, or at any rate more often than not, aim at what seems to them good'. Butterfield wanted Berlin to emphasize that 'I hold the old-fashioned view that all men are sinners, that egotism is our curse, and that all nations and all social classes court doom through it. I should feel it an injury if this were described as a "cynical" view . . . The Christian view is that God condemns, and if I can convince a man that God (not I) condemns, then I have achieved something for I have secured that the man condemns himself.'⁴⁸ Although he left the judgement and punishment of historical agents, including historians, ultimately to God, Butterfield insisted that we must judge ourselves and recognize that the same Christian morality prevailed in politics as in private life. To make our nation and ourselves moral the 'real achievement' was to induce other people

to evaluate their own motives and behaviour. When they appeared unwilling to take on that moral imperative, Butterfield's reflection upon their weakness of will appears to violate his principle of not judging individuals. In criticism of the historian G. P. Gooch, Butterfield found that he made 'sensible comments on the materials he studied', but he 'never really wrestled with anything—never gave the impression of hurdles surmounted or wounds suffered'.⁴⁹

One of the problems with which Butterfield wrestled repeatedly was the appropriate response to Nazi Germany. Christ, Butterfield suggested, would have cautioned America and Britain not to assume their moral superiority: 'If the Germans had been as fortunate as you have been, and if they had been in the same position, they might have behaved at least as virtuously as you.' That admonition might have been more persuasive if Butterfield was describing petty thieves and not mass murderers. Butterfield's justification was that people were 'not always quite masters of themselves' but rather 'imperfect parts of an imperfectly ethical world'. Although we should condemn and try to stop immoral actions, we should always remember that we might have done the same thing, especially in 'that political realm in which our judgements are so gravely entangled with our interests'. While the inter-war conservative historians thought of themselves as an elite largely, although not entirely, exempt from the failings of human nature, Butterfield included himself among the sinners, and made everyone responsible 'to a certain degree for other people's sins'. Not trusting anyone to behave well, given their inheritance of sin and the consequent corruption of human nature, Butterfield saw the purpose of political society as 'primarily to establish a region of peace and order, in which men can develop the life of reason and the world can grow in reasonableness'. In common with the inter-war conservative historians, Butterfield relied upon 'the state', understood as a series of regulating institutions, to establish 'a tolerable mode of life, the possibility of a life of reason in spite of sin—and in one sense it is a remedy for sin, in that . . . at least the external conduct of men becomes controlled, and the reign of actual violence is curbed'.⁵⁰

Butterfield insisted that his deep commitment to Christianity was entirely compatible with his equally deep commitment to objective and technical history, which he believed could be separated successfully from moralistic judgements and ideological intrusions. *History and Human Relations* (1951), published to explain and justify Butterfield's position, fell short of satisfying critics. No matter how much he denied it, his invocation of Christianity as essential to historical understanding imported an ideological system of informing conservative ideas, which he superimposed upon his technical history. *The Listener* clearly expressed the major differences between Butterfield and his critics, including those sympathetic to him, by describing Butterfield as a 'Christian and an idealist', whose philosophy of history was 'that there is no philosophy of history', and who, strangely for a historian, taught 'that we learn little or nothing from history'. That description was both accurate and inaccurate. Butterfield was not an idealist but rather a conservative pragmatist, who believed that any philosophy of history

trampled upon actual historical experience. The factual record of experience gave historical study pedagogical possibilities. Butterfield wanted history to teach us our own limitations and personal duties, even though individual and communal efforts might be denied and redirected by an indecipherable Providential intent. *The Listener* was only partially correct to point out further that Butterfield's claim to be a scientific historian was a licence to treat both sides in a conflict as if each had a legitimate claim to be the right side. Butterfield did not forgive everything, nor did he see 'the tragic element in history' as 'the continual battle . . . between two rights'. While Butterfield greatly preferred impartiality because judgement was God's sphere, after the war he condemned the Nazis as both wrong and evil. He also agreed that it had been necessary to go to war against them, though he had urged a negotiated settlement in 1943 and maintained relations with the Germany Embassy in Dublin throughout the war. At the same time, he remained unwilling to judge individual Nazi behaviour.

It is not surprising that Butterfield's readers were confused. *The Listener* objected that 'since historians themselves are human beings, unconsciously they are bound to write from a particular point of view and that the very selection of evidence which they present in their books is influenced by their moral judgements'.⁵¹ Maurice Cowling, while still a student at Jesus College, also protested Butterfield's rejection of the historian's value judgement. The young Cowling found that 'undesirable' and 'unavoidable', and he urged that 'its place in the history of the historian's mind shd [*sic*] be made clear, the statement of it ought to be as articulate though not as unobtrusive as possible'.⁵²

In response to this kind of criticism, Butterfield contended that 'history', when stripped of extraneous moral pronouncements, was accessible to the scientific or technical historian through three levels of analyses that appeared contradictory but were actually compatible. These analyses concentrated on individuals, on the laws of nature, and on religion. The first two, individual agency and the deterministic concept of laws, were reconcilable by examining the 'large processes in society working for decades to produce the French Revolution or the War of 1914, while seeing the men of 1789, the men of 1914 . . . make their own history—blameable for the decisions they have taken'. The third, and highest, level, religion, relied upon 'a Providence which has put men into a world where they run all the risks that flow from free will and responsibility and from even the cruelties that they commit against one another—put them into a world which also has its regularities and laws—indeed we are only able to do things and calculate the consequences of one's actions because there are these regularities, these conformities to law'. Butterfield was not invoking natural law theory, which he rejected along with other secular abstractions, but rather God's direction of history. Providence judged 'Western Civilization as it then stood in the war of 1914' while simultaneously ordaining a 'kind of progress in history' that 'underlies the whole story of evolution throughout the ages'. When it came to understanding individuals, Butterfield warned that the historian is 'defeated on

those issues of private feeling and ultimate motive which always lie between a man and his Maker'.⁵³

An inability to fathom the depths of any individual did not mean that historians were incapable of explaining events. Although he admitted that even the most thorough and scrupulous historians might miss important pieces of evidence which would have allowed a truer interpretation, historians were still better equipped, he believed, than the historical actor to analyse what happened.⁵⁴ With access to varieties of evidence, a historian could 'reconstruct' historical episodes while constantly re-examining original sources to test the continuing validity of any historical consensus. His ideal was for the historian to conduct his research 'with a mind unloaded of all hypotheses' to 'collect his facts' gather 'his microscopic details, and place everything in chronological order, until the moment comes when he can brood over the whole without any *parti pris*'. Reflecting upon his own method, Butterfield concluded that in the 'last resort, sheer insight is the greatest asset of all'.⁵⁵ That flash of recognition required an appreciation of the story as a whole in which one thing leads to another, 'so that there is a fairly explicable line of development'.⁵⁶ Butterfield's early admiration for imaginative literature and narrative was later transformed into a method for technical history.⁵⁷ Throughout his career, and especially after the Second World War, Butterfield urged historians to do the documentary history that he argued was their proper function, but he did very little of it himself.

Increasingly after 1945, Butterfield thought about the practical uses of history that would not perpetuate the anachronism and present-mindedness that had been the target of his Whig critique in 1931. He wanted historians to study high politics, the balance of power, and diplomacy. If pursued 'scientifically', these studies would demonstrate the value of pragmatic political action. Mere 'insight, mere goodwill, mere trust in God' were necessary but not sufficient. In common with the other conservative historians, Butterfield relied upon 'experience'.⁵⁸ That demonstration was especially clear in political history which studied man 'in his more sovereign aspect, choosing his own ends, deciding his history, doing something about his own destiny', as opposed to being 'the victim of historical processes'. The historian began by establishing 'hard facts, to discover what actually happened, in so far as this can be deduced from the tangible evidence that survives'. Having done that, he then connected events in 'a scientific manner' without invoking any *deus ex machina*. Butterfield sought in history the 'machinery' through which 'Providence appeared to work'. Although committed to following the technical rules of history, he could not accept that human beings 'are merely part of nature' because a Christian must believe that 'historical events have a genuine significance, and that one must know the truth about them, even when the truth is inconvenient to one's present political purposes. . .'.⁵⁹

As a result of a Christian's 'deep views about the nature and possibilities of human personality', Butterfield treated people as more than 'mere bundles of caprice and optimism and willfulness'. The Christian as a historian was compelled

by his Christianity to repudiate the 'effects of the paganizing of history' of 'a materialistic outlook, a depreciation of personality, a scepticism about the human will'. Instead, Butterfield wanted a humanistic history, a 'resurrection of the past and the story of human beings living out their lives'.⁶⁰ If individual agency is essentially the acceptance and furthering, often unconsciously, of providential purpose, then where did Butterfield find room for any 'sovereignty' of the will? The commitment to 'humanism' that he wanted was expected to persuade individuals to work 'for higher ends of some kind'.⁶¹ In 1954, when questioned about the use of causality in history, he conceded that he came increasingly 'to see human beings as actual sources of action—the real "causes" of events'. Moreover, he believed that although causes were understood differently 'by different historians because of their education, training and experience', technical history made it possible for a 'fairly scientific discussion of "causes" as between one historian and another in the civilized world'.⁶² In his research and technical thinking, Butterfield read widely and systematically. One example of the process that he followed was his study of the development of historiography, which required reading through the journal *History* from 1921 to 1953 and taking copious, introspective notes. Although this was hardly the technical, basic research that relied upon documents from an earlier time, Butterfield believed any other reader of the same run of *History* would arrive at the same conclusions as he did.

Even though the historian lacked the 'reproducibility' of the natural scientist, Butterfield found little difference between them. He trusted historians to 'take observed events' and 'study the demonstrable relations' between them. Then they could 'do calculations' on their results 'just as you can do mathematics on the results of experiments'. When the historian followed this procedure, he would discover patterns and connections because historical events 'form an intricate network'. Even so slight an event as 'the shape of Cleopatra's nose—may alter the whole course of the future'. History remained 'the kind of story in which one doesn't know what is going to happen next'. What he called 'scientific' thinking was applicable and illuminating, Butterfield maintained, in such enterprises as 'a comparison of all the revolutions of history, or the repeated causes of aggressions among the European states during the last 500 years'.⁶³ Butterfield was more prepared to use 'scientific' history to create explanatory models more than to explain particular events despite his insistence upon a circumscribed set of events as the historian's necessary limit.

Between 1960 and 1968, Butterfield vacillated between viewing history as part of God's providential and determined order and an emphasis upon the efficacy of individual will. Butterfield worried that individuals no longer felt that they made history, which became something 'happening to them'. He attributed that perception of impotence to their materialism, which left them the 'victims of mere process'. By the 1960s Butterfield was willing to allow the historian to make counter-factual judgements restricted to an evaluation of 'what would

have been the issue if something else had happened, if government had made a different decision'. Given all these caveats and Butterfield's reluctance to take sides, he was still able to urge historians to 'rise above our age and help to produce "tomorrow"'.⁶⁴

Unlike the inter-war conservative historians, Butterfield was no political activist, although he was a missionary for conservative views. Among his motives for studying history was his conviction, told to a Birmingham audience in 1968 and repeated at Eton some months later, that a serious historical attitude could 'cleanse' one's emotions and produce 'the right kind of sentiment for those who lived and died before us'. Despite what he said about learning from history so that something could be done about our own destiny, he repeated what he had said thirty-seven years earlier in his critique of the Whig view. The past must not be used 'to serve the purposes of the present day. Precisely because it is no longer here it exists to be enquired into and it has no right to anything except to be understood.'⁶⁵

Butterfield found his greatest professional satisfaction in the narration of English history as high politics. Butterfield's technical research and writing were directed to the conservative enterprise of analysing the consequences of an insatiable human striving for dominance. Political history, he argued, gave us an essential perspective about 'the problem of power'.⁶⁶ Ranke was especially to be emulated, because the German historian saw power-politics as fundamental to history and concentrated on the European states-system and the balance of powers. Butterfield saw the structural analysis of power-politics as still one of the historiographical imperatives of his own day. The 'reality of power' was as inescapable as Marxist teaching about the 'play of self-interest in individuals and the conflict of social classes'. Above all other historical inquiries, Butterfield gave 'primacy' to foreign policy. At the same time, he celebrated the 'central tradition of English historiography' for its practical, institutional, and exceptionalist character. The 'English scheme of liberty' was the result of evolving tradition based 'not so much on the natural rights of man as on the historic rights of Englishmen'.⁶⁷ That is a phrase that could have been used—and in some cases was—by Hearnshaw, Feiling, Bryant, Elton, and Kitson Clark.

Study of the eighteenth century, and especially of the understanding of war then and subsequently, revealed to Butterfield that individuals and states, revolutionary governments, and even democratic peoples were sometimes ready to sacrifice everything to achieve 'brute power . . . over one's fellow-men'. Although he insisted that historians must not judge historical actors, he approved of George III as a 'Patriot King' in the national, paternalistic image that he and the inter-war conservative historians admired. Butterfield's Patriot King attempted to eliminate corrupt influence from the House of Commons and to use his patronage not for political influence but to reward merit. George III emerged, anachronistically, as a conservative Tory Democratic hero who wanted to be 'a truly national monarch' caring for the interest of the lower classes, valuing

the responsible aristocracy, and reducing the power of the arrogant old Whig houses. George III especially appealed to Butterfield because he saw him as a proponent of religious and moral life, as well as of literature, music, and science. Above all, George was laudable because he followed a foreign policy meant to promote peace. George's character and policy were evident to Butterfield through his reading of policy-making documents, the decisions of government departments, cabinet discussions, and ministerial correspondence.⁶⁸ That was the kind of 'scientific' evidence that he believed all reasonable historians would agree about.

Butterfield's interpretation of George III and of the development of parliament and parties in the eighteenth century led him into a historiographical battle with Lewis Namier and the Namierites. Namier was also a conservative, and their methodological differences had little to do with their basic assumptions about human nature, the relations between individuals and the state, or the restraining role of institutions validated by history.⁶⁹ Together with Namier, Butterfield wanted historians to put aside misleading expectations about the world so that practical, limited policies could be extracted from historical experience to direct human affairs more rationally.

The account of Butterfield's famous confrontation with Namier over their conflicting approaches and disparate interpretations of George III has been exhausted in an extensive literature. It is pertinent to touch on it briefly here in the context of their common conservatism. Namier's reputation was established in 1928 with his *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, in which he set out to study the 'political nation' by concentrating upon that 'marvellous microcosmos, the British House of Commons', and especially upon 'types' and 'structures' and 'constituencies'.⁷⁰ Butterfield characterized his and Namier's methodologies as two different but legitimate fields of study: Namier studied 'the structure of politics as analysis of constituencies, elections, local influence, party management, etc.', while Butterfield was interested rather in 'statesmanship in sense of the operation of the central government for the welfare of the nation as whole'. Butterfield opposed what he saw as Namier's single-minded concentration upon 'interests' isolated from 'ideas'.⁷¹ When Butterfield emphasized the role of 'ideas', he meant that a historian should understand strategies by which individuals pragmatically worked through problems presented to them. From Butterfield's perspective, Namier had ignored the motivations that underlay the acquisition and uses of power. But Butterfield was close to Namier in their common exploration of 'power', although by different means. Most crucially, they shared a distrust of 'idealism', which they both saw as either misguided or opportunistic, and doomed to fail. In his Raleigh Lecture on History at the British Academy in 1944, Namier turned to diplomatic history to describe the European revolutions of 1848 as mob phenomena exploited by the intellectual middle classes: 'The mob had come out in revolt, moved by passions and distress rather than by ideas: they had no articulate aims' and there was no 'rational

explanation' for their activities. The 'working classes touched it off, and the middle classes cashed in on it'. The intellectuals failed because they did not recognize 'Realpolitik'.⁷² Of all the historical subjects that he investigated, Butterfield was most comfortable with diplomatic history because it demonstrated a realistic approach to international relations in which down-to-earth power-politics were more honest than idealism.

To prove the efficacy of common sense as opposed to idealism, Butterfield called upon diplomatic history to testify for him. As early as 1929, in *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon, 1806–1808*, Butterfield studied diplomacy as the practised art of international reconciliation.⁷³ After the war, in *Christianity and History* (1949), he returned to eighteenth-century diplomacy as an object lesson in the common-sense truth that war was not fought for 'righteousness', but for limited aims about which people could compromise. Twentieth-century wars were abhorrent to Butterfield not only for the cruel loss of life and treasure, but because they were mistakenly fought over abstract and unattainable moral issues. Butterfield was attracted to the eighteenth-century because he believed that sensible leaders then fought rather about provinces. It was much easier and more desirable, Butterfield insisted, to compromise about relative boundaries than about absolute right.⁷⁴ The same year, *George III, Lord North and the People* (1949), provided a homily on the ways in which conflict could be avoided in the future by applying the realistic policies of the past.⁷⁵ *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* (1953) continued the argument that war and diplomacy were always much more about power than about ideals.⁷⁶ At the same time, Butterfield objected to E. H. Carr that he got 'a little tired of people who say that I exclude morality from the world because I exclude moral judgements from the functions of the technical historian.'⁷⁷ In spite of his objections, Butterfield's technical historical writing studied statecraft as accommodation in both domestic and foreign affairs. That perspective allowed him to illustrate the compulsion of circumstances and the restricted role of men in responding to those circumstances.

While Butterfield concentrated upon power and foreign-policy imperatives in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, his conservative colleagues George Kitson Clark and Geoffrey Elton entrenched themselves in a past where they, too, could document the efficacy of their conservative values. The three men were never friends during their professional lives at Cambridge and they wrote about different periods. But the collapse of Britain's traditional political and imperial authority led each of them to look at history through a conservative prism in their agreement about the cupidity of human nature and the centrality of high politics, government, and administration as agencies for containing human excesses. Butterfield's Peterhouse nurtured a flourishing concentration on power-politics with an increasingly militant, conservative bend. Kitson Clark and Elton were never polemically conservative on a national and international stage, and neither of them made their Colleges magnets for conservative historiography, let alone conservative controversy. Instead of engaging with the major issues of

their time, both men sought refuge from the twentieth century in periods where they discovered a more satisfying imposition of order upon disorder.⁷⁸ Following an essential conservative ideal, they valued those historical eras in which the excesses of human nature were contained by institutions and their efficient administrators. Unlike either Butterfield or Elton, both of whom became Regius Professors, Kitson Clark remained a Fellow at Trinity and never achieved a university post higher than a Readership in Constitutional History, 1945–67.⁷⁹ But he did have influence within the Cambridge History Faculty, and was a dedicated teacher of important future historians in Britain, Australia, and America.⁸⁰

Kitson Clark was most comfortable in the first half of the nineteenth century, where he admired sensible, pragmatic men and technocratic landlords. He approved especially of statesmen such as Robert Peel who were not 'likely to defend what was indefensible, nor to press a principle beyond the point that practical politics allowed'.⁸¹ Although Kitson Clark returned to Peel repeatedly, he increasingly minimized the influence of individuals and of ideas. The lesson of the mid-Victorian period was the 'influence in human affairs of the force of necessity, of the pressure of circumstances'. It seems 'impossible to doubt that given the circumstances of Britain in the nineteenth century something resembling what did happen would have happened, whoever the agents available might have been'. Men's 'intentions had to conform, not to what was recommended by theory, but to what was determined by fact, and they were not masters of the future'.⁸² After producing *Peel and the Conservative Party 1830–41* (1929) and *Peel* (1936), Kitson Clark did not publish again until 1950. In his teaching as well as writing, his message remained fairly consistent after the war. It was the 'development of social policy that led to the creation of the State as we know it nowadays in Britain'. That policy, between 1820 and 1880, was the result of actions taken by a great variety of people not as a result of principles or personality but because of 'the need to find a practical solution' to immediate problems.⁸³ The purpose of his 1929 study of Peel had been 'to describe first how Peel and his party were moulded and scarred by the years before 1832' and then how they 'set about protecting . . . the ancient institutions of their country'. The second edition, published in 1964 without alteration to the content, had a new introduction, which emphasized instead that Peel was a man who was 'not to evade his destiny'.⁸⁴ After the war, Kitson Clark viewed conditions as more powerful than individuals.

Kitson Clark also shared the view that Michael Bentley attributes to Butterfield and Elton. Bentley places the latter two in the modernist historiographical 'persuasion' because they believed that the role of the historian was to tell a story about high politics based upon a precise and impartial study of evidence.⁸⁵ Butterfield continuously returned after the Second World War to the dilemma about the historian's contemporary role, but neither Kitson Clark nor Elton saw a problematic relationship between subjective historians and the writing

of objective history.⁸⁶ When he was 67, Kitson Clark published *The Critical Historian* (1967). This was not an exploration of the historian's reading or writing of history, but rather a simple discussion of the craft of teaching. But he did believe that historical knowledge had immediate relevance. When Butterfield had reviewed Kitson Clark's *The English Inheritance* (1950), seventeen years earlier, he had praised the legitimate use of the past 'to throw light on the most critical of our contemporary problems. He is concerned with the effect of Christianity on our mundane order and our secular traditions.' That approval was modified by his criticism of Kitson Clark's failure to discuss modern 'individualism, humanism, internationalism, humanitarianism, and liberalism' which had their roots in 'a Christian context'. To cut these movements adrift from religion worried Butterfield, who saw them as precarious and vulnerable 'to terrible paradoxes and inversions when left to develop by their own internal logic'. Butterfield used the review to reiterate his conviction that 'doctrines of individualism and liberty may serve only to ruin a civilization unless accompanied by a strong assertion of the spiritual character of human beings'.⁸⁷

Kitson Clark, who was an Anglican, did emphasize the centrality of religion and approached history from a Christian perspective, despite Butterfield's strictures. By contrast, Geoffrey Elton was a Jewish exile from Hitler's Prague, who saw religion as another aspect of political power. Even so, all three of the Cambridge conservative historians endorsed Elton's view that narrative history was 'usually political history because narrative records movement, and the dynamic life of society (as I have stressed several times) equals political life'.⁸⁸ Elton wholeheartedly embraced his new country and became an enthusiastic, fundamentally conservative English patriot. His emphasis upon the historical veracity of strong institutions, a stable and harmonious nation, and a balance of power was accepted almost universally by conservatives. Several generations of undergraduates and postgraduates, reading his required texts in English-speaking universities, learned from Elton that the most important subject of study both for historians and people of affairs was the origins and exercise of power. Without peers in his influence among historians of Tudor England, not only in Britain but throughout the English-speaking world, Elton created a flourishing school of Tudor studies, and although his acolytes were not necessarily political conservatives, they largely accepted and taught his interpretations.⁸⁹

His original and single-minded pursuit of a subject, particularly the Tudor revolution in government, narrated with verve and elegance, was an unreserved, deeply conservative paean to his adopted country. To explain the origins of the nation that he so admired and adopted without reservation, he went back to the sixteenth century to reveal a constitution based on law, parliamentary consent, and order. In his epochal *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (1953), Elton wrote that because he belonged to a generation that knew 'despotism and a reign of terror' at 'first hand', he could exonerate the Tudors of similar charges. It was more accurate to describe the sixteenth century as 'a time when men were

ready to be governed, and when order and peace seemed more important than principles and rights'. It was especially in the Tudor period that Elton found and celebrated efficient administration by strong individuals, such as Thomas Cromwell, who shaped and managed institutions. At the beginning of his career, he urged Tudor historians to 'understand the true structure and ideas of so "governed" an age' and to see 'matters not only from the point of view of the governed but also from that of the government'.⁹⁰ In common with the other conservative historians, Elton found equitable law, order, and peace more important than abstract principles.

Some of his peers, such as Joel Hurstfield, challenged Elton's attempts to rehabilitate Tudor government. Hurstfield also came from a family of Jewish *émigrés* and he called upon twentieth-century *émigré* experience to question Elton's arguments that the Tudors' reliance on law and consent proved that they were not tyrants. 'Everything Hitler did before 1943', Hurstfield argued, 'was within the framework of the law and the constitution although some of his deeds were the most barbarous in the history of mankind'. Elton replied that there were no personal differences between Hurstfield and himself because they equally hated oppression, deplored corruption, and disliked hypocrisy, but there were differences of method. Elton said that he wanted understanding to come from 'inside the period studied', while Hurstfield brought to the sixteenth century a 'model' of a free society to be used for testing events that had occurred four centuries earlier.⁹¹ What Elton did not see was that he and Hurstfield each brought a model to their studies: Hurstfield, at one time sympathetic to socialism, had an entirely different idea of liberties and justice than did the conservative Elton; Elton's sixteenth century, where he chose to live, became a model for explaining the exemplary strength and durability of British nationalism.

Elton was a generation younger than Butterfield and Kitson Clark, and he outlived them both by a generation. At the end of his career, his beliefs about the Tudors and the straightforward role of the historian as a narrator of political life had altered very little. When, in 1974, he was asked to revise his bestselling text, *England Under the Tudors*, issued in eleven editions since its publication in 1955, he admitted that he continued 'in general to stand by the view of the sixteenth century which I expressed here from the first'.⁹² In 1992, two years before his death, he published *The English*, a personal tribute to the 'country in which I ought to have been born', where 'the centuries of a strong monarchy and a powerful system of legal rights' left the twentieth century a legacy of the toleration of variety and respect for the rights 'not of Man but of English men and women'.⁹³ Butterfield and Kitson Clark, both born in England, expressed the same sentiments.

In common with Kitson Clark, Butterfield remained consistently interested in political, and especially international, reconciliation and the art necessary to achieve it. As early as 1929, in his technical historical study of *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon, 1806–1808*, Butterfield examined Napoleonic systems of

diplomacy.⁹⁴ *The Englishman and his History* (1945) praised the ‘whigs’ as opposed to the ‘whig historians’, because they represented the tradition of Burke which small ‘c’ conservatives had adopted, at least since Disraeli, as the fount of their conservatism. In the whig tradition that he favoured, Butterfield found the ‘common heritage of Englishmen . . . of both whig and tory’. That uniquely English tradition replaced the futile and ‘doctrinaire quest for the highest good by’ the ‘more difficult . . . pursuit of the highest practicable good’. English history, which Butterfield described as ‘a living thing’, was ‘reconciling continuity with change, discovering mediations between past and present, and showing what can be achieved by man’s reconciling mind’. He concluded by saying that it was ‘not even the whigs that we should praise, but . . . the solid body of Englishmen, who throughout the centuries have resisted the wildest aberrations, determined never for the sake of speculative ends to lose the good they already possessed; anxious not to destroy those virtues in their national life which need long periods of time for their development; but waiting to steal for the whole nation what they could appropriate in the traditions of monarchy, aristocracy, bourgeoisie and church’.⁹⁵

Among the virtues in English national life, none was greater to Butterfield than the achievements of practical, realistic diplomacy. In his Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture of 1956, the *Historical Development of the Principle of Toleration in British Life*, published in association with the Council of Christians and Jews, Butterfield turned to particular historical examples of that success. Even when the outcome appeared to be a triumph for moral or idealistic principles, the motives and methods were, he insisted, generally utilitarian. Cromwell restored Jewish life in England not out of any ethical compulsion to justice but because he wanted the Jews to be helpful should war occur with Spain.⁹⁶ Although Butterfield imposed restrictions on human agency, he often admired such pragmatic individuals as Cromwell, who planned and acted with purpose. We could not understand those historical figures, Butterfield asserted, unless we listened to their asserted intentions. *The Statecraft of Machiavelli* (1940), written as Britain was on the threshold of war, argued that although great men were strictly confined in their choices, some, like Machiavelli, were successful because they held non-doctrinaire views of politics and aimed for limited ends that could be achieved.⁹⁷ But Machiavelli was wrong in believing that men could defeat capricious time and chance. Machiavelli’s contemporary Guicciardini appeared far more perceptive to Butterfield because he understood policy as ‘a perpetual course of improvization’ and he appreciated government as an art rather than as a science.⁹⁸ Among great men, the best track record went to those who, independent of context or country, pursued virtues Butterfield identified as English: practicality over doctrine; practice over ideology; and pragmatism over system.⁹⁹

Especially in the fraught arena of international affairs, Butterfield continued to rely upon Providence, but he also felt compelled to take a pedagogical

role in fostering further 'scientific' study of the means to attain and sustain *rapprochement* among nations. To him, that enquiry was understood as a prolegomenon to the uses of power for public good. In the theory and practice of international affairs, Butterfield moved among an extremely influential constituency. Although he had great numbers of students and developed warm, long-term relations with many of them, Butterfield never produced an enduring school of historical studies focused on the eighteenth century, the history of science, or historiography.¹⁰⁰ Instead, from his international pulpit, where few historians preached successfully, Butterfield's conservative historical imagination gave him a sympathetic and admiring audience, especially among American policy-makers. These international pundits, in common with Butterfield, accepted the inability of people to control events, and argued that the best of intentions were more likely to go wrong than right.¹⁰¹

Beginning with a suspicion of human nature, Butterfield's reliance upon providential wisdom led him to an unwillingness to usurp that wisdom by taking sides in conflicts, and to the conclusion that there must be an international order based upon a conciliatory balance of powers and a 'realist' consensus about common policy. That commitment created his most responsive constituency in the Anglo-American theory and practice of international affairs. The mutually agreed-upon containment of power was the realistic course of action for Butterfield, as for his conservative colleagues. While we were 'not morally responsible for sin', Butterfield advised, we were 'politically responsible for creating too obvious an opening for an adventurer' unless the world powers were 'evenly balanced'. For Butterfield, one of the most dangerous aspects of human nature and behaviour for individuals and countries alike was the attraction to whatever terrible temptations might be available.¹⁰²

Butterfield always included himself among such potential sinners. To restrain an impulse to make historical judgements, he wore self-denial as a professional hair shirt. How, then, could he actively advocate an international order based upon a judgement about the necessity for a particular set of imperatives? Where did he find the licence that he usually renounced to take such a decisive position? His answer was that, since history has demonstrated the successful merit of a balance of power, the historian had a professional obligation to explain high politics and to champion that balance of power. He did not perceive himself as making preferential moral judgements in controversies, but rather as neutrally applying the 'scientific working of principles of classical diplomacy'. When considering both parliamentary and public attitudes towards Germany, France, and the other European countries before 1914, his study of diplomacy led him to conclude that England 'could be carried where the Foreign Office and Foreign Secretary led it, as easily as courts and court-factions could be led in the eighteenth century'.¹⁰³ The Peterhouse school of high politics clearly has its roots in Butterfield's ideas about the role of high politics and diplomacy.¹⁰⁴

When the British Co-ordinating Committee for International Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science met on 6–7 January 1949, Butterfield spoke to them about integrating the subject of International Relations in the undergraduate curriculum so that the low ‘quality of our diplomacy’ itself can be raised through a historical study of the subject of diplomacy. Following his mentor, Temperley, he emphasized a detailed study of documents together with a Special Period of Diplomatic History, although he felt that it was more useful for post-graduate study. He did not want the undergraduate subject to be simply of a body of information but rather, in keeping with the purpose of all undergraduate history, a training of the mind, an ‘intellectual discipline’ that involved learning ‘certain techniques’. Butterfield warned against studying history, and especially International Relations with any ‘utilitarian intention . . . all the prejudices, passions and wishful thinking which are involved in present-day controversies often make this more contemporary study a form of self-indulgence rather than a discipline for the mind’. Butterfield always found ‘self-indulgence’ nationally dangerous and personally unworthy. To gain the proper perspective, he recommended that students begin with historical studies before the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵

Butterfield returned often to his analysis of the small wars of the eighteenth century to prove the success of diplomacy and the ‘doctrine of the Just War’, which he understood as a conflict devoid of moralistic goals, limited in range, and intended to achieve a more stable and enduring peace. The balance of power was not only useful and valid in the eighteenth century but was, he insisted, the way national interests actually operated. In 1939, when Britain was again faced with a destructive war, Butterfield wrote an interpretive essay about Napoleon, who introduced ‘Armageddon, the giant conflict for justice and right between angered populations each of which thinks it is the righteous one’.¹⁰⁶ Although he disapproved of utilitarian usages of the past to remedy the present, when cataclysmic war threatened human existence, he was prepared, on the eve of the Second World War and again during the Cold War, to let eighteenth-century diplomacy and pragmatism teach his own time.¹⁰⁷ Frederick the Great had been justified in taking Silesia because all his ‘policies and letters confirm the view that he was more anxious for peace at this time than anybody else in Europe’. Frederick’s pursuit of a ‘Just War’ provided ‘for reasonable security; it forbade the kind of aggression that can take place in the guise of a demand for guarantees; it forbade you to make the destruction of a power or a state, the actual object of a war. The only exception it allowed was in the case of a power so barbaric that the civilised world could not admit it to be one of their number’.¹⁰⁸ Butterfield eventually came round to regarding the Nazis as that exceptional barbaric power. After 1945, a greater knowledge of the level of Nazi barbarity led him to acknowledge the ‘justness’ of the war fought against them.

When Butterfield developed these arguments more fully for a wider audience in *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* (1953), almost every review was negative,

including Martin Wight in *The Observer*. Although Wight read History at Oxford, where he earned a First Class in 1935, Butterfield was one of his examiners and subsequently a close friend. After 1958 and, at Butterfield's invitation, they worked closely together on the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics, the British offshoot of the American Rockefeller Committee on International Relations.¹⁰⁹ Wight's assumptions about human nature, Christianity, and Just War theory were very close to Butterfield's as was evident in his publications.¹¹⁰ In spite of his regard for Butterfield, Wight criticized the historical inaccuracy of Butterfield's view of a golden age of the balance of power in the eighteenth century, as did most of Butterfield's reviewers. Wight was correct, because that century was a time of continuous warfare in which thirty-two conflicts among states occurred on the average of 1 every 2.85 years.¹¹¹ While Wight agreed that the Christian 'category of political discussion has traditionally been, not charity or humility, but justice', he dissented from Butterfield further by pointing out that Christians 'in seeking to avoid self-righteousness about the tyrant and the aggressor', have forgotten to consider the implications for the victims and for the international community.¹¹²

A. J. P. Taylor, who found Butterfield's assumptions about history and human nature untenable, wrote a scathing, shrewd review in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. A 'non-Christian reviewer', Taylor argued, 'might expect the Christian answer to war to be absolute pacifism. Mr. Butterfield's answer, however, is worldly wisdom. Since Christianity teaches original sin and the wickedness of this world, the Christian must outwit the sinner by being even more subtle and cynical than he is. The Balance of Power, not striving for world-order, is the true Christian policy. If we fight, we should do so without claiming that our enemy is more wicked than we are; and we should make a compromise peace with him as soon as possible.' Taylor concluded sarcastically what Butterfield had concluded in earnest that 'we ought to have propped up Austria-Hungary in the First World War and compromised with Hitler in 1940'.¹¹³ A kinder, but equally sharp, review came from Stuart Hampshire, the Oxford philosopher who maintained that historical and genetic determinism could be overcome by the intention of free agents. Hampshire gave Butterfield credit for a convincing argument against those who see their enemies as always and necessarily evil, but insisted that we must not pretend, 'in some refinement of humility and helplessness, that we cannot discern brutality and injustice on a scale of relative evil, and at least choose not to support them'. Hampshire suggested that 'Humility, and an appeal to historical complexities, can also be an evasion.'¹¹⁴ Butterfield's greatest inconsistencies derived from his abandonment of responsible agency to the unfathomable workings of Providence and the determinism of historical events. Neither of these devices helped Butterfield when he found that he was compelled to make moral decisions.

At about the same time that he published *Christianity, Diplomacy and War*, Butterfield encouraged the *Times Literary Supplement* to feature a twenty-eight-page

section devoted to the nature and substance of post-war historical writing. Seventeen prominent historians, including the American Henry Steele Commager, reflected upon the past and future of their profession. Geoffrey Barraclough began with a 'Larger View', urging each historian to extract insights from history that addressed 'the dilemmas of the present'. The need was 'particularly urgent' because 'under the impact of contemporary events, so many of our old assumptions have ceased to carry conviction'. Barraclough spoke for many younger historians who found that the 'result of the war implied a shift in historical perspectives, almost as revolutionary as one of those great geological upheavals'. He reminded his readers that our history did 'nothing to prepare us for the emergence of the world in which we now live, and offers us no clue to its understanding'.¹¹⁵ Barraclough recommended a more international focus for the study of history and, practising what he preached, he became a distinguished comparative historian of Europe.

Barraclough's invitation to his colleagues to study the greater, contemporary world was ignored by most of them. Butterfield was among the very few British historians sympathetic to Barraclough's appeal. Uniquely, Butterfield echoed Barraclough to plead for less insularity and a more international point of view. In his inaugural address as Regius Professor of Modern History in 1964, Butterfield again made the narrative of high politics, including diplomacy, central to the historian's craft.¹¹⁶ A young Geoffrey Elton, another contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement* issue of 6 January 1956, emphasized instead the nationalistic study of English history. When Elton became Regius Professor of Modern History twenty years later, he used his inaugural address to insist still that 'English history be given a dominant role in English historical studies'.¹¹⁷

Unlike Elton, Butterfield drew upon his authority as a historian to address international issues. He sanctioned negotiation on the basis of power because it was difficult to deal with the 'problem of morality in a realm where force possesses a certain unanswerability'. The 'realm of international relations is the one most calculated to suffer at one and the same time from the cupidity of the wicked, the anxieties of the strong and the unwisdom of the virtuous. It is a field in which the problem of the self-righteousness of nations can be more deadly than the problem of national greed'.¹¹⁸ In the spring of 1956, Butterfield told the Peterhouse Chapel Fellowship that the development of a 'real international order is like the installation of a moral order'. Butterfield warned that since 'there are creeds, ideologies and regimes that make aggressive and exclusive claims, the real object of foreign policy is to provide a *modus vivendi*, and it is this which an international order primarily achieves'. War should never be fought for ideals such as 'Christianity or democracy or Socialism'. Instead, the purpose of war was 'to check the breach of the international order, so that the actual role of war in the history of human society is reduced'.¹¹⁹ For that reason, Butterfield had admitted in June 1941 that 'nobody in this country can have been a more passionate supporter than I of Chamberlain's Munich policy'.¹²⁰

Throughout the 1960s, Butterfield discovered, with relief, that one 'of the gratifying features of recent decades has been the limitation of warfare. Ten or twelve years ago we wondered whether it would be possible at all for the world to get through the 1950s without a major war . . . I have an awful feeling that all wars tend to become Just Wars for all parties because each so often each feels that it is being wronged—being forced to take action'. Butterfield viewed the Cold War with a neutrality he believed obligatory for historians, and he found in the communist versions of civilization 'a kind of democracy for those not yet fitted for democratic government'. An odd observation, not because of his sympathy for communism but rather because it was such a Whiggish view of national progress, in which various communities, groups, and nations arrived at different positions on the same road while travelling at different speeds in the same desirable direction. Beyond his reliance upon the demonstrations he found evident in the historical record, Butterfield turned to Christianity to persuade the west to recognize that 'many conflicts are in fact struggles between one half-right and another half-right' which use the 'same standard of judgement on both sides'. The 'strongest' activity for Christians was 'to testify their witness faithfully . . . leaving Providence to do the rest'.¹²¹ Butterfield preferred limited war, 'a combination of force with reason in order to prevent what might otherwise mean a release of the entire world to blind force', to ideologically driven wars for 'Righteousness'.¹²² Butterfield's wider interest in the twentieth century was expressed through such books as *International Conflicts in the Twentieth Century: A Christian View* (1960), an appeal to mutual accommodation in place of hot and cold wars. He also maintained a correspondence with scholars and students in nearly every country in the world as his papers in the Cambridge University Library reveal.

Above all, from the late 1950s, he was heard in international affairs through his activity in the Rockefeller Committee on International Politics in both America and Britain. In 1954, Dean Rusk, President of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1952, joined Kenneth Thompson in organizing a committee of Americans interested in 'theoretical questions about international relations'.¹²³ Initially a study circle run by Thompson and centred in the Department of International Affairs at Columbia University, the Rockefeller Committee included George Kennan and some of Kennan's friends from the former Policy Planning Section of the State Department, such as Louis Halle and Paul Nitze, who became patron saints of the American neo-conservative movement. They were joined by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and Arnold Wolfers of the International Relations Department at Yale.¹²⁴ The group examined, among other issues, the foundation of diplomacy in ethics; why countries have a foreign policy; and how far foreign affairs were amenable to scientific treatment. Butterfield met with them occasionally and in 1958 set up a similar group in England, which he chaired from 1959 through to 1966, when Wight became chair.¹²⁵ Within that group, which became known as the 'English School', and which met three

weekends a year at Peterhouse while Butterfield was Master, he remained a revered figure, who participated vigorously through to 1977 by giving papers and providing serious written comments on other presentations and discussions, many of which were published in journals or as essays in books dealing with international relations.

When Butterfield became involved with the Rockefeller Committee, he declared that he wanted 'to make past history continuous with present experience, and to see how far the long-term surveys of the historian might affect one's appreciation of the present day'. Butterfield successfully urged the new group to transcend diplomatic history and contemporary journalism for 'deeper' analyses that moved 'in the direction of fundamental principles', which included the re-examination of 'current assumptions about international politics'. Desmond Williams, Butterfield's close friend and then a diplomatic historian at University College, Dublin, was the first invited to join the English section. Williams described the group's purpose as bringing together people interested in international relations from a historical and theoretical viewpoint that included 'philosophy, the history of ideas, economic doctrine and financial policy' among other perspectives, in the hope that eventually they would reach 'a certain unity of purpose amid the diversity of viewpoints'.¹²⁶ The committee's members were originally Martin Wight; Desmond Williams; the philosopher Donald M. McKinnon, Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen; Michael Howard, then Lecturer in War Studies at the University of London; Adam Watson, who came from the Foreign Office and had a long and worldly career in the Foreign Service; Godfrey Hudson, a fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, who specialized in China and international communism; and William Armstrong, a Treasury man with specialties in economics and government, who was later uniquely powerful under Edward Heath and was often called 'the deputy prime minister'. By 1961, it included the Australian Hedley Bull, a Lecturer in International Relations at the London School of Economics, who was to become a prominent specialist in international affairs through the 1990s. Throughout the 1960s, the committee tried to discover how far anything analogous to the European states-system existed in the past, and in other parts of the world, through a study of ancient Greece, medieval Europe, China, Islam, India, American theories of international relations, and political philosophy.¹²⁷

In 1966, Butterfield and Wight published a series of essays, *Diplomatic Investigations*, to which they both contributed, which attempted to distance the English group from their American counterpart. When *Diplomatic Investigations* appeared, Dean Rusk, the central figure in founding the American Rockefeller group, had become a secretary of state who was aggressively pursuing greater American military involvement in the Vietnam War. Although Vietnam is never mentioned in any of the book's essays, it provided a cautionary backdrop against which the essayists presented their theoretical arguments. In the Preface to *Diplomatic Investigations*, Butterfield and Wight attempted to make clear

their differences from the American group. 'The British', they wrote 'have probably been more concerned with the historical than the contemporary, with the normative than the scientific, with the philosophical rather than the methodological, with principles rather than policy'. What most interested the British group was not 'the formulation of foreign policy, but the diplomatic community itself, international society, the states-system'.¹²⁸ Despite Butterfield's disclaimer, he did advocate a foreign policy in common with the other members of the British group based upon what they understood to be realism, conciliation through diplomacy, and an avoidance of moralistic imperatives.

It is instructive to look at some of the papers, which Butterfield, who read intensively in all these areas, wrote for the committee from its inception through 1977. None of them reveals either new ideas or new emphases. Instead, they stress his consistently conservative themes about the fallibility of human nature, and the need for Christian humility strengthened by constraints and remedies against undesirable and destructive behaviour, whether in individuals or nations. A talk on 'Foreign Policy and Historical Processes', assuming an analogy between individuals and states, warned against 'national egotism', the notion that each state pursues with force what it presumes to be right. For Butterfield only God knew which side was right because nations saw only their own 'interests, or ideals and ideologies making their absolute claims'. To counter that 'egotism', foreign policy should be directed at establishing a '*modus vivendi*'. The purpose of an international order was to decide contentious issues 'by reason', which required the West to realize that 'we are going to have to live with communism, and that communists realize that they are going to have to live with us'. Butterfield was left with the dilemma of explaining how 'reason' could triumph over self-interest, which made its goals appear rational. He had two answers that were familiar to readers of any of his post-war writings. One was that it was 'clearly the duty of the statesman to act as one who is trying to co-operate with the historical process itself'. That was hardly satisfactory since only God, Butterfield had said many times, knew the direction of that process. The second, equally unconvincing today but more credible in the 1950s and 1960s when the appropriation of scientific models appeared promising, was that a 'scientific approach can succeed where mere moralism fails'.¹²⁹

In another talk for the Rockefeller Committee on morality and the historical process, Butterfield urged that moralism, in the form of both individual and national self-righteousness, be jettisoned. Since human beings were neither absolute ends in themselves nor mere means to other ends, the only kind of 'progress' that could occur was the enrichment of the inner man who lived in subordination to God, whose compelling higher law was beyond human knowledge. Both the 'individual and society' had to be thought of 'as existing for the glory of God', in the sense that there has to be 'a regulative principle' that 'transcends' and is 'higher than either the man or the state'. Butterfield invoked Acton the Christian rather than Acton the historian to endorse the

possibility of 'liberty' only for those who understand 'that the whole political game is being played in a realm over which there rules a higher law'. Secular thinking, beginning with the alleged rights of man, led to egotism and the faulty assertion that an individual should obey only those laws with which he agrees. Butterfield's reconciliation of the inscrutability of God and His government with the requirement for responsible human agency rested on the argument that people could judge themselves but not others because 'we do not know how to work out the calculations and the transpositions required'. Butterfield's reading of history demonstrated that the 'object of political society is to establish an area of peace and order in which man can develop the life of reason and the world can grow in reasonableness'. Although that sounds suspiciously like the Whig view of progress that Butterfield largely repudiated, he qualified it by describing the state as a 'remedy for sin: because at least the external conduct of men becomes controlled, and the reign of actual violence is curbed'. The 'morality of the Christian' rather than the 'moralism of the Pharisee' does not attribute historical 'atrocities' to 'particularly wicked men', but insists rather 'on a further analysis that reaches behind the conduct so condemned'. Butterfield wanted nations to avoid acting as judges in their own cause because that invoked the kind of absolute moralism he wanted to discredit. In spite of his Augustinian despair, he concluded that 'in the long run everybody wants everybody else to submit to the rules of a civilized world'.¹³⁰ Butterfield's Rede Lecture in 1971 was even more optimistic in his conclusion that political experience could be transmitted from one generation to another based upon 'reflection on actual experience'. Eight years before he died, time became the healer for Butterfield and he welcomed the 'great progress that comes from the gradual growth of reasonableness among men; and the benefits that accrue from long periods of peace and stability'.¹³¹

When Kenneth Thompson reviewed Butterfield's life in 1980, he said, fairly, that Butterfield always adhered to an Augustinian theology that included recognition of the value of human personality, sin, God's sovereignty, the failings of human nature, and the incomplete character of human existence. He attributed three main interests to Butterfield: British and European history; the relations of Christianity to history; and the theory of international relations. After the war, Thompson saw Butterfield turning essentially to the relations between religion and history, which included his concern with international affairs.¹³² While the inter-war conservative historians had all invoked religious and pragmatic principles, Butterfield carried both of those precepts to what might be understood as a logical post Second World War position. In the aftermath of a war and its horrific by-products that were almost incomprehensible, Butterfield called upon an unknown providential dispensation higher than human understanding, and he fortified that dispensation by a 'scientific' study of international politics and the best ways to guarantee peace and the continuity of traditions and institutions that deserved to be conserved on the bases of their historical success and validity.

While interest in Butterfield's technical history has waned considerably, his contributions to a diplomatic history, which promoted international conciliation, still attract attention. In 2007, a series of Butterfield's papers, with a 'Foreword' by Thompson, appeared in *The International Thought of Herbert Butterfield*, edited by Karl Schweizer and Paul Sharp. Schweizer and Sharp readily admit that Butterfield was a 'diplomatic historian who actually wrote very little diplomatic history, a historiographer' who 'revealed little more than the embryonic state of the history of historiography, a Christian moralist who thought that the USSR might have more to offer the latter's former colonies, and a theorist who seemed to understand 20th century international conduct in terms of a fall from 18th century diplomatic grace precipitated by the events of 1914'. Even so, they justify their inclusion of Butterfield's writings in a series of volumes devoted to the 'importance of diplomacy to contemporary international relations more broadly conceived', by adopting the 'thesis' that Butterfield demonstrates that the 'world would be a better place if more people thought and acted like good diplomats'. Diplomatic history, they conclude, not only teaches about past international relations, it also teaches 'proper intellectual and moral training'.¹³³ Would Butterfield have included 'moral training' among the aims of diplomatic history, since he associated even the best-intentioned moral principles with consequent disaster? Reliance upon such principles appeared to him as dangerous moral hubris. In his writing of history and in the international relations he based upon historical precedent, he resorted to the successes of the past, to tested institutions that would constrain the intrinsically destructive forces driving human nature, to Christian faith, and to providential dispensation. Butterfield was a committed conservative who believed that the problems of a Cold War world required opportunistic realism based upon conciliation and acceptance rather than upon moralistic confrontation.

NOTES

1. Butterfield Papers, Cambridge University Library (hereafter Butt) W335, 29 May 1963. Hugh Trevor-Roper, who was on the Committee of Electors for the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge in 1963, to Desmond Williams, Butterfield's close friend. Trevor-Roper thought the candidates would be Jack Plumb, Geoffrey Elton, and George Kitson Clark. He found Elton unpopular and a stiff opponent of reform, 'but no denying his energy and ability'. He could not 'vote very enthusiastically' for Plumb because there was 'something small about his character, something vulgar about his arrivisme, something trivial about his character . . . Kitson . . . is not very inspiring and a bit of an ass'. Williams sent an extract of the letter to Butterfield. Charles Wilson was elected to the Chair.
2. T. C. McIntire in 2004 and Keith Sewell in 2005 each published an interesting and illuminating book dealing with Butterfield's thought. McIntire, who interviewed Butterfield extensively and was given access to papers in his widow's possession,

finds his subject to be a 'Dissenter', not only in his Methodist background but in his position about history particularly and life generally. To McIntire, Butterfield dissented from accepted opinions and methodologies by consistently carrying out a dialectical argument between opposing viewpoints and choosing a moderating version that attempted to resolve contesting positions. Sewell addresses the apparent dichotomy between Butterfield's insistence upon a neutral, value-free, individualist, and empirical 'technical history' and his Christian view that was deeply committed, prejudiced, general, and implicitly theoretical. Both authors acknowledge the importance of background, education, and the influence of his teachers upon him, but they spend the greater part of their discussion in a close reading and exposition of Butterfield's published and unpublished writings. Their analyses are intelligent and perceptive, but lack the richer dimension of the intellectual, social, and political context in which he lived and worked. This chapter, readily acknowledging the important contributions of both Sewell and McIntire, concentrates instead on Butterfield's essential conservatism and the ways in which it affected the other parts of his professional life. See Keith C. Sewell, *Herbert Butterfield and the Interpretation of History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); and C. T. McIntire, *Herbert Butterfield. Historian as Dissenter* (New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 2004).

3. Autobiographical Information, Butt/7, MS, n.d.
4. 'Memoirs', Butt/269/1, 5–8.
5. Temperley Manuscript (biography and memorial to Butterfield's tutor) Butt/9.
6. Noel Annan, *Our Age: Portrait of a Generation* (London, 1990), 270.
7. The International Society for the History of Ideas was formed on 15 July 1959 by Hans Kohn, Aaron Noland, Philip Wiener, and Frederick Burckhardt, and the first meeting was at Peterhouse from 31 August to 3 September 1960. Butterfield gave a paper on 'Religion and Modern Individualism'. Philip Wiener, then the executive editor of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, asked Butterfield to serve as editor, but he declined. Butt/Correspondence, Philip P. Wiener to Butterfield, 18 May 1959, Butterfield to Wiener, 29 May 1959. Butterfield did serve on the Membership Committee of the International Society for the History of Ideas from the spring of 1961. Butt/letter from Aaron Noland thanking Butterfield for accepting the post, 30 March 1961. In 1964 Butterfield was elected to the editorial board as a corresponding editor. Butt/letter from Philip P. Wiener, 14 May 1964.
8. Conversation with Frank O'Gorman; interview with Jonathan Steinberg, who also recalled that Butterfield had a reputation as an appeaser because he was invited to go to Munich in 1938 and, after consulting his Church, decided it was his Christian duty to go.
9. Maurice Cowling, *Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 198, 199, 229.
10. Annan, *Our Age*, 392. During the war, Butterfield 'saw nothing odd when visiting Dublin as external examiner at the university in going to parties at the German Consulate'. In the winter of 1950 Desmond Williams arranged for Butterfield to give three lectures at University College Dublin. Butterfield proposed: Reform

in German History; The Place of the Reformation in the History of Western Civilization, and Protestantism and the Rise of Capitalism. Butt/W212, Butterfield to Williams, 20 November 1950. Williams answered that 'Protestantism and the Rise of Capitalism might be safer for the public lecture although I feel you can put anything across in Ireland' 9 January 1951, W213, 1.

11. Interview with Tony Wrigley.
12. Letter to Sir Francis Rundall, in the Diplomatic Service of the British Embassy in Japan, who has heard that Butterfield was retiring as Master of Peterhouse and wrote on 30 June 1967 to find out if his own candidacy had any chance. Butt/R12. Butterfield replied on 10 August 1967, R13 that he was compelled by statute to retire as Regius Professor when he was 68, on 30 September 1968.
13. MS, n.d., no title, Butt/93/1.
14. Sewell wrestles with these inconsistencies, which he documents tellingly and analyses perceptively, but finally concludes, oddly, that Butterfield's 'belief in providence' did 'not function as a constraining hypothesis', 216.
15. Autobiographical Information, Butt/7, MS, n.d.
16. In a letter to Max Beloff, on 14 October 1951, Butterfield wrote that he used to say that fascism and communism were the Anti-Christ, but that he had modified that view in the last of his three Riddell Lectures on Christianity in European History. Butt/B56.
17. Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (London, 1949), 77. This book began as a series of lectures given to the Divinity Faculty at Cambridge in 1948. They were then transposed into six broadcast lectures for the BBC, from 2 April to 7 May 1949, and amplified for publication.
18. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 23.
19. 'The Cracked Vessel' is George Kennan's title for the first chapter of his *Around the Cragged Hill. A Personal and Political Philosophy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993).
20. Unlike Butterfield, Elton dismissed Acton as a fraud, and he claimed that he once introduced a motion into the Academic Senate that would forbid future graduate students from writing doctoral dissertations about him. Conversation with Elton in June 1983.
21. John Raymond, 'Review of *Christianity in European History*', the *New Statesman*, 12 April 1952.
22. Butterfield, *Lord Acton* (London, 1948), 7–8, 13. For a perceptive discussion of Butterfield's ambiguity about Acton, see Owen Chadwick, 'Acton and Butterfield', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 38: 3, (July 1987), 386–405.
23. Butterfield, *Lord Acton*, 8.
24. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), 89.
25. Butterfield, *The Present State of Historical Scholarship (An Inaugural Lecture)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 24. See, too, the discussion of

- free will and necessity in *George III and the Historians*, rev. edn. (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 205; and, *History and Human Relations* (London, 1951), 70.
26. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 36, 34.
 27. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945), 135. See, too, *Christianity in European History*, The Riddell Memorial Lectures, 1951 (London, 1952), 63.
 28. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 92.
 29. Kitson Clark, 'Thoughts on War Thought', *Cambridge Review*, 11 October 1940, repr. in Eric Homberger, William Janeway, and Simon Schama (eds.), *The Cambridge Mind. Ninety Years of the Cambridge Review, 1879–1969* (London, 1970), 55–6.
 30. Kitson Clark, *The Critical Historian* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), based on a paper for the educational section of the British Association at Manchester in 1962 on the teaching of history, 208, 209.
 31. For Knowles, see Soffer, 'The Historian, Catholicism, Global History, and National Singularity', *Storia della Storiografia*, 35 (1999), 113–27.
 32. Butterfield, MS on divine judgement in history, 20, Butt/B 352.
 33. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History*, 2.
 34. Butterfield, MS on divine judgement in history, 20–3, Butt/B 352.
 35. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 66.
 36. Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London, 1931), p. v.
 37. Butterfield, *The Statecraft of Machiavelli* (London, 1960), 15–16.
 38. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History*, 92.
 39. Butterfield, *Lord Acton*, 20.
 40. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 28, 26, 91.
 41. Butterfield, *Christianity in European History*, 63.
 42. Stanley Elkin, *The Living End. A Triptych* (New York: Dutton, 1979), 136–44.
 43. Butterfield, *Christianity, Diplomacy and War*, The Beckly Social Service Lecture (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), 15, and *History and Human Relations* (London, 1951), 39.
 44. Quoted in R. J. B. Bosworth, *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima: History Writing and the Second World War, 1945–1990* (London, 1993), 44–5.
 45. Butterfield, *History and Human Relations*, 70.
 46. Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science, 1300–1800* (London, 1951), 32, 41.
 47. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 33–4.
 48. Isaiah Berlin to Butterfield, 1 September 1953, 2–3; Butterfield to Berlin 25 September 1953, 1, Butt/122/6.
 49. Butterfield, Notebook up to 1968: On Gooch, Butt/MS.
 50. Butterfield, Peterhouse Chapel Fellowship, 27 April 1956 Butt/10/1 typescript, 5–6, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12.

51. Review of Butterfield, 'History and Human Relations', *The Listener*, 20 December 1951, Butt/133.
52. Written in 1952, when Cowling was at Jesus College, 5, 13, Butt/318. Although Cowling was a presumptuous student who challenged Butterfield's most fundamental views, they agreed more than they differed, and it was Butterfield who hired him at Peterhouse.
53. Lecture at Aberystwyth, n.d., Butt/MS.
54. 'The Historian and his Evidence', 20, 21, Butt/128, typescript.
55. *The Reconstruction of an Historical Episode: The History of the Enquiry into the Origins of the Seven Years' War*. Eighteenth Lecture on the David Murray Foundation in the University of Glasgow, 20 April 1952 (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1951), 30, 27, 40.
56. MS on divine judgement in history, Butt/352, 19.
57. Butterfield, *The Historical Novel. An Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924).
58. Notebook, 'The Nature of Political History', n.d., Butt/MS.
59. N.d., but apparently sometime after 1950, Butt/95/1/1, 2, 6.
60. *Ibid.*, 8.
61. Manuscript notebook, where, in the 1960s through 1968, Butterfield kept notes and comments on current historical writing on the social sciences, philosophy of history, psychological history, and prosopography.
62. Typescript letter to Edward D. Myers, a philosopher at Washington and Lee University who had sent Butterfield a draft of an introductory chapter of Myers's work on the philosophy of history, 22 February 1954, 1. Butterfield's reply, n.d., Butt/78/3.
63. Typescript letter to Professor C. A. Coulson, Professor of Theoretical Physics, King's College, London, 4 October 1951 responding to Coulson's inquiry about Butterfield's use of 'scientific' in a Reform Club lecture in September 1951. Butt/122/61, 2,4.
64. Manuscript notebook.
65. MS of Birmingham lecture in 1968, 'Flight from History' (given in slightly altered form to Eton, 27 February 1969), Butt/126,11-12.
66. *Ibid.*, 14, 17-18, 27-8.
67. 'History of Historiography', a lecture delivered at Kingston, Ontario and at Trinity and at Christ's Colleges, Cambridge, n.d., Butt/B 348.
68. Typed MS of university lecture at Cambridge, 'Some Controversial Issues of George III's Reign', 19 April 1963, 7; MS fragment, n.d.
69. For a discussion of Namier, see Part I.
70. Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, 2nd edn. (London, 1957), Preface to the 1st edn., pp. x-xii.

71. Butt/MS after August 1963, when Butterfield attended a conference on British Studies in America. Butterfield notes further that Caroline Robbins told him that Namier said that he could not read her book 'because it was about ideas' and 'ideas meant nothing to him. He had given it to his wife to read.'
72. Namier, *1848: The Revolutions of the Intellectuals* (London, 1962) (Garden City New York: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1964), 6, 64.
73. Butterfield, *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon, 1806–1808* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1929), p. vii.
74. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 137.
75. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History*, 102; *George III, Lord North and the People 1779–80* (London, 1949), p. vi.
76. Butterfield, *Christianity, Diplomacy and War*, 115.
77. Butterfield to E. H. Carr, 12 February 1960, Butt/C11.
78. For Elton, see Soffer, 'Commitment and Catastrophe. Conservatism and the Writing of History in Twentieth-century Britain and America', and for Kitson Clark and Elton both, 'British Conservative Historiography and the Second World War'.
79. Noel Annan, 'The Right Historical Stuff', *New York Review of Books*, 13 (February 1986) observed that when the Regius Chair of Modern History fell vacant in 1983, 'no other choice' than Elton 'was possible', 32. Elton held a personal chair in Constitutional History from 1967.
80. Those students included John Burrow, Geoffrey Best, Robert Robson, and Peter Clarke, the American David Cresap Moore, and the Australian F. B. Smith.
81. Kitson Clark, MS of *Peel and the Corn Laws*, 52, written about 1950 and never finished. In Add.MS a. 239, Trinity College Library, Cambridge. See, too, *Peel and the Conservative Party 1830–41* (London, 1929) and *Peel* (London, 1936).
82. Kitson Clark, *An Expanding Society. Britain, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) (Based on lectures at the University of Melbourne as first George Scott Visiting Fellow in June and July 1964), 181–3 and 'A Commentary', (1974–5), 7–8, an unfinished essay on public health and medical practice until 1854. Add.MS.a.240, Trinity College Library.
83. Kitson Clark, *An Expanding Society*, 147, 163.
84. Kitson Clark, *Peel and the Conservative Party. A Study in Party Politics, 1832–1841*, 2nd. edn. (London, 1964), 'Introduction to First Edition', p. xiv; 'Introduction to Second Edition', p. xxiv.
85. Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past. English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10. In this extension and revision of his 2003 Wiles Trust Lectures, Bentley, himself a Peterhouse man, provides a richly textured context for Butterfield's historical career.
86. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 23.
87. 'Review of Kitson Clark's *The English Inheritance. An Historical Essay* (London, 1950)', *TLS*, 14 July 1950, Butt/429. Butterfield also condemned Kitson Clark's

style and exposition. Although Butterfield's students remember him with affection for his modesty, self-effacement, and generosity, his published appraisals of colleagues usually conclude in disparagement after initial, sometimes very faint, applause. See, e.g., his reviews of Bryant's *The Age of Elegance, 1812–1822*, the *TLS*, November 1950, Butt/148 i; and of Feiling's *A History of England from the coming of the English to 1918* (London, 1959), *Time and Tide*, 13 May 1959 Butt/428 ii. And see esp. the obituary of Plumb, which provided Butterfield with the opportunity to provide a lesson in the proper writing of technical history by showing how Plumb had got it wrong. Butt/241/4–5. Plumb proved to be 'a very successful supervisor', quickly recognizing the quality of first-class men and communicating to them both stimulus and drive. He also showed the virtues and the persistence of a great manipulator, running his candidates for one post and another to the great advantage of all the parties concerned. He was a good lecturer, though capable of playing too obviously to the gallery; and as a writer he sometimes failed to give a real challenge to popular audiences, failed to wrestle very seriously with his own thinking—missing therefore the high pressures that would have produced originality. In the more professional side of his work he suffered through the lack of ability to handle general concepts. Butterfield's review was written in the winter of 1973 at the request of L. P. Wilkinson, on the occasion of Plumb's retirement, to be filed until his death.

88. Geoffrey Elton, *Political History, Principles and Practices* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 156–7; *The Practice of History* (London, 1967); his famous exchange with the economic historian Robert Fogel in Fogel and Elton, *Which Road to the Past?* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), and, *Return to Essentials: Some Reflections on the Present State of Historical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
89. For Elton's influence, see E. I. Kouri and Tom Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society on Reformation Europe: Essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his Sixty-fifth Birthday* (London, 1987); Claire Cross, David Loades, and J. J. Scarisbrick (eds.), *Law and Government under the Tudors: Essays Presented to Sir Geoffrey Elton, Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, on the Occasion of his Retirement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and *Rules, Religion and Rhetoric in Early Modern England: A Festschrift for Geoffrey Elton from his Australasian Friends* (Sydney, NSW: University of Sydney Press, 1988).
90. Elton, 'Fifty Years of Tudor Studies at London University', *TLS*, 6 January 1956, p. viii.
91. Geoffrey Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 1–2; Joel Hurstfield, 'Was there a Tudor Despotism after all?', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 17 (1967), 96 (repr. in Hurstfield, *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England* (London, 1973)); and Elton, 'Hurstfield's "Freedom, Corruption and Government"', in *Reviews in European History*, 1:2 (September 1974) repr. in Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, and III. *Papers and Reviews 1973–1981* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983), 434.

92. Elton, 'Preface to the Second Edition', *England Under the Tudors* (London, 1974), p. v.
93. Elton, *The English*, pp. xii; 234–5. See, too, *Return to Essentials* (1991).
94. Butterfield, *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon*, p. vii.
95. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History*, pp. vii, 98, 138–9.
96. Butterfield, *Historical Development of the Principle of Toleration in British Life* (the Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture of 1956, published in association with the Council of Christians and Jews) (London, 1957), 14–15.
97. Butterfield, *The Statecraft of Machiavelli*, 19, repr. in 1955 and 1960, and *Christianity and History*, 47.
98. Butterfield, *Machiavelli*, 24–5.
99. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History*, 138.
100. John Pocock, Peter Laslett, Jonathan Steinberg, and Michael Bentley were all impressed by Butterfield, but their work and considerable reputations are due to their unique interests.
101. See Kenneth Thompson (ed.), *Herbert Butterfield, The Ethics of History and Politics* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980); the very perceptive and sympathetic *The Wisdom of Statecraft. Sir Herbert Butterfield and the Philosophy of International Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985) by Alberto R. Coll who shares Butterfield's religious and political commitments; and Butterfield to Desmond Williams, 28 April 1958, Butt/W270, 1; William's reply, on 2 May 1958, W272, 1; Williams to Butterfield, 27 May 1958, W273; Butterfield to Williams, n.d.; Williams to Butterfield, 30 September 1958, W279.
102. Butterfield, 'Human Nature', 2 July 1970, Butt/250/2, 1, 4.
103. In a reading of Desmond Williams's paper 'The role of National Prejudice in the Formation of Foreign Policy', n.d., Butt/220, Butterfield raises questions about the origins of the Great War. Butterfield read extensively about this issue in Cabinet memos, the contemporary press, memoirs, biographies, and secondary studies.
104. Noel Annan, in *Our Age*, 365–6, was correct to describe Butterfield as the creator of 'a kind of militant conservatism, distinct from the establishment conservatism of most Cambridge colleges'. When Maurice Cowling's obituary of Butterfield denied that Butterfield was a 'party Conservative', he was also correct. 'Herbert Butterfield: 1900–1979', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 65 (1979), 600. See, too, Richard Brent, 'Butterfield's Tories: High Politics and the Writing of Modern British Political History', *Historical Journal*, 30: 4 (1987), 943–54.
105. 'Notes on: How Far Can and Should the Subject of International Relations be included in the Curriculum for Undergraduate Students of History?' for the Fourth Conference on the University Teaching of International Relations, convened by the British Co-ordinating Committee for International Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science, 6–7 January 1949, Butt/130/2, 1–3.
106. Butterfield, *Napoleon* (1939) (New York: Collier Books, 1968), 18.

107. 'The New Diplomacy and Historical Diplomacy', 23–6 September 1960, 3. This paper was published in Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London, 1966), 181–192.
108. *Ibid.*
109. After working at Chatham House and as a correspondent for *The Observer* on United Nations sessions in 1946–7, Wight was appointed Reader in International Relations at the London School of Economics in 1949, and in 1961 became Dean of the School of European Studies at the University of Sussex. For Wight, see Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society. A History of the English School* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 52, 91, and chs. 1, 3, 5, and 6. For another account, see Brunello Vigezzi, *The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics (1954–1985): The Rediscovery of History* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2005.) The English School has an informative website at www.leeds.ac.uk/polis/english-school/watson98.doc
110. See esp. Wight, 'Christian Pacificism', *Theology*, 33 (1936), 12–21; *Power Politics* (London, 1946); 'The Crux for a Historian Brought up in the Christian Tradition', in A. J. Toynbee (ed.), *A Study of History* (London, 1954); 'Why is there no International Theory?' (originally a British Committee paper in January 1959) in *International Relations*, 2 (1960), repr. in *Diplomatic Investigations*, 17–34.
111. Dunne, *Inventing International Society* 79.
112. Martin Wight, 'Morals and Warfare', *The Observer*, 16 August 1953, Butt/99.
113. A. J. P. Taylor, 'A Christian Cynic', *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 13 August 1953, Butt/99.
114. Stuart Hampshire, 'The Ethics of Diplomacy', *New Statesman and Nation*, 22 August 1953.
115. *TLS*, 6 January 1956, p. ii.
116. Butterfield, *The Present State of Historical Scholarship*, 22.
117. *TLS*, 6 January 1956, p. ii; Elton, *The History of England* (inaugural lecture delivered 26 January 1984) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 11.
118. 'Morality and Force', MS on the morality of international relations, Butt/110, n.d., 1. See, too, 'Morality and an International Order' (1969) in Brian Porter (ed.) *The Aberystwyth Papers: International Politics, 1919–1969* (London, 1972), 337–57.
119. Typescript of Address to the Peterhouse Chapel Fellowship, 27 April 1956, Butt/10/1, 12, 15, 18.
120. An informal conference of allied historians was held in Cambridge in late March 1942 for the dual purpose of preserving and making accessible records of the Second World War and for documenting the relations between Cambridge and those historians. W. K. Hancock, Director of the Official History of the Civil Departments in the war opened the discussion on March 21. Those attending, besides Butterfield, included G. M. Trevelyan, Helen Cam, C. B. A. Behrens, Z. N. Brooke, C. W. Crawley, P. Gierson, M. M. Postan, and P. C. Vellacott. On 24 June 1941 Butterfield replied to Salter's inquiries about inviting Czech and Polish lecturers. Besides reiterating his support for Chamberlain's efforts to

secure peace, consistently one of Butterfield's most admired acts of statesmanship in both the past and present, he wrote that 'I was always a partisan of the Sudeten Germans—but the Czechs, unlike either Poles or Hungarians have made a claim on our sympathies by their general conduct since 1919.' The Poles and the Hungarians, in Butterfield's view, precipitated the war and therefore were *personae non gratae*. Butt/51.

121. MS, n.d., on 'Just War', Butt.
122. Butterfield, 'Comments on Hedley Bull's Paper on the Grotian Conception of International Relations', 20–3 July 1962, 8–9, Butt/330, printed in Karl Schweizer and Paul Sharp (eds.), *The International Thought of Herbert Butterfield* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 198–206.
123. Butterfield and Wight, Preface to *Diplomatic Investigations*, 11.
124. Kenneth W. Thompson taught at the University of Chicago and at Northwestern University through 1955 before becoming Vice President for International Programs at the Rockefeller Foundation. He also served as Director of Higher Education for Development at the International Council for Educational Development (1974–6) and in 1975 went to the University of Virginia where, from 1978 to 1988, he headed the Miller Center of Public Affairs. His mentor at the University of Chicago had been Hans Morgenthau.
125. Butterfield to Desmond Williams, 28 April 1958, 1–2, Butt/W270; Williams to Butterfield, 2 May 1958, 1–3, W272, and 27 May 1958, W273. Butterfield to Williams, n.d. September 1958, W279. Williams to Butterfield, 30 September 1958. The first meeting was scheduled 19–21 September 1958, and the small group adopted the name 'Committee on International Politics'.
126. Typescript, unsigned, 'Discussion on the objects of the Committee', 38, 39, 20 September 1959, Butt/337.
127. See, e.g., 'The Historic "States-Systems"', 8–11 January 1965, Butt/331.
128. *Diplomatic Investigations*, 12. In addition to 'The New Diplomacy and Historical Diplomacy', the other essay by Butterfield is 'The Balance of Power', 132–48, also in *The International Thought of Herbert Butterfield*, 230–9, 259–72.
129. 'Foreign Policy and Historical Processes', n.d., 25, 28–9, 43, 49, Butt.
130. Butterfield, 'Morality and Historical Process in International Affairs', (paper for Rockefeller Group Discussion), October 1961, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 15, 21, 31, Butt.
131. Butterfield, *The Discontinuities between Generations in History. Their Effect on the Transmission of Political Experience*, the Rede Lecture, 1971 (London, 1972), 15, 28.
132. Kenneth W. Thompson, 'Butterfield and the Theory of International Politics', *Herbert Butterfield: The Ethics of History and Politics*, 41, 44.
133. *The International Thought of Herbert Butterfield*, 1, 8. The editors have written excellent and thoughtful Introductions, based upon a wide knowledge of Butterfield's work and the literature of international relations, but the larger historical context in which Butterfield lived and worked is largely absent, as is subsequent scholarly discussion of conservatism and historiography. The essays are arranged in four sections. I: European Diplomatic History: 'In Defence of Diplomatic History'

(an address to the Cambridge University History Club, November, 1963); 'Prussia's Attempt to Make Separate Peace with Napoleon after Jena' (the original chapter of Butterfield's *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon* (1929)); 'Austrian Policy and the Austrian Attempt to Bring about Peace' (Book IV, ch. 3 of *The Peace Tactics*); 'Crowe's Memorandum of 1 January 1907' (a paper delivered to the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics (BCTIP) 1960); and, 'Sir Edward Grey in 1914' (a paper originally given on a lecture tour of German universities and then expanded). II. Faith and Ethics in International Politics: 'Christianity and Human Problems', *Christianity, Diplomacy, and War* (1953); 'Human Nature and Human Culpability', *Christianity, Diplomacy, and War*; 'Morality and Human Progress' (n. d.); 'Moral Judgements in History', *History and Human Relations* (1951); and 'The Moral Framework of International Relations' (n.d.). III. International Theory: the four papers included were intended for discussion by the BCTIP: 'Notes for a Discussion on the Theory of International Politics' (1962); 'The Great Powers' (July 1964); 'The Historic "States-System"', (January 1965); and 'Comments on Hedley Bull's Paper on the Grotian Conception of International Relations' (July 1962). IV. Diplomacy: 'The Development of Diplomacy' (1969); 'The New Diplomacy and Historical Diplomacy' (1960); 'The Changing Moral Framework' (n.d.); and 'The Balance of Power' (n.d.).

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PART IV
POST-WAR AMERICA

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Conservative Historians and Social Criticism in America, 1941 through the 1960s

During the period from the end of the Second World War through the late 1960s, the radically altered exigencies of post-war reconstruction and the Cold War led many historians to believe that their political obligations were as imperative as their commitments to the study and writing of history. Beginning in the 1940s, historians on both sides of the Atlantic turned to their national past to correct the present by example. This was especially true for conservatives, who were convinced that the unprecedented directions taken in the post-war world might be fundamentally misconceived unless informed by an appropriate analysis of the historical record. The virtues of an idealized national past, imagined differently in each country, became their test for evaluating the forms and contents of the present as well as for prescribing the future. After the war, British conservative historians continued to write within a continuous conservative tradition that accepted common assumptions about the infirmities of human nature and their social and political consequences, as well as emphasizing the advantages of unique secular and religious traditions, institutions, and national character. Unlike Woodrow Wilson's messianic mission at the end of the Great War, American conservatives in the post-Second World War generation were not interested in their country's role as a model for the rest of the world. Unable to discover an established conservative American tradition that persisted from earlier centuries, American conservatives confronted the present by attempting to explain and justify America's new status as, undeniably, the greatest of superpowers, militarily, politically, and economically. Conservatives, searching for an influential role in American life, wanted to shape domestic policy at home and the future of American ascendancy abroad.

In marked contrast to sanguine American experience and expectations, British conservatives after the Second World War experienced a crisis of confidence. Americans could contrast their vast country, untouched by the war, to a bombed and broken, if still picturesque, little island just off shore from Europe. Although that island had once governed a vast and self-sufficient Empire, Britain emerged from the Second World War as a diminished, post-imperial nation, with a problematic future in the councils and markets of the world. British conservatives had to accommodate to a welfare state domestically, while accepting a sharp

erosion of status and power in the greater world. Conservatism had historically been a reaction to circumstances that conservatives believed threatened their traditions and values. Post-war British conservatives, despite an electoral victory in 1951, worried about a Conservative government that appeared to accept, and even to extend, the Labour vision of a planned, centrally administered, state. They were anxious, additionally, about schemes for redistributing wealth that would lead to the erosion of traditional classes. For British conservative historians, the Second World War and its consequences were not a source of rejuvenation but rather of premature ageing. For them, the scale and depth of horrors, beyond the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, included a Labour victory in 1945, the establishment and governance of the welfare state, and the rise of the Soviet Union as another totalitarian power threatening world peace.

To alleviate their concerns about a diminished future, British conservatives held fast to a set of common principles developed during the nineteenth century in reaction initially against liberalism and, in the twentieth century against socialism and communism. The constant factor in that tradition was the vesting of authority in a social hierarchy that included the monarchy and established religion. Throughout the nineteenth and until the third decade of the twentieth century, British conservatives generally maintained that hierarchy on the basis of traditional landed wealth, membership in the Church of England, and identification with the unwritten national constitution. As early as 1867 and thereafter, they were supported often by working-class electors whose particular local interests took priority over both political dialectics and class affiliation. Those electors were sought after by conservatives and often successfully wooed and won by the Conservative Party.

In America, the working classes, unlike their British counterparts, were not inclined to endorse the wealthy and powerful, who were clearly indifferent to their welfare. After the Second World War, conservatives described America as an open society with increasing economic opportunity and independence, even though working people, immigrants, and people of colour complained of marginal status. The Left, critical of that exclusionary historical legacy, became the target of conservative attack because their economic and social critique encouraged the collectivist and central planning occurring in Europe and Britain. To make their case valid, conservatives in both countries asked history to provide testimonials for them. Conservative historians provided the text and its meaning for the present and future.

Differences between American and British conservative historians, much greater than their similarities, become more pronounced when their work is set within historiographical traditions that opposed and attempted to moderate the tendencies emergent in both countries in the mid-twentieth century. Especially in the crucial two decades after the Second World War, British and American conservative historians both approached the past and their own time by rejecting the historiographical traditions that prevailed when they began to write. They

chose interpretive principles, which responded to the dramatic and unprecedented events within each country's shifting cultural, social, economic, and political accommodations. The great majority of British and American historians were never introspective about the history that they studied and wrote. Still, it is striking that some American historians of America thought about their methods of study and the validity of their interpretations, while more of their British counterparts found such reflection inappropriate. A British historian of America has marvelled that American historians took 'sides over the very question of whether there are any sides to take.'¹ More than a hundred books have been written on twentieth-century American historiography, but the studies of British historical writing are very recent and many of those are written by scholars of Britain who are not British.²

At least two explicitly American phenomena explain why American historians were more preoccupied with each other than were the British. The first was determined by academic practice, and the second by intellectual convention. Academic practice was created by the substance, content, and emphases of graduate training in history. Within rapidly proliferating American universities, twentieth-century graduate students were generally required to take a historiographical seminar, which taught them to read historians as well as the history they wrote. But there was no systematic graduate training in history within British universities until after the Second World War. When that training was casually and reluctantly introduced, it did not include historiography. The second phenomena, American intellectual convention, was rooted in the first half of the twentieth century, when both pragmatism and admiration for the objectivity promised by scientific method led to a suspicion of speculative systems as disguised 'ideology'. To deal with thought empirically and avoid deceptive abstraction, Americans studied specific works of historical writing and distilled ideas from their content.³ British historians were also distrustful of speculation, but for reasons very different from those convincing to their American colleagues. Few British historians expected history to benefit from scientific models, but they did believe in objective truth that could be revealed by a dispassionate study of facts. Their ideal of emotional neutrality was often confounded by heated and truculent quarrels about the uses of evidence, but few British historians were perturbed by disputes about the nature, meaning, and uses of history.⁴ Residues of the living past persisted in every English village and town to testify to the stability and endurance of a people whose qualities of mind and will enabled them to succeed so conspicuously. The British conservative historians believed that their history demonstrated an ability to solve social, economic, and political problems without domestic disorder. That ability, they believed, was derived from the rule of law, a judicious constitution, responsible institutions, the cultivation of national character, pragmatism, education directed towards the public good, and the favour of a God who turned out to be British, but with an 'English' accent.

British historians' attitudes towards historiography, until at least the 1950s, rested in great part upon the smallness of their country, the predictable qualities of academic life, and access to influence and power. Britain was governed largely by a small, homogeneous elite, educated essentially within a few elite universities. Most historians in England, which dominated British teaching and writing, shared family and class backgrounds and values, were educated in the same few schools and universities, and tended to spend the rest of their lives together in Oxford and Cambridge, the institutions that had taught them, as well as in the University of London. The new red-brick universities could not compete seriously with the older universities until after the 1950s. At the far more social-science-oriented London School of Economics (LSE), the faculty who taught economic history from the 1920s through the next three decades also tended to come from very comfortable backgrounds and to be educated at Oxford and Cambridge. But they had wider intellectual interests than did the majority of their colleagues, were often on the activist Left, and introduced and promoted social, structural, and comparative history that challenged prevalent historical methodology and practice. For many historians, especially outside of the LSE, familiarity, combined with innocence about historical introspection and admiration for English development, bred indifference to what other historians thought about history. In spite of their assault upon conventional historical traditions, even the historians at the LSE were part of an exclusive and almost incestuous community, confined to a crowded island that could be swallowed up by California.⁵

Britain was already the hegemonic industrial empire, while America was just beginning its climb to world power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. American historians, in marked contrast to most of their British colleagues, came from conspicuously disparate backgrounds, and were often separated from each other by thousands of miles. Public and personal power in America was fragmented among many local, regional, and state interests, representing diverse and competing social, ethnic, religious, economic, and professional constituencies. American historians, often rootless and dissimilar, wanted to discover a 'usable past' in their relatively new and still unsettled continent. Their interpretive principles of national history came, in part, from an examination of the writing of their peers and predecessors, living and dead. The conservative, eastern establishment of nineteenth-century aristocratic gentleman amateurs, who reached their apotheosis in Henry Adams, offered a reassuring explanation of their protean national past. Their assumption of consensual unity and order was set against what was largely an expanding and mobile agrarian population. After the 1880s, in an America increasingly industrial and plutocratic, history became the professional province of university-trained scholars, who challenged harmonious views of national history. This 'New' or 'Progressive' history was introduced by liberal and occasionally radical scholars, such as Charles and Mary Beard, who were raised in small-town and rural America and

began their training in middle American and western universities. In opposition to their predecessors, they responded to their immediate circumstances by reading the American story as a drama of recurring and rending conflict. It was possible, in either the consensus or conflict school, to assume that history had a practical, even contemporary, application. In the inter-war and post-Second World War years, many historians of varied political persuasions set out to confirm the singularity of American experience.

After the Second World War, the American conservative historians discussed in this book shared two conspicuous attributes with their British counterparts. First, with the exception of Butterfield, who was born in 1900, they came into the post-Great War world between 1914 and 1921. That meant that their most traumatic experiences were Hitler's war, and the appearance of communist powers. Looking back in 2000, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., born in 1917, wrote that for his 'generation the Second World War was the supreme experience' and for them, 'the war was never over'. Schlesinger believed himself to be a life-long liberal, but he shared with his conservative counterparts in both countries an unequivocal and ferocious aversion to communism.⁶ Butterfield was unique among both American and British conservative historians in his willingness to reach a reconciliation with communism for the sake of world peace and security, even though he, too, found its tenets and practices unpalatable. And, finally, the American conservative historians were each from backgrounds that would normally have excluded them from positions of power or influence. Instead, largely as a result of ability and of speaking to an audience that found them congenial and often inspirational, they moved comfortably and easily from the marginal periphery to positions near the centre.

Some British conservative historians, such as Hearnshaw, Feiling, Bryant, and Butterfield, co-opted a liberal emphasis on individualism and freedom. Their Tory democracy often appeared as a variant of the liberal welfare state's economic and social policy introduced in the inter-war years and culminating in the Beveridge Report. American conservatives after the Second World War joined the British in opposing socialism as well as communism, but did they also incorporate liberalism as their British colleagues had done? When, in the 1970s, Irving Kristol defined a conservative as 'a liberal mugged by reality', was his quip retrospective or was he describing the emergence of neo-conservatism?⁷

In 1990, looking back on the development of American conservatism, the sociologist Jerome Himmelstein maintained that opposition to liberalism was central to conservative perspectives. Himmelstein argued further that the ideological strength of conservatism has not been its response to reality so much as its 'capacity to picture a natural, spontaneous order . . . and to blame the disruption of that order on liberal elites and their policies and ideas'.⁸ Post-war American conservatism, he argued, was aimed especially at the New Deal and its domestic and international legacy.⁹ Conservatives repudiated liberals, he maintained, for their alleged failure to recognize the corruption, aggression, and

unrestrained ambition of human beings, a failure that left liberals unrealistically receptive to collectivism and to corrupting foreign influences. Liberal 'cosmopolitanism' became even more dangerous to the conservatives when strengthened by the Diaspora of left-wing intellectuals who arrived in America in flight from fascism.¹⁰

Himmelman's strictures do not fit the plethora of competing interpretations of conservatism, nor do they explain the efforts made by the conservative historians Daniel Boorstin, Rowland Berthoff, or Peter Viereck in their attempt to discover common ground with those liberals who shared many of their preconceptions and purposes. Communists and left-wing radicals were the enemy, not liberals. Although Russell Kirk dismissed liberals as unrealistic and even dangerous because of what he understood to be their belief in equality, direct democracy, unrestrained individualism, and the possibility of reinventing society, he was still willing to accept some liberal changes for the sake of national reconciliation. Finding a consensus without abandoning fundamental principles was as central to the American post-war conservative historians as it was to Butterfield.

In America, where wealth was more fluid and class less conspicuous than in Britain, conservatives were eclectic in their approach to liberal and even populist interests. American conservatives repudiated those aspects of the Progressive agenda that attempted to ensure social and economic equality, but they accepted the reality of an inseparable relationship between economics and politics, which had been stressed by progressive scholars such as Charles Beard.¹¹ Until the Reagan years, conservative political thought and practice was characterized by a specifically American mingling of conservative, liberal, and progressive themes. While the American conservative historians emphasized 'exceptionalism', they had no monopoly on that description of American history. Daniel Rodgers finds that the generation of American historians who began to write in the 1940s 'was the first to take exceptionalism as an American given'. Rodgers attributes this historiographical change to the attempt of American historians to understand how America had escaped the disasters of the mid-twentieth century.¹² The most influential exposition of post-war exceptionalist history was *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955) by Louis Hartz, the Harvard political theorist. It was only in the 1960s, that historians on the Left found exceptionalism suspect because they came to believe then that an emphasis upon national success buried inequities based on class, race, and gender. In a congratulatory narrative, exclusion could be made to appear marginal. In sharp contrast to the suspicions of the Left, the conservative historians Viereck, Kirk, Boorstin, and Berthoff made the uniqueness and inclusiveness of America central to their narrative and to their purpose as historians.

American conservative rhetoric, and its argument and exposition through historiography, had taken a critical turning after the Second World War with the emergence of more present-minded and committed advocates. About half of all professional historians between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five had

done some kind of national work during the war. In their war service, as William Binkley has observed, historians were 'indoctrinated with the concept of working for a practical purpose'. The wartime experience of these future leaders of the post-war historical generation affected the nature and purposes of historical scholarship.¹³ Even before the war, Roosevelt's New Deal had co-opted intellectuals, but they were rarely conservatives. In both Britain and America the war enlisted conservatives as well as liberals to serve as historians and, more glamorously and influentially, as advisers and policy-makers. Peter Viereck and Russell Kirk served in a military intelligence department. For many, intellectual camaraderie and the conviction that they had made a difference in the outcome of events persuaded them that they could, and should, continue to be actively concerned about national purposes. While the post-Great War historians had been largely forgotten and overlooked by their countries, both conservative and liberal historians in America and Britain played an important part in the intellectual war effort, and they returned to peace in the 1940s convinced that an explanation of the meaning of historical events was vital for the understanding and solution of urgent post-war dilemmas. Their commitment became especially urgent for conservatives in both countries because they had become a minority, politically, culturally, and intellectually.

If we begin with the slippery contents of American conservative thought, we find that nineteenth-century Americans had organized their historical mythologies, including conservatism, around the image of a rural arcadia within a promised land. But by the mid-twentieth century, conservatism became increasingly difficult to distinguish from liberalism.¹⁴ Lionel Trilling commented, famously, in 1950 that liberalism then was 'not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition'.¹⁵ At the end of that year, Samuel Eliot Morrison, then president of the American Historical Association, told his colleagues that what they needed was 'a United States history written from a sanely conservative point of view . . .'.¹⁶ That appeal went unheard. Five years later, when the political scientist Clinton Rossiter tried to define American conservatism, he, too, found that liberalism had become 'a national faith'.¹⁷ Even so, the meanings of both 'liberalism' and 'conservatism' were contested. In his influential *Rendezvous with Destiny. A History of Modern American Reform* (1952), Eric Goldman equated liberalism with the tradition of reform, while acknowledging the confusions about its meanings.¹⁸ In 1962, Rossiter came back to his analysis of American conservatism and liberalism. He now distinguished between 'conservatism', the 'philosophy of preservation, tradition and order', and 'Conservatism', which was also the philosophy of preservation, tradition, and order, except that it descended from Burke and was, unlike 'conservatism', irrelevant to 'American experience'. Rossiter's revised book is an instructive example of the difficulties of distinguishing between conservatism and liberalism even in the early 1960s. From 1960 to 1961 Rossiter was the Pitt Visiting Professor at Cambridge, and in one of his lectures he told his audience that he had voted for John F. Kennedy.¹⁹ In the

1962 edition, Rossiter added to his original title, *Conservatism in America*, the subtitle '*The Thankless Persuasion.*' To make clear his own political persuasion, since critics had described him variously as a conservative or as a liberal, he described himself as, in 'principle well removed from Dr. Peale [the popular evangelist Norman Vincent Peale] in the direction of Dr. Niebhur and well removed from Russell Kirk in the direction of Walter Lippman, in politics to the right of Walter Reuther and well to the left of Senator Goldwater'. He added that he wished the 'conservatives almost as well as he wishes the liberals', and said further that he could be thought of as 'at once the most liberal of conservatives and the most conservative of liberals'.²⁰ Viereck included Rossiter, an intellectual historian as well as a political scientist, together with Boorstin as his two exemplary historians of America.

Among the most thoughtful and sympathetic books about post-war American conservatism, George Nash's *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (1976) admitted immediately that there is no a priori definition. Nash doubted, moreover, that there was 'any single, satisfactory, all-encompassing definition of the complex phenomenon called conservatism, the content of which varies enormously with time and place'. It 'may even be true', he continued, 'that conservatism is inherently resistant to precise definition'.²¹ The inability to identify conservative principles was due in part to the absence of a Conservative Party in American public life. The Republican Party had no clearly conservative identity, and it is interesting that from 1903 to 1960 none of the eleven Old Confederate states sent a Republican senator to Washington. It was not until 1961 that John Tower won a special election in Texas as a Republican. After 1960, when the demography and social and economic composition of the South changed, new suburban voters immigrating from the North attempted to make the Republican Party a conservative party based on low taxes, anti-unionism, and family values.²² Then, the candidacy of Barry Goldwater in 1964 divided conservatives rather than uniting them.²³ Although the election of Richard Nixon in 1968 finally made the Republican Party appear to be conservative, his administration, especially in its adventurous foreign policy, satisfied liberal rather than conservative requirements. When the Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart said that while he could not define pornography, he knew it when he saw it, he could have been describing the ways in which American conservatives understood conservatism.²⁴ It was not until a coalition of disparate groups emerged in support of Ronald Reagan that a tenuous agreement surfaced within the country about what 'conservatism' should mean. That agreement, challenged more often than it was accepted, did not survive the presidency of George W. Bush.²⁵

When Richard Hofstadter examined historical writing in 1968, he characterized the earlier 'consensus' historians of the Gilded Age as anti-democratic, anti-foreigner, anti-labour, anti-union, and anti-black. Then, by the end of the nineteenth century, he found that they had become imperialist, pro-British, and opponents of a radical and revolutionary view of the American past.²⁶ In the

new century, Hofstadter continues, and most scholars agree, the Progressive view replaced conservative consensus historiography.²⁷ An explanation for these opposed views, which Hofstadter does not offer, lies in the very different times that supported them. The decades between 1865 and the turn of the century were marked by consolidation, national reunification, and the development of industry. It is hardly surprising that historians living then should have been evolutionary conservatives who applauded continuity and order. Late nineteenth-century scholars understood stable institutions, the constitution, ties to Europe, and the slow unfolding of national principles as demonstrable, objective historical fact. But in the early twentieth century, disparities resulting from the new industry, the failures in agriculture, and the closing of the frontier found a voice in Progressive historians. Instead of continuity, historians like Charles and Mary Beard and Vernon Parrington saw confrontation, instability, and the conflict of economic and social forces.²⁸ Their historical insights made them into social reformers who emphasized unprecedented change and its economic and social casualties to argue for a more just democracy.

The drive of the Progressive historians to ‘democratize American history’ John Higham observed, ‘and to read it as a struggle against privilege reflected the democratization of academic life itself’.²⁹ There is no question about the enormous growth of public universities all over America during the inter-war years that drew students and faculty without the advantages of birth or wealth. In those burgeoning universities, both private and public, American historians were expanding political history to include a social and economic milieu as part of their intent to study ordinary people’s experience. At the State University of Iowa as early as 1933, Arthur Schlesinger introduced a course on ‘Social and Cultural History of the United States’, the first of its kind anywhere in the country.³⁰ In the 1920s and 1930s, younger historians turned increasingly to the particular lives of such historically neglected groups as dirt farmers, immigrants, cowboys, and native Americans.³¹ At the same time, most British inter-war historians continued to study and teach high politics and the constitution in their few privileged universities, whose faculty and students were not conspicuously democratic. More than thirty years would elapse until social and, later still, intellectual or cultural history made its way into British university teaching in the 1970s. Until then, even among liberal historians, the British constitution remained the most appropriate study for university students.

In America, from the Progressive era to the mid-1950s, the elusive and invisible snark was easier to find than an American historian who would admit to being conservative. That does not mean that they did not exist. James Truslow Adams (1878–1949), who won the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1922 for *The Founding of New England* (1921), the first volume in a trilogy about American history through 1850, was very active within the profession and, in 1918, a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference. Although never holding an academic position, he wrote twenty-one books from 1916 and 1945, and was chief editor for the

Dictionary of American History and the *Atlas of American History*, as well as serving as chancellor and treasurer of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. John Higham called him an 'amateur scholar', remembered among historians as the debunker of Puritan morality whose *The Epic of America* (1931) was the non-fiction bestseller of 1932.³² James Gray described him, similarly, as a 'literary journalist'.³³ Adams was among the last of the gentlemen historians whose views on practical sense, hard work, the importance of effective leaders unrestrained by public opinion, the value of tried tradition, and the unique American provision of opportunity for people to rise within their innate capacities anticipated the conservative historians who wrote after the Second World War.³⁴

It was only in the decades after the Second World War that conservatives set out, aggressively, to influence national life and culture. A small group of conservative intellectuals gathered together after 1954 in the *National Review* to define, clarify, and pursue a national 'conservatism'.³⁵ Other conservatives with more 'expert' or academic credentials also wrote conservative tracts in the 1950s. The German Leo Strauss and the Austrian Eric Vogelin were both *émigré* political philosophers who had fled from Hitler's onslaught to American political science or government departments.³⁶ Strauss' *Natural Right and History* (1950) and Vogelin's *The Science of Politics* (1952) were influential among American conservative intellectuals, but neither author made an attempt to reach a larger public. The year 1953 saw the death of Stalin, the humiliating end to the Korean War directed against communism in pursuit of the Truman Doctrine, and the new emphasis on American military power. That was the same year that Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics*, Viereck's *Conservatism. From John Adams to Churchill*, Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, and Robert Nisbet's *Quest for Community* all appeared. Thirty-three years later, Nisbet, a sociologist, recalled that he had 'not particularly written it as a conservative book, but when it was so judged, I did not appeal'.³⁷ Before the late 1970s, the American conservative historians were unique among conservatives in their attempt to try and persuade a wide, distinctively American, audience that conservative ideals and values were more relevant to them than the competing ideologies of socialism and communism. Everything written by the four conservative historians discussed in this Part was explicitly intended to be 'conservative'.

An examination of the stated motivation and actual writing of the historians Kirk, Viereck, Berthoff, and Boorstin reveals that in spite of individual deviations they shared and promoted recognizable American conservative values. Identification of particular conservative historians is difficult because American conservatives and liberals often adopted similar principles of historical interpretation, even when they applied them very differently. Interpretations, which might appear to be conservative, (such as 'consensus' historiography; or rejection of the idea of progress and its assumptions about human perfectibility; or opposition to collectivism; or the appreciation of power and its uses) were also appropriated by liberal historians. From the perspective of 1989, Peter Novick's wonderfully

perceptive *That Noble Dream* finds the 'single term characteristic of the dominant tendency in postwar American historical writing' to be 'counterprogressive' and he regards Hofstadter, Louis Hartz, and Boorstin as the three leading counterprogressive or consensus historians.³⁸ Hofstadter, like the conservatives, dismissed progressive models and advocated the pragmatic necessities of power to curb collectivism, especially in its communist guise. Hartz's consensus was based on his discovery that without a feudal tradition in the U.S., no distinctly liberal and conservative dichotomies had developed and there was only consistent liberalism.³⁹ Novick has also suggested, persuasively, that a dominant theme in American historiography in the 1950s, expressed even by liberals such as H. Stuart Hughes, Jacques Barzun, and later echoed by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., was the rejection of ideology and the advocacy of empirical thought.⁴⁰ That was true, as well, for Boorstin and Berthoff. Boorstin found events and the confrontations of the real world demanded practical solutions rather than theory, and Berthoff emphasized the role of social communities rather than systems of thought. Viereck and Kirk, in common with Hughes, Barzun, and Schlesinger on the liberal side, rejected ideological determinism but insisted upon the decisive role of ideas in history.

Additionally, the conservative conviction that all history, and especially the history of the twentieth century, was a 'tragic' history was accepted by many liberals and even by historians on the far Left who had difficulty reconciling the Holocaust and the unprecedented destructive potential of atomic energy with traditional liberal and socialist faith in progress and rationality. The conservative Reinhold Niebhu's *Beyond Tragedy* (1937) was matched after the war by the left-wing William Appleman Williams's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959), while Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s *The Vital Center* (1949) lamented that there was 'no time more crucial or more tragic' than the post-war era.⁴¹ The great difference in the perception of 'tragedy' between liberals and conservatives was that while the former accepted the historical reality of failure, misbegotten and horrific events, they believed that improvement and amelioration was possible. For liberals, historical tragedies could be avoided. If their causes were understood, more desirable directions could be planned and implemented successfully. Conservatives saw 'tragedy' as inherent in flawed human nature that could, at best, be restrained but rarely remedied. Although liberals and conservatives appeared to share some interpretive strategies, they can still be separated from one another by the assumptions, contents, and interpretations of their actual body of thought. Similar rhetoric was applied for very disparate purposes.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., a close friend of Viereck's, has been called a liberal 'with a very conservative outlook' by George Kennan, a conservative with a very conservative outlook. He has also been described, approvingly, by the liberal political historian John Morton Blum as a 'Tory Democrat'. Schlesinger, according to John Diggins and Michael Lind, wrote *The Vital Center* to defend New Deal Liberalism from both Stalinism and McCarthyism.⁴² That

view was corroborated by Schlesinger half a century later in his *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, where he also recalled that, in the 1940s, he had found a 'solid foundation' in the 'Augustinian tradition, as rendered . . . most profoundly and most passionately by Reinhold Niebuhr'.⁴³ The 'Augustinian tradition' emphasized the weakness and futility of human agency, encumbered by guilt, corruptibility, and the precariousness of daily life. Together with another of Schlesinger's friends, George Kennan, Niebuhr was an early member of the Rockefeller Committee, which had attracted Herbert Butterfield, who also was an Augustinian.⁴⁴ Liberalism, after the Second World War, as Schlesinger's intellectual journey reveals, was no more a unified and coherent body of thought than conservatism, even though the liberals may have been more prominent, especially within the academy, the media, and the increasing proliferation of public intellectuals.⁴⁵

All four of the conservative historians, during the three decades after 1940, wrote historical works in response to the issues and events that characterized their times, but they differed in their approaches. One tradition, exemplified by Boorstin and Berthoff, celebrated American accomplishments within a uniquely American context. Boorstin was also a public intellectual who found fault with certain aspects of American culture but those faults did not detract from the greater story that he portrayed as the successful conservative triumph of American history. Berthoff remained a professional historian whose work on immigration and the importance of early American values never spilled over into a polemical and public stance. Although he was without greater influence and was certainly not a social and cultural critic with a large and loyal audience as were Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin, he is included here because he was the only academic historian before the 1980s to declare himself a 'conservative' historian in a uniquely American context.

A second and more pugnacious tradition was represented by Viereck and Kirk, who fought continuing and contentious battles with those forces in American history which they saw as deviations from their approved model. That model invoked British and European conservative traditions, institutions, values, and culture as the standard upon which American history was judged. Viereck and Kirk were polemicists who, unlike Boorstin and Berthoff, spent the greater part of their time and energy on contemporary political and cultural issues rather than on historical research or conventional historical writing. Viereck, in spite of his admiration for British and European thought, did find values and virtues in his native country that were distinctly American. Kirk, too, wrote approvingly about American thinkers, but those thinkers—John Adams, John Randolph, John Calhoun, Orestes Brownson, Irving Babbitt, and T. S. Elliot, among others—were either surrogates for Edmund Burke or were presented as intellectuals in Burke's lineage.

As early as 1975, when the American intellectual historian John Diggins traced the 'complete shift from the Old Left of the 1930s to the New Right of

the 1950s', he found correctly that Boorstin, 'the only important conservative historian who stays entirely within the American tradition' glorified the American 'genius' for abolishing philosophy to argue instead that Americans had devoted themselves successfully to activity. In so doing, Diggins charged, Boorstin had denied 'Americans one of the highest principles of philosophical conservatism—consciousness, the ability of mind to become aware of itself and to create value through conscious choice'.⁴⁶ But as Diggins admits throughout his thoughtful and provocative study of four major figures—Max Eastman, John Dos Passos, Will Herberg, and James Burnham—, there has never been an agreement in America about the principles or contents of philosophical conservatism. Diggins divides American conservatism to 1975 into two separate camps: anti-communism; and philosophical conservatism. That may be a fair appraisal of Diggins's five protagonists, but it does not apply to all the conservative thinkers from the 1940s to the 1970s, and it certainly does not accurately characterize the conservative historians described in this chapter. Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin were all cold warriors who developed their American version of conservatism as a patriotic and religious affirmation of American unity and values. All of them held a pragmatic and passionate belief in historically proven rectitude. Unlike Boorstin and Berthoff, Viereck and Kirk placed their anti-communism within a larger philosophical tradition that considered ideas as the major means for both defending a valuable cultural, moral, and political heritage and for attacking those who threatened it.

NOTES

1. J. R. Pole, 'The American Past. Is It Still Usable?', *Journal of American Studies*, 1 (1967), 77.
2. A notable and very recent exception has been Michael Bentley, trained at Peterhouse by Maurice Cowling. See esp. his *Modernizing England's Past*. For Americans working on British historiography through 1994, see the bibliography in Soffer, *Discipline and Power*. Routledge press has become especially prominent in publishing both historiographical and methodological books about the meaning and traditions of historical writing. Their 2007 catalogue of 'New Titles and Key Backlist' lists 27 titles in the 'History—Theory and Method' section.
3. I am grateful to Stan Katzman for this insight.
4. For the rare attempt by historians to assess the status of their discipline, see the *TLS* 6 January 1956, for an inquiry instigated by Butterfield. A similar attempt at introspection in the *TLS* was launched ten years later, spurred this time by Keith Thomas that resulted in three issues on 'New Ways in History' that year. The most recent 'New Ways in History' occurred in the *TLS* on 13 October 2006.
5. R. H. Tawney, the son of a Sanskrit scholar and distinguished civil servant, went to Rugby and Balliol College, Oxford, where he took a degree in Classics; Eileen

Power, from a middle-class family, took her Tripos at Girton College, Cambridge in 1901, but was unable to take a degree, which was not offered to women until 1923 and they did not become full members of the University until 1949. For an interesting discussion of the remarkable career of Eileen Power, as well as of the LSE, during the 1920s and 1930s, see Maxine Berg, *A Woman in History. Eileen Power, 1889–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For the history of the LSE by a former director, see Ralf Dahrendorf, *A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1895–1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.) Harold Laski read History at Oxford and taught Political Science at the LSE, 1930–50, as well as a brief stint at Harvard. He came from a prominent Manchester family and was a Labour Party leader. The close connections between the LSE, the University of London, and Oxbridge, in spite of what were often pronounced political differences, is well illustrated in the career of M. M. Postan, a foreigner with obscure origins who married Eileen Power, went from the LSE, where he took a degree in 1924 and an MA in 1926, to teaching positions at University College, London, back to the LSE, and finally to the Chair in Economic History at Cambridge in 1939.

6. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings, 1917–1950* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000), 353, 352. For Schlesinger's efforts to combat communism in the 1940s, see his ch. 20.
7. Irving Kristol acknowledges this definition. Discussion with the staff of *The Public Interest*, 19 March 1998.
8. Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right. The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990), 62.
9. *Ibid.*, 77.
10. See David Hollinger's percipient *In the American Province. Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1985), esp. ch. 4.
11. See esp. Charles A. Beard, *The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings*, comp. by William Beard (New York: Random House, 1957).
12. Daniel T. Rodgers, 'Exceptionalism', in Anthony Mohole and Gordon Wood (eds.), *Imagined Histories. American Historians Interpret the Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998) 26–7, 29. Rodgers provides a thorough, critical, survey of the uses of exceptionalism, essentially by left-leaning American historians.
13. William C. Binkley, 'Two World Wars and American Historical Scholarship', Presidential address to the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 33 (1946), 15, 20, 25–6.
14. Peter Viereck, *Conservatism Revisited. The Revolt against Revolt, 1815–1949* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1949), and *Conservatism. From John Adams to Churchill* (Chicago, 1953); Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind. From Burke to Eliot* (Chicago, 1953). Both 1953 volumes were published as complementary volumes by Henry Regnery, the Chicago publisher devoted to conservative causes.
15. Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1950), p. ix.

16. Samuel Eliot Morrison, 'Faith of a Historian', *AHR*, 56:2 (January 1951), 272–3.
17. Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America* (New York: Knopf, 1955), 68.
18. Eric Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny. A History of Modern American Reform* (New York: Knopf, 1952, rev. 1955).
19. In a conversation on 17 August 2007, Peter Clarke recalled this lecture, at which he was present.
20. Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America. The Thankless Persuasion*, 2nd edn., rev. (New York: Knopf, 1962), pp. vii, viii–ix, 13. Lisa Mc Girr argues in *Suburban Warriors. The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 66–7, that the strength conservatism enjoyed in the Republican Party of the early 1950s came from their national advocates Senator Robert Taft of Ohio and Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin and vanished by the mid-1950s.
21. George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (1976) [reissued, unchanged, by the Conservative think tank, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (Wilmington, Del., 1996)], pp. iii–iv. Although Nash writes about the immediate post-war period, he belongs to the 1970s and occasionally tends to confuse the ideals of that decade with those of the late 40s and 50s. Nash characterizes the 'Right' in the early 1950s as three 'loosely related groups: traditionalists or new conservatives, appalled by the erosion of values and the emergence of secular, rootless, mass society; libertarians, apprehensive about the threat of the State to private enterprise and individualism; and disillusioned ex-Radicals and their allies, alarmed by international Communism', 118. He is absolutely correct in concluding that even by 1965 conservatives had not constructed a unified conservative philosophy and that 'they probably never would', 170.
22. Byron Shafer and Richard Johnston, *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), argue controversially that economics and not race transformed the South into a Republican stronghold.
23. See the very different stand taken by Viereck and Kirk in ch. 7.
24. Potter Stewart, in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964), 197. Instead of a search for conservatism, William B. Hixson, Jr., finds that it is more in keeping with the reality of American political attitudes to *Search for the American Right Wing. An Analysis of the Social Science Record, 1955–1987* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).
25. From 2001, the *Wall Street Journal* has been running occasional op ed pieces, written by prominent conservatives, in an attempt to identify the essence and substance of conservatism. None of the writers has agreed.
26. Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington* (New York: Knopf, 1968), 27–9.
27. See John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America* (1965), (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1983), esp. Part III, 'American History'. Higham's penetrating discussion of what historians in America thought and wrote does not place them in the greater intellectual community of their time.

28. See esp. Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913). In 1935, Beard published it again (New York: the Macmillan Co., 1935) with a new introduction and it has gone thorough multiple reprinting through 1990; and Charles and Mary Ritter Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, 2 vols. (1927) (New York: the Macmillan Co., 1937). In the same year that the Beard's influential work appeared, Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927) was published and won the Pulitzer Prize the following year.
29. Higham, *History*, 174.
30. *Ibid.*, 194.
31. Some lamented the replacement of drum and trumpet history by what Dixon Ryan Fox called 'bum and strumpet history'. See Binkley, 'Two World Wars and American Historical Scholarship', 10.
32. Higham, 75, 199, 74 n. 13.
33. James Gray, 'The Journalist as Literary Man', *American Non-Fiction 1900–1950* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), 115.
34. See Allan Nevins, *James Truslow Adams: Historian of the American Dream* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1968).
35. See Jeffrey Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind. The National Review and its Times*.
36. Leo Strauss came to America in 1937. After brief periods as a Research Fellow in History at Columbia University and in the Political Science faculty at the New School for Social Research in New York City, he spent the greater part of his American career in the University of Chicago as a Professor of Political Science. Eric Vogelin arrived in America in 1938. Unsuccessful stints at various universities concluded in 1942, when he went to the Department of Government at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. In 1958 he accepted Max Weber's long empty chair in political science at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat. Then, in 1969, he moved to Stanford University's Hoover Institute and remained active there until his death in 1985.
37. Robert Nisbet, *Conservatism: Dream and Reality* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), 97.
38. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream. The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 332, 333.
39. See Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men who Made It* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948); and Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America. An Interpretation of American Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955).
40. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 300–1.
41. Reinhold Niebhuhr, *Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History* (New York: C. Scribner and Sons, 1937); William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1959); Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center. The Politics of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), 10.

42. Gorge F. Kennan, 'The Historian and the Cycles of History', 59; John Morton Blum, 'Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.: Tory Democrat', esp. 69; and John P. Diggins and Michael Lind, 'Introduction: The Vital Historian', in John Patrick Diggins (ed.), *The Liberal Persuasion. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and the Challenge to the American Past* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). For Schlesinger's friendship with Viereck and admiration of him, see his *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, 239, 284–5.
43. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, 510–11.
44. See ch. 5.
45. There is an enormous literature on the history and content of American liberalism from the inter-war years to the 1960s. A good beginning is Gary Gerstle, 'The Protean Character of American Liberalism', *AHR* (October 1994), 1043–73.
46. John P. Diggins, *Up from Communism. Conservative Odysseys in American Intellectual History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 1, 454–5.

8

The Americanization of the British Conservative Mind: Peter Viereck and Russell Kirk

The American intellectual debate about the meaning and uses of conservatism was launched, inadvertently, when Edward A. Weeks became the new editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, one of the oldest and most respected of American magazines. Weeks wanted to move the magazine in a more liberal political direction and in early 1940 he invited Peter Viereck, then a precocious 23-year-old graduate student at Harvard in both history and poetry, to write about 'the meaning of young liberalism for the present age'.¹ Viereck responded with 'But—I'm a Conservative!', a passionate explanation and justification of his political, intellectual, and cultural faith in a 'new conservatism'. The *Atlantic Monthly* article established Viereck as an innovative combatant in the new controversy about the origin, meaning, and applicability of conservative values.

Viereck and Russell Kirk, the most conspicuous and most public of the conservative historians, were prominent conservative intellectuals whose historical writings were largely ignored within the historical profession. But unlike most sequestered and largely ignored professional historians, they each attracted a large popular audience and were required reading for a generation of undergraduates. Although beginning in sympathy with each other, they came to disagree bitterly about appropriate political policies, personalities, and conservative strategies. Both men relied upon intellect and artistic imagination as necessary for interpreting and influencing events. And they both defined and defended the priority of an intellectual elite living the life of the mind independently of conformist pressures. Welcoming the historical necessity and efficacy of practical thinking, they both insisted that ideas were not abstract but rather explanatory and hortatory. The paucity of an authentic American conservative intellectual tradition led them to exhume deeper roots in Britain, and for Viereck, in Continental Europe too. When Charles Dunn and David Woodward re-examined *American Conservatism* in 1991, they agreed with Viereck and Kirk that the American version was part of European, and especially British, ideas originating in Burke. At the same time, Dunn and Woodward conceded that conservatism was 'about cultural traditions and values which defy simple definition'. Although they struggled

valiantly to find a complex definition within the 'moral constitutional tradition of the West', they arrived only at 'a defense of the political, economic, religious, and social status quo from the forces of abrupt change, that is based on a belief that established customs, laws, and traditions provide continuity and stability in the guidance of society'.² While this definition may describe conservative preferences, it hardly illuminates the American context. Both Viereck and Kirk sought an ordered model to explain and correct recalcitrant American development by placing it within a history of conservative ideas dating back at least 150 years.

Viereck's *Atlantic Monthly* article was followed in 1941 by the publication of his doctoral thesis at Harvard: *Metapolitics. From the Romantics to Hitler*. Then in 1949, *The Revolt against Revolt, 1815–1949*, followed four years later by *Conservatism. From John Adams to Churchill*, established Viereck as a central figure in the emerging debates about the origin, meaning, and relevance of conservative ideas and values. In addition to his conservative historiography, he wrote mordant social and cultural criticism in *The Shame and the Glory of the Intellectuals. Babbit Jr. vs. the Rediscovery of Values* (1953), and *The Unadjusted Man. A New Hero for Americans. Reflections on the Distinction between Conforming and Conserving* (1956). *Conservatism*, an anthology for college students introduced and interpreted by Viereck, was reissued in 1956 and by January 1964, 30,000 copies had been sold and it had been adopted by approximately 200 colleges.³ In the mid-1960s, he extended, amended, and reissued his other books to address a different historical context and they, too, sold very well. He also wrote more than forty articles, many on poetry, in scholarly and popular journals and in the press. A Pulitzer-prize winning poet in 1948 for his *Terror and Decorum*, Viereck returned to his poetry and the teaching of Russian history in rural Southampton, Massachusetts, after the mid-1960s and left polemic controversy to others. But for the two decades in which he sought to provide a broad audience for his brand of conservatism, Viereck's books were reprinted and sold out.

Until the turn of the twenty-first century, when new interest has developed in his formulation of conservatism, Viereck remained widely known to educated readers, but he was largely ignored by the pundits of post-war American conservatism. That was especially true for the contributors to the *National Review*, including Kirk, and for the supporters of Joe Mc McCarthy and Barry Goldwater, both of whom he opposed energetically. While Viereck supported Adlai Stevenson as a properly aristocratic and intellectual presidential candidate in 1956, Kirk was a principal in Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964, advised Nixon and Reagan, and was the Michigan state chairman of Patrick Buchanan's run for the Republican presidential nomination in 1992.⁴ Kirk, until his death in 2004, attempted directly to influence policy through his journalism and other writing, personal contacts among conservative policy-makers, and his alliance with conservative intellectual organizations.

Viereck was a product of the intellectually self-conscious east coast, where he enjoyed the best possible education at the Horace Mann School for Boys, Phillips Exeter Academy, Harvard, and Oxford. During the war, he served in Africa and Italy with the army's psychological propaganda branch and won two stars. Although offered a position at the University of Chicago, Viereck chose to teach at Mount Holyoke College in Southampton, Massachusetts, and remained there for his entire career as a professor of Russian History, who held the Kenan Chair. Although he moved in elite circles and made a reputation in his early twenties as a serious conservative intellectual, he bore the stigma of being the son of George Sylvester Viereck, the German-American apologist for the Kaiser in the First World War, and who, in 1940, was imprisoned for his propagandist activities for the Nazis. In part, Viereck's conservatism may have been a rejection of his father's principles.⁵

Kirk became a major figure in defining American conservative thinking with the publication of *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana* (1953), a remarkably influential work that even today is admired by prominent conservatives in both Britain and America.⁶ Born in 1918 to 'young and poor' parents—a railroad engineman and a waitress who read poetry—he grew up in small-town Michigan, where he reacted viscerally and intellectually against the establishment and expansion of Henry Ford's mechanized factory culture and the attendant erosion of rural life.⁷ For the rest of his long life, he devoted himself to an aggressive defence of an agrarian conservatism that was the idealized antithesis of the world that Ford had created. Unable to afford the best university education, in sharp contrast to Viereck's easy access to elitist schools, Kirk attended Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science (later to become Michigan State University) on a scholarship, 1936–40. He took a Master's degree in History at Duke and, after his military tour as a sergeant in the Chemical Warfare Service, taught at his alma mater in East Lansing while working towards and, astonishingly, receiving a D. Litt. at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. His ability to surmount his deprived background by what he believed to be merit, character, and hard work, led him to laud elitist values, as did Viereck.

After Michigan State, which he detested as a 'cow college' and a 'Behemoth University', Kirk never held a permanent academic position, although he was a visiting professor at universities all over the U.S. From 1955 he wrote a 'From the Academy' column for the *National Review* that was consistently critical of American higher education. Additionally, he maintained a connection with such conservative bastions as the Heritage Foundation until his death.⁸ From 1957 to 1959 he was a founding editor of the conservative journal *Modern Age*, a singularly incongruent role for Kirk, who detested almost everything 'modern'. Writing prodigiously, he established the *University Bookman*, a quarterly review of books, and produced 30 books, 500 *National Review* articles, 2,500 newspaper columns, 400 essays, and 60 lectures for the Heritage Foundation,

in addition to editing 30 titles for his series 'The Library of Conservative Thought'. In common with Viereck, Boorstin, and many British conservative historians, he often spoke on the radio and appeared on television. In addition to his conservative analysis and polemics, he wrote fanciful, Gothic fiction. His books were translated into a multitude of languages and sold over a million copies.⁹ While we cannot know what his readers took away from their reading, we do know that his interested audience heard a message that was consistently repeated.

Initially, it appeared that Viereck and Kirk would find a common ground and purpose, especially because they each believed that the best historians had an imaginative and artistic sensibility and both actively cultivated those sensibilities in their creative and historical writing. They also revered a divinely sanctioned Christian order; found human nature to be too easily led by passion and emotion; imagined a better government guided by the best and brightest; reduced political problems to moral problems; trusted institutions, laws, and traditions to maintain a civil society; and saw conservatism as the necessary social and cultural bond that would guarantee individual security, social equity, and harmony. In common, they attacked selfish mercantile, financial, and business interests who profited while ordinary people suffered, but they parted company about the desirability of conservative *rapprochement* with liberals. Viereck approved of supporting liberals over such issues as civil rights and social welfare legislation. That position infuriated other conservatives, and especially those who felt themselves to represent conservatism as it ought to be understood and practised. Wilmore Kendall, once a Trotskyite, became a conservative political philosopher and controversialist who proved that the truest of believers is often a convert. Kendall accused Viereck of telling people 'how to be conservative' while agreeing with 'Liberals about Everything'.¹⁰ Communists remained the greatest enemies for Kirk, but he disliked liberals for their belief in the reformation of human nature and the promise of progressive change.

Another issue that separated Kirk and Viereck and rent the conservative movement in the 1950s was the appropriate attitude towards Joe McCarthy and his zealous pursuit of communists. Kirk found an intellectual home in the *National Review*, which accepted Joe McCarthy as a scourge of communism. Viereck vigorously repudiated McCarthyism as pseudo-anti-communism and as a witch-hunt based upon the resentment of intellectuals. Kirk conceded that McCarthy had 'abused' his privileges, but he believed that McCarthy had done little harm.¹¹ He found McCarthy's destruction of Owen Lattimore entirely justified because Lattimore was the Soviets' 'unofficial ambassador'.¹² Viereck also found Lattimore to be reprehensible, but he believed that McCarthy did as much harm as Lattimore and he attempted to organize conservative intellectuals to oppose the senator. Kirk refused to join them, saying later that he was repelled by Viereck's extreme 'reverse McCarthyism'.¹³ Viereck never forgave Kirk.

Viereck had described the McCarthy phenomenon as a 'revenge of the noses' that 'for twenty years of fancy parties were pressed against the outside window pane'.¹⁴ Although Viereck's education and attainments allowed him to enter the lofty establishment of the intellectual élite, as did Butterfield, Kirk, Boorstin, and Berthoff, they all began on the wrong side of the windowpane. None of them came to status and position by birth or family connections. Instead, they were all outsiders who overcame their initial exclusion. All four conservative historians after the Second World War, and in Butterfield's case even earlier, were determined to be included, and they wrote and talked their way into positions of prominence and authority. With the exception of Berthoff, who never achieved national notoriety, they were concerned above all with their public responsibilities, which they understood as a commitment following from their conservative apprehensions. For Butterfield, those public responsibilities meant organizing other intellectuals in Britain and America to work towards peace and reconciliation in the Cold War on the basis of a deep Augustinian pessimism that prevented him from taking sides in ideological quarrels. The American conservative historians opposed communism unrelentingly and they also became cultural critics who held up historical standards they believed ought to be pedagogical mirrors to an unsatisfactory present. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., argued in 1949, during his most conservative phase, that 'a knowledge of history separates the responsible conservative from the plutocrat'.¹⁵ History taught Viereck that true conservatism had nothing to do with McCarthy or the right-wing extremism of Barry Goldwater, but was instead pluralistic in its acceptance of the 'liberal' defence of civil liberties and a positive, social role for the state, as well as the endorsement of internationalism. Viereck located conservatism in historical roots deep within British and European responses to events that challenged conservative principles.

Viereck greeted Kirk's first book, *Randolph of Roanoke* (1951), appearing two years after his own *Conservatism Revisited*, as 'brilliant research on conservative Americana'. He also called attention to Kirk's 'extraordinarily perceptive article on Burke' in the *Sewanee Review* of 1952.¹⁶ A decade later, in addition to opposing Kirk's support for McCarthy and for the 'Goldwater Manchester liberals of old-guard Republicanism', Viereck identified Kirk with a new and irrelevant conservatism based on nostalgia for an agrarian, aristocratic utopia that sympathized with Southern conservative manifestos such as *I'll Take My Stand* (1930). Kirk's 'unhistorical appeal to history' and 'traditionless worship of tradition' repelled Viereck, who invested conservatism with an apodictic 'rooted tradition and historic continuity'.¹⁷ Viereck correctly associated Kirk with the romantic agrarian conservatism of the 1930s. Kirk especially approved of T. S. Eliot's sympathy with the 'Southern Agrarians and his hope that Virginia might be able to preserve or restore her own culture better than had his ancestral New England', and he wrote admiringly about Richard Weaver,

Donald Davidson, and Flannery O'Connor.¹⁸ Viereck lived and taught all his life in a small, pastoral town, but he recognized that he lived in an urban, modern society focused on the city. Although Viereck and Kirk both abhorred philosophical Romanticism as an abstraction that threatened conservative historical values, Kirk took great pride in his self-construction as a romantic 'Bohemian Tory' inspired by Coleridge and Walter Scott. Kirk, often wearing a cloak and large-brimmed hat, despised modernism and envied those who had lived in the order and moral certainty of a pre-modern past. Looking back on his forty-year career in 1995, Kirk described himself as 'buffeted in the Battle of the Books' and bearing a shield inscribed with the device 'Permanent Things', a phrase he borrowed from T. S. Elliot.¹⁹ Although Kirk used the amenities of modern life, he tried to subordinate them to pre-modern values that made an agrarian past so attractive to him. Viereck was unsympathetic to Kirk's romantic lament, but he did applaud the 'Unadjusted Man', an individual who rejected pressures for cultural subjection and chose instead moral historical values and time-honoured traditions. While Viereck tried to accommodate conservatism to altering times, Kirk faced resolutely backwards.

Viereck was far more willing to moderate his thinking to respond to new developments. Still, his conservatism in common with Kirk's was based essentially on distrust of human nature, rootlessness, and untested innovations; and on trust in historical continuity that would provide traditional non-ideological, religious, empirical, and cultural checks on human nature. He advocated government by a meritocracy within a Western community of ethical nations. Viereck's conservatism mandated a moral choice, which rejected the ephemeral and fashionable for the rooted institutions shared by all successful cultures. The political liberalism that he admired defended personal freedom and paternalistic social reform, while also valuing tradition and recognizing the weaknesses of human nature. Surprisingly, he found these qualities in contemporary public life best represented by Adlai Stevenson, the presidential candidate that he admired and supported.

When Viereck began his conservative crusade with the essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*, he envisioned conservatism as an immediate response to the Nazi-Soviet Pact of Non-aggression, the Soviet invasion of Finland, Hitler's brutal rampage through Europe, and the anti-Semitism embraced by Nazis. In 1940, Hearnshaw, Feiling, and Butterfield were silent about the predicament of Jews in Nazi Germany, while Bryant initially considered the possibility that the conduct of German Jews had provoked Nazi retribution. Viereck condemned anti-Semitism absolutely as 'the first step in an ever-widening revolt of mob instinct against all restraints and liberties'.²⁰ Well after the war, when it was clear what anti-Semitism had wrought in Nazi Germany, Viereck insisted that 'simple human compassion for Hitler's millions of tortured victims' was 'the deepest emotional and moral experience of our era'.²¹ In 1940, he recommended a Tory paternalist tradition as a remedy against the appearance of a similar

mob instinct in America. Conservatives intelligent enough to be pragmatic, he urged, should accept immediate social, economic, and political obligation including a 'patriotic' guarantee that every citizen have sufficient purchasing power to become a 'free and stable property owner and an economically articulate consumer'. He argued further 'necessities (such as wheat) must no longer be burned or ploughed under, but sold, even without profit and below cost, to all citizens who lack them'. Legitimate mass discontent could only be prevented, he insisted, with thoroughgoing social legislation along with decentralized governmental power.²²

While attempting to call attention to the horrors of Nazi Germany, Viereck also feared misplaced liberal sympathy for American and especially Soviet communism. To counter what he considered a naïve liberalism, he proposed a conservatism that would oppose all totalitarian 'communazis', whether of the Left or Right.²³ Viereck defined conservatism as a 'humanistic' and 'common sense' conservation of 'our cultural, spiritual, and individualist heritage'. His basic conservative principle was the 'necessity and supremacy of Law' that ought to reflect the 'absolute moral laws of the spirit', which need to be invoked and practised to provide safeguards against the reality of original sin. Social stability, he contended, had depended historically upon such basic institutions as the U.S. Supreme Court, an established Church, a monarchy, a non-partisan civil service, and an aristocracy trained from birth to fill that service. Against the 'dynamism' of power, instinct, and blind change, he proposed five self-disciplines: the 'rule of reason in the individual, Christian ethics between individuals, Law in the state, free parliamentary negotiation among political parties, peace by negotiating among nations.' The young Viereck's 'great dream' was that other young Americans would dedicate themselves to a synthesis of 'cultural, spiritual, and political conservatism' combined with 'economic reform'.²⁴

Except for including the American Supreme Court among his 'basic institutions', Viereck might have been in Britain writing about British history. Before returning to Harvard to receive his doctorate, Viereck was at Christ Church, the most politically conservative College in Oxford. Keith Feiling was the dominant historian then and Viereck was certainly exposed to an ethical elitism and a socially responsible Toryism, which may have reinforced or possibly enriched his pre-existing elitist and social welfare assumptions. Two generations before Viereck, the experience of Charles Austin Beard, who was to become the iconic figure of an American 'Progressive' history relying upon economic analyses, was very different. Beard went from his B.A. at De Pauw University in Indiana to Balliol College in 1898 and there, together with an American couple on holiday in Oxford, Amne and William Watkins Vroorman, established Ruskin College (originally Ruskin Hall) for working people, who could either live in the college and study there, remain at home and take correspondence courses, or attend extension classes around the country.²⁵ Balliol was the most reformist and socially conscious of all the Oxford Colleges and Ruskin Hall was housed

initially in the former home of T. H. Green, the intellectual godfather of Oxford social reform.²⁶ Beard's Oxford did not have to contend with Hitler and his ambitions.

A year after his *Atlantic Monthly* assertion of faith and three months before Pearl Harbour, Viereck's Harvard doctoral dissertation was published as *Metapolitics. From the Romantics to Hitler* (1941). His engagement with conservatism had begun when he confronted the meaning of ideological fanaticism in the writing of *Metapolitics* at Harvard and Oxford from 1936 to 1940. The 'German soul' took shape for Viereck as the historical residue of a struggle between the competing attractions of conservatism, on one side, and romantic traditions of self-centredness, on the other. Conservatism belonged to the Western tradition of 'civilization', which was threatened by the Germanic tradition of 'Kultur'. In Nazi Germany, he discovered an 'almost schizophrenic' confrontation of 'Law vs. life, form vs. content, static vs. dynamic, classicism vs. romanticism, politics vs. metapolitics, internationalism vs. racism, liberal capitalism vs. national socialism, pacificism vs. militarism, freedom vs. tribal Fuhrer, individualism vs. totalitarianism, atomism vs. organic volk, reason vs. force, gold vs. blood, Christ vs. Wotan'.²⁷ Viereck condemned Germany's reckless embrace of a romanticism that rebelled against the historically proven values of the Western heritage. Instead of endorsing civilization, the Germans chose to believe in racism, a 'vague economic socialism', and the 'alleged . . . forces of Volk collectivity'.²⁸ *Metapolitics* was a deliberately revisionist work in its argument that the origins of Nazism could be traced to romantic and cultural decadence rather than to a struggle for power. Looking back upon its publication a generation later, Viereck felt that the isolationist, pro-German, and especially pro-Soviet 'climate of the 1940s was inauspicious for getting this Hitler-interpretation debated seriously'.²⁹ Part of that interpretation was the warning that the socialist side of National Socialism was an additional danger that had to be taken seriously.

Viereck reached out to a wider audience in *Conservatism Revisited. The Revolt against Revolt, 1815–1949* (1949). Although widely read, this was his least successful book because of a historically tendentious portrait of Metternich, the book's putative representative of valuable conservative traditions. In 1962, in an extended edition, he recognized that his 'deliberate focus' on Metternich was 'too narrow' for a discussion of conservatism, especially in America. What he had intended was to show that the international conservatism of the Metternich era from 1815 to 1848 and the international liberalism of 1820 and 1848 should have acted together to defeat Realpolitik nationalism. As in all of Viereck's writings, the lesson was meant for the present. Just as *Metapolitics* bolstered the anti-Nazi position, so the 1949 book endorsed a conservatism that represented the 'value-heritage for which America rightly entered World War II' rather than a distorted understanding of conservatism as a defence of 'economic greed and privilege'.³⁰ A revised *Conservatism Revisited* appeared in 2005 as part of Rutgers University's revival of Viereck's work through their Transaction Series.

Claes G. Ryn's introductory essay praised Viereck and his ideas as they had appeared nearly half a century earlier. Ryn, a conservative unhappy with what he perceived as the aberrant directions taken by conservatism since the late 1960s, wanted to 'provide a context for assessing the evolution and present condition of American conservatism'. Regrettably, Ryn concluded, in spite of Viereck's 'visibility' from 1940 to 1956, his ideas never received systematic attention. Among those ideas, whose demise Ryn deplored, was an insistence that true conservatism was pluralistic, especially in its acceptance of the 'liberal' defence of civil liberties and the positive role of some kind of welfare state. Additionally, Ryn approved of Viereck's attempt to demonstrate that internationalism was a historically conservative position rooted deeply within British and European thought and events.³¹

In 1953, Viereck's *Conservatism. From John Adams to Churchill* introduced 'conservatism', along with its principal texts, to a still broader audience.³² Explaining the historical and philosophical origins of conservatism, Viereck relied most upon English thought to represent conservatism because 'hers was the most conservative temperament of all', transcending party and class. That temperament was what Viereck understood and endorsed as true conservatism reliant upon experience rather than 'apriorism'; organicism rather than atomism; liberty rather than equality; aristocracy, in the sense of government by the best as proposed by Burke and John Adams, rather than plutocracy or democracy; and, finally, a preference for an ethical Western community as opposed to a rapacious and isolationist nationalism.³³ Except for the last point both the inter-war and post-war conservative historians in Britain would have agreed. After the Second World War, Butterfield also saw the necessity for international agreements, but Bryant and the other inter-war conservative historians who survived into the post-war decades, remained ardent nationalists. The laudable conservatives in Viereck's collection were Burke, Coleridge, Carlyle, Newman, Disraeli, Churchill, Tocqueville, Taine, and the American Federalists, especially Adams and Hamilton. Metternich remained important for Viereck, but he appears here as only one of many historical founders. Among contemporary historians, Viereck praised Boorstin's study of the historical evolution of conservatism, and especially his *The Genius of American History* (1953) for 'rediscovering our conservative origins'.³⁴

After 1949, Viereck concentrated more on cultural and social criticism and less on historical explanation. That was hardly a major change in direction because everything that he wrote, including his historiography and intellectual histories, were all critiques of the failings of his own time and the ways in which they could be remedied by the active adoption of conservative principles. In *The Shame and the Glory of the Intellectuals. Babbitt Jr. vs. the Rediscovery of Values* (1953), he tried to separate the responsible intellectual from those claiming, falsely, to live the life of the mind. He dedicated the book to Winston Churchill, 'whose career as a great liberal social reformer in the 1900s, as opponent of an appeasing

and commercialized Chamberlain-conservatism in the 1930s, and as unabashed “warmonger” of the 1940s, against both Nazism and Communism has made him the inspiration and world-symbol of the independent new conservatism now being born out of the agony of the 1950s’. Viereck, in often vitriolic prose, attacked the intellectual, political, and cultural philistinism he saw in liberals, and especially in the ‘opportunistic and herd-minded intellectual’ he called Babbitt Jr., as opposed to the ‘ethically-dedicated and independent intellectual’ of a new conservatism embodied by Churchill in Britain and by Adlai Stevenson in America.³⁵ In 1965, when he again thought the times were propitious to bring his views to a new generation, he issued an edition with an unaltered text but with a new Preface and a new closing chapter covering 1953 to 1965. In that new ending, the pretentious ‘Gaylord’ Babbitt Jr. of 1953, a ‘professional martyr with silk-lined hair shirt’, who was ‘*Angst*-ridden and frivolously tragic in religion’ and part of a ‘rearguard kind of breathless avant-garde’ an ‘anti-establishment member of the establishment’ morphed into the ‘Cabot’ Gaylord, who had usurped the new conservatism for ‘McCarthy–Goldwater nonsense’.³⁶

Three years later, his conservatism, while still rooted in Burkean British models supplemented by allusions to the Federalists, took a uniquely American tone in his defence of individual privacy and his protest against the mindless conformity of the ‘Overadjusted Man’, a middle-class ‘massman’ keeping up with the Jones. Although he talked about phenomena prominent in Europe as well as the U.S., he argued that Europe had become more ‘Americanized’ than America, which retained cultural ‘burrows of individual creativity’ that survived due to ‘indifference’. Viereck’s conservatism was pre-eminently a ‘moral choice’ not ‘between conforming and nonconforming but between conforming to the ephemeral, stereotyped values of the moment and conforming to the ancient, lasting archetypal values shared by all creative cultures’. By ‘archetypes’ he meant rooted institutions ‘growing out of the soil of history: slowly, painfully, organically’. The notion of conciliation, so prominent in Butterfield’s work, took on a different meaning for Viereck. While Butterfield urged that all different shades of opinion be brought together in compromises that would result in peace and security, Viereck condemned the extremes of both Left and Right, and suggested a coalition at the centre. He approved of political liberals who defended personal freedom and ‘humane reforms’ and were, at the same time, ‘philosophical conservative’, who valued tradition and recognized the failings of human nature. True American conservatism, for Viereck, was not linked to class or party, but depended rather upon accepting a view of human nature as depraved and of a historical tradition best epitomized intellectually by Arthur Schlesinger Jr.’s emphasis on ‘the vital center’.³⁷ In practical politics, Viereck looked for moderate pragmatists who acted for the common good on the basis of conservative traditions and values. Viereck hardly endeared himself to other American conservatives in his support for Stevenson’s unsuccessful presidential

bid in 1952 or in his sympathy for Schlesinger, both of whom were considered staunch liberals by conservatives who might agree on little else. His contempt for 'old-Guard Republicans' like Goldwater whom he saw as unreconstructed Manchester liberals concerned only with commercial ends, and his distaste for the authoritarianism of the Right, as well as his support of labour unions, was understood by conservative critics as a rejection of conservatism. From Viereck's perspective, he was condemning the extremes of both Left and Right, as well as support for any class or party.

A review of Viereck's corpus of work thorough the autumn of 1954 welcomed him enthusiastically as a political philosopher who asserted the 'primacy of morals' in 'politics and art' and attacked moral relativism and philistinism. The reviewer recognized Viereck as the 'most controversial' of political and polemical writers. In his savage assault against extremists on both the Left and Right, Viereck was the 'authentic voice of the morally indignant, spiritually aroused, but at the same time enlightened young America . . . of the thinkers in the universities who are shocked at the horrors of Communists, but unprepared to join in a frenzied campaign of hatred and vilification that so tragically distinguishes Senator McCarthy and his followers'. It is significant that the review appeared in the *Time Literary Supplement* and not in an American publication.³⁸ British conservatives never had a McCarthy and the excesses of a conservatism of the far Right were marginal in Britain after the Second World War. Moreover, Viereck's conservatism had British roots in Burke above all, as well as in Coleridge, Carlyle, Newman, Disraeli, and Churchill. As late as 1974, when Viereck chose a select reading list for understanding conservatism, he included two British historians—F. J. C. Hearnshaw and Arthur Bryant—and only one American—Daniel Boorstin.³⁹ Hearnshaw, who belonged to the inter-war era of British conservative historiography, was the only intellectual historian among his British conservative peers, and his purposes as well as his contexts were very different from the post-war American conservative historians.⁴⁰

Viereck's admiration for the British antecedents of American conservatism and the reciprocal appreciation of Viereck in Britain did not mean that he was without influence in America, as the sales for his books demonstrate. Additionally, he was an important voice in the debate among conservative intellectuals and in the larger public about the meaning and applicability of conservative principles. When the sociologist Daniel Bell attempted to understand *The New American Right* (1955), he invited distinguished contributors from various academic disciplines to define and explain the emergence of the 'new right'. A common theme which emerged from the various essays was that a sound, moderate, and respectable conservatism had been challenged by an unacceptable 'pseudo-conservatism'. Then, in the early 1960s, when Bell perceived another shift in direction, he assembled *The Radical Right*, which reprinted six of the original essays together with each author's reappraisal of their earlier views.⁴¹ In 1955, Viereck's essay for Bell, 'The Revolt Against the Elite', summoned Burkean and Federalist conservatism

to condemn the 'masses', who were 'more bourgeois than the bourgeoisie', and the consequent failings of direct democracy. In typically passionate prose, with Carlylean cadence, he castigated mid-western and western 'Old Guard Republicans' and their 'incongruous allies', who had in common 'the same old isolationist, Anglophobe, Germanophile revolt of radical Populist lunatic-fringers against the eastern, educated Anglicized elite. Only this time it is a Populism gone sour; it lacks the generous, idealistic, social reformist instincts which partly justified the original Populists.'⁴² McCarthy was especially distasteful to Viereck's elitist soul because he led a 'plebian revolution' attempting 'to overthrow an old ruling class' and 'replace it from below by a new ruling class'. Replacing the British notion of an aristocratic class based on birth, land, religion, and social and economic status, Viereck located his vaunted, American old ruling class in a 'New England' heritage, a moral apprehension rather than a geographical area. He condemned the extreme right wing, represented by such figures as Father Charles Coughlin and McCarthy, to identify instead with an 'eastern' intellectual and social aristocracy, although he often suspected them of social engineering, hypocrisy, and self-deception. The best of that eastern aristocracy was represented, for Viereck, by Adlai Stevenson, whom he saw as an American amalgam of Mill's liberal free dissent and Burke's conservative roots in historical continuity. The result would be, he said playing on the title of his *Shame of the Intellectuals*, the 'glory not the shame of the eggheads'. The conservatism that he advocated was viable, he maintained, because it was aware of its roots and its history and it repudiated the 'atomism' of 'unregulated capitalism' and the 'merely bureaucratic, merely mechanical unity of modern socialism'.⁴³

Subsequently, in his 1962 essay for *The Radical Right*, Viereck turned to 'non-McCarthyite, non-thought-controlling . . . "new conservatism"', in opposition to an ahistorical, abstract, romanticizing old conservatism that dreamed of a utopian 'aristocratic agrarian revolution'. Distancing himself from authoritarian conservatives, as well, Viereck allied himself with the 'deep-rooted tradition of liberal conservative synthesis', which went back to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and its amalgam of Locke's 'very moderate liberalism' and Burke's 'very moderate conservatism'. In common with Kirk, Viereck increasingly relied on Burkean prudential wisdom in explaining the conservative development of American history. Unlike Kirk, Viereck found American history to be distinctly American in its assimilation of the best in liberalism and the New Deal reforms of the 1930s. He also resurrected 'Tory socialism' in the 'aristocratic Shaftesbury–Disraeli–F.D.R–Stevenson tradition', which also included the Kennedy reforms, to defeat the other dominant trends in conservative thought, which he identified as 'Manchester-liberal economic materialism' and 'right-wing nationalist thought control'. The aristocracy that Viereck admired, and of which he saw himself as an exemplar, endured 'the lonely creative bitterness' of the artist fighting for 'inner imagination' against 'outer mechanization'. The fight that mattered most to him was for 'the private life', and three years after he wrote

this essay he retreated to that life and, except for a rare foray, left the battle for the definition and implementation of a true conservatism.⁴⁴ Kirk remained as a prominent warrior.

Jeffrey Hart, a senior editor of the *National Review* since 1969, described Kirk as one of the four major figures in the birth and development of 'modern American conservatism, a cultural and political phenomenon'.⁴⁵ At the end of 2005, as conservatives continued to quarrel about the meaning and purposes of American conservatism, Hart celebrated Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* as 'a founding document of the American conservative movement' in which Kirk assembled 'an array of major thinkers beginning with Edmund Burke and made a major statement'. For Hart, Kirk proved that conservative thought existed in America as an intellectual force, 'a demonstration very much needed at the time'. Hart continued that in 2005, 'we are in a very different and more complicated situation. Nevertheless, a synthesis is possible, based on what American conservatism has achieved and left unachieved since Kirk's volume . . . the political philosopher presiding will be Burke, but a Burke interpreted for a new constitutional republic and for modern life.'⁴⁶ When Roger Scruton the conservative Peterhouse philosopher assembled canonical conservative texts in 1991, he included Russell Kirk as 'perhaps the most distinguished living conservative in America, and the one who has done most to present conservatism as an outlook that is both intellectually respectable and relevant to the modern age'.⁴⁷

While Kirk had many conservative admirers, he also had conservative critics. In common with Viereck, these conservatives felt that his romantic nostalgia, distorted reading of history, and inflexibility damaged their cause. In an essentially sympathetic treatment of the man who was his friend and mentor, W. Wesley McDonald's intellectual biography concludes that Kirk 'can be correctly accused of having failed to articulate a fully developed sense of historical consciousness' because of an 'ahistorical attachment to the past' in which 'no room could be made for new categories of thought'. Clinton Rossiter's *Conservatism in America* said that Kirk sounded 'like a man born one hundred and fifty years too late and in the wrong country'.⁴⁸ Those are damaging charges against a conservative intellectual who found validation for his ideas, values, and cultural prescriptions in the historical past. Are they true?

Throughout his life, Kirk thought of himself as a 'man of letters' and 'a social critic', and he always considered that his intellectual history was part of 'letters'.⁴⁹ Kirk's influence in the highest political circles rested on his analysis of a descent of ideas culminating in contemporary conservatism. His reflections on social, cultural, economic, and political issues were an integral part of that analysis. For the wider, non-scholarly audience, including powerful political figures like William Buckley, Jr., Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan, Kirk's advocacy of conservative ideas appeared to be historically tried and proven. His depiction of heroic figures addressing the dilemmas of their

time was additionally a partisan social commentary that lauded intelligence, determination, family love and support, hard work, self-denial, trust in God, and the right beliefs. In 1964, when Goldwater ran for president, Kirk ghostwrote his campaign speeches. As early as January 1962, together with William Buckley, Jr., Kirk persuaded Goldwater to distance himself from Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., the leader of the controversial, far-right John Birch Society.⁵⁰ Kirk was not only a constant presence at both Richard Nixon's and Ronald Reagan's White House events, he also advised Nixon about what to read, and so impressed Ronald Reagan that he was awarded the Presidential Citizen's Medal in 1989.⁵¹ The Conservative intellectual establishment expressed their further appreciation of his contributions through the Christopher Award, inspired by a Catholic priest, for his book *Eliot and His Age* (1971), and through the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters, an Ingersoll Prize.⁵² The scholarly community also recognized him occasionally with a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Senior Fellowship of the American Council of Learned Societies, a Constitutional Fellowship of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and a Fulbright Lectureship in Scotland.

Kirk's advice to his millions of readers, as well as to the great and powerful, was based on his interpretation of British thought and its American incarnations from Burke to the present. That interpretation always had a polemical intent. It is naïve not to recognize that historical writing is meant to be persuasive in the sense that historians study a body of material and come to believe, truly or falsely, that they understand what they have read and its greater context sufficiently enough to persuade a reader to follow them through an explanatory narrative. In order to be compelling, that narrative has to be based upon people, events, and ideas which are recognizable and therefore credible to those encountering them. Conclusions about meaning often vary. Still, we can ask Kirk, or any historian of ideas, about the relationship between their political moral, religious, and cultural agendas and the history that they write. Did Kirk attempt a scrupulous and fair approach to the writers and times that he wanted to explain? Did Kirk recognize and resolve any latent conflicts among his beginning assumptions, his guiding themes, and the discovery of the unexpected?

Kirk's first book and the only one that involved extensive archival research was *John Randolph of Roanoke* (1951), which was written initially for Kirk's M.A. at Duke. Kirk read widely in secondary and manuscript sources, including books by Hearnshaw and Feiling, whose historical opinions he sought when he needed an apt conservative quote.⁵³ Does that make the book a genuinely historical treatment by the standards of his time that stressed objectivity and emotional neutrality towards the subject investigated and discussed? Kirk failed those tests because it never occurred to him that he ought to meet them. Instead, he began with the typical Cold War assumption of 1951 that conservatives found persuasive: 'almost in a fit of absence of mind', America had become the

major 'protector of the patrimony of civilization: the great conservative power'. Randolph, in Kirk's idealized view, was a crucial, if unjustly neglected, figure in the origins of that conservative movement, an American Burke in his defence of individual 'sovereignty' and common sense conditioned by 'prescription and tradition'. Kirk and Viereck both resurrected Burke as a principal founding father of American conservatism, embodying the amalgam of values, morals, cultural prescriptions, religious imperatives, and political goals that each of them understood as true conservatism. Randolph was especially interesting to Kirk because he saw him as carrying further Burke's reverence for history and his dislike of a priori assumptions and abstractions such as natural rights, as well as his repudiation of Benthamite materialism.

Randolph became, for Kirk, the transplanter of Burke's ideas into the soil of the American nation. When Kirk looked back at the subsequent growth of American history, he saw the history America ought to have had. The American Revolution largely was no 'innovating upheaval' but rather a 'conservative restoration'. Adams, another iconic Burkean American in Kirk's judgement, also trusted history as the 'source of all enlightened expediency'.⁵⁴ Just as Burke battled against the egalitarian and fraternal principles of the French Revolution, so Randolph resisted the same impulses in the new America that was being formed. Randolph understood, as did Burke, that a good constitution was rooted in 'custom and prescription', which were superior to positive law. The American Revolution was 'essentially a struggle for the preservation of old American ways' among which were 'an agrarian society of freeholders'. In Kirk's treatment, Randolph, the 'Old Republican', emerges as a strict constructionist of the Constitution and an advocate of states rights. Both of those positions led him, Kirk maintains, to support slavery even though he never 'wavered in his hatred of the slave trade and never bought or sold slaves' no matter how much he needed money. When he lay dying, Randolph freed his slaves and gave them land in Ohio. Kirk's report about their subsequent abuse and expulsion from their lands, even though they lived in an abolitionist state, implies that the newly freed people were better off as slaves under Randolph's paternalistic care.⁵⁵

Randolph's 'disposition to preserve' the 'ancient values of the society' were the mark of a 'truly conservative statesman'. Kirk's test for what was worth preserving was that it was pre-modern, pre-industrial, and measured by standards that were neither progressive nor innovative. The older an institution, habit, custom, or practice the better, so long as there was no taint of political corruption, special privilege, or the legislative protection of special interests. One of Kirk's deepest convictions, that 'change is not reform', was taken from a speech by Randolph at the Virginia Convention of 1829. Kirk found Randolph's greatest influence in the South through disciples such as John Calhoun. In the 'perspective of history, northern abstract humanism and northern industrial appetites' were more guilty 'of contempt for compromise and concession', Kirk contended, than Southerners like Randolph and Calhoun. The Civil War, in common with the

American Revolution, had conservative consequences because it demonstrated that the power of government is limited, that social institutions cannot be altered automatically by legislation, and that when government acts against 'great interests and classes, it must be prepared to employ military force' because men will resist. The North's refusal to listen to Randolph and Calhoun was responsible not only for the consequent debacle in the North and South but for 'much of the present sullen tone of American society'.⁵⁶

Randolph was essentially a surrogate for Kirk's own opinions about politics, society, culture, ethics, individualism, the state, common sense, the role of religion, and the preservation of pre-modern traditions and practices. For the rest of his long, prolific, and politically engaged life, Kirk never wavered from the themes introduced in Randolph: reliance upon custom, convention, continuity, and ancient usage; prudence; a suspicion of uniformity; and a recognition of the frailty of human nature. Adherence to those principles and, above all, to the notion of an unknowable providential dispensation, led him to advocate policies in which freedom depended upon property monitored paternalistically within voluntary communities where both power and human passion were curtailed. He did discover new targets for criticism that included libertarians and other errant conservatives, as well as particular political and religious leaders, policy proposals, and cultural and moral standards, but his complaints and remedies remained the same as those debuting in his first book. Viereck had also laid out his future agenda in his first publication in the *Atlantic Monthly* and, like Kirk, he repeated his opinions consistently. The difference between them was that Viereck was willing to moderate and change by incorporating liberal and even progressive views. Viereck's definition of conservatism evolved; Kirk's was cast in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The most successful, influential, and enduring of Kirk's books, *The Conservative Mind. From Burke to Santayana* (1953), was an ambitious attempt to explain the essence of conservatism to an educated American public. Kirk intended the book to be an 'intellectual history, with considerable reference to institutions and political parties' from the mid-eighteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, and 'a lesson in normative politics, historically considered, expounding and criticizing the literature of the subject'.⁵⁷ Just as *John Randolph* had its origins as a requirement for an academic degree, so the *Conservative Mind* began as a dissertation topic on Burke for St Andrews.⁵⁸ Based entirely on wide, if idiosyncratic, reading, it included those British and American thinkers who met Kirk's standards for representing the conservative pantheon. John and John Quincy Adams, Walter Scott, Coleridge, Randolph, Calhoun, Fenimore Cooper, Tocqueville, Hawthorne, Orestes Brownson, Lowell, John Henry Newman, Disraeli, Sir Henry Maine, Lecky, W. H. Malloch, Irving Babbitt, and Santayana all appear, but Burke was the central figure as he had been in *John Randolph*. When Kirk reissued a third revised edition in 1960, he changed the subtitle to 'From Burke to Elliot', and amended and extended the last chapter to include an appreciation

of Robert Frost and especially of T. S. Elliot. All of Kirk's ideas are repeated and elaborated in its 450 pages, and from then to 1994 those ideas were recycled in everything that he wrote.

In *The Conservative Mind*, Kirk's analysis concentrates on those British and American thinkers 'in the line of Burke' who represented the 'true school of conservative principle'. Turning to Hearnshaw, Kirk abridged the British historian's conservative principles to provide a list that were to be permanently associated with his American heir. The first introduced Kirk's faith in a providential order, a 'divine intent' that governed society by relying upon conscience and the transformation of political problems into moral ones. The second was an aesthetic and emotional benefit provided by an enjoyment of the mysteries and varieties perpetuated by living a traditional life. That attraction to the unknown led him to write his fantastic fiction.⁵⁹

Kirk's third conservative principle, derived from Hearnshaw, tied traditional social and economic hierarchies to moral values by asserting that a civilized society required 'orders and classes' because the only equality possible was moral equality.⁶⁰ The kinds of equality offered by communism were 'unjust' to Kirk, who rejected arguments for both equality of opportunity and equality of conditions. Just before he died, in 1994, 'The Injustice of Equality', the last of his lectures to the Heritage Foundation, maintained that people were fundamentally unequal because of their educational, social, and economic backgrounds, which were determined by their family inheritance. Kirk treated inequality as a failure of will and genetics rather than as an unfortunate result of unfavourable circumstances.⁶¹ Kirk attributed his own success to intelligence, will, family, committed work, self-discipline, trust in Providence, and the ability to discriminate among competing beliefs. Those without a combination of tradition, personal heritage, and perseverance could never aspire to equality with those who had those advantages. In that judgement he was much closer to the inter-war British conservative historians than to their post-war successors.

The fourth principle defended property by equating it with freedom, and the fifth found tradition and prejudice to be necessary checks on anarchic human nature. The sixth reiterated a major argument of *John Randolph of Roanoke*: legislation with reformist intent was misguided and not a legitimate function of government. Change and reform were not identical. Providence was the proper instrument responsible for determining the quality, purposes, and processes of change. The test for the statesman was his recognition of the 'real tendency of Providential social forces', a belief similar to Butterfield's reliance on the unknowable workings of Providence.⁶²

Throughout the rest of his career, Kirk would return to this condensation of the main principles of conservatism, although he was always careful to say that conservatism was an attitude 'sustained by a body of sentiments' and not a 'system of ideological dogmata'. While he claimed to alter those principles in various editions of *The Conservative Mind* and in his anthology, *The*

Portable Conservative Reader, they remained essentially the same. In 1982 he reiterated his fundamental beliefs as: an enduring moral order; custom, convention, and continuity; the principle of prescription or immemorial usage; prudence; variety as opposed to uniformity; and the imperfectability of human beings. Then, in 1986, he added four more that had already appeared in his earlier work: the inseparability of freedom and property; voluntary community as opposed to involuntary collectivism; restraint of both power and human passion; and the recognition and reconciliation of both permanence and change.⁶³ These principles were crucial to Kirk because they were 'ideas'. One of his 'Ten Exemplary Conservatives', was the Southern agrarian historian Richard Weaver, whose *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948) enormously influenced Kirk when it was published because of its insistence that intellect matters, and because of its rebellion against prevailing liberalism. He still admired it in 1986.⁶⁴

The Conservative Mind was treated as a major publishing event by leading newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals. The president of Kenyon College, Gordon Chalmers, reviewed it in the *New York Times Book Review* in the spring of 1953 and August Heckscher discussed it in the *Herald-Tribune*. Other reviews appeared by Harrison Smith in the *Saturday Review*, John Chamberlain in the *Chicago Tribune*, and William Henry Chamberlain in the *Wall Street Journal*. There was a discussion in *Fortune*, and on 6 July 1953, *Time* used its entire book review section for an analysis. In more scholarly journals, there were analyses by John Crowe Ransom in the *Kenyon Review*, Brainard Cheney in the *Sewanee Review*, and Clinton Rossiter in the *American Political Science Review*. While the left-wing *Partisan Review* provided a critical reading, Kirk described it as opposed but respectful.⁶⁵ T. S. Elliot brought out a London edition, published by Faber, which was reviewed by Michael Oakeshott in *The Spectator*. In the mid-1950s, when Oakeshott had not yet become a leading intellectual spokesman for conservative thought in Britain, he used this review to make his own ideas clear as well as to summarize, praise, and criticize Kirk. Oakeshott approved of Kirk's understanding that conservatism was a 'disposition' and of his demonstration that conservatism had a rich and intelligent history, but he disapproved of Kirk's ahistorical emphasis on Burke, who belonged to a long lineage of ideas that Kirk ignored. Oakeshott also objected to Kirk's identification of conservatism with speculative, 'redundant' beliefs such as faith in a 'Providential order'.⁶⁶

What was redundant to Oakeshott was central to Kirk, who was convinced that human nature and history were manifestations of Divine purpose. A deep religious commitment underlay the principles that he adapted from Burke and ascribed to Randolph and others. It is hardly surprising that Kirk's home was called 'Piety Hill', embodying his reverence for religion and the elevated view that he believed right thinking intellectuals should hold. For Kirk, whenever change proved to be beneficent, it revealed a process independent of conscious human

behaviour. Free will meant essentially freedom to be wrong and maleficent. Even though Kirk did not begin with Butterfield's Augustinian predisposition to perceive the world as irremediably tragic, the similarity of their views about human nature and human freedom are very striking. The 'object of human existence', Kirk believed, was 'to know God and enjoy Him forever'.⁶⁷ After he had lived forty-five celibate years, in 1964 Kirk married Annette Kourtemanche, an ardently conservative Catholic, and converted to Catholicism.⁶⁸ Attracted to Catholicism even before he met his wife, he had written for Catholic publications and he continued to work steadfastly for traditional Catholicism, which represented the permanent values he held.⁶⁹ Looking back upon his life just before he died, Kirk recalled that in the mid-1950s he began to act according to the Christian understanding of original sin and the intense moral struggle that entailed and, as Cardinal Newman had predicted, belief began to follow.⁷⁰ When Kirk wrote *The American Cause* in 1957, he emphasized the connection between Christian morality and American life, and testified to a conviction that 'God's love rules the world', and that the only happiness we can hope to find 'comes from doing God's will'.⁷¹ When Kirk finished his study of conservative thought in Britain and America, he found a sixty-five year continuity in which religious sanction played an essential role.

For Kirk, 'religious truth' was always the 'higher wisdom'. Although 'intellectual' implied 'defecated rationality, the exaltation of pure logic, presumptuous human reason unassisted by religious humility and traditional wisdom, above veneration and conscience', Kirk relied upon both intellect and a belief in providential direction. History, he argued, depended upon those who perceived providential purpose and acted upon that perception.⁷² Unlike Butterfield, Boorstin, and Berthoff, both Kirk and Viereck saw ideas as aggressive and defensive weapons in political and cultural warfare. The greatest impact upon political life, for them, was made by men of ideas who recognized a necessary subjection to traditions, rules, and practices. Leaders of political movements and parties had less influence because they were more committed to immediate activity than to considered thought. Among those weapons, for both men, the discipline of religious tradition was essential because human nature was both capricious and corrupt. Kirk believed further that beyond the weaknesses of human nature, we were impotent before the 'Divine mystery' of a moral order that claimed our obedience.⁷³

Kirk did not see thought as a response to particular political, economic, or social crises. Instead, as Oakeshott had observed critically, those ideas that he associated with Burke became a template of appropriate thinking universally applicable to all times and places. In 1967, he recapitulated much of the content of *The Conservative Mind* in *Edmund Burke. A Genius Reconsidered*, written for the conservative Arlington House 'Architects of Freedom Series'. A brief bibliographic essay refers the reader to the second chapter in *The Conservative Mind* for 'a more

coherent examination of Burke's political philosophy'.⁷⁴ That chapter is especially revealing of the origins and tendencies, as well as the contents, of Kirk's mind because his explanation and justification of Burke's beliefs are equally an affirmative confession of his own conservative impulses and theories. Kirk's emphases promoted newly conservative readings of Burke, a growing enterprise from the late 1950s. Conservative appropriations were evident in the work of Peter Stanlis; in a *Burke Newsletter*, which Stanlis edited for thirteen years from its founding in 1959; and in biographies by Carl Cone and Charles Parkin. Since then, Burke has undergone a series of reappropriations in both Britain and America, the most recent being the two-volume study of a theist Burke by P. F. Lock.⁷⁵

Reason played an important, but mitigated, part in Kirk's scheme to allow those changes that did not threaten the 'old and permanent things', which he preferred on both moral and aesthetic grounds. Kirk deeply distrusted the 'lust' for change. He was willing to adjust the older order through reason so long as the adjusters recognized their own fallibility and behaved with appropriate reverence towards the past. If there was a conflict between reason and tradition, reason had to defer to tradition, a composite of prejudice and intuitive folk wisdom, custom, the accumulation of laws, and common experience. Although longing for an idealized past, Kirk was a forward-looking early environmentalist, who made care for the earth's natural and irreplaceable resources part of a conservative agenda. Our place in nature and the benefits that it brought to us, in common with all our other experiences, were taught both by history and by the restraining and civilizing forces of 'myth, ritual, useage, instinct, prejudice'.⁷⁶ Both Kirk and Viereck insisted upon the essential importance to individuals and society of natural and humanly created beauty, imagination, literature, and especially poetry. Butterfield, too, valued imaginative literature and the splendour of nature, art, and especially music, as sources of inspiration and solace.

In traditional political thought, the innocence or fundamental role of 'nature' and its requirements were often opposed to the artificial or arbitrary 'state'. While Kirk worried about any exercise of power, including that of the state, he ridiculed the idea of a 'natural' man who could begin his social, cultural, and political life anew with a *tabula rasa* written upon only by natural rights arising from a hypothetical state of nature. Everyone in the real world that mattered to Kirk, no matter what their status or place, was governed by traditional order, a cultural inheritance, and a Divine purpose that gave their life meaning and purpose. The great historical achievement of American political philosophy, in Kirk's reading, was the Constitutional restraint of power through checks and balances in government together with the dispersion of authority away from the centre.⁷⁷ Disapproving of governmental intrusion, as did Viereck and the libertarians, he still expected the state to promote security of labour and property, civilized institutions, an orderly society, and equal justice. But Kirk repudiated 'libertarians', again in keeping with Viereck, because their only kinship to

conservatism appeared to be their interest in private property. In 1952, he worried that 'libertarian nonsense' about conciliation with the Soviet Union, sweeping away the state, and relying entirely on 'enlightened self-interest' to 'cure all the ills to which flesh was heir' might 'make inroads upon conservative common sense'.⁷⁸

When certain alterations in society become irresistible, Kirk was willing, reluctantly, to amend older traditions. Together with Viereck and Butterfield, Kirk appreciated the necessity of compromise. 'Conservatism never is more admirable', he wrote in reverence to Burke's establishment of the principle, 'than when it accepts changes that it disapproves, with good grace, for the sake of a general conciliation'.⁷⁹ Providence acted through the human medium of trial and error. As part of that process, Kirk invoked notions of a 'collective mind' influential in twentieth-century psychology. He saw a collective mind as part of the natural order in society that protected men against their own irresponsible passions. Although people were weak and foolish, especially without appropriate leaders and institutions, they were not 'mere creatures of appetite' nor instinctually selfish.⁸⁰ In common with his fellow conservatives, Kirk struggled to find the acceptable balance between the individual and society. From Presidents Adams and Madison to Senators Byrd and Taft, the consolidation of power has been 'detested'. Instead, he found the balance that he sought in the Federal Constitution and state constitutions and in those institutions and habits which guarantee 'private property, liberty under law, freedom of worship, a just distribution of political power, and a respect for individual personality'. But in the last analysis—and this is the argument that allowed Kirk to support the House Un-American Activities Committee and the McCarthy proceedings—an ordered society has the right 'to protect its own existence' that 'transcends the right of individuals to follow their own humor or to tamper with existing institutions' as they see fit. In return, the people have the right to expect their leaders to obey the 'established laws of the land' and not preach or act subversively so that 'liberty of expression shall not be allowed to degenerate into license'.⁸¹

Kirk and Viereck are each enjoying a renaissance among disparate conservative groups in the twenty-first century, as the American controversy over the real meaning of conservatism grows even more fractious.⁸² The rediscovery of their work, due both to liberals and conservatives, testifies to the continuing and increasingly futile attempts since the 1940s to arrive at a consensual definition of conservatism. Liberal journalists such as Tom Reiss, writing in the *New Yorker* on 10 October 2005, used Viereck, 'the first conservative', to discredit the allegedly fraudulent conservatism practised by the George W. Bush administration. Jonah Goldberg and Ramesh Ponnuru in the *National Review*, 11 September 2006, responded by claiming the unanimity of conservatism.⁸³ None of these journalists, pleading very different political agendas, was prepared to admit that there never was any consistent, unchallenged conservative interpretation of thought, politics,

policies, and values. In Jonathan Schoenwald's recent *A Time for Choosing. The Rise of Modern American Conservatism*, he never mentions Viereck and Jeffrey Hart's *The Making of the American Conservative Mind*, only alludes to him tangentially.⁸⁴ But both Schoenwald and Hart treat Kirk as a major figure in the development of American conservatism. Schoenwald discusses Kirk's intrinsic and seminal significance at length to report that when 'the groundbreaking' *Conservative Mind* appeared in 1953 it was 'soon cited by all major American conservatives as one of the most influential books in their lives'. The book affected 'generations of conservatives' because Kirk demonstrated that it was possible to be an intellectual 'while still acting and thinking constructively about practical politics'. In 1994, George Nash expressed a very similar view.⁸⁵ In Peter Novick's magisterial study of American historiography, he examines Boorstin's conservatism, but Berthoff, Viereck, and Kirk are never mentioned. It is not surprising that Berthoff was omitted because he was never a major figure in American historiography, as was Boorstin. Viereck and Kirk are absent because Novick's book is about the relationship of the historical profession to professed canons of objectivity and the historical writing of both men, in common with everything else that they did, proudly proclaimed their polemical and committed conservatism. Boorstin, too, admitted that he was a conservative, but he believed that his historical work met professional standards and those colleagues who awarded him so many prizes agreed. All four of the conservative historians were hardly anomalies within their profession in their appropriation of history to battle against the political and cultural tendencies of their times. What set Viereck and Kirk apart from Boorstin and Berthoff was their absolute conviction that the purpose of studying and writing history was to reveal fundamental, deeply conservative truths about human nature, human behaviour, social institutions, and religious imperatives.

NOTES

1. Edward A. Weeks succeeded Ellery Sedgwick as editor in 1938. While Sedgwick had published a variety of opinions, he was himself conservative.
2. Charles Dunn and David Woodward, *American Conservatism from Burke to Bush. An Introduction* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991), 24, 30, 31.
3. Marie Henault, *Peter Viereck* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), 92, 105.
4. Stevenson, whose grandfather was Vice-president of the United States under Grover Cleveland, 1893–97, was born in Los Angeles, became governor of Illinois, 1949–53, and twice ran unsuccessfully for President in 1952 and 1956 against Dwight Eisenhower. He served as ambassador to the United Nations during the Kennedy administration. Kirk's political influence is discussed in Lee Edwards, 'Guardian of the Permanent Things. An Appreciation of Russell Kirk', *The World & I*, 9 (October 1994), 416. Edwards, senior editor for *Current Issues of the World & I*,

was Kirk's friend and colleague for thirty years. Established in 1986, this monthly magazine was affiliated with the *Washington Times* and, until 2004, with Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.

5. George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 58.
6. See Jeffrey Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind*, 344; and 'American Conservatism. The Burke Habit', *WSJ*, 27 December 2005, A20.
7. Kirk, *The Sword of Imagination: Memoirs of a Half-century of Literary Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. c.1995), 3. This collection of autobiographical vignettes is written in the third person. Many of them appeared in his earlier *Confessions of a Bohemian Tory. Episodes and Reflections of a Vagrant Career* (New York: Fleet Pub. Corp., 1963). The shorter essays in this book were reprinted from his syndicated 'To the Point' column that appeared in about a hundred American newspapers. Other essays were reprinted from journals, including *Commonweal*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Voice of St. Jude*.
8. The Heritage Foundation website contains the lectures that Kirk gave between 1986 and 1994. The web address is: www.heritage.org
9. See the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal website: www.kirkcenter.org/kirkbooks.html
10. Kendall had been William F. Buckley, Jr.'s teacher at Yale and he joined Buckley in founding the *National Review*, where he became a senior editor. Kendall also disapproved of Clinton Rossiter, who made people feel shame if they were 'not both conservative and Liberal'. Quoted in Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, 123.
11. Kirk, 'Conformity and Legislative Committees', *Confluence*, 3 (September 1954), esp. 345.
12. Kirk, *Academic Freedom. An Essay in Definition* (Chicago: H. Regnery & Co., 1955), 135.
13. Quoted by Nash from an interview with Kirk on 21 April 1971, in Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 163.
14. Viereck, 'The Revolt Against the Elite' (1955), in Daniel Bell (ed.), *The Radical Right. The New American Right Expanded and Updated* (New York: Archon Books, 1964), 162.
15. Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, n. 20. Schlesinger argues that when the Republicans rejected Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, they also rejected 'responsible conservatism', 23.
16. Viereck, *The Shame and the Glory of the Intellectuals. Babbit Jr. vs. the Rediscovery of Values* (Boston, 1953, 1965), 203 n.1. The *Sewanee Review*, founded in 1892, is the oldest American literary and critical quarterly in continuous publication.
17. Viereck, 'The Philosophical "New Conservatism"' (1962), *The Radical Right*, 195, 188.
18. Kirk, *Eliot and his Age. T. S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1971), 209. See, too, the discussion of Richard

- Weaver, Donald Davidson, and Flannery O'Connor, in *The Sword of Imagination*, 172–84.
19. Kirk, *The Sword of Imagination*, 2.
 20. Peter Viereck, 'But—I'm a Conservative!', the *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1940, PDF, 5. The URL for this article is <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/194004/peter-viereck>
 21. Viereck, *Dream and Responsibility. Four Test Cases in the Tension between Poetry and Society* (University Press of Washington, DC, 1953), 14.
 22. Viereck, 'But—I'm a Conservative!', 5–6.
 23. *Ibid.*, 6. As evidence of liberal support for the Soviet Union he cited a manifesto that appeared in *The Nation* on 26 August 1939, signed by 400 of 'liberalism's Social Register' three days after the Nazi–Soviet Pact was signed on 23 August, 1.
 24. Viereck, 'But—I'm a Conservative!', 2, 3, 4, 6.
 25. For a discussion of Oxford's efforts in adult education from the early 1870s to 1914, see Anne Ockwell and Harold Pollins, "'Extension" in all its Forms', in M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: VII: Nineteenth-century Oxford*, Part 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For the early history of Ruskin College to 1903, 175–180; and for a complete history of the College, H. Pollens, *The History of Ruskin College* (Oxford: Ruskin College, 1984). See, too, Mary Ritter Beard, *The Making of Charles Beard. An Interpretation* (New York: Exposition Press, 1955). Mary Beard wrote this memoir 27 years after her husband's death in 1928 and her memory is sometimes inaccurate.
 26. For Balliol, see John Prest, 'Balliol, for example', *History of the University of Oxford*, VII, Part 2; and Reba Soffer, *Discipline and Power*; for Green, M. Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and his Age* (London, 1964).
 27. Viereck, *Metapolitics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind. Being a Revised and Enlarged Edition . . . with a new Prefatory essay on the Bonn Republic, based on the Author's current travels in Germany, up-to-date supplements on Alfred Rosenberg and on bibliography, and a new appendix of unpublished Thomas Mann material* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), 5. This quote appeared in the original version of 1941.
 28. Viereck, *Metapolitics*, 19, 4. These sections are part of the 1941 text.
 29. Viereck, 'New Survey for the 1960s', *Metapolitics*, pp. ii, i. In 1965, the 1961 edn. was extended to include '1965 material' and in 2003, as part of Transactions revival of Viereck's books, the 1965 edn. was republished and expanded. Henault says that Viereck was revising the book as early as 1952, *Peter Viereck*, 30. When it was originally published in 1941, Viereck said that he had 're-edited' it that year.
 30. Viereck, 'Author's Note for the 1962 Edition', *Conservatism Revisited. The Revolt Against Ideology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 59. *The Revolt against Revolt, 1815–1949* was the original subtitle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949) In 1962, Viereck reissued the book with the Free Press with a new subtitle and an essay, 'The New Conservatism—What Went Wrong?' That edition was reprinted (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978).
 31. Claes G. Ryn, 'Peter Viereck and Conservatism', in *Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt Against Ideology* (New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Publishers, 2005), 4, 5. A

- brief essay, 'Conservatism', written in 1974, was appended to the 2005 issue. Ryn's discussion of Viereck tends to be more about Ryn's thought than about Viereck's. See Ryn's *America the Virtuous: The Crisis of Democracy and the Quest for Empire* (2003), *The New Jacobinism: Can Democracy Survive?* (1991), *Democracy and the Ethical Life: A Philosophy of Politics and Community* (1990), and *Will, Imagination and Reason: Irving Babbitt and the Problem of Reality* (1987).
32. Viereck, *Conservatism: From John Adams to Churchill* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1956). This volume was part of Van Nostrand's Anvil series edited by Louis Snyder, Professor of History at the City University of New York, who, in 1932, had written *Hitlerism, the Iron Fist in Germany*, a prescient prediction of the rise of Hitler, the Nazi–Mussolini alliance, and the attack on Jews. In Viereck, Snyder found a kindred spirit who had also warned against German intentions in his *Metapolitics*.
 33. *Conservatism: From John Adams to Churchill*, 15–17, 18–24.
 34. *Ibid.*, 88.
 35. Viereck, *The Shame and the Glory of the Intellectuals. Babbitt Jr. vs. the Rediscovery of Values* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), 279. Irving Babbitt, a teacher at Harvard and the founder of the 'New Humanism' denounced Rousseauian sentimentality, democracy, and utopianism, as well as modernism to advocate instead classical values of rationalism and ethical conservatism. Sinclair Lewis ridiculed Irving Babbitt in his 1922 novel of that name and 'Babbitt' came to mean a conforming philistine. When Viereck wrote *Shame and Glory*, he used that stereotype as the centre of his book, even though he found Babbitt's distinction between direct and indirect democracy useful. Although Viereck does not discuss Irving Babbitt in his lengthy introductory essay to *Conservatism, From John Adams to Churchill*, he does include a selection from Babbitt's *Democracy and Leadership* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), 179–80. Kirk was influenced by Babbitt and discussed him extensively, especially in the *Conservative Mind* and in his anthology. Boorstin quoted Babbitt approvingly in *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 231.
 36. *The Shame and the Glory of the Intellectuals* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1965), new Preface, p. xii, and new concluding chapter, 310–11. Transaction Publishers reprinted the book in 2007.
 37. Viereck, *The Unadjusted Man. A New Hero for Americans. Reflections on the Distinction between Conforming and Conserving* (New York, Beacon Press, 1956), 25, 17–18, 248–9.
 38. The TLS essay is reprinted in Viereck, *Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt Against Ideology* (2005), 54, 51, 55–7. The quotes above are from 54–5.
 39. Arthur Bryant's *The Spirit of Conservatism* (1929); F. J. C. Hearnshaw's *Conservatism in England* (1933); and Daniel Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics* (1953) were the books that Viereck selected. 'Appendix B: Conservatism' (1974), *Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt Against Ideology* (2005), 204–5.
 40. For a discussion of the history of intellectual history in both the U.S. and Britain, see Part I.

41. Daniel Bell (ed.), *The New American Right* (1955); The 1962 edn. was reprinted with a new Introduction by David Plotke and an Afterword by Bell in 2002 as part of Transaction Publishers' project to republish Viereck.
42. Viereck, 'The Revolt Against the Elite', *The New American Right*, 165,164. The other contributors for both 1955 and 1962 were Bell, 'Interpretations of American Politics', (1955) and 'The Dispossessed' (1962); Richard Hofstadter, 'The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt' (1955) and 'Pseudo-Conservatism Revisited: A Postscript' (1962); David Reisman and Nathan Glazer, 'The Intellectuals and the Discontented Classes' (1955) and, in 1962, Reisman alone, 'The Intellectuals and the Discontented Classes: Some Further Reflections'; Talcott Parsons, 'Social Strains in America' (1955) and 'Social Strains in America: A Postscript' (1962); and Seymour Martin Lipset, 'The Sources of the "Radical Right"' (1955) and 'Three Decades of the Radical Right: Coughlinites, McCarthyites, and Birchers' (1962). The book has gone through four printings, in 1955, 1963, 1964, and 2000. The latter three reprinted the 1955 essays.
43. Viereck, 'The Revolt Against the Elite', 162, 179, 162, 177–8.
44. Viereck, 'The Philosophical "New Conservatism"', *The Radical Right*, 186, 188–91, 194.
45. Jeffrey Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind*, 344. In addition to his connection with the *National Review*, Hart is Professor of English Emeritus at Dartmouth.
46. Jeffrey Hart, 'American Conservatism. The Burke Habit'. This essay was still another of the *WSJ*'s continuing, if unsuccessful, series about conservatism that contained as many different interpretations as there were interpreters. That series included Roger Scruton, 'A Question of Temperament', 3 December 2002, in which the British Conservative attempted to explain American conservatism to Americans by pointing out, with misguided envy, that while British conservatism has been 'suspicious of ideas', the influence of T. S. Elliot, an American in Britain, has been continued by 'his disciple, Russell Kirk, who made clear to a whole generation that conservatism is not an economic but a cultural outlook'. Other attempts in the *WSJ* to define conservatism were: Francis Fukuyama, 'Beyond our Shores', 24 December 2002; Max Boot, 'What the Heck is a "Neocon"?', 30 December 2002; James Q. Wilson, 'The Family Way', 7 January 2003; Christopher Hitchens, 'A View from the Left', 13 January 2003; Robert H. Bork, 'The Soul of the Law', 20 January 2003; Stephen Goldsmith, 'The "Compassionate" Factor', 29 January 2003; Susan Lee, 'Sex, Drugs and Rock "n" Roll', 12 February 2003, which prompted six letters to the editor on 21 February 2003, offering six readings of the 'libertarian' element in conservatism that Lee had discussed; Myron Magnet, 'The War on the War on Poverty', 5 February 2005, emphasizing what Magnet, the editor of the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*, had said in the *WSJ* on 5 February 1999 in 'What is Compassionate Conservatism', which echoes both Boorstin and Berthoff in its approving discussion of immigrants who 'universally came seeking opportunity to work' and who 'dreamed of becoming part of the American community'; and, Michael Barone, 'The Presidents', 3 March 2005. Barone is a conservative political commentator, a senior writer for *the U.S. News and World Report*, and the son of immigrants.

47. Roger Scruton (ed.), *Conservative Texts: An Anthology* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 164. Scruton included 23 texts but found only 4 Americans. In addition to Kirk, he listed Max Eastman (1883–1969) who ‘began as an ardent radical on the left’ to describe himself as a conservative by 1956, 76. The remaining 2 Americans were John Courtney Murray (1904–67), Jesuit priest and Professor of Theology at Woodstock College, and Robert Nozick (1938–), the American philosopher who attempted to repudiate John Rawls’ *Theories of Justice* (1971).
48. W. Wesley McDonald, *Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 215; Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America. The Thankless Persuasion* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 222.
49. Kirk, *Sword of Imagination*, 1, 95, and *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice, Essays of a Social Critic* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1956).
50. That decision was taken at a two-day meeting in Palm Beach, Florida to deal with the John Birch Society problem and it was attended by Kirk, Buckley, Stephen Shadegg, William Barody, and John Hall. Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing. The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 137.
51. When President Nixon asked Kirk what one book he should read, Kirk responded with T. S. Elliot’s *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948), recalled by Kirk in *Ten Conservative Books*, lecture for the Heritage Foundation, 11 September, 1986 and published as part of ‘The Heritage Lectures’, 7. The other nine books that the Heritage Lecture recommended were: Burke *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; Orestes Brownson, *The American Republic*; James Fitzjames Stephens, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*; W. H. Mallock, *Is Life Worth Living?*; Irving Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*; Donald Davidson, *The Attack on Leviathan*; and Wilhelm Ropke, *The Social Crisis of Our Times*.
52. See Kirk’s posthumous website: www.kirkcenter.org/kirkbio.html. The Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters was given to that author who best stressed social honour and virtue. Other winners include Shelby Foote, Eugene Genovese, Robert Nisbet, and Robert Conquest. The Ingersoll Foundation, the sponsor of the Weaver Award, was the philanthropic arm of the Ingersoll Milling Machine Company of Rockford, Ill.
53. Kirk, *John Randolph of Roanoke, A Study in American Politics* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1964), 43, where he calls on Hearnshaw to repudiate social contract theory, or 185, where he cites Feiling’s comparison of Canning to Burke to explain Randolph’s political beliefs. The 1964 edn. is essentially the same as the 1951 edn. except for the addition of an appendix containing Randolph’s speeches and letters. In *The Conservative Mind. From Burke to Elliot*, 3rd edn. rev. (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1960), originally subtitled: *From Burke to Santayana* in the 1953 edn., he again cited Hearnshaw because he wrote the earliest 20th-century exposition of conservatism that Kirk found acceptable and, perhaps, because Hearnshaw was a historian of ideas as was Kirk, 1, 7. (All subsequent quotes from the *Conservative Mind* are from the 1960 edn.)
54. *Conservative Mind*, 81, 120.

55. Kirk, *John Randolph of Roanoke*. 2, 26–8, 42, 67–8. Kirk saw Randolph as the great defender of the virtues of the agricultural life, 131, 157.
56. *Ibid.*, 159–8, 189–90. Chapter 7 is called ‘Change is not Reform’.
57. Kirk, *Sword of Imagination*, 146–7.
58. *Ibid.*, 87–8.
59. Kirk, *A Creature of the Twilight: His Memorials. Being some Account of Episodes in the Career of His Excellency Manfred Arcane, Minister without Portfolio to the Hereditary President of the Commonwealth of Hamnegri, and de facto Field Commander of the Armies of that August Prince* (New York, 1966); *Old House of Fear* (Roslyn, NY: Published for the Detective Book Club by Walter J. Black, 1961); *Lord of the Hollow Dark* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979); *Watchers at the Strait Gate: Mystical Tales* (Sauk City, Wis.: Arkham House Publishers, 1984); *The Princess of all Lands* (Sauk City, Wis.: Arkham House Publishers, 1979); and *The Surly Sullen Bell; Ten Stories and Sketches, Uncanny or Uncomfortable, with a Note on the Ghostly Tale* (New York: Fleet, 1962).
60. *Conservative Mind*, 7, 38
61. Kirk, ‘The Injustice of Equality’ (Heritage Foundation, 1994), lecture delivered 15 October 1993.
62. *Conservative Mind*, 8.
63. *The Portable Conservative Reader*, with Introduction and Notes by Russell Kirk (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. xv–xviii; Kirk, *Ten Conservative Principles* (The Heritage Foundation, 1987), lecture delivered 20 March 1986, 1–7.
64. Kirk, *Ten Exemplary Conservatives* (The Heritage Foundation, 1956), 8.
65. Kirk, *Sword of Imagination*, 150.
66. Review of Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), in *The Spectator*, 193 (1954), 472, 474.
67. Kirk, ‘The Sacrament of Marriage’, *Confessions of a Bohemian Tory*, 222.
68. In ‘Reflections of a Gothic Mind’, the Introduction to the *Confessions*, Kirk, then 44, describes himself as ‘always celibate and generally cheerful’, 3.
69. Kirk, *Sword of Imagination*, 423–32.
70. *Ibid.*, 239.
71. Kirk, *The American Cause* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1957), 35.
72. Kirk, *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice*, 3.
73. *Conservative Mind*, 34.
74. Kirk, *Edmund Burke. A Genius Reconsidered* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1967), 242. The book has only three references to three letters by Burke in archival collections and is based almost entirely on secondary sources.
75. See esp. Peter J. Stanlis, *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1958). Kirk and Stanlis were close friends, and Kirk wrote a Foreword to this book. See, too, Carl B. Cone, *Burke and the Nature of Politics*, 2 vols. (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1957–64); Charles

W. Parkin, *The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought, an Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); F. P. Lock *Edmund Burke*, vols. I and II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

76. *Conservative Mind*, 49–51, 43.
77. Kirk, *A Program for Conservatives* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1954), 257.
78. *Sword of Imagination*, 144–5.
79. *Conservative Mind*, 52.
80. *Ibid.*, 102.
81. Kirk, *Program for Conservatives*, 258, 277–8.
82. Since 2003 Transaction Publishers (Rutgers University), the same publishers who issued a new edition of Daniel Bell's *The Radical Right* (2002), have been reissuing Viereck's books.
83. Tom Reiss, 'The First Conservative. How Peter Viereck Inspired—and Lost—a Movement', the *New Yorker*, 10 October 2005; Jonah Goldberg and Ramesh Ponnuru, 'The Long Goodbye—Conservatism's perpetual decline', *National Review*, 11 September 2006. For the earliest criticism of Viereck by competing conservatives, see Frank Meyer, *National Review*, 11 August, 1956, repr. in Meyer, *The Conservative Mainstream* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969), 67–70.
84. Hart, *The Making of the American Conservative Mind*, 42, discusses Frank Meyer's attack on Kirk and Viereck as a rival to Kirk.
85. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing. The Rise of Modern American Conservatism*, 19; George H. Nash, 'The Conservative Mind in America', *Intercollegiate Review* 30:1 (Fall 1994), 27.

9

Conservatism and Exceptionalism

While Viereck and Kirk vied for the role of dominant conservative pundit, Boorstin and Berthoff were better known for their professional and academic identities, established by their historical research, writing, and teaching. Boorstin, unique among the American conservative historians for his recognition as a pre-eminent scholar, was the most important historian among them. Additionally, he had a diverse and loyal reading public, and he was celebrated by powerful politicians such as the right-wing Senator Ted Stevens and liberal media pundits such as Jim Lehrer. Boorstin's appointment as Librarian of Congress was both a public recognition and a reward. Although not a political polemicist, he shared with Kirk, Viereck, and Berthoff a deep revulsion against newer directions in contemporary American history that he saw as regrettable departures from the best of American traditions. Boorstin's history of America, criticized by other historians for its sins of omission, provided him with the exemplary standards against which he measured the present and found it wanting. Boorstin was comparable to Bryant in the extensive audience who read his histories. As Bryant had done in England for English history, Boorstin presented a large, educated, reading American public with a reassuring American history from his conservative, consensus point of view. First, at the University of Chicago, and then as the activist Librarian of Congress, he used conservative ideals combatively to achieve those values he understood as uniquely American. Berthoff, a student of immigration who taught most of his life at Washington University in St. Louis, had limited influence among American social historians, but he, too, wrote about special American circumstances and attracted wider professional attention in the 1960s and 1970s by aggressively and singularly described himself as a 'conservative historian'.¹ Although Boorstin, like Butterfield, never promoted himself pugnaciously as a 'conservative', fundamental beliefs about human nature, society, and institutions placed both men unequivocally in the conservative camp.

While British conservatives, including historians, emphasized liberty, with its connotations of a political meritocracy guiding the inchoate, Boorstin and Berthoff were committed to a democratic society characterized by equal opportunity for education and social and economic mobility, although not for claims to essential equality. That commitment reflected the given historicity of a vast and heterogeneous geography, massive waves of immigration that populated those

spacious lands, and social and economic incentives that made success possible. Although distrustful of humanity's darker side, Boorstin and Berthoff each produced an American conservative historiography that was an eclectic amalgam of liberal, populist, and conservative interests. That eclecticism was based upon broad agreement that American history was determined by American circumstances: the separation of Church and state, religious pluralism, a classless society, social and geographical mobility, the constant influx of productive immigrants, and the establishment of an industrial plutocracy in place of a paternalistic landed aristocracy.

In common, both historians embedded their conservatism in an exceptionalist demonstration of American history, a panoramic survey of a deeply conservative American past that revealed peculiarity and continuity in traditions, institutions, and the promotion of remarkable American character. To fashion cohesive principles within their narratives of American history, Boorstin and Berthoff each studied America as a pragmatic experiment, whose success depended upon the preservation of tested verities. Boorstin's legal background led him to trace American uniqueness through laws and institutions, while Berthoff was concerned with conserving social structures and relationships, but they both saw American history as an apotheosis. The tradition of conservative historiography represented by Berthoff and Boorstin denied the role of abstract ideas and theory in the development of American history. Unlike Viereck and Kirk, Berthoff and Boorstin rejected a historical methodology that pursued a historical exposition and explanation of elite thought as the historian's essential function. What all four men did share was a respect for morality and community as necessary to the restraint of human nature within a stable and fair society.

Boorstin and Berthoff each began with an emphasis upon experience rooted in the uniqueness of American circumstances and then constructed a parable of American success around the assimilation of successive flows of peoples into a fecund and fruitful landscape. There were few waves of immigration in British life, except for the Irish, until the 1950s. Until then, British conservatives, even in top positions within the Foreign Office, remained relatively ignorant of non-British peoples, because few lived among them. When the new black and brown groups arrived, they were hardly assimilated. In America, even if the displaced American Indians are counted, native Americans were a distinct minority. Both Boorstin and Berthoff were the descendants of recent immigrants. Moreover, they were each born on the wrong side of the windowpane. Berthoff, in common with Boorstin, came from a Jewish background. While Boorstin's family proudly accepted their cultural and religious heritage, Berthoff's parents concealed his father's Jewish background from him and he learned of it only as a teenager.² Both men also came from Middle and Southern American small cities, as did Kirk.

Berthoff was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1921, and graduated from Oberlin College in 1942 to join the U.S. Army and rise to the rank of captain. His father's

original surname was Piatoff, which Berthoff assumed had been Anglicized by school authorities, and his paternal grandparents came from Byelorussia. His father, who experienced increasing declines in status from a basketball player to a real estate agent and then to a factory worker, never admitted that he was Jewish. His mother, who came from a Yankee background with ancestors allegedly on the Mayflower, disapproved of her husband's Jewish descent, and told her son about his father's ethnicity only when Berthoff was aged 15. Berthoff's parents were divorced while he was in college.³ After the war Berthoff went to Harvard, without having to worry about his 'Jewishness' or about meeting the Jewish quota for entry, and in 1952 he became Oscar Handlin's second Ph.D.⁴ Ten years later, after teaching at Princeton, he joined the History Department at Washington University in St. Louis, and from 1966 until 1992 was William Eliot Smith Professor of History there. Berthoff followed his mentor in concentrating on immigrants and his dissertation was published as *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790–1950* (1953).⁵ By 1960, when Handlin, then 'Harvard's premier Americanist', embodied the academic liberal centre, Berthoff published his article in the *American Historical Review*, commemorating an Arcadian ideal and its conservative development through American history. By the end of that decade, while Handlin turned to conservative, mainstream politics in his support of Richard Nixon,⁶ Berthoff continued and expanded his more idiosyncratic conservatism in *An Unsettled People: Order and Disorder in American History* (1971).

In addition to his Jewish past, Berthoff thought of his progenitors as Scots and Irish. *British Immigrants in America*, which studied the British immigrants with whom Berthoff identified most closely, was divided into two sections that dealt with the periods of adjustment of Scots, Irish, and Welsh immigrants once they had arrived in America. One section emphasized the economic experience, and the other the cultural. After a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the various British populations who came to settle in America for a period exceeding 150 years, Berthoff concluded that their experience in industrial America were superior to that of other emigrant groups, and that their 'economic' and 'social adjustments were relatively so easy that they could enter into American affairs as equals' of native Americans. At the same time, in common with other immigrants, they were able to retain and enjoy their own traditions.⁷ What impressed him then, and subsequently, was how welcoming America was, and how much a sense of original community was possible even within the assimilating possibilities of the new world.

When Berthoff published his 'The American Social Order: A Conservative Hypothesis', in the *AHR*, he addressed the largest audience available to him. As the journal of the American Historical Association, the *AHR* was read by the greatest number of historians. In that article, he attempted to explain a 'new conservatism' that he extracted from his historical research. In common with Boorstin and Viereck, he relied upon an alloy of conservative and liberal components. Responding to what he perceived as a decade of 'dynamic

conservatism' in politics and a 'new conservatism' among intellectuals, Berthoff tried to replace Samuel Eliot Morison's pre-war emphasis upon a conservative Federalist–Whig–Republican political history with a new social history. Emerging in both America and Britain, as a turning away from concentration exclusively on high politics, social history was in search of a subject. Berthoff insisted that 'social order' ought to be the concern of social history, and that 'mobility' ought to be its 'central theme'. Berthoff denied the Turner thesis that attributed mobility solely to the frontier, and proposed instead an explanation based upon three stages in the evolution of social order. The first, concluding in 1815, was characterized by relatively low mobility and the establishment of a 'fairly stable social order'. The second, throughout the nineteenth century, was a disorderly period of 'enormous migration, immigration, and social mobility'. After a transitional period from about 1900 to 1930, when free land and free immigration ended, a profound effort to reorganize America produced a highly mobile, but better integrated, society comparable to that of the stable eighteenth century, which Berthoff idealized, as both Bryant and Kirk did, for its supposedly pastoral and communal virtues.

Berthoff also emphasized two other distinctly American themes that diverged sharply from British conservative historiography and from both Viereck and Kirk's application of British and Continental thought to the American experience. First, he adopted the Progressive belief in a steady and consonant development of characteristically American institutions and values; and second, he viewed America as a melting pot of peoples empirically transforming their common lives. Concentrating upon the discovery of a harmonious historical process, Berthoff argued that social reconstruction, rather than untested change, was the criterion for meaningful historical development. Kirk, too, had viewed reconstructed continuity rather than change as the measure for historical success. But Berthoff went far beyond Kirk's aristocratic elitism in accepting the contributions of the working classes, popular culture, the humanitarian reformers of the 1830s and 1840s, the labour movement through the 1850s, Progressivism, and even the New Deal. Like Boorstin, Berthoff commemorated institutional constancy for providing unity and national stability. The resulting 'proliferation of interlocked institutions', Berthoff concluded, was 'a conservative counterrevolution' in which, he predicted confidently, 'the big business corporation would shed its early reputation as a monopolistic monster and, in effect, become esteemed as the pioneer of modern industrial society, and the urban political machine would be affectionately recalled as the prototype of the modern welfare state'. Instead of suspecting the welfare state, as did Kirk, Viereck, and British conservatives, Berthoff imagined it as a successor to the minimum provision of security once guaranteed by the eighteenth-century family farm. Berthoff's reading was very whiggish for a conservative, and it became even less plausible after Reagan. He transformed the legacy of the New Deal to fit his romantic, conservative faith in continued community based upon an evolved agrarian ideal. That Arcadian myth

had appealed to inter-war conservative historians in Britain, and it remained a nostalgic reality to Arthur Bryant and Russell Kirk for the rest of their lives, but it was discarded after the war by other British and American conservative historians, including Butterfield, Elton, Kitson Clark, Namier, Beloff, Viereck, and Boorstin.

Berthoff stretched the rural model further to fit his presupposition about consistent institutional and ethical development, and found that the contemporary industrial plutocracy had transformed themselves into a modern variant of the paternalistic landed aristocracy common in the eighteenth century: 'In a sense, the broad middle-class homogeneity of the eighteenth century has been restored.' The 'Roosevelts, Tafts and Rockefellers not only accept the responsibility of their class to lead the common voter but are in turn accepted by him.' It was evident to Berthoff 'that we once again have an established upper class with privileges and duties roughly equivalent to those of the eighteenth-century gentry'.⁸

Berthoff was hardly alone among historians in post-Second World War America who had little interest in the dysfunctional cities of America. Only after the urban crises of the 1960s did historians turn to a critical reconstruction of American urban history.⁹ The British, ever since the 1850s, when more Britons lived in cities than in the countryside, had recognized that modern problems were essentially urban problems.

In 1971, eleven years after Berthoff's declaration of his position as a conservative historian, he looked back on the development of American social life in his *An Unsettled People; Social Order and Disorder in American History*, to repudiate 'the liberal individualism that pervades most of the American past and the writing about it'. Once again, but in greater detail, he concentrated on the 'institutional social structure', which demonstrated the validity of conservative belief in a 'hierarchy of values' based upon an economy of 'adequate production and equitable distribution' that can only be subverted or abandoned at 'grave peril'. Beginning with the early American society of 1607–1775, Berthoff found that immigrants 'accepted English ideas of rank or degree, of deference on the part of inferiors and responsible exercise of authority by superiors, and of an organic community extending outward from the family and the village, borough, and county to the national commonwealth'. These social ideals, he argued, dominated American society for nearly two centuries, and colonial economic progress occurred 'without tipping the balance against a viable form of the old social order'. From 1775 to 1875, Berthoff found that the older, satisfying social order had been replaced by a 'society of individuals', in which material progress dominated values and institutions, and the 'absolute rights of private property against society' became, unfortunately, the 'essence of American conservatism'. Then, from 1875 to 1945 'The Reconstituted Society' saw reactions against the nineteenth century's flawed social, cultural, and spiritual turning away from institutional constraints and consensus. Even by 1945, Berthoff concluded, Americans still did not understand that their social community, whether urban,

suburban, or rural, had to supplement economic progress and material security with that uniquely American combination of community and individualism that their colonial ancestors had enjoyed.¹⁰ All of the conservative historians grappled with individual rights and limits, and they tried, without great success, to find a *modus vivendi* between flourishing, creative, and responsible individualism and a greater common good.

Berthoff lived long enough to find that his confident expectations were confounded repeatedly. In 1997, four years before his death, he published *Republic of the Dispossessed. The Exceptional Old-European Consensus in America*, ten essays written during the preceding four decades that revealed his reluctance to abandon his earlier views. While admitting a great debt to John Pocock's theories about republicanism, Berthoff concluded that it was not ideas but rather the 'ingrained *mentalité* drawn from practical experience' that defined American exceptionalism. The purpose of publishing the essays was to show that Americans had consistently and stubbornly held the 'old peasant/republican' values of 'independence within community'. Often against the reality of social and economic conditions, they saw themselves as 'respectably middle class'. 'Folklore', he suggested in 1980, might be 'more persuasive than economics', and he saw the American Revolution as one of many steps in the transformation of 'self-reliance into an explicitly republican ideal of personal independence'. American history had 500-year-old roots in European and British peasants and artisans who had fled dispossession and brought with them social values that became the evolving foundation for the special American response to industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Unlike both Viereck and Kirk, who were interested in the transfusion of British and Continental thought into American conservative intellectuals, Berthoff looked for the heart and soul of American consensus and exceptionalism in the innovating and accommodating immigrants who came to America from 1600 to 1950.¹¹

Four of the themes that Berthoff considered fundamental to American conservatism—the importance of immigration; the subordination of ideas to community practices; the cohesive and deterministic character of American institutions; and the consistency and unity of uniquely American history—received more subtle and extensive treatment from Boorstin, especially in his massive three-volume study on the colonial, national, and democratic experiences.¹² Boorstin was a prominent public intellectual and social critic who wrote for, and was welcomed by, a large popular and literate audience. Unlike Bryant, who was read by many historians largely for his ability to tell a rousing story, Boorstin received every accolade available from his profession. Like Bryant, he employed his considerable narrative skills to portray a past meant to influence policies in the present.

Even more than Berthoff, Boorstin revealed the anomalous, eccentric character of a quintessentially American conservative view of American history. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1914, Boorstin grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, then a

small town, as the precocious son of a professional family, whose parents had been immigrants. In Tulsa, the very small Jewish community lived within an overwhelmingly Christian city. Boorstin's childhood experience was considerably different from that of Berthoff, who was ignorant of his Jewishness until his adolescence. The boy growing up in Tulsa lived in an environment that was also very different from that of Jews who came of age in Eastern and Northern cities such as New York or Chicago. In those metropolises, a concentration in numbers and in the urban professions might well have led young Jewish boys, and occasionally even girls, to believe that they belonged to the ethnic majority that counted in presence, ambition, and achievements. It is a historical, and by now familiar, truism that an individual's ethnic, cultural, and social experiences always play a role in determining their view of what is desirable and undesirable in life. In Boorstin's case, his fortunate personal and professional life, while hardly a replication of the Horatio Alger myth, came close enough to that trajectory to become a crucial factor in shaping his view of American history. Boorstin looked beyond the ethnic community to which he belonged to a greater America, where he found rewards for intelligence, hard work, dedication, and practical experience. It may have been very lonely and conspicuous to be a 16-year-old Jewish undergraduate in the exclusively Protestant community of Harvard in the early 1930s, but it was also remarkably distinctive. Even more remarkable was his award of a Rhodes Scholarship. His sojourn at Balliol, then the most welcoming of all Oxford Colleges to outsiders of various racial and ethnic heritages; his admission to the practice of law in England although an American; and his post-graduate Fellowship at Yale in the late 1930s would have been extraordinary for any young man, but it was almost incredible for a young American Jew from the American Southwest. In the letter to the Master of Balliol warmly recommending Boorstin, Roger J. Merriman at Harvard wrote that Boorstin 'is a Jew though not of the kind to which one takes exception'.¹³

At Oxford, Boorstin took a double First in Jurisprudence and Civil Law and was admitted as barrister-at-law of the Inner Temple. After earning a doctorate in Judicial Science at Yale in 1940, he was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar two years later and practised law, briefly, as an attorney for the Lend-Lease Administration. A few months later, he resigned to accept a teaching position at Swarthmore College. In 1944 he joined the Faculty of the University of Chicago, where he remained for the next twenty-five years, although he taught occasionally at the universities of Rome, Kyoto, Geneva, the Sorbonne, and Trinity College, Cambridge. From 1969 to 1973 he was Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology (renamed the National Museum of American History in 1980) and from 1973 to 1975 was Senior Historian there. When he became Librarian of Congress, 1975–87, he had an intellectual dignitas as well as a bully pulpit that he used to promote the conservative values that he never doubted.

Boorstin's significant success, beginning at an early age and then continuing throughout his long life, is reflected in his view of America as an open and encouraging society, where outsiders could go beyond assimilation to become powerful members of the most prominent elites. Boorstin's ecumenical appeal to a diverse public was based upon his ability to present a broad sweep of History as an engrossing and accessible adventure, which demonstrated the entrepreneurial strengths of American character and the necessity and value of historically proven, essentially legal, institutions. Boorstin's twenty bestselling books, translated into thirty-two languages, included his major trilogy on American History: *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (1958), awarded the Bancroft Prize; *The Americans: The National Experience* (1965), winning the Parkman Prize; and *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (1973), receiving both the Pulitzer and Dexter Prizes. When he turned to contemporary social and cultural criticism, especially in *The Decline of Radicalism. Reflections on America Today* (1963), *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (1964), and *Democracy and its Discontents. Reflections on Everyday America* (1971), he spoke to his many readers with the authority of a prize-winning historian. He also won the Phi Beta Kappa Distinguished Service to the Humanities Award, the Charles Frankel Prize from the National Endowment of the Humanities, and the National Book Award for Distinguished Contributions to American Letters.

Boorstin was far from being a conservative in the 1930s when he supported Left-wing positions and joined the Communist Party briefly between 1938 and 1939. In his first book, *The Mysterious Science of the Law* (1941), he treated Blackstone and common-law traditions as bourgeois justifications of unjust property rights. By the 1950s he had long abandoned his communist sympathies, as was evident from his appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to endorse their legitimacy and purpose, while naming three of his Harvard colleagues as fellow communists. In expiation for his youthful errors, he told the HUAC, he had opposed communism through his historical explanation of the unique and enviable virtues of American history.¹⁴ Boorstin's version of consensus history gave American exceptionalism a new meaning that could be used as a noetic weapon in the Cold War. *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson* (1948) and *The Genius of American Politics* (1953) were intended, he testified to the HUAC, to be contributions to the cultural Cold War.¹⁵

Beginning with *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*, a discussion of Jefferson as the prototypical pragmatist, Boorstin spent his productive career explaining the whole of American history as an exceptional national narrative based upon institutions and values inherited originally from the British, but modified by a direct and constructive confrontation with American nature and geography. Until the 1990s, he provided a historical demonstration of the practical institutions and the special environment that produced the American 'experiment'. He rejected systems of ideas, such as the Enlightenment, because they were 'homogenized stereotypes' that ignored what particular eighteenth-century Americans were

really doing.¹⁶ It apparently never occurred to him that the institutions he trusted to transmit permanent values might also represent special interests, or that the traditions those institutions protected could be flawed because they were perpetuated more by inertia than by merit. An enduring strength of the American tradition for Boorstin, as for Berthoff, was the provision of opportunities for assimilated outsiders, such as himself. Those opportunities and his own considerable skill in presenting American life as stable, structured, and governed by law, earned Boorstin his appointment as Librarian of Congress in 1975, a canonical recognition that he had become the ultimate insider.

Boorstin's idea of consensus as a major, unifying theme in American history was very similar to the ideas of compromise and conciliation proposed by inter-war British conservative historians and especially by Butterfield after the war. Most critically, they all agreed that events rather than theories determined the empirical responses that drove historical processes. When, in 1963, McGeorge Bundy, then directing the National Security Council for President Kennedy, contributed a historical essay on foreign policy to a volume describing American thought, his sub-text was the conservative conviction that thought has been 'produced by the impact of immediate and enormous events' on people's 'traditional attitudes'.¹⁷ Boorstin may have argued that experience trumped thought in the creation and continuity of American practices and institutions, but that did not prevent him from adopting and using conservative ideals combatively. All of his writing explained and appreciated what he held to be the conservative character of American life and institutions. Peter Viereck admired Boorstin as the only historian representing a 'new conservatism' and George Nash reports, oddly, that he was 'sometimes considered a neo-conservative'.¹⁸ Those conservatives who believed that the American Revolution was a conservative rather than a revolutionary phenomenon could find historical evidence and arguments especially in Boorstin's *The Genius of American Politics* (1953), where the achievements of Jefferson are described as 'lawyerly', and the Revolution itself appears as a 'kind of affirmation of faith in ancient British institutions' such as trial by jury, due process, representation before taxation, *habeas corpus*, freedom from attainder, an independent judiciary, free speech, free petition, free assembly, a definition of treason, and an aversion to peacetime standing armies.¹⁹

The Genius of American Politics had its origin as a Charles R. Walgreen Foundation Lecture. The Foundation was established in June 1937 by the founder of the extensive chain of pharmacies, who left half a million dollars to encourage students at the University of Chicago to value American life and institutions. In addition to Boorstin, the Foundation Lecturers included Walter Lippmann, Carl Sandburg, Jacques Maritain, Ralph Bunche, George Kennan, Paul Douglas, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Barzun. In his published lecture, Boorstin set out to prove his deepest conservative conviction that institutions are organisms that grow out of time, place, and tradition. 'Our history', he said, 'has

fitted us, even against our will, to understand the meaning of conservatism. We have become the exemplars of the continuity of history and of the fruits which come from cultivating institutions suited to a time and place, in continuity with the past.²⁰ Seven years later, in *America and the Image of Europe* (1960), and in everything else that he wrote, Boorstin repeated the argument of his 1953 book to insist that, 'Our most important and most representative thinkers have been more interested in institutions than in ideologies. For an ideology is something fixed and rigid. . . . But institutions live and grow and change. They have a life of their own as a philosophy cannot; and our major accomplishments have been in the realm of institutions rather than in thought.' Boorstin saw the historian as 'the high priest of uniqueness' who made clear the process and the outcome.²¹

From his emphatically waste-not, want-not, can-do view of American history, Boorstin explained that: 'Perhaps the intellectual energy which American Revolutionaries economized because they were not obliged to construct a whole theory of institutions was to strengthen them for their encounter with nature and for the solution of their practical problems. The effort which Jefferson, for example, did not care to spend on the theory of sovereignty he was to give freely to the revision of the criminal law, the observation of the weather, the mapping of the continent, the collection of fossils, the study of Indian languages, and the doubling of the national area.' While Europeans were prepared to kill each other over conflicting theories, Boorstin marvelled that Americans were constantly making and remaking their world. To Boorstin 'the sparseness of American political theory' was due less to a conscious refusal of American statesmen to think about philosophical problems 'than to a simple lack of necessity'.²²

Liberal historians attempted to repudiate the historical validity of Boorstin's conservatism by arguing that his treatment of the American Revolution left out the ideals, the principles, the passion, and the revolution. Bernard Bailyn, who considered the ideas of the American Revolution as logical 'weapons' that organized and acted on experience, has argued eloquently that the American Revolutionary leaders were 'profoundly reasonable people' who 'sought to convince their opponents'. They believed, Bailyn maintains, that America was the true heir of English traditions of freedom and liberty, which had succumbed to tyranny in England. Unlike Boorstin, who dismisses the role of ideas in general and especially those external to special American conditions, Bailyn found that the political awareness of Americans was formed by the 'literature of English politics' and that the pre-revolutionary period was 'the most creative in American political thought'. Within a framework provided by now obscure eighteenth-century writers attempting to understand and respond to contemporary problems, Bailyn brought together Enlightenment abstractions and common law precedents, covenant theology, and classical analogy in a comprehensive, uniquely American theory of politics. By 1776, the traditional words and concepts of the Enlightenment and of English libertarianism had been reshaped, Bailyn maintained, into American radicalism as a 'transformed

as well as transforming force' in which the Americans hesitantly accomplished a 'creative adjustment of ideas to reality' through a uniquely American spirit of pragmatic idealism.²³ Liberal and conservative historians both found 'pragmatism' to be specifically American, but for the conservatives it was a pragmatism based on institutional practice rather than on the possible validity of new and untested ideas.

That aspect of Boorstin's work that has attracted the greatest liberal criticism has been his discussion of the Civil War. Hofstadter saw the war as a major test of institutions and ideas, which failed and collapsed tragically. To demonstrate what was wrong with Boorstin's account, Hofstadter suggested a cartoon: 'a Reb and a Yank meet in 1865 to survey the physical and moral devastation of the war. "Well", says one to the other consolingly, "at least we escaped the ultimate folly of producing political theorists"'.²⁴ Is Hofstadter's criticism and Bailyn's implicit criticism warranted? In *The Genius of American Politics* (1953), Boorstin's chapter on the Civil War describes the war as a sectional and federal conflict based on each section's appraisal of the 'givenness' of the 'totality' of its own culture. Instead of relying upon abstractions or slogans, each side made its case, he argues, by citing those 'facts' that characterized their region. Like the American Revolution, the debate that occurred between North and South was essentially legalistic, in that each side thought that it represented the Constitution. Boorstin's stress upon a legal framework reflected his own background in law and legal history, and his conservative belief in the superiority of evolving law over rigid or transient opinion. The Civil War, for Boorstin, was about issues marked by long series of compromises, beginning with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Such 'a controversy could have happened only within a framework of going federal institutions'. When the Civil War was over, he contended, those institutions were strengthened.²⁵

In keeping with his belief in the adaptability of law, institutions, and the American people, Boorstin, too, changed with the times. Twelve years later, in *The Americans: The National Experience* (1965), instead of stressing the sectional nature of a constitutional conflict, as he had done in *The Genius of American Politics*, he condemned the South not only for adopting the European weakness of abstract thought but for slavery and an inability to move with improving times.²⁶ Although the Civil War itself is never discussed in *The National Experience* or in its successor, *The Democratic Experience* (1973), Boorstin is unequivocal in his judgement about guilt. It was slavery, the South's 'Peculiar Institution', that bifurcated 'the life, the hopes, and the destiny of Southern communities . . . The South became the most unreal, most powerful, and most disastrous oversimplification in American history'.²⁷ The progressive and flexible North emerges as the true representative of American pragmatic traditions, which change the country while retaining its best traditions. Twenty-five years later, when George M. Fredrickson reviewed the historiography of nineteenth-century American history, he found Boorstin irrelevant because 'Most historians would

agree that the Civil War was the central event of the nineteenth century, if not of the nation's history.²⁸

Together with Kirk and Viereck, Boorstin's historical work spilled over into social and cultural criticism. He, too, objected strenuously to homogenization of culture, malaise, ignorance of the past, a too-quick readiness to jettison what he prized in American traditions and institutions, and an erosion of values and ideals. In a series of books, often based on invited lectures, he reiterated his opposition to attempts by the mass media, advertising, and radical or utopian groups to control and divert Americans from their better selves. Instead of succumbing to the artificialities of popular culture, he wanted contemporary Americans to welcome and take advantage of opportunity, while confronting the challenges that success as well as failure imposed. *America and the Image of Europe. Reflections on American Thought* (1960), was followed by *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (1964), *The Decline of Radicalism, Reflections on America Today* (1963), and *Democracy and its Discontents. Reflections on Everyday America* (1971). Each of these books went through at least four printings.

The Image was the most widely read and most discussed of these ventures into social and cultural analysis. When it appeared in 1961, it was one of the first attempts to warn Americans that they were being manipulated by advertising, the media, governmental agencies, and the invidious phenomena of public relations. Boorstin may have presumed that his readers had an incurable attention deficit disorder because he repeats every point made scores of times in each essay. Essentially, Boorstin argued, America's problems 'arise less from . . . weaknesses' and more from 'literacy, and wealth and optimism and progress'. What he meant was that all the social, political, and educational agencies had created unrealistic expectations in encouraging us, wrongly, to expect 'more than the world can give us or than we can make of the world'.²⁹ Since we are bound to be frustrated in our relations to harsh realities, we demand illusions to make up for that deficiency and all the managers of our culture respond by manufacturing 'pseudo-events' which replace true events. Boorstin warned that the images we crave and cherish have long left reality far behind. That argument is deeply conservative in its assumption that no matter how hopeful, and expectant, and successful we are, the real world is recalcitrant, dark, resistant to interference, and ultimately, and often immediately, unsatisfying in the most profound ways. 'It is only a short step', Boorstin warned, 'from exaggerating what we can find in the world to exaggerating our power to remake the world'.³⁰

What disturbed Boorstin about the appetite for unreal images was that Americans believed they could construct their experiences, and, worse yet, that they could invent anew 'our very ideals'. The God of the 'American Founding Fathers', was for Boorstin a 'constitutional monarch' who 'ruled by laws which he was not free to change at his whim'. The American nation that Boorstin admired and about which he wrote so extensively was guided by 'ideals', which were not made but were rather 'given to us by the cumulative and experimental

combination of traditions, reason, and God'. The pseudo-event distorts and replaces the world of fact just as the pseudo-image does for value: the 'image is a pseudo-ideal'.³¹ In common with the other American conservative historians, Boorstin believed that we were bound by a past that had survived because it had merit practically and morally. That meant that it was unreasonable and dangerous to attempt to alter the present and future in ways that ignored that historical 'given' legacy. American historians, Boorstin lamented, 'had once been preoccupied with ideals' such as liberty, democracy, equality, peace, and justice, and the old 'humanist historians' had concentrated on the 'unique event'. Regrettably, they had been superseded by social scientists who constructed images about frontiers, economic classes, and status, and 'dominated the ways in which literate Americans thought about themselves'.³²

For Boorstin values grew from their 'context' and 'appropriate ways of thinking' from a 'particular style of living'.³³ Boorstin made a distinction between desirable American dreams and undesirable illusion or images. Dreams were the inspiration and exhilaration that 'symbolized the disparity between the possibilities of New America and the old hard facts of life'.³⁴ Boorstin never expected those dreams to be fulfilled, but he valued them as a necessary process to stimulate people to accommodate to reality rather than to be satisfied by the self-defeating illusions that had replaced their aspirations. Accommodation was not a passive state for Boorstin, but rather part of a creative 'process' that was uniquely characteristic of America and its overflowing material resources. Extending Henry Maine's famous dictum that society moves from Status to Contract, Boorstin argued that a 'more general principle' was the 'transit of civilizations, from an interest in things to an interest in ways'. From the first settlement in America, Boorstin traced a 'remarkable continuity', which has tied thinking 'to the slow organic growth of institutions'.³⁵ Unlike Kirk and Viereck, who mistrusted democracy as a descent into mediocrity, Boorstin welcomed democracy as a stimulus to opportunities and creativity. In the Old World, he wrote, there had been traditional, institutional barriers between those who '*thought*' and those who '*did*', and the 'very distinction between the "theoretical" and the "practical" acquired a shocking new irrelevance'.³⁶ Among the many things that Boorstin loved about America was that the New World, with its vast size, diversity, and amalgam of peoples, encouraged and promoted entrepreneurship, inventiveness, and the will to overcome unprecedented obstacles.

Although Daniel Boorstin was still writing popular bestselling historical works in 1992, his eclectic conservatism had become anachronistic in contemporary historical thinking.³⁷ In a memorial service at the Library of Congress and both in professional and popular obituaries, the body of his historical writing was either scarcely mentioned or it was discussed critically. Bart Barnes, in the *Washington Post* and the Sunday edition of the *Los Angeles Times* called attention to the criticism Boorstin had received 'for oversimplification and for overlooking complicated moments of American history, from McCarthyism to Vietnam,

and complicated moments of American scholarship from multiculturalism to feminist studies'. Aside from professional historians, there were other public interest groups who found his views unacceptable. In 1975, when Gerald Ford nominated him to be Librarian of Congress, Boorstin was opposed by the Congressional Black Caucus because he had fought affirmative action and had attacked student radicals in the 1960s.³⁸ The American Historical Association obituary was written by John Y. Cole, an administrator rather than a professional historian, who was appointed by Boorstin as Director for the Book in the Library of Congress, a position established by Boorstin in 1977. Cole celebrated Boorstin's tenure as Librarian of Congress, but he made no attempt to assess his mentor's historical contributions.³⁹ Cole concentrated on Boorstin's role as Librarian because, by the time he had died, his historical writing and his brand of conservatism had both become irrelevant.

The most perceptive obituary and the best retrospective analysis of Boorstin's work appeared in *The Economist*, which relied on an earlier interview with Boorstin about his views on the uniqueness of America and its creative tensions with a 'wild continent' that made institutions peculiarly flexible and its leaders more responsive to altered circumstances. One of the insights that *The Economist* got especially right was the relationship between Boorstin's background and his love of his country. Boorstin told *The Economist* that his lawyer father moved from Atlanta to Tulsa to in 1916 'partly to escape anti-Semitism, but partly because he wanted to help with the founding of a new community'. When the family came to Tulsa, skyscrapers did not yet exist; 'they had to be imagined. And, in the typical way of American genius, they were no sooner imagined then they began to rise out of the Oklahoma plains.' American history presented challenges to real life and real Americans, and they, like Boorstin himself, rose to meet them. The other spot on perception of *The Economist* was that, while Boorstin acclaimed the vigour of the original and ongoing American experiment, he was often disappointed in modern America.⁴⁰

At the Library of Congress, where his work as Librarian took centre stage, those who presented eulogies tended to emphasize the quality of his mind and character as well as his tenure as Librarian of Congress, which was marked by his expansion of the holdings and public functions of the national Library. Boorstin's successor at the Library, James H. Billington, lauded Boorstin's active sponsorship of cultural affairs, and recalled that his predecessor's inaugural address as twelfth Librarian of Congress encouraged 'the unimagined question and the unwelcome answer'. Senator Ted Stevens, the right-wing Republican from Alaska, infamous for securing federal funds to build a massive bridge that went nowhere, correctly called Boorstin a 'dedicated public servant' whose American trilogy was an 'American treasure'. Jim Lehrer, a friend and neighbour and the Public Broadcasting System host of 'The News Hour', remembered an interview on his programme on 8 September 1987, in which Boorstin, in keeping with all his thinking, warned that history was a 'cautionary science' incapable

of generalizations and predictions. Boorstin fairly described himself then as a short-term pessimist and long-term optimist who found 'mystery' in creation and discovery.⁴¹ All four of the American conservative historians were religious men. Their conservative inclinations to preserve rather than to change came, in part, from their common belief that God was the Creator, among other things, of unpredictability.

By the time of Boorstin's later years, there was a general agreement among American historians about the 'complacency of *The Genius of American Politics*' and the 'capriciousness of *The American Trilogy*.'⁴² That does not mean that Boorstin was completely written off by his successors. In still another of the chronic efforts by American historians to understand each other, the state of their craft, and the ways in which historical writing illuminates its own time, Stanley J. Kutler commissioned a series of 'Retrospective' essays for *Reviews in American History*. The best of these, covering the iconographic figures in American history from the 1930s to the 1970s, were subsequently published in *American Retrospectives: Historians on Historians* (1995). Kutler required his essayists to 'explain the present vitality and usefulness' of the particular work they chose to review and to 'explore the original reception and impact' of that work and its 'utility through succeeding years'. Stephen J. Whitfield selected Boorstin's *The Image*, 'invaluable' as both cultural criticism in its own time and in the 1990s, and for its identification of 'fresh topics for exploration for historians and specialists in American Studies'. *The Image*, Whitfield concluded in 1991, 'looks less eccentric, though no less ingenious', than it did in 1962. It was not Boorstin's cautious optimism that Whitfield admired, but rather his historian's 'deeper awareness of our predicament' and his observant and 'astonishing erudition'.⁴³

If we place Boorstin and the other American conservative historians in the context of the debate among American historians that began after the war, their positions do not appear entirely aberrant. The nature of those debates was highlighted in annual presidential addresses to the American Historical Association. In 1975, looking back at his predecessor's speeches, and anticipating his own, Gordon Wright warned that they should not be heard as the voice of God or the crystallized wisdom of the ages.⁴⁴ Still, through at least the two decades after the war, those addresses were *obiter dicta* by the leading historians of the day, and they were heard and understood by historians as a window into the mind and accountability of the historical profession. In 1950, a year after Boorstin's *Thomas Jefferson*, and Viereck's *Conservatism Reconsidered*, and three years before Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, Conyers Read, a historian of Tudor England and of the American Constitution, gave his presidential address on 'The Social Responsibilities of the Historian'. Read urged his audience to recognize that in an age that had produced Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, 'we must clearly assume a militant attitude if we are to survive. The antidote to bad doctrine is better doctrine, not neutralized intelligence.

We must assert our own objectives, define our own ideals, establish our own standards and organize all the forces of our society in support of them.' In this struggle, he warned, the 'historian is no freer from this obligation than the physicist'. Historical study reveals that there are certain fundamental values and they must be defined and defended. That did not mean 'distortion of the past' but rather recognition that 'freedom can survive only if it goes hand in hand with a deep sense of social responsibility, particularly among those whose business is education in any form and at any level'.⁴⁵ That was exactly what the American conservative historians set out to do. Although their social commentary and their historical work has not endured, it was heard in the two decades after the Second World War. When post-war revisions of conservatism were abandoned in America during the 1970s, a more aggressive conservatism and a neo-conservative generation of historians responded by celebrating the dramatic political, social, economic, and imperial turning which they admired and welcomed. Just like their predecessors, although for different ends, they, too, resurrected a historical narrative to buttress and move forward their conservative political agendas.

NOTES

1. Rowland Berthoff, 'The American Social Order: A Conservative Hypothesis', *The American Historical Review*, 65 (1960).
2. Interview with Rowland Berthoff in St. Louis, 10 May 1998.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Oscar Handlin was himself a symbol of the entry of Jews into the American historical profession. See Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream. The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173–4, 364–5.
5. See Berthoff's obituary by David Konig in *Perspectives* (January 2002), <http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/Issues/2002/0201/0201mem1.cfm>
6. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 437.
7. Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790–1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), 211–12.
8. Berthoff, 'The American Social Order', 500, 503, 500, 510, 511.
9. The work of Richard Wade was especially seminal in this area. See his 'An Agenda for Urban History', G. A. Billias and G. N. Grob (eds.), *American History: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Free Press, 1971), 367–98. When Arthur Meier Schlesinger wrote *The Rise of the City, 1878–1898* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), he found a developing urban consensus in the late nineteenth century.
10. Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People; Social Order and Disorder in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. xiii–xiv; 20–1, 173, 234, 274, 395.

11. Berthoff, *Republic of the Dispossessed. The Exceptional Old-European Consensus in America* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri, 1997), 'Introduction', 3, 2, 'Small Business in the American Dream', 198–99 in Stuart Bruchey (ed.), *Small Business in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
12. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958); *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1965), and *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
13. 12 January 1934, quoted in Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 173.
14. *Ibid.*, 325–8; Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 41–2, 44.
15. See Richard H. Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age. American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 318.
16. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe. Reflections on American Thought* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 77.
17. McGeorge Bundy, 'Foreign Policy: From Innocence to Engagement', in Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Morton White (eds.), *Paths of American Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), 294. Bundy had been the youngest Dean of Arts and Sciences at Harvard from 1953 before becoming a special assistant for national security to both Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.
18. Peter Viereck, *The Unadjusted Man*, (1962), 248–9. Among the 'new conservatives', Viereck included Thomas I. Cook, Raymond English, Francis Wilson, August Hecksher, Chad Walsh, Hyatt Waggoner, John Hollowell, Robert Nisbet, Clinton Rossiter, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Will Herberg. The most surprising name in the group is Adlai Stevenson, the failed Democratic candidate for President in both 1952 and 1956. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America*, 67.
19. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 90, 98.
20. *Ibid.*, 6.
21. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe*, 52, 66.
22. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics*, 95.
23. Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 18, 21, 54, 83, 127, 161, 181, 232, 245. See, too, his 'Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in Eighteenth-century America', *American Historical Review*, 67 (1961–2), 339–51; Introduction to *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750–76* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), and *The Origins of American Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1968).
24. Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians*, 461, 462.
25. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics*, 116, 118, 122, 131.
26. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience*, see esp. the section 'Metaphysical Politics', 212–18.
27. *Ibid.*, 170.

28. George M. Frederickson, 'Nineteenth-century American History', in Anthony Mohlo and Gordon S. Wood (eds.), *Imagined Histories. American Historians Interpret the Past*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 166.
29. All the quotes are from the 1964 edn., Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. iii, 5.
30. *Ibid.*, 118.
31. *Ibid.*, 181–2.
32. *Ibid.*, 201–2.
33. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe*, 58.
34. Boorstin, *The Image*, 240.
35. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe*, 54, 60.
36. Boorstin, *The Americans. The Democratic Experience*, 597.
37. See, e.g., Boorstin, *The Creators* (New York: Random House, 1992).
38. Bart Barnes, 'Daniel J. Boorstin 89: Eloquent Historian Won Pulitzer Prize', *Washington Post*, repr. in Sunday's *Los Angeles Times*, 29 February 2004, B22.
39. John C. Cole, 'In Memoriam', *AHA Perspectives* (September 2004), 68–9.
40. 'Daniel Boorstin', *The Economist*, 20 March 2004, 94.
41. Memorial Service at Library of Congress, 27 April 2004.
42. Stephen J. Whitfield, 'The Image: The Lost World of Daniel Boorstin' (1991), *American Retrospectives: Historians on Historians* in Stanley J. Kutler (ed.), (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 213. Whitfield is the Max Richter Professor of American Civilization at Brandeis University.
43. Stanley J. Kutler, 'Introduction', *American Retrospectives*, p. ix.; Stephen J. Whitfield, 'The Image: The Lost World of Daniel Boorstin', 220, 219.
44. Gordon Wright, 'History as a Moral Science' (Presidential Address to the American Historical Association, 26 December 1975), *AHR*, 81:1 (1976), 1–11. www.historians.org/index.cfm
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Epilogue: The Future of the Conservative Past

In late 1939 a radio program from Toronto broadcast the song 'There'll Always Be An England' on every daily show. As the war continued through 1945, it was sung once a week.¹ In 1941, *Nice Girl*, an American movie with Deanna Durbin, whose parents were British, was released in Britain. In the British version the song was added and Durbin sang it directly to the audience. The opening bucolic words bear repeating because they epitomize so well the conservative view of character and country that had come to pervade a national consciousness that then still included Canada and the 'empire too, we can depend on you':

While there's a country lane,
Wherever there's a cottage small
Beside a field of grain.
There'll always be an England²

Then, in 1942, a similar Arcadian image representing the true England to which the nation was committed, appeared in an equally popular song, *The White Cliffs of Dover*, which assured its listeners that:

The shepherd will tend his sheep,
The valley will bloom again
And Jimmy will go to sleep
In his own little room again.

The social and economic discontents of both rural and urban life, and the inability of Britain to feed, clothe, and house itself had made the small cottage, the fields of grain, fecund valleys, and the possession of a little room of one's own more than problematic. Dependence upon the Empire, as post-war events especially in India made dramatically clear, had also become more fantasy than reality. Until the war's end, confrontations with unwanted realities were obscured and postponed by emphases in popular culture upon a sentimental and patriotic view of nation and of the individual's secure place within it. That image, which owed much to conservatism and very little to the promises of the Left, did not prevent a Labour government's triumphant assumption of power at the war's end.

In America, it never occurred to any songwriter or any other kind of purveyor of popular culture to persuade Americans that there would always be an America. The country was never bombed, let alone invaded, and American civilians were never really under threat. Only after the war would the staggering number of Americans killed and wounded become a tragic reality in every city and town. Until then, and even after, the popular music of the time, which reached the greatest number of people, glorified the kind of American initiative, spurred on by a national purpose, which the post-war conservative historians were to find so unique in their nation. Topping the American Hit Parade in 1943 was *Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer*. With only one engine left the triumphant fighter plane returned confidently home:

Watta show what a fight
Yup, we really hit our target for tonight
How we sing as we lift through the air
Look below, there's our field over there
We're coming in on a wing and a prayer.³

Once the war was over, and divinely sanctioned derring-do gave way in America to the assimilation of the returning military and the transition to a peacetime economy and culture, political commitments appeared less urgent than family, home, and work. Immediately after victory over both Germany and Japan, there were great popular expectations for continuity with the promises of the New Deal. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, re-elected to a fourth term in 1944, was succeeded after his death in April 1945 by his vice-president, Harry Truman, elected in his own right in 1948. The Republicans, not yet a 'conservative' party, gained the presidency under Dwight Eisenhower from 1952 until 1960, when John F. Kennedy triumphed. The Democrats maintained control of the House from 1932 to 1992, with the exception only of 1956 and 1972. The Cold War was several continents away.

In sharp contrast to Britain, the Second World War made America the unchallenged world power politically, economically, and culturally. That meant imperatives of new relationships and responsibilities abroad and at home. Older patterns of work, income, education, and social and economic identity were challenged and eroded. While there had been no continuous historical tradition of conservatism before the war, the deviations from what was imagined to be a more satisfying conventional life encouraged conservative social criticism and political prescription. The difficulty in identifying conservative principles had been due, in part, to the absence of a Conservative Party in American public life. Until a coalition of disparate and often reluctant groups supported Ronald Reagan in the late 1970s, American conservatism remained anomalous and marginal. When Reagan first ran for the presidency in 1976, although unsuccessful as the Republican candidate, he offered divided conservatives a new ideological home and a promise of successful unity. As Governor of California,

he had punished students and state universities that demonstrated against the Vietnam War, providing conservatives with a new leader willing to confront the liberal and left-wing radicalism that they saw undermining the American way of life. Although he lost the nomination in 1976, he won it in 1980. In part, that victory was due to his predecessor's economic legacy—especially unemployment and stagflation. Other factors contributing to Reagan's victory included disunity among Democrats and, possibly, as Leo Ribuffo has contended, Jimmy Carter's denigration of contemporary American character.⁴ Reagan, who had praised his fellow Americans, enjoyed an earth-moving victory in the election of 1980. Additionally, repugnance against aggressive feminism, a licentious youth culture, détente with the Soviet Union, and an expensive welfare state challenged conservative idealizations of propriety to energize an electorate responsive to Reagan's new, hard-line conservatism. Once the Reagan administration was in place, the Cold War and the apparition of Soviet expansion took precedence over domestic issues, which were approached as largely unnecessary expenditures of money best devoted to national defence. In repudiation of the earlier conservative emphasis on paternalism, community, and social responsibility, the Reagan conservatives drastically reduced federal involvement in welfare, education, and other social and economic programmes, that should, they argued, best be left to market forces and to a trickle-down effect.

Why was it so difficult for a conservative understanding of the past, present, and future to flourish in America until the Reagan ascendancy? Conservative intellectual life, stoked by conservative historians, began only in the 1940s. Until the 1970s it remained, largely, an internal discourse in which conservative historians provided the texts and historical contexts for the consideration of conservative ideas, values, and programmes. The conservative historians were welcomed by a large literate reading public, and were warmly embraced by figures with political aspirations such as Barry Goldwater and Patrick Buchanan. But when conservatives finally came to real power, the influence of the conservative historians was marginal at best. The Reagan administration, although triumphantly conservative, rejected the legalistic, anti-ideological conservatism championed by historians such as Daniel Boorstin. Although they were hospitable to Kirk, it is difficult to find his impress upon any policy. It is only since the neo-conservative debacle of the twenty-first century, that the romantic, ideological, paternalistic, and culturally critical appeal of Viereck and Kirk has again become resonant within conservative circles searching for a tenable identity.

In Britain, during the decades between the Great War and the Heath government, most British conservatives, writing and speaking to each other and to a greater public, held views readily identifiable as those promoted by the conservative historians before and after the Second World War. Although political expediency and appraisals of political viability clearly affected conservative thought and policy, many conservatives and Conservatives held to standards of what was acceptable to them—standards based fundamentally on what they

believed were principled ideas. The media and the public would not have been able to grasp changes so quickly, especially in Conservative Party direction, unless there was a direction to be discerned. During and immediately after the war, Britain's greatly diminished global status and the need to reconstruct the nation physically, economically, and socially, strengthened rather than weakened those attitudes, values, and proposals that inter-war conservatives had advocated as 'realistic'. Inter-war conservatism survived the Second World War and, in policy matters such as 'One Nation' social commitments, reached its apotheosis in the Heath government. It was Margaret Thatcher who deliberately abandoned a traditional conservatism that had emphasized the interdependence of moral obligation, social harmony, capitalism, and individualism. She did not invent a new conservatism. Instead, she stressed the individualistic, laissez-faire, anti-socialist, and nationalist strains always present in twentieth-century conservatism, while rejecting a social welfare emphasis that she identified with a Labour government. As John Campbell's definitive biography shows, Thatcher 'gave "One Nation" a patriotic twist quite different from the sense of social cohesion it normally carried'.⁵ Both Reagan and Thatcher reached prominence by running against those who could be identified in the public mind as responsible for 'failed' governments.

Through two world wars and arduous recoveries from both, voices across the British political spectrum had testified to a widespread view that their nation was capable of replacing an unsatisfactory present with a more secure and even prosperous future. Among those voices, liberals, socialists, and conservatives competed for primacy in shaping that future. To do that, conservative thinkers defended their place in a 'modern' Britain by providing an ideological basis for conservatism that made their beliefs pertinent to political crises and their social, cultural, and economic effects. It did not help that those crises were all historically unprecedented events. Among them were the First World War; the depression and massive unemployment; the pervasive desire for avoiding another war in the 1920s and 1930s; the successes of fascism and, especially, of socialism and communism; the climbing expectations of labour and the changing nature of the working population as women turned away from domestic work; the expanding habits of consumption; and, most traumatically, the Second World War, with its revelations of unimaginable evil in genocides and holocausts. After the war, although conservatives welcomed the rise in the standard of living, they found it very difficult to accept the new ascendancy of the Labour Party and its creation of a welfare state, as well as the loss of Empire, the expansion of communism, the centrality of the Cold War, and the omnipresent threat of atomic and nuclear weapons. British conservatives, who looked back on two centuries of their history as an explanation of the present, as well as its justification, found that the accelerating catastrophes of the twentieth century made the past an uncertain and unreliable memory. The result was that increasingly unpredictable events, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, challenged the meaning of

small 'c' conservatism for those who embraced it as a guarantor of a historically proven British way of life.

From the First World War to at least the 1960s, it had been more gratifying for British historians to be conservatives than either liberals or socialists. In contrast both to liberals and socialists, the conservative historian was able to celebrate national character and institutions whose merit was demonstrated by their historical continuity. In sharp contrast, liberal historians were increasingly assaulted by events that confounded their largely rationalistic assumptions and expectations, while socialist historians looked ahead and contemptuously repudiated the past as a manipulation of people and events by powerful classes and interests intent upon achieving and justifying power. Although not necessarily apologists for any social, political, or economic group, the conservative historians belonged to an established order of influential position, comfortable income, and recognized status. Their finding that the historical world was the only possible world allowed those who were ascendant a better conscience than they might otherwise have had. While liberals and socialists were unable to promise that the future would fulfil the meliorative plans that they made, historical evolution assured conservatives that the world shaped by the past could endure. In America, where liberalism remained a dominant force in national political life until the third quarter of the twentieth century, conservatives became substantive and influential by incorporating compatible liberal themes into their conservative prescriptions.

Americans did not have a monarchy, an established Church, or an admitted hierarchy of classes. There was almost no paternalism until it was provided by new money from the Fords, Rockefellers, and other industrial barons who created and maintained the pervasive rags-to-riches myths that fuelled entrepreneurial efforts. Social and economic status was indeterminate, money was largely newly won, and civility was more acceptable than deference. Wealth was assessed by capital and the property it accumulated, and power and privilege were its principal attributes. British conservative historians from 1913 to the 1960s had a common agreement about what they wanted to conserve. American conservative historians agreed most about a shared trust in hard work as a guarantee of social mobility and economic security.

While conservatism had great difficulty in establishing itself in America, the twentieth century has often been referred to as 'the Conservative century' in Britain because of the electoral successes of the Conservative Party and the consistency of conservative principles. A trawl through Conservative Party statements and endorsed books, anonymous pamphlets, journalism, the speeches of Party leaders, and the records of national and local conservative associations exposes a generally consistent line of thinking and policy that was stated and restated by the conservative inter-war historians.⁶ Conservative politicians acted on the strategy that political slogans sold a point of view and mobilized Conservative voters. That did not prevent them from recognizing that unless such strategies

rested upon articulated principles, they risked failure. Rhetorical formulae were also sufficiently consistent among rank-and-file conservatives to reveal hard-core beliefs that defined particular points of political commitment or intransigence. Every issue that conservatives championed, no matter how apparently incompatible or disparate, already existed in the rhetoric and policy endorsements of conservative historians in the 1920s and 1930s. That is not to say that each conservative held all these positions simultaneously and schizophrenically, but rather that some conservatives promoted one set of ideas, say, libertarianism and opposition to growth of the state, while others promoted the Disraelian Toryism that supplied the One Nation movement. But all these ideas were recognizably and consistently conservative with some receiving Party endorsement and greater emphasis at one time or another depending upon electoral exigencies, opportunities, or the role of particular leaders. Moreover, the readings of human nature and society that the conservative historians believed they had extracted from history continued into the 1990s. We can see that, for example, in Kenneth Baker's attempt in 1993 to express the various components of Conservatism as 'tradition, the free market, support for the family, patriotism, property, morality, a love of the countryside, less government and a sense of community'.⁷

What ideas did the conservative historians emphasize in common and separately in both Britain and America? In both countries, until the Thatcher and Reagan eras, the thinking of conservative historians reveals striking similarities of assumptions and purposes as well as national differences in their quintessential core ideas. They all saw human nature as problematic, whether due to original sin, genetic predispositions to destructive behaviour, or an inability to resist vicious inclinations. Recognizing the effects of both environment and biological determinism, they tended to emphasize most people's incapacity for meeting human, let alone divine, expectations. They began with the assumption that the majority of people were not so much evil as weak, lazy, listless, undisciplined, irrational, and selfish. They disagreed especially on the depth of human corruption and upon the kinds of remedies possible. In Britain, during the inter-war years, Feiling was the most hopeful; Hearnshaw, the least; and Bryant fell in between. From the 1940s, Butterfield in Britain and Viereck, Kirk, Boorstin, and Berthoff in America began with still gloomier forebodings. Post-war revelations of human capacity for evil certainly confirmed and reinforced conservatives' grim assumptions about human nature, and the requisite of institutions, habits, and a leadership that would constrain the worst in human tendencies. In an unprecedented atomic, nuclear, and Cold War world, they felt even greater urgency to affirm and justify conservative virtues aggressively.

American conservative historians supplemented their British colleagues' faith in the remedial force of laws and institutions with a cultural critique, but they agreed with the British that reason was a vitiated form of mopping up the inevitable mess left by human corruption and incompetence. And they dismissed any expectation that society could be made substantially better as socially naïve

at best, and at worst as withering to individual character that developed best in response to adversity. That does not mean that they were irrational or unwilling to change social and political institutions. On the contrary, the historians on both sides of the Atlantic believed that they, unlike their opponents, lived in a historical world where the facts of life were always given precedence over untested experiment. Society, if never perfectible, could be incrementally improved because the latently subversive forces contained within human nature could be restrained. Instead of thinking about conservatism as a dogma, an ideology, or an attitude, it might be most accurate to describe it as a reaction, often visceral, to political, social, economic, and cultural threats to an idealized past that conservatives found more predictable and more satisfying.

For the British inter-war conservative historians, the Great War was their defining historical moment. Feiling and Bryant served in the bizarre *mélange* of slaughter, despair, futility, and camaraderie that characterized the bloody routine of fighting and death. Hearnshaw, too old to fight, loyally drilled as Honorary Secretary to the King's College Volunteer Section. They all mourned the fatalities and maiming of young men, and were angry that the survivors returned to a country hardly fit for heroes. That led them, as it did the great majority of their countrymen, regardless of political ideology, to a passionate aversion to any future wars. Bryant, attracted to the proto-fascist Right and intent upon exhausting every avenue leading to the possibility of peace, was unique among the conservative historians in his willingness to continue to work for appeasement after the Second World War had begun.⁸ Feiling strove for appeasement until the war actually began; Hearnshaw was among the few conservatives who opposed Nazi Germany unequivocally; and in 1943, Butterfield urged peace with the Nazis so that the war could end.

Although living in a world delineated by the horrors and consequences of the Great War, Hearnshaw, Bryant, and Feiling approached those new realities with older nineteenth-century ideas. They were romantic Tories, even though they recognized the potentialities of the modern capitalist world. Their emotional, psychological, and ideological loyalties remained within a Disraelian hierarchical, but inclusive national, community. What the Great War taught them was that the carnage on the battlefields and subsequent injustice in the reconstitution of society must never be allowed to occur again. Their concern for political and economic stability and social security led them to phobic obsessions about world communism and its British cousin, socialism, as a road to social dissolution and an even more catastrophic war. To prevent that catastrophe, they attempted to monitor vigilantly and combat perceived threats from the Left. For Hearnshaw and Feiling, Germany, increasingly in its fascist form, threatened British moral courage and character. Bryant saw fascist Germany as an ally who had achieved an ordered state secure from the greater threat of communism. In common, all three inter-war conservative historians revered the Empire as the extension of Britain's physical and cultural being, as well as its guarantor of status as a world

power. They recognized, with great reluctance, that the Great War had begun Britain's relative decline as a national power.

A profound effect of the conservatives' war experience during the Great War in Britain and the Second World War in both Britain and America was an opposition to individualistic materialism geared to accumulation at the expense of a national community obligated to consider the roles and needs of every class. The fulcrum of national success, for the inter-war conservative historians, had been Disraeli's combination of pragmatism and romantic Toryism. Disraeli's condemnation of the division of Britain into Two Nations of the rich and the poor had greater influence in twentieth-century Britain than any other conservative idea. It was stressed by the conservative historians from the early part of the century and was adopted by the Conservative Party as an identifying motto from the post-Second World War period until the Thatcher years. When the Director of the Conservative Political Centre published 'Some Principles of Conservatism' in 1956, the flyleaf contained a picture of Disraeli.⁹ What were emphasized as Disraelian ideas were given historical authority, argued passionately, and propagated widely among every kind of audience by the inter-war conservative historians. Although Hearnshaw, Feiling, and Bryant continued nineteenth-century Tory paternalistic emphases as an essential part of their conservative appeal, they recognized that pre-war complacency had to be jettisoned. For Britain to become once more powerful and dominant, they were convinced that conservatives had to find new solutions for persistent social and economic problems.

For most British conservatives, beginning in the inter-war period and continuing until the 1970s, the two most conspicuous fractures in their thinking were a version of romantic Disraelian, or 'One Nation' Toryism, and an embrace of the potentialities of the modern capitalist world and the free market. These preoccupations were not necessarily antithetical and their amalgam, promoted by the inter-war conservative historians, attracted such future leaders as Harold Macmillan, Noel Skelton, and Robert Boothby. With the exception of Butterfield, the conservative historians advocated the harmonious and communal ideas of 'One Nation' and, simultaneously, the individualistic goal of a 'property-owning democracy'. Hearnshaw, Feiling, and Bryant attempted to reconcile both camps. As a religious pessimist who trusted the corrective hand of God more than state intervention or other ineffectual attempts by human beings to interfere in each other's lives, Butterfield chose the more libertarian emphasis. All the British conservative historians agreed that people rarely rose to meet God's expectations, but could aspire to a more noble life through energetic efforts to improve themselves. Social welfare goals depended on the individual enterprise and moral qualities that conservatives championed through small statism. The benefits of ownership were not meant to promote social mobility or challenge the status quo, but rather to encourage citizenship strengthened by a vested interest in property. Hearnshaw and Feiling accepted industrial capitalism as an

essential means to national prosperity because it developed capacities for hard work and competence. At the same time, they were convinced that only higher, non-materialistic aspirations, resting upon religion and divinely created morality, cultivated the kind of life that mattered. Bryant distrusted the avarice driving an unrestrained market, but he agreed wholeheartedly with Hearnshaw and Feiling that society, intrinsically imperfect, could be improved incrementally because the latently subversive forces in human nature could be redirected to productive ends within an organic and unified nation.

In the winter of 1882, the Marquis of Salisbury had predicted that 'Radicalism' was not a challenge to his Party because the next generation would turn from the Party which was leading them to revolutionary projects inconsistent with the industrial well-being of society and instead support 'that party to whom has fallen the defence of individual liberty and the rights of property, of the sacredness of religion, and of those institutions by which liberty, property, and religion have hitherto been so marvellously preserved'.¹⁰ That emphasis upon 'liberty', in opposition to the notion of 'equality' promoted by socialism, was continued by most conservatives throughout the twentieth century. From the 1920s, evolving conservative views of liberty and equality depended upon presumptions about the unreliability of human nature and the necessary gradations within society. The enjoyment of liberty, they inferred, was essential to a cohesive society, while the ideal of equality was unnatural and socially divisive. Inequality, expressed historically through a hierarchy of classes, was considered an inescapable consequence of human nature. When the Left advocated greater economic and social equality through a redistribution of wealth, some conservatives responded that such redistribution denied the free choice that lay at the core of liberty. If the market were freer, they argued, those capable of earning more would be encouraged to work harder, while those with diminished capacity and ambition would be free to work and earn less. Even a more limited form of state intervention, they argued, would punish the creators of wealth who provided greater benefits to the poor than any tax upon the rich. A free society was based on those individuals who pursued their material interests and in so doing served a wider social good. Success, for conservatives, tended to be the reward of ability and effort. While the emphasis upon liberty remained an integral part of conservatism through the Thatcher and Reagan administrations, the older paternalistic and socially responsible context disappeared, to be replaced by a conviction that the uninhibited pursuit of individual interests promoted social welfare.

The conservative historians in both Britain and America wanted a structured national community to allow everyone to aspire to, and receive, the well-being appropriate to their particular talents and station in life. The reconciliation of material ambitions, necessary to economic growth, with moral law depended upon a harmonious society necessarily based on class and authority. Conservative purposes were inclusive enough, they were convinced, to subsume

pseudo-antitheses between freedom and order, continuity and progress, and individualism and community within a greater national interest. They assimilated capitalism and industry, limited by certain ethical impositions, to a vision of a necessarily hierarchical society governed by reciprocal rights and responsibilities. The resolution of the antithesis between economics and ethics rested on the inherently redeeming nature of work. In Britain, a conservative variety of individualism, championed by the inter-war conservative historians and reaffirmed by Butterfield, recurred repeatedly throughout the twentieth century in conservative thinkers such as Ernest Benn, Eustace Percy, Brendan Bracken, and Lord Beaverbrook. Thatcher gave her name to what was already a persistent strand of populist, conservative libertarianism.

Even after Thatcherism adopted a policy that in practice created 'Two Nations', the ideology expressed by the conservative historians continued to echo, with accommodation to new times, in the rhetoric of the faithful.¹¹ Designations of a 'new' Right during the Thatcher years are misleading because there was no pronounced intellectual break with the past nor with conservative ideological precedents. Hardly newly minted, Thatcherite conservatism had intellectual antecedents more in mid-nineteenth-century *laissez-faire* economic liberalism than in any characteristically conservative observance of community, institutions, and social order. Since the 1970s, British conservatism developed by submerging some of its former paternalistic commitments, while allowing other more individualistic and market-oriented emphases to emerge in keeping with different times, different leaders, different constituencies, and fluctuating opportunities. When Alistair B. Cooke, Deputy Director of the Conservative Research Department, 1985–97 and Director of the Conservative Political Centre, 1988–97, surveyed the Party's general election manifestos from 1900 to 1997, he concluded that the manifestos showed 'that Disraelian social reform, the protection of property and the maintenance of the authority of the state have all been as prominent amongst the concerns of the Tory Party as economic freedom'.¹² Each of the conservative historians during the inter-war or post-Second World War decades insisted upon individualism only when it was constrained by communitarian obligations. This is hardly surprising since, as Martin Francis reminds us, 'the 'ideology of the Conservative Party has long been a blend of paternalist and libertarian traditions'.¹³ In America, the election of Ronald Regan transformed the Republican Party. That new, first genuinely conservative party, rapidly adopted a pugnaciously libertarian stance.

While the British conservative historians before, and their British and American successors after, the Second World War still found liberty to be far more attractive than equality, they also recognized that individual success was not always proportionate to ambition or talent, and that choice was always contingent. In place of both equality and ruthless competition, they advocated standards of social and economic equity. They worried that a lack of opportunity, poor housing, and unemployment would lead working-class people to socialism

or even communism. Their image of a harmonious and prosperous society depended upon social and economic incentives and rewards. They wanted potential corruption and unacceptable behaviour to be contained by institutions, traditions, philanthropy, and various disciplines imposed by religion, family, and education. At the same time, they recognized that the state had certain responsibilities to those who were unable to succeed on their own. In Britain, Hearnshaw, Feiling, and Bryant were 'One Nation' conservatives before the term gained currency through Eden's and Macmillan's support, especially after the Second World War. To the conservative inter-war historians, as well as to many Conservative politicians, a nation divided into the comfortable rich, the indifferent middle classes, and the uncomfortable poor could not long endure. That separation was objectionable on at least two grounds. The first was moral and humanitarian and the second was political and self-regarding: socialist leaders would lead the poor to question the legitimacy of a system that produced such inequities in wealth.

'One Nation' Conservatives and those who imagined that they were fulfilling the Disraelian tradition treated the condition of England as an accusation against their conscience and their self-interest. Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan spoke in a rhetoric that echoed the conservative historians, and they pursued policies that followed from that rhetorical position. Eden entered the Commons in December 1923, when he was just 26, and Harold Macmillan in October 1924, at 30, the same year that Noel Skelton introduced the term 'property-owning democracy'. In 1946, when Eden was the Party's deputy leader, he made a 'property-owning democracy' the centrepiece of a post-war Conservative Party policy. Both men had been on the horrendous Western Front. Eden with the King's Royal Rifle Corps, won an MC, and Macmillan was wounded twice at both Loos and the Somme. D. R. Thorpe, in his biography of Eden, suggests that the experience of both Conservative leaders, in serving with men of all classes, encouraged their support for 'One Nation' Conservatism.¹⁴ Fifteen years after the Second World War ended, Iain Macleod, a central figure in Conservative post-war policy-making, was still urging the obligation of Disraelian leadership in his *One World*: 'let us now respond as we have always done to the clear call of duty'.¹⁵ Even if his statement is dismissed as merely political oratory, it is reasonable to ask why such a rhetorical strategy was chosen.

That strategy and the sentiments that it expressed were consistent with conservative experience, practice, and manifest beliefs. It cannot easily be dismissed as cynical opportunism. Whether conservative ideology was promoted as a passionate belief of particular conservatives, or rather because such convictions had popular appeal, once that ideology was introduced and accepted it entered a public realm where it could be scrutinized for meaning and coherence. Politicians say a lot of contradictory things. We have come to expect glaring disparities between political promises and subsequent legislation, and are rarely surprised when any Party's platform is repudiated. Power has come to be considered in

Actonian terms as the great corrupter. Still, for those politicians who succeeded, there was some consistency of both statement and purpose, even when they changed their minds about which policies were most appropriate to realizing their ends. The British and American conservative historians could be even more principled and consistent in their statements of conservatism because they did not have to worry about elections and Party compromises, although they were ready, along with politicians, to seize those expedients which allowed them to advance their deeply held convictions. A socially just community, in which each class had its appropriate virtues and rewards, was the common core of the British historians' conservatism. In America, that view was perpetuated by the neo-British conservative tradition represented by both Viereck and Kirk.

At the heart of conservatism, championed by both American and British advocates, there was a deep mistrust of utopian projects, which they all saw as specious rationalizations of impractical schemes. What was purported to be progress, they warned, easily culminated in expensive disappointments. Central planning was that kind of quixotic venture. Experience taught instead that altruism and melioration were limited in their potential effect because of the regrettable, often criminal, ineptitude that characterized most human activity. 'Ideas', were repudiated when they appeared to be incorrect or dangerous abstractions, overarching principles, or visionary fantasies. Instead, they attempted to promote practical, applicable, minimalist, or realistic concepts. Any theory not derived from practice was, for them, an arbitrary and self-serving rationalization of instinctive, usually destructive, tendencies in which the highest ideals often became excuses for the lowest desires. Theories such as socialism and communism had to be denied and destroyed because social and economic problems could not be solved by any grand scheme that ignored the facts of life. The liberal proposition that all ideas should compete freely in the intellectual arena seemed chimerical to conservatives, who found ideas, like people, unequal. Those ideas that passed the test of history were safeguarded for the conservative historians in habits and laws that promised constancy safe from misguided human interference.

The inter-war and post-war conservative historians in Britain wanted to create national unity based upon their assumptions and ideals. In practice, that meant that they wanted formative institutions to be governed and administered by those who advocated their values. Although Conservatives had shared national governments with Liberals in the inter-war years, they had been the dominant power. No matter what their considerable differences with liberals were, the Liberal Party was historically English, while socialism, adopted by the Labour Party in its constitution of 1918, was an alien import, and therefore unacceptable to many conservatives as a legitimate parliamentary opposition. Socialism, which advocated class conflict and attacked cherished conservative traditions, could not be accommodated within a conservative idea of an English/British nation. Despite conservative unease, the reality of the decline of Liberalism as a major

political force meant that Labour became a partner in the coalition government during the Second World War. Worse yet, for conservatives, Labour became the majority government after the war. The conservative political calculus, dominant for the preceding half century, was compelled to change dramatically and irrevocably. After the Labour victory of 1945, the question became, and remains, for conservatives: what is essential about their traditions and what is historical anachronism?

Did that mean that their fundamental convictions were abandoned and a new set put in their place? Was the result a post-war political consensus between the Labour and Conservative Parties, most conspicuous during the 1950s and early 1960s, in which conservatives appeared to adopt Labour values and policies? Was 'Butskellism' and 'Corporatism', after the Keynesian policies followed by the Labour minister Hugh Gaitskell and continued by his Conservative successor, R. A. Butler, a merging of the formerly irreconcilable political, economic, and social views? Recent scholarship has argued instead that the Conservative Party and conservatism both retained their original assumptions, purposes, and principles as are evident from the policies they pursued.¹⁶ Harriet Jones' examination of a 'New Conservatism' from 1951 to 1964 finds that the only 'new' elements were a 'linguistic' marrying of the 'principles of Conservatism to the emerging discourse of the Cold War by associating the party with the idea of freedom, prosperity, broad property ownership and democracy'.¹⁷ It might be added to that analysis that conservative ideology, with its well-rehearsed views on individualism, community, liberty, property, social hierarchy, social welfare, paternalism, religion, the monarchy, and national character, was little compromised.

While the essential conservative ideas persisted with different competing elements gaining acceptance at different periods, they were weakened first by austerity, then bolstered by prosperity, and finally eroded by a perception, whether accurate or not, that participatory democracy had come to govern politics. The conservative historical narrative, with its promise of social harmony, was challenged immediately by post-war deprivation. Then, good times were welcomed and entrenched, under Conservative governments from 1951 to the early 1960s, in the newly systematic connections established between Whitehall, employers, and their employees.¹⁸ But by the 1960s, as Geoff Eley has suggested, the 'rhetorical binding of the post-war consensus', elicited a 'narrative of popular democratic accomplishment, requiring elaborate and extensive dissemination'.¹⁹ If the belief in more effective democracy was indeed widespread then justifications for social hierarchies and for an elite necessary to lead them had little resonance in the street. When the economy flourished and the standard of living rose, even though the Conservatives could claim credit, the future became more attractive than the past to great numbers of people whose past was not nearly as comfortable as their present.

In 1945, when their ascendancy was challenged and the Left was catapulted into political power, British conservatives found themselves in the unfamiliar

and uncomfortable position of outsiders. In 1985, Robert Blake, the pragmatic conservative historian who finds ideology and principles unimportant in conservatism, looked back at the late 1940s as the years when Britain declined as an economic and as a 'great' power. By the early 1960s, Blake found the dominant political mood to be self-doubt, self-criticism, and dissatisfaction with the status quo, which meant with the Conservatives, who had been in continuous office for eleven years.²⁰ At the same time that events contradicted the conservative historians' assumptions and conclusions about place and power, their nationalistic and patriotic account of high politics, with its heroes and villains as models of national character to emulate or avoid, was repudiated by young people, including a new generation of historians. In contrast to the turmoil in America in the 1960s and 1970s, there was little searing confrontation in the streets, in Parliament, or in common rooms, but there was a growing left-leaning popular and intellectual resistance to traditional historical interpretations of English history. At the war's end, historians like G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate were writing that the study of history revealed a chronicle of egregious errors, wrong turns, and the economic exploitation of the weak.²¹ But it was not until the early 1960s that A. J. P. Taylor's *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961) and E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) created a definitive break with the conventional subjects and writing of history.²²

In the 1930s, a young A. J. P. Taylor had been convinced that British political, social, and economic institutions required remedy, and he then saw the radical Left as offering the possibility of a more just society.²³ When he wrote the *Origins* three decades later, which Kathleen Burk rightly calls one of his most 'provocative and undoubtedly most controversial books', he emphasized the 'accidental' nature of the war just as the first CND campaign was launched against nuclear weapons and against the possibility of another accidental war that would end this time in annihilation. Taylor began a debate on the origins of the Second World War, which continues still.²⁴ Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, a panegyric to self-conscious working-class groups determining their own future, spawned two generations of Marxist historians concerned with social and economic history from the bottom up. Their heroic figures were not national icons but ordinary people, attempting to right the wrongs committed against them by an unjust, class-conscious, and repressive society in which wealth, race, and gender determined power and status. In contrast to the Left, during the first two post-war decades, the Right could hardly encourage a radical wing because the pre-war radical Right had been contaminated by fascism. Conservative apprehension about a resurgence of their own radical Right disappeared in the late 1970s. Then, as discontent grew from a populous Left in Britain as well as in America, a new and combative coalition of the far Right developed in the wider community, in the halls of government, and in the academy.

It is interesting that among the new generation of conservative historians, many trained at Peterhouse and producing compelling work, such as Michael Bentley and Phillip Williamson, ignored the larger political world of left-wing politics and ideology to refute instead Left-wing and radical historians' social, economic, and cultural emphases on ordinary people, gender, and discourse.²⁵ The turn away from the greater Left to the Right within the historical profession may have been motivated by two phenomena. Most obviously, the political Left had not, as it was feared in the 1920s to the 1940s, become communist, socialist, or even conspicuously 'left' in its eventual march towards the centre. By the 1980s, the Left, often indistinguishable from the centre Right, were not dangerous enough to merit confrontation. A possibly more compelling reason for a revision of left-wing historical writing was that conservative historians wanted power and the uses and structures of power to remain the focus of historical study. That was important to them because they understood high politics to be the most revelatory approach for a historian, and because they also believed that such study resulted in more realistic appraisals about present and future policy. Some more radical, right-wing historians, such as John Charmley and Andrew Roberts, have devoted themselves to public, polemical conservatism as well as to historical revisionism.²⁶

In America, where there never was a unified conservative movement, an uneasy and shifting coalition included and excluded libertarians, social conservatives, religious fundamentalists, cold warriors, free-market economists, realists, nationalists, internationalists, neo-imperialists, neo-cons, and various mono-causal groups coalescing in large numbers around such issues as abortion, family values, homophobia, race, immigration, and the right to bear arms. Some became conservative in search of protection against those individuals and communities they perceived as threats. Lisa McGirr has maintained that conservative strength, enjoyed briefly in the early 1950s through the celebrity of Senators Robert Taft of Ohio and Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin, had been squandered by the mid-1950s. When there was a resurgence of grassroots mobilization on the Right in 1963, she claims that it was a result of lack of political power and influence within national politics and within the Republican Party.²⁷ Apart from the continuing ideological disarray among conservatives generally, as is evident from the *Wall Street Journal's* chronic but futile attempts to find acceptable definitions of their faith, conservative historians were also unable to flourish, let alone proliferate. The two schools of conservative historiography discussed in this book had no major disciples who became historians. Peter Novick noticed in 1988 that the historical profession had very few representatives of a conservative tradition and they had little 'influence before the 1960s' and 'no more thereafter'.²⁸

Boorstin and Berthoff, instead of searching for an American inheritance of British conservative ideas, institutions, and practices, found America to be exceptional. They defined American character as a conglomerate of immigrant traditions that simultaneously maintained their ethnic and cultural backgrounds while

contributing to a melting pot of American virtues that rewarded entrepreneurial pragmatism. Their post-war, rose-hued view of immigration had already been challenged by the first quota law of 1921, followed by more restrictive limits in 1924, and by the rejection of Jewish refugees from Germany in the 1930s, even though Hitler was willing to sell Jews and American Jewish groups were willing to buy them. It was not until 1952 that racial exclusions disappeared, although in 1965 the attempt to attract more Europeans meant, in effect, the exclusion of non-whites. By the last third of the twentieth century, in spite of these attempted restrictions, the foreign-born population tripled and the newcomers, millions of whom were illegal, became conspicuous for not melting into an 'American' mix.²⁹ Boorstin and Berthoff were unable to influence conservatism after the 1960s because conservatives were confounded by the extraordinary events that began in the 1960s and grew increasingly unprecedented. A conservative interpretation of a unified, harmonious history, based upon unique evolving and equitable institutions and traditions, became very difficult to sustain because it appeared not merely untenable, but false. The American time of troubles was characterized by the war in Vietnam and its escalation; the Watts riots and the civil rights revolution; a racial, class, and religious backlash; the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the subsequent assassination of his brother Robert; the campus disorders and the emergence of an anarchistic youth movement; the appearance of the 'Radical Right'; assertive feminism; and the constitutional crisis of Watergate. These traumatic events led scholars of American history to find Boorstin's conservative and conciliatory interpretation anachronistic or irrelevant. Boorstin's books remained bestsellers, but their focus shifted away from American history to topics such as *The Discoverers* (1983), *The Creators* (1992), and *The Seekers: The Story of Man's Continuing Quest to Understand his World* (1998).

The ideological tradition represented by Viereck and Kirk remained more popular within conservative intellectual circles. Despite the ascendancy and recent decline of a neo-conservatism ignorant of its own history, the romantic Burkean Toryism of Viereck and especially of Kirk continues to attract adherents. Kirk had the closest ties to the Republican establishment locally in Michigan and nationally in the Nixon and Reagan White Houses. His influence was extended further because of his long association with the *National Review*, the most consistently important of conservative journals since its foundation in 1954, and with the Heritage Foundation, an equally important disseminator of conservative views. When the Heritage Foundation assembled its summer interns in 2005, a young man named Kenneth Gibb reported that he had packed only one book because it sent 'chills up my spine'. The author was Kirk.³⁰ One intern, with or without chills, hardly demonstrates a trend, but it is a reminder that Kirk, in common with Viereck, provided an alternative to the liberalism that was so pervasive before the 1970s. In 1999, when Lee Edwards published his *The Conservative Revolution. The Movement that Remade America*, he dedicated it to

‘the founders of the American conservative movement, especially Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Barry Goldwater’.³¹

Beginning with Viereck and continuing with Kirk, conservatives were given an intellectual context that was aggressively ideological, insistently moral, Christian, and iconoclastic. That context appeared to be more than opinion or political preference because it was situated in American history and connected to British roots going back further than the American Revolution. Recently, Viereck, who no longer contributed to conservative history or polemics after the mid-1960s, has been resurrected by the Transactions Series imprint of Rutgers University Press. Whether historically accurate or not, their vision continues to play a conspicuous part in the attempts by conservatives to discover an explicitly American tradition.

All the major figures discussed in this book were public intellectuals attempting to propagate those traditions that mattered to them. There is no question about the sincerity of their conservative beliefs, but can their public persona as a ‘conservative’ be seen, at least in part, as an application for appreciation, status, and recognition? Would they each have so avidly pursued their convictions if they knew they would remain forever excluded from the select groups whose company they coveted? Even if they occasionally lauded the virtues of ordinary people, whom they sought to influence and even transform, they were all intellectual elitists. Outsiders like Hearnshaw, Butterfield, Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin were rewarded for their commitment to conservatism by being welcomed effusively into the establishment. Bryant’s and Feiling’s fortunate family connections did not satisfy either of them and they aspired to greater personal influence through politically active conservatism. Butterfield, in spite of his Cambridge ascendancy and worldwide reputation, continued to remember his family and their place in a lower-class society with a romantic patina as part of his sustaining personal past. Kirk, too, made his lower-class family representative of the best qualities in American life. In spite of their origins, which they both idealized, Butterfield and Kirk resurrected a historical heritage worth conserving not only for its inherent virtues but because they were able to participate in it as both narrators and actors. That does not mean that they did not genuinely welcome and believe deeply in the historical institutions, values, and traditions that imbued the present. Their adamant conservatism was the truest form of belief. Still, ‘conservatism’ certainly gave them access to a venerable and venerated past that they could not claim by birth or wealth. Bryant’s past, while spent in the immediate neighbourhood of the wealthy, powerful, and even royal, did not make him wealthy or powerful until he became a polemical conservative and one of the intellectual and cultural icons of the inter-war Conservative Party. Feiling may have been the most comfortable in his position, which was largely an extension of his greater family’s intellectual life, but he was unique in that family for his political engagement.

Each of the conservative historians in both Britain and America discussed here addressed themselves to those with genuine political power as well as

to the intelligent public. Within their diverse audiences, can we know what was accepted, rejected, or acted upon?³² The essential purpose of all their writing, historical and polemical, was to persuade people to live according to a conservative view of political, social, and economic reality. The demonstration of their influence upon those in a position to move policy and national direction is sometimes specific—as in the case of Hearnshaw, Bryant, Feiling, and Butterfield—because we have the record of their political activities and the testimonies of those well-placed figures they affected, as Parts II and III reveal. The American conservative historians Viereck, Kirk, and Boorstin had access to presidential candidates, presidents, senators, congressmen, and important journalists, and we know that they were heard and admired by them, as is evident in Part IV. Even more importantly, beyond some influence on that small group with potential power, the American and British conservative historians spoke directly to listeners who may have been searching for a coherent view that gave them some measure of security or comfort, or that fit their basic assumptions, or that confirmed the views they already held, or that provided an alternative to liberalism or other competing movements of ideas and values. The American and British conservative historians both presented a political, social, and economic agenda that insisted upon the inclusion of all elements of the population. That message was very likely to resonate among those already comfortably included, as well as among those who perceived themselves as excluded but welcomed a promise that they, too, could belong and prosper. All the conservative historians championed an encompassing organic and patriotic nationalism that was demonstrated by a history that had conferred the providential blessing of exceptional national characteristics. A grateful public paid attention to them for as long as they believed that the historians' narratives were accurate and adequately described their own expectations and myths about the past, present, and, most importantly, the future. That public, whose beliefs may have had more national effect than the behaviour of politicians, expressed their admiration for the conservative historians by buying their books, reading their contributions to newspapers and journals, listening to them on the radio, and watching them on television.

What can be said of the future of the conservative past? Historians cannot predict the future. We have enough difficulty in establishing a coherent and satisfying view of what we imagine to have happened. When we have abundant testimony, many recorded perspectives on events, corroborating voices, and a chronology that allows us to speak about causes and effects, then there is a possibility of revealing, and perhaps even reconstructing with a fair degree of accuracy, the contexts in which people, events, ideas, cultures, institutions, and circumstances are related to each other. Then, we can attempt to construct a web of meaning that explains at least our particular enquiry into the past. We can follow suggestive trends and plausible directions through circumscribed periods of time, and we can understand what many of the actors believed that they

were doing. The advantages of informed hindsight allow us greater accuracy in grasping elusive contexts.

The American and the British conservative historians chose to be active participants within the rapid and unsettling history of their own time. They came to those events through a diverse range of experiences within and without their professions. All of them had ability, determination, and perseverance, although they were not original thinkers. Committed to their work as historians, they saw themselves as pursuing truth in a fair and accurate study of the past. Their conservative views and values were, they believed, deduced from their historical enquiries and understanding of the past. A variety of audiences found their thinking and its justification compelling through the mid-1960s, when unanticipated challenges nationally and internationally made their views increasingly irrelevant. A generation later, in both America and Britain, an ostensibly new conservatism of the radical Right clamoured for power.

After Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in America, has the confusion on both sides of the Atlantic, amplified by the British Conservative Party's inability to find an appealing programme and a principled leader, and by the neo-conservative debacle in America, led conservatives to a remarkable loss of direction both domestically and internationally? Or will a reappraisal occur, resulting in a more durable centre for conservatism? Can the conservatism championed by the conservative historians again find an audience to whom the resurrection of tradition and values may be more satisfying than the invention of new ones? There is little doubt that in both Britain and America that audience is now much smaller and more marginal than it was before the 'realism' emphasized by Thatcher and Reagan omitted the compassionate part of conservatism. Could those conservative assumptions of more than half a century ago, as well as the history that validated them, still ring true among the wider public and within the narrower corridors of power? While that scenario appears highly unlikely, no other more cohesive or persuasive conservative ideology in either Britain or America seems to be on offer.

NOTES

1. The programme was called *The Happy Gang*. E. L. Rose, 'End of Depression and the War Years', a personal memoir, www.hillmanweb.com/elrose06.html
2. The remaining words were:

While there's a busy street,
Wherever there's a turning wheel,
A million marching feet.
Red, white and blue;
what does it mean to you?
Surely you're proud,

shout it aloud, 'Britons, awake!'
 The empire too, we can depend on you.
 Freedom remains.
 These are the chains
 Nothing can break.
 There'll always be an England,
 And England shall be free
 If England means as much to you
 As England means to me.

3. The full words were:

Coming in on a wing and a prayer
 Though there's one who is gone, we still carry on
 We're coming in on a wing and a prayer.
 Watta show what a fight
 Yup, we really hit our target for tonight
 How we sing as we lift through the air
 Look below, there's our field over there
 With a full throttle on and our struts in a storm,
 We're coming in on a wing and a prayer.

4. Leo P. Ribuffo, "'Malaise' Revisited: Jimmy Carter and the Crisis of Confidence', in *The Liberal Persuasion*, esp. 175–6.
5. John Campbell, Margaret Thatcher, vol. I *The Grocer's Daughter* (London, 2000), 383.
6. See Seldon and Ball (eds.), *The Conservative Century*.
7. Kenneth Baker, *Faber Book of Conservatism* (London, 1993), p. vii.
8. *Ibid.*, see ch. 4.
9. Peter Goldman, *Some Principles of Conservatism* (London, 1956), 3.
10. 'The Growth of the Radical Party', in Edinburgh, 23 November 1882, in *Speeches of the Marquis of Salisbury. With a Sketch of his Life*, ed. Henry W. Lucy (London, 1885), 29.
11. See Kenneth Minogue (ed.), *Conservative Realism. New Essays in Conservatism* (London, 1996), for the Thatcherite view; and Ian Gilmour, *What Happened to the Tories? The Conservative Party since 1945* (London, 1997), for the Tory Democratic emphasis.
12. Alistair B. Cooke, 'The Conservative Party and its Manifestos. A Personal View', Introduction to Iain Dale (ed.), *Conservative Party General Election Manifestos 1900–1997* (London, 2000), 5.
13. Martin Francis, "'Set the people Free"? Conservatives and the State, 1920–1960', in Martin Francis and Ina Zweiniger-Bargilewska (eds.), *The Conservatives and British Society, 1880–1990* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 58.
14. D. R. Thorpe's *Eden*, argues further that there was a clear relationship between Eden's and Macmillan's experiences in the war and their opposition to appeasement.

15. Iain Macleod, *One World* (Conservative Political Centre, 1960), 22. Macleod was Minister of Health, 1952–5, Minister of Labour and National Services, 1955–9; and Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1959–61, when he wrote this pamphlet. Subsequently, he became Chairman of the Conservative Party, 1961–3, sharing the chairmanship with Lord Poole in 1963; and simultaneously Leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1970, the year he died, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was also editor of *The Spectator*, 1963–5.
16. See esp. Peter Catterall, General Editor's Preface, in Harriet Jones and Michael Kandiah (eds.), *The Myth of Consensus. New Views on British History, 1945–64* (London, 1996), p. x, which argues that the 'idea of "consensus" obscures more than it illuminates. Such policy continuities as there are might be more plausibly explained by constraints, economic, electoral or international to name but a few, rather than by the voluntaristic and generous impulses implied by the word consensus. Certainly the latter does not seem to have been the intention of the political parties.' While he admits that there was the creation and maintenance of the welfare state by both parties, 'its form was contested. Indeed, the very introduction of key elements in the Welfare State, such as the National Health Service, was shaped by a history of pre-conflicts, its final form reflecting perhaps compromise rather than consensus.' See, too, Harriet Jones, 'Introduction', p. xiv and 'A Bloodless Counter-Revolution: The Conservative Party and the Defence of Inequality, 1945–51'. Michael Kandiah, in 'Conservative Leaders, Strategy—and "Consensus"? 1945–1964,' makes the point that Conservative ideas after the war were consistent with those before the war, 74. See, too, John Ramsden, 'A Party for Owners or a Party for Earners? How Far did the Conservative Party really change after 1945?', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 37 (1987), 49–63.
17. Harriet Jones, 'New Conservatism'? The Industrial Charter, Modernity and the Reconstruction of British Conservatism after the War', in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters (eds.), *Moments of Modernity. Reconstructing Britain, 1945–1964* (London, 1999), 188.
18. G. R. Searle, *Country Before Party. Coalition and the Idea of 'National Government' in Modern Britain, 1885–1987* (London, 1995), 226.
19. Geoff Eley, 'Finding the People's War: Film, British Collective Memory, and World War II', *AHR*, 106: 3 (June, 2001), 821, 823. See, too, Becky E. Conekin, *The Autobiography of a Nation. The 1951 Festival of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
20. Robert Blake, *Decline of Power 1915–1964* (London, 1985), 322, 326, 328, 406.
21. See G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, 'Epilogue', in *The British Common People, 1746–1946* (London, 1947).
22. Robert Bosworth, *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima. History Writing and the Second World War, 1945–1990* (London, 1993), 51. Bosworth found it significant that these new directions have not produced any subsequent radical revolution within the historiography of the Left. Instead, the new, self-conscious, revolutionary radicals such as Jonathan Clark and Norman Stone stand conspicuously on the far Right.

23. A. J. P. Taylor had 'no illusions about Stalinism' in the 1930s, but he was 'unshakably pro-Russian' and saw the 'Five Year Plan as a demonstration of socialism in action', *A Personal History* (London, 1983), 124.
24. Kathleen Burk, *Troublemaker. The Life and History of A. J. P. Taylor* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 281, 282, 295.
25. See esp. Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury's World*; and Philip Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin*.
26. See, e.g., John Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics, 1900–1996* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); and Andrew Roberts, *A History of the English-speaking Peoples Since 1900* (London, 2006).
27. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors. The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 66–7.
28. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 464. As an instance of the lack of influence among Conservative historians, Novick observes that the only explicitly Conservative historical journal, *Continuity*, began publication in 1980 and by 1985 had a circulation less than 300, while the Left's *Radical History Review* had 3,000 subscribers.
29. See Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design. Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).
30. Quoted in Jason De Parle, 'Next Generation of Conservatives (by the Dormful)', *NYTimes.com*, 14 June 2005. Viereck, who died in 2006, had 16 books still in print, including volumes of poetry. Rutgers University Press, in its Transaction Series is republishing *Metapolitics*, *The Unadjusted Man*, and *Conservatism Revisited*. In Mecosta, Michigan, Kirk's hometown, there is a Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal, dedicated to perpetuating his ideas.
31. Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution. The Movement that Remade America* (New York, The Free Press, 1999). The book jacket carries lavish testimonials from Buckley, William J. Bennett, and George F. Will.
32. See Robert Colls, *The Identity of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2002), and the 'Roundtable' on Hall's book, *JBS*, 42:4 (October 2003), 505–38; and Peter Mandler, *History and National Life* (London, 2002), and *The English National Character* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), for provocative discussions about British 'identity'. For an analyses of 'mass' reading, in addition to Jonathan Rose, see John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939* (London, 1992); and Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1870–1939* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2004). For a discussion of what political thinkers say and what their listeners and readers hear, see Soffer, 'Political Ideas and Audiences: The Case of Arthur Bryant and the Illustrated London News'.

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PERIODICALS AND JOURNALS ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Alb</i>	<i>Albion</i>
<i>AHAP</i>	<i>American Historical Association Perspectives</i>
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>AJ</i>	<i>Asbridge Journal</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Cambridge Review</i>
<i>Conf</i>	<i>Confluence</i>
<i>CBH</i>	<i>Contemporary British History</i>
<i>Dae</i>	<i>Daedalus</i>
<i>DD</i>	<i>Daily Dispatch</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Daily Express</i>
<i>DS</i>	<i>Daily Sketch</i>
<i>EJRSSG</i>	<i>England, the Journal of the Royal Society of St George</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>Hist</i>	<i>History</i>
<i>ILN</i>	<i>Illustrated London News</i>
<i>IR</i>	<i>Intercollegiate Review</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
<i>LAT</i>	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>

<i>MEN</i>	<i>Manchester Evening News</i>
<i>MVHR</i>	<i>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</i>
<i>NR</i>	<i>National Review</i>
<i>NYRB</i>	<i>New York Review of Books</i>
<i>Obs</i>	<i>The Observer</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PoP</i>	<i>Patterns of Prejudice</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Political Quarterly</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Revue de Synthèse</i>
<i>Spec</i>	<i>The Spectator</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Sunday Times</i>
<i>T&T</i>	<i>Time and Tide</i>
<i>TCBH</i>	<i>Twentieth-Century British History</i>
<i>WSJ</i>	<i>Wall Street Journal</i>
<i>W&I</i>	<i>The World & I</i>

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Many of the subjects of this study lived well into the second half of the twentieth century. The contemporary nature of their work, the ongoing discussions they had with their peers, and their active participation in debates about the meanings of conservatism make any discrimination between 'primary' and 'secondary' writings problematic. Instead, I have arranged their books, articles, and editing under each author's surname, and, to provide a more complete understanding of any author's interests over time, their various writings appear in chronological order.

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