



CHRISTOPHER THORNE

## Christopher Guy Thorne 1934–1992

CHRISTOPHER THORNE CAME LATE TO ACADEMIC LIFE, and to the scholarship which was to bring him election to the British Academy in 1982 and to an international reputation. Prior to his appointment, in 1968, as Lecturer in International Relations, at the University of Sussex (with successive promotions to Reader and Professor of International Relations) he had worked as history master successively at St Paul's and Charterhouse schools and for the Further Education Service of the BBC. Nor did he immediately launch into the field of exploration that he was to make his own, the application of ideas drawn from the social sciences to the history of international relations, especially of international relations during the Second World War. His first work, *The Approach of War, 1938–1939*, was a conventional exercise in diplomatic history, based in the main on the published British, German, American and Italian diplomatic documents covering the two years before the outbreak of the Second World War. Very largely written and conceived before his entry into university life, it owed a good deal to the example of Sir Lewis Namier's masterly reconstructions of British and French policy on the basis of the 'coloured books' published at the beginning of the Second World War. By contrast with earlier and more sensational work based on the same source by two disciples of A. J. P. Taylor and the iconoclastic *Origins of the Second World War* of the master himself, Thorne's work embodied much of the re-evaluation of British and French policy in the years of appeasement, which had been in progress in Britain since the late 1950s. *The Approach of War* reflected his work

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as a teacher and educator; it provided a thorough and succinct summary of all the printed sources; it was to prove a godsend to university teachers faced with an increasing demand from their students for historical courses covering the origins of the Second World War. But even Thorne's measured evaluation of British policies was to give way half-way through the book to what he later admitted to be a loss of temper with Neville Chamberlain; the latter part of the book was devoted to a hostile and all-too-familiar critique of British foreign policy, based on the premise that even after the issue of the British guarantee to Poland at the end of March 1939 it reflected Chamberlain's concept of appeasement and was inspired by his guidance—a view which now would command less support than it did when Thorne wrote. The influence of Namier and the Churchillian critique of appeasement was still too strong and too persistent for any one of Thorne's generation to challenge it head on. Moreover, the task of re-evaluating the contemporary debate over British policy towards Nazi Germany in general, and the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938 and the Munich agreement in particular, poses basic problems of the role of moral judgement in the writing of history which are still far from proper understanding, let alone agreed solutions, even among historians. Christopher Thorne retained until his death the strongest of moral disapprobation of the policies adopted by the British government of the day and the arguments advanced then and subsequently to justify them.

By the time his book had appeared, however, the basis of his work, like that of most of his contemporaries, had been revolutionised by the reform of the Public Records Act in 1967 to permit the release of public records on the opening of the thirty-first, as opposed to the fifty-first, year since their creation. This was to set in motion the wholesale release of private and public papers from all but the intelligence services of government on a scale then only exceeded by practice in the United States. The result of this was that it became possible for historians to look beyond the concepts of governments and nations hitherto employed in the analysis and exposition of foreign policy into the formal and informal relationships and hierarchies, factions and rivalries which actually existed within those small groups constitutionally responsible for the conception and conduct of a nation's foreign policy and between their members and the societies they served and within which they lived and acted. It also became possible to discuss the role in the overall conduct of foreign policy, not merely of ambassadors and foreign ministers, but of the military, of senior members of the

bureaucracy and the directorates in the fields of finance, banking and overseas trade, and to distinguish between the formal structures of power and authority and the actual relationships between the persons who occupied those structures.

Thorne was himself to benefit from the spread of this opening of the archives from the practice of the United States and Britain to Britain's western neighbours (in particular from the opening of the Dutch archives), as he was from the accessibility of the Japanese archives captured in 1945 by the British and American occupying forces and used in the Tokyo war crimes trials of 1947–8. Without this sea-change in the release of archives and the consequent encouragement of those who had retired from public or political service in Britain to follow the example of their American contemporaries in preserving their papers and releasing them to university, regional or national archives for public access, the kind of changes that a few pioneers in Italy, France and Britain were already proposing should be introduced into the practice of international history, so far as the history of the origins and course of the Second World War were concerned, would have been difficult, if not impossible, for another two decades.

Even while his first book was going through its proof stages, Thorne was coming to echo the dissatisfaction with traditional diplomatic history which had already inspired these pioneers. Characteristically, however, Thorne found his own way to these conclusions without any real interaction with his forerunners, of whom Professor W. N. Medlicott of the London School of Economics was then the leading practitioner and advocate of such a widening in Britain. He was, however, to become a great friend of those members of the Department of International History at the LSE whose work impinged upon his own. The dedication of his second work, *The Limits of Foreign Policy; The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–1933* (London, 1972) to the French historian, Pierre Renouvin, and to Captain Stephen Roskill RN, the official historian of Britain's war effort at sea was in part misleading. Like his fellow innovators at London and Cambridge he had read Renouvin's basic text, *Introduction aux Relations Internationales*, published by Renouvin and his successor, J. B. Duroselle, in the 1950s, on which those European historians of international relations, grouped in the Paris-Geneva axis of the journal *Relations Internationales*, founded their work; he was also familiar with Renouvin's work on the history of the Far East in the twentieth century. And he had profited from the revival of war studies under Sir Michael Howard at King's College,

London, a field represented in Cambridge by Captain Stephen Roskill RN, the moving spirit in the establishment and operation of the Archives Centre of the Library of Churchill College, Cambridge, at which so many public servants from the British military and civil services were to deposit their papers. This collection, together with the additional collections of private political manuscripts at the University Library of Cambridge, the Bodleian, the Liddell Hart Library of King's College, London, the Library of Birmingham University, and a multitude of smaller collections around the country, when taken with the unhindered access to papers from the Cabinet Office, Prime Minister's private office, Foreign Office, Treasury, and Chiefs of Staff papers resulting from the two Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967, now made it possible for historians to envisage a model of the policy-making process in which the accumulation of information, the formulation of policy proposals at all levels of responsibility, from the lowliest to the highest, and the roles of individuals, factions, groups, Ministers and their advisers, could be identified and followed, if necessary, day by day or even hour by hour. Moreover, with similar, if not even richer, access to the records of the other major powers, especially those of the United States, it was now possible to chart the interactions, the perceptions and misperceptions, the understandings and misunderstandings, the conceptions and misconceptions, which governed the whole process of relations between the powers, to a degree profoundly more sophisticated than that entertained by most theorists of international relations.

Thorne was to pay his obligatory respects to those theorists (such as the French political sociologist and news commentator, Raymond Aron) whose writings came within the limits of the analysis now possible for historians of international relations using the archives of all the powers whose relations they were studying. But his real originality was shown by passages in the preface to *The Limits of Foreign Policy*. Here he revealed that since his arrival at Sussex he had been expected to teach and master the field of 'foreign policy analysis', favoured by Departments of International Relations throughout the United States and Britain. On his own he had come to the same dissatisfaction that made other historians of international relations in Britain dismiss this as a mishmash of *idées reçues* which ignored the dynamic and interactive nature of relations between states. Equally he had become dissatisfied with traditional diplomatic history.

In common with many who have been trained as historians, [he wrote,] I have to admit to a deep scepticism regarding the search which is being conducted by some political scientists for general theories and predictive formulae that can be applied to international relations . . . the designing of theoretical patterns at a quasi-theological level can degenerate into a self-indulgent and fruitless pastime, however attractive the notion of discovering all-embracing explanations and solutions for international conflict, say, in an age when such a phenomenon threatens to destroy mankind itself . . . the theoretical structures that have been erected around a particular subject such as foreign-policy decision-making . . . tend to be unduly static, for example, to allow insufficiently for the on-going nature of foreign policy, where the conscious major decision is the exception rather than the rule, and to have nothing to offer when it comes to weighing the relative significance of any one factor on a specific occasion . . .

The more traditional discipline of narrative diplomatic history, even when practised by a master of that craft, is surely also open to question . . . Many such studies — and I do not except my own — have often adopted a brusque approach . . . where causality is concerned, and in this context have failed to make use of work being done in neighboring areas of study such as social psychology . . . that approach to international history which treats states as so many billiard balls, each one a discrete unit with its own and ready made set of aims and interests, bears little relation to the world of international politics as it now exists — or perhaps ever existed . . . The infinitely complex nature of foreign policy formulation . . . is still frequently simplified to the point of falsification, either by isolating a single aspect of that policy from all other issues that were having to be faced by officials at the time, or by ignoring the interplay between international factors and those arising within domestic politics . . .

Thorne certainly saw his work as contributing to the development of the theoretical study of international relations. Indeed, he added to the bibliographical section of his second book a separate entry listing those works that had influenced him. He devoted a substantial part of the work to the examination of the interactions between the official policy-makers and various unofficial pressure groups, individuals and newspapers in the various countries involved both in the events in Manchuria and China which were the focus of his study and in the states members of the League of Nations where those events were examined, pronounced upon, and eventually and unsuccessfully acted upon.

In his analysis of his own work, it must be said that Thorne displayed a surprising ignorance of how the discipline of international history had developed in the 1930s, especially in the United States in the ever-more-sophisticated analysis of the 'war guilt' issue and the

influence of public opinion, pressure groups, and the press and other opinion-forming agencies upon public policy in France, Germany and Britain, in the decades before 1914. Indeed it is tempting to see much of his criticism of the state of 'diplomatic history' as a reaction to the rejection by some noted Oxbridge historians of the work of most, if not all, of their American colleagues and the diversion of the work of those radical German *émigré* critics of the official German line on 'war guilt', the Pan-German League, the Navy League, the steel cartels, and the Liberal-National and German Nationalist parties in the Reichstag to suit their general rejection of all things German as inherently, if not genetically, perverse. But the move he made with *The Limits of Foreign Policy* into international relations in the Far East, where the principal actors were Japan, China, Britain and the United States, with smaller parts played by the Netherlands and France, together with the emergence of a separate sense of national interest and identity in Australia, was to lead him into a field which he was to make his own, the role of what, for want of a better word (and the only word available is miserably imprecise and inadequate), has come to be called 'cultural' differences between the various politico-social systems and organisations which represent the various states and powers on the decision-making processes, the mutual perceptions and misperceptions of one another, and the consequent misjudgements and misunderstandings which were to pave the way to the ignominious if not foredoomed defeats, first of the colonial empires and then of their Japanese challengers.

In this move he could draw on the assistance of schools of historians in both Japan and the United States which had already plunged well beyond the exercise of nationalist historiography which marked the majority of work by those American diplomatic historians whose belief in American exceptionalism had confined their study to the history of American foreign relations, based entirely on American archives. Indeed, attempts to make sense of the conduct of foreign policy-making in Japan in the inter-war period which did not take account of the peculiar lack of any overall central control of the Japanese political system, and the quasi-feudal rivalries between different factions in the Japanese army, the High Command of the Japanese Navy, the Foreign Ministry, the Treasury, the officials of the Court and the *genro*, the elder statesmen, who had been for so long the inspiration towards modernism, had by the end of the 1960s been largely abandoned by historians of the Pacific War in both countries, as simplistic in the extreme. Thorne was

to stay within this area for the rest of his tragically short career. It is characteristic of his bent for examining all the labels with their accompanying presuppositions employed by his fellow historians that he should devote the beginning of the preface of his fourth book, *The Issue of War, States, Societies and the Far Eastern Conflict of 1941–1945* (London, 1985), to defending his preference for calling his field that of the ‘Far Eastern’ war against charges that it embodied a ‘Eurocentrist’ approach. For his American critics, of course, Japan and the western Pacific represent the Far West not the Far East, whether approached by sea or by that most modern of historical workhorses, the economy class of a jumbo jet.

His greatest work, seen from the point of view of the historian alone, was to be his third. Entitled *Allies of a Kind; the United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941–1945* (London, 1978), it concentrated on the separate war in the Pacific and the Far East of the Western allies against Japan, and the at times highly strained relations between the various groups of British and United States policy-makers, in Delhi, Sydney, Singapore and Hawaii, not to mention their superiors in Washington and London. The picture he drew had very little to do with that of militant pan-Anglo-Saxonism so assiduously cultivated by Winston Churchill’s memoirs and was impossible to reconcile with Harold Macmillan’s mythological invocation of Greeks and Romans in his memoirs, in support of his picture of Anglo-American ‘interdependence’; instead he depicted British imperialism at its often most insufferable sense of cultural superiority vying with a simple-minded American belief in the claims of any would-be Asian political figure who professed to speak in the name of the ‘people’ of his particular geographical area, as it might be a Soekarno for Indonesia or a Ho Chi Minh for Indo-China, even where the existence as a single political entity of that geographically-defined area had been entirely created by the European colonial overlord. No history of Anglo-American relations in the Roosevelt-Churchill era could ever be the same after Thorne’s examination of the issues involved in the Far Eastern war. His most striking argument, that Roosevelt and his strategic advisors committed American power to the support of Britain’s imminently evanescent empire in Malaya and Singapore for fear of the effect of a Japanese attack in South-East Asia on Britain’s ability to withstand and contain Hitler’s empire in Europe, has still not taken hold of the dominant schools of historiography in either the United States or Britain. Perhaps it conflicts too deeply with

the image of Pearl Harbour, and the determination of the US Navy to fight the war against Japan without British participation to be acceptable in the United States; while, in Britain, the fall of Singapore, the experience of the Japanese contempt for British military power displayed on the bodies of those who surrendered to them, and the whole complex set of attitudes involved in the dismissal of General Slim's victorious army of 1945 as 'the forgotten army', not to mention that latest development in the school of historical study of the British empire that is obsessed with 'declinology' as the inevitable *até* following the hubris of imperialism, has stood in the way of a similar recognition outside the small number of specialists in Far Eastern international history.

In writing *Allies of a Kind* and his subsequent studies, *Racial Aspects of the Far Eastern War of 1941–45* (London, 1982), (a reworking of his Raleigh lecture of 1980), *The Issue of War* (already mentioned), the collection of essays published as *Border Crossings: Studies in International History* (Oxford and New York, 1988), and *American Political Culture and the Asian Frontier, 1943–1973*, Thorne drew on records in Japan, Australia, the Netherlands, India, the United States and Britain. Of these, *The Issue of War* was in a sense the most ambitious of his works, representing an attempt on his own to write that full history of the war in the Far East which he had originally envisaged as a work of collaboration.

It is a work which is difficult to evaluate today on the terms in which it was conceived. Thorne wrote, as he admitted in the preface, under the influence of 'the times through which I myself have lived (which have helped direct my attention towards such themes as race relations and the position of women in society)', and he could well have added, of a conception of the public image of the war in the Far East, which had been formed by the immediate experience of that war and the very strong racial and anti-Oriental images fostered by Allied propaganda on the record of Japanese feelings of racial superiority as expressed in the treatment both of Allied war prisoners and civilian internees in the lands they overran in the opening year twelve months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. While it would be untrue to say that the general public in Britain has accepted his more balanced and historic view of the Far-Eastern War, it has won such general acceptance among historians that on rereading it, one is often surprised to realise how far what is now generally accepted required such hard labour on his part to establish.

The need to counter this hostile, not to say diabolised image of Imperial Japan, led him to an examination in depth of the conflict of cultures embodied in the practices of the war in the Far East and its antecedents. His own attitudes, impeccably liberal on such subjects as Indian and Indonesian nationalism, induced him to place the events of 1942–5 in a setting of the contacts, conflicts and interactions of the various forms of Asian politico-social ‘culture’, with the European and American ‘imperial’ powers. His approach and arguments owed a great deal to those Anglo-Saxon and European sociologists whose dissatisfaction with or ‘alienation’ from their own cultures had persuaded them to find benefits and advantages in the various and diverse societies of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. And he sometimes seemed to make no distinction between those for whom their explorations of Eastern societies were a means of drawing parallels with their own to the disadvantage of the cultures which had borne them, and the more disinterested, objective enquiries of their colleagues. (In addition, like most of his contemporaries, he accepted unquestioningly the dominant Nehruist school of Indian historiography and neglected the vast resources of loyalty to the Raj and support for the King-Emperor in India, without which the conduct of the war against Japan from the Indian base would have been impossible.) The small and unhappy group of Indian National Army collaborators with the Japanese engaged his attention far more than the ‘loyalist’ (or as contemporary American observers called them, the ‘mercenary’) forces of the British-led Indian army. And where Indonesia was concerned he seems to have accepted the claims of the Javanese social climbers who were eventually successful in exploiting the power vacuum left by the Japanese surrender and resisting the attempt on the part of the Dutch to re-establish their empire in the East Indies, to represent an Indonesian national spirit rather than the subsequent history of that unhappy and enormous archipelago of races, political cultures, religions and islands would justify.

In this he betrayed his own lack of confidence in exploring what the social sciences could offer historians in the way of tools and concepts with which to tackle the problems of intercultural relations on the scale with which he was concerned. The prefaces in which he explained his approach and the methodology which he had adopted were redolent of apology designed to disarm those whose claims to expertise he was, or so he seemed to think, invading — as though an amateur violinist was apologising to a Heifetz for tackling some peculiarly difficult passage in

a violin concerto which Heifetz had made his own. In crossing the 'lines of demarcation that separate the various human disciplines' he felt it necessary, or so he wrote, to 'acknowledge my position as a tyro'. This was both unnecessary and unworthy of his abilities and historical imagination and the range and scale of the problems, especially of those of change over time on a national and extra-national basis, with which his task had engaged him. For it is impossible for an international historian tackling the problems of the twentieth century to avoid becoming in the process a historian of 'global' or world history without exercising the most rigid and ultimately distorting of controls over the concepts he encounters and the questions which the material poses of itself. Thorne was incapable of such self-mutilation. Neither the range of his vision nor the generosity of his personality allowed of such a possibility.

In explaining the scope of *The Issue of War* as covering the impact of that conflict not only on the societies of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia but also on those of Britain, the Netherlands, France and the United States he argued, first, that those Western societies had been involved for many years in a 'network of relationships' with the peoples of the area; and, secondly, that these Western societies had despatched substantial forces to fight in that part of the world and had given every sign of regarding the outcome of the fighting there as of 'considerable importance in relation to their own, post-war, futures'. Such a perspective was very different from that of his Anglo-Saxon contemporaries who wrote of the Vietnamese or Indonesian 'national struggle against colonialism' in terms reminiscent of nineteenth-century liberal historians of Italian unification. Thorne's vision and historical 'reach' was too large for such anachronistic stenosis.

The third reason he gave was that he wished to take the opportunity to 'abrogate the boundaries between Western and non-Western history', a phrase he borrowed from the title of a book by the American historian, Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, 1982). It is significant of the generational change since that of Arnold Toynbee, that Thorne should neither mention his name nor his *Study of History*, nor even the practice of the annual *Surveys of International Affairs* with which Toynbee had launched his occupancy of the Chair of International Relations at Chatham House from 1925–58, and should find it necessary to defend what would now seem to be an inevitable part of the work which he, Thorne, had set himself. But the comment is more one on the discontinuities in British historiography and the isolation of

the International Relations school of writers in Britain from the traditions of international history than on Thorne's own enormously extensive and tireless range of contemporary reading, or on the sterling work he put in reviewing Chatham House's own archives and advising on their preservation, or in drawing on their war-time material in his analyses of British attitudes and concepts.

As has already been noted he found himself dependent on the state of development of concepts in those social sciences which seemed to be interested in the same kind of problems which he was encountering. One can perhaps trace the influence of his colleagues at Sussex, especially the sociologist of Japan, Ronald Dore, in the comparative absence from his reading lists of works by social anthropologists (Margaret Mead, the American, is the only name he mentions). Work by social psychologists, interested as they are in investigative and experimental work among small groups, which necessarily excludes the important, the very busy, and the formally and informally structured groups of political, diplomatic and military, policy-makers with which historians such as Thorne are concerned, he found, as others have, to be 'to an equal degree, awakening and disappointing' of one's appetite—as Charles Lamb wrote of the Wednesday luncheon menu at his primary school.

As with most of Thorne's work, the detail and complexity of his exposition does not lend itself easily to summary. To say, for example, that he refused to categorise Imperial war-time Japan as Fascist or totalitarian, is more a comment on the facile drawing of ideological and contemporary classifications by Allied, in particular, American analysts and propagandists, and the length of time it takes historiography to purge itself of such misconceptions once they have entered the literature, than to recognise quite how far Thorne was opposing himself to facile attempts to reduce the Second World War to one between democracy and Fascism, or between European imperialism and the emergent (and therefore presumably incapable of imperialism) non-European Third World.

Thorne himself was never quite clear on the question of how to handle such misconceptions. At one moment he seems to argue that such statements are not in accordance with observable historical 'reality'—which, if that kind of approach is accepted, is obvious—and that therefore those who use them are, wittingly or unwittingly, inventing categories for their own purposes into which the historical realities can only be fitted by distortion or mutilation. At other times he

seems to take the equally acceptable historical view that such statements do, in practice, have a historical validity as evidence, not insofar as they can be shown to correspond with objective phenomenological evidence, but insofar as important and influential sections of the policy-makers, the opinion-leaders and the opinion they generated, held such statements to be 'true' or valid, and allowed their actions, decisions and anticipations to be governed by such analyses. But he does not always make the distinction between these two levels of argument clear — an indication, perhaps, that he took less account of the difference between perceptions of reality and objective 'reality' itself than his successors would make, always provided that they acknowledged the existence of an objective reality apart from, yet observable by, the percipient. He was never publicly severe with those with whom he disagreed, displaying in this, as in the help he so unceasingly gave to fellow historians of every nationality, the generosity of nature which was one of his most endearing characteristics.

*Border Crossings* was a less integrated work than its three great predecessors. It is in fact a collection of essays, conference papers, and contributions to collective works, generated during the latter years of his career. The title reflects his own concern with the increasingly cross-disciplinary nature of his work (in parenthesis he seems as obsessed with what in trade union terms used to be called 'demarcation disputes' as any British trade unionist of the 1950s). It also reveals the increasing Americanisation of his work, in the sense that his arguments are increasingly directed to American audiences, in terms which reflect American values and historiographical developments. Accused once, jokingly, by a British friend at a conference in the United States, of 'going native', he reacted with a degree of protest that revealed his sensitivity to such a taunt. But the demand for his presence at such conferences, and the sheer number of American historians of ability who shared his interests and friendship in some sense made the increasing casting of his views in terms and in a vocabulary with which they were familiar, inevitable. It is hardly surprising that his reputation stood so high among historians in the United States.

His reputation stood no less high in Japan. He acknowledged freely his debt to Professor Chihiro Hosoya, the leader of those Japanese historians of the Second World War who were pursuing a history which should be neither a nationalist nor a Marxist distortion of the record. His own approach, neither demonising nor minimising the influence of Japanese military feudalism and nationalism in the processes which

led to the Japanese decision for war and empire in East Asia, fitted closely with the social and political analysis employed by Hosoya and his allies. His acceptance of the Japanese motivation as a drive for modernisation rather than westernisation of their political culture and the perils surrounding such a process, paid the Japanese the compliment of taking their leaders' actions and justifications of their actions at their own value, while in no way denying those aspects of Japanese behaviour towards other Asian cultures and peoples as towards their European victims which were to redound most heavily to Japan's detriment during and after the war.

Scholarship of the scale Thorne practised does not come either easily or cheaply either in financial or personal terms. He was generously treated by the University of Sussex in terms of leave and by British, American, Dutch and Japanese foundations in terms of financial support. But there is no disguising that the sheer volume of the records he came to master, their extreme geographical distribution and the stresses of cheap air travel that his research imposed made enormous demands on his health and physical stamina. Moreover he set himself a relentlessly punishing schedule. At least one distinguished historian of the war in the Far East was forced to withdraw from a proposed joint enterprise by his unwillingness or inability to keep up with the schedule Thorne set him. Thorne was physically strong, a big bull of a man, a player of rugby in his younger days, a trained baritone with the physique professional singing demands. But the pace at which he worked and the scale of his travels were paid for with severe and, to his friends and family, regular and alarming breakdowns in health. These were aggravated by the heating system at his Sussex home, which was discovered after several years to have been discharging noxious gases into the air he and his wife breathed. His increasingly senior position in the University of Sussex also exposed him to the ever-increasing administrative, managerial and policy-making demands imposed on the universities by forces external to the university system. His early death can be counted, at least in part, as just one of the unnecessary losses of excellence imposed by those who are unable to recognise something they find themselves unable to quantify.

At Thorne's death in April 1992, there were those of his contemporaries who muttered *sotto voce* that he had very largely come to the end of what he had to say, or even that he was beginning to repeat himself. It is true that he showed little interest in the two directions into which so many of his contemporaries, let alone his younger colleagues,

in the study of international history were developing their interests, the respective roles of propaganda and intelligence in policy-making and the conduct of foreign relations; although he had written to some point on the subject of Japanese and western propaganda in the Far East. Nor did he share their interests in the post-war history of East-West relations which the advance of the opening of British records into the post-war era made possible. His isolation from his British colleagues (he once said that he was happy not to be part of a Department of History of International Relations) weakened his connections with British political perceptions and preoccupations. And as already noted, his contacts with social scientists were serendipitous rather than structured. His closest and deepest friendships were with American historians of American radicalism such as Professor Lloyd C. Gardner of the University of Rutgers, a man whose originality of judgement and perception could more readily be appreciated as part of the American historiographical tradition.

The change in emphasis in his later years showed itself in what appeared to be a much greater willingness to rely on and cite the work of American social scientists, work which he was not in a position either to check or to evaluate. He whose major works had rested on a complete and overwhelming preoccupation with the primary sources was producing papers and articles which revealed that his gargantuan appetite for reading had in no way diminished but whose nourishment was designed for appetites and tastes other than those which he had developed himself. This is, of course, the dilemma which all synoptic historians face; that in attempting to absorb and bring together the work of others in a variety of what seem to be relevant fields, they may only be synthesising the current states of knowledge and perceptions of those fields rather than the finished outcome of schools of original research unbiased by any current political or social, overt or hidden agendas. Thorne's admirers, among whom the author of this memoir counts himself, maintained that this stage of his thinking would soon have given way to his inimitable ability to read into his new field of study, patterns and concepts not hitherto seen by others. But, alas, we were never to see our hopes realised.

Christopher Thorne's literary and historical remains constitute a most remarkable contribution, perhaps the crucial contribution, to the restructuring of the historiography of the Second World War and its antecedents in the Far East in the last three decades. But to leave his work with that judgement would be to do Christopher Thorne an

injustice. His work called attention to and concentrated on the impossibility of depicting, let alone analysing, the development and conduct of relations, including wars, between the political units into which the world is divided, if there is no recognition of the very different sets of beliefs, values, social relationships, traditions, hierarchies, divinities even, obtaining among the peoples of the units involved. In writing about this, Thorne suffered, as we all do, from the cultural inadequacies, the presuppositions, the redolent cultural essences, the overtones and undertones embedded in the language which is all that we have in which to record our perceptions and communicate them to others. He suffered too, from the absence of theoretical and analytical training from the standard historical degrees in Britain, and the fear of departure from the certainties of established historical method which governed the majority of his colleagues and forestalled any perceptive dialogue between him and those of his contemporaries who were also feeling their way towards newer and deeper analyses of the tasks set them by the new richness of evidence available to historians working in the mid-twentieth century. But despite these inhibitions peculiar to his own development (and there are no practitioners of his discipline of whom similar inhibiting factors cannot be adduced), the work he produced is still as new and as fresh and as profoundly stimulating as if it were newly-minted. Only we can no longer rely on those sudden encounters at the Public Record Office or outside the British Library, in the wings of some American conference or airport waiting-room, to elucidate what we in our purblindness could not at first comprehend. He was a man of many friendships, unusual insights and colossal energies. He did not father a school; and one cannot but feel that his work stands more on its own than as part of a larger British body of thought. Not that he could not work with others. He worked closely with the British Committee for the History of the Second World War and contributed regularly to their bilateral conferences. He did his country great credit internationally. It is perhaps an indication of the sense of loss his contemporaries still feel that one is left at the end with a feeling of dissatisfaction. He should not have died so young; and he has at the moment no replacement.

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