Political geographers of the past VIII

Putting Mackinder in his place

Material transformations and myth

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ABSTRACT. As a consequence of the Cold War, Halford Mackinder is best known as a geopolitician and theorist of the heartland. Such an understanding of Mackinder, it is argued, is a selective appropriation of his ideas and neglects the spatial and historical context within which Mackinder wrote. This paper seeks to develop an alternative critical understanding of Halford Mackinder as a conservative intellectual in the Age of Empire (1875–1914), a time of profound material transformations in Great Britain. Four material transformations are outlined and Mackinder's relationship to them discussed. The organic conservative ideology of Mackinder is then described and subjected to critical analysis. It is suggested that Mackinder's ideology needs to be understood within the context of a general reaction by traditional aristocratic and aristocratized British élites to industrialization and modernization. Mackinder's ideology, it is suggested, was both patriarchal and romantic and not democratic and realist as is supposed by existent readings of his work.

A Cold War geopolitician?

In January 1988 the United States White House, in the name of the President, issued a document called the *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Reagan, 1988). The document states:

> The first historical dimension of our strategy is relatively simple, clear-cut, and immensely sensible. It is the conviction that the United States' most basic national security interests would be endangered if a hostile state or group of states were to dominate the Eurasian land mass—that area of the globe often referred to as the world's heartland. We fought two world wars to prevent this from occurring. And, since 1945, we have sought to prevent the Soviet Union from capitalizing on its geostrategic advantage to dominate its neighbors in Western Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and thereby fundamentally alter the global balance of power to our disadvantage (Reagan, 1988: 2).

To strategists and political geographers this statement has a familiar cachet which they associate with the name of Halford Mackinder, the British geographer who first coined the

term 'heartland' and first spoke about its significance in a paper read at the Royal Geographical Society on 25 January 1904. In the paper, 'The geographical pivot of history', Mackinder argued that 'trans-continental railways are now transmuting the conditions of land-power, and nowhere can they have such effect as in the closed heart-land of Euro-Asia', a region he described as the 'pivot' of world history (Mackinder, 1904: 434). The consequences of this change are that 'the balance of power' is now 'in favour of the pivot state, resulting in its expansion over the marginal lands of Euro-Asia . . .' (Mackinder, 1904: 436). The empire of the world, he concluded, would then be in its sight.

Halford Mackinder's ideas on the strategic significance of the heartland were further refined, it is commonly noted, in two subsequent works *Democratic Ideals and Reality* first published in 1919 (republished 1942) and in a short article in the American foreign-policy establishment journal *Foreign Affairs*, 'The round world and the winning of the peace', published during the Second World War in 1943. In the latter article, Mackinder was asked by the editors (including the politically well-connected US geographer Isaiah Bowman) to consider whether his strategical concept of a 'heartland' had lost any of its significance under the conditions of modern warfare (Mackinder, 1943: 595). Mackinder wrote that his concept is 'more valid and useful today than it was either twenty or forty years ago' (Mackinder, 1943: 603). The Soviet Union, he argued, 'if it should emerge from the war as conqueror of Germany, will rank as the greatest land Power on the globe. The Heartland is the greatest natural fortress on earth. For the first time in history it is manned by a garrison sufficient both in number and quality' (Mackinder, 1943: 601). The policy that Mackinder urged after the war was the occupation of Germany and co-operation between the USSR, America, Britain and France so that 'Germany would live continuously under the threat of immediate war on two fronts should she be guilty of any breach of the treaties which prohibited either physical preparation for war or the misleading of youth which is another way of preparation for war' (Mackinder, 1943: 604). The post-war world that Mackinder envisaged was that of a demilitarized Germany and a balance of power among the Great Powers.

Despite the fact that Mackinder never wrote about a protracted conflict between the United States and the USSR the language and texts of Halford Mackinder implicitly informed the post-war American policy of containing the USSR (Dalby, 1990; Sloan, 1988). In his discussion of these strategies of containment the historian John Lewis Gaddis suggests the influence of Mackinder in early Cold War thinking when he notes that one got a 'line of reasoning reminiscent of Halford Mackinder's geopolitics' in some papers and memos during 1947 and 1948 (Gaddis, 1982: 57). Certainly among some post-war Western security intellectuals the texts of Halford Mackinder were required reading. Within this community, Mackinder was read as a Cold War geopolitician, an intellectual prophet who first saw the geographical realities of international politics and first recognized the great geopolitical significance of control of the heartland. One strategist recently accorded the geopolitical ideas of the British geographer a 'first-echelon theoretical role' in his work because they provide 'an intellectual architecture, far superior to rival conceptions, for understanding the principal international security issues'. Mackinder's geopolitical work, he declared, is grand theory at its best (Gray, 1988: 4). Even if not explicitly acknowledged (see, for example, Brzezinski, 1986) Halford Mackinder's writings on the heartland have long been a presence in the literature of the Cold War and have helped constitute, as our introductory quotation does, that conflict as meaningful and purposeful to strategists, politicians and the public.

It is remarkable that a British geographer writing over 80 years ago in a world which was radically different from the present should appear to exercise such influence and inspire

such reverence. Warfare, the ultimate preoccupation of strategy, has changed immeasurably since the time Mackinder first wrote. Modern nuclear weapons can now destroy the heartland in a matter of minutes. International politics too has changed radically with the collapse of formal colonial empires, the development of global capitalism and the diffusion of military power throughout the international system.

It is also remarkable that Halford Mackinder never thought of himself as a geopolitician. In fact, in a biography Parker (1982: 147) notes how Mackinder detested both that word and the term 'geopolitics'. The common nomination of Mackinder as the 'founding father' of 'geopolitics' thus appears somewhat at odds with how he saw himself and his writings. Consulting the record of Mackinder's published works one quickly realizes that most of these are not what we would today call geopolitics. Although Mackinder published on a great variety of issues during his lifetime the majority of his publications concern geographical education. Parker (1982: 60) notes that at first sight the many topics on which Mackinder expressed views may seem unconnected but 'most of his multifarious statements find a place in a unifying imperial philosophy' (see also Kearns, 1984). Taylor (1989) notes that Mackinder was much more than the geostrategist portrayed in political geography. Mackinder, he observes, was 'more of a political economist with a holistic viewpoint lacking in so many of his followers' (Taylor, 1989: 49). What then is the real Mackinder?

The purpose of this paper is to place the texts of Halford Mackinder back in the place and time in which they were generated. The Halford Mackinder presented in contemporary Western security discourse as a geopolitician and theorist of the heartland is, it is argued, a cardboard figure whose use by security intellectuals has neglected the full context and ideology of Mackinder's time and place. Mackinder came to be grafted onto a social formation which through the static historiographical models of its security community sought to render the Cold War as a meaningful and permanent condition. Taylor (1990) has argued that it was not the formal geopolitics of Mackinder's heartland thesis that informed the trend towards the Cold War but the informal geopolitics of Bevin and Churchill. Yet Mackinder's ideas were significant as a *post-hoc* rationalization of the Cold War. The Cold War, he notes, generated a new Mackinder-like thesis rather than Mackinder's theory creating Cold War strategy (Taylor, 1990; 128). The two parts of this paper, one on material transformations and the other on Mackinder's ideology, seek to develop a more geographically sensitive account of Halford Mackinder and break with Cold War readings of his work. Mackinder, it is argued, is best understood not as a Cold War geopolitician but as a British imperialist intellectual who championed social imperialism and fostered a romantic mythology as a means of dealing with uncomfortable change—particularly the rise of working-class socialism. Mackinder's corpus can be understood as an attempt to modernize traditional conservative myths about an organic community in an age where a multiplicity of international and domestic material transformations were eroding the economic foundations of the British Empire and the social world of the aristocratic establishment who ran it.

Material transformations in the age of Empire

The life-span of Halford Mackinder (1861–1947) covered a period in human history which was marked by dramatic material transformations in the human geography of the globe. Mackinder's life stretched from the transformations in central European political geography with the unification of Germany to the utter destruction wrought by World War II and the fall of Hitler's Third Reich. Mackinder (1943: 595) recalls that one of his earliest

memories of public affairs was when he took home the news, which he had learned from a telegram affixed to the local post-office door, that Napoleon III and his army had surrendered to the Prussians at Sedan. Six days after his death on 6 March 1947, President Harry Truman of the United States addressed a joint session of Congress and requested $400 000 000 in economic and military aid to help the governments of Greece and Turkey 'maintain their free institutions and their national integrity'. US aid was necessary because Britain, war-weary and bankrupt, could no longer support Greece. The one overarching theme that united this 86-year period was the decline of the British Empire and the rise to global pre-eminence of the United States; the life of Halford Mackinder was inextricably bound up with the unfolding of that great drama.

Though Halford Mackinder continued to publish until quite close to his death, the period of his greatest productivity and public activity was between the years of 1885 and 1920 when Mackinder was between the ages of 25 and 60. The bulk of this period falls within what the historian Eric Hobsbawm (1987) has termed 'the Age of Empire' (1875–1914). It is within this historical period and within the geographical setting of Great Britain that Halford Mackinder experienced the material transformations of the age. His writings developed as a comment upon and engagement with these material transformations, four of which are explored below.

The first critical transformation of the Age of Empire was the growing international-ization of human affairs. Mackinder, as many have noted, wrote of the world becoming a closed system where affairs in one region have certain ramifications in other parts of the globe. Such was an obvious feature of a period which saw the opening of China to outside commerce (and imperialism), the emergence of Japan as a Great Power in the Far East, the establishment of an American empire and the colonial seizure of the great internal spaces of the African continent. What Mackinder found significant about the fact that there were no new spaces for conquest and expansion was that the attention of statesmen may now be diverted 'from territorial expansion to the struggle for relative efficiency'. It was with this struggle for relative efficiency that Mackinder's life and texts were concerned.

The extensive migrations of people, capital and commodity goods had marked impacts on the relative strength of certain places and states *vis à vis* others. The internal migration of agricultural laborers and handicraft artisans to Britain's industrial cities had led to unprecedented levels of urbanization and the development of social problems with public health, housing and employment—problems that Mackinder believed hindered the relative efficiency of Great Britain (see Mackinder, 1905, 1906). Internationally between 1871 and 1911 some 10.4 million people from Britain and Ireland moved to lands of European settlement. During this time the United States of America received 20.5 million immigrants from the rest of the world (see Hobsbawm, 1987: 344). While the migration of 'the English race' throughout the world was in general a positive phenomenon for Mackinder (it helped the development of 'civilization'; see Mackinder, 1925) the settlement of talented English 'man-power' outside the British Empire only contributed to the growth and relative efficiency of Britain's rivals (see Parker, 1982: ch. 3). The same logic applied to British capital and financial investments overseas. By 1914 it was estimated that Britain had some $19.5 billion invested overseas which constituted some 43 percent of the world's total foreign investments (Kennedy, 1987: 230). The overseas investments of France ($9.28 billion), Germany ($5.65 billion) and Holland ($4.1 billion) were slight in comparison (Barraclough, 1982: 109).[1] In 1860–70, over 25 percent of British foreign investments were in the United States with this percentage (not absolute) figure shrinking to just over 20 percent between 1911–13. The percentage investment in both Latin America and the Dominions both increased during this latter period. By 1911–13 both accounted for a

greater percentage of British investments than the United States (see Hobsbawm, 1969: diagram 32). The bulk of British investment in 1913 was portfolio investment in railways and government stock (Hobsbawm, 1969: diagram 33).

The rise in world trade after the 'Great Depression' (1872–96) saw an increasing internationalization of the range of commodities available for purchase throughout the imperialist world and in their colonies. Scares about the increasing number of commodities of foreign origin within Britain prompted such journalistic polemics as E. E. Williams's *Made in Germany* (1896) and Fred A. Mackenzie's *American Invaders* (1902). Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary from 1895 to 1903 in the Conservative-Unionist government of Salisbury and Balfour, was deeply concerned about foreign 'penetration' of British colonial markets and commissioned a report on it as soon as he assumed office. It concluded that from 1884 to 1894 the foreign (i.e. non-British) share of total colonial imports had increased from 26 percent to roughly 32 percent. The sources of these foreign commodities were principally the United States and Germany who provided 'low-class' products and were likely to follow with higher-quality goods in the future (Friedberg, 1988: 47 and note 104).

Chamberlain's concern for the economic state of the British colonies was part of the second material transformation: the relative decline of the British Empire given this increasing internationalization of the world political economy. The British Empire in 1900 was, as Kennedy (1987: 224) notes, the largest empire the world had ever seen with some 12 million square miles of land and perhaps a quarter of the entire population of the globe. In terms of its territorial sway, the British Empire was at its height having secured the richest and most populated lands in the late nineteenth-century scramble for Africa. The island of Britain, however, could no longer be described as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) for with the collection of the first modern statistics enabling intellectuals to make comparisons between the Great Powers it was evident that British power and prosperity was not increasing as fast as that of most other powers. In demographic terms, an increasingly popular index in a period impressed by Darwinian arguments, Britain was seventh in the league of Great Powers in 1890, behind France and Japan. Sheer giganticism seemed a mark of great power and while the British Empire as a whole appeared in a favourable light the island of Britain itself looked rather slight. More significant in real terms, however, were comparisons of iron and steel production which saw Britain's output rise from 3.6 to 6.5 million tons while that of the United States (whose total output had surpassed Britain's as early as 1880) rose from 4.3 to 23.4 million tons and Germany's from 2.2 to 11.9 million tons (Friedberg, 1988: 25). Pig iron was a similar story with British totals bettered by the United States in the 1880s and by Germany after 1906. British coal production was impressive but these totals too were surpassed by the Americans before the turn of the century and equalled by the Germans before World War I (Friedberg, 1988: 25). Besides, Britain exported part of her coal rather than using it internally to further industrialization and modernization. *Table 1* shows the relative shares of world manufacturing output from 1880 to 1938. The remarkable feature about these data is the rise in the share of world manufacturing output of the United States from 14.7 percent in 1880 to 32 percent in 1913 and the corresponding decline of Britain's share from 22.9 percent in 1880 to 13.6 percent in 1913. The greatest threat to British manufacturing hegemony was coming from the United States.

There were a wide variety of statistics generated by the British government in an attempt to measure the progress of national prosperity and strength. In absolute terms, Britain was becoming more prosperous (though its working classes were hardly prosperous) with various calculations putting its growth rate at 1.9 percent between 1885 and 1905 or 1.6

TABLE 1. Relative shares of world manufacturing output, 1880–1938 (percent)

	1880	1900	1913	1928	1938
Britain	22.9	18.5	13.6	9.9	10.7
United States	14.7	23.6	32.0	39.3	31.4
Germany	8.5	13.2	14.8	11.6	12.7
France	7.8	6.8	6.1	6.0	4.4
Russia	7.6	8.8	8.2	5.3	9.0
Austria–Hungary	4.4	4.7	4.4	—	—
Italy	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.8

Source: Kennedy, 1987: 202.

percent between 1870 and 1913 (Friedberg, 1988: 25). Exports also grew—though it depended on how one measured them—and Britain earned huge amounts from 'invisibles' such as finance, insurance and shipping. The relative decline of Britain to contemporaries, therefore, was by no means self-evident. Debates between free-traders, who supported the existent order, and fair-traders, who wanted the introduction of economic measures to protect British agriculture and parts of British industry from foreign competition, generated their own statistical evidence to support their arguments. Friedberg (1988: 79) remarks that '[a]t the close of the nineteenth century Britain's leaders shared a belief in the importance of "national economic power" but they lacked agreement on exactly what that concept meant or how it should be measured'.

Halford Mackinder was one of many advocates of tariff reform and a system of imperial preferences as a way of dealing with the changed circumstances of Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For him the salvation of Great Britain from relative decline lay in a united and economically integrated Empire. In 1900 Mackinder had stood as a Liberal Imperialist ('Limp') at Warwick and Leamington against a Conservative candidate. Mackinder argued that '[n]o other course is open to us than to bind Britain and her Colonies into a league of democracies, defended by a united navy and an efficient army' (Mackinder's campaign speech, reproduced in The Times and quoted by Blouet, 1987: 141). Mackinder was beaten in the election by a candidate who had Joseph Chamberlain come to speak on his behalf. In May 1903 Chamberlain made his dramatic call for an imperial economic union and the imposition of import duties on foreign (i.e. non-British Empire) goods. Mackinder, at this point, changed his party allegiance (it did not involve, Blouet 1987: 142 notes, a large philosophical shift) and in January 1904 gave his famous address to the RGS. One interesting feature of this address not often noted is that the major emergent Great Power of this period is relegated, literally, to the margins in his famous map. In a passage, remarkable today for its counter-intuitive understanding of East and West, Mackinder comments that

the United States has recently become an eastern power, affecting the European balance not directly, but through Russia, and she will construct the Panama canal to make her Mississippi and Atlantic resources available in the Pacific. From this point of view the real divide between east and west is to be found in the Atlantic ocean (Mackinder, 1904: 436).

The relegation of the United States to the margins in his thinking was perhaps Mackinder's single greatest blunder for it was in a 'special relationship' with the United States that Britain's twentieth-century history and geopolitics lay.

The ideology of Chamberlain, Mackinder and other tariff reformers at this time derived much of its urgency from the manifest failures of the British army during the Boer war (1899–1902) and the weaknesses this exposed in the structures of the British Empire. The unexpected military defeats and casualties (over 3000 men died during 'Black Week' in December 1899) necessitated that Britain send a contingent of reinforcements the 6000 miles to South Africa thus leaving its regular forces depleted. The surprisingly protracted length of the war contributed to a financial crisis in the Conservative-Unionist government as army expenditures reached £205 million in 1901–02 (original estimates put the cost of the war at five or ten million pounds; Friedberg, 1988: 106). Army organization and efficiency were shown to be poor and inadequate. Searle (1971: 50) notes that explanations for 'the blunders of the army also supplied a cogent critique of Britain's entire political and administrative arrangements and the liberal values underpinning them, and could therefore be appealed to by reformers, of differing interests, who shared a feeling of dissatisfaction at the functioning of their "model liberal state".' For some, like Lord Viscount Milner, the British Commissioner to South Africa during this period, the health and continued strength of the British as an 'imperial race' necessitated tariff reform and a strong state to create good houses, healthy industries and a fit and vigorous population worthy of an imperial power (on Milner see Semmel, 1960: ch. 9).

The third global material transformation of this period was the time-space compression ushered in by the diffusion of new technologies and new global standards to regulate daily life. In his study *The Culture of Time and Space 1880–1918*, Stephen Kern (1983) argues that from 1880 to around the outbreak of World War I a 'series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space'. Such technological innovations included the telephone, telegraph, bicycle, automobile, assembly line, cinema, phonograph and radio. Their multiple effect was to compress distances, truncate time and re-arrange social hierarchies. The traditional and familiar ordering of space, whether it be social (the traditional distances between classes and genders) or territorial (spheres of influence) was subjected to forces which were transforming them in radical ways. In international politics, two technologies threatened to revolutionize the existing territorial order: the railway and the airplane. Railways were a great locus of capital accumulation for they collectively constituted the most massive effort of public building yet undertaken by human society (Hobsbawm, 1987: 27). In Russia the massive foreign-financed railway construction projects promised to transform dramatically the power and connectedness of the Russian Empire (Hobsbawm, 1987: 294). Between 1890 and 1904 the railway mileage was doubled with the Trans-Siberian railway. The dynamic railway combined with the giganticism of this land empire prompted an excessive yet self-assured futurology (itself an interesting feature of this period; see Kern, 1983: ch. 4) on Mackinder's part:

> . . . the century will not be old before all Asia is covered with railways. The spaces
> within the Russian Empire and Mongolia are so vast, and their potentialities in
> population, wheat, cotton, fuel, and metals so incalculably great, that it is
> inevitable that a vast economic world, more or less apart, will there develop
> inaccessible to oceanic commerce (Mackinder, 1904: 434).

Yet it was not inevitable—as future developments demonstrated. Mackinder's appreciation of the significance of railways was somewhat superficial. Neither railways nor other elements in his formula—vast spaces, a large population and abundant resources—themselves guaranteed, either alone or in combination, economic develop-

ment and the power attendant upon this. Railways and land power do not a Great Power make, as the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05 demonstrated. Rather, as Mackinder himself noted at other times, economic development and the realization of Great Power potential are inherently social processes which are dependent upon the particular organization of society and not simply on technology and space.

The one technology that most dramatically violated existent boundaries and spatial order was the airplane. The development of air power in warfare radically changed the nature of conflict and strategy in the twentieth century. The old understandings between land-power and sea-power that Mackinder worked from were rendered obsolete by the speed, flexibility and mobility of air power. Ironically, the possibility of appreciating this was emergent just at the time Mackinder was re-inscribing the old dualism. Leopold Amery,[2] 12 years younger than Mackinder, commented on the 1904 paper that with air 'locomotion',

> a great deal of this geographical distribution must lose its importance, and the successful powers will be those who have the greatest industrial base. It will not matter whether they are in the centre of a continent or on an island; those people who have the industrial power and the power of invention and of science will be able to defeat all others (Amery, 1904: 445).

Amery's analysis points to a contradiction between the emphasis Mackinder placed on geographical factors (location, vastness, resource potential) in his academic analyses and the emphasis he placed on social organization in his practical political activity. From the perspective of Mackinder's own political ideology (see below), the heartland should not have qualified as a heartland given its appallingly poor social organization.

The final material transformation of this period that is important in understanding Mackinder was the broad push for democratization and empowerment by those groups in society that had previously been silenced and powerless in the British social order: workers and women. It is worth remembering that Britain was one of the few European states in the nineteenth century not to experience a significant revolutionary revolt by discontented and disenfranchised elements of the working population. The Reform Acts of 1867 and 1883 almost quadrupled the electorate in Britain, but only from 8 percent to 29 percent of the male population over the age of 20 (Hobsbawm, 1987: 85). The rapid urbanization of the nineteenth century and the dramatic growth of an urban proletariat had always posed problems of order and ideological legitimacy for the British establishment and ruling élites. The growth in the late nineteenth century of trade unions and socialist ideals among the working class necessitated in certain states that ruling élites make certain compromises to maintain their power. Bismarck's compromises with Ferdinand Lasalle in Germany eventually produced a compulsory sickness-insurance scheme (1883), accident-insurance plans (1884, 1885) and an old-age pension scheme (1889).

Within Britain, progress was much slower. As output dropped in the Great Depression, strikes and labor disputes increased with riots occurring in London and some provincial towns in 1885. One of those towns was Birmingham—where Joseph Chamberlain became mayor and established a tentative alliance between nonconformist industrialists, such as Chamberlain himself, and organized labor. The strategy of industrialists like Chamberlain was to 'kill socialism with kindness'. One could do this from above by the implementation of certain judicious reforms relating to employment and housing conditions. In government as a Unionist MP, Chamberlain followed Bismarck's welfare-nationalist line

and helped pass a workingman's compensation law in 1897. His social policy initiatives were, Cox (1987: 174) notes, brought to fruition by the Liberal government that took office in 1905 and passed an old-age pension act in 1908 and a national health-insurance act in 1911. Trades unions within Britain, however, did not have full political rights until the Trade Union Act of 1913 (Thompson, 1967: 197).

Securing the hearts and minds of class-conscious workers was a challenging task for the British establishment. At the center of this struggle was control over education. In the 1880s a series of new universities were being established throughout the country. Education, as many social-imperialists realized, was crucial both as a means of inculcating imperialist values and also as a means of creating an efficient national workforce. Mackinder was a life-long propagandist on behalf of this social-imperialist vision of education. In 1890 he and Michael Sadler wrote the pamphlet *University Extension: Has It A Future?* proposing that a series of university extension centers should be established in English towns. Mackinder was first employed as an extension lecturer and later appointed as head of Reading College, an extension experiment which eventually became Reading University. In 1902 a new Education Act, partly the work of Sadler, was passed re-organizing the secondary-school system and making geography a school subject. For those of primary-school age, Colonel Robert Baden-Powell—another social-imperialist who served in the Boer War—established the Boy Scouts in 1908. Every boy, he argued, should be a 'brick' in 'the whole building' that is 'our great Empire' (see Rosenthal, 1984: 10). The hearts and minds were to be conquered at an early age.

The agitation by the Suffragette movement to gain the vote for women was part of the larger challenge of democratization to the British ruling élites. The women's movement, which was by no means unified in its political beliefs, was significant in that it challenged the daily social *mores* of an often vociferously patriarchal establishment. The Royal Geographical Society (established 1830) which had long been a bastion for 'male pursuits' (exploration, adventure and military conquest) had a contentious split in 1892–3 over a proposal to make women eligible for election as Fellows. The issue, first discussed in 1887, came to a head in 1892 when the Council of the RGS elected some women, only to see its action reversed in a general meeting. The result was that women were excluded from being Fellows of the RGS until 1913. The person who led the opposition to women was the future Lord Curzon later to become President of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage. His argument, an argument also used by Mackinder, was that the extension of the parliamentary franchise to women would be hostile to the welfare of women (see Curzon, 1915). Women were not admitted the vote in Britain until 1918.

The combined result of the four material transformations outlined here was to place a series of pressures on the British establishment, its intelligentsia and its vision of normative social order. The pressures came from external sources as other states, particularly the United States and Germany, modernized and accumulated power at a much faster rate than Great Britain. The pressures also came from internal sources as the global interests of the financial community in the city of London began to diverge quite significantly from the increasingly protectionist interests of industrial capitalists in provincial cities. The growth of an urban and increasingly activist working class also threatened to disrupt the capital—labor relationship and the stability of social order. Finally, a small but activist women's movement appeared to pose a threat to the Victorian family and the power relations it had normalized. The combined force of these material transformations posed a significant challenge to a social formation that was still organized and governed by a conservative, undemocratic and aristocratic or aristocratized establishment (see Mayer, 1981).

Mackinder's ideology

An organic community in decay

For Halford Mackinder and other conservative intellectuals, British society in the Age of Empire was to be understood as an organic community in decay. An organic community was conceptualized as a living entity, a community which had 'grown' naturally rather than been 'made' mechanically—the contrast is between natural living organisms and machines (see Williams, 1983: 228). Taking its inspiration from an idealized classical or feudal social order, the concept suggests a community of natural social hierarchies (the male lord and his serfs) bound together by a shared set of mutual obligations and beliefs. Such was a stable community where everyone had a place and knew their duties. The community was made up of a diverse set of people from different social ranks yet all were well-rounded and adept at performing a variety of different practical tasks. Land and soil were at the center of economic life, a life distinguished by honest labor and natural balance.

Like many conservative intellectuals of his day, Halford Mackinder subscribed to the image of such a mythical community. The 'knights and the burgesses of the Middle Ages', he noted in 1919, 'represented communities of far more complete and balanced life than the artificially equalized constituencies of to-day' (Mackinder, 1942a: 184). Such were self-contained communities that were truly independent. Why, he asks, were 'Athens and Florence the wonderful founts of civilization which have made them the teachers of the world?' His explanation was that they were small cities both politically and economically. 'The men who shook hands in the streets, and whose families intermarried, were not merely rival masters in the same industry or competing merchants on the same exchange; every principal category of supreme human activity was represented in one intimate circle'. (Mackinder, 1942a: 189; slaves were hardly part of the intimate circle!). As a consequence, young men did not need to leave the city to fulfill their ambitions. Small localized communities were, to Mackinder's mind, the most desirable and balanced forms of human organization.

With the development of trade, transport and a money society, however, these localized communities began to break down. In the eighteenth century, Mackinder argued, the British town began to become specialized and thus ceased to be 'a complete organism' (1942a: 189). The development of capitalist relations of production and a spatially extensive division of labor inevitably produced uneven and unbalanced development. When macadamized roads were introduced in England, Mackinder observed, 'a star of them was made, radiating from London; they brought the life of the country up to London, sapping it for the growth of London'. When the railways were constructed, they too perpetuated this same process, 'feeding London' and 'milking the country' (1942a: 191). This persistent organicizing of space and community is Mackinder's structured way of seeing and constituting an imaginary organic world. Economic specialization and new transport technologies were the means by which the organic community was eroded and torn apart.

The ideology of an organic community and the contrast between city and country is a familiar one in Western culture. In tracing its operation in English literature, Raymond Williams (1973) illustrates its many different historical forms and exposes its many contradictions and illusions. While often functioning as a critique of capitalist society and industrialization (the contrast between a pastoral countryside and the squalor of industrial cities) the ideology acknowledges neither the operation of capitalist agriculture in the country nor the unequal social relations and exploitation that characterized actual life in either the country or in classical 'fonts of civilization'. One can never find an actual organic

community in the past for it was never a material reality. Rather, as Williams (1983: 228) points out, the significance of the image of an organic community is as an ideology by which revolutionary societies and proposals could be criticized as *artificial* and against the 'natural order of things'. Edmund Burke's critique of the French revolution was of this order. The critiques of early industrialization found in late eighteenth- to mid nineteenth-century Romanticism were critiques against the emergence of a rationalist, mechanical, instrumentalist form of life associated with the capitalist mode of production. As such they were, in part, an aristocratic rebuke of the materialist values and rising power of the bourgeoisie. One can find such an ideology in the works of critics such as Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) and John Ruskin (1819–1900), the latter of whom taught at Oxford during the time Mackinder attended that institution. Though early twentieth-century Britain had become an urbanized and industrial society, the traditions and values of its governing and ruling élites continued to be inordinately influenced by classical and pre-industrial humanistic visions rather than modernist visions of material progress, equality and emancipation (Mayer, 1981). The socialist variant of these latter visions came to constitute the greatest threat to the 'natural order of things' in the twentieth century. The 'one essential thing', Mackinder (1942a: 186) argued in 1919, 'is to displace class organization, with its battle-cries and merely palliative remedies, by substituting an organic ideal, that of the balanced life of the provinces, and under the provinces of the lesser communities'.

How did Mackinder understand Britain as an organic community in decay?

Mackinder's analysis of the material transformations of the Age of Empire began, in *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, by his representing all modern societies as characterized by a 'Going Concern'. In contrast to the 1904 paper, he places the means by which modern states organize and structure their productive power at the center of his analysis. 'Human riches and comparative security are based to-day on the division and co-ordination of labor, and on the constant repair of the complicated plant which has replaced the simple tools of primitive society' (1942a: 8). In the operation of the Going Concern, Mackinder singles out the key figure of the 'organizer'.[3] He (Mackinder's texts, typical of their time, only empower men) is a figure necessary to keep society a healthy Going Concern, to keep it organized. 'The possibility of organization in the constructive sense depends on discipline' (Mackinder, 1942a: 12). The organizer provides this discipline for he is a 'great realist' whose 'one care is that the business or the army which he has organized shall be efficiently administered ...' (Mackinder, 1942a: 14). The organizer, who is usually an autocrat, brings military discipline to a society and makes it a formidable power. Societies run solely by such organizers (Mackinder's examples are Napoleon and the Prussian ruling caste), however, are blindly materialistic and end in military disaster. The desirable case is to have an organizer who is also a 'democrat' or, at least, appreciates the significance of 'spiritual forces' and not just material power (Mackinder's example is Bismarck, who was hardly a democrat). Society should be organized by those who believe in democratic ideals (understood in the classical and not modern sense) but have an acute appreciation of 'material realities'. In the British case, exemplary figures for Mackinder were Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, a former prime minister and the leading advocate of 'national efficiency' in Britain, and Lord Roberts, a social-imperialist who led the British army in South Africa and wished to introduce four years of military training for all young British men between the ages of 18 and 30 (see Semmel, 1960: ch. 12).

Britain in the Age of Empire was not, however, a society run by such 'wise men'. In

developing a theme of decay similar to that of some continental writers (such as the Swede, Rudolf Kjellen, or the German, Oswald Spengler, whose influential two-volume work, *The Decline of the West*, was also published after the war), Mackinder wrote of the disease and decline resultant from adherence to *laissez faire* ideals in Britain:

> There are three attitudes of mind in regard to the Going Concern which spell tragedy. There is *laissez faire*, which is surrender and fatalism. This attitude produces a condition comparable with threat of a disease brought on by self-neglect; the human body is a going concern which, becoming unbalanced in its functions, is organically affected, so that in the end no doctor's advice or even surgeon's scalpel can avail, since to stop the disease means the stoppage of life itself. No doubt it seemed, in the warm sunshine of Britain in the middle of the last century, that the wiser political philosophy was to live for the day and to trust in Providence. Fortunately disease had not progressed to a fatal stage when we came to the surgeon's table in August 1914. But a million men of military age classified as unfit for military service constitutes a symptom which almost makes one thank God that the war came when it did (Mackinder, 1942a: 177–178).

Given the circumstances, Mackinder's last sentence is remarkably coldblooded.[4] For organic conservatives like Mackinder, society was—literally—a body. As such it needed proper, disciplined organization and national training to keep it a fit and vigorous Great Power. Such organization and leadership was not provided by those who believed in *laissez faire* political economy. The results of this failure of organization were that:

1. Economically, the specialization encouraged by free trade made growth in Britain 'lobsided' (1942a: 145). British agriculture was neglected at the expense of British industry and within British industry certain industries (cotton and shipbuilding) grew while others (chemicals and electrical branches) did not increase proportionately. The consequence of Britain developing 'vastly those industries into which she gradually concentrated her efforts' was that she became 'market-hungry' (note the persistent organic discourse) and was eventually pushed in the direction of war (1942a: 145–147).
2. Politically, British democracy and political discourse were degenerating into a very dangerous state. Mackinder noted how the various extensions of the franchise and the push for democratization meant 'our Western communities are passing through a dangerous stage in this generation'. 'Half-educated people', he argued, 'are in a very susceptible condition, and the world to-day consists mainly of half-educated people'. Unlike the traditional establishment, the new voting groups 'are capable of seizing ideas, but they have not attained to the habit of testing them and of suspense of mind in the meantime' (Mackinder, 1942a: 187; see also Mackinder, 1916). This meant that in elections most people were very open to 'suggestion' and propaganda. Reason had been abandoned and thus the judicious management of the affairs of state by those who appreciated the need for proper organization was made an even more difficult task.
3. Socially and demographically, British society suffered from both a spiritual and a physical malaise. The material, social and cultural order engendered by modern industrial life prompted Mackinder, like Spengler and others, to write vigorous culture critiques. 'What is the bane of our modern industrial life? Surely monotony—monotony of work and of a petty social and communal kind. No wonder', he wrote, 'our men took refuge before the war in betting on football' (1942: 188). 'Our men' and questions of their vigor and fitness were serious concerns for Mackinder and the British proponents of 'national efficiency'. The question was represented by these as a question of 'man-power' (Parker, 1982: 62 credits Mackinder with coining this term; see Mackinder, 1905, 1906). Britain was losing segments of its population to the United States because

of emigration. Working-class men thought more about sport and drink than about the welfare of the nation. Men who lived in slum housing were physically weak and thus were rejected by the army. In keeping with those who urged 'housing fit for an imperial race', Mackinder (1906: 21) argued that slums were 'the scrap-heaps of abandoned and disused portions of our national man-power'. In rhetoric not dissimilar from that which would be used later by continental fascists, Mackinder argued that the 'real strength of the nation lies in its workers, its thinkers, its fighters and its mothers' (1905, 1906; see also Semmel, 1960: 174).

Mackinder's solutions to the decay

According to Mackinder, the decay wrought by industrial society and *laissez faire* has produced the separation of the social from the economic dimensions in human affairs. As both organic conservatives from the right (such as Mackinder and Spengler) and organic radicals from the left argue, modern industrial life has produced people alienated from themselves and their humanity. To recover this meant bringing the economic and social back together again. This could only be achieved, Mackinder argued, by control, 'which in a democracy means self-control' (1942a: 179). What had to be controlled was transnational capitalism and the transnational labor movement, especially the Bolsheviks. If both these could be controlled, then it might be possible to radically re-design the territorial world order so that equality of opportunity for nations would be guaranteed and thus, according to Mackinder's reasoning, the impulse to war could be avoided.

Mackinder's distaste for transnational capitalism is not something that is often noted about his ideology. Yet in common with many advocates of a system of national capitalism (or quasi-national capitalism—for he thought of the British Empire as a single unit) Mackinder saw a transnational investment and financial network as a dangerous thing. It was good that the war had effectively destroyed the pre-war system of international capitalism (1942a: 185). While acknowledging that credit and insurance had to have a broad base he thought it important to add: 'let us none the less recognize that they present the danger of a financial control of the world' (Mackinder, 1942a: 199). The most desirable world system was one based on a certain number of large nations each characterized by 'balanced economic development' (Mackinder, 1942a: 180, 182). This he thought possible because, although raw materials are unevenly distributed over the globe, primary economic activity formed but 'a relatively small part of the total of industry' (Mackinder, 1942a: 180). Each large nation should strive to develop its own independent key industries, such as steel. In prescribing a normative world economic order for the League of Nations he describes the issues thus:

> No stable League of Nations appears to me possible if any nation is allowed to practice commercial penetration, for the object of that penetration is to deprive other nations of their fair share of the more skilled forms of employment, and it is inevitable that a general soreness should ensue in so far as it succeeds. Nor, to speak quite plainly, is there any great difference in result if some nations feel that they are reduced to the position of hewers and drawers owing to the industrial specialization of another country under the regime of unrestricted Cobdenism (Mackinder, 1942a: 176).

In practice, Mackinder was speaking only about the large nations (with the British Empire understood as a white, globally dispersed, English nation). His normative world order appears to be a world made up of a few geographically separate and independent Great Powers each with their own area of economic expansion and influence. In this sense,

Mackinder's ideas can be read as precursors to the pan-regionalism found in German *Geopolitik* (see O'Loughlin and van der Wusten, 1990). Within the chosen nation-states (presumably those with what Mackinder termed 'the most virile races') the organization of social space should also be re-constructed on the principle of balanced development. In practice, what Mackinder seems to suggest is a policy of controlled urbanization so that one can have a national organization composed of a series of provincial communities (see Parker, 1982: 87 for Mackinder's proposals on this in Parliament). Though he acknowledges that a return to ancient Athens or medieval Florence is not possible, he nevertheless laments that, with 'proper control', one 'could have had a "village region" with a community dependent on each factory or group of small factories, wherein rich and poor, masters and men, might have been held together in a neighborly responsible relationship' (Mackinder, 1942a: 192). Mackinder's narrative here takes on its characteristic form; the assertion of an organic myth in the face of regrettable material transformations. Dealing with a utopian normative order rather than the nature of real change, Mackinder argues that 'what the real freedom of men requires' is 'scope for a full life in their own locality'. Each 'exceptional brain is serving the nation best if it remains racy of its own particular soil' (1942a: 193).

The image of people serving the nation by adherence to their own soil would become a familiar one in the 1930s in continental Europe. Mackinder's vision of a people closely rooted to their own soil carried the implication that each people or race should stay in its own place and social position. The white race was the manifestly superior race. The mixing of different races in the British Empire had deeply uncertain physical and moral consequences (see Parker, 1982: 74). Speaking of his ideal Empire, Mackinder remarks:

> In such an Empire as I am contemplating there will be room for the ideal of a white Australia, which seeks ardently to avoid the difficulties experienced in the United States, where two races, white and negro, are geographically mixed, which have totally different characteristics, are in wholly different stages of civilization, and are fitted for wholly different methods of government (Mackinder, 1907: 40).

Mackinder's vision for society and empire was quite sweeping and ambitious. Social space was to be rigidly regimented and ordered, beginning with provincial communities and progressing upwards to the level of the nation, empire and world order. Out of this normative vision came specific proposals to further such a re-structuring. Mackinder supported immediate tariff reform, the establishment of a system of imperial preferences, as Chamberlain had suggested, and the creation of an imperial economic union. This was to be a democratic union but a democracy of the *white* communities within a *British*-centred structure which remained an *Empire*. Though Mackinder would have wanted it, the identity 'British' never became a consensually adopted identity beyond Great Britain and parts of Ireland (see Mackinder, 1902, 1907).

Other specific proposals that Halford Mackinder supported include a whole package of reforms designed to promote 'national efficiency' (conceptualized not simply as business efficiency). Among these were housing reform, a minimum-wage proposal, a scheme for national training (along the lines of Lord Roberts's proposals) and measures to control capitalist investment, particularly overseas. In foreign policy, Mackinder supported a strong navy and believed in greater burden-sharing by the Dominions. He also thought it necessary that Britain develop its own land-power capability and strive meticulously to maintain the balance of power on the 'world-island'.

Undoubtedly Mackinder's greatest passion was education and educational reform, for he devoted most of his life to it and wrote in this area more than in any other. In keeping with

attitudes typical of organic conservatives, Mackinder believed that education should be practical and holistic (see Mackinder, 1913, 1921, 1937). He deplored the division of education into the Arts and Sciences, and also what he saw as the needless proliferation of subjects (Parker, 1982: 92). The great enemy of a comprehensive and practical education, as he saw it, was academic specialization and theory for its own sake. The purpose of education was to produce generalists not experts. In his war against all specialization ('All specialization contains the seeds of death'; 1942a: 198), geography was enlisted in the front lines. The 'New Geography' that Mackinder helped articulate and promote in the 1880s was a geography that was not only professional but holistic. In a revealing passage towards the end of his 1887 lecture on 'The scope and methods of geography', he argues that he has sketched a geography that 'shall satisfy at once the practical requirements of the statesman and the merchant, the theoretical requirements of the historian and the scientist, and the intellectual requirements of the teacher'. 'Its inherent breadth and many-sidedness'. he noted, 'should be claimed as its chief merit . . . It would be a standing protest against the disintegration of culture with which we are threatened' (Mackinder, in Gilbert, 1951: 29).

The theme of the particular virtues of geography is one Mackinder promoted throughout his life. Geography was an integral part of his political ideology for he conceptualized the discipline as a means of acculturating the British people from a young age into 'thinking imperially':

> It is essential that the ruling citizens of the world-wide Empire should be able to visualize distant geographical conditions . . . Our aim must be to make our whole people think Imperially—think that is to say in spaces that are world wide—and to this end our geographical teaching should be directed (Mackinder, 1907: 37, 38).

Mackinder's geography and his efforts at geographical education (e.g. his service on the Visual Instruction Committee of the Colonial Office, his relations with the army and his text-books; see Mackinder, 1911; Stoddart, 1992) were. in sum, works of imperialist pedagogy and consequently a particular type of political propaganda.

Conclusion

In the 1940s, Karl Polanyi wrote *The Great Transformation* as an account of the origins of the cataclysmic changes in the international system that led to the rise of fascism in Europe and eventually to the Second World War. His explanation was that the institutional system of the nineteenth century had collapsed. The key to that institutional system, for Polanyi, was a dialectic put in motion by the laws governing market economy:

> Our thesis is that the idea of a self-adjusting market implied a stark utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness. Inevitably, society took measures to protect itself, but whatever measures it took impaired the self-regulation of the market, disorganized industrial life. and thus endangered society in yet another way. It was this dilemma which forced the development of the market system into a definite groove and finally disrupted the social organization based upon it (Polanyi, 1957: 3–4).

The life and writings of Halford Mackinder were a participation in the operation of this dialectic in the specific geographical context of Great Britain. Mackinder's political philosophy was that of an organic conservative who sought to 'protect' society—concep-

tualized as an organic entity—from the destructive domination of economic materialism, the self-regulating market and the possibility of socialism. Mackinder's response to the transformations wrought by modernization was to re-assert a backward-looking, traditional aristocratic myth of an idyllic balanced community. Such was a reactionary response to the market system and the emancipatory ambitions of liberalism and socialism. In certain places after World War I this general response, as Polanyi notes, developed into place-specific forms of fascism. The attractions of Mackinder's work to Haushofer and its affinities with fascism are worthy of future investigation. While a comprehensive evaluation of Mackinder's life and ideology is not possible here, a few general points are worth noting chiefly because they have not received the attention they deserve.

First, it is worth emphasizing that Halford Mackinder's ideology was patriarchal rather than democratic. Integral to his organic conservatism was a belief that leadership and governance is best left in the hands of the 'educated' and the 'experienced'. In practice this attitude was a defense of élitism and the rule of the few over the many. Mackinder was wary of politics in the age of 'half-educated' masses and lamented the disappearance of 'neighbourliness' when discussing his electoral defeat at the hands of the independent Labour party (1942: 205; this was strange coming from one who was an English outsider to the constituency he represented in Glasgow). His position on certain key issues of the day—e.g. women's suffrage and Home Rule for Ireland—reveals an ingrained paternalism. In both cases he presumes to be able to speak for the disadvantaged group. Women should not get the vote because women do not want it (see Parker 1982: 91). The Irish should not get Home Rule because doesn't this demand, he asks rhetorically, 'come mainly from young men who are agitating, though they do not fully realize it, for equality of opportunity rather than against the assumed wickedness of England?' (Mackinder, 1942a: 190). What Mackinder did not fully realize was that the ideology of democracy meant more than the rule of an élite establishment of white 'civilized' men. The ideology of the British Empire was quickly undoing itself. In World War I, those who served in the colonial armies fought a war for the self-determination of small nations. They were soon to demand it themselves and reject the hubris of British imperialist intellectuals who sought to tell them their place within the world.

Secondly, Halford Mackinder's ideology owes much to Romanticism as an intellectual reaction to industrialization and the development of urban industrial life. The places of Mackinder's birth and early life (Gainsborough, Epsom and Oxford; see Blouet, 1987: chs 1–2) were small towns with rural hinterlands and not the bleak urban industrialized landscapes that were home to so many of the working class. One senses in Mackinder an uncomfortableness with modern urban industrial life. Reflecting on Mackinder in 1918, Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary:

> He still talks in continents and waterways, in mass movements and momentums
> ... but he has become uncomfortably aware of another kind of mass movement,
> of another type of momentum—the uprising of manual workers within each
> modern state, organized as political and industrial democracies, to oust those
> who own the instruments of production from their property and their power ...
> it is an uncomfortable shadow falling across his admirable maps of the rise and
> fall of empires (Beatrice Webb quoted in Parker, 1982: 46).

As a partial counter to this and other transformations, Mackinder fostered an aesthetic vision of the discipline of geography. Geography was a practical and holistic subject which required the art of 'seeing visually' (Mackinder, 1895). It was, as he described it, an art and a philosophy (Mackinder, 1942b). Like certain Romantic poets, his preconceived visions of the organic and the balanced mythologized the real world he contemplated. The

conclusion of his last academic article 'The round world and the winning of the peace' is quite extraordinary for one who was highly regarded by self-styled 'realists' in the post-World War II period:

> ... a thousand million people of ancient oriental civilization inhabit the Monsoon lands of India and China. They must grow to prosperity in the same years in which Germany and Japan are being tamed to civilization. They will then balance that other thousand million who live between Missouri and the Yenisei. A balanced globe of human beings. And happy, because balanced and thus free (Mackinder, 1943: 605).

The fetish with balance and the search for a supposed lost harmony are persistent utopian preoccupations for the real Mackinder. The Cold War Mackinder, however, appears as neither a patriarch nor a romantic but a prophet of the heartland (the organic nature of this term is rarely noted) and a grand strategist of the first order. There is an irony here. Mackinder once noted that the object of a geographer 'is to understand the concrete complexity, not to abstract and reduce to simplicity' (Mackinder, 1935: 8). Mackinder did not always follow this maxim himself. The Western security culture that selectively appropriated him certainly did not, for they made him a strategist without a place or context: another theorist who identified the timeless verities of grand strategy. Most disturbing of all, however, was the evisceration of a genuinely geographical sensibility from Cold War foreign-policy formulation and practice. Exhortations about the heartland substituted for real human geography, in its messy complexity. The result, most spectacularly in the case of the United States, was a foreign policy driven by simplistic visions of containment and domino reasoning rather than a comprehensive grasp of the complexity of regions and places. Mackinder, the geographer, may well have demurred.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The figures Kennedy (1987: 230) uses and those of Barraclough (1982: 109) differ slightly on British overseas investment, the latter putting 'United Kingdom' investments at $19.935 billion. Hobsbawm (1987: 51) uses the figure of 44 percent of the world's overseas investments as Britain's share.
2. Amery was Military Correspondent of *The Times* during the Boer War and later a Conservative MP who became Colonial Secretary 1922–4, Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies and Secretary of State for India during World War II. Like Mackinder he was a forceful advocate of tariff reform, a Unionist and lifelong imperialist. His son, Julian Amery, a biographer of Joseph Chamberlain, also became a Conservative MP and is currently on the editorial board of the right-wing international journal, *Géopolitique*.
3. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971: 196) defines 'organize' as 'to furnish with organs ... to form into a living being or a living tissue'.
4. In World War I, it has been estimated that 772 000 servicemen from Britain and Ireland lost their lives (Winter, 1985). The slaughter at Ypres, on the Somme and at Passchendaele was unprecedented in the history of warfare. Mackinder had taken a leading role in actively recruiting volunteers for the war before people had to be conscripted into the army in 1916. He even had a

share in a company. the Electro Bleach Company, that supplied large quantities of chlorine for the Western Front to the Ministry of Munitions (Blouet, 1988: 154–155). Paul Fussell in his masterful study *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975: 89) quotes some participants who noted that 'by the end of 1918 there were two distinct Britains: ... the fighting Forces, meaning literally the soldiers and sailors who fought, as opposed to garrison and line-of-communication troops, and the Rest, including the Government'. Mackinder, 58 years of age and writing from the safety of England. was certainly among the Rest, one of the armchair generals that Siegfried Sassoon so despised.

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