



JEAN GOTTMANN

H. S. Rossotti

Jean Gottmann

1915–1994

Escape from Russia

JEAN GOTTMANN, who died on 28 February 1994 at the age of 78, was one of the most productive and creative scholars of his generation. He spanned two continents and several languages, almost uniquely making his mark in the French geographical world and in the Anglo-American one; no other geographer was simultaneously Fellow of the British Academy and Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. Even more unusual was that he was trilingual and tricultural. Born on 10 October 1915 into an affluent Jewish family of industrialists in Kharkov in the Ukraine, he lost both parents (Elie and Sonia-Fanny) in the revolutionary year 1917 when their home was robbed. A young widowed aunt came to rescue him and took him back to St Petersburg. They moved south through Moscow to Sebastopol in the Crimea where his aunt met and married Michel Berchin. The new family escaped via Constantinople and Marseille to Paris as part of the White Russian emigration to France. His uncle became art and music critic for an expatriate journal and brought up Jean in a rich cultural atmosphere of an extended family; visitors to the house included the historian Paul Milhiukov, Marc Chagall, and the Zionist leader V. Jabotinski. So, like so many émigré Russians of his generation, he grew up in a culture that was cosmopolitan yet francophone.

This brilliant and hard-working young man studied at the Lycées Montaigne and Saint-Louis, with Dr Elicio Colin, who had written about various French ports, as his geography master in the latter institution. He duly entered the Sorbonne, initially to read law, but soon found that his real love was geography. Like all other geographers in France at this time, he was required to devote part of his time to studying history. He also took a lively interest in philosophy, political science, and colonial affairs, especially appreciating the ideas of André Siegfried and of the geographer Emile-Félix Gautier. At the Institut de Géographie, numbers of staff and students were small. Emmanuel de Martonne, son-in-law of the great Paul Vidal de La Blache, taught all aspects of physical geography; Augustin Bernard specialised in colonial geography, especially of French North Africa; newcomer André Cholley occupied a chair of regional geography; and Albert Demangeon taught economic and political geography, having published influential books on *America and the Race for World Domination* (1921) and *The British Empire* (1923), and amassing evidence on the impact of the 'crash' of 1929 on the world economy. He also launched a devastating attack on the German practice of *Geopolitik* that he described in 1933 as 'simply a war-making machine'. De Martonne and Demangeon edited the influential *Annales de Géographie*, and Demangeon sat on the editorial committee of the controversial *Annales d'Histoire Sociale* that had been founded in 1929 by his historian friends at the University of Strasbourg, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch.

The late 1920s and early 1930s also saw the appearance of many of the volumes of the great *Géographie Universelle* that had been conceived in 1907 by Vidal de La Blache and Max Leclerc of the Armand Colin publishing house, but had been delayed by the events and dramatic territorial and economic outcomes of the Great War. De Martonne wrote two volumes on *Europe Centrale*, extending from the Rhine to the Black Sea, and had intimate knowledge of Germany, Czechoslovakia, and especially Romania, having presented three theses on Transylvania and the Carpathians. He had also served as official adviser on the delineation of Romania at the 1919 Peace Conference. Demangeon had inaugurated the *Géographie Universelle* in 1927 with two volumes on the British Isles, and on what would later be recognised as the Benelux countries. Together with Vidal's other favoured disciples (especially Lucien Gallois, Jules Sion, and Antoine Vacher) he had advised the French government during the First World War, drafting reports on strategically vulnerable sections of northern France as well as various other parts of Europe.

Following earlier contacts with the American geologist William Morris Davis and the physiographer Douglas W. Johnston, in the early 1920s many Vidalians published on European topics in the *Geographical Review*, the journal of the American Geographical Society based in New York. Its director from 1915 to 1935 was Isaiah Bowman who was well aware of the activities of the established geographers at the Sorbonne, and of their protégés. Foreign geographers, such as the Serb Jovan Cvijić (both geomorphologist and political geographer) and the Estonian Edgar Kant (a founding father of urban and quantitative geography), came to the Sorbonne to work with De Martonne or Demangeon. Without doubt, the Institut de Géographie was an exciting place to be between the wars, but its two leaders were very different personalities. Like several other scholars, including his friends Pierre Gourou and Jacques Weulersse, Gottmann was much more attracted to the open humanism of Demangeon than the cold science of De Martonne.

Gottmann received his *licence* (BA) in geography with history and continued with research for a *diplôme d'études supérieures* (equivalent of a masters degree by research) in 1934. In the previous year Demangeon had remarked that there were four over-arching themes that he wished his young researchers to consider: the densely-populated regions of the Far East, interactions between 'blacks' and 'whites', irrigation in arid lands, and the spread of urbanisation. He wanted Gottmann to focus on an urban issue, in particular the supply of foodstuffs to Paris, but the young man had an urge to travel and duly undertook his first period of fieldwork in the Levant, with a travel grant obtained with the assistance of Demangeon. His thesis was entitled 'La culture irriguée en Palestine' (Irrigated farming in Palestine) and was one of thirteen geography theses submitted in that year. However, it had the distinction of being published in abbreviated form in the *Annales de Géographie* in 1935. Amazingly, this was not Gottmann's first geographical publication, since he had already used his fluency in Russian to produce five short notes-cum-book reviews dealing with the second Soviet five-year plan, and recent developments in Turkestan, Uzbekistan, and Siberia. Apparently he wrote a number of journalistic pieces for French-language Jewish periodicals when he was only 16 and 17. During the remainder of the decade Gottmann's publications were mainly in the form of brief notes and reviews for the *Annales de Géographie* on Russian and Middle Eastern themes. Doubtless, these were undertaken at the request of Demangeon, co-editor of that journal, and of Elicio Colin who was responsible for collating the *Bibliographie Géographique Internationale*.

Assisting the Master

In 1937 Gottmann published his first English-language article that dealt with the extension of pioneer settlement in Palestine and appeared in the *Geographical Review*. This initiated what would be a life-long association with that journal, as Gottmann transmitted developments in Europe and the Middle East to American geographers, and wrote notes and articles in French on publications and research outcomes from English-speaking sections of the geographical community. This important pivotal position as a communicator on both sides of the Atlantic and his remarkable linguistic abilities offered opportunities for work to be recast for different audiences. Later in life, with his reputation firmly established, learned societies in many countries would be anxious to print the text of his keynote lectures, and this would have a similar effect on the pattern of his publications.

By 1937 Gottmann was working as a research assistant on various projects headed by Demangeon, who was especially concerned with agricultural issues during that decade. With the help of funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, a research centre for human geography was established at the Institut de Géographie and operated under the auspices of the Conseil Universitaire de la Recherche Sociale. In 1936 Demangeon launched no fewer than three investigations. The first of these dealt with foreign workers in French agriculture and was headed by Dr Georges Mauco, an established authority on international labour migration. That project would be fully completed, with a substantial volume appearing in 1939. The other two enquiries involved farm structures and rural housing; both were co-ordinated concurrently by the young Jean Gottmann. In addition, from 1936 to 1940 he helped Demangeon with contract research on the supply of foodstuffs and other raw materials into France, the compilation of detailed maps for the *Atlas de France*, being prepared for the Comité National de Géographie, and the compilation of publications on rural housing in France for the Exposition Internationale held in Paris in 1937. In addition, there were many editing and secretarial tasks to be handled for the *Annales de Géographie*. All this frenetic activity yielded an impressive array of reports, articles, book reviews and scholarly notes, predominantly in French but also in English.

On the negative side, however, Gottmann did not present himself for the rigorously competitive *agrégation* examination, in which success was obligatory in order to teach in a *lycée* or a university in France. Nor was he able at this time to proceed with work towards a *doctorat d'état* that

would be required for the status of professor in a French university. (In fact, he would not be awarded a French research doctorate until 1970 when, at the age of 55, he presented copies of published work for examination rather than a single thesis.) During 1939 he continued with his rural enquiries but the outbreak of war and the German invasion of France in 1940 made life in Paris especially difficult for this talented Jewish intellectual. Neither project had reached completion but during 1939 Gottmann was able to synthesise the results of sample surveys into farm structures in much of western France. Despite Gottmann having received support from the Rothschilds, Demangeon advised his protégé to leave the city, encouraging him to move to Montpellier where his life-long friend, Jules Sion, was professor of geography. Demangeon's further advice was for Gottmann to consider quitting France if conditions became unbearable. On 25 July Demangeon died, leaving Gottmann with neither a master nor a protector. Together with Pierre Gourou, his fellow student from the Sorbonne, he wrote a lengthy and appreciative obituary. Indeed, Gottmann was doubly bereaved at this time since Sion had died a fortnight earlier on 8 July. In the depths of despair, Gottmann continued working at Montpellier on a part of the farm survey, having left the results of the rural housing enquiry in boxes in the basement of the Institut de Géographie in Paris. He would never see them again, and was only able to bring the material on farm structures in western France to publication in 1964.

Escape from France

As conditions for Jews worsened in France, Gottmann decided to leave Montpellier, escaping through the byways of Languedoc and Spain to Liverpool, reaching the USA on 7 December 1941, the very same day that Japan attacked the American fleet in Pearl Harbor. From the very start he was fascinated by the concentration of wealth and activity to be found in and around New York. Indeed, his major textbook on America would bear a picture of the magical skyline of Manhattan on its cover. Academic and personal contacts arranged by Demangeon and Henri Baulig, a specialist on North America who taught at Strasbourg, to some extent eased the way for this brilliant, cultivated and polyglot twenty-five-year-old. In addition, there were relatives in and around the city who could offer support. Because of his fragile health he could not enlist in the armed forces but was involved with the activities of the Construction Board for

Economic Warfare (1942–4). His detailed knowledge of the rural geography of western France was particularly valuable in the preparation for the Normandy landings. In 1944 he represented the provisional government of the French Republic in the French West Indies, from which he managed to write an article on the isles of Guadeloupe for the *Geographical Review* (1945).

Despite his potential for administrative or diplomatic work at the highest level, he retained his concern for academic research in a university setting. Indeed, for much of the middle period of his life he would hold a number of concurrent positions. In 1942, he started a twenty-three-year-long association with the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton where he conversed, among others, with eminent physicists working on the Manhattan Project, and in the following year began a five-year position as lecturer and subsequently associate professor in the newly created Department of Geography at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where Isaiah Bowman (formerly of the American Geographical Society) had been President since 1935. Frequent train journeys through the discontinuously urbanised northeastern seaboard of the USA would, in due course, inspire Gottmann to produce his most monumental work.¹ Not surprisingly he began to write predominantly in English, with reviews, notes, and articles in the *Geographical Review* appearing on an astonishing variety of themes in the mid 1940s. Perhaps the most significant were his perceptive analysis of geographical research in France during wartime (1946) and his remarkable appraisal of Vauban (1944) as a military engineer, town planner, and regional surveyor during the seventeenth century, in which he argued convincingly that the art of territorial management, in the interests of wise government as well as defence, had many distinguished precedents in history.

Transatlantic transhumance

In 1945 Gottmann returned to France for a year to occupy a position as chargé de mission to advise the office of Pierre Mendès-France, Ministre de l'Economie Nationale. This involved many essentially geographical issues, such as evaluating sites for a new international airport on the

¹ Neil Smith's *American Empire* (Berkeley, 2003) shows that Bowman fired Gottmann for treating Johns Hopkins as a 'stopover between trains' (p. 267). The phrase was used by George Carter, Gottmann's head of department.

southern side of Paris that was duly constructed at Orly. Then followed a spell as director of studies in the research department for social affairs at the United Nations at Lake Success outside New York (1946–7). This enabled him to travel to Colombia and Venezuela and enhanced his knowledge of Central and Latin American affairs that would be put to good advantage in a future textbook. Thereafter he became research fellow of the Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique (1948–51), while teaching for a semester each year at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (1947–60) thanks to the intervention of his mentor André Siegfried (1875–1959) who taught there. In 1948 he went to Strasbourg to seek the advice of Henri Baulig on his early ideas for writing an urban geography of the north-eastern USA. Gottmann also served as visiting professor in numerous North American universities. It is hard to appreciate the rootlessness he must have experienced, living in different apartments or faculty clubs, month after month, year after year. As a political geographer—or more accurately, a spatially aware political scientist—Siegfried operated outside the confines of the Université de Paris (Sorbonne). Gottmann derived much inspiration from his senior colleague and some of his most influential work in political geography was written while he taught at the IEP.

He developed the concept of the compartmentalisation of the world (*cloisonnement politique du monde*); a division that arose through both material and cultural factors. Among the latter, he proposed that the most critically important could be isolated to produce what he called 'iconography', involving a sense of self image, spatial identity, and territorial belonging. More specifically, he identified a religious creed, a social viewpoint, and distinctive political memories (or a combination of all three) as central to this critical notion. (It is not too fanciful, perhaps, to see here an idea that Samuel Huntington developed so influentially, half a century later, in writing about the clash of civilisations.) These ideas appeared in articles, now increasingly written for political science journals, and also in *La Politique des Etats et leur Géographie* (1952) that distilled the messages of his seminars at the IEP. These embraced a thorough and rigorous review of 'geographical doctrines', past practices of political geography (including *Geopolitik*), frontiers, buffer zones, population distribution, and the resource needs of particular states. The book was published in a political science series, not a geography one, and was not reviewed in the *Annales de Géographie*. An English version was prepared but rejected by Gottmann, who let the idea drop as he turned to other things.

His energy continued unabated and in this phase of his life he edited an important international volume on *L'Aménagement de l'Espace: planification régionale et géographie* (1952) that was presented to the XVIIth International Geographical Congress in Washington. Indeed, he chaired the commission on regional planning of the International Geographical Union between 1949 and 1952. In addition, at this time he wrote two very substantial textbooks for geography students on either side of the Atlantic: *L'Amérique* (1949), and *A Geography of Europe* (1950). These were not to the liking of all reviewers with, for example, Jan Broek remarking that Gottmann's coverage of North American physical geography had 'been cut to the bone if not further', while social geography and especially urban issues were overemphasised.² The *Europe* text is also remarkable for the large numbers of maps that were reproduced directly from the pages of the *Geographical Review*, admittedly with acknowledgement. Nonetheless, both books would go through several revisions and expansions, and be translated into different languages in subsequent years. In addition to a set of articles on port cities, perhaps stimulated by his impressions of New York and Baltimore and certainly advancing some of his early ideas on transactional economies, Gottmann continued to write about Israel and Palestine, a collection of his papers being brought together as *Etudes sur l'Etat d'Israël et le Moyen Orient* (1959). Such activity was all the more remarkable since he had experienced a serious fall in the United Nations building in 1952 that broke his neck and required long periods of convalescence. Despite the physical pain from which he was never free, it may well have been that he found that these months of confinement to bed provided the opportunity to write and to revise his existing texts.

Although Gottmann displayed such productivity, he continued to operate on the margins of academic geography and did not receive the recognition that he undoubtedly deserved at this stage in his life from his fellow French academicians. Perhaps this was because he did not hold an *agrégation*—and was not considered 'one of us'—but more likely for other reasons: French geography at the time has been well described by André-Louis Sanguin as occupying a 'scientific and pedagogic ghetto'. The 'cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism of Gottmann were light years away from the petit-bourgeois university milieu'. Besides, there was a political

² *Geographical Review*, 40 (1950), 336–7.

reason; the university establishment of influential geographers (e.g. Pierre George, Jean Dresch) in the post-war years was Communist or at least fellow-traveller in its leanings, and—with the Cold War deepening—heavily distrusted Gottmann's American connections. Certainly, Gottmann was still heavily immersed in American geography, and between 1952 and 1955 he worked on a detailed study of the State of Virginia at the request of Paul Mellon of the Old Dominion Foundation of Washington and with the active support of Abraham Flaxner, founder of the Institute for Advanced Studies. *Virginia at Mid-Century* (1955) was almost a French-style regional monograph set in North America. This 584-page account traced the social and economic processes at work in the past to produce the spatial characteristics of the state *circa* 1950.

As a work of geography, the book was filled with maps, but in several respects it differed from the painstaking one-man efforts that gave rise to *doctorats d'état* in France. Gottmann acknowledged the help of research assistants, minimised the quantity of academic references cited, and included a large number of photographs, none of which came from his own camera. The book was, indeed, an attractive and insightful representation of the state, rather than simply being a diligent, scholarly description. At a seminar in University College London in 1964, the distinguished British geographer, Henry Clifford Darby, FBA (1909–92) commented on Gottmann's various books and acknowledged the relative merits of *Virginia*, while insisting that its author appeared to be 'something of a showman' rather than a traditional scholar. Although Gottmann was anything other than brash in his speech, there was a measure of truth in Darby's appraisal and that may well have been echoed in the halls of the Sorbonne as well as in geography departments in Britain. Nonetheless, the text had an impact in the USA and would provide an opening for Gottmann to tackle a much greater theme; it would be revised and enlarged to reappear as *Virginia in our century* (1969). A further book on *Les marchés des matières premières* (1957), that he revised from earlier versions by the Vidalian Fernand Maurette, contained highly original sections on waste disposal, recycling, and mineral recovery.

The road to Megalopolis

Following the invitation of Robert Oppenheimer, director of the Twentieth Century Fund, Gottmann took the momentous decision in 1956 to become research director for metropolitan studies based in New York. In

the following year he married Bernice Adelson, a journalist on *Life* magazine whom he had met during one of his many periods of convalescence. He occupied that post, with research assistants and appropriate financial resources, for five years (1956–61), and his massive 810-page study of *Megalopolis, the urbanised northeastern seaboard of the United States* was published in 1960. Gottmann was able to report to his ailing mentor Henri Baulig (1877–1962), who had been helpful in the darkest days of the early 1940s, that the project had finally reached completion. It was this remarkable volume that, above all, brought him international fame. Already presaged in an article of 1957 in *Economic Geography*, it was a *tour de force*. For the title, that had been suggested to him by Robert Oppenheimer as far back as 1950, Gottmann took an ancient Greek concept—and indeed an actual place name—that he knew well enough, for he had intensely studied Aristototele’s work on the Greek *polis*. The direct borrowing was from Lewis Mumford, who had used the term so eloquently in his book *The Culture of Cities* (1938). There, it had become Mumford’s symbol of what he termed the Insensate Metropolis: the vast sprawling post-industrial city, which Mumford saw in an apocalyptic way as presaging global war and the triumph of totalitarianism. Gottmann, who knew a great deal of those topics at first hand, used it in an altogether more neutral sense to describe what he saw as a new urban form: a 350-mile-strip of virtually continuous urbanisation on the eastern seaboard of the United States, from Boston to Washington (BOSWASH as it came to be known to generations of students).

A similar idea had been developed by the English geographer Professor Eva Taylor in the 1930s, in the then-celebrated concept of the ‘coffin’ of urbanisation from London to Liverpool and Leeds. In either case, the notion was metaphorical, even fanciful: as casual examination would have suggested but later research was to prove, the reality was very far from continuous urban sprawl. What did exist was a developing coalescence of urban fields or spheres of influence over surrounding areas of countryside: a functional, not a physical, urbanisation. Gottmann in practice conflated and thus confused the two concepts; and the book’s achievement, considerable enough, was in evoking the operations of a highly complex urban region while never quite defining what in actuality it was. For this he was criticised somewhat roughly by some of the next generation of geographers, who had already espoused the new ‘scientific’ geography of exact measurement and model-building; this cut him to the quick, for in academic debate as in everyday social encounter he adopted an old-fashioned European courtesy.

The success of the book was due as much as anything to the timing of its appearance. In 1960, America was the symbol of the economic and social future, and Europeans in particular looked to it to understand what might happen to them in a few years' time. The popular academic literature of the time, including sociological classics like Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) and Whyte's *The Organisation Man* (1956), was obsessed with the realities of life in the new automobile-oriented suburbia in which a whole generation of young Americans was growing up; Gottmann's book joined them, to become a classic in its turn, perhaps one of the few such by a geographer to reach a wide audience. But its success lay partly in its accessibility; and this stemmed from the fact that essentially it was a fairly traditional piece of first-rate French regional geography, with all the cultural and historical insights that implies, albeit applied to a highly untraditional kind of region.

That conclusion is fortified by the fact that Gottmann wisely made no attempt to join the revolution in geography that was then raging through the universities of the western world. He knew what he could do well, and he continued to do it, turning out polished essays, many of them derived from *Megalopolis* or developing the themes in it. His wisdom was sought on the American Committee on Resources and Man of the National Academy of Sciences that he joined in 1965. He began to lead an informal worldwide movement to study the phenomenon of the megalopolis, in which—for obvious reasons—he found particular support from Japanese geographers. Italian experts were also particularly interested in his ideas. He wrote a classic article for the *Geographical Review* in 1966, on the reasons for the skyscraper, which as a European he found a fascinating topic. In addition, he formed a close working relationship with the charismatic Greek planner Constantinos Doxiadis, lending his prestigious reputation to Doxiadis's science (or, as some would have it, alchemy) of Ekistics. His relationship with the American Geographical Society remained close, with the editor of the *Geographical Review*, Wilma Fairchild, finding him an invaluable authority on European matters.

The Oxford years

Meanwhile Gottmann had made yet another migration back to Europe, part of what he himself described as his 'Transatlantic transhumance'. In 1960 he accepted the position of Professor in the *École des Hautes Études*

en Sciences Sociales in Paris (but not the Sorbonne), a title he was to retain as a *détaché* (on leave) basis until formal retirement in 1983. But in 1968 he was appointed to the Chair of Geography at the University of Oxford and to an associated Fellowship at Hertford College, which he occupied for the next fifteen years. The School of Geography had, of course, produced excellent scholars but by the mid 1960s it had become somewhat stale, with a rather elderly complement of academic staff, many of whom owed greater allegiance to their colleges than to their department or, indeed, their discipline. Gottmann's decision to move to Oxford was perhaps surprising. Undoubtedly the prestige of the university and the charm of the city attracted him, but arguably he did not appreciate the administrative characteristics of the institution, the unusually limited powers of the head of department (given the strength of the colleges in teaching matters), and the magnitude of the challenge ahead of him. Nonetheless, he was determined that there would be change and in the course of the next fifteen years worked to transform the School of Geography from an intellectual backwater into something of a powerhouse. As a thesis supervisor he was attentive, interested and inspiring, with a remarkable skill to set an individual's research into the wider context. He was accessible and hospitable, with his supervisory lunches at least once a term being particularly memorable. He attracted distinguished visitors to Oxford and promoted his vision of a graduate school of doctoral students, along North American lines. He succeeded in nurturing a new generation of research students, many of whom now occupy chairs of geography in Britain and the USA, and was able to appoint young staff to replace those who retired. It must have been a source of deep satisfaction that when he retired, one of his first appointments, Andrew Goudie, succeeded him.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and even well into retirement, Gottmann and his wife continued to travel widely and to work prodigiously. Jean's output continued, much of it in the form of reviews of broad urban trends. His views on policies for spatial management were summarised in 1973 in *The Significance of Territory* that, unfortunately, was not widely known on either side of the Atlantic. Ten years later, he was presented with a handsome *Festschrift* edited by John Patten, who was just leaving academia for a political career that would take him to the position of Secretary of State for Education under Mrs Thatcher; it contains a full bibliography of his publications to that date. He became increasingly interested in the so-called quaternary sector of the economy, the producer services, directly stimulating the growth of studies in

this area; he drew attention to the importance of university research as a trigger for innovative economic growth. In these areas he was a true pioneer, well ahead of his contemporaries. His contributions on these themes were not major pieces of empirical research but were designed to stimulate younger associates to follow new lines of inquiry—as indeed they did.

The volumes entitled *Megalopolis Revisited: twenty-five years later* (1987) and *Since Metropolis: the urban writings of Jean Gottmann* (1990, with Robert A. Harper) presented his later reflections on urbanisation and service economies, setting them in the context of his undoubted masterpiece. Despite the lingering effects of illnesses that had plagued him since youth, massively complicated by the accident at the United Nations in 1952, necessitating long spells in hospital and leaving him far less than completely mobile, he published down to the end, at the age of 78; in that very year, 1993, he published both in English and French. His scientific publications spanned exactly sixty years: among the longest of any twentieth-century geographer, but surpassed by W. R. Mead, FBA, whose first papers were published in 1939 and whose recent book, on Norway, appeared in 2002. A further monograph, on the distinguished Scandinavian traveller Pehr Kalm, was published in June 2003.

During the 1970s and 1980s Gottmann was showered with honours. His election into Fellowship of the British Academy came in 1977, three years after being made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. He was elected into honorary membership of the American Geographical Society, the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society, the Société Géographique de Liège, the Società Geografica Italiana, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Liverpool, Southern Illinois, and Wisconsin. He was honoured by the Royal Geographical Society with the award of the Victoria Medal, in 1980, and by the Société de Géographie de Paris with the *Grand Prix*, in 1984. On that occasion, Professor Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier rightly hailed him in her address as a citizen of the world; justifiably so, since he had been made an honorary citizen of Yokohama and of Guadalajara. In his final years, he seemed particularly at home at various colloquia arranged by the Commission de Géographie Politique of the French Comité National de Géographie.

Jean Gottmann: a life reviewed

Jean Gottmann's life contained phases of great tragedy, including the murder of his parents in 1917 and the impact of Nazi regulations on French Jews in the early 1940s. However, his family connections and his sheer brilliance enabled him to fashion a new and influential life. The death of his master Demangeon in 1940 and of his friend and co-worker Constantinos Doxiadis in 1976 were major blows. His health was always poor and the severe accident in New York brought recurrent pain for the second half of his life. Students at Oxford were well aware of his physical disability and could not ignore the fact that he looked so ill at times. He proved to be something of an 'outsider'; perceived as a 'European' in the USA and UK, as an 'American' in France, as a 'political scientist' among geographers, and as a 'geographer' among political scientists and planners. His compendious textbooks, despite revision (and partly because of expansion), have not stood the test of time and now survive as monuments to an earlier encyclopaedic age. The notion of 'Megalopolis' has passed into common parlance among geographers and planners, to describe the northeastern USA and not the small town in the central Peloponnisos with an ugly lignite-burning power station. However, his path-breaking monograph is rarely taken from the shelves. Students at Oxford were not always in accord with their distinguished but stooping and apparently frail professor, so richly steeped in history and old-fashioned European culture, so quietly spoken and with an enduring foreign accent. Certainly the urban geography that Gottmann preached at Oxford was light years removed from the model building and quantification being developed at Cambridge and in Sweden and North America.

Like many prophets, he remained largely without honour in his own country until relatively late in life. It is a telling fact that the *Grand Prix* was awarded in Paris the year after he retired, coming almost as an afterthought by a grateful but perhaps also apologetic academic community. However, in the final ten years of his life, new trends emerged within academic geography. Cultural geography took on new guises and welcomed the rich humanism of Jean Gottmann, while political geography was no longer sullied by the *Geopolitik* of the 1930s that Demangeon had so roundly condemned. Jean Gottmann, with the constant support of his wife Bernice, came into his own. The tributes received in his latter years from around the world were richly deserved, since Jean Gottmann was one of the great human geographers of a gen-

eration reared in the classic school of French regional study. His achievement was to apply the insights and synthetic capacities of that school to illuminate the geography of the United States, his second adopted country. He came to Britain to make his third academic home, receiving there the highest academic accolade his hosts could confer upon him; altogether, a true academician.

HUGH CLOUT

Fellow of the Academy

PETER HALL

Fellow of the Academy

Note. A bibliography of publications by Jean Gottmann prior to 1983 is found in J. Patten (ed.), *The Expanding City: essays in honour of Professor Jean Gottmann* (London, 1983), with later items listed in A. Champion, 'Iona Jean Gottmann, 1915–1994', *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers*, NS 20 (1995), 117–21. A selection of Gottmann's urban essays is listed in J. Gottmann and R. A. Harper (eds.), *Since Megalopolis: the urban writings of Jean Gottmann* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). R. J. Johnston has published an assessment of Gottmann's work as a political geographer: 'Jean Gottmann: French regional and political geographer extraordinaire', *Progress in Human Geography*, 20 (1996), 183–93. An earlier appreciation was by Robert E. Dickinson, *The Makers of Modern Geography* (London, 1969, pp. 246–9). In preparing this essay we have consulted these sources and appreciations published in various places by the late Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier, Paul Claval, the late Robert E. Dickinson, François Gay, Georges Prevelakis, André-Louis Sanguin, and Michael Wise. We are indebted to B. J. L. Berry, W. R. Mead, P. E. Ogden, M. Philipponneau, H. C. Prince, and M. Williams for their recollections of Jean Gottmann.