

I may quote myself, and all otherwise. This and believe there is a certain calling.



JAMES JOLL

James Bysse Joll 1918–1994

JAMES JOLL died in London on 12 July, 1994, aged seventy-six. Professor Emeritus at the London School of Economics, he was one of the most eminent and productive historians of his generation. Joll held a chair of international relations, and made a lasting contribution to debate about the origins of the First World War; he also wrote widely on movements and ideas of the European left, and was the author of a sophisticated general book on modern European history that set the standard in the field. Running through all his work was a strong interest in the connections between ideas, culture and politics. This reflected the great importance that culture played in his life. James Joll was a man of wide reading, took an exceptionally well-informed interest in the visual arts, and had a lifelong love of music (he was a gifted pianist). He also possessed a very strong sense of right and wrong, yet there was absolutely nothing of the martinet about him. James Joll was, as everyone who met him quickly realised, a man of quite unusual warmth and kindness.

When eminent academics are immortalised on canvas, usually at the point of retirement, they are invariably painted in aldermanic mode. The portraiture is naturalistic and competent; the distinguished person wears a dark suit and tie. James Joll was painted wearing a green tie and no jacket, sitting next to an alarm clock with no hands. The artist was an American modernist master, R. B. Kitaj, who also happened to be a friend. The work in question (it is in private possession) was on show to the public at an exhibition that opened just weeks before Joll died; the

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major Kitaj retrospective at the Tate Gallery. Work number 28 was a large canvas called *From London (James Joll and John Golding)*.¹ Painted in 1975–6, its central figures are two men with whom Kitaj had recently begun a lasting friendship, Joll himself and his companion of nearly forty years, the painter and art critic John Golding. At that time Kitaj had become increasingly interested in the human figure, and the painting dates from the period when he coined the term ‘school of London’ to describe figurative artists such as Auerbach and Freud. A few years later Kitaj would start to practise what he was already championing. *From London* is a painting in a different idiom, however, one that the artist favoured in the 1970s. His two figures are placed in flat, carefully delineated planes of colour, surrounded by a collage of objects representing the world his friends inhabited. And where better to begin an appreciation of James Joll, an historian to whom the arts meant so much, than with the busy, allegorical composition of an artist obsessed with history?

James Joll is shown in profile seated towards the left of the canvas and facing the same way. Behind him lies the world of cultured domesticity; a Mondrian hangs on the wall. Immediately in front of him, a small and enigmatic figure wearing a flat cap leans against a tree — looks, indeed, as if he might be perched on an invisible branch like a weightless character out of a Chagall. This poor but respectable worker is a marvellously disturbing presence, and the historian of socialism and anarchism is looking steadily towards him. In the foreground is a table with books, three of them carrying clearly visible names: Léger; Wollheim, the philosopher and writer on aesthetics, a close friend of Joll’s; and Gramsci, the Italian Marxist writer on whom he was then preparing an introductory work. The firmly cosmopolitan title, the scholarly allusions, the icons of modernist high culture — these point to some of the many facets of James Joll’s life. Serious-minded but never pompous, he was a man of genuinely European sensibility and interests, who read and spoke many languages and always shunned Little-Englandism.

James Bysse Joll was born in Bristol on 21 June 1918, the son of Lieutenant-Colonel H. H. Joll and his wife Alice Muriel Edwards. He was an exhibitioner at Winchester, which he disliked, then studied for a year at the University of Bordeaux after leaving school, thereby adding French to his already fluent German. The slightly older Richard Cobb,

¹ The painting is reproduced in *R. B. Kitaj*, ed. Richard Morphet (New York, 1994), p. 142.

who spent a year in France between Shrewsbury and Oxford (the first of many), was later to speak of the 'second identity' he acquired as an Englishman gone native.² James Joll's time in Bordeaux during the period of the Popular Front government in France and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War was also a crucial experience. It opened his eyes to a larger world, and gave him subjects he would later pursue with great success as a professional historian.

In 1937 he took up a scholarship at New College, Oxford to read Greats, but his undergraduate career was interrupted by the outbreak of war. Joll was commissioned in the Devon Regiment in 1940 and served as intelligence officer of the 203 Infantry Brigade during 1941–2. He was then recruited into the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The 'Baker Street Irregulars' were created in July 1940 to 'set Europe ablaze' by acts of sabotage on the occupied Continent. Joll was trained as an agent, to be parachuted into Hungary. This was never a very successful theatre for the SOE, and after the Germans took over Hungary in March 1944 the SOE changed its plans for Joll. He was assigned to its Austrian, and then later to its German section. There he apparently refused on one occasion to be party to a covert operation he considered completely unscrupulous — an example of his strong moral sense that will surprise no one who knew him at any stage of his life. He worked in Germany on counter-intelligence duties from April to October 1945. About all of these experiences, James Joll remained very reticent. He shared the same background as many other young SOE operatives, but was not the swashbuckling type who would readily have imagined himself (as others in the SOE did) to be emulating a character from John Buchan or Dornford Yates.

Joll returned to Oxford in 1945 to complete his degree. Before the war he had read Greats; now he read PPE, in which his philosophy tutors included Isaiah Berlin and Herbert Hart. From 1946 he taught Politics at New College, of which he became a Fellow two years later. At the same time, he was tapped by the Foreign Office to join the team working under the direction of Sir John Wheeler-Bennett to classify and edit captured German foreign policy documents from 1918–45. For a six-month period in 1948 Joll acted as editor-in-chief. His dual-track activities in these years prefigured the two areas in which he was to make his greatest contribution as a scholar: the history of political ideas, and the history of international relations, in both cases broadly

² Richard Cobb, *A Second Identity: Essays on France and French History* (Oxford, 1969).

defined. This combination of interests was apparent in his first book, published in 1950 as part of the series on the British Political Tradition edited by Alan Bullock and William Deakin. The aim of the series was, as the editors put it in their general preface, 'to present from sources of the most varied kind, books, pamphlets, speeches, letters, newspapers, a selection of original material illustrating the different facets of Englishmen's discussion of politics'. (Even after 1945, it was clearly assumed that Englishwomen did not go in for that sort of thing.) Joll's volume, the third in the series, was a selection on the theme *Britain and Europe: From Pitt to Churchill 1793–1940*.³ It was characteristic of Joll that he not only rounded up the usual suspects, in the shape of Castlereagh, Palmerston, Gladstone and other parliamentary notables, but found the space to include some lines from Tennyson's *Maud* ('We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,/And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind.') It is equally in character that, looking for a way to pin down the Foreign Office mind in his introduction, it was a passage from Proust's *Within a Budding Grove* to which he turned.

In 1951 Joll served as William Deakin's principal assistant in setting up St Antony's College, Oxford. This was a new graduate college, made possible by a large bequest from the Aden businessman Antonin Besse, and it became an important centre for the teaching of modern history and politics — especially of Europe and the Middle East. In the field of German history, to take a prominent example, St Antony's has been one of the most important academic bases in Britain for visiting scholars, comparable to Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study as a favoured destination of German historians on sabbatical. Klaus Bade, Erich Matthias, Thomas Nipperdey, Gregor Schöllgen, Michael Stürmer, Peter-Christian Witt — these and dozens of others (with highly diverse views) have spent time at St Antony's, held seminars, and fostered the exchange of ideas between British and German historians. Often, figures who were to make major reputations came to the Woodstock Road some years before those reputations were established. James Joll had a major part in laying the foundations of all this. He was one of the college's founding fellows and served as its Sub-Warden from 1951–67, contributing much to the establishment of St Antony's as an institution whose graduate students and visiting fellows gave it a truly international atmosphere. This achievement was time-consuming, for Joll

³ London, 1950.

took his teaching obligations and heavy administrative duties very seriously. Perhaps it prevented him from writing a major monograph in his thirties and forties.

He was, nevertheless, very productive in his Oxford years. Between 1955 and 1964 he wrote three books and edited a fourth. They share certain common characteristics. Joll is concerned with political ideas in a broad European setting, putting a wide range of printed sources to telling use. He constructs his narratives with unobtrusive literary skill, has a sharp eye for the unfamiliar quotation, and writes with a distinctively dry, ironic voice. A common thread in the subject-matter of these books is Joll's sympathetic interest in the political left—not the dogmatic left that was sure it had history on its side, but the radicals, socialists and anarchists who grafted a concern for social justice on to the emancipatory promise of the Enlightenment, and stood against a narrow chauvinism as Joll himself always did.

The first of these books was *The Second International*.⁴ It is a subtly crafted work that draws on sources in English, French, German, Italian and Dutch. The great themes of the international (in fact, largely European) socialist movement in the decades before the First World War are all there—the rapid growth of its member-parties, the disputes between disciples of anarchism and Marxism, the problems caused by nationalism (especially in the multi-national Habsburg monarchy), the debates over 'reformism', 'revisionism', and whether socialists should, if the opportunity arose, participate in 'bourgeois governments'. Not least, Joll considers the discussions that marked the efforts of the Second International to come to terms with the threat of war—efforts that were to yield so little in the summer of 1914. The book is built around the German and French socialists—the large, disciplined mass party of German Social Democracy, the weaker, more fissiparous French movement—and the fraternal bickering that so often marked their relations. But Joll's pages also contain a large cast of minor characters (concern with individual historical actors runs through all his books), and present a persuasive account of the International as a whole.

While the book distributes its emotional sympathies widely, Joll clearly finds himself more drawn to the French than the German socialists. Running implicitly through his account is the contrast between a Gallic left that consorted in cafés with writers and painters,

⁴ London, 1955, rev. ed. 1974.

and a German party that sought 'blind insistence on doctrinal uniformity'.⁵ That nimble dialectician Karl Kautsky is described, rather unfairly, as a 'fanatic'; the dourly unimaginative Marxist Jules Guesde is at least credited with composing sub-Baudelairean verse. This is not the only occasion when Joll treats a commitment to the arts as, in effect, a redeeming feature, a sign of human generosity. He quotes an opponent who called Rosa Luxemburg 'that pedantic and quarrelsome person with her mechanistic interpretation of marxism'. His next sentence begins with a 'but', and a revealing one: 'But her political rigour and intellectual achievements were accompanied by a warmth, charm and sensibility, (she even used to sing songs by Hugo Wolf), rare in the socialist world . . .'.⁶ The book strikes the urbane tone that would inform all Joll's work. Of the July 1914 meeting between the French trade union leader Léon Jouhaux and his German counterpart Karl Legien we are told: 'As neither spoke the other's language, it is not surprising that little was said — nor that it is uncertain what that little was'.⁷ This is deft — and a shade donnish. *The Second International* is less substantial than many of Joll's later books, but it still holds up remarkably well as an accessible and perceptive synthesis of the subject. Joll's account bristles with *aperçus*. He discusses the German Social Democrats as a 'state within the state' ten years before Peter Nettl and Gunther Roth wrote classic analyses of this phenomenon, and he talks about the co-operation of liberals and socialists against the anti-'immorality' clauses of the *Lex Heinze* almost twenty years before Robin Lenman (one of Joll's own students) brought that obscure measure to the full attention of scholars. Joll reveals a similar mastery of the Allemanists, Broussists, Guesdists and other French socialist groupings, at a time when the Anglo-Saxon Ph.D. mills had not yet ground them into more easily digestible form.

Four years later, Joll edited a collection of St Antony's Papers on *The Decline of the Third Republic*.⁸ He wrote an introduction to the volume, and contributed an essay on the making of the Popular Front. The leader of the Popular Front government, the socialist Léon Blum, was one of the three figures who featured in the book Joll published the following year: *Intellectuals in Politics*.⁹ It is the most original work of

⁵ *Second International*, p. 105.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 161–2.

⁸ London, 1959.

⁹ London, 1960.

his Oxford period. The book contains three self-standing but connected essays: on Blum, who became leader of the French Socialist party after it had been weakened by the split with the Communists in 1921; on Walter Rathenau, the German industrialist and would-be philosopher first propelled into public life when he became head of the newly-created War Raw Materials Department in 1914; and on Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the Futurist artist who provided some of the ideological underpinnings for Italian Fascism. The three men were born within ten years of each other, and all had made careers in other fields before they took part in political life — with less than happy consequences. As the author laconically notes: ‘Entry into politics led to Rathenau’s death; it endangered Blum’s life and made nonsense of Marinetti’s.’¹⁰ The book offers a subtle examination of the contradictions, frustrations and compromises of intellectuals in politics, although most readers will probably feel that Joll is at his best dealing with the pre-political periods of his characters’ lives. His exegesis of their writings is often superb, showing how easily Joll moved in the larger intellectual history of France, Germany and Italy (and, indeed, Britain, for the Marinetti essay has a good account of the artist’s impact on figures such as Wyndham Lewis and C. R. W. Nevinson). The book has some wonderfully crisp characterisations: Rathenau’s ‘dehydrated mysticism’ would be hard to beat.¹¹ And the author is, as one would expect, very good when it comes to the striking detail: Blum’s enormous admiration for *Mansfield Park*, Rathenau’s fondness for discussing metaphysics over smoked salmon and Rhine wine. He even — another gastronomic note — mentions Marinetti’s advocacy of Futurist cookery, with its fierce attack on pasta — although it was left to a rather different sort of writer, Elizabeth David, to popularise this particular debate in *Italian Food*, which quotes Marinetti’s ringing proclamation that ‘spaghetti is no food for fighters’.¹²

Joll wants to explore the various kinds of interplay between career and calling, politics and culture. Re-reading the book, one is struck by some of the parallels with Peter Gay’s 1974 Cooper Union lectures, later published as *Art and Act: On Causes in History*. Gay also considers three prominent figures — Manet, Gropius and Mondrian — and

¹⁰ *Intellectuals in Politics*, p. ix.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹² E. David, *Italian Food* (Harmondsworth, 1977), pp. 93–4. See also N. O’Sullivan, *Fascism* (London, 1983), p. 143.

tries to weigh the different parts played in their respective achievements by the private inner world, the craftsman's imperative, and the broader public culture. Joll, like Gay, places individuals at centre-stage; but both are also concerned with larger social, cultural and political currents during the decades on either side of 1900, the period that historians (following art historians and literary critics) are beginning to call the era of 'classical modernity'.

Joll's great feeling for this period was also apparent in his next book, *The Anarchists*.¹³ It is a less original work than *Intellectuals in Politics*, and—curiously, perhaps—there was already a much more extensive and distinguished English-language literature on the subject than there was on the Second International when Joll wrote his first book. One thinks of H. N. Brailsford on Shelley, Godwin and their circle, E. H. Carr on Bakunin, Gerald Brenan on the Spanish anarchists, Franco Venturi on the Russian Populists, George Woodcock on almost everyone. Eric Hobsbawm had published his pioneering study on *Primitive Rebels* in 1959; and for the earlier parts of his book Joll could also draw on another classic, Norman Cohn's *Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957). To contextualise in this way does not diminish Joll's achievement. His account, based on printed sources in many European languages, is rich, sure in judgement and unfailingly intelligent. It exhibits a generous sympathy for history's losers, yet addresses the contradictions within anarchism, including the obvious fact that the same generic term covers both kindly, ruminative philosophical anarchists, and those who perpetrated acts of individual terror. Not least, the book is extraordinarily wide in its range of reference, from the Albigensian heretics of the thirteenth century to the post-Gandhian Indian social reformers, Jayaprakash Narayan and Vinobha Bhave.

The vice of this virtue is that the book has a certain unruliness, no doubt appropriate to the subject. Part One is devoted to the roots of anarchist thinking in religious Utopianism, Enlightenment ideas of perfectibility, and the mystique of revolution (and devoted revolutionary) spawned by 1789. Part Two, covering the middle years of the nineteenth century, is built around two dominant figures: Proudhon and Bakunin. The third part, easily the longest and arguably the most original, begins with the anarchist 'outrages' of the 1870s and 1880s and ends with the Civil War in Spain. It is here, and particularly when he deals with the years around the turn of the century depicted in

¹³ London, 1964.

Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima*, that Joll's account seems to slip into a higher gear. That is notably true of a short but very stimulating chapter on the cultural revolt of the 1890s called 'Saints and Rebels', which deals among other subjects with Prince Peter Kropotkin and his disciples, the rediscovery of Max Stirner's work in Germany, and the appeal of anarchism for French artists and writers of the *fin de siècle*. As Joll notes, when the Paris police raided Jean Grave's paper, *La Révolte*, in 1894, the subscription list included Alphonse Daudet, Anatole France and Stéphane Mallarmé, as well as others more actively engaged in the anarchist movement such as Signac and Pissarro. *The Anarchists* is an uneven book, but it is also more multi-faceted than *The Second International*. At its best it cuts deeper.

By the second half of the 1960s, Joll's association with Oxford was approaching thirty years' duration. He was a popular and greatly respected figure in the university. His circle of friends included not only colleagues in modern history such as Alan Bullock, William Deakin, Agnes Headlam-Morley and A. J. P. Taylor, but an extremely wide range of others: Isaiah Berlin, Maurice Bowra, Patrick Gardiner, John Sparrow, Robin Zaehner. Joll enjoyed the stimulation of Oxford; he also felt its stifling qualities. In *The Second International* there is a wonderful anecdote that he must have enjoyed recording. Jules Guesde, anxious to alter the thinking of the German Social Democrats on a particular doctrinal point, tried to enlist Engels' support through an intermediary, a Frenchman who taught modern languages at Oxford. Engels' irritated response was entirely in character: 'The idea of leading the European working-class movement from Oxford — the last bit of the real middle ages that still exists in Europe — is incredible . . .' ¹⁴ It is not a view of Oxford Joll would have shared. But his personal life, his wide cultural interests, and the challenge of teaching in a great metropolitan university all made London attractive. In 1967, therefore — at about the same age when the lives of Léon Blum and Walter Rathenau were fundamentally changed — he accepted the offer of the Stevenson Chair of International History at the London School of Economics.

James Joll already moved comfortably between the intellectual worlds of Oxford and London. Professionally, however, the decision to go to London placed him in a new setting. The LSE was, of course, a very peculiar institution: stimulating and querulous, an important

¹⁴ *Second International*, p. 52.

source of new thinking on both left and right, intensely English yet strongly touched by Continental thought through powerful figures such as the sociologist Karl Mannheim, or (in Joll's time) Ernest Gellner and Ralf Dahrendorf. Joll certainly found some aspects of the School more congenial than others. He was a man of great institutional loyalty, however, and became an important, much-liked member of its senior professorial ranks.

The 'School' was the institution to which James Joll now owed his immediate allegiance; but his move to the capital also made him part of the larger London School of History. In substance and style, this marked a sharp break from Oxford. The London school owed much more to the nineteenth-century German model of what a school of history should be. The emphasis was squarely on professionalism rather than donnish inspiration: students were to be trained, not encouraged simply to graze in the great libraries. Research students had long been expected to serve their apprenticeships by writing a Ph.D., something that was still regarded as a bizarre Teutonic notion in many Oxford circles at the time when Joll left. The Institute of Historical Research, as the sternly Rankean name suggests, conveyed the message that good writing was all very well, but the footnotes had to come first. In these and other ways, James Joll was entering a different world—although the fact that his Oxford years had been spent at St Antony's probably made the contrast less stark than it would otherwise have been. During the fourteen years he spent at London University, before taking early retirement in 1981, Joll succeeded in combining the best from both systems. Thoroughly professional in his own habits and a very conscientious supervisor of dissertations, he happily never adopted the view that irony or elegant prose were suspect attributes.

One of the strongly German aspects of the London School of History was the power of the professor. Its hold was weakening in the 1960s, although there were still instances of junior lecturers who mowed the professor's lawn at the weekend. This was not James Joll's style: his instincts were strongly collegial, not hierarchical. Altogether more congenial were three other aspects of London: the importance attached to the history of ideas, a tradition of strength in international relations, and the high profile enjoyed by modern European history, represented by professors such as Douglas Johnson (France), R. F. Leslie (Poland) and Christopher Seton-Watson (Italy). Above all, Joll struck up a productive professional relationship with the German *émigré* historian, Francis Carsten, who had taught in London since the late 1940s and

became Masaryk Professor of Central European History in 1961. For many years the two men taught a paper called 'Autocracy, Democracy, and Dictatorship', dealing with Germany from 1860 to 1945. It consistently proved to be one of the most popular 'optional papers' among history undergraduates. Joll and Carsten also ran an important research seminar on modern German history, which met in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in Russell Square.

German history had always been important to Joll, from his post-war editorial work alongside Wheeler-Bennett to the pioneering essay on Walter Rathenau. In the 1960s he played a central role in introducing English-speaking readers to one of the most explosive debates in modern German history: the 'Fischer controversy' over the origins of the First World War. In 1961 the Hamburg historian Fritz Fischer published a book called *Griff nach der Weltmacht*. Most of the text documented the consistent expansion of German aims in 1914–18; but the opening chapters dealt with the background to the outbreak of war, a subject the author returned to in a second book on the years 1911–14, *Krieg der Illusionen*. Fischer argued that the German role during the July Crisis of 1914 had been more aggressive and intransigent than generally assumed, and he questioned the distinction between 'good Germans' such as Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, and 'bad Germans' in the High Command and on the Pan-German radical right. These claims alone would have guaranteed the book a stormy reception within the conservative German historical profession of the early 1960s. What ensured controversy, and made the Fischer debate a symbolic landmark in post-war German historiography, were two further arguments in his book. First, he explicitly suggested lines of continuity between German aims in the two world wars, thus antagonising the majority of his fellow German historians, who preferred to see Hitler as an aberration. Secondly, he pointed to the role played by economic interests in pre-1914 Germany, emphasising the contribution he believed German domestic social and political instability had made to the outbreak of war. The hostility that Fischer and his mainly younger supporters faced in the Federal Republic was immense, and it came in political as well as scholarly form. Not until the 1980s, when the *Historikerstreit* broke out, was there to be an historical controversy of comparable dimensions.

For many English observers at the time, it might not have been automatically apparent why Fischer's arguments aroused such a heated response. After all, A. J. P. Taylor's almost contemporaneous book on

the origins of the Second World War also drew lines of continuity between German foreign policy in the 1930s and earlier.¹⁵ Taylor, moreover, had long been arguing that the 'good Germans', however well-meaning, had never amounted to very much. James Joll's great service was to show the significance of Fischer's work within the German context, and to place it more generally within the twists and turns of First World War historiography. In 1966 he wrote an article on Fritz Fischer and his critics for *Past and Present*; the following year he contributed a sympathetic but not uncritical introduction to the English edition of Fischer's book.¹⁶

In April of the following year, Joll made a direct and very important contribution to debate over the origins of the war in his inaugural lecture at the LSE: *1914: The Unspoken Assumptions*.¹⁷ It is a little masterpiece of subtle, wide-ranging reflection. Joll suggests that a key reason for continued interest in the events of July 1914 was 'the discrepancy between the importance of the events themselves and of their consequences and the ordinariness of most of the politicians and generals making the key decisions'.¹⁸ These were men caught up in a grave crisis: uncertain and fatalistic, they fell back on instinctive reactions, traditions and modes of thought. To understand their motives, it was necessary to uncover their unspoken assumptions, the things that 'went without saying'.¹⁹ W. N. Medlicott, the previous incumbent of the Stevenson Chair, had remarked in his own inaugural lecture of 1955 on the limitations of the purely diplomatic documentary record. Joll went further. Not only were there actors who did not appear in that record: the words of those who did appear were neither transparent nor self-evident. What tone did they use? Did they express regret, relief, surprise?

This warning against a literal-minded reading of the diplomatic record no doubt carried more authority coming from a historian who had demonstrated his own expertise at sorting out documentary evidence. Certainly it was salutary. In 1961, for example, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher had enjoyed great success with a book that claimed to

¹⁵ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London, 1961).

¹⁶ 'The 1914 Debate Continues: Fritz Fischer and his Critics', *Past and Present*, 34 (1966), reprinted in H. W. Koch (ed.), *The Origins of the First World War* (London, 1972); F. Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (London, 1967).

¹⁷ London, 1968.

¹⁸ *The Unspoken Assumptions*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 6.

have located 'the official mind of imperialism'. Whatever revisionist virtues *Africa and the Victorians* might have possessed, however, it rested methodologically on the shaky assumption that decision-makers said what they meant and meant what they said.²⁰ Joll, a man of good sense, did not subscribe to this kind of common sense. In the inaugural lecture he illustrates his concern about documentary fetishism with some remarks on that other *succès d'estime* of 1961, Fritz Fischer's *Griff nach der Weltmacht*. He points out that our view of the notorious 'September Programme', a prime exhibit in Fischer's case, cannot rest on the contents of the memorandum alone, but on 'our general view of the mentality, the *Weltanschauung*, of the German leaders'.²¹ While many of Fischer's German critics reacted (or over-reacted) unhelpfully to his arguments, Joll's point is one that would now be widely accepted by historians at different points on the historiographical spectrum. Fischer's first book was a great landmark work; but his claims are potentially undermined—ironically, given the politics of the controversy—by a conservative literal-mindedness in reading evidence that plays down context, overlooks nuance and sometimes comes close to presenting a 600-page shopping list of German 'war aims'.

Historians should aim to reconstruct the presuppositions, the 'ideological furniture', of those charged with making decisions in 1914, says Joll. But how? He has thoughtful, if ultimately agnostic observations about incorporating psychology and 'economic factors' into our accounts. In some of the most original passages of the lecture, he then turns to the values and moral codes that politicians had absorbed in their youth. So, for example, we shall better understand Sir Edward Grey's schoolboy sense of honour if we understand that he always remained a 'high-principled, slightly priggish Wykehamist' (a gentle side-swipe at his old school).²² The second half of the lecture expands deftly on this theme. Educational systems, the influence of vulgar-Darwinist and distorted Nietzschean ideas, the varieties of anxiety and hope with which Europeans of the *belle époque* contemplated the prospect of war—all feature in an elegantly constructed case for the study of mentalities. The wide range of reference is characteristic of Joll: Hegel and Bergson rub shoulders with British diplomatic histor-

²⁰ Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961).

²¹ *The Unspoken Assumptions*, p. 8.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

ians, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Alban Berg are as integral to the argument as political memoirs. Joll's title, 'The Unspoken Assumptions', has become a part of the historical vocabulary, like 'the enormous condescension' of posterity (E. P. Thompson), 'the invention of tradition' (Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger), or 'imagined communities' (Benedict Anderson). Like those other happy phrases, it has been worn smooth by repetition; but it first gained currency by pinning down an important omission, or limitation, in prevailing ways of looking at its subject. Joll believed passionately that the study of international relations should not be wilfully self-limiting. 'What we call International History must in fact embrace all kinds of history', he argued, for 'any attempt to insist on a too rigid departmental division of historical studies into economic history, diplomatic history, military history, art history, and so on, must lead to an impoverishment of our historical understanding.'²³ Outstanding international historians of a later generation, including Akira Iriye and Paul Kennedy, have shown what can be gained from broadening the scope of the subject in some of the directions so eloquently mapped out by James Joll.

Joll's inaugural lecture ranged over the whole of Europe for its examples, but the focus was on one particular crisis. A year later, he offered a larger, synoptic view of European history in the 1969 Montague Burton Lecture on International Relations at the University of Leeds.²⁴ Joll was already working on his next book, which was to be a general history of modern Europe, and in the lecture we can see him trying out some of his ideas. He approaches the subject at three levels. The first is the very long-term. Joll gives us a striking broad-brush account of how 'Europe' might be defined, beginning with a discussion of its porous borders (the Atlantic, the Urals, the Mediterranean), then turning from geography to common history: the legacy of the Roman Empire, Christianity, the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment. This sets the stage for the second level, which concerns Europe from roughly the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Joll sets out the forces that offered potential for co-operation and integration (common ideas and institutions, industrial technology and free trade, organisations like the International Red Cross), and shows how they

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁴ *Europe: A Historian's View* (Leeds, 1969). From the same period, see also 'Europe Supreme', in J. M. Roberts (ed.), *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 (London, 1970), and 'The Decline of Europe', *International Affairs* (Special Anniversary Issue, 1970).

were outweighed by the nationalist and imperialist rivalries that culminated in the world wars of the twentieth century, leading in turn to the post-1945 division of Europe. Over the same period, as he notes, Europe's place in the world also shrank as the material and ideological weapons of imperialists were appropriated by non-European peoples seeking their independence. The third and final level of the lecture, with which Joll begins and ends, addresses the issues facing Europe at the end of the 1960s: the crushing of the hopes carried by the 'Prague spring', the prospects for unification within (Western) Europe, the emergence of renewed nationalist sentiment among small European nations such as the Basques, Bretons and Scots.

The Burton Lecture suggests the depth of Joll's erudition, as well as his deft handling of potentially overwhelming material. He belonged to a generation that thought and wrote in ambitiously large terms. Many of the themes sounded in his 1969 lecture were also the themes of prominent contemporaries or near-contemporaries such as Geoffrey Barraclough, E. H. Carr and Eric Hobsbawm. But there is, one feels, a difference in tone. Joll seems more pessimistic, not just in the rather sombre, edgy remarks with which the lecture ends, but in the larger lament for a lost liberal Europe.

In 1973, James Joll produced a full-scale interpretation of modern European history. *Europe since 1870: An International History* shows him at his best.²⁵ Perhaps only those who have written a general history will fully appreciate the skill that has been deployed in selecting and organising material. Joll opted for thematic chapters (only two out of fifteen carry dates), but these are not narrow 'subject chapters' that divide the world into politics, economics, society, the arts, and so on. Instead, wherever possible, these strands have been interwoven, so that we gain a stronger understanding than we do from most general histories of the connections between, say, industrialisation and culture, or politics and ideas. In several respects Joll has made his own task even harder by eschewing some of the techniques that can spread the weight of a long text: grouping chapters into overarching sections, or lining up the arguments in the manner favoured by some historians ('seventhly . . .'). The formal structure of the book is very light. Its success as a continuous narrative incorporating analytical themes therefore rests on two things: the wonderfully skilled handling of juxtapositions from one subject to the next, and the sheer quality of the writing. The second of

²⁵ London, 1973; reprinted in Pelican Books, 1976.

these virtues comes as no surprise, although perhaps in one sense it should: this is the work of a highly accomplished essayist sustained over almost five hundred pages. To give just one example of many, this is Joll's comment on Armistice Day 1918: 'The victorious powers did not yet count the cost of their victory and the defeated did not yet believe the extent of their defeat'.²⁶ As for the handling of material, consider the opening chapter. Joll begins vividly with the Franco-Prussian War, then tracks through the great powers in turn to illustrate not only 'The New Balance of Power', but the main elements of the domestic order in Europe; a brief consideration of two smaller countries—Belgium and Spain—then allows him to point up contrasting paths of social and political development in the later nineteenth century. Just twenty-five pages, and he has set the scene, conveyed basic information, introduced leading figures, and established central lines of argument. Only once does Joll's touch seemingly desert him. The chapter on Europe after 1945 is surprisingly boneless, a reminder of the dangers that stalk any general account—and of the unobtrusive mastery that otherwise gives *Europe since 1870* its great coherence. The word unobtrusive should be emphasised. There are some general works of history that, as it were, leave their pipes and ducts exposed—the literary equivalents of the Beaubourg. That was decidedly not James Joll's style. Modernism, for which he had such a great and informed enthusiasm in the arts, was not something he permitted to invade his writing of history.

The pivot of the book is the First World War. Dealing with the pre-1914 years, Joll's starting point is the free-trade liberalism that reached its high point in the 1860s. He shows how it was variously challenged by State intervention, socialism and imperialism. Two outstanding chapters ('Liberalism and its Enemies', 'The Industrial Society and its Critics') then consider the widespread cultural revolt of the late nineteenth century, something treated by many historians of the 1960s and 1970s as a straightforward 'anti-modern' spasm, but permitted its full complexity by Joll. He brings these threads together in his treatment of the war ('The European Crisis') and its aftermath; and this sets up a discussion of cultural ferment, international instability and the struggle between democracy, Communism and Fascism that structure his account of the 1920s and 1930s.

Two points stand out, I think, when it comes to the architecture of

²⁶ *Europe since 1870*, p. 239.

the book. The first is that, while Joll clearly (and with good reason) sees the First World War as a genuine caesura in European history (and in Europe's relations with the non-European world), the moral centre of his book is the period that straddles the conflict—roughly, the years from the 1880s to the late 1920s, the era of electrification and the cinema, vastly expanded bureaucracies and unprecedented political mobilisation, new kinds of urban living and revolutionary experimentation in the arts. *This*, the period of classic modernity, is what Joll writes about with incomparable insight. Secondly, the real culmination of the book is (again, with good reason) Hitler's War and his defeat. What the author has to say about the years after 1945 is well-informed and often shrewd, but one feels that he is less engaged than in the earlier parts of the book. Joll the citizen was clearly not at all indifferent to the events he lived through as a mature man; but we sense that Joll the historian has lost some of the intellectual energy apparent earlier in the work. He is respectful towards the Marshall Plan; the Coal and Steel Community is duly noted; but it comes as no surprise that Apollinaire figures more often in the text than Adenauer.

As it happens, Dada also receives more mentions than the Dawes Plan. But the book does not skimp on industrialisation, nor on the links between the economy and changes in both political and cultural spheres, on which Joll is very good. More obviously neglected are subjects that had, by the 1970s, become typical of a still optimistic, expanding social history—population, the family, social mobility, diet, crime. The book has seven maps, but no tables. Joll himself, writing in the introduction about the space he gives to individuals rather than 'vast global movements', notes drily: 'If this seems old-fashioned, then this is old-fashioned history.'²⁷ Except, of course, that it isn't. In one respect it is a very new-fashioned history. Joll is much more concerned with the city than the country, with workers than peasants, with bourgeois sophisticates than aristocratic primitives. It is striking that rural society hardly ever appears directly in these pages. Instead it keeps coming into view as a political or cultural construct: Tolstoy's idealised peasants, the blood-and-soil fantasy of German racialists, Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England*. Rural Europe, aristocratic Europe, pious and clerical Europe—these, too, have a smaller place in Joll's account than one might expect. It is notable that very little time is wasted on 'clerico-Fascism' or the authoritarian inter-war regimes in many of the small

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

(and some not so small) European countries. Salazar is not mentioned; even the domestic origins of the Spanish Civil War receive little attention compared with the impact of the struggle on international politics and the European imagination, so that John Cornford, Julian Bell and George Orwell appear in the text, but Gil Robles does not.

James Joll warms much more to the shock of the new than the persistence of the old. At one point he quotes one of his favourites, the Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky: 'After seeing electricity, I lost interest in nature. Not up to date enough.'²⁸ Joll himself certainly did not 'lose interest' in nature. Nor was he a vulgar progress-monger: one of the virtues of his 'old-fashioned' approach is that it side-steps the more tiresome aspects of the 'modernisation theory' fashionable when he was writing. He respects the quirks of his characters and the ironies of history. As the pessimistic note sounded in his 'Epilogue' suggests, he is no uncritical admirer of the streamlined, modern materialist world. What unlocks his enthusiasm is not the future in 1973, but yesterday's future. He was an intellectual wedded to Europe in the age of classical modernity from 1880 to 1930. And, for all its impressive fair-mindedness and balance, *Europe since 1870* is a book that — like all major books — tells us more about its author than he perhaps knew, or intended.

James Joll continued to revisit subjects on which he had written earlier in his career. In the 1960s he wrote on Walter Rathenau's relationship with the maverick journalist, Maximilian Harden, and contributed an introduction to the German edition of Rathenau's diaries.²⁹ Together with David Apter he edited *Anarchism Today* in 1970; the following year he wrote for an Einaudi Foundation volume on contemporary anarchism.³⁰ Italian political thought remained a subject of abiding interest: an important by-product of this was Joll's crisply perceptive book on another 'intellectual in politics', the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, for the Fontana Modern Masters series.³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

²⁹ 'Rathenau and Harden: A Footnote to the History of Wilhelmine Germany', in M. Gilbert (ed.), *A Century of Conflict 1850–1950: Essays for A. J. P. Taylor* (London, 1966); W. Rathenau, *Tagebuch 1907–1922*. Hrsg. und kommentiert von H. Pogge von Strandmann. Mit einem Beitrag von James Joll und einem Geleitwort von Fritz Fischer (Düsseldorf, 1967).

³⁰ Apter and Joll, *Anarchism Today* (London, 1970), which includes Joll's own article, 'Anarchism—A Living Tradition', also published in *Government and Opposition*, v, 4 (1970); 'Anarchism between Communism and Anarchism', in *Anarchici e Anarchia nel Mondo Contemporaneo* (Turin, 1971).

³¹ *Gramsci* (Glasgow, 1977).

It was, however, the origins of the First World War that he returned to most often during these years, a subject on which Joll was also helping to shape the direction of new research through the graduate students he supervised. When Imanuel Geiss and Bernd-Jürgen Wendt put together a Festschrift for Fritz Fischer in 1973, he contributed an article on 'The English, Friedrich Nietzsche and the First World War'.³² (Nietzsche, like Croce, was a recurring point of reference throughout Joll's writings.) Then, in 1978, he took stock of the debate—and more—in a lecture at the newly-opened German Historical Institute, London.³³ 'War Guilt 1914: A Continuing Controversy' surveys the vicissitudes of the debate from the 1920s to the 1960s, before coming to the crux of the lecture: the growing importance since the 1960s of interpretations that emphasised the 'primacy of domestic policy' in the coming of war. Joll, always generous in acknowledging the work of others, points to the arguments of post-Fischer historians such as Volker Berghahn, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, and Peter-Christian Witt. They had made a fairly convincing case for the *Primat der Innenpolitik* in the German case, suggests Joll; but what about the domestic circumstances of the other powers on the eve of war? He then offers a perceptive, sure-footed discussion of the problems facing two of them in 1914: Britain and France. The following year saw the publication of a further article on the decision-makers in 1914 and their 'freedom to choose', in a Festschrift for his mentor and friend, Isaiah Berlin.³⁴

Fittingly, James Joll's last book dealt with the causes of the conflict. *The Origins of the First World War* was commissioned for the Longman 'Origins of Modern Wars' series.³⁵ Published in 1984, it was already being reprinted for the fourth time the following year. To employ a viticultural term that its author might have appreciated, this was a sweet, late harvest—a *Trockenbeerenauslese*. The book is, as Charles Maier has rightly called it, a 'masterly synthesis'.³⁶ Twelve years on, it remains the first work that one would recommend to undergraduates

³² I. Geiss and B.-J. Wendt (eds), *Deutschland in der Weltpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf, 1973).

³³ P. Kluge and P. Alter (eds), *Aspekte der deutsch-britischen Beziehungen im Laufe der Jahrhunderte* (Stuttgart, 1978).

³⁴ 'Politicians and the Freedom to Choose: The Case of 1914', in Alan Ryan (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin* (Oxford, 1979).

³⁵ London, 1984.

³⁶ *New York Times*, 17 July 1994.

fresh to the subject, while resembling the routine textbook only in its 200-page length. It is hard to think of another historian who could have explicated better the unstable brew of European politics on the eve of war: German ambitions, Austrian fears, French grievances, Russian expansionism, British anxieties. Joll begins with the July Crisis, before showing, in a series of superbly judged chapters, how the decision-makers of 1914 were constrained by their own previous decisions and the larger forces within which they operated—the alliance system, strategic plans and armament programmes, domestic pressures, conflicting economic interests and imperial rivalries. A final chapter on the ‘mood of 1914’ returns to a favourite theme, surveying the assumptions of politicians and military men, but looking also at popular attitudes as they revealed themselves in invasion-scare novels and school-books, youth movements and navy leagues.

And the conclusion? On the debate about the German responsibility for the war, Joll adopts what might be called a modified version of the Fischer view. Germany is shown as a prime mover, but the strong version of a pre-emptive strike argument is rejected, and Joll notes the importance of Austrian ‘pull’ as well as German ‘push’ in the final crisis. On the larger question of how we should combine the different levels of long-term analysis with the immediate causes of the war, Joll suggests that we probably have to resign ourselves ‘to a kind of two-tier history’.³⁷ What we should *not* do is signalled clearly enough. No very satisfying explanation is likely to come, argues Joll, from attempts to quantify the causes of the war—or wars—by the *devotees* of conflict resolution and crisis management. (He is, however, predictably more civil towards such efforts than the more hard-faced exponents of International Relations, or ‘IR’, often are towards the work of hopelessly wishy-washy, humanistic historians.) On the other hand, Joll rejects those—especially English historians—who believe that only the immediate actions of politicians and the short-term reasons for them can be discovered. Between the neo-positivism of the computer-programmers and the blinkered empiricists, Joll makes a plea for something that is more historical than the former, more ambitious than the latter. And that prompts a fine rhetorical trope at the end of the book. In his introduction, noting the problem of combining so many different kinds of explanation, Joll had allowed himself the ironic observation that ‘ideally, no doubt, an account of the causes of the First World War

³⁷ *Origins of the First World War*, p. 205.

would lead to a moment of profound Hegelian insight in which everything in the world would be related to everything else and all the connections and patterns would become clear'. Two hundred pages later, he returns to Hegel from a rather different angle. After mildly scolding those who see history as simply one damn decision after another, he continues: 'But many of us are sufficiently Hegelian, if not Marxist, to want to try to bring into our explanations the moral values of a society, the *Zeitgeist*, as well as the economic interests of the participants both as individuals and as members of a class'.³⁸ This is a final grace-note in a book containing many. It closes the circle opened by the earlier reference to Hegel, and offers us a credo that is no less firm for being gently expressed.

In the same year that *The Origins of the First World War* appeared, James Joll delivered the Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute London.³⁹ The lecture discussed historians and national views of the past in Britain and Germany, a subject with contemporary resonance at a time when a core curriculum and the national 'heritage' were being debated in Britain, and 'identity' was becoming a central theme in West Germany. There was also appropriateness in the fact that Joll was invited to give the lecture. He had been one of the British historians who participated in the Anglo-German group of historians established in 1968, the initiative that paved the way for the German Historical Institute. He was subsequently one of the two British scholars (Eleanora Carus-Wilson was the other) who gave lectures at the Institute's formal opening in November 1976.⁴⁰ Joll's high standing in the scholarly world was honoured in other ways. In 1977 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. Joll twice spent a year at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, and was also visiting professor at Stanford, Iowa and Sydney. Not least, he accepted many invitations to deliver distinguished named lectures, including the Stevenson Memorial Lecture, the Martin Wight Memorial Lecture, and the first Richard Storry Memorial Lecture.⁴¹

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 205.

³⁹ *National Histories and National Historians: Some German and English Views of the Past*, 1984 Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute (London, 1985).

⁴⁰ See *Aspekte der deutsch-britischen Beziehungen*.

⁴¹ 'The Ideal and the Real: Changing Concepts of the International System 1815-1982', The 30th Stevenson Memorial Lecture, *International Affairs*, 58 (Spring 1982); 'Two prophets of the twentieth century: Spengler and Toynbee', 1984 Martin Wight Memorial Lecture, *Review of International Studies*, 11 (1985); 'Interpreting Japan', 1st Richard Storry Memorial Lecture, St Antony's College, Oxford (1987).

Over the years, James Joll contributed to a variety of *Festschriften*. In addition to those already mentioned, for Fritz Fischer and Isaiah Berlin, he wrote essays for volumes honouring (or, in one case, commemorating) Leonard Montefiore, Hans Rothfels, A. J. P. Taylor, Francis Carsten and Federico Chabod—a strikingly diverse company.⁴² In 1984, Joll was himself the recipient of a *Festschrift* bearing the apt title *Ideas into Politics*.⁴³ The volume gives some indication of the range of subjects pursued by Joll's pupils. There are articles on German workers, the French Right, the British Foreign Office and Italian Fascism; the links between economics and politics are well represented; but so are political ideas, international relations and cultural modernism. What is also striking about this collection is the distinction of its contributors, men and women of five different nationalities who taught in universities throughout the world.

Nothing could have been more misleading (or more characteristically modest) than James Joll's remark in the introduction to *Europe since 1870* that he had observed four decades of European history 'from the comparative safety and detachment of an English middle-class life'.⁴⁴ Joll prized a cultivated domesticity very highly, but he was the least insular of men. Even before the war, which moulded his life as it did the lives of so many contemporaries, his natural instincts were strongly anti-insular. He moved easily in European scholarly and intellectual circles, and lectured also in Australia, the Americas and the Far East. Travel, notoriously, can narrow the mind; but not in Joll's case. His generous, internationalist cast of mind is in evidence throughout his work, especially perhaps the lectures and essays at which he excelled. It shows in the subjects he wrote about, and in the way he wrote about them. When Joll commemorated his former colleague Richard Storry in 1987 with a lecture on 'Interpreting Japan', he was returning to a subject he had first broached nearly a quarter of a century earlier.⁴⁵

⁴² 'Germany and the Spanish Civil War', in M. Beloff (ed.), *On the Track of Tyranny: Essays presented to Leonard G. Montefiore* (London, 1960); 'The Historian and the Contemporary World', *Geschichte und Gegenwartsbewusstsein: Festschrift für Hans Rothfels zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen, 1963); 'Rathenau and Harden', in Gilbert (ed.), *A Century of Conflict 1850–1950: Essays for A. J. P. Taylor* (see n. 29 above); 'Walter Rathenau—Intellectual or Industrialist?', in V. R. Berghahn and M. Kitchen (eds), *Germany in the Age of Total War: Essays in Honour of Francis Carsten* (London, 1981); 'Socialism between Peace, War and Revolution', in S. Bertelli (ed.), *Per Federico Chabod (1901–1960): II. Equilibrio Europea e Espansione Coloniale* (Perugia, 1980–1).

⁴³ *Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History 1880–1950*, ed. R. J. Bullen, H. Pogge von Strandmann and A. B. Polonsky (London, 1984).

⁴⁴ *Europe since 1870*, p. xii.

⁴⁵ 'Japan—Asian State or Western Society', *Listener*, 31 December 1964.

Indeed, this wide interest in extra-European as well as European societies and cultures was already apparent in his essays during the 1950s, where, alongside articles on Georges Sorel and Heinrich von Treitschke, we find occasional pieces on the Middle East and Mexico.⁴⁶

If Joll's formal subject-matter was broad, so too was his understanding of what constituted a historical source. His inaugural lecture had urged historians not just to read behind the documentary record, but to take music, literature and painting seriously. It was something he himself did supremely well. Joll was also aware that the range of possible historical sources is much wider still. As he observed in his 1984 lecture at the German Historical Institute:

For most ordinary people their view of the past is a random and fragmentary one, made up of family recollections, war memorials, television programmes, holiday visits to castles and palaces, the associations of objects in their homes — a shell case from the First World War, or — especially for the British — a brass tray from India, a wooden African tool brought home by an uncle who had served in the colonies — a whole range of disconnected and often trivial experiences out of which it is very hard to construct any sense of a continuous history.⁴⁷

Joll welcomed the study of popular attitudes by professional historians. Like the French historian of the First World War, Marc Ferro, he was especially interested in film as a source for modern history, and served as chairman of the Inter-University History Film Consortium. This cut two ways, for film — like radio talks and popular writing — was also a means of communicating history to a broader audience. Joll directed and narrated the Film Consortium's film *Fascism*, just as he broadcast on BBC radio and wrote for non-specialist publications such as *History Today*. It was important, he believed, that historians 'not treat history just as a private kaleidoscope' or 'try to escape the responsibility of forming the historical awareness of a wider public'.⁴⁸

In American universities the term 'good citizen' is used to denote the person who takes teaching, administration and the small, thankless tasks of academic life seriously. James Joll was an exemplary citizen in this sense. He was also a well-informed and engaged citizen in the more conventional sense. His sympathies were always broadly on the left

⁴⁶ 'Georges Sorel: The Unorthodox Marxist', *Listener*, 3 January 1952; 'Treitschke and the Prussian Legend', *History Today*, March 1952; 'Arabs and Jews: the Onlooker's Dilemma', *Listener*, 5 June 1952; 'A Historian in Mexico', *Listener*, 9 April 1959.

⁴⁷ 'National Histories and National Historians', p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

(although he disliked the dogmatic or trendy), and he was saddened by what he perceived as the mean-spirited mentality in Britain during the last years of his life. Joll's beliefs were firmly held, but by temperament he was not someone to posture or wear his heart on his sleeve. On two occasions, however, his strong sense of moral duty led him to take a course of action that cut against the grain of his natural reserve. In 1956, his deeply held feelings over Suez caused him to lead a public protest by Oxford colleagues against the invasion. Then, in 1979, he gave shelter to his old friend and John Golding's colleague at the Courtauld Institute, Anthony Blunt, after Blunt had been named in the Commons as a former Soviet spy. This exposed him to widespread vilification in the press. I can remember telephoning him shortly after the story broke, to say how much I admired his personal act of courage and loyalty. In retrospect it is remarkable that he was answering calls; but, characteristically, he was. And it was equally in character that, after thanking me, he managed to find dry humour in the situation by remarking that not all of his callers had expressed the same feelings.

I first met James Joll in the spring of 1976. He responded graciously to the offprint of an article I had sent him, and invited me to give a paper to his research seminar with Francis Carsten. There, and over dinner in Bertorellis, I first experienced his great warmth and interest in others. Later that year I moved to a post in London, and we became colleagues. We examined together, and met at seminars and academic occasions hosted by the German Historical Institute and the newly-founded German History Society (of which he was a loyal supporter). We also became personal friends. James encouraged and helped me in countless small ways; he was a mentor and a model of academic integrity. I have never met a kinder man in university life. Short in stature, he had a distinctive way of rocking slightly on his feet as he talked; and his talk managed to be, at once, enthusiastic and diffident. James was patient and tolerant, always looking for the virtues in the most unlikely person or the most unpromising piece of work. It required practice at reading between the lines to discern when a review of his was, in fact, expressing disapprobation. I can recall seeing him angry on only one occasion, when we happened to be sitting next to each other while David Irving presented his 'revisionist' views on Hitler during a panel discussion at the German Historical Institute. It was, I think, not just the arguments that James found disagreeable, but the self-dramatising, game-playing way in which they were presented. Although the least pompous of men, James took academic and intellectual life seriously,

and had his own gentle way of intimating what he felt about self-regard or academic bullying. He was a warm, generous, very modest man, good-humoured and often funny, with a gift for friendship. 'History, like art, offers us an opportunity to enlarge our experience,' he wrote on one occasion.⁴⁹ He enlarged ours, not just through his work, but through his largeness of mind and goodness as a person.

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⁴⁹ *Europe since 1870*, p. xii.