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Published version

TAYLOR, Tony (2018). "The Local in the Global": memories of northern industrial protest in a transnational context, 1880-1930. *International Journal of Regional and Local History*, 13 (2), 118-133.

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“The Local in the Global”: Memories of Northern Industrial Protest in a Transnational Context, 1880-1930

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The recent transnational turn has provided opportunities for historians to engage with multiple contexts, to transcend political and social boundaries, and to chart the establishment of kindred networks in a variety of global and cosmopolitan contexts. In an inventive and wide-ranging historiography, historians have proved able to track the movement of peoples, commodities, systems and bureaucratic models around the world. Alert to the overlaps and synergies that unite/united global communities, transnational historians have opened up new spaces in which to assess the affinities and the overlaps between peoples and systems, using lines of inquiry that supersede older notions of imperial or “British world” models. Across the different strands of historical inquiry, case-studies of individual industries, trades, agitations, communities or organisations now carry little weight. In recent research the local has been marginalised, and there now seems only very limited scope for inquiries that prioritise local contexts over trans-global situations.

Transnationalism, however, is at its weakest in its intersections with new approaches to national memory, commemoration and inherited oral traditions. This powerful element in recent historical debates is rarely applied in a transnational context, where the emphasis is on exchange and transfer, rather than on the stable, the static, the continuous and the impermeable.¹ Discussion of memory(ies) and the rituals and political

allusions that accompany them have accordingly played far less part in recent debates about transnationalism. This article seeks to bring together these omitted areas of inquiry pertaining to local memory and circumstances, for the purposes of re-examining their significance in a transnational context. It argues that memory, in common with the above attributes, is also a transnational commodity, contributing to the creation of dispersed communities held together by bonds of habit, ritual and national mythology, whilst spanning a number of global contexts.

This article seeks to re-examine the local context by re-claiming the local for the global, and the locality for the trans-border. This is in line with recent work, inspired by the adage, “think locally, act globally” and notions of “translocalism”, growing out of environmental movements and identity politics that seek to establish a place for the “local” in food production, local resource harvesting, and local control of labour in the face of encroachments by transnational agencies.² Its emphasis is on the memories of radical protest that sustained the reform platform in the north of England from the late nineteenth-century through to the years after the Great War. Through an examination of the core elements in these memories that energised later movements of radical protest, it argues that labour rituals and memories carried common innate elements that allowed them to re-establish themselves in White settler situations. The emphasis is on the dispersed community of northerners existing throughout the Anglophone world, but with specific reference to Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Drawing on the radical political traditions and allusions of reform movements in the north of England, this article demonstrates the ways in which localised political memories and references in

the north found a receptive audience, and were able to appeal to diffuse diasporic northern and non-northern communities of labour in White settler situations. More than just the common story of migrant suffering, these aspects of the history of the British reform tradition, were able to re-locate themselves, particularly in the aligned political and social contexts of New Zealand and in the Australian colonies. Through an analysis of the memories of radical protest that sustained the reform platform in the north of England, this article, then, seeks to chart the transportation of global memories and the folklore of historical resistance to new world situations. In so doing, it analyses the affinities that allowed this narrative of struggle to establish itself as an Anglophone story of dissent that spanned regional historical memory and the crises of labour and representation in new global situations.

Most of the memories of the northern radical platform crystallised around episodes of blood-letting, massacre, popular defiance, and agitations that might crudely be construed as expressions of popular resistance. This article focusses on the three most frequently referred to and iconic episodes of northern political dissent: Peterloo, the Chartist movement, and memories of Gerrard Winstanley, and the Digger movement. These were events that loomed large in public memory and were often celebrated for the seismic shifts they heralded towards a more confident, assertive and confrontational radicalism.³ They usually shared the same pattern of exclusion from the mainstream of civic and urban life in northern England. In addition, they followed the arc of inherited British constitutional liberties, celebrating events from the seventeenth-century, through to the reform crusades of the early part of the nineteenth-century. All were also marked

by an absence of commemoration and memorialisation, or were subject to shifting, makeshift and impromptu memorialisation, rather than any official recognition. Indeed, the only memorial to celebrate the contribution of reformers to British historical traditions was the Kensal Green reformers' monument erected in 1885, which referenced the careers of contemporary, rather than historical, reform figures.⁴ The Peterloo massacre, in particular, remained a formative event that inspired a future generation of northern radicals, but was ignored by officialdom. Central to the radical perspective of the nineteenth-century platform, the massacre was, nevertheless, commemorated only in amateur and improvised ways, despite the numerous campaigns to establish a more permanent memorial from the 1880s onwards. In 1906 the *Labour Leader* still hoped for a memorial in Manchester's Stevenson Square, traditionally a site for public demonstrations, to commemorate the public access struggles in Manchester that began with Peterloo in a city it saw as justly famed for its "massacre and its martyrs".⁵ In gatherings in preparation for anniversaries of the massacre from the seventieth anniversary through to its centenary, attempts were made to variously set up a commemorative granite pillar, or to renovate the obelisk dedicated to Henry Hunt's memory at Reverend James Scholefield's chapel in Every streets, Ancoats. In the event, nothing materialised.⁶ The commemoration of Chartism also suffered from official neglect. In 1898, in "A Plea for the Chartists", the journalist, W.T. Stead, was moved to comment on the puzzling absence of anything to commemorate the last Chartist petition of 1848: 'Wild they were, savage and addicted to bombast, they nevertheless stood for things which even the moderates of the London County Council regard as the natural rights of modern man'.⁷ Older traditions of radical protest also loomed large in the

popular imaginations of a later generation of reformers. Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the Digger movement, was seen as a central figure in the development of radical ideas in relation to property from the seventeenth-century and was another noted northerner who received only cursory official recognition: “for Winstanley and his Diggers were the first body of men in England to proclaim boldly against the rights of property, the rights of man” asserted the northern dialect writer and Bolton radical, Allen Clarke. Celebrating Winstanley’s early life in Wigan, Clarke argued strongly in support of a memorial to him in the town to revive the memory of “a Lancashire man” whose first radical tract was dedicated to the county of his birth. “If Wigan loves monuments”, he announced, “let it put one (up) to the memory of the Digger”.⁸ Never officially recognised in Wigan, Winstanley was a rare example of a British radical whose contribution was recorded in public sculpture; he features on the obelisk in Moscow’s Alexander Gardens erected in 1918 to honour the forerunners of the Russian revolution.⁹ More often, these blanks in the official commemoration were filled by community, radical, and amateur testimonies that attested to the importance of a people’s history lived outside the official record, but touching a strong vein of popular memory and folk tradition within northern communities.¹⁰

Peterloo lived on as part of northern radical identity and in the folklore and traditions of the radical platform until the early years of the twentieth century.¹¹ It remained a point of rhetoric for even longer. For most radicals it was part of a revered canon that highlighted the latent spirit of revolt amongst English workmen in the nineteenth century. In 1884, the *Manchester Guardian* called it, “a baptism of blood for

the cause of reform”.¹² Survivors were often reform celebrities whose moving accounts left a lasting impression on those who saw their orations.¹³ Moreover, the printed casualty lists of the dead and wounded circulated widely in the Manchester region into the twentieth-century, invoking memories of the infamy of the yeomanry’s actions.¹⁴ Frequently used to castigate Tory ministries, the memory of Peterloo became part of a series of ancestral crimes laid at the doorstep of the Conservative party. For Tom Quelch, writing in 1910, these were the “Tory murders at Peterloo”.¹⁵ The memory of Peterloo was usually invoked to assert public rights of meeting and assembly in the face of governmental or local authority restrictions.¹⁶ Elsewhere it might emerge as a warning, urging radicals to resist provocation, or exhorting the reform community to beware of “other Peterloos” orchestrated by the authorities against radical and reform demonstrations; it was often bracketed with the shooting of striking miners at Featherstone near Pontefract in 1893 where “visions of Peterloo swept before men’s imaginations”.¹⁷ In some contexts it served as a call to arms, inspiring defensive strategies and notions of citizens’ militias to counter unprovoked state action.¹⁸ For a later generation of radicals, memorabilia, revered sacred items that had featured at the massacre, and amateur poems and ditties commemorating the event were a regular feature of gatherings and commemorations in the north of England.¹⁹ The Manchester co-operator and reformer, Robert Cooper, treasured a stick, carried by his father for self-defence on the day which was engraved with its provenance. He recalled: “the particulars of the ‘Peterloo massacre’ made a lasting impression on my juvenile mind”.²⁰ The periodic commemorations and memorialisations of Peterloo were exercises in reclamation of the events of 16 August 1819. The 1919 centenary in particular, provided

a last opportunity for retrospection, recollection and insights into the events of that day before many of the direct human bonds to the event were severed. One correspondent in the *Manchester City News* recorded the strength of feeling invoked by the experience, its transmission across the generational divide and its incorporation into the cultural and emotional life of the city: “I have had many conversations with those who were actually present at Peterloo...when I was a youth I remember an old gentleman named Reddish, who attended the once famous Great Bridgewater Street Chapel, giving before a literary society meeting in the old Trumpet Street Sunday School, a vivid description of his recollections of Peterloo and the Blanketeers”.²¹

The popular resonances of the event and its possession by the citizenry, rather than by the corporation and civic authorities of Manchester, was very apparent in 1919. Apart from a display of artefacts in Manchester City Library, it went unrecorded by the city council. Instead, it was commemorated by a march of trades unionists and assorted supporters from the local trades council, Gorton Trades Council, Manchester and Salford Labour Party, and the ILP, escorted by bands that repeated the same tunes played on the day.²²

The same radical traditions cohered around Chartism and were seen as a continuation of the energies released at Peterloo. Chartism remained a lived presence in the 1866-67 reform campaign, where veterans were lauded, or paraded in reform demonstrations, relics like banners and ephemera were given a place of prominence, and Chartist petitioning strategies were mooted.²³ For many, the centrality of Chartism to the

identity of northern popular culture was very apparent. William Dixon, addressing a Chartist meeting in Southwark in 1848, extolled the virtues of those reformers present at Peterloo and “the brave men of the north when they threw down the loom and shuttle and declared to work no more until the Charter was obtained”.²⁴ Others radical agitators in the north of England drew lessons from the failures of the Chartist movement, criticising the misguided actions of physical force Chartists or lamenting the willingness of some Chartist leaders to be drawn into non-reciprocal alliances with liberalism.²⁵ The generation that built the Labour party was preoccupied with the agitation, and the Yorkshire agitator, Tom Maguire, often meditated on the failures of the movement.²⁶ In the later nineteenth-century Chartism was still a current point of reference and provided a model of collective action for successor agitations in the north of England.²⁷ The writer Allen Clarke immersed himself in the memories of the movement. Collecting and reading surviving tracts written by prominent Chartists, notably J.R. Bray, whose work *Labour’s Wrong and Labour’s Remedy*, he acquired from a second-hand book-stall in Blackpool, Clarke was in close contact both with living veterans of the agitation and the shade of their presence in places of significance for the movement.²⁸ In 1904 he lamented the passing of George Robinson of Padiham, “a sturdy fighter for reform and a friend of the oppressed...full of interesting reminiscences of the bygone days”.²⁹ For Clarke, the spirit of the movement was incarnated in the sites most closely associated with the memories of the movement. On organised picnicking and rambling expeditions he sought out places of Chartist assembly for radical pilgrimages. In a walk to Hardcastle Crag near Hebden Bridge, he extolled “those old reformers, the Chartists, fifty years ago or more, driven to meet in quiet, out of the way places”.³⁰ Many Chartist veterans served as repositories of

memory and experience in the north of England, passed on to junior colleagues. As Malcolm Chase has pointed out, Chartist veterans accumulated “cultural capital” that gave them immense authority in their communities.³¹ In many northern towns and cities the story of Chartism was frequently retold for a new generation by survivors and children of Chartist veterans. In the case of Richard Ayre, a former Newcastle Chartist, his home was described as a “veritable museum”, where he talked animatedly to all visitors about the history of radicalism “from Hunt and Peterloo down to Edmond Beales”.³² To have Chartist parents was something of a badge of honour, marking out West Yorkshire Labour councillors like Leonard Robinson of Bradford, or Dennis Hardacre of Brighouse. Moreover, Chartist songs and poetry circulated widely into the inter-war years.³³ When Henry Hyndman visited Manchester and spoke at the Free Trade Hall in 1906, it was natural that he should invoke the spirit of Chartism in one of its former areas of strength.³⁴

A sense of place and locality in the north of England was also important for the legacy of Gerrard Winstanley. The career of Winstanley’s was recovered from relative obscurity by the radical reformer, J. Morrison Davidson, in the later part of the nineteenth-century.³⁵ Depicted as “a hero and prophet who cried aloud in the wilderness”, in subsequent reassessments he was construed as standing at the beginning of a long tradition of land reform activity culminating in the Chartist land campaign and the Single Tax proposals of Henry George.³⁶ Personal inheritance and genealogy evoked a sense of a lived continuity with this past. Radicals like the platform campaigner, Guy Aldred, treasured the memory of descent from family members who had found “salvation

in the views of Winstanley the Digger”.³⁷ A new generation of northern radicals and reformers, inspired by the vision of him as an advocate of “a wise and free ordering of the earth”, defined themselves as contemporary incarnations of the Digger tradition. Percy Redfern, a Manchester co-operator and follower of Tolstoy, recorded his tutelage under the “lecturing Lollards, Levellers and Diggers of the time”; the Leeds socialist and ILP member Joseph Clayton included a sketch of Gerrard Winstanley and reproduced the famous “Diggers’ Song” in his volume, *Leaders of the People*, devoted to adherents of the people’s cause.³⁸ The emergence of an unemployed movement in Manchester and Bradford in 1906-7 that campaigned for self-sufficiency and a restoration of the land to the poor led to a strong revival of interest in Winstanley. Impromptu land communes established in Levenshulme in Manchester, on Chat Moss outside the city, and in Bradford became focal points for activity inspired by the Commonwealth, with figures, like Winstanley represented as premature advocates of land redistribution.³⁹ At Bradford’s improvised squatters’ camp, the so-called Girlington “Klondike”, previous generations of land reformers were invoked, whilst at Levenshulme, the Commonwealth was a point of rhetoric, drawing on memories of dispossession from the land.⁴⁰ Winstanley remained a fixed point in the lineage of platform radicalism into the nineteen-thirties and forties, leading George Orwell, infused with the spirit of Wigan radicalism, to assert that his “experiments in primitive communism...are in some ways strangely close to modern Left wing literature”.⁴¹ Thereafter, his memory, and particularly “the Diggers’ Song”, became intermeshed with the northern folk revival of the post-war years, ensuring the survival of his reputation into the radical counter-culture of the nineteen-sixties and seventies.⁴²

Recent literature on the “British world” and transnationalism has emphasised the compatibilities between British culture, politics and reform traditions both abroad and at “home”.⁴³ The transmission of these memories of industrial protest and radical political expression to the broader Anglophone world was a marked element in the emergence of reform platforms in new world situations. In the settler dominions, politics remained rooted in a common pedigree of shared historical values and traditions.⁴⁴ Many Australian and New Zealand readers of radical publications followed British politics closely. A correspondent writing from New Zealand to *Labour’s Northern Voice* commented “We here in New Zealand are vitally interested in whatever takes place in the old land. Every morning we eagerly scan the papers to try and get some inkling of what is taking place up yonder”.⁴⁵ In the Australian colonies and in New Zealand in particular, memories of political movements in the past often recurred in reminiscences or in records of family experiences. The disavowal of the conditions of the “old world” and the possibilities for renewal in new world environments were noteworthy elements of radical and labourist platforms in both the Australian colonies and in New Zealand. Like the British Labour Party, the Australian Labor Party and New Zealand Labour Party, eschewed ideology in favour of a pragmatic platform and an appeal to historical injustices. Ben Tillett noted this aspect of labourist rhetoric at a reception on his visit to New Zealand in 1907: “It seems to be the habit of Australians to conjure up stories of poverty in the Old Country, and frighten their own workers by comparisons made”.⁴⁶ British radicalism, however, was characterised by a deep ambivalence about the advantages of emigration. Many accounts of migration that featured in the radical press

stressed the advantages of cheap food, easily available land, innovative social welfare reforms, and the classlessness of developing colonial society.⁴⁷ For many northerners, the successes of migrants like the progressive premier of New Zealand, Dick Seddon, originally from St Helens and retaining his northern accent to the end of his life, were to be celebrated as expressions of exported northern values of grit and determination, translated into career success in the colonies: he was widely mourned in Lancashire at the time of his death in 1906.⁴⁸ These positive and enthusiastic visions of emigration were, however, frequently tempered by an awareness of poor working conditions, exploitative labour practices and misleading and untrustworthy accounts of the benefits of emigration. *The Clarion* newspaper in particular, reporting a bogus Queensland emigration scheme in Bradford, campaigned against the “pretences of unscrupulous land grabbers and exploiters who periodically come over here to entrap cheap flesh and blood”.⁴⁹ An equal number of reflections on the emigrant journey, from both British and colonial sources, emphasised the elements of “old world” injustices that lingered on in the “working-men’s paradise” and “God’s Own Country” of Australia and New Zealand.⁵⁰ A large number of visitors from Britain on “flying pilgrimages” to the colonies of the south sought to evaluate the precocious development of infant labour parties, and the successes of the trades union movement there during this period.⁵¹ Despite their enthusiasm for the new social systems they encountered, many of these peripatetic reformers were still struck by the degraded working conditions and displaced conservative attitudes that were apparent in the factory towns and countryside of the new world. Some noticed how little had changed for British emigrants, despite the distances involved. Whilst welcoming his reception at the “wide hearth” of Yorkshire emigrant families, the West Riding socialist,

E.R. Hartley, who toured New Zealand in 1911-12, noted at a political meeting: “The same old objections. The same old questions. The same old rudeness of the ignorant”.⁵²

Recently, studies of Englishness in a colonial context have emphasized the continuing overlaps in identity and culture that helped define Anglophone communities, with implications for radical, reform and labourist political platforms.⁵³ In a summary of the backgrounds of labour representatives in colonial parliaments and the Federal parliament in Australia after 1901, C.N. Connolly has demonstrated that an exiled Englishness pervaded aspects of colonial labour organisations. Only a third of the Labor MPs elected to the New South Wales parliament in 1891 were “native to the colony.” In Queensland, in particular, a state characterised by early labour successes, state-assisted migration projects brought in large numbers of working-class British migrants.⁵⁴ Groups like the Knights of Labour were active in maintaining networks and connections between these dispersed communities and those who stayed at home in cultural activity that transcended national boundaries. Moreover, British organisations like the Fabians provided a model for imitative offshoots, like the successful Fabian branch in South Australia.⁵⁵ As W.G. Spence pointed out in his reminiscences of trades unionism in Queensland, a narrative of victimhood, exile, and displacement rooted in the memories of the emigrant experience set the tone for much labour rhetoric in the 1890s. As Richard White suggests, migrant memories were shaped by lingering experiences like the “Hungry Forties” that mirrored the prevailing conditions of twenty years earlier that had provided a trigger for emigration for many British migrants. Such themes were repeated in the rhyme and metre of the songs and ballads of the New Zealand émigré poet Edward

Hunter that circulated widely on the North Island coal field.⁵⁶ Indeed, for some followers of the Australian Labor Party, the new world context breathed new life into political traditions and radical alternatives that they saw as moribund or dying in former heartlands like Manchester and Lancashire.⁵⁷

Little attention has been devoted to the specifically northern component of this platform style. Nevertheless, a pronounced cultural residue of northern political memories and values lingered on in the politics of the period. Many of these links were the direct consequence of radical emigration projects. William Ranstead, the philanthropist and “Cheshire farmer of independent means” who sought to establish a utopian settlement in New Zealand rooted in the principles of Robert Blatchford’s Manchester-based *Clarion* Newspaper, was responsible for bringing over a number of socialist reformers, many from a northern background, who maintained a distinct identity in New Zealand. The newspaper they established, the Wellington *Commonweal* that featured British radical laments and Chartist poetry, formed one of the strands that fed through into the formation of the New Zealand Labour Party in 1916.⁵⁸ The *Clarion* newspaper also circulated widely in the Australian colonies, claiming a committed readership.⁵⁹ Such connections were reinforced by a steady traffic of entertainers, performers and northern dialect bards between northern England, the Australian colonies and New Zealand. “Casey” (Walter Hampson) the popular dialect protest singer and contributor to the *Labour Leader* from Stockport was favourably reviewed in the *Maoriland Worker*.⁶⁰ Tours of brass bands, like the Besses o’ th’ Barn Band from Whitefield near Manchester, that recalled the paternalistic mill culture of the north, were

also popular.⁶¹ Even in the remote New Australia colony established by William Lane in Paraguay, readings in northern dialect offered solace to displaced migrants, far from home.⁶² In such material there were intersections with the dialect songs and traditions of the north of England, with their strong hints of irreverence and insubordination. Frequently this was a two way traffic. The Australian outback balladeer Henry Lawson found admirers amongst radicals and socialists like Allen Clarke, who featured a reverential sketch of his work in *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*.⁶³ In much of this culture there were overlaps with the poetry and verse that emerged from the “tramping culture” of the Australian bush, and the New Zealand frontier.⁶⁴ Compatibilities with the Lancashire moorlands were very marked. Both places served as spaces of radical political mobilisation: in the Australian colonies, early trades unions and radical organisations were largely created amongst a semi-agrarian and rural workforce where “the bushman formed the nucleus of the great Australian Labor Party”.⁶⁵ For Clarke, Lawson and the Australian bush balladeers were a counterpoint to the moorland poets, mystics, and public rights of way campaigners that inhabited the open spaces of the north of England. His British admirers found in his poems the images of open spaces as havens of freedom and sanctuary that were absent in the context of northern England where access to the moors was regulated and constrained, and walking-culture was a semi-legitimate activity, rooted on the fringes of legality.⁶⁶ As Katrina Navickas has pointed out, the appeal of many colonial environments for northern émigré reformers was in this access to space and land where English society could be reconstituted in a landscape of plebeian freedoms and liberties.⁶⁷

References to the political past and the broader radical platform of the nineteenth-century were representative of the shared traditions that shaped British and colonial/anti-colonial radicalism. Such affinities highlighted the export of notions of “old corruption” overseas in matters of government, land ownership and exactions to fund the imperial army and navy.⁶⁸ Memories of Peterloo, in particular, provided a short-hand for the lack of restraint, the inequities, and the violent displays associated with imperial rule. Confrontations with local communities, massacres, and riotous actions, energetically quelled by the colonial authorities, frequently evoked comparisons with Peterloo. The spectre of the massacre was used to demonstrate the injustices surrounding Governor Eyre’s actions in Morant Bay in Jamaica in 1865, and the misgovernment associated with British rule in Ireland at the time of the Mitchelstown massacre in 1887.⁶⁹ In the Australian and New Zealand press, it was usually these imperial incarnations of the massacre that were highlighted. Reporting the centenary commemorations of Peterloo in Manchester, the New Zealand *Truth* emphasised the indignation of the rally at the ‘murderous onslaught’ by the colonial authorities during the events of the Amritsar Massacre in India.⁷⁰ Often Peterloo in the colonial press provided an indicator of the corruptions of the old world.⁷¹ Tom Mann, visiting Australia in 1902-5, made frequent reference to the massacre in attempts to incite the ire of his audiences which contained large numbers of émigré Lancastrians and Mancunians. Speaking at 1902, he evoked the memory of “the revolt in Lancashire....The steets ran with blood”.⁷² Frequently Peterloo served as a milestone, against which the advances of the labour movement in the White settler colonies might be measured. Recording “our debt to Peterloo” Lionel Lynx, writing in Sydney’s *Australian Worker* in 1928 called it “a blood red page in history” that

showed the distance still to travel for the acquisition of full workers' rights, despite the successes of state industrial arbitration. *The Worker* in Queensland labelled Peterloo 'the day of baptism of the modern working-class movement' in 1919.⁷³ As in Britain, Peterloo was often invoked as a warning of the direction retrograde and revanchist action by governments might take the country, despite hard won workers' rights. Against the background of the "Red Fed" strikes in New Zealand in 1913 that resulted in the formation of the New Zealand Labour Party, the *Maoriland Worker* warned against the possibility of a violent political backlash against the industrial unions, exhorting that "we cannot allow the gentry to play Peterloo in this country".⁷⁴ In Brisbane, a century after the events of Peterloo, continuing revulsion at the massacre, led to appeals to remember Peterloo in the *Daily Standard*, under the banner headline, "history repeats itself".⁷⁵

Historical memories of Chartist suffering, transportation and exile also shaped the experience of the Australian Labor Party much as they did that of their British counterparts. Edward Lane, brother of the radical émigré journalist, William Lane, lamented that 'unlike some I have no Chartist rebel ancestors or traditional progressive background.'⁷⁶ Much of this cross-fertilisation of radicalism in Britain and the settler colonies was emblematic of late Chartism's lively interest in the empire. The most adventurous recent research into Chartism has emphasised the movement's global reach, and the entangled narratives of liberty and freedom that re-emerged as part of colonial separatist rhetoric. Chartists in exile showed themselves part of an infinitely malleable movement able to adapt to the context of the White settler colonies. As Terry Irving and Paul Pickering have demonstrated, former Chartists in the Australian colonies benefited

from the expansion of the franchise in the mid to late 1850s, campaigned on colonial land reform platforms, entered state parliaments, and carved out careers as colonial politicians.⁷⁷ Rather than closing off the possibilities offered by involvement in Chartism, a new world context opened up fresh avenues of activity for émigré veterans. In both New Zealand and the Australian colonies, Chartists introduced mass platform strategies and crusading styles of popular journalism of the kind that typified northern radicalism, notably co-opting the strategies of the Anti-Corn Law League into the campaign against the resumption of convict transportation in New South Wales.⁷⁸ Writing in the *Queensland Worker*, Lionel Lynx emphasized the positive place Chartism occupied in early histories of Australia, noting the familial links between Ernest Scott, the British-born son-in-law of Annie Besant, a Fabian socialist, and a member of the first generation of Australian historians.⁷⁹ In New Zealand in particular the success of the manhood suffrage system introduced in 1879 was built around memories of the exclusion and dispossession that characterised the British parliamentary system and fuelled the Chartist agitation. There was a strong northern inflection to the memory of the formative events of the British radical platform in the settler colonies. The Huddersfield reformer, Ramsden Balmforth's popular history of British radicalism, *Some Social and Political Pioneers of the Nineteenth-Century* that culminated in his account of the Chartist movement, featured in a serialized form in the Australian press. The lives, and both new, and old, world careers of Chartist veterans like Robert Holt, a radical bookseller from Oldham, were a source of particular interest in the colonial press, acting, in some ways, as a radical variant on the widely extant pioneer memoir.⁸⁰ For other former Chartists, reform in New Zealand amongst the children of emigrants in a "Better Britain" offered a corrective to a

declining democracy at “home.”⁸¹ As in Britain, such veterans with northern radical pedigrees were commanding presences in the debating clubs and political associations that were part of the thick networks that made up colonial society.⁸² Measuring the distance from Britain, and, sometimes, the lack of progress in improving the conditions of labour, the offspring of Chartists, active in colonial labourist organisations, and channeling memories of injustice and exclusion, were also much in evidence.⁸³

Gerrard Winstanley’s new world incarnation provides further evidence of the transplanting of memories of northern political protest and radicalism into White settler situations. For some, there was a clear imperial context for Winstanley’s political platform. George Orwell, in particular, speculated about the impact of Winstanley’s ideas on anti-imperial nationalist movements, and hypothesized a link between Ghandi’s independence struggle and Winstanley’s arcadian imagery in his vision of a post-colonial society of devolved rural communes in India. For admirers of the Diggers, this imagined link led some to depict his followers as exponents of alternative living, dietary reform, animal welfare, and passive resistance ideas.⁸⁴ Against the background of Federation and the creation of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901, the memories and terminology of the Cromwellian interregnum became a subject for analysis and debate in the Australian colonies. The constitutional conventions that accompanied the Federation process often digressed into discussions about the advisability of adopting the term Commonwealth, and the memories it evoked of the English Civil War.⁸⁵ In the “utopian” moment of the eighteen-nineties in particular, when a number of potential trajectories for the future development of the Australian colonies were mapped out, it became commonplace to

refer to these seventeenth-century antecedence – alluded to as “beacon lights of freedom” - and to imagine a new Australian state, depicted as a kind of Eden. Here there was a sense of millenarian expectation in radical circles that was suggestive of the political and social experimentation of the sixteen-forties.⁸⁶ Moreover, the frontier pattern of economic development in the Australian colonies encouraged experimentation in property holding, spade husbandry and dairy farming that recalled the English tradition of communal settlement, allotments and small holdings, realized in the urban development pattern in Melbourne of houses with “a quarter acre block and a pen of chooks” that appealed to migrant memories of “three acres and a cow.”⁸⁷ For advocates of new communal settlement ideas like William Lane, an English expatriate from the West Country, Winstanley’s ideas remained pertinent, leading the Australian constitutional historian, W.K. Hancock, to declare “that Lane was at heart an English Puritan, a spiritual descendant of Winstanley and the Digger communists of the seventeenth-century”.⁸⁸ These were the same Puritan lineages that imbued the northern radical platform, and inspired Soloman Partington to describe Bolton as “the Geneva of Lancashire” for its traditions of dissent and alternative religious energies.⁸⁹ The New Zealand radical press reviewed accounts of Winstanley’s ideas favourably, commenting on their wide circulation, and their continuing currency in Lancashire where “his name is still common.” Discussing their relevance, and from the perspective of a pioneer society, it noted the “his weapon was not the sword, but the doctrines associated in our day with the spade”.⁹⁰ Integral to a sense of “Greater British” identity in the colonies, this essentially English tradition of revolt often made its way back to Britain, heavily mediated through the White settler experience and radical expatriate lives. The historian, Lewis Behrens,

from an Irish background, who contributed significantly to the revival of Winstanley's reputation in the eighteen-nineties, was active in Henry Georgeite single tax campaigns in South Australia, an experience he drew on in his account of Winstanley's life.⁹¹ Similarly, the radical Australian writer Jack Lindsay, resident in London from 1926, revived Winstanley's ideas in his historical novels, poetry and theatre, where they featured prominently in the pageantry of the Popular Front period.⁹² For radical historians, Lindsay retained the "old traditions" of Puritan dissent that had shaped the reform platform in the nineteenth-century and contributed to the milieu that influenced George Orwell's politics in Wigan.⁹³

This article has considered the significance of memories of radicalism for later movements of political progress in a transnational context. Memory was a crucial component of popular radicalism and the reform platform. In these matters of political protest, the imperial context was very dependent on memory. Much of the political activity in the White settler colonies was mediated through the same memories that had shaped political activity and radical activism at home. They provided a constituent element in the expression of a plebeian identity within "Greater Britain". Both in Britain and the colonies, radicals served the purpose of "memory keepers" for the traditions of popular protest in the north of England, retaining an enthusiasm for the history of popular politics that survived the decline of those movements. Some were impresarios of commemorative events in both Britain and the wider world. Many radicals, in both hemispheres, were also omnivorous collectors of radical memorabilia. All sought to keep the flame of past struggles alive, often offering a distinct flavor of the northern radical

tradition in the process. Many direct memories, amongst them Peterloo, Chartism and the Digger tradition, that inspired northern radicalism, made the journey from Britain to White settler situations. Frequently, such memories were also handed down through the offspring of Chartist veterans, whether at 'home', or as part of a migrant diaspora. In places like the Australian colonies and New Zealand, such memories established a radical genealogy that contributed to a heritage trail of popular radicalism. At a time when Chartism was beginning to fade from popular memory in Great Britain, ageing reformers abroad gave a renewed relevance to the memories and key events that had shaped the traditions of the radical platform in the north of England in the wider empire.

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² Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories. Wild Possibilities* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2016), 96-100 and Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 178-81.

³ For the northern radical platform, see Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 23-5; Lisa Nandy, "Wigan," in *Labour's Identity Crisis: England and the Politics of Patriotism*, ed. Tristram Hunt (Winchester: University of Winchester, 2016), 153-60 and Paul Salveson, *Socialism with a Northern Accent: Radical Traditions for Modern Times* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2012), chs. 3-4.

⁴ *National Reformer*, September 13, 1885, 167 and for a celebration of the Kensal Green monument, W. Henry Brown, *Pathfinders* (Manchester: Manchester Co-operative Union, 1925), 7-8.

⁵ *Labour Leader*, July 20, 1906, 136 and 139

⁶ *Manchester Weekly Times*, October 6, 1888, 4, October 20, 1888, 2 and the *Manchester City News*, August 16, 1919, 2. For the Henry Hunt monument at Reverend Scholefield's chapel in Ancoats, see V.I. Tomlinson, "Postscript to Peterloo", *Manchester Region History Review* 3 (1989): 61-8.

⁷ W.T. Stead, "A Plea for the Chartists", *Review of Reviews* 17 (1898): 348-9.

⁸ *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*, January 12, 1907, 4.

⁹ John Gurney, *Gerrard Winstanley: The Digger's Life and Legacy* (London: Pluto, 2013), 7-8 and Enzo Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 64.

¹⁰ Ruskin History Workshop Student Collective, "Worker Historians in the 1920s", in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: History Workshop, 1981), 17-20.

¹¹ Alarm about further "Peterloos" was a point of rhetoric in the city up until the eve of the Great War: see the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, July 31, 1905, 5.

¹² *Manchester Guardian*, August 16, 1884, 8 and *Freedom*, September 1, 1889, 41-2.

¹³ See the obituary of Samuel Collins, "The Bard of Hale Moss" of Failsworth, north Manchester, who was a Peterloo veteran, local celebrity, and minor dialect poet, in the *National Reformer*, August 18, 1878, 103; for mention of the Peterloo veteran, E.T. Craig, still living in 1894, see George Standring, "The Peterloo Massacre", *Our Corner*, August 1, 1885: 108-113, and J.M. Wheeler, *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations* (London: Progressive Publishing Company, 1889), 93, and for reference to the secularist, N.J. Ridgway, who, as a boy, carried the cap of liberty at Peterloo, Edwin Waugh, "An Old Man's Memories", *Manchester Weekly Times*, December 3, 1881, 5.

¹⁴ *Manchester City News*, October 13, 1906, 2. For the history and origins of the casualty list, see Michael Bush, *The Casualties of Peterloo* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2005), 41-56.

¹⁵ Tom Quelch, *The Crimes of Liberalism and Toryism* (London: The Twentieth-Century Press, 1910), 10 and *The Commonwealth*, June 30, 1866, 5.

¹⁶ *Bee-Hive*, September 8, 1866, 4, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, July 29, 1866, 1 and *The Radical*, December 11, 1880, 3.

¹⁷ *English Chartist Circular*, vol. 2 (1842): 109, *The Call*, August 14, 1919, 1 and J. J. Terrett, *The Right Hon. H.H. Asquith M.P. and the Featherstone Massacre* (London: The Twentieth Century Press, 1906), 6.

¹⁸ George Melton, "Peterloo", *The British Socialist* 11 (1913): 321-26, A.A. Watts, 'Socialism and Militarism', in *ibid*, 300, and *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*, April 21, 1906, 4.

¹⁹ *City Jackdaw*, November 9, 1877, 414.

²⁰ *National Reformer*, June 14, 1868, 373-4.

²¹ *Manchester City News*, August 16, 1919, 2.

²² *Ibid*, August 23, 1919, 2 and the *Manchester Evening News*, August 16, 1919, 3. For the commemorative culture that surrounded Peterloo in Manchester, see Terry Wyke, "Remembering the Manchester Massacre," *Manchester Region History Review* 23 (2014): 111-223.

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²⁴ *Northern Star*, March 18, 1848, 5.

²⁵ *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, January 5, 1884, 1 the *Labour Echo*, July 6, 1895, 1.

²⁶ Tom Maguire in the *Labour Leader*, September 1, 1894, 2,

²⁷ *Reynolds's Newspaper*, May 27, 1900, 12 and the dedication in C.A. Glyde, *The Centenary of the Massacre of British Workers: Peterloo Massacre* (Bradford: Pamphlets for the People, 1919), i.

²⁸ *Teddy Ashton's Northern Weekly*, March 25, 1899, 106. Also see for reminiscences of the movement, *ibid*, July 30, 1904, 5.

²⁹ *Ibid*, June 25, 1904, p. 4.

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³⁴ *Manchester City News*, November 7, 1908, 9

³⁵ J. Morrison Davidson, *The Wisdom of Winstanley the "Digger": Being Outlines of the Kingdom of God on Earth* (London: Francis, Riddell, Henderson, 1904), 14-18. For the historiography surrounding Winstanley's reappraisal, see John Gurney, "Gerrard Winstanley and the Left," *Past and Present* 235 (2017): 179-206 and *The Clarion*, March 23, 1906, 2.

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⁴³ See especially, Stephen Constantine, "British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880: From Overseas Settlement to Diaspora?" in *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, ed. Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (London: Routledge, 2003), 16-35 and Kate Darian-Smith, "Images of Empire: Gender and Nationhood in Australia at the time of Federation," in *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 153-68.

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⁴⁷ See the *Labourers' Herald*, January 8, 1874, 7, *National Reformer*, April 8, 1888, 229-31, the *Co-operative News*, December 24, 1898, 1485-6 and *Justice*, September 7, 1901, 4

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⁴⁹ *The Clarion*, April 22, 1893, 2.

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