

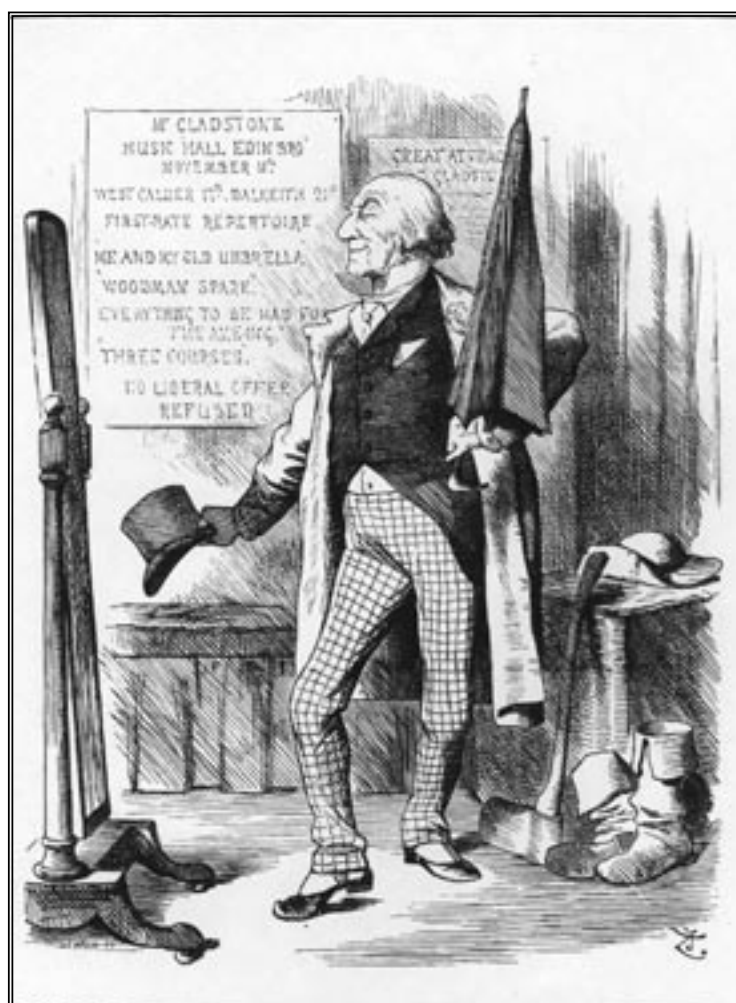
GLADSTONE'S MIDLOTHIAN

THE REALPOLITIK OF

E. F. Biagini
analyses
Gladstone's
principles of
foreign policy,
challenging those
who characterise
him as an idealist.

When he set off on his pre-electoral tour in November 1879, the 'People's William' was ostensibly preparing to wrest the constituency of Midlothian from the sitting Tory MP, the Earl of Dalkeith. However, from the start many thought that the campaign had more ambitious aims, namely wresting the party leadership from the Marquis of Hartington and, indeed, the premiership from the Earl of Beaconsfield. Less evident at the time was the extent to which the Midlothian speeches would become a lasting monument to a certain liberal tradition in international relations.

'Reappearance of the Popular Favourite' (*Punch*, 7 November 1885) – Gladstone returns to the scene of his Midlothian Campaign triumphs, with speeches in Edinburgh, West Calder and Dalkeith



Later generations would regard the Midlothian doctrine on foreign policy as a precursor of Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' or the Charter of the UN.¹ Moreover, Gladstone's emphasis on Europe's cultural and moral unity and the supranational forms of legitimacy

and authority emanating from that unity seemed to prefigure the modern process of European integration.

More recently historians have grown rather sceptical about Gladstone's motives and achievements. Richard Shannon has pointed out that, although his principles seem to stand like 'a

IAN CAMPAIGN OF 1879 OF CHRISTIAN HUMANITARIANISM

great historical monument of bronze and marble', the latter, like all monuments, was held together by less noble 'wires and strings', including personal ambition and a degree of self-deception.² Yet, in the end he seems to confirm the old 'idealist' interpretation, and, almost echoing Victorian Tories, criticises the GOM for his disregard for 'the logic of imperial argument'. 'That logic had no bearing on Gladstone's actions or intentions ... He acted throughout for Europe, within a European frame of assumptions and intentions.'³

Of course, in Victorian Britain the Tories were not alone in fearing that Gladstone would sacrifice national interest to abstract principle. Within the Liberal Party many expressed similar concerns. As Jonathan Parry has written, Hartington and other leading Whig landowners distrusted Gladstone for many reasons, including his 'populist mode of leadership', tendency to fall into 'states of morbid excitement', and Christian fervour.⁴ Parry's analysis is very accurate. Hartington and Gladstone differed in temperament, style and priorities. However, did these differences imply different foreign policy aims? Was Gladstone an irresponsible and impractical visionary who neglected national interest for the sake of abstract moral principle and 'ethical' foreign policy?

A number of historians, including the present writer, disagree with this interpretation. They accept Shannon's warning about the 'wires and strings', but draw different conclusions about Gladstone's attitude to principles, his (often hypocritical) readiness to apply them selectively, and his handling of Britain's interests. They feel that Gladstone's conduct of international relations anticipated the late twentieth-century democratic dilemma – so evident in recent U.S. foreign policy – between universal principles and national interest.⁵ Although these historians disagree with one another as to how precisely Gladstone dealt with this dilemma, they follow Colin Matthew in arguing that his foreign policy reflected a realistic assessment of Britain's global interests and an effective – occasionally ruthless – pursuit of imperial stability within the constraints of the international context.⁶ His emphasis on the European Concert was generally based on a more realistic appreciation of Britain's long-term interests and vulnerability than the unilateralism of those who preached a strategy of 'national assertion'. The present article applies this interpretation to the specific case of the Midlothian Principles, which Gladstone first presented in ten public speeches in 1879.

Gladstone's conduct of international relations anticipated the late twentieth-century democratic dilemma between universal principles and national interest.

The six 'right principles'

The British Empire was then a superpower – in the sense of being a power with global interests and the military and financial means to pursue them anywhere in the world. Gladstone was concerned that this position of power should not be misused or abused, particularly by adopting unilateralist policies abroad, or by fomenting chauvinism and warlike passions at home.⁷ He had long regarded both practices as morally wrong and politically misguided, indeed ultimately disastrous to British interests.

This was exemplified by the Tory government in 1876: '[the] point upon which we quarrelled [with the other Powers] was this: Whether coercion was under any circumstances to be applied to Turkey to bring about the better government of that country'.⁸ By rejecting the 1876 Berlin Memorandum, with which the Continental powers proposed a concerted action to deal with civil unrest and the violation of human rights in the Ottoman Empire, Britain prevented the development of a common European policy⁹ without proposing viable alternatives. Later, Beaconsfield's decision to send the fleet to the Dardanelles and Indian troops to Cyprus without previous consultation with the other European governments maximised the risk of a general war.

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The second mistake that Gladstone denounced in Midlothian was Beaconsfield's encouragement of jingoism, which caused uneasiness and alarm abroad. Gladstone claimed that this had resulted in Britain's international isolation and the unsettling of the stock markets, both of which were bound to sap British power. This is interesting for the light it throws on Gladstone's view of the British Empire. The latter – he insisted – did not depend either on its military might (real or perceived), or on its territorial extent, but only on the vitality of British industry, trade and finance.

He saw the Empire as a British-dominated global economic system, which, through free trade, benefited both Britain and the rest of the western world, and simultaneously offered peace, law and order to colonies, protectorates and dependencies in Asia and Africa. However, in 1875–79 the stability of the imperial edifice as well as the future of this 'benign' form of globalisation had been undermined by Beaconsfield. His jingoism and unilateralism were more dangerous to British interest than Russia's ambitions in the Balkans. Hence the need for patriotically-minded Englishmen to denounce and oppose the government, despite the general principle that in foreign affairs '[it] is most important to maintain our national unity in the face of the world.'¹⁰ To Gladstone it was a choice of evils: 'I ... have always admitted, and admit now, that our responsibility in opposing the Government has been immense, but their responsibility in refusing to do right has been still greater.'

Because the government controlled a large majority that prevented effective opposition in Parliament, Gladstone felt that it was his duty to bring the issue directly to the people, to the electors, to whom that majority was ultimately accountable. Here he introduced a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate uses of populist oratory. Appealing to the

people was good, provided it was inspired by a desire to increase their civic awareness. A legitimate use of populist rhetoric depended on making the people fully aware of their moral and political, almost legal, responsibilities before the international community:

The great duty of a Government, especially in foreign affairs, is to sooth and tranquillise the minds of the people, not to set up false phantoms of glory which are to delude them into calamity, not to flatter their infirmities by leading them to believe that they are better than the rest of the world ... but to proceed upon a principle that recognises the sisterhood and equality of nations, the absolute equality of public right among them.¹¹

By contrast, populist rhetoric which was 'calculated to excite, calculated to alarm, calculated to stir pride and passion, and calculated to divide the world' was illegitimate. This was what the Tory government had been doing: '[t]heir business has been to appeal to pride and passion, to stir up those very feelings which every wise man ought to endeavour to allay.'¹²

It has frequently been pointed out that Gladstone was never patronising when addressing artisans and working men: he made 'the most obscure man in the hall feel that he was contributing to the moral judgement of the world on great events.'¹³ But in Midlothian he went beyond speaking to working *men*: remarkably, he devoted the final part of his second speech to *women*: 'I speak to you, ladies, as women', he said, 'in virtue of the common nature which runs through us all', as 'the present political crisis has to do not only with human interests at large, but especially with those interests which are most appropriate ... to you. ... "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform"'. All of these words, ladies, are connected with the promotion of human happiness.¹⁴ It was to

women that he addressed some of the most famous and frequently quoted passages of his 1879 speeches, when his indictment of Tory imperialism among the Zulus and the Afghans culminated in an emotional proclamation of rights – rights which were established by the Almighty and were shared by all human beings, irrespective of national, religious and race barriers:

Remember the rights of the savage, as we call him. Remember that the happiness of his humble house, remember that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eye of Almighty God as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you together as human beings in the same flesh and blood, has bound you by the laws of mutual love; that that mutual love is not limited by the shores of this island, it is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilisation; that it passes over the whole surface of the earth, and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope.¹⁵

Gladstone expected that this politics of crusading humanitarianism would be as electorally viable as the equally emotional politics of jingoism. He thought that, unlike jingoism, humanitarianism spanned the gap between the genders' 'separate spheres', evoking strong responses among women of different social classes. While he may have been wrong about women's unresponsiveness to jingoism, he was certainly shrewd in identifying humanitarianism as one of the distinctive features of 'feminine' liberalism.¹⁶

The Third Speech was delivered at West Calder to a gathering of electors and non-electors, in 'a district which was partly agricultural and partly mining'. Perhaps it was not the most influential audience in Scotland, but it was to this gathering that Gladstone chose to deliver the most important

He saw the Empire as a British-dominated global economic system, which, through free trade, benefited both Britain and the rest of the western world, and simultaneously offered peace, law and order.

and complete exposition of his views on foreign policy. It contained the famous six 'right principles'. The cornerstone was 'to foster the strength of the Empire by just legislation and economy at home, thereby producing two of the great elements of national power – namely, wealth, which is a physical element, and union and contentment, which are moral elements – and to reserve the strength of the Empire, to reserve the expenditure of that strength, for great and worthy occasions abroad.'¹⁷ However, imperial strength was better saved than spent, a consideration which led to Gladstone's second principle, namely 'to preserve to the nations of the world and especially ... to the Christian nations of the world – the blessings of peace.' The third principle was really a corollary of the second, because it indicated the chief means whereby peace would be preserved among 'Christian nations':

To strive to cultivate and maintain ... what is called the Concert of Europe; to keep the powers of Europe in union together. And why? Because by keeping all in union together you neutralise and fetter and bind up the selfish aims of each. I am not here to flatter either England or any of them. They have selfish aims, as, unfortunately, we in late years have too sadly shown that we too have had selfish aims; but then common action is fatal to selfish aims. Common action means common objects; and the only objects for which you can unite together the Powers of Europe are objects connected with the common good of them all.¹⁸

The fourth principle was 'to avoid needless and entangling engagements', such as unnecessary annexations of territory which would overstretch the military and human resources of the Empire without adding to British strength. While this was consistent with the Concert of Europe – which required an

undisturbed balance of power – it was also linked to the fifth principle, which was 'to acknowledge the equal rights of all nations'. To Disraeli's Latin motto of *Imperium et Libertas*, Gladstone objected that Britain was not 'the new Rome' and had no special 'imperial mission'. What Beaconsfield meant, Gladstone argued in his Third Midlothian Speech, was simply this:

Liberty for ourselves, Empire over the rest of mankind ... the policy of denying to others the rights that we claim ourselves ... No doubt, gentlemen, Rome may have had its work to do, and Rome did its work. But modern times have brought a different state of things. Modern times have established a sisterhood of nations, equal, independent; each of them built up under that legitimate defence which public law affords to every nation, living within its own borders, and seeking to perform its own affairs.¹⁹

This fully expressed Gladstone's hostility to, and contempt for, jingoism:

In point of right all [nations] are equal, and you have no right to set up a system under which one of them is to be placed under moral suspicion or espionage, or to be made the constant subject of invective ... if you claim for yourself a superiority, a pharisaical superiority over the whole of them, then ... you are a misjudged friend of your country, and in undermining the basis of the esteem and respect of other people for your country you are in reality inflicting the severest injury upon it.

The sixth and final principle was that, 'subject to all the limitations that I have described, the foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom'. He insisted that support for self-government and constitutional movements abroad should

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be 'founded not upon visionary ideas, but upon the long experience of many generations within the shores of this happy isle, that in freedom you lay the firmest foundations both of loyalty and order'.²

Context

In a sense it is correct to say that the six principles 'form[ed] a landmark in the history of Liberal internationalism'.²¹ Yet, in Gladstone's formulation, they were not supposed to have universal application: on the whole they were limited, first, to 'the Christian nations of the world'; and, second, to non-Christian nations with a stable government with which Britain could establish treaties and formal agreements, such as China, Japan, the Emir of Afghanistan or the Zulu king. By contrast, they did not apply either to countries which had 'long forfeited' their independence and were no longer 'nations' (e.g. Egypt), or to regions within which there was no established or recognised government and 'anarchy' reigned. Although the human rights of the people living in these areas ought to be respected, their countries as such had no 'right' to self-government, nor were they entitled to membership of the 'sisterhood of nations'.

Moreover, though Gladstone's dislike for imperialism was genuine, there was no hint of pacifism in his principles, but only a resolute attempt to promote peace and regulate the use of force by subjecting it to international authority, i.e. to the Concert of Europe, which embodied 'the best available institutional representation of Christian morality in international affairs'.²² The fact that the Concert included only the Great Powers – those whose decisions actually 'mattered' – added a strong dimension of *Realpolitik* to his vision.

His 'realism' was strengthened by his conviction that there was a strict interdependence between foreign and financial policy. In

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1874 Gladstone had sought to impose a 'fiscal constitution' on the Foreign Office and the Colonial and War departments in an attempt to prevent them from pursuing imperialist expansion in 'fits of absent-mindedness' (such as the 1873 expedition to West Africa).²³

Earlier, in his days as Palmerston's Chancellor of the Exchequer (1859–65) he had tried, with mixed success, to produce financial policies which would restrain expenditure on external affairs, a Cobdenite strategy which helped to improve his relationship with the Radicals. Indeed Gladstone had drawn closer to Richard Cobden in the 1850s, when they had jointly opposed Palmerston's gunboat diplomacy in Greece (the Don Pacifico case, in 1850) and in China (the so-called *Arrow* incident, leading to the second 'Opium War', in 1856–60). It was then that Gladstone made appeal, for the first time, to the 'sisterhood among nations' and their rights irrespective of power and size.

Although many Cobdenite Radicals liked what they heard, as Matthew has written, 'Gladstone was, outside free trade, no Cobdenite'. While Cobden had always supported non-intervention, Gladstone 'saw intervention as a natural part of the maintenance of the civilised order of the world ... Every Cabinet he had sat in since 1843 had dispatched a military expedition.'²⁴ His philosophy implied almost universal intervention – provided it was sanctioned by the Concert of Europe – and was based on a version of *inter*-nationalism that ascribed to nation-states a leading role in human progress. Finally, while Cobden was a genuine critic of the Empire as well as imperialism, Gladstone was an unreconstructed advocate of imperial power: he could be represented as 'anti-imperialist' only in the fervidly jingoistic climate of the end of the century. Even his 1876 speeches to stop the Bulgarian atrocities

– which so outraged imperialist and 'patriotic' opinion – contained the 'implicit reaffirmation of Britain's right to dictate events in the eastern Mediterranean', a claim which was 'delivered with the charisma of an Old Testament prophet', but was 'calculated to appeal to Britons, whatever their background'.²⁵

His foreign policy was not derived from Cobden, but from the 1841–46 government of Sir Robert Peel, whose Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, had been Gladstone's mentor. Aberdeen personified the connection between 'Peace', 'Retrenchment' and the preservation of the 'Concert of Europe'. The latter was, originally, a conservative system derived from the 1815 Vienna settlement. Based on the notion of collective responsibility, its aim was the avoidance of full-scale conflicts by means of consultation among the big Powers, whose representatives would meet periodically at congresses and conferences. These powers – Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia – were prepared to apply diplomatic and military pressure on trouble-makers, for the preservation of the balance of powers and a Christian-inspired 'international law'.

At first interpreted in conservative terms under the 'Holy Alliance', 'international law' gradually acquired a more liberal significance after 1830, when the establishment of a liberal regime in France allowed for the development of an *entente cordiale* between London and Paris. This worked on behalf of liberal revolutionaries in Belgium, Spain and Portugal without significantly altering the mechanism or the legitimacy of the 'Concert.' After 1851 Napoleon III, though often unpredictable and generally distrusted, remained loyal to the system, which was reasserted during the Crimean War and the ensuing Paris Congress of 1856.

For these reasons the Crimean War weakened the Russian Empire, but did not undermine

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the European balance of power. The latter was more seriously threatened in 1859–60, with Italian unification, which asserted the principle of nationality and destroyed the Vienna Treaty settlement. However, united Italy was not a real power, and Cavour, like other liberal diplomats, valued the 'moral consortium' among governments more than abstract theories of nationality: he saw it as the counterpart to his free-trade project of an ordered and rational progress, sustained by foreign as well as national investments.

Thus, when we consider the extraordinary British enthusiasm for the Risorgimento (enthusiasm which Gladstone shared) we must bear in mind the liberal-conservative nature of the new Italian state, which stabilised the internal affairs of the peninsula after decades of upheavals and rebellions. Indeed Palmerston had envisaged a settlement of the Italian question along similar lines as early as 1848, when British diplomacy was deployed to support the Piedmontese liberals against both Austrian reactionary intentions in Lombardy and French Republican ambitions on Savoy and Nice.

Although Palmerston favoured the creation of a north-Italian state under the Piedmontese constitutional monarchy – a sort of Italian Belgium – he was not originally favourable to unification. Indeed in 1859 he tried unsuccessfully to avoid the outbreak of the Franco-Austrian war in northern Italy, which, he feared, could lead to the dismemberment of the Austrian empire. Eventually Italy was unified, but on terms uniquely favourable to British interests in the Mediterranean.²⁶ Palmerston played the international moralist on the cheap, and his government reaped where others had sown. Of course this strategy did not always work: in 1864 Palmerston committed British support to another constitutional monarchy, Denmark, but when the latter was attacked by

Prussia and Austria his bluff was called. Britain was in no position to engage in a continental war: the Danes were defeated, and lost Schleswig-Holstein to the German Confederation.

Was this combination of liberalism and pragmatism superseded by a more idealistic approach once Gladstone replaced Palmerston as Liberal Party leader? Not really. Undoubtedly there were differences of style, outlook and especially rhetoric between the two statesmen, but in terms of actual policy and overall strategy the continuities and the common ground between them are striking. In 1859–65 Palmerston relied heavily on Gladstone, who, in turn, was genuinely appreciative of Palmerston's liberalism. If Palmerston enjoyed bullying Greece and China, Gladstone was 'as ruthless a wielder of power as any contemporary when he saw a necessity or a benefit' – as he would show in 1882, with the invasion of Egypt.²⁷ Generally, however, he advocated an approach which allowed for the peaceful solution of international problems and the enforcement of international treaties. This was exemplified by his response to the three major international crises of 1870–71, when he was Prime Minister.

These crises involved Britain's relations with, respectively, Germany, Russia, and the USA. At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war, Gladstone took energetic steps to preserve the independence of Belgium: had its neutrality been violated by either France or Germany, Britain – he said – would have fought for Brussels. This policy followed an established tradition in British politics – a tradition which Palmerston had strongly endorsed throughout his career. In particular, from the 1830s the British government had guaranteed Belgian neutrality, and in 1848 Palmerston made it clear to the new republican government in Paris that an invasion of Belgium would be a *casus belli* for Britain. Belgian neutrality

was not violated either in 1848 or 1870. However, in 1871 Gladstone was not able to prevent the Germans from annexing Alsace and Lorraine against the will of their inhabitants – a failure reminiscent of Palmerston's Schleswig-Holstein fiasco in 1864. More successful was Gladstone's Russian policy, when he convinced the St Petersburg government to come to the negotiating table, rather than unilaterally to break the Black Sea Clauses of the 1856 Paris Treaty.

Finally, Gladstone managed to settle by international arbitration the Anglo-American dispute over the losses inflicted to US shipping by British-built Confederate cruisers during the American Civil War. This was the famous *Alabama* case, after the name of one of the privateering warships. Eventually a specially convened international court of arbitration ruled that the British government owed reparations to Washington, and Gladstone accepted to pay.

It is questionable whether Palmerston would have relished this 'surrender' to foreign judges, but it is likely that he would have grudgingly acknowledged that the peaceful settlement of this question was a great success for the British Empire. Conscious of Britain's vulnerability, he had always been careful to combine assertive rhetoric with the resolute avoidance of conflicts with major powers, including the USA in 1861–65. In 1871–72 Gladstone's decision to submit to arbitration averted an escalation of tension which was likely to cause long-term problems in Anglo-American relations, and, in the worst scenario, might have led to an armed conflict. And it was evident that, in case of a war, the minuscule Crown forces – thinly spread along the Canadian frontier – would have been no match for the US Army and its Civil War veterans. Furthermore, the cost of a full-scale war, not to mention the difficulty of protecting other British dependencies overseas against American naval raids,

simply bore no comparison with the settlement paid by the Liberal government after arbitration.

However, Gladstone was not primarily concerned about the material advantages of arbitration, but about the general principle it involved – namely, that international conflicts between Christian powers should be settled without recourse to force. Commitment to this overarching philosophy was perhaps the single most important difference between his approach and Palmerston's, and represents the area in which he was closer to Cobden and Bright. Yet, in practice if not in theory, Palmerston reluctantly accepted what Gladstone fervently preached, i.e. that the pursuit of British interests required 'the concurrence of other and jealous powers'.²⁸ Against this background it is easier to see why in 1879 Gladstone argued that unilateralism was both immoral and impolitic. His sense of the unity of Europe bred what has appropriately been described as 'cosmopolitan patriotism' – or, in other words, the *Realpolitik* of Christian humanitarianism. Palmerston would have put it differently: '[t]here was no cheap war to be had in Europe or North America'.²⁹

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- 1 J. L. Hammond, 'Gladstone and the League of Nations Mind', in J. A. K. Thompson and A. J. Toynbee (eds.), *Essays in Honour of Gilbert Murray* (London, 1936), pp. 95–118; F. R. Flournoy, 'British Liberal theories of international relations (1848–1898)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. VII, No. 2, 1946, pp. 195–217.
- 2 R. T. Shannon, 'Midlothian: 100 years after', in P. J. Jagger (ed.), *Gladstone, Politics and Religion* (London, 1985), p. 90.
- 3 Shannon, *Gladstone: Vol. 2, Heroic Minister, 1865–1898* (London, 1999), p. 305.

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- 4 J. P. Parry, *The rise and fall of Liberal government in Victorian Britain* (London, 1993), pp. 257–60, 290–92.
- 5 R. T. Harrison, *Gladstone's Imperialism in Egypt: Techniques of imperial domination* (Westport, CT, 1995); J. Y. Wong, *Deadly Dreams. Opium and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. pp. 431–33; and E. F. Biagini, 'Exporting "Western and Beneficent Institutions": Gladstone and Empire, 1880–1885', in D. Bebbington and R. Swift (eds.), *Gladstone Centenary Essays* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 202–24.
- 6 H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone 1875–1898* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 1–60.
- 7 W. E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches 1879* (Leicester, 1971), First Speech, pp. 35–36.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 9 Interestingly, in this case Gladstone insisted on a European consensus, to the exclusion of the USA, only because he reckoned that '[our] American friends have too remote an interest in [the Ottoman Empire] to take part' (*ibid.*, p. 54).
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 36 and 37.
- 13 J. L. Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation* (London, 1964), p. 706.
- 14 Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches*, Second Speech, pp. 89–90.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- 16 Cf. J. Jordan, *Josephine Butler* (London, 2001); J. Alberti, *Eleanor Rathbone* (London, 1996); and S. Pedersen, 'National bodies, unspeakable acts: the sexual politics of colonial policy-making', *Journal of Modern History*, 63 (December 1991).
- 17 Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches*, Third speech, p. 115.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 D. W. Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: faith and politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1993), p. 179.
- 22 Matthew, *Gladstone 1875–1898*, p. 23.
- 23 H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809–1874* (Oxford, 1986), p. 225.
- 24 Matthew, *Gladstone 1875–1898*, p. 123; cf. W. Hinde, *Richard Cobden* (London, 1987), pp. 202–03, 207–08, 270–71.
- 25 A. Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the working classes 1856–1878* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), p. 94.
- 26 On the international dimensions of this question see D. Beales and E. F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy* (London, 2002), pp. 114–33, 163–75.
- 27 Matthew, *Gladstone, 1875–1898*, p. 198. In 1879 Gladstone thought that Disraeli's purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal had amounted to assuming 'the virtual government of Egypt', in so far as Britain, jointly with France, was now in control of Egyptian revenue and responsible for the servicing of her national debt (*Midlothian Speeches*, First Speech, p. 49). His understanding was that Britain had accepted a virtual 'Protectorate' on the Nile – with all the political and moral obligations that a protectorate entailed. This helps to explain why he was so readily persuaded to invade Egypt in 1882.
- 28 E. D. Steele, *Palmerston and Liberalism 1855–1865* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 246.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

LETTERS

Lib-Labs

Roy Douglas

Andrew Hudson's interesting article on the Lib-Labs (*Journal* 41) raises a few points which call for comment.

The National Agent Francis (not Henry) Schnadhorst and the Chief Whip Herbert (later Viscount) Gladstone were both interested in securing the election of more working-class MPs, but at different periods. Schnadhorst retired from the post of Secretary of the National Liberal Federation in 1893 and from Chairmanship a year later. His health collapsed about that time, and he died early in 1900. Herbert Gladstone was Chief Whip from 1899 until he joined Campbell-Bannerman's government late in 1905.

The Hanley by-election of 13 July 1912 did not result in a Tory victory (though many people, including the *Punch* cartoonist, anticipated otherwise), but in a victory by the Liberal land-taxing enthusiast R. L. Outhwaite. The result was: Outhwaite 6647; Rittner (Tory) 5993; Finney (Labour) 1694.

The author is right in stating that the affiliation of the Miners' Federation to the Labour Party 'was not universally welcomed'. In the general election of January 1910, the Lib-Lab miners' MPs who defected to the Labour Party were only able to hold their seats where they had no Liberal against them. The only one of their number who encountered Liberal opposition was John Johnson in Gateshead. The feeling of the local miners was indicated on polling day when eight thousand of them

demonstrated against him in the streets of the town. The Liberal won the seat; Johnson ran a poor third.

Archie Macdonald

Michael Meadowcroft

Excellent issue (*Journal* 41) just arrived! On Jaime Reynolds' and Robert Ingham's biography of Archie Macdonald, I knew Francis Boyd very well. He was the Lobby Correspondent for the *Guardian* for very many years and he told me that when Archie Macdonald appeared at the Commons in 1950 he, Francis, sought Archie out, basically to introduce himself as just about the only Liberal journalist around the place. He duly met Archie and congratulated him warmly on

his election. Archie's response was the comment, 'Ah, yes – now there's three things wrong with the *Manchester Guardian* ...'!

The novelist Ernest Raymond was the conduit for the 1962 victory in the Town Ward of Hampstead Borough which put Archie Macdonald on to that council. There's a hilarious account of it in Ernest's autobiography, *Please You, Draw Near*, published by Cassell in 1969, pages 115–19. It's particularly about persuading his friend and fellow author, Pamela Frankau, to stand with him and Archie in the three-member ward on the guarantee that she wouldn't win! All three of them came to my Liberal councillors' training sessions that year and I recall Archie putting on an air of some superiority as an ex-MP.