

Section II The Colonial Realm

Section two of the thesis extends Chartist historiography to Australia by way of a series of case studies. Chapter six looks at changing perceptions of the Australian colonies (primarily New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land and Victoria) between the first phase of Chartist activity in the mid-to-late 1830s, and the early 1850s, when the Australian goldrushes began. This transitional chapter is then followed by a discussion of the first truly radical-democratic Australian newspaper, the People's Advocate, published in Sydney, New South Wales, from late 1848 by Edward Hawksley. The final two chapters then move southwards to the new colony of Victoria, and are primarily concerned with tracing the Chartist political inheritance in a society spectacularly transformed by British emigration during the 1850s. Chapter eight looks closely at the 'red-ribbon' demonstrations mobilised at Bendigo in Central Victoria in mid-1853 against the thirty shilling monthly license fee required to engage in goldmining. The final chapter looks beyond the heyday of the alluvial goldrushes, and examines the Land Convention which sat in Melbourne in 1857, as well as other aspects of Victorian democratic culture. In sum, section two examines the vitality, limitations and evolution of a Chartist cultural inheritance in various (and quite different) Australian contexts, and also critically appraises the domestic horizons of both colonial and Chartist historiography.

Chapter Six

The Place of Australia in Chartist Rhetoric

One theme that invariably arises in writing about the place of Australia in nineteenth-century European literature and culture generally is the ramifications of distance.¹ Until the advent of telegraphic communication isolation gave early European society in Australia a curiously suspended character. Coral Lansbury argued that the infant colony of New South Wales ‘lived in two time periods, that of its own, and the historical past of Europe’, and her point remains valid for the Chartist period.² The function of almost incomprehensible distance is certainly crucial when looking at the rhetorical contestation over Australia within Chartist political culture. Few of the Chartists who wrote, read or heard about the colonies had any physical experience of Australia. Confusion abounded as to the size, purpose and geographical relationships of the colonies. Henry Richard Nicholls recalled being accosted at his London farewell by a man who exhorted him to seek out an estranged son in Australia, as if ‘all the people there knew each other, and were sure to meet sooner or later’.³ Because comparatively few Chartist emigrants (or political prisoners) actually returned to Britain, knowledge of Australia was primarily mediated in printed sources and oral lore. Australia was, for the average Chartist, a rhetorical entity.

Alan Beever has argued that the place of Australia in working class opinion changed drastically during the 1840s. ‘By mid century’, he writes, ‘Australia had become a focal point of attention, and the image was highly favourable’ – and not just

¹ See generally G. Blainey, *The tyranny of distance* (Melbourne, 1982).

² C. Lansbury, *Arcady in Australia: the evocation of Australia in nineteenth-century English literature* (Melbourne, 1970), pp. 13-14.

³ Nicholls, Typescript memoir of London Chartism, p. 21.

because of the discovery of gold.⁴ The real vision of Arcady for many, Beever emphasises, lay in the living bounty of the soil. But if we narrow the search somewhat from the ‘working class’ parameter of opinion Beever works with, and look more closely at the cultivation of images of Australia within Chartist political culture between the late 1830s and the early 1850s, the transformation from a Hell on earth to a ‘paradise’ becomes rather more difficult to discern. Whilst attitudes to emigration undeniably changed by about mid-century, the ready Chartist equation of emigration with political exile and quietism never really disappeared. Significant differences, moreover, existed between Chartist attitudes to the United States and Australia.⁵ Whilst the *Northern Star* may have embraced a favourable notion of Australia just before its demise, influential leaders such as Joseph Barker and Ernest Jones continued to paint Australia in decidedly negative terms in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The antipodean odyssey that straddled almost the entire Chartist period, of course, was the exile of the ‘Welsh martyrs’: John Frost, Zephaniah Williams and William Jones.

The ‘never to be forgotten’ Frost, Williams and Jones quickly became part of Chartism’s ‘martyrology’ after their trial, reprieve and transportation to Van Diemen’s Land (aboard the *Mandarin*) in 1840. Although Gammage suggests that the efforts made for the pardon and return of the Newport rising leaders waned somewhat after 1844, the initial mass-mobilisation of opinion against their sentences probably saved their lives, and over the next fifteen years or so their names were solemnly invoked at

⁴ Beever, ‘From a place of horrible destitution’, p. 11.

⁵ For the USA see Boston, *British Chartists in America*, pp. 13-20.

Chartist gatherings throughout Britain.⁶ In August 1840 the London Chartist H. (Henry Dowall?) Griffiths had written to the *Star*:

I consider it highly necessary that Frost, Williams and Jones should be mentioned at every public meeting, & c.; that you should cheer them three times three, and also host the Whigs at their elections, and their Corn Law preventives of justice, at their meetings, and cry at each, 'Where's Frost?' 'What have you done with the Welsh Martyrs?'

From Boulogne, Thomas Matthew informed Chartists at home that the 'working men of Moulin A Vapeur' 'do sincerely sympathise with the wives and families of Frost, Williams and Jones, for the worse than death-like manner in which they have been hurried away'.⁸ Soon a central fund raising committee was set up in Birmingham to lobby the people's 'mock representatives' and mobilise public meetings and petitions demanding the Welsh leaders' pardon.⁹ Organisers T.P. Green and W.H. Cotton helpfully provided potential activists with procedural advice and some ready-made resolutions.¹⁰ Enterprising Manchester Chartists also produced batches of green adhesive stickers inscribed 'Remember Frost, Williams and Jones', and a good trade was apparently met with at restoration committee meetings.¹¹

In early 1846 Chartists claimed to have collected 3,000,000 signatures in three weeks demanding the restoration of the Welsh exiles, although the hundreds of petitions presented by Duncombe, Fielden and other sympathetic members were once

⁶ Gammage, *History*, p. 256.

⁷ *Northern Star*, 5 September 1840, p. 5.

⁸ *Northern Star*, 14 March 1840, p. 5. Matthew also remitted the sum of £1 12s. 6d. for Henry Vincent's defence fund.

⁹ See the *Rules, regulations, and objects of the committee for securing the return to their native land of Messrs. Frost, Williams and Jones* (Birmingham, 1840) held in HO 45/52. A detailed balance sheet of the committee's receipts and disbursements until June 1841 (totalling £42 13s. 8d.) was published in the *Northern Star*, 18 September 1841, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Rules, regulations, and objects of the committee for securing the return to their native land of Messrs. Frost, Williams and Jones*, pp. 6-7.

¹¹ *Northern Star*, 30 January 1841, p. 5; 20 February 1841, p. 1; Pickering, 'Chartism and the "Trade of Agitation"', p. 225.

again ignored by most members of the Commons.¹² Later that year the *Star* reported that Frost was ‘out of employ, in ill-health, and in indigent circumstances, at Sydney’.¹³ Within a couple of months approximately £300 had been subscribed to English and Scottish support funds.¹⁴ Apart from these nationally co-ordinated fundraising efforts so typical of the organised movement culture, *ad hoc* appeals were commonly made at Chartist meetings. James Sweet concluded a Land Plan lecture at Nottingham ‘by hoping that his countrymen would never forget that Frost, Williams, Jones and Ellis were yet in Exile, in a felon’s land’.¹⁵ A local subscription fund (for Williams and Jones) was immediately decided upon, and Sweet appointed treasurer.¹⁶ Chartists also attempted to restore the domestic bonds broken by Whig tyranny. In May 1848 the National Victims’ Committee appealed for £50 ‘to pay the passage and give an outfit’ to enable William Jones’ wife to emigrate to Van Diemen’s Land.¹⁷ Many children were also named after the Welsh leaders (particularly Frost) in the early 1840s, and the political agency inherent in this symbolic act was duly recorded for all Chartists to see in the *Star*. Just after Feargus O’Connor’s release from York Castle, for example, it was reported that ‘Two brothers of the name of Amer, residing at Boothtown, near Halifax, have each of them a son, one of which is christened Feargus, and the other John Frost’.¹⁸ In time other ‘martyrs’ were appended to the counter-cultural incantation of the Welsh exiles. At a social gathering in Bradford in 1851, the Manchester activist James Leach pre-empted the dancing by remembering

¹² See *Northern Star*, 14 March 1846, pp. 4, 6-8. Duncombe presented 249 petitions collected in England and Scotland.

¹³ *Northern Star*, 6 June 1846, p. 5. Note that Frost was in Van Diemen’s Land, not Sydney. Illustration 3 is taken from Roberts and Thompson, *Images of Chartism*, p. 53.

¹⁴ *Northern Star*, 8 August 1846, p. 8; 15 August 1846, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Northern Star*, 29 August 1846, p. 8. For Ellis see pp. 219-22 below.

¹⁶ *Northern Star*, 29 August 1846, p. 8.

¹⁷ *Northern Star*, 27 May 1848, p. 5.

¹⁸ *Northern Star*, 19 September 1840, p. 8.

‘Frost, Williams and Jones, Cuffay, Mitchell, O’Brien, and all banished patriots and martyrs in the cause of liberty’.¹⁹ By the time of Frost’s eventual return to Britain in 1856 (Zephaniah Williams and William Jones remained in Van Diemen’s Land until their deaths) the Welsh leaders had thus become idealised symbols of Chartist faith.

A fracture between symbolic rhetoric and remote reality, however, emerges in some of the finer details of the leaders’ lives in Van Diemen’s Land. Frost retained a sense of dignity commensurate with his social status, even though he appears to have suffered ‘two or three years’ on a gang after re-offending the Colonial Secretary (Lord John Russell) when a letter he wrote to his wife from Port Arthur was published in England.²⁰ An indication of Frost’s charismatic qualities (Gammage, for one, rated him as popular as O’Connor²¹) can be gathered from the fact that a petition requesting his pardon was even made by residents of the Tasmanian community of Bothwell, where he resided during 1846-7.²² William Jones, on the other hand, appears to have turned police informer in Hobart – perhaps the basest persona in the melodramatic pantheon of Chartist political culture. After warning authorities of Zephaniah Williams’ failed attempt at escaping to New Zealand in 1847, Jones is said to have

¹⁹ *Northern Star*, 16 February 1850, p. 1. For similar toasts made at a tea party in honour of O’Connor at Stockport see *Northern Star*, 23 February 1850, p. 1. William Cuffay was a London Chartist leader of African descent who was transported following the ‘Orange Tree Conspiracy’ of 1848. See P. Fryer, *Staying in power: the history of black people in Britain* (London, 1984), pp. 237-46.

²⁰ Frost, *The horrors of convict life*, pp. 25-9; Williams, *John Frost*, pp. 306-7. Frost had originally been assigned to clerical duties at Port Arthur. For the offending communication see *A letter from Mr. John Frost to his wife, from Port Arthur, in Van Diemen’s Land ...* (Manchester, n.d.). See also the memorial of J. Frost to Sir J. Franklin, Archives Office of Tasmania, CSO 22/7. A letter written from Zephaniah Williams to his wife on arrival at Hobart in June 1840 was also reprinted in the *Northern Star*, 23 January 1841, p. 7.

²¹ Gammage, *History*, p. 266.

²² M. Graham and D. Bamford, ‘Chartists and Young Irelanders: towards a reassessment of political prisoners in Van Diemen’s Land’, *Papers and Proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association*, 32 (1985), p. 71.

become an unemployable outcast in Van Diemen's Land.²³ Apparently unaware of these events, however, Chartists continued to invoke the antipodean outcast in the mantra of 'the Welsh exiles, Frost, Williams and Jones'.

Soon after his arrival in 1856, Frost toured those places where Chartism persisted – London and the industrial communities of Lancashire and Yorkshire. His lecture upon his experiences was published as a pamphlet, and this late Chartist document reiterated nearly all of the elements of the early model of Van Diemen's Land as a Hell on earth. In fact, the general tone and content of *The horrors of convict life* is virtually indistinguishable from George Loveless' well known pamphlet first published almost two decades before, *The victims of Whiggery*.²⁴ 'There are English mothers', Frost warned, 'whose sons are at this moment in situations infinitely worse than death'.²⁵ Only after requesting the 'females present to withdraw' did Frost proceed to outline the more 'abominable practices' of convict life to his audience.²⁶ The one common rhetorical ploy Frost did not draw upon (explicitly, at least) was the death-wish motif which can be found in other critical accounts of the convict system. 'In more than one instance, during my stay in Van Diemen's Land', wrote George Loveless, 'it has been known that men so wretched and weary of life, have taken an axe and murdered their companions for the sole purpose, as they have declared, of being hung, to end their present wretchedness'.²⁷ One place in particular was cast as a living Hell. 'In all that has been said', continued Loveless,

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-74. The appeal made by the National Victims' Committee on behalf of Jones' wife in May 1848 obliquely refers to 'pressing letters' received by Eliza Ann Jones from her husband. See *Northern Star*, 27 May 1848, p. 5.

²⁴ Loveless, *The victims of Whiggery*.

²⁵ Frost, *The horrors of convict life*, p. 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-47.

²⁷ Loveless, *The victims of Whiggery*, p. 22. There is a quite large (but rather dated) popular historiography on the Tolpuddle Martyrs. For typical accounts see O. Rattenbury, *Flame of freedom: the romantic story of the Tolpuddle martyrs* (London, 1931); M.M. Firth and A.W.

I had almost forgotten that hell upon earth, ‘Norfolk Island.’ Whoever goes there they are no longer prisoners of hope. In every other place, however dreadful and melancholy, there is a hope that springs up in the mind that some day may bring deliverance and that at a future period, however remote that period may be, you will be restored again to your friends. Not so at Norfolk Island.²⁸

In chapter five we have seen how the quest narrative could be fashioned into an effective political tool because in the imaginative realm of romance hope remained eternal. Norfolk Island, however, symbolised a world without hope. It was Frye’s ‘night-world’ incarnate – a place of no return.²⁹

Some time ago Anne Conlon argued that convict narratives published between 1818 and 1850 were essentially picaresque ‘moral tales’ which had remarkably similar titles, content and narrative structures.³⁰ As Conlon also notes, most accounts had at least a ‘cursory chapter on Norfolk Island, whether the authors had been there or not’.³¹ The images of hell which permeated Loveless’ 1837 account can also be found in a condemnatory lecture on emigration and transportation given by William Ashton, the Barnsley Chartist, at Sheffield Town Hall in July 1838.³² The vehemence of Ashton’s political views shocked even prison inspectors who interviewed many Chartist prisoners in 1839-40. ‘His hatred of the government of the country seems incredible’, commented Captain Williams after speaking to Ashton at the Wakefield House of Correction.³³ Like Frost and Loveless (who became an active Chartist after

Hopkinson, *The Tolpuddle martyrs* (London, 1934); J. Marlow, *The Tolpuddle martyrs* (London, 1971).

²⁸ Loveless, *The victims of Whiggery*, pp. 23-4.

²⁹ On Norfolk generally see the essays collected in R. Nobbs, ed., *Norfolk Island and its second settlement, 1825-1855* (Sydney, 1991); M. Hazzard, *Punishment short of death: a history of the penal settlement at Norfolk Island* (Melbourne, 1984); R. Hughes, *The fatal shore* (London, 1988), ch. 13.

³⁰ A. Conlon, “‘Mine is a Sad yet True Story’: convict narratives 1818-1850”, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 55 (1969), pp. 43-82.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³² Ashton, *A lecture on the evil of emigration and transportation*. See also J. Knott, ‘A Chartist’s view of Australia, 1838’, *Push From The Bush*, 13 (1982), pp. 2-13. I am indebted to Dr Knott for providing me with a copy of Ashton’s lecture.

³³ Godfrey, ‘The Chartist prisoners’, p. 203.

his return to England in 1837) Ashton was one of the few activists to have been to Australia, having been transported in 1830 on a charge arising from a Barnsley weavers' strike in 1829. Although this experience no doubt contributed to his contempt for the government, in 1838 Ashton was pardoned and brought back to England courtesy of the fund-raising energies of Barnsley's radical community.³⁴ Ironically, Ashton was later spurned by his rescuers following his sensational accusation that Feargus O'Connor had effectively betrayed John Frost in late 1839.³⁵ Ashton subsequently emigrated to America for a short period, before returning to England. Finally, he settled in Victoria during the goldrushes.³⁶

John Frost requested that he be supplied with a copy of *The pilgrim's progress* before leaving England – perhaps in order to prepare himself for the ordeal ahead – and Ashton invoked the Valley of the Shadow of Death when describing in 1838 the depravities of Norfolk Island:

It is, I am sure, utterly impossible to convey even a faint picture of these horrible places, where the ill-fated convicts are cut off from all hope; they know nothing of the world or its inhabitants, being doomed to continual thralldom and misery of the most agonizing description; my soul recoils within me when I reflect on these abodes of wretchedness and despair.³⁷

Ashton travelled more miles than most in his political life – more even than John Frost. But like Frost, he never seems to have set foot upon Norfolk Island. Ashton also reiterated that other potent symbol of despair in his critique of convictism, the death-wish motif: 'Others, whose lives have become insupportable wreak their vengeance',

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

³⁵ Epstein, *The lion of freedom*, pp. 197-201; Knott, 'A Chartist's view of Australia', pp. 11-12.

³⁶ Knott, 'A Chartist's view of Australia', pp. 11-12.

³⁷ Ashton, *A lecture on the evil of emigration and transportation*, p. 21; J. Bunyan, *The pilgrim's progress* (London, n.d.), p. 70: 'we heard also in that valley a continual howling and yelling, as of a people under unutterable misery, who were sat bound in affliction and irons; and over that valley hangs the discouraging clouds of confusion: death also doth spread its wings over it. In a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order'.

he noted, solely ‘for the purpose of being executed in Hobart Town’.³⁸ ‘I have seen these men *executed* and heard them declare in their dying moments the horrid and disgusting particulars of how they have murdered their mates one after the other, and lived upon their dead bodies’.³⁹ Far from disappearing, these grotesque images were to recur in Ernest Jones’ campaign against emigration in the early 1850s.

Loveless’, Ashton’s and Frost’s condemnations of the convict system echoed those voiced by W.B. Ullathorne, the Roman Catholic Vicar General of New South Wales.⁴⁰ Ullathorne first visited Norfolk Island in the wake of the 1834 mutiny, and witnessed the execution of thirteen prisoners implicated in the rising.⁴¹ In 1837-8 his criticisms of secondary penal stations were published in Australia and Britain, and in February 1838 he gave evidence to the Molesworth select committee, which later recommended the abolition of transportation to Australia.⁴² Historians have generally described this inquiry as a carefully manipulated investigation, and there can be little doubt that Ullathorne’s evidence of animal-like existence and ‘unnatural crimes’ contributed materially to the findings.⁴³ Frank Clarke notes that homosexual ‘marriages’ were not unknown during the second settlement, and that some convicts

³⁸ Ashton, *A lecture on the evil of emigration and transportation*, pp. 21-2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20. Italics in original. For another account of convict cannibalism in Van Diemen’s Land see the *Northern Star*, 5 September 1840, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Reports from committees, transportation (1837-8), *British Parliamentary Papers*, Transportation, III (Shannon, 1968 rep.), para. 263, evidence of W.B. Ullathorne.

⁴¹ See the chapter entitled ‘The horror of Norfolk Island’ in W.B. Ullathorne, *From cabin boy to Archbishop: the autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne* (n.p., 1941), pp. 81-9.

⁴² Reports from committees, transportation (1837-8), especially pp. xli-xlvi; W. Ullathorne, *The Catholic mission in Australasia* (Adelaide, 1963 rep.); W.B. Ullathorne, *Horrors of transportation briefly unfolded to the people* (Dublin, 1838).

⁴³ F. Clarke, ‘The background to resettlement: context and the tyranny of accepted explanations’ in R. Nobbs, ed., *Norfolk Island and its second settlement, 1825-1855* (Sydney, 1991), pp. 7-8. Ullathorne admitted in his evidence to the Committee (at para. 237) that he had been told beforehand that he would be specifically examined upon the subject of ‘unnatural crimes’. On the inquiry more generally see J. Ritchie, ‘Towards ending an unclean thing: the Molesworth committee and the abolition of transportation to New South Wales, 1837-40’, *Historical Studies*, 17 (1976), pp. 144-64; N. Townsend, ‘The Molesworth Enquiry: does the report fit the evidence?’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1 (1977), pp. 33-51.

were also given female names by fellow prisoners.⁴⁴ Valda Rigg also points out that Edward Smith Hall's *Sydney Monitor*, a notable advocate of convict rights, was parodying the newly re-settled penal station as 'Sodomy Isle' as early as 1827.⁴⁵ Ullathorne himself stressed how even the most prosaic features of life seemed to have been turned upside down at Norfolk Island:

So corrupt was their ordinary language ... – so perverse, that, in their dialect, *evil* was literally called *good*, and *good*, *evil* – the well-disposed man was branded *wicked*, whilst the leader in monstrous vice was styled *virtuous*.⁴⁶

Despite his condemnation, Ullathorne also was struck by the natural beauty of the island, and by the anomaly between a fertile natural environment and the corrupted culture imposed upon it. He even suggested that Norfolk's towering pines, verdant rainforest and Pacific vistas formed a natural 'Gothic fantasy': 'here is beauty like the shadow of the countenance of the Creator ... Yet man alone ... remains untouched by his spirit, and wanders the demoniac of the scene'.⁴⁷

'Sodom Island', 'Hell on earth', cannibal convicts and the idea of a fate worse than death: these images became a part of a Gothic radical lore of convictism.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Clarke, 'The background to resettlement', p. 8. For a convict's account of sexual behaviour on Norfolk Island see T. Cook, *The exile's lamentations* (North Sydney, 1978), pp. 68-70.

⁴⁵ V. Rigg, 'Convict life' in R. Nobbs, ed., *Norfolk Island and its second settlement, 1825-1855* (Sydney, 1991), p. 27; *Sydney Monitor*, 16 March 1827, p. 4; *Historical Records of Australia* (first series), XIII (Sydney, 1920), p. 183. Hall had actually made similar comments soon after the re-settlement of Norfolk. See *Sydney Monitor*, 29 September 1826, p. 155. For Hall generally see J.A. Ferguson, 'Edward Smith Hall and the "Monitor"', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 17 (1931), pp. 163-200; S. Blair, 'The "convict press": Edward Smith Hall and the *Sydney Monitor*' in D. Cryle, ed., *Disreputable profession: journalist and journalism in colonial Australia* (Rockhampton, 1997), pp. 21-40; E. Ihde, 'Monitoring the situation: the 'convict journal', convict protest and convict rights', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 85 (1999), pp. 20-35.

⁴⁶ Ullathorne, *The Catholic mission in Australasia*, p. 40. Italics in original.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁸ On the narrative depiction of Norfolk Island and other places of secondary punishment see L.L. Robson, 'The historical basis of *For the term of his natural life*', *Australian Literary Studies*, 1 (1963-4), pp. 104-21. The death-wish motif can also be found in the testimony and memoirs of colonial judicial figures such as Sir Francis Forbes and Sir Roger Therry. See Reports from committees, transportation (1837), *British Parliamentary Papers*, Transportation, II (Shannon, 1968 rep.) evidence of F. Forbes, especially paras. 1331-52; R. Therry, *Reminiscences of thirty years' residence in New South Wales and Victoria ...* (London, 1863), especially pp. 18-21; See also Hazzard, *Punishment short of death*, pp. 125-6 and

Something of the power of these metaphors was perhaps crystallised in the surviving letters of Richard Boothman, a young weaver who was convicted of killing Joseph Halstead during the final anti-police riot at Colne in 1840.⁴⁹ Boothman always protested his innocence, and the following year his death-sentence was commuted to transportation for life.⁵⁰ Despite this reprieve, the turmoil engendered by Boothman's imminent removal is clear in his last known letter to his father. Whereas all of his earlier correspondence speaks calmly and dutifully, on a hulk just prior to his voyage Boothman seems to have suffered what George Rudé has aptly termed 'apocalyptic visions':

Dr father I hope and trust that you will not be angry with me in writing ... to you in this way, but I can assure you that it is my desire and wish that both you and I may be saved (?) from our sins hear, and from the punishment hear after when the Heavens shall crofs away with a grate noise and the Ellements shall melt ... and when the Starrs shall fall from native place of abode and when the Earth shall be burnt to ashes, and the whole world shall be destroyed by ... flames of Dreadful Fire.⁵¹

'If I should not meet you again in this world', Boothman concluded, 'I hope and trust that we both shall meet in heaven where parting will be no more'.⁵²

Robert Fyson suggests that perhaps the most prominent Chartist to be exiled to Australia apart from the Newport leaders was William Sherratt Ellis, the Potteries leader who was sentenced to twenty-one years transportation at the Staffordshire Special Commission in 1842.⁵³ The main source of information upon Ellis is a

Clarke, 'The background to resettlement', pp. 6-7. For a comparatively recent reiteration of these earlier accounts see B. Beatty, *Early Australia: with shame remembered* (London, 1962), ch. 9.

⁴⁹ Storch, 'The plague of blue locusts', p. 83. See also *Northern Star*, 15 August 1840, p. 2; 22 August 1840, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Boothman Correspondence, Lancashire Record Office, Preston, DDX 537.

⁵¹ Rudé, *Protest and punishment*, p. 142; Boothman correspondence, DDX 537/11. Emphasis in original.

⁵² Boothman Correspondence, DDX 537/11.

⁵³ R. Fyson, 'The transported Chartist: the case of William Ellis' in O. Ashton, R. Fyson and S. Roberts, eds., *The Chartist legacy* (Rendlesham, 1999), pp. 80-101. For Ellis' trial see

serialised memoir written by Thomas Cooper, who had been briefly imprisoned with Ellis during 1842.⁵⁴ Although Cooper personified the Chartist autodidact (he is said to have been the model for Kingsley's Alton Locke⁵⁵) his depiction of his incarceration with Ellis was explicitly coloured by Gothic fantasy:

The feeling of horror which came over me when I first entered that dungeon, I cannot describe. All I had read in the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, and other companion tales of my boyhood, did not serve to prepare me for the shuddering vision of that night.⁵⁶

Nonetheless, Ellis took Cooper aside:

We walked to and fro, during the hour we remained in that dungeon, pouring into each other's hearts ... I assured him ... that the chief struggle of my future life ought to be the unwearied and incessant one to procure redress for his wrongs ... I sought to cheer him by a reliance on the future, by the bright hope that truth, in her omnipotent progress, must eventually triumph ... He listened till the light of joyous hope, instead of the cloud of despair dwelt in his eye; and then revealed his own thoughts of the future. He spoke of the coming age of universal brotherhood, of the world-spread establishment of the great community. I soon perceived his attachment to the doctrines of socialism; and we communed together until we forgot the dungeon.⁵⁷

This was a meeting of minds: Ellis was another autodidact who had 'been known to remain up for whole nights together to make himself master of a subject'.⁵⁸ For Ellis, salvation lay in the writings of a prophet of technology, John Adolphus Etzler.⁵⁹ Cooper, on the other hand, maintained the truth of a Christian doctrine shed of

Northern Star, 1 October 1842, p. 1, 8 October 1842, pp. 1, 5; 15 October 1842, p. 6; 22 October 1842, p. 1.

⁵⁴ See *English Chartist Circular*, 2 (1842-3), pp. 371-2, 375-6, 379-80, 383, 387, 391-2; *Idem*, 3 (1843-4), p. 400.

⁵⁵ Thompson, *The Chartists*, p. 187; C. Kingsley, *Alton Locke* (London, 1910 rep.).

⁵⁶ *English Chartist Circular*, 2 (1842-3), p. 379. For Radcliffe's place in the Gothic tradition see R. Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: the great enchantress* (Manchester, 1995).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Rumours circulated at the time of the special commission that Ellis was planning an audacious mass-escape from Stafford Gaol. See *Northern Star*, 15 October 1842, p. 5.

⁵⁸ *English Chartist Circular*, 2 (1842-3), p. 371.

⁵⁹ J.A. Etzler, *The paradise within the reach of all men, without labour, by powers of nature and machinery* (London, 1836). See also G. Claeys, 'John Adolphus Etzler, technological utopianism, and British socialism: the Tropical Emigration Society's Venezuelan mission and its social context, 1833-1848', *English Historical Review*, 101 (1986), pp. 351-75.

‘Priestianity’.⁶⁰ Cooper also kept his word to Ellis and subsequently became a leading figure in the Chartist campaign to support his family.⁶¹

Following his removal to Van Diemen’s Land in late 1842, Ellis’ ‘orphaned’ daughter was taken in by another Staffordshire Chartist family.⁶² William Oldham, ‘Pater’ of a group of Owenites, Fourierites and vegetarians resident at the Ham Common Concordium in Surrey, also offered to ‘undertake the board, lodging, washing, clothing and education’ of two Ellis children ‘at about half our usual charge’, ‘provided they are of good organization and health’.⁶³ Despite William’s enthusiasm for Etzler (who lived for a time at the Concordium, and whose plan of tropical emigration was published by the community’s press in 1844⁶⁴) this offer does not appear to have been taken up. The ‘law-made widow’ Ellis, however, did accept the assistance of fellow Chartists during her trip from Burslem to Portsmouth to take leave of her husband.⁶⁵ At Birmingham ‘Mrs. Ellis read several of her husband’s letters to the Chartists present at Mr. Follows, in Monmouth-street, where she was staying, the endearing, patriotic, and self-denying sentiment of which, together with the sobs of his wife, caused tears to flow from the eyes of all present’.⁶⁶

Emma Ellis subsequently became a regular recipient of payments administered by the Political Victims’ Defence Fund, one of the myriad of support organisations that characterised the Chartist movement culture in the 1840s. At Manchester Abel Heywood and the Owenite lecturer Robert Buchanan presented phantasmagoria in aid

⁶⁰ *English Chartist Circular*, 2 (1842-3), p. 379.

⁶¹ Fyson, ‘The transported Chartist’, pp. 87-8.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Northern Star*, 4 February 1843, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Claeys, ‘John Adolphus Etzler’, pp. 359-60.

⁶⁵ *Northern Star*, 26 November 1842, p. 1; 28 January 1843, p. 7.

⁶⁶ *Northern Star*, 26 November 1842, p. 1.

of the local Victims' Fund.⁶⁷ Thomas Cooper's public call to other prominent Chartists on Emma Ellis' behalf struck a typically chivalrous note:

O'Connor has promised Mrs. Ellis to give her all due help; will he undertake to move London in her behalf? I will pledge my word that Leicester will not be behind. Sweet! – I can depend on you ... to put Nottingham in motion. Harney! – you will urge the good Sheffields to do their best. Hobson, Brook! come ... let something be done to furnish bread, from Leeds, for this poor *widow* and her four helpless orphans. Robert Brook! – say to the Todmorden lads, that their *sister* will perish in a Bastile, if they do not stretch out their hands and help. Leach! – tell Manchester, even in its starvation, that the exile's beloved wife and babes must be helped. Clarke! – use your eloquence at Stockport, in the cause of these suffering ones.⁶⁸

In 1844 the radical publisher John Cleave and Tower Hamlets Chartists supported the Ellis family with a shop and a weekly income of 15 shillings.⁶⁹ The London experiment failed, however, and by September 1845 Emma and her three remaining children were back in the Potteries 'in daily bread of the "Poor Law Union"'.⁷⁰ The indefatigable Cooper (who had only recently been released from prison) promptly started a new 'Exiles' Widows and Childrens fund' for the fallen family of 'THE MARTYR ELLIS'.⁷¹

William himself beseeched his wife not to follow him to Van Diemen's Land: 'I think of the happy home I have lost ... and compare it with the moral desolation that now surrounds me ... I am ready to ask myself the impious question, is life worth having in such dreadful terms?'.⁷² On board the transport *John Renwick*, Ellis

⁶⁷ *Northern Star*, 13 February 1841, p. 8. Heywood was at this time O'Connor's business manager and one of the most prominent radical booksellers in the north of England. He later became Mayor of Manchester.

⁶⁸ *Northern Star*, 21 January 1843, p. 5. Italics in original.

⁶⁹ *Northern Star*, 3 August 1844, p. 7.

⁷⁰ *Northern Star*, 20 September 1845, p. 1; Fyson, 'The transported Chartist', pp. 88-9.

⁷¹ *Northern Star*, 13 December 1845, p. 6. Cooper also instigated a 'Veteran Patriots Fund', from which John 'Daddy' Richards, Thomas Smart and the aged Spenceans Thomas Preston and Alan Davenport received assistance. Cooper resigned as Fund Secretary in August 1846, following his dispute with O'Connor. See *Northern Star*, 8 August 1846, p. 8.

⁷² *Northern Star*, 13 December 1845, p. 6.

described his future as ‘an ocean of darkness and doubt’.⁷³ As Robert Fyson’s recent investigations show, it appears that he experienced a ‘sad decline’ during the 1850s and died a dissipated figure in Hobart in 1871.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, we have already seen how Chartist journalists and publishers such as William Hill, Joshua Hobson and John Watkins cultivated a deliberate and effective symbolic narrative around O’Connor’s imprisonment. Another of Watkins’ literary efforts at this time included the ‘Play of John Frost’, which ran to 48 pages of blank verse.⁷⁵ The death-wish motif, of course, propels a Frost soliloquy:

Transported! – ‘tis to drag on death alive ...
 I shall go mad, or worse, become a fiend –
 And this they call their mercy – royal mercy!
 Be merciful, indeed, and give me death –
 Oh, let me die while yet I am a man –
 Give me some chance of leaving earth for heaven.⁷⁶

Similar sentiments were reputedly uttered by Frost himself before embarking for Van Diemen’s Land.⁷⁷ Frost also later claimed that the government had attempted to induce the three Newport leaders to commit suicide whilst their fate was in the balance.⁷⁸ Following their reprieve and transportation, however, a number of Chartist poets set about mediating the Welsh leaders’ exile in verse.

George Binns, himself about to emigrate to New Zealand, set his song to the tune of ‘The Gallant Hussar’.⁷⁹ Other publications composed to exploit the fame of

⁷³ *English Chartist Circular*, 2 (1842-3), p. 387.

⁷⁴ Fyson, ‘The transported Chartist’, pp. 94-8. After being employed on probation as a police constable, Ellis unsuccessfully attempted to escape from Tasmania (with the Newport leader Zephaniah Williams) in October 1847. Although Ellis subsequently participated in the local temperance movement and the Tasmanian Union (an organisation founded in 1850 to establish rights for ex-convicts) he later was arrested more than thirty times on charges of vagrancy, drunkenness, indecent exposure and assaulting the Irish convict he married (probably bigamously) in 1853.

⁷⁵ Warner and Gunn, *John Frost and the Chartist movement in Monmouthshire*, p. 21.

⁷⁶ Extract reprinted in *Northern Star*, 2 January 1841, p. 3.

⁷⁷ *Leeds Mercury* (Supplement), 21 March 1840, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Frost, *The horrors of convict life*, pp. 19-21.

⁷⁹ *Northern Star*, 1 August 1840, p. 3. For Binns see S. Roberts, *Radical politicians and poets in early Victorian Britain: the voices of six Chartist leaders* (New York, 1993).

the Newport leaders were hastily adapted from existing typographical layouts. One ballad entitled ‘Frost, Williams, and Jones’s Farewell to England’, for example, was somewhat curiously adorned with an illustration of a paddle-steamer.⁸⁰ The following lines, simply entitled ‘Frost’, typified the Chartist lament:

He is far from the land where his offspring sleep,
And the waves are around him playing,
But he only turns from the view to weep,
For his thoughts to his home are straying.⁸¹

As the author ‘J.H.’ readily admitted, these lines were taken almost verbatim from Thomas Moore’s song ‘She is far from the land’ (whose subject was Sarah Curran’s grief-stricken exile in Italy following Robert Emmet’s execution in 1803).⁸² This formal appropriation may not have been particularly original, but it did evoke specific political overtones that many Chartists would have recognised.

In Merthyr during the early 1840s David John Jnr. and Morgan Williams published Chartist newspapers in both English and Welsh, and a song ‘DYCHWELIAD FROST, WILLIAMS, A JONES’ (RETURN FROST, WILLIAMS, AND JONES) appears in the extant pages of *Udgorn Cymru (Trumpet of Wales)*.⁸³ ‘Of two pieces sent us by THOMAS JONES’, the *Northern Star* wrote some years later, ‘we find the following worthy of insertion’, if only ‘on account of the subject the writer has chosen’:

Hail! hail, all hail, thou noble patriot Frost,
The first of Nature’s nobles, and the friend

⁸⁰ Anon., *Frost, Williams, and Jones’s farewell to England* (Birmingham, n.d.). A copy is held in the Australian National Library, Canberra.

⁸¹ *Northern Star*, 2 May 1840, p. 7. For more Frost poetry see *Northern Star*, 16 May 1840, p. 7; 25 July 1840, p. 3.

⁸² J. Dorrian, ed., *The poetical works of Thomas Moore* (London, n.d.), pp. 142-3. Part of the romantic legend attached to Emmet was that Sarah Curran, a daughter of the famous Irish barrister and parliamentarian John Philpott Curran, died of ‘a broken heart’ in Sicily within months of Emmet’s death. For the 1803 rebellion generally see M. Elliot, *Partners in revolution: the United Irishmen and France* (New Haven, 1982), ch. 9.

⁸³ *Udgorn Cymru*, 1 February 1841, p. 5 in HO 45/54. Some issues of the *Advocate and Merthyr Free Press* from early 1841 can also be found in this location.

Of suffering man, tho' now to us thou'rt lost;
 Yet shall a nation's prayers Heaven's arches read –
 Till thee and thy compatriots shall return
 To bless the land, that now your absence mourn.⁸⁴

In a typically blunt manner, the *Star* informed Jones that as a poet he had 'a wide field of improvement before him'.⁸⁵ Yet note the stylistic similarities between this reverential ode and those dedicated to O'Connor during his imprisonment at York. Whilst the aesthetic quality of Chartist verse may have varied widely, the political agency embedded in the publication of this popular creative form should not be underestimated. Perhaps to an even greater extent than prose, verse and song was imbued with a sense of artistry and power, particularly amongst those excluded from the political nation.

In the 1880s the Halifax Chartist Ben Wilson recalled the long and improbable odyssey Frost came to symbolise:

If someone had said to me when John Frost was transported for life for the riots in 1839 that I should meet and shake hand with him, I should have come to the conclusion that it would have to be in Van-Diemen's Land. The Chartists never forgot him, but did all they possibly could by agitations and by petitions to Parliament to obtain his freedom. Seventeen years elapsed before his free pardon was granted, and in 1857 he came to Halifax to give us a lecture after which a few friends spent several hours with him talking over old times.⁸⁶

As Wilson's recollections intimate, Frost's return saw renewed Chartist mass-mobilisation in London and the remaining strongholds of the movement. Once again 'Banner Committee Meetings' were convened as Chartists took to the streets. At Deptford it was unanimously resolved 'that Mr Martin purchase a new banner 3 yards long by 4 wide'.⁸⁷ In gold and red, the Chartist programme was to be emblazoned; in

⁸⁴ *Northern Star*, 20 September 1845, p. 3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Wilson, *The struggles of an old Chartist*, p. 223.

⁸⁷ *People's Paper*, 12 July 1856, p. 1.

white, a welcome to Frost; in green, the slogan – ‘The day of retribution is at hand’.⁸⁸ Ernest Jones, in his serialised novel *De Brassier*, remarked upon how such ‘terrible mottoes’ transmitted ‘stern truths’ from the ‘pages of history’.⁸⁹ The tenacity of these visual media to sustain rich memories and historical meanings should certainly not be underestimated. James Vernon cites an example of how ‘loud cheers burst from the people’ as an old Chartist banner was unfurled at a Reform League meeting in London in 1866.⁹⁰ A decade earlier Ernest Jones used Frost himself as a metaphor of resilience:

John Frost is a noble evidence of Chartist faith, endurance, energy and courage – he is an omen of Chartist triumph. Few men have survived so much – it would seem as though fate had reserved him as a living monument of our past and predestined witness of our future triumph ... Up with your banners then – bring the old emblems and ensigns of our cause forth into the light of day – array your mighty masses in the sight of heaven.⁹¹

Despite Jones’ attempts to capitalise upon the symbolic resolution of Frost’s quest, the exile’s return effectively signalled the end of Chartism in Britain.

II

In the late 1840s the promotion of emigration to Australia became a growth industry. Samuel Sidney’s famous *Australian handbook* first appeared in 1848, just prior to the launch of *Sidney’s Emigrant Journal*.⁹² J.C. Byrne’s *Emigrant’s guide to New South Wales proper, Australia Felix, and South Australia* was reprinted at least eight times

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Notes to the People*, 1 (1851), p. 51.

⁹⁰ Vernon, *Politics and the people*, p. 109.

⁹¹ *People’s Paper*, 19 July 1856, p. 1.

⁹² A Bushman (S. Sidney and J. Sidney), *Sidney’s Australian hand-book. How to settle and succeed in Australia ...* (London, 1848). See also Lansbury, *Arcady in Australia*, ch. 5.

by 1848.⁹³ Clearly, a burgeoning demand for knowledge of Australia existed even before the discovery of rich alluvial deposits of gold in 1851. From early 1850 Charles Dickens' new magazine *Household Words* also became a prominent advocate of Australian emigration, particularly the operations of Caroline Chisholm's Family Colonisation Loan Society.⁹⁴ Most Chartist criticisms of emigration to Australia, on the other hand, centred around a few persistent themes.

In broad terms, emigration was decried as a political delusion, tainted with Malthusian overtones, and condemned as a covert form of 'transportation' imposed upon unsuspecting working people.⁹⁵ As Alan Beaver has suggested, the amorphous notion of 'old corruption' was also associated with the aristocratic administration of Empire, particularly the usurpation of vast tracts of colonial lands.⁹⁶ Pro-emigration arguments were thus usually coolly received by Chartist reviewers, despite one writer's reticence in labelling Patrick Mathew's 1839 plea for colonial settlement a 'Malthusian' conspiracy.⁹⁷ Yet bastardised theories of surplus population did fuel much emigration propaganda. John Dunmore Lang claimed in 1848 that the 'urgent necessity for extensive Emigration and Colonization, as an outlet for the redundant

⁹³ J.C. Byrnes, *Emigrant's guide to New South Wales proper, Australia Felix and South Australia* (London, 1848).

⁹⁴ For commendations of Chisholm see *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, pp. 19-24; 24 August 1850, pp. 514-15; 28 February 1852, pp. 529-34. See also Lansbury, *Arcady in Australia*, p. 69.

⁹⁵ Boston, *The British Chartists in America*, p. 18. Chartist criticisms of emigration were summed up in a series of leading articles in the *Northern Star*, 11 December 1841, p. 4; 18 December 1841, p. 4; 24 December 1841, p. 4.

⁹⁶ Beaver, 'From a place of horrible destitution', p. 3.

⁹⁷ P. Mathew (also Matthew) *Emigration fields. North America, the Cape, Australia, and New Zealand ...* (London, 1839). See the review published in the *Lovettite Charter*, 17 March 1839, p. 122. Compare the grudging examination of Byrnes' *Emigrant's guide to New South Wales proper* in the *Northern Star*, 19 August 1848, p. 3. Mathew was one of the 'middle-class' delegates elected to the National Convention for Perthshire and Fifeshire, although he resigned in April 1839. See Wilson, *The Chartist movement in Scotland*, pp. 71-2. He primarily is remembered for anticipating elements of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. See W.J. Dempster, *Patrick Matthew and natural selection: nineteenth-century gentleman farmer, naturalist and writer* (Edinburgh, 1983).

population of all classes in the mother country, is universally acknowledged'.⁹⁸ In another pamphlet published in 1849, Lang even suggested that Australian emigration was the 'proper remedy for Chartism'.⁹⁹

Alan Beever notes that one of the reasons Chartists were so ambivalent towards free-trade (apart from class based antagonisms) was the belief that the proper utilisation of the land would have rendered the bourgeois doctrine superfluous.¹⁰⁰ Feargus O'Connor, for example, painted emigration as a 'sickening, heartless delusion'.¹⁰¹ Like William Cobbett, he argued that England and Ireland could comfortably support a population many times its total by adopting practical strategies such as the recovery of wastelands and the placing of arable land under the intensive form of culture epitomised by the Land Plan.¹⁰² During his trip to Belgium in September 1845, Feargus claimed that 'If the land of Belgium was treated like the land of England it would not produce anything; and if the land of England was cultivated like the land of Belgium is, it would feed half the world'.¹⁰³ Thomas Brown, a visitor to O'Connorville July 1849, wrote that the community itself 'represents, at least to my mind, the waste lands of England in miniature, unlocked, and open to the sons of industry to expend their labour upon'.¹⁰⁴ The rank and file agreed. One public meeting held in Brighton in 1848 by the Society for the Promotion of Emigration, for example, was noisily disrupted by local Chartists 'contending that

⁹⁸ J.D. Lang, *Emigration to Port Phillip; or a brief statement of the general capabilities of that province for immediate and extensive colonization ...* (London, 1848), p. 5.

⁹⁹ J.D. Lang, *Juvenile-pauper emigration: a letter to Mathew Talbot Baines, Esq., Q.C., M.P.* (London, 1849), pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁰ Beever, 'From a place of horrible destitution', p. 4.

¹⁰¹ *Northern Star*, 5 April 1845, p. 1. For similar sentiments made in the post-1848 period see James Leach's condemnation of emigration schemes at a Chartist meeting held in Rochdale and reported in the *Northern Star*, 22 December 1849, p. 8.

¹⁰² See O'Connor, *A practical work on the management of small farms*, p. 8.

¹⁰³ *Northern Star*, 20 September 1845, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Northern Star*, 21 July 1849, p. 1.

there were waste-lands in England which ought to be cultivated before emigration was proposed'.¹⁰⁵ Although at odds with orthodox political economy, these views were not without support in some rather unexpected quarters. As John Saville points out, John Stuart Mill commended the O'Connorville community in the first edition of his *Principles of political economy*, before the Plan's decline obliged Mill to expunge his potentially embarrassing comments.¹⁰⁶

However, on Beever's reading of working class newspapers, by about 1850 the Irish famine and the failure of the Land Plan destroyed the faith previously placed in domestic solutions. At the same time, the widespread economic depression which had afflicted most Australian colonies during the 1840s began to abate. Thus by mid-century the shattered ideals of home colonisation were increasingly being transferred to Empire, and Australia was reconfigured as an agrarian paradise. As Gregory Claeys and Jamie Bronstein have pointed out, this was the very picture which radicals had long painted of the USA, even if the rhetorical ideal had become rather tarnished by the Chartist period.¹⁰⁷ But did Chartist opinion of Australia change as drastically as Beever suggests? Before looking at the impact of the discovery of gold upon Chartist political culture, we need to look a little more closely at attitudes to emigration and its domestic alternatives.

It would be misleading to suggest that all Chartists viewed emigration in negative or fatalistic terms. Even in the early period it was occasionally depicted as a revitalising force. In the Glasgow *Chartist Circular*, for example, 'E.P' contributed 'The Emigrant's Farewell' to be sung to the air of 'Farewell thou fair day'. The first

¹⁰⁵ *Brighton Herald*, 12 August 1848 reprinted in *Sydney Morning Herald* (Supplement), 11 December 1848, p. 3 (n.p.).

¹⁰⁶ See Saville's introduction to Gammage, *History*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁷ Claeys, 'The example of America a warning to England?'; Bronstein, 'From the land of liberty to land monopoly'.

verse gives an idea of the content, and the way emigration could be construed as a form of political salvation:

Farewell, then, poor land of the coward and the slave,
Where millions still fettered will be;
Where justice sits wailing at liberty's grave –
Farewell to thy bondage and thee!¹⁰⁸

Or consider another 'Song of the emigrant' penned by a Mrs. B.F. Foster which Julian Harney (then editor of the *Northern Star*) reluctantly published in 1847:

Up, up and away! Why linger we thus!
What is our country now!
Unknown is the patriot's glow to us ...
'Away, then, away!' In Australia's Land,
Will palaces seldom rise,
To shadow the spot where cottages stand ...
And come! Who will tremble at dangers to be,
What Britons once were – independent and free!¹⁰⁹

Here the pristine virtues of an imagined past have found a new home no longer bearing the stigma of Botany Bay. Notice the upward trajectory of the imagery: what was previously imagined as a living Hell has become a new Eden. Nonetheless, a 'transportation' metaphor continued to be used in Chartist condemnations of emigration.¹¹⁰ In 1848 the *Northern Star* again castigated emigration as 'wholesale transportation': when 'no more wastes remain', said the traditional voice of Chartism, 'then we shall approve of the plans advocated by scheming societies, and selfish land speculators ... He is no true son of the soil who deserts here now'.¹¹¹

It was not the sons of the soil, however, who were soon to capture public sympathy. Henry Mayhew's *exposé* of the impoverished conditions of metropolitan tailors and 'needlewomen' led Sidney Herbert and Lord Ashley to form in late 1849

¹⁰⁸ *Chartist Circular*, 21 March 1840, p. 108.

¹⁰⁹ *Northern Star*, 24 July 1847, p. 3

¹¹⁰ See, for example, *Northern Star*, 8 May 1841, p. 3; *English Chartist Circular*, 2 (1842-3), p. 16; *Northern Star*, 30 September 1848, p. 4.

¹¹¹ *Northern Star*, 30 September 1848, p. 4.

the Female Emigration Company. Both men were also involved in Edward Gibbon Wakefield's Canterbury Association, designed to settle the south island of New Zealand.¹¹² Over the next couple of years some 700 women were assisted to emigrate to Australia under aristocratic patronage.¹¹³ The newly instituted *Reynold's Political Instructor* (the experimental forerunner of *Reynold's Weekly News*) had favourably commented upon and reprinted a number of Mayhew's 'Labour and the Poor' series. Yet Reynolds was scathing of the Female Emigration Company's object of 'transportation' that went 'under the genteel name of "emigration"':

I regard it as a scandal ... that any members of the community should be told there is no room for them in their own country ... if the land monopoly was abolished in these islands, the laws of primogeniture and entail repealed, the Crown Lands properly managed, and the waste lands brought into culture, there would be a sufficiency of food for double the present population of Great Britain and Ireland. The doctrine of surplus population is a base, wicked, wilful lie; and it is only preached in order to divert men's mind from a pursuit of the investigation into the real causes of the wide-spread pauperism, distress and misery apparent in this country.¹¹⁴

Although late-Chartism is depicted as a fatally fractured movement, Ernest Jones was making essentially the same points in 1856-7.¹¹⁵

In July 1849 Feargus O'Connor announced in one of his open letters that because of the immense calumnies he had faced, and the ingratitude he had suffered at the hands of some of the more fractious members of his Chartist family, that he intended to retire from public life.¹¹⁶ The *Star* was immediately inundated with a

¹¹² A. Humpherys, *Travels into the poor man's country: the work of Henry Mayhew* (Firle, 1977), pp. 55-6. For Wakefield generally see J. Phillip, *A great view of things: Edward Gibbon Wakefield* (Melbourne, 1971).

¹¹³ Humpherys, *Travels into the poor man's country*, pp. 55-6.

¹¹⁴ *Reynold's Political Instructor*, 5 January 1850, p. 66.

¹¹⁵ In particular see Jones' 1856 and 1857 lectures on 'The Hereditary Landed Aristocracy' and 'Emigration' collected in *Evenings with the people* (New York, 1986 rep.). Compare Jesse Collings' later condemnation of 'The emigration peril' in *The colonization of rural Britain: a complete scheme for the regeneration of British rural life* (2 vols., London, 1914). In his youth Collings had witnessed Ernest Jones declaim upon emigration and land policy (see pp. 261-2).

¹¹⁶ *Northern Star*, 7 July 1849, p. 1.

stream of passionate responses from the rank and file begging O'Connor not to desert them. These long-forgotten pleas also reveal something of the extraordinary intensity of the hopes which had been invested in the Land Plan. Fife Chartists wrote of their

feelings of the deepest grief and sorrow – though not of surprise – that we have read of your repeated determination of retiring into private life. We are grieved, because your retirement would destroy our only hope of self-elevation and independence, and leave us sheep without a shepherd ... that you lost caste, as it were, among your own order – surely all this was bad enough without being mistrusted and maligned by the very persons whom you stooped to raise ... We, sir, saw in your Land Plan the only redemption for our social miseries and lost no time in becoming members. We have watched with admiration your almost superhuman efforts in developing and carrying out its projects; and if it may not have altogether reached your or our expectations, we saw that the fault was not in the system, or its projector, but because of the legal and combined interests of selfish politicians of all classes.¹¹⁷

Classic O'Connorite themes such as independence and redemption, persecution, self-sacrifice and superhuman exertion permeate this communication. Other responses from around Britain struck a similarly desperate tone. Samuel Hudson, a paid-up shareholder, found himself in the 'most sorrowful mood I ever experienced in my life'.¹¹⁸ All 'our hopes and prospects are forever vanished' was the grim edict of Merthyr Tydfil members.¹¹⁹ Wrote a Reading Chartist: 'It makes my very heart ache to read of your intentions of winding up the affairs of the Land Company – to have, as it were, the cup of hope dashed from my lips. The land, of all things was my fondest wish'.¹²⁰

One Nottingham Chartist wrote to the *Star* 'by request of a dying man',

Thomas Smith:

He believed, up to the time of his death, the National Land Plan would, if carried on, be the means of destroying all pauperism and poverty ... He was a teacher and a member amongst the Baptists of Normanton-on-Soar for half a century. But as he was a bold Chartist, declaring the rights of the people, and his everyday pleasure

¹¹⁷ *Northern Star*, 18 August 1849, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ *Northern Star*, 14 July 1849, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *Northern Star*, 18 August 1849, p. 1.

¹²⁰ *Northern Star*, 14 July 1849, p. 1.

being to read the *Star* newspaper to those around him ... he was turned out of the church. It was then his desire to be drawn on the Land if he lived on it but a day.¹²¹

The quasi-religious significance of the land to working people in Britain – which is crucial to understanding the tenacity of the Chartist inheritance in Australia – finds some expression in these words. ‘I have shown the way out of the house of bondage to the Labour castle’, O’Connor had proclaimed in 1848.¹²² Soon he was being reminded of the responsibilities inherent in such demagogic boasts: ‘remember that there are thousands of the very poor who have paid in anxiously waiting their redemption by your Land Plan’, wrote a Speenhamland tailor in the summer of 1849.¹²³ Or, as Joseph Morgan of Deptford dutifully informed O’Connor: ‘You have pledged yourself to redeem a fallen people, and you knew the nature of the task ... open the free labour field, and there will be no slave to take the bludgeon, the sword, musket or cannon, to keep down his fellow slaves’.¹²⁴

‘Emigration sinks into utter insignificance when compared to this God-like plan of Mr O’Connor’s’ declared a ‘Young Bachelor’ resident at O’Connorville.¹²⁵ A contemporary visitor to the community came to a similar conclusion.¹²⁶ Elizabeth Dewhirst, resident at the Great Dodford estate near Bromsgrove, informed O’Connor that ‘his promises, as contained in the *Northern Star*’ would surely be realised given time: ‘My cottage has surpassed my expectation. With diligence and labour my labourfield will become a paradise’.¹²⁷ The great majority of Land Plan members, however, never saw the promised land. Even those given the chance of location

¹²¹ *Northern Star*, 21 July 1849, p. 1.

¹²² *Northern Star*, 15 January 1848, p. 1.

¹²³ *Northern Star*, 28 July 1849, p. 1.

¹²⁴ *Northern Star*, 21 July 1849, p. 1.

¹²⁵ *Northern Star*, 2 March 1850, p. 1.

¹²⁶ *Northern Star*, 23 March 1850, p. 3.

¹²⁷ *Northern Star*, 14 July 1849, p. 1.

sometimes had changes of heart. J.B. Crews, a Newton Abbot Chartist we will hear more of in Victoria, offered for sale a four acre allotment at Snig's End in early 1848.¹²⁸ Others sold their shares at a reduced price due to impending emigration.¹²⁹ Samuel Hall of Derby voiced a dilemma which faced the great majority of 'Old Guards' as the Plan fell apart in 1849:

I like many others, have been unlucky at the ballot ... and, as yet, have had no return for the money beyond the gratification of doing good to others. I am now out of a situation, and see no prospect but a gloomy one for the future. I have managed to save a few pounds, which I have received in a very straightforward manner from your manager, Thomas Price, Esq. ... I intend, along with my wife and boy, to proceed to South Australia, in about two weeks. You will, perhaps, say this is a poor alternative. I think so, too; for I had a deal rather live in my own country, if I could see all your benevolent designs carried out; but all my hopes have fled at present – what the future may bring forth, we do not know ... My interest in the Land Company I confidently leave in your hands.¹³⁰

These words again give a lucid insight into the destruction of hopes invested in the Plan. Hall's faith in O'Connor, however, seems to have been unshaken. Hall's evidently ambiguous feelings about emigration, on the other hand, summed up an increasingly paradoxical attitude that became all the more obvious after the discovery of gold in California and Australia.

Joseph Barker's *People* is particularly interesting from a colonial perspective because it moved from an initial preoccupation with sweeping domestic reform to an equally pronounced emphasis upon the virtues of emigration to the United States. Whilst Barker was somewhat ambivalent over the actual need to emigrate, his views upon Australia were consistently hostile:

¹²⁸ *Northern Star*, 22 January 1848, p. 4. Crews was not among the original list of Snig's End allottees balloted in May 1847, although a John Miller from Newton Abbot was successful. See *Northern Star*, 8 May 1847, p. 8. For the final list of allocations see 27 May 1848, p. 1.

¹²⁹ For examples see *Northern Star*, 20 May 1848, p. 4; 27 May 1848, p. 4; 10 June 1848, p. 4; 23 February 1850, p. 4.

¹³⁰ *Northern Star*, 4 August 1849, p. 5. Thomas Price managed the Land and Labour Bank set up in conjunction with the Land Plan.

there is no comparison between the United States and Australia. Australia ... is in the hands of a selfish, an ignorant, and a savage Government. It is in the hands of an order, who from the earliest ages, have cursed every country they have touched ... The price charged for government land in Australia is about eight times the price that is charged in America ... If Australia were placed under similar law and similar institutions to those of the United States, and if the distance to Australia from Europe were no greater than the United States from Europe, it would be as eligible place for intending emigrants, as any other country in the world ... But it is not ... No friends, if you emigrate at all, emigrate to the United States of America. Go to a land of comparative liberty ... Go to the land where you can be your own man; where you can choose your own place of residence; where you can choose your own kind of work; where you can have the company of your wife and children; and where you can have the advantage of a comfortable home, of a freehold estate.¹³¹

Barker was no O'Connorite. However, he was a forcible speaker and political journalist. And his prose, with its rich oral inflections, often resembled O'Connor's characteristic style. What is also striking about the passage just cited is the convergence between Barker's evocation of life upon an American homestead and the basic attractions of the Land Plan – independence, choice, domestic harmony, comfort, security and so on. The displacement of the domestic radical agrarian ideal onto foreign soil had clearly begun.

III

The tremendous hopes invested in O'Connorite home colonisation, and the anxieties about the unknown that emigration must have raised, are themes not often discussed by Chartist historians. Despite its diversity and richness, Chartism was a proletarian political culture, and sources encompassing the actual hopes and fears of individual activists who emigrated to Australia are very rare. Some of the material which has survived, moreover, is disappointingly silent on the crucial theme of motivation. H.R.

¹³¹ *People*, 1 (1848-9), p. 213. See also pp. 20, 65-6 and 121 for similar arguments.

Nicholls' diary of his voyage to Victoria onboard the *Norway* has lain in the archive unknown for many years. It is also probably the only extant narrative of its type written by an active Chartist.¹³² Yet Nicholls' diary seems almost apolitical, apart from an off-hand observation that most of the Germans emigrants onboard appeared to be republicans.¹³³ Andrew Hassam points out that although shipboard journals contained narratives uniquely caught 'between two worlds', they were often actually written after the journey was completed.¹³⁴ In Nicholls' case it is hard to tell when the text was composed, although its repetitive and prosaic character does suggest the pervasive influence of a long and tedious voyage interspersed by the odd adventure such as the capture of a shark.¹³⁵ In contrast to the clipped entries of his diary, Nicholls' rambling memoir of London Chartism contains a few pertinent remarks: 'fate or destiny', he reflected in old age, was 'driving me, like others, to that new land where gold had been discovered'.¹³⁶

As noted at the outset of this chapter, Nicholls was farewelled by his fellow Chartists in Chelsea. Although such social events were probably not uncommon movement culture functions, records of them are very rare. However, one detailed description of the farewell of another Chartist drawn by 'the laws of fate' to Australia has survived. In September 1853 Torquay Chartists gathered to say goodbye to a W. Tope, and an extended account of the occasion was fortuitously published in the *People's Paper*.¹³⁷ After briefly eulogising Tope's Chartist fervour, the chair called

¹³² Nicholls, MS. ship diary.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ A. Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: shipboard diaries by nineteenth-century British emigrants* (Manchester, 1994), p. 3.

¹³⁵ Nicholls, MS. ship diary.

¹³⁶ Nicholls, Typescript memoir of London Chartism, p. 20.

¹³⁷ *People's Paper*, 24 September 1853, p. 2. Tope was previously the secretary of the Torquay locality. See his brief February 1852 account of branch activities published in *Notes to the People*, 2 (1852), p. 822.

upon ‘Mr. Wood, to sing Ernest Jones’ song, “We are Low, We are Low”’.¹³⁸ Then a Mr. Brewer formally addressed the intending emigrant in the characteristically heroic language of Chartist public discourse:

FRIENDS! The purpose for which you are assembled together this evening, is, as you are all aware, to pay our last public tribute of respect and esteem to our friend ... we confidently hope while the vital principle of life animates his frame, he will continue to display that same unflinching determination to oppose everything which in the least savours of oppression; to battle with tyrant power, and so defend the rights of mankind ... we are cheered by the pleasing thought, that, at our antipodes may be found one who will have gone forth from our ranks equipped with every manly principle, whose aim it will be to right the wrongs of his fellow men, to crush the enslaving power of despotism, and to sow in the minds of his toiling brethren, the seeds of those glorious principles, which shall one day rise in all their immortal dignity, and ... sweep oppression from the earth, overthrow the thrones of despots, and suffuse this world with freedom, love and beauty.¹³⁹

After listening to these bracing sentiments Tope rose and assured his friends that ‘He had always resisted oppression ... and he hoped to continue to do so’. ‘He did not leave England like most people’, he pointedly remarked, ‘to seek a momentary gratification, but to recruit his lost health. The winters here were too much for him’.¹⁴⁰

As J.M. Powell has shown, Australia was being increasingly promoted as a kind of natural sanatorium, and Tope’s avowed motivation may well have been genuine.¹⁴¹ Perhaps because of his fragile constitution, Tope ‘shook hands with the company, and retired amidst the well-wishings of the meeting’.¹⁴² A Mr Blackler then rose, and entreated his remaining comrades ‘to rally around the locality, to maintain its efficiency’.¹⁴³ ‘Attend Sunday afternoon meetings which are being held for mutual

¹³⁸ For the lyrics of Jones’ ‘Song of the Low’ see *Notes to the People*, 2 (1852), p. 953; Maidment, *The poorhouse fugitives*, pp. 44-6.

¹³⁹ *People’s Paper*, 24 September 1853, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ J.M. Powell, *Mirrors of the new world: images and image-makers in the settlement process* (Canberra, 1978), pp. 129-32.

¹⁴² *People’s Paper*, 24 September 1853, p. 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

instruction!’.¹⁴⁴ The rest of the evening was then enlivened by some ‘sterling’ recitations and song. If nothing else, this account gives an idea of the sect-like fervour of late-Chartist activity at the periphery of the movement. Ernest Jones’ ascendancy is also clearly evident. We can see a kind of logic, too, in the formal structure of the attempt to bring the rites of departure into the familiar imagery of Chartist political culture. Note how the spoken presentations moved from the themes of ‘principle’ and loss to a light-hearted *finalé*. Blackler’s didactic exhortation, moreover, was seemingly pronounced with maximum dramatic effect just as Tope left his friends. The detail evident in the published description also suggests that the speeches were first written down before being read to the gathering. As the event had previously been advertised in the *People’s Paper*, no doubt the authors understood that their gallant words espoused at the periphery would be read and commented upon in other remaining localities.¹⁴⁵ The empowering facility of the printed word, it would seem, remained a constant feature of Chartist political culture.

Before establishing the *People’s Paper* in May 1852, Ernest Jones mounted a concerted attack upon emigration in his magazine *Notes to the People*. In a long series of articles entitled ‘Our Colonies’, Jones argued that ‘certain ruin’ stalked the ‘emigrant working man’.¹⁴⁶ He also re-mobilised the death-wish motif:

the *poor* thief ... is forced to work in the CHAINGANGS, and submitted to every horror that civilised cruelty can invent. ‘So intolerable does this sort of life become to the convicts *that they have been frequently known to murder their contiguous convicts, from no other motive than that of ending their sufferings on the scaffold!*’¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Notes to the People*, 1 (1851), pp. 230-234, 250-252.

¹⁴⁷ *Notes to the People*, 1 (1851), p. 232. Emphases in original. For his information upon venomous snakes, wild dogs, other ‘noxious life’ and ‘villainous blackies’, Jones drew heavily upon James Ward’s, *Perils, pastimes, and pleasures of an emigrant in Australia, Vancouver’s Island and California* (London, 1849).

Jones then digressed into the grisly confessions of a Vandemonian cannibal convict and his ‘horrible repast’.¹⁴⁸ Typically, this rendering of Australia failed to distinguish between free and penal colonies; in any case, Jones’ efforts to stifle emigration were increasingly doomed. As J.M. Powell puts it, “Elysium”, “Eldorado” and “Arcadia” combined in a ‘powerful triumvirate’ that inevitably negated some radical dissent over emigration.¹⁴⁹ From 1851 a torrent of sensation issued from the rich alluvial fields of Victoria, and radicals were hardly immune to the excitement. Before departure, William Dexter is said to have astonished navvies constructing a railway near his Holloway residence by occasionally borrowing their tools, and working ‘earnestly with them for an hour or two’ in order to ‘acquire a practical knowledge’ of digging.¹⁵⁰ Others turned to less onerous forms of instruction, and emigration manuals were hastily written or modified to accommodate a new and voracious audience.¹⁵¹

This transformation, it must be stressed, occurred quite rapidly. As we have seen, influential Chartists such as Reynolds, Jones and Barker continued to wage a rhetorical war against Australian emigration. Unlike the 100 or so Chartists transported to Australia, we will never know how many committed activists actually left for the United States and Australia. One of the reasons that a cultural (rather than biographical) approach has been adopted in this argument is because the typically patchy sources of Chartist biography break down even further when colonial emigration is added to the equation. Individual motivation, in most cases, is simply

¹⁴⁸ *Notes to the People*, 1 (1851), pp. 232-4.

¹⁴⁹ Powell, *Mirrors of the new world*, p. 132.

¹⁵⁰ Haslem, *The old Derby china factory*, p. 141.

¹⁵¹ For typical examples see Anon., *Cassell's emigrant handbook ... to which is added, a guide to the gold fields of Australia ...* (London, 1852); Anon., *Murray's guide to the gold diggings* (London, 1852); R.S. Anderson, *Australian gold fields: their discovery, progress and prospects* (Glasgow, 1853). See also R.A. Stafford, ‘Preventing the “Curse of California”’: advice for English emigrants to the Australian goldfields’, *Historical Records of Australian Science*, 7 (1988), pp. 215-30.

beyond the historian's grasp. Why, for instance, did William Dexter – whose art had just begun to receive recognition from the Royal Academy, no less – suddenly leave for Victoria in 1853? At least we know something of Dexter's subsequent life and political activity – which is more than can be said for other emigrant Chartists such as McDouall, the Cheltenham leader J.P. Glenister, or the London activist J.J. Bezer.¹⁵²

We should not underestimate the devastation of Chartist hopes in the late 1840s, whether they were those invested in renewed constitutionalist protest, the revolutions of 1848, or the Land Plan. After more than a decade of almost continual political failure, emigration began to beckon. Of course, the flight to the antipodes did not go unchallenged. When Bezer left for Australia in 1852, Gerald Massey penned a bitter epigraph:

Another gone back, when our battle went sorest!
 Another soul sunk, like a star from the night
 Another hope quencht, when our progress was poorest
 Another barque wreckt, with the haven in sight.¹⁵³

Although he left a vivid and touching autobiography of his youth, Bezer's fate is unknown.¹⁵⁴ As will be shown in the rest of this thesis, however, the biographical silences in existing source material should not be seen as a bar to the study of Chartist political culture in Australia.

¹⁵² For Dexter generally see Morgan, *Folie à deux*.

¹⁵³ G. Massey, 'The Deserter from Democracy (alias, that blasted Bezer!)' in F.G. Black and R.M. Black, eds., *The Harney papers* (Assen, 1969), pp. 45-6.

¹⁵⁴ J.J. Bezer, 'Autobiography of one of the Chartist rebels of 1848' in D. Vincent, ed., *Testaments of radicalism: memoirs of working class politicians, 1790-1885* (London, 1977), pp. 147-87. See also A. Louvre, 'Reading Bezer: pun, parody and radical intervention in 19th century working class autobiography', *Literature and History*, 14 (1988), pp. 23-36.

Chapter Seven

Imagining Chartism From Afar: Edward Hawksley and the *People's Advocate*

Edward Hawksley, who edited and published the radical *People's Advocate* in Sydney from late 1848 to 1856, has been recently and belatedly acknowledged as a significant figure in the earlier history of Australian democracy.¹ Unlike contemporaries such as Henry Parkes or John Dunmore Lang, Hawksley has always stood at the periphery of colonial political historiography.² Whereas Parkes and Lang have been the subject of major biographies, Marion Diamond points out that Hawksley was not even included in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.³ This neglect is rather surprising, particularly given Hawksley's unprecedented and forcibly espoused vision of an agrarian-democratic society based upon Chartist cultural principles. Despite Diamond's recent recognition of Hawksley's significance, however, his radical politics propounded in the *People's Advocate* continue to be treated in a simplistic fashion.

Consider the two pertinent essays that have been published to date. Both J.M. O'Brien's and Diamond's (admittedly quite brief) analyses limit their discussion of Chartism to the basic programme of Parliamentary reform. O'Brien, whose primary concern was the supposed tension between Hawksley's adopted Catholicism and his radicalism, noted that his 'attraction to Chartist principles' was spelt out in two long

¹ An earlier version of this chapter appeared as A. Messner, 'Contesting Chartism from afar: Edward Hawksley and the *People's Advocate*', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, 1 (1999), pp. 62-94.

² For the period generally see M. Roe, *Quest for authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851* (Parkville, 1965); Hirst, *The strange birth of colonial democracy*.

³ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley'. For Parkes see Martin, *Henry Parkes*; R. Travers, *The grand old man of Australian politics: the life and times of Henry Parkes* (Kenthurst, 1992). For Lang see A.C. Child, 'Studies in the life and work of John Dunmore Lang', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 22 (1936), pp. 69-91, 208-28, 298-311; D.W.A. Baker, *Days of wrath: a life of John Dunmore Lang* (Carlton, 1985).

series of 'Letters to the Working Classes' published in the *Advocate* in 1849-50 and 1854-5.⁴ Diamond, who supplies valuable biographical detail about Hawksley's later career, also stresses that 'Hawksley's main concerns' 'were in line with the six principles of the People's Charter':

He advocated the Chartist demands of manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, and representation by population, and added the specific radical issues of colonial New South Wales: the need for popular control of the process of constitutional change, antagonism towards the squatters, and concern about the possibility of renewed convict transportation.⁵

Neither O'Brien nor Diamond makes any reference to recent Chartist scholarship. We are told little of the political culture Hawksley inherited, remembered, imagined and contested from afar. In fact, for the faithful, Chartism amounted to a way of life that went far beyond the famous programme for Parliamentary reform. To do justice to this 'influence' in colonial Australia, we need to discard positivist approaches that summarise Chartism by simply reiterating the six familiar slogans of radical reform.

The impact of Stedman Jones' re-appraisal of Chartism (and its much broader influence upon the study of nineteenth century popular politics) does not seem to have excited much interest amongst historians of colonial Australia. As I pointed out in the introduction, the one notable exception to this generalisation is David Goodman's cultural history of responses to gold in Victoria and California.⁶ To repeat, Goodman reminds us that Victorian emigrants understood the upheaval wrought by the discovery of gold in the moral, political and aesthetic languages that they had inherited from Britain. He also argues that colonial historians need to explore this cultural legacy in a more searching fashion than has become the norm. This point seems particularly relevant to the rather programmatic treatment of Chartism so

⁴ O'Brien, 'Edward John Hawksley', p. 41.

⁵ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 50.

⁶ Goodman, *Goldseeking*, especially ch. 4.

common in Australian historiography. This chapter places Hawksley and his paper in an international cultural context. For if Hawksley did represent a truly significant radical-democratic voice within colonial politics in New South Wales, and if his rhetoric was ultimately informed by Chartist antecedents, then surely there is a need to look rather more closely at this parent culture. But what ultimately intrigues about Hawksley is the realisation that his democratic vision was informed not just by experience and memory, but also by the constant stream of imported newsprint he depended upon as a Sydney journalist. The Chartism propounded and defended from afar in the *People's Advocate* was ultimately a print-bound entity.

II

The virtual cessation of convict transportation to New South Wales in 1840 had significant economic, political and cultural ramifications. The first mass-demonstration in the colony – the procession mobilised by the Catholic community to mark the laying of the foundation stone of St Patrick's chapel on Church Hill – took place in Sydney that very year.⁷ In 1842 the first municipal elections were also held, and the following year the Governor was made accountable to local public opinion insofar as a partly elected (but predominantly nominated) Legislative Council was instituted. Another striking feature of the evolution of colonial political culture during the 1840s is the growth of a newspaper industry in Sydney and other regional centres

⁷ This demonstration has not been given much notice by historians, but see P. Farrell, *The Catholic church and community in New South Wales: a history* (Melbourne, 1977), pp. 53-4; P. Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (Kensington, 1987), pp. 41-4; Ullathorne, *From cabin-boy to Archbishop*, pp. 159-61. For contemporary accounts see *Sydney Monitor*, 26 August 1840, p. 2; *Colonist*, 27 August 1840, p. 3.

of New South Wales.⁸ In this evolving sphere of printed public contestation, Edward Hawksley provided the first consistent radical-democratic viewpoint.⁹

Born in the Nottingham area about 1807, Hawksley was brought to the colony in 1838 by William Ullathorne, the Benedictine priest whose evidence was crucial to the Molesworth Committee's recommendations.¹⁰ Although Hawksley was originally recruited as a teacher, he became involved in a religious controversy soon after arriving in New South Wales.¹¹ As Diamond notes, however, 'Even within Australia's Catholic community Hawksley was on the margins ... He had little in common with Irish Catholicism, either its Jansenist theology, or its nationalist fervour'.¹² Originally a Unitarian, Hawksley may have converted to Catholicism whilst serving as a volunteer in the Spanish civil war during the mid 1830s.¹³ After teaching at schools in Sydney and Maitland, in 1846 Hawksley became the editor of the *Sydney Chronicle*, a Catholic paper which survived a number of ownership and name changes.¹⁴ Following the *Chronicle's* eventual collapse in 1848, Hawksley started the *People's Advocate* with Edward Cunninghame. Although Cunninghame appears to have left the partnership by the winter of 1853 (he was replaced by William Williamson) Hawksley continued to present a vigorous democratic viewpoint as New South Wales moved towards the implementation of responsible government (and thus substantial home

⁸ Walker, *The newspaper press in New South Wales*. See also G. Souter, *Company of heralds: a century and a half of Australian publishing by John Fairfax Limited and its predecessors* (Carlton, 1981).

⁹ It should be noted that a few earlier attempts had been made to capture a working class and 'radical' (but not necessarily democratic) readership in New South Wales. For brief outlines of these short-lived papers see J. Normington-Rawling, 'Before Eureka', *Labor History*, 4 (1963), pp. 11-18; Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia*, pp. 92-5.

¹⁰ O'Brien, 'Edward John Hawksley', p. 32.

¹¹ See E. Hawksley, *The worship of the Catholic Church not idolatrous; reply to the Reverend William McIntyre's enquiry into the doctrine maintained by Bishop Polding* (Sydney, 1838).

¹² Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 52.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-6.

rule) in 1856.¹⁵ Hawksley's career as a journalist, however, seems to have ended with the *Advocate's* demise in that year. Nevertheless, Hawksley remained active in Sydney municipal politics (and this was a well-worn Chartist path in Britain) before finally emigrating to Fiji in 1874.¹⁶

The rupture of time between Europe and Australian that Coral Lansbury alludes to is nicely illustrated in the first numbers of the *People's Advocate*. By late 1848 revolutionary enthusiasm in Europe had come under a quite intense conservative assault. In Britain, as we have seen, Chartism had been disastrously tainted with a number of derogatory associations following the Confederate alliance, instances of violent rioting, and the farcical local risings of August. In Sydney as late as December 1848, however, Hawksley seems still to have been caught in the excitement of the first half of the year. His introductory article, addressed to 'EVERY BODY', had a millenarian tone which would not have been out of place in that better-known publication, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

We believe then that the time is at hand when the social condition of the great mass of mankind must undergo a complete amelioration. Old systems are breaking up; on every side of us we perceive the up-heavings of the 'new birth' of a fresh and more healthy state of civilization; the rights of labour are beginning to be recognized; the claims of industry are already acknowledged. The Democratic principle is making rapid strides; the strongholds of despotism have been assailed by armed bands; and the eagles of Imperial Autocrats have fled, dismayed by its triumphant shouts. It is true, the struggles of the masses are not yet over ... but no man can regard the events that are now transpiring in almost every country in Europe without being fully satisfied that the days of oppression are numbered, that the progress of mankind cannot be retarded, or that the hitherto down-trodden classes of our fellow-labourers can be longer withheld from that fair share of political power, to which their intelligence, their worth, their perseverance, and their continuous industry entitle them.¹⁷

¹⁵ *People's Advocate*, 13 August 1853, p. 16. By the time the paper ended in June 1856 it was printed and published solely by Hawksley. The classic interpretation of responsible government is P. Loveday and A.W. Martin, *Parliament, factions and parties: the first thirty years of responsible government in New South Wales, 1856-1889* (Carlton, 1966).

¹⁶ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', pp. 51-2.

¹⁷ *People's Advocate*, 2 December 1848, p. 1; K. Marx and F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Moscow, 1957 rep.).

Despite the internationalist vision expressed here, Hawksley invariably justified his arguments for universal suffrage by appealing to the 'first principles' of the constitution. The prospectus of the *Advocate*, which also appeared in the first number dated 2 December 1848, gives a clear vision of the interests it was established to serve. "'The People's Advocate'" will be essentially a Working Man's paper. It will be conducted solely by *Working Men* – men who are proud to be ranked among the sons of toil ... They are *of the People*, and, therefore, they will labour without ceasing for the people'.¹⁸

Some time ago Terry Irving argued that colonial radicals such as Hawksley 'developed a language of class which postulated the identity of interest of all engaged in urban production. The radical slogan was "the unity of the working and middle classes"'.¹⁹ Whilst the sentiments just cited might seem at odds with Irving's generalisation, his 1967 doctoral thesis remains one of the more compelling interpretations of radical and liberal colonial politics during the 1840s and 1850s.²⁰ One of the defining features of the contemporary linguistic turn, of course, has also been a close concern with rhetorical entities such as the 'working' and 'middle' classes, and also the way historians have used these collective subjects as interpretative tools.²¹ Dorothy Thompson is usually seen as the proponent of a more traditional class-oriented approach to Chartism, but she too has recently explored the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12. Italics in original.

¹⁹ T.H. Irving, 'Some aspects of the study of radical politics in New South Wales before 1856', *Labour History*, 5 (1963), pp. 18-25.

²⁰ T.H. Irving, 'The development of Liberal politics in N.S.W., 1843-1855', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Sydney, 1967).

²¹ Joyce, *Visions of the people*; Vernon, *Politics and the people*. See also D. Wahrman, *Imagining the middle class: the political representation of class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995).

way in which a highly malleable collective term such as 'the People' was contested in 1842, particularly the way in which the phrase took on exclusionary meanings.²²

Whilst a number of late-Chartist journals were presented as the true voice of 'the People', Hawksley's obvious model for a successful radical-democratic paper was the *Northern Star*, which had quickly become the voice of radicalism following its establishment by O'Connor in late 1837. At a social celebration held in the aggressively Chartist community of Ashton-under-Lyne in 1846 to celebrate the anniversary of Tom Paine's birth, one of a long list of toasts given was 'The Northern Star, the people's advocate'.²³ In New South Wales a couple of years later the *Sydney Morning Herald* gave notice of the newly established *People's Advocate* by commenting: 'as may be supposed from its title, it is extremely democratic in its principles ... but its great want is "a grievance"'.²⁴ Thus spurred, the indomitable Hawksley immediately replied with a forthright leader upon the 'grievances' affecting 'the people, that is to say, "the working men of the colony"'.²⁵ These included unjust indirect taxes, low wages, a lack of political representation, administrative nepotism and the 'Squatter question'. The 'only reason these grievances are not better known', Hawksley concluded, 'is because the People have hitherto had no organ through which to express their wants ... they have in fact been for years without an advocate'.²⁶

Another 'grievance' Hawksley re-directed back at the *Herald* was the latter's denigration of universal suffrage, the first demand of the *People's Charter*.²⁷

²² Thompson, 'Who were "the People" in 1842?'. See also Prothero, 'William Benbow and the concept of a general strike', p. 142; Yeo, 'Christianity in Chartist struggle', pp. 112-13.

²³ *Northern Star*, 7 February 1846, p. 8.

²⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1849, p. 3 (n.p.).

²⁵ *People's Advocate*, 6 January 1849, p. 1

²⁶ *Ibid.* See also *People's Advocate*, 13 January 1849, p. 1.

²⁷ See, for example, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

“Chartism” has been painted in such dark colours, and with such hideous features’, he wrote, ‘that we fear some of our readers may be almost startled by the mention of the word’. ‘The fact is’, Hawksley continued, ‘that “Chartism” has been greatly misrepresented; almost the entire Press of England has united to crush it’.²⁸ Although Hawksley was clearly keen to keep the *Advocate* as a secular organ, the associations of Chartism in 1848 with derogatory Irish stereotypes (and the vilification of the Land Plan) could hardly have escaped his attentions in Sydney. Hawksley certainly tried to portray the London ‘Orange Tree’ conspiracy of August 1848 (which also had Confederate connections) as distinct from true Chartism: ‘The men who have latterly attempted to raise the standard of revolution in London were not real “Chartists”’, he claimed; ‘they were principally men who had but little idea of politics in general, and who made “Chartism” a pretext for the commission of outrage in order that they might profit from plunder’.²⁹

Hawksley replied to the stream of derision emanating from England, and that regurgitated in the local press, in two ways. As Diamond stresses in her concluding remarks, he was constantly engaged in a rhetorical battle over the respectability of ‘the working classes’, and hence his calls for self-help and education.³⁰ Apart from criticism directed at Earl Grey’s moves to resume transportation to New South Wales in 1849, Hawksley rarely mentioned convictism in his rhetoric, preferring to remind his readers not of the past but of the unblemished future which lay before them. Secondly, he stressed the historical or constitutional origins of the Chartist democratic programme. ‘The six points of the Charter ... assert no organic change in the British

²⁸ *People's Advocate*, 3 February 1849, p. 1.

²⁹ *People's Advocate*, 17 February 1849, p. 1.

³⁰ Diamond, ‘Edward Hawksley’, p. 52.

Constitution itself, on the contrary, their adoption would be merely a carrying out to their full extent the primary principles of that Constitution', he argued in February 1849.³¹ 'With respect to "Annual Parliaments"', he added a couple of weeks later,

there can be no question that this would be a vast improvement on the present system; besides which, it would only be a reversion to the first principles of the constitution, and it ought therefore to meet with the approval of all admirers of that constitution ... In the early days of the constitution, it was customary for the King to summon a new parliament every time they met ... That was the old law of the land. The septennial sittings of parliament is a mere modern invention, and the Chartists, in seeking for 'Annual Parliaments,' are reverting only to that old and better state of things under which England became a great and powerful nation, while her people were well-fed, well-clothed and happy.³²

Marion Diamond remarks that Hawksley's anti-monarchism had Paineite origins.³³

But here again we see the way in which the constitutional heritage could be utilised by radicals who also espoused the existence of natural political rights.

In accordance with another Chartist constitutional precept, Hawksley equated the right to vote with the burden of taxation: 'it is a fundamental principle of the Constitution that ... every man is taxed with his own consent; that in accordance with this principle taxation and representation are co-equal'.³⁴ On the other hand, Hawksley was rather ambivalent about the merits of arguments in support of the ballot:

With respect to the second point, that of voting by ballot, we confess for ourselves we do not admire it ... we admire open voting, we like to have the opportunity of giving our vote in a manly and fearless manner; and so far as we agree with the opponents of the ballot, that the practice is 'un-English;' but as a matter of expediency we admire the ballot, and believe it to be essential to the preservation of liberties of England. The system of coercion, intimidation, and bribery has arrived at such a height that it is absolutely necessary that the ballot should be enforced in order to put a stop to this wholesale corruption.³⁵

Many Chartists would have concurred with this slightly tortured argument, for Chartism was a heady blend of enlightenment rationality and patriotic romanticism.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42 and *People's Advocate*, 3 February 1849, p. 1.

³² *People's Advocate*, 17 February 1849, p. 1.

³³ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 52.

³⁴ *People's Advocate*, 3 February 1849, p. 1

³⁵ *Ibid.* See also 27 October 1849, p. 1.

Until Australian historians begin to go beyond the old mantra of the 'six points', however, such nuances of a shared political inheritance will continue to go unheeded.

Despite Hawksley's trenchant defence of the unrepresented producers of wealth, his vision of 'the People' had distinct limitations. For example, his rhetoric almost seems expressly designed for a masculine audience. Hawksley certainly rarely mentioned women, let alone explicitly considered them as political agents. Although his adopted Catholic faith demanded a commitment to the Irish in New South Wales, the racist abuse he directed at Indian and Chinese 'coolie' labourers shows that his understanding of 'the People' had obvious racial boundaries. In his reply to the *Herald's* evaluation of the *Advocate*, for instance, Hawksley attributed low wages in New South Wales to the importation of 'hordes of half civilized coolies, and Chinamen, as well as numbers of downright savage cannibals'.³⁶ A few months later he published a letter from a correspondent called 'TRUTH' condemning the 'Wholesale robbery of crown lands' by un-named members of the Legislative Council, and the disaster which would befall a colony inundated by Chinese labourers:

They live on rice, beef, mutton, rats, dogs, cats, mice, snakes, maggots &c ... they are to a man thieves, robbers, cut-throats, pirates &c ... they have not one redeeming quality ... they are men devoted to all manner of nameless bestialities and abominations, of which they make no secret ... We have to deal with men possessing the hearts of tigers who seek only to acquire immense wealth by reducing the shepherd and working man to beggars.³⁷

Hawksley could only agree:

It is true, that we are told these men are only intended for the interior, to go into the bush as hut-keepers, cooks, shepherds, and such like: but even so, let us suppose some five or six hundred of these fellows in the interior ... Let us imagine them there, erecting their heathenish temples, practicing their devilish rites, and giving full and unrestrained way to their own evil passions, what a perfect pandemonium must such a place become!³⁸

³⁶ *People's Advocate*, 6 January 1849, p. 1.

³⁷ *People's Advocate*, 3 March 1849, p. 7.

³⁸ *People's Advocate*, 10 March 1849, p. 1.

At least one of Hawksley's anonymous subscribers – a 'CONSTANT READER' – felt bound by a 'sense of duty' to censor his 'strong language and harsh epithets', pointing out that not only were the Chinese admirably suited to labour on behalf of the white man, but that the inexorable logic of free trade demanded that no discrimination be made against 'the free disposal of any set of men at the best market for themselves'.³⁹ Hawksley was unrepentant, however, and accused his correspondent of being the 'organ' of 'those men who take the lead in this Chinese immigration scheme'.⁴⁰

Existing research passes over this rather unpleasant aspect of Hawksley's outlook. O'Brien and Diamond deal primarily with his advocacy of democratic constitutional reform, his opposition to the resumption of transportation, and the role of the newly formed Constitutional Association in mobilising public opinion over these issues. Both writers note that the Association's primary object of 'an immediate extension of the elective franchise' did not necessarily equate with Hawksley's espousal of the Chartist demand for universal male suffrage.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Hawksley and the *Advocate* were closely linked with the Association from its inception. Council meetings were often held at the *Advocate* office in King Street in early 1849, and Hawksley was elected Honorary Secretary in March.⁴² And whilst the initial objective of the Constitutional Association, the 'extension of the Elective Franchise' may have not have amounted even to household suffrage, a number of prominent members apart from Hawksley and Henry Parkes do appear to have been committed to the goal of universal suffrage.⁴³

³⁹ *People's Advocate*, 17 March 1849, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴¹ O'Brien, 'Edward John Hawksley', p. 38; Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 49.

⁴² *People's Advocate*, 24 March 1849, p. 3.

⁴³ *People's Advocate*, 2 December 1848, p. 6.

Consider the sentiments expressed from the platform at the first major event sponsored by the Association, the public meeting held at the City Theatre, Market Street on 22 January 1849. Its purpose was to initiate a petition to the Crown and the British Parliament for the existing franchise to be extended to fifty pound freeholders and ten pound leaseholders in Sydney, and half these qualifications elsewhere in the colony.⁴⁴ The City Theatre meeting, one of the first movements for the implementation of a wider suffrage in New South Wales, was organised by Hawksley, Parkes and other members of the Association committee specially charged with procuring 'speakers of talent and influence for the occasion'.⁴⁵ Although Edward Flood, then Mayor of Sydney, agreed to take the chair, three prominent colonial politicians (James Macarthur, William Bland and James Martin⁴⁶) refused to attend, citing various objections to the aims of the meeting.⁴⁷ Robert Lowe, recently elected a member for Sydney in the Legislative Council, also avowed from the platform that he was not in favour of universal suffrage. Yet a number of other speakers explicitly supported this measure.⁴⁸ As always, Lowe represented the voice of *realpolitik* wisdom: 'It would have been all very well to have had such a resolution [universal suffrage] if they were going to the friends of the Charter' he told the crowd, 'but they were not going to the Chartist Executive, but to the British Government'.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Accounts of City Theatre meetings can be found in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁵ *People's Advocate*, 13 January 1849, p. 3.

⁴⁶ For Macarthur see J.M. Ward, *James Macarthur, colonial conservative, 1798-1867* (Sydney, 1981). For Martin, then a member of Council for Cook and Westmoreland, see E. Grainger, *Martin of Martin Place: a biography of Sir James Martin, 1820-1886* (Sydney, 1970). For Bland see N.J. Dunlop, 'Dr William Bland', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 11 (1926), pp. 321-51.

⁴⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸ For Lowe see S.E. Napier, 'Robert Lowe and his associations with Australia', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 18 (1932), pp. 1-32; K. Knight, *Illiberal liberal: Robert Lowe in New South Wales, 1842-1850* (Melbourne, 1966).

⁴⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, p.

Henry Parkes, on the other hand, argued that even if it was not 'intended to ask for the full measure of liberty just now ... that was no reason why they should not assert the broad principle of universal suffrage'.⁵⁰ G.R. ('Radical Bob') Nicholls, another member of the Legislative Council, agreed – as did the Irish Catholic radical J.R. Brennan and Richard Hipkiss, an Association member who had formerly been active in the Birmingham Political Union.⁵¹ Hipkiss warned the assembly that they 'had been unjustly charged with incipient chartism; but he would remind the meeting that physical force was not the means they wished to employ, they wished to carry their objects peacefully and morally'.⁵² The attempt at appeasement was soon undercut, however, by John McPhail's aggressive defence of the 'the great unwashed'. McPhail avowed himself to be of the working classes and decried the proposed property qualifications, for he 'believed that every man had an imprescriptable right to liberty, and to the resistance of oppression, which right he could not exercise so long as he was taxed without being represented'.⁵³ Unlike Hawksley, however, McPhail argued that the 'British constitution was a thing of expediency altogether, manufactured out of conquest and tyranny'.⁵⁴ According to *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, McPhail 'indulged in a severe philippic against the British Constitution, which he termed a "manufactured article," presuming it existed; for Mr. McPhail expressed very strong doubts upon the point'.⁵⁵ Although

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⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, p. 5. For Hipkiss see A.G.L. Shaw and C.M.H. Clark, section eds., *Australian dictionary of biography*, 1 (Carlton, 1966), pp. 541-2.

⁵² *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, p. 5.

⁵³ *Ibid.* At preparatory meetings of the Constitutional Association, McPhail had also advocated the introduction of the secret ballot, a measure not taken up at the City Theatre meeting. See *People's Advocate*, 13 January 1849, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.) McPhail stated that the British constitution, 'if such a thing existed, was a mere manufactured article'.

⁵⁵ *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 27 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

this Constitutional Association member's background is very obscure, his belligerent rhetoric was plainly informed by Paineite elements of radical-Chartist inheritance.

The City Theatre meeting ended with groans for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which had earlier criticised the Association's objects as akin 'to the ravings of a bedlamite allowed pen and paper in his cell to prevent him banging his head to pieces'.⁵⁶ The differences between Lowe and other speakers upon the issue of universal suffrage was also soon seized upon, the *Herald* also being of the opinion that 'there is no chance of Universal Suffrage finding its way to the shores of Australia'.⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, a few days earlier the paper (and a correspondent) had also taken democratic speakers to task for their 'arrogant usurpation' of the term 'the people': 'Even the phrase "working *people*," or "*working* classes," cannot be honestly claimed by any part of our society, in contradistinction to other parts', argued the *Herald*. 'We are *all* working people'.⁵⁸ This editorial counter-claim (made on the sixty-first anniversary of the founding of European colonisation) struck at the heart of the symbolic stand Hawksley had made in naming his paper and devoting it to 'WORKING MEN'. Again, he was forced to defend the anomaly between the manly democratic culture he hoped to represent in the *Advocate*, and the essentially conservative instincts of shrewd political opportunists such as Lowe. 'We are unable to discover the inconsistency, the want of logical connexion, between that resolution [Lowe's] and the more definite ones which follow', replied Hawksley.⁵⁹ 'In seeking

⁵⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 December 1848, p. 2 (n.p.).

⁵⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

⁵⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 1849, p. 3 (n.p.); 26 January 1849, p. 2 (n.p.). Italics in original.

⁵⁹ *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, p. 6.

part-payment from an unwilling debtor is it inconsistent or illogical to inform him that we know the whole amount due to us?'⁶⁰

III

Despite Hawksley's consistent and combative defence of Chartist political culture, little is known about his background in England. Another neglected member of the Association's Provisional Council appears to have been Patrick Grant, who had held the position of Police Magistrate in the Hunter Valley region during Hawksley's residence in the district in the early 1840s.⁶¹ Previously a proprietor of the *Sun*, the *True Sun* and the *Weekly True Sun* – the latter ranking amongst the most influential radical papers in England – Grant had owned the *Sydney Gazette* for a time in the early 1840s, before being elected to the Legislative Council in 1845.⁶² In mid-1849 he also appears to have been planning a new daily paper called the *Sydney Morning Telegraph*.⁶³ Although he had lost control of the *True Sun* in 1835, Grant had become something of a radical *cause célèbre* in 1833-4, when he and John Bell, the paper's publisher, were criminally prosecuted for libels (one case being initiated by the state for 'bringing the House of Commons into contempt') and imprisoned for nine months.⁶⁴ During this time Feargus O'Connor led their public defence, and may also have helped edit the *True Sun* whilst Grant and Bell were in prison.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *People's Advocate*, 13 January 1849, p. 3.

⁶² A. Atkinson, 'Grant of Redcastle, an Australian radical', unpublished paper.

⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1849, p. 3 (n.p.); *Portland Gazette*, 13 July 1849, p. 4 (n.p.).

⁶⁴ For a rather dated account see C.H. Vivian, 'Radical journalism in the 1830's: the *True Sun* and the *Weekly True Sun*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 15 (1954), pp. 222-32.

⁶⁵ Epstein, *The lion of freedom*, pp. 18-19.

This slim link between Hawksley and the first rank of the radical leadership is intriguing, if only because his radical credentials in England are so vague. It is clear that he and his family left during March 1838, or just before the first 'Chartist' mass-mobilisation.⁶⁶ In his opening article in the *Advocate*, Hawksley alludes to a career in the English radical press, although he does not mention which paper(s) he had written for.⁶⁷ Diamond remarks that his family had strong radical connections in Nottingham stretching back into the eighteenth century, and the significance of these links should not be underestimated.⁶⁸ Paul Pickering's recent study of Chartism in Manchester and Salford stresses the importance of kinship in local activism, and as we have seen Nottingham also boasted a rich radical tradition.⁶⁹ During 1849 Hawksley had contact with the prominent local Chartist, James Sweet, who had long helped co-ordinate Nottingham Chartist from the newsagency and barber shop he ran with his wife.⁷⁰ Hawksley wrote to warn of misleading depictions of Australia in the English press, which Sweet ensured were duly published in the *Northern Star*.⁷¹

In fact, Hawksley waged a continuous rhetorical battle against large-scale emigration to New South Wales. Unlike John Dunmore Lang (who was then moving towards republicanism⁷²) Hawksley actively sought to parry 'unlimited and unrestricted' emigration to Australia.⁷³ His targets included his co-religionist Caroline Chisholm, whose philanthropic emigration schemes were later lauded by Charles

⁶⁶ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 42.

⁶⁷ *People's Advocate*, 2 December 1848, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 41.

⁶⁹ Pickering, *Chartism and the Chartists in Manchester and Salford*, ch 2; Epstein, 'Some organisational and cultural aspects of the Chartist movement in Nottingham'.

⁷⁰ Pickering, 'Chartism and the "Trade of Agitation"'.
⁷¹ *Northern Star*, 5 January 1850, p. 3.

⁷² See R.J. McDonald, 'Republicanism in the fifties – the case of John Dunmore Lang', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 50 (1964), pp. 262-76.

⁷³ For typical arguments see *People's Advocate*, 17 February 1849, pp. 5-6; 24 February 1849, p. 6.

Dickens: 'like most other enthusiasts, whether in politics, religion, science or benevolence, she knows not where to stop', Hawksley lamented in April 1850.⁷⁴ Just before the anti-transportation demonstrations held in Sydney in June 1849, Hawksley advocated a possible solution:

If a public meeting was held, and an address to the Operatives of the United Kingdom was adopted, setting forth a true statement of facts, as it regards the rate of wages, the price of rent, of clothing, of provisions, with the number of various trades now out of employment, and the dearth of employment which exists in nearly all the towns of the colony – in short, if a standing committee was appointed to collect information, and from time to time transmit the same to England ... the work would be done.⁷⁵

In the early 1840s William Hick had conducted a similar survey in Leeds into 'THE EFFECTS OF CLASS LEGISLATION, AS SEEN IN THE STREETS AND HOUSES OF THE WORKING CLASSES'.⁷⁶ Two months after Hawksley's idea was published in the *Advocate*, a meeting of operatives was chaired by John McPhail at the Shipman's Hotel in Sydney. Hawksley attended and roundly criticised Lang, Chisholm and other proponents of what McPhail termed a 'regular system of kidnapping'.⁷⁷ This remark, of course, was also entirely consistent with late-Chartist attitudes to emigration. McPhail himself advocated the appointment of an 'eligible and efficient' person to perambulate England in Lang's wake, in order to rebut the Presbyterian cleric's propaganda.⁷⁸ Although any number of Chartist lecturers could have fulfilled this role, no further meetings or action appear to have taken place.

In his condemnations of emigration Hawksley stressed the illusions of distance, particularly the ramifications for colonial policy making:

⁷⁴ Baker, *Days of wrath*, pp. 290-2. For Chisholm see *People's Advocate*, 6 April 1850, p. 8.

⁷⁵ *People's Advocate*, 2 June 1849, p. 1.

⁷⁶ *Northern Star*, 6 February 1841, p. 7; 13 February 1841, p. 5.

⁷⁷ *People's Advocate*, 11 August 1849, p. 4. See *ibid.* pp. 6-7 for further criticism of Lang's juvenile emigration schemes.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

In England, large numbers of people ... believe that Sydney, Hobart Town, Port Phillip and Swan River, are all close neighbours; some, in fact, so far to think that they are one and the same place. We can hardly be surprised of this when we recollect that some years ago it was gravely proposed in the House of Commons, by one of the King's Ministers, that a bridge should be built from Sydney to Hobart Town.⁷⁹

Echoes of the transformation that Alan Beever outlines can also be seen in Hawksley's complaints of the idealised depictions of Australia appearing in *Lloyds Weekly News* and other papers: 'everybody here knows well enough', he complained with typical sarcasm, 'that sirloins of beef and legs of mutton run after labourers begging to be eaten; that sovereigns grow on every bush, that wood and coal always walk into every grate, and light themselves every morning'.⁸⁰ In early February 1849 he wrote of new arrivals: 'What is to be done with all these people? – where are they to find employment? Already the labour market in Sydney is overstocked'.⁸¹ Responding to another commendation of Australian emigration in the *Nottingham Review*, Hawksley could only conclude that 'as long as their ignorance is so great, the best thing they can do is leave us alone'.⁸² Perhaps it was this article from his birthplace which persuaded Hawksley to contact James Sweet. As one disappointed Chartist informed Joseph Barker by mail from Sydney: 'not one of our companions regret leaving England ... Hundreds are much deceived'.⁸³

John Hirst has noted the reliance of colonial papers upon overseas publications for international news, and the *People's Advocate* was no different in this regard.⁸⁴ 'We would be obliged if our friends would occasionally favour us with the loan of the late liberal European papers they may receive', Hawksley begged in March 1849, 'as

⁷⁹ *People's Advocate*, 21 April 1849, p. 1.

⁸⁰ *People's Advocate*, 17 March 1849, p. 3.

⁸¹ *People's Advocate*, 17 February 1849, p. 5; 24 February 1849, p. 6.

⁸² *People's Advocate*, 14 July 1849, p. 6.

⁸³ *People*, 2 (1849-50), p. 350.

⁸⁴ Hirst, *The strange birth of colonial democracy*, pp. 48-9.

we are anxious to place before the public the best possible information as to the state of political progress in the old countries'.⁸⁵ A decade earlier the *Sydney Monitor* had noted the appearance of the *Northern Star* in England, just as the infant *Star* had reprinted an exposé originally published in the *Sydney Herald* upon the 'cupidity of agents and contractors in all emigration business'.⁸⁶ Although Hawksley drew upon many English and Irish papers, he also lifted a significant amount of copy from the *Northern Star* in 1848-9, including leading articles, reviews of agrarian and democratic pamphlets, and Feargus O'Connor's open letters.⁸⁷ Less recognised by historians, however, is the evident attention leading Chartists in England paid to colonial papers such as the *Advocate*.

In late 1849 O'Connor wrote that he had received two papers from New South Wales, 'each containing a most lucid, clear and able article with reference to the application of the soil in every country'.⁸⁸ Almost certainly he referred to a series of articles Hawksley had written in the *Advocate* entitled 'THE LAND. – WHOSE IS IT?' in May and June.⁸⁹ About this time two other Hawksley commentaries, upon 'The Chartist sentences – English justice' and 'The Defections of the London Press' (a polemic directed particularly the *Examiner*), were reprinted in the *Northern Star*.⁹⁰ 'We could bear with the truth-distorting, villainy breathing, blood-jocose, liberty vituperating articles of the TIMES', Hawksley wrote with heroic bombast,

⁸⁵ *People's Advocate*, 3 March 1849, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Sydney Monitor*, 25 May 1838, p. 3 (n. p.); *Northern Star*, 13 January 1838, p. 2.

⁸⁷ For examples see *People's Advocate*, 2 December 1848, p. 3; 13 January 1849, pp. 7-8; 17 February 1849, p. 9; 24 February 1849, p. 9; 3 March 1849, pp. 7-9. For other reprints of articles about Chartism see *People's Advocate*, 27 January 1849, p. 1; 7 April 1849, pp. 6-7; 5 May 1849, p. 2; 12 May 1849, p. 9; 9 June 1849, p. 8.

⁸⁸ *Northern Star*, 3 November 1849, p. 1.

⁸⁹ *People's Advocate*, 12 May 1849, p. 1; 19 May 1849, p. 1; 26 May 1849, p. 1; 2 June 1849, p. 1; 9 June 1849, p. 1. O'Connor specifically referred to the issues dated 26 May and 2 June.

⁹⁰ *Northern Star*, 30 June 1849, p. 3; 28 July 1849, p. 3; *People's Advocate*, 20 January 1849, p. 1; 17 March 1849, p. 1.

if we had not to bear with the defection of those veteran journals whose names are grown, as it were, household names of justice and freedom ... Looking at the London press, it is impossible to suppress our fears for the public good and our apprehension of public evil. The jaundiced views taken of the late tremendous events in France ... the torturous misrepresentation of what the French had rendered clear and plain ... must cause deep anxiety to the wellwishers of British journalism. Nor to us the colonists of New South Wales is this anxiety the least groundless; our caterers for English news pounce on all the worst portions of the unseemly patchwork ... They think, perhaps, that their popguns will be the more formidable for having some smell of the powder and shot from the cannon of the TIMES.⁹¹

Although these criticisms may only have been picked up by the *Star* in London as exotic ammunition in O'Connor's battle with Albany Fonblanque (the proprietor of the *Examiner* and Land Plan critic), Hawksley's contributions to Chartist political culture illuminate a neglected aspect of its international dimensions.

Julian Harney (who had given up his position as editor of the *Star* following his disagreement with O'Connor over the coverage of international news) also evidently kept an eye upon the *Advocate*. In his own fledgling undertaking, the *Democratic Review*, Harney reprinted some poetry Hawksley had originally published (under the pseudonym 'E.J.H.') in 1849 decrying the incipient resumption of transportation: 'The following lines extracted from the *People's Advocate, and New South Wales Vindicator* of March last', Harney asserted, 'indicate the coming of that not distant day, when the Australians will govern themselves, with, or without the concurrence of Britain'. Antipodean democratic poetry, however, was patently imbued with the heroic-romantic ethos of its parent-literature:

Oh! haste from the plains where your white flocks are grazing;
 Come down from the mountains where roam your free herds;
 Oh! leave the clean hearths, where your home fires are blazing;
 Nor heed ye, young men, soft Love's honied words.
 Leave the plough and the harrow, the anvil and the spade,
 Oh! leave for a time all endearments of home;
 The tyrant is coming, and slavery's his trade,
 Arise in your strength, and say – Shall he come? –
 No Never, no never!⁹²

⁹¹ *People's Advocate*, 20 January 1849, p. 1.

⁹² *Democratic Review*, 1 (1849-50), p. 188; *People's Advocate*, 17 March 1849, p. 3.

Whilst a number of prominent activist-poets such as Thomas Cooper, Ernest Jones, and Gerald Massey may have received considerable recognition during their lifetimes (and as such stand at the periphery of the Victorian canon) most verse and song was produced by rather more obscure figures such as John Watkins, William Hick, E.P. Mead, Thomas Martin Wheeler and literally hundreds of others. These included the young Henry Parkes, whose 'Song of the Night' and a lament upon poverty were published in the *Charter* just before Parkes and his wife left England in 1839.⁹³

'I am one of the many who cannot now obtain the means of living in their native country', explained Parkes from his temporary London garret.⁹⁴ 'In a fortnight's time I shall be gone to seek a better home in the wildernesses of Australia; and having a few of these "attempts in verse" by me; I would fain leave one or two of them for the perusal of those among whom I spent my boyhood. THE CHARTER, I believe, circulates among them, for I come out of the Birmingham Political Union'.⁹⁵ This was an explicit statement not only of Parkes' politics, but also the motivation behind a great deal of Chartist verse – the desire to enter the inspirational sphere of printed political contention, and to be seen doing so by one's peers. As A.W. Martin points out, Parkes' sentimental lines struck a chord with another 'artisan bard'.⁹⁶ J. Alden's reply to Parkes, 'The Emigrant's Farewell', almost seems designed as a portable stock of sustenance for the intrepid traveller:

I do not fear but Austral soil
Will repay the ardent toil;–
I do not fear but I shall find
Hearts whose greeting will be kind;–
I do not doubt the sun will shine
As bright as on that land of mine;

⁹³ *Charter*, 17 March 1839, p. 119; 24 March 1839, p. 139; Martin, *Henry Parkes*, pp. 21-2.

⁹⁴ *Charter*, 24 March 1839, p. 139.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* See also C. Flick, *The Birmingham Political Union and the movements for reform in Britain, 1830-1839* (Connecticut, 1978).

⁹⁶ Martin, *Henry Parkes*, p. 22.

But still the tears unbidden come—
Farewell my home, my cherish'd home!⁹⁷

Note that Alden's sentimental rejoinder (which ran to six stanzas) must have been written and forwarded to the *Charter* almost immediately. Time (or, more accurately, the lack thereof) is a factor which should never be forgotten when discussing Chartist verse. But as A.W. Martin also comments, 'In the end, whatever the heroics, no person ... could escape ... the inescapable feeling ... in a world desperately conscious of distance, poverty and mortality, that migration involved irrevocable ends and unknown beginnings'.⁹⁸ The heroic agency invested in the printed public word, however, did provide one psychological mechanism for coping with the unknown.

IV

Both O'Brien and Diamond touch upon Hawksley's distinctive use of the open letter as a didactic form of political communication. Diamond suggests that although 'Hawksley's sympathies were with the people, he was not quite one of them himself', because he habitually addressed his readers as 'you', rather than 'we'.⁹⁹ This rhetorical tactic, however, needs to be clarified. William Cobbett had long engaged his readers in a didactic form of conversation, and his influence weighed heavily upon radical journalism during the Chartist period. As we have also seen, Hawksley at times went out of his way to describe himself as a 'working man'.¹⁰⁰ That said, he certainly did not use a term like 'BROTHER PROLETARIANS' in his open letters, as

⁹⁷ *Ibid. Charter*, 31 March 1839, p. 133.

⁹⁸ Martin, *Henry Parkes*, p. 22.

⁹⁹ Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 52.

¹⁰⁰ *People's Advocate*, 2 December 1848, p. 12.

Julian Harney did in his roughly contemporary use of the form in the *Democratic Review*. Yet the open address presented 'from above', so to speak, did have a clear precedent in O'Connor's use of the form. As stressed at various points in this argument, quite unlike leaders of working class origin such as Harney, O'Connor's authority was ultimately predicated upon his cultivation of a gentlemanly public persona. O'Connor may have led and represented the fustian jackets and their families, but he was never one of them. And although Hawksley was no romantic leader-hero like O'Connor, his use of a prominent rhetorical convention was certainly not a democratic contradiction.

Hawksley's audience in New South Wales, however, differed from O'Connor's in a number of crucial respects. Whereas the potency of O'Connor's missives ultimately relied upon formalised networks of Chartist organisation to reach a national readership, no such cultural framework or tradition existed in New South Wales. Henry Parkes may have dubbed the mass-protest against transportation marshalled by the Constitutional Association 'Australia's First National Movement', but the organisation itself was short-lived and never extended beyond Sydney's infant municipal wards.¹⁰¹ Likewise, the massive audience O'Connor regularly enjoyed simply did not exist in New South Wales – despite the *Advocate* boasting a Pacific-rim circulation which may have stretched to California.¹⁰² Hawksley knew well that his subscriber base did not accurately reflect his readership. In fact, he claimed that the *Advocate* had the biggest circulation of any paper in New South Wales apart from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and some Melbourne papers, 'whilst as regards readers,

¹⁰¹ *People's Advocate*, 28 April 1849, p. 2; Martin, *Days of wrath*, pp. 56, 431.

¹⁰² Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 47 notes that Hawksley listed a Californian agent and printed regular articles on the goldfields.

we are satisfied that the ADVOCATE exceeds in numbers those of the HERALD itself'.¹⁰³ Yet the absence of the organisational framework which O'Connor took advantage of so effectively in Britain was reflected in the design of Hawksley's letters. O'Connor's sermons were political events; Hawksley's remained prisoners of the printed page. Generally speaking, Hawksley's letters betrayed no more formal emphases than his normal copy. Nor were they characterised by the oral inflections which at times almost derailed the coherency of O'Connor's prose – apart, that is, from occasional radical-Chartist slogans such as 'Knowledge is power', or 'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work'. Ever the teacher, Hawksley explained in his introductory communication that 'My only reason for adopting this mode of writing is because I am anxious that you should *read* and *think*'.¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, the later letters of the first series in 1849-50 included didactic explanations of the basic Chartist program, as well as favourite topics such as 'Injudicious Emigration'.¹⁰⁵ Hawksley's letters written after the arrival of the convict transport *Hashemy* in June 1849, however, were plainly intended as bracing exhortations to action.

The outdoor mass-meetings near Sydney's Circular Wharf (now Circular Quay) organised by members of the Constitutional Association (in conjunction with a somewhat more patrician Sydney Anti-Transportation Committee which had also been formed in early March¹⁰⁶) were unprecedented in their scale and significance. Secretary of State for the colonies, Earl Grey, proposed to resume transportation in late 1848, the dispatch being officially published in Sydney in late February 1849.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *People's Advocate*, 10 November 1849, p. 6. Emphases in original. Diamond, 'Edward Hawksley', p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ *People's Advocate*, 9 June 1849, p. 1. Italics in original.

¹⁰⁵ *People's Advocate*, 13 October 1849, p. 1; 27 October 1849, p. 1; 3 November 1849, p. 1; 10 November 1849, p. 6; 17 November 1849, p. 6; 24 November 1849, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ *People's Advocate*, 10 March 1849, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ *Supplement to the New South Wales Government Gazette*, 24 February 1849, pp. 290-1. See

At a preliminary protest meeting convened at the Royal Hotel a number of prominent figures such as Charles Cowper, Lowe and Nicholls expressed their opposition to Grey's communication it was also resolved to hold a public meeting at the Victoria Theatre in Pitt Street.¹⁰⁸ The Constitutional Association also immediately took up the transportation issue, Grey being subjected to considerable abuse in committee.¹⁰⁹ The following week an Anti-Transportation Committee was formed at the Victoria meeting. The Mayor took the chair and Cowper, Nicholls, Lowe, J.R. Wilshire, the Reverend Ralph Mansfield (of the *Sydney Morning Herald*), Dean McEncroe and other Sydney respectables spoke at length.¹¹⁰ The *Herald*, which quickly became a prominent voice in the Sydney anti-transportation movement lamented that the 'meeting was by no means so well attended as was anticipated, although by the time the first resolution was proposed, the Theatre was tolerably filled'.¹¹¹

Terry Irving presents the anti-transportation movement in New South Wales in 1849 as a bourgeois alliance.¹¹² It is true that Dr. Isaac Aaron and J.R. Wilshire appear to have been the only notable members of the Constitutional Association involved in organising and speaking at the Victoria Theatre meeting. However, John McPhail interrupted the speakers 'from the body of the theatre', protesting that one of the resolutions put to the meeting (regarding the possible deployment of any new convict-labour at Cockatoo Island, in Sydney Harbour) was 'mere humbug': 'he would assert

also M. Kerr, 'The British parliament and transportation in the eighteen-fifties', *Historical Studies* (Australia and New Zealand), 21 (1953), pp. 29-44.

¹⁰⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1849, p. 2 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 3 March 1849, p. 2; *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 3 March 1849, p. 2 (n.p.). For Cowper see A. Powell, *Patrician democrat: the political life of Charles Cowper, 1843-1870* (Melbourne, 1977).

¹⁰⁹ *People's Advocate*, 3 March 1849, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March 1849, pp. 4-5 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 10 March 1849, pp. 2-3. For Mansfield see Souter, *Company of heralds*, ch. 1. For McEncroe, a prominent Catholic priest who had been chaplain at Norfolk Island between 1838-42, see A.G.L. Shaw and C.M.H. Clark, section eds., *Australian dictionary of biography*, II, pp. 165-6.

¹¹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 March 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

¹¹² Irving, 'The development of Liberal politics in N.S.W.', ch. 8.

it was highly impolitic to make any compromise whatsoever'; the convicts should be returned to England, whatever expenses were incurred.¹¹³ McPhail's objection was supported by Cowper and the conciliatory proposal was eventually dropped.¹¹⁴ It should also be noted that from this point radical democrats played an increasingly important role in the anti-transportation movement, and were primarily responsible for convening the mass-meetings marshalled after the *Hashemy's* eventual arrival in June.

In the weeks following the Victoria Theatre meeting signatures were duly collected for a protest memorial in the time-honoured fashion. Yet Sydney's democrats evidently felt that rather more defiant measures needed to be taken. The first step was the publication of suitably heroic verse. John Pearson's call to arms, 'ARISE, AUSTRALIANS, ARISE', appeared in the *Advocate* alongside Hawksley's anthem:

Arise! Australians, arise! let no despotic Earl—
Deprive us of our country's right, and Freedom's banner furl—
Let not the felon's galling yoke, let not his clanking chain
Be seen upon our fertile shores, or ever heard again!¹¹⁵

By early April it was understood in Sydney that the *Hashemy* had left Portsmouth carrying approximately 230 convicts, some of whom had been struck down by cholera.¹¹⁶ The *Advocate* suggested that as soon as the vessel arrived a public demonstration should be held on the rising land above Circular Wharf, near the site of the abandoned old Government House: 'it is a good place for a meeting at any time, with the bank of the old domain for a platform; and on the present occasion it is just the right locality'.¹¹⁷ This was indeed the case: to the north, vessels at anchor would

¹¹³ *People's Advocate*, 10 March 1849, p. 3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March 1849, p. 5 (n.p.).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *People's Advocate*, 17 March 1849, p. 9.

¹¹⁶ *People's Advocate*, 7 April 1849, p. 7.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

be clearly visible to the demonstrators; just to the north east of the site lay the new vice-regal seat of colonial administration.¹¹⁸

In late April a number of preparatory meetings were held in Sydney's municipal wards.¹¹⁹ At Maitland, a leading provincial centre to the north of Sydney, public meetings and petitions against the renewal of transportation were also mobilised and forwarded to Government House.¹²⁰ With one exception, all these meetings were held in public houses. And quite unlike the Victoria Theatre gathering, the organisational assemblies were addressed by democrats such as Parkes, McPhail, Richard Driver, Edward McEncroe (the brother of the Dean) and J.R. Wilshire. Despite the *Herald's* abuse of the Constitutional Association, the democrats and the Anti-Transportation Committee had by this time decided upon an alliance, although one paper which favoured a 'reformed' system of transportation was certainly struck by the incongruity of this marriage. In an editorial entitled 'The Projected Riots', *Bell's Sporting Life in Sydney* argued that:

Chartism like other refugees from home is attempting to raise its head in New South Wales ... The most singular feature of the present agitation, however, is the unnatural union that has taken place between two parties so opposite in their professions, as that which calls itself the Church and State party, and that which professes Radicalism, Democracy, the abolition of distinctions of individuals, and, as a matter of course, the division of all property. The Chartist party, in which is embodied Roman Catholic and Irish agitation, through its leaders Mr. Parkes and others, openly recommends resort to violent measures ... while the peace-and-order men, the Church Men, through their mouth-piece the 'Morning Herald' are preaching and inciting sedition and resistance.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Hawksley again advocated this site in the *People's Advocate*, 14 April 1849, p. 6; 21 April 1849, p. 6. Illustration 11 of *Hashemy* protest site in the early 1850s is taken from H. Proudfoot, A. Bickford, B. Egloff and R. Stocks, eds., *Australia's first Government House* (North Sydney, 1991), ch. 9.

¹¹⁹ *People's Advocate*, 28 April 1849, p. 3; 5 May 1849, p. 3.

¹²⁰ *People's Advocate*, 28 April 1849, p. 3; *Maitland Mercury*, 12 May 1849, p. 4 (n.p.); 6 June 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

¹²¹ *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 28 April 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

The writer also accused the protest movement of intending to intimidate shopkeepers to shut on the appointed day.¹²² Certainly, Hawksley hoped that business would cease in order to facilitate the largest possible meeting.¹²³

In late April a delegation from the Anti-Transportation Committee waited upon Governor FitzRoy to present their petition and obtain information about the impending arrival of the *Hashemy*.¹²⁴ Although the Governor was sympathetic on this occasion, some of his interrogators 'expressed their regret at the unsatisfactory nature of His Excellency's reply respecting the intended dispersion of such convicts as may arrive'.¹²⁵ The much-discussed transport anchored at length in June. 'The crisis has at length arrived', the *Advocate* warned in an apocalyptic strain: 'To-day the Deputation committee will meet, and as soon as possible the time for the great protest meeting will be made known'.¹²⁶

Despite terrible winter weather on the day of the first meeting, it appears that about 5000 Sydneysiders met to protest on 11 and 18 June. Many businesses closed at about 11 am on both Mondays to enable attendance as Hawksley had hoped.¹²⁷ Speakers spoke from the top of an omnibus located at what is now the eastern end of Bridge Street.¹²⁸ Henry Parkes presented himself as the advocate of 'the working classes', who he said were 'most unjustly dealt with in this matter'.¹²⁹ Proceedings were also watched by a considerable contingent of military and civil authorities who

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ See *People's Advocate*, 14 April 1849, p. 6; 21 April 1849, p. 6.

¹²⁴ *People's Advocate*, 28 April 1849, p. 4.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *People's Advocate*, 9 June 1849, p. 2.

¹²⁷ For the first meeting see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1849, pp. 2, 4 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 16 June 1849, pp. 4-6; A satirical account can also be found in *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 16 June 1849, p. 1 (n.p.). For the second meeting see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 1849, pp. 4-5 (n.p.); *People's Advocate*, 23 June 1849, pp. 4-5; *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 23 June 1849, p. 1 (n.p.).

¹²⁸ *People's Advocate*, 16 June 1849, p. 4.

¹²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

guarded the fenced Domain which surrounded Government House.¹³⁰ The visual impact of the *Hashemy*, moored in Sydney Cove, was of prime importance. Hawksley had previously penned a metaphor of a 'noble' natural environment re-infected by a 'festering mass of corruption'.¹³¹ According to the *Herald*,

they now saw its solid substance in the shape of a convict ship floating upon the waters of their harbour. There the monster lay, mocking their long-cherished hopes ... but they met it as British freemen should. They looked it boldly in the face; they pondered well the mischief it boded.¹³²

Such reports of the propitious geography of protest caught the imagination as far away as Adelaide. 'The horrid monster – vice – with which they had been threatened', commented the *South Australian Register*, 'was no longer confined to despatches – to pen, ink, and paper; but lay before their eyes, floating on the waters of their noble harbour'.¹³³

FitzRoy's refusal to meet a 'respectable' delegation of protest leaders on 11 June has become a staple narrative element of colonial political historiography.¹³⁴ Looking beyond the high politics of the occasion, however, what is particularly striking about the demonstration is the absolute dearth of some of the basic visual and aural elements of political protest in Britain. Few (if any) banners or flags appear to have been used – despite the long wait for the *Hashemy*. The only hint of any visual insignia lies in a derisory account of the second meeting, published in *Bell's Life in Sydney*:

Shortly after mid-day the scouts announced the arrival of the 'Herald' of the insurgent forces, and ... the intrepid Heki Souwester marched on to the green,

¹³⁰ *People's Advocate*, 16 June 1849, pp. 5-6. The correspondent of the Melbourne *Argus*, 26 June 1849, p. 2 (n.p.) stated that Government House's kitchens and stables 'were crowded with infantry and cavalry', that a 'large body of police with loaded fire-arms were in reserve in the Domain', and that 'the cannons of Fort Macquarie were loaded and shotted'.

¹³¹ *People's Advocate*, 14 April 1849, p. 6.

¹³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

¹³³ *South Australian Register*, 14 July 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

¹³⁴ Martin, *Henry Parkes*, pp. 55-9; Travers, *The grand old man of Australian politics*, ch. 5.

immediately preceding the Triumphal Car of Defiance, on whose roof crouched the giant forms of MICHIE and GILBERT, backed up by the CUDGEE CHIEFTIAN and AARON, shoulder-ing his brother's rod. Color-Sergeant Parkes having stitched a Liberty Flag to the coat collar of the charioteer, the Insurrectionist leaders harangued their troops in strains of martial enthusiasm, somewhat qualified by the impregnable aspect of the Imperial fortress, the bristling bayonets of the Royalists, and the iron spikes of the entrance gate.¹³⁵

Although protesters seem to have marched to the site in bodies, none of the accounts makes any mention of the use of a band. One explanation of these quite remarkable visual and aural absences, however, lies in the legal prohibition of outdoor political activity. In New South Wales such association had been proscribed under an Act of Council first passed in 1846 preventing 'Party processions and certain other public exhibitions', a measure primarily intended to quell burgeoning religious sectarianism in many parts of the colony.¹³⁶ Whilst no attempt was made by the colonial administration to stop the *Hashemy* demonstrations, just after the monster meetings the Party Processions Act was extended.¹³⁷ Hawksley, of course, protested vigorously against the restrictive measure, which he likened to Irish coercion.¹³⁸

The *Hashemy* protests may have lacked the colour and noise of the typical Chartist demonstration, but the chosen site did have significant symbolic benefits. In a sense, organisers were able to construct an immense and emotive political amphitheatre simply by locating the protest amidst meaningful features of the natural, built and sea-borne environment. Echoes of this creative use of place were also to appear upon the Victorian goldfields, where similar forms of improvisation were

¹³⁵ *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 23 June 1849, p. 1 (n.p.).

¹³⁶ *Acts and Ordinances of the Governor and Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1846), 10 Vic. (1846), no. 1. See also Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-51*, pp. 120-24 and *passim*.

¹³⁷ *Acts and Ordinances of the Governor and Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1849), 13 Vic. (1849), no. 10. For the membership of the Legislative Council in this period generally see J. Forrest, 'Political divisions in the New South Wales Legislative Council, 1847-53', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 50 (1964), pp. 466-89.

¹³⁸ *People's Advocate*, 9 June 1849, p. 6.

deployed. A familiar contest was also waged in the press over the size, respectability and legitimacy of the *Hashemy* demonstrations. *Bell's Life in Sydney* described the second meeting (held to report back upon the local government's scornful response to the first meeting's resolutions that transportation cease and Earl Grey be removed) as being organised by 'madmen' who harangued 'some few hundreds of the populace'.¹³⁹ Later, the *Port Phillip Gazette* was castigated by the *Advocate* for stating that both meetings consisted of less than 300 'lazy and dissolute idlers', and claiming that the Constitutional Association was a 'secret society' whose activities were 'impudent parodies on "public meetings"'.¹⁴⁰ As the *Advocate* contemptuously replied, the *Gazette* had itself estimated the crowd at the second meeting at 6000 in an editorial printed on the same page as the derogatory report.¹⁴¹

The *Hashemy* protests, however, were probably the only occasion that Hawksley's open letters actually provoked people into taking to the streets. Following FitzRoy's curt refusal to meet the delegates, the *Advocate* complimented its slighted audience:

Henceforth the 11th of June will be a day to be remembered in Australia ... On this occasion, with the ship load of unfortunate criminals before your eyes, you did all that you could do. You met, you deliberated, you *protested* and you most emphatically requested that they should be sent back to England ... Your *request* has not been complied with, it has been most ungraciously refused, but you have done your duty, and on the government, and the government alone rests the odium of introducing among us this abominable thing.¹⁴²

'Your work is not yet done', he continued, 'you must again assemble':

Monday next is the day appointed for your meeting. The questions to be discussed are of the first importance. Fail not to be there ... Let every man who prizes the benefits flowing from constitutional freedom assemble on Monday next, and *win THE BATTLE OF NEW SOUTH WALES*'.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 23 June 1849, p. 2 (n.p.).

¹⁴⁰ *People's Advocate*, 7 July 1849, p. 6.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *People's Advocate*, 16 June 1849, p. 1.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* Emphases in original.

This particular instance of printed rhetoric, replete with its formal emphases resonates with O'Connor's use of the form as a motivational tool. In London, too, the protest and the suspension of business were approvingly noted in the *Northern Star*.¹⁴⁴ The excitement which greeted the arrival of convicts in Sydney in June 1849, however, did not last long. They were disembarked without any further mass-resistance, and assigned to rural areas where their labour was still in considerable demand.¹⁴⁵

Part of the significance of the *Hashemy* demonstrations, however, was the way in which working men and their advocates actively attempted to influence the future identity and moral character of their society – just as they might attempt to control the destiny of a model agrarian village. When O'Connor was supervising the building of O'Connorville in 1846, he was forced to warn itinerant Chartists not to turn up at the site expecting work or lodging (after a number had done so).¹⁴⁶ Although Ernest Jones had explicitly contrasted the Chartist village to the 'closed gates' of aristocratic estates, a practical tension did exist between the democratic commitment to members unlimited and the patience (and financial contributions) demanded by co-operative forms of association such as the Land Plan.¹⁴⁷ The *Hashemy* protests in Sydney also raised issues of inclusion and exclusion, respectability, destiny and the problem of dealing with a famously tainted past. Although most of the demonstrators were probably drawn from the ranks of recent state-assisted immigrants, some of those who gathered above Circular Wharf would have been either emancipists or the children of

¹⁴⁴ *Northern Star*, 6 October 1849, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ For subsequent anti-transportation activity in the eastern colonies see C.S. Blackton, 'The Australasian League, 1851-1854', *Pacific History Review*, 8 (1939), pp. 385-400.

¹⁴⁶ Hadfield, *The Chartist Land Company*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁷ *Northern Star*, 22 August 1846, p. 8.

convicts. The latter must have felt some degree of ambivalence about their actions, despite Hawksley's exhortations.

When the next transport (the *Mountstuart Elphinstone*) arrived in October 1849, Hawksley was plainly taken aback by the complacency he encountered.¹⁴⁸ 'It may be that the pain is deeper felt because no cry is made', he speculated somewhat despondently.¹⁴⁹ Then again, the convict system had been the rationale of New South Wales for some sixty years. On the *Mountstuart Elphinstone* were two prominent Young Irelanders, Kevin O'Doherty (formerly an editor of the *Irish Tribune*) and John Martin (editor of the *Irish Felon*).¹⁵⁰ Hawksley does not seem to have been a noted orator, but he did speak (as an 'Englishman') at a meeting called by the Irish community to consider the probity of attempting to 'mitigate the condition' of the exiled journalists – particularly as Martin had a 'peculiarly delicate frame, wholly unsuited for physical labour'.¹⁵¹ In contrast to some other speakers, Hawksley defended the Young Irelanders: had they done any wrong in pursuing the cause of freedom?¹⁵² He probably also went on the 'Pleasure excursion' taken by about seventy Confederate sympathisers to Bradley's Head, on the north shore of Sydney harbour.¹⁵³ Like Chartist social excursions to the Land Plan estates, however, this spring outing had a distinct political purpose. Accompanied by the City Band, the day-trippers steamed towards the anchored *Mountstuart Elphinstone* singing 'Exiles of Erin' and 'There's better days coming, boys' while Martin and O'Doherty watched from the deck. On the outward and return journeys the steamer circled the convict transport a

¹⁴⁸ *People's Advocate*, 6 October 1849, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Davis, *The Young Ireland movement*, pp. 155-6.

¹⁵¹ *People's Advocate*, 13 October 1849, p. 4.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

number of times, those onboard cheering constantly. Obviously aware of the floating demonstration in their honour, the entrapped Young Irelanders took off their hats and bowed in appreciation.¹⁵⁴ Not all radical political protest in Sydney, then, was devoid of a creative sense of theatre.

V

Hawksley's criticisms of the renewal of the Party Processions Act fell on deaf ears. In fact, a legislative attack was mounted against all forms of political protest in the latter half of 1849. Just after Martin and O'Doherty's arrival in Sydney, a uniform postage system was implemented which placed a new penny duty on all papers sent by post.¹⁵⁵ Liquor licensing legislation was also passed forbidding publicans to allow 'any body, union, society, or assembly of persons' (apart from Freemasons and OddFellows) to meet on their premises, or the display thereon of 'any arms, flags, colours, symbols, decorations, or emblems whatsoever'.¹⁵⁶ Not only was the diffusion of knowledge subjected to a tax; the right to meet both in and out of doors had been effectively prohibited. Hawksley quickly brought these infringements of constitutional rights before his reader:

A system has commenced which by little and little will insidiously eat away your liberties, and leave you bound hand and foot, at the mercy of your oppressors ... Already your liberties have been affected far beyond what Englishmen ought to endure ... and now another attack has been made, successfully made by those who call themselves your representatives ... It appears pretty evident that this clause has

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Acts and Ordinances of the Governor and Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1849), 13 Vic. (1849), no 38, sect. 19-20. For Hawksley's criticisms of the proposed stamp duty on newspapers see *People's Advocate*, 11 August 1849, p. 1; 22 September 1849, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁶ *Acts and Ordinances of the Governor and Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1849), 13 Vic. (1849), no. 24, sect. 50.

been introduced into the Bill for the purpose of preventing political meetings of any kind from being held.¹⁵⁷

The obvious political target of the licensing legislation, in fact, was the Constitutional Association, which had lately been meeting in committee at Richard Driver's house.¹⁵⁸ In response, Hawksley attempted to revive and transplant a classic Chartist counter-cultural tactic.

A common radical organisational response to periods of legal proscription and political and religious exclusion in Britain was to collect funds and build or rent independent indoor meeting places. In Nottingham, for example, a 'Democratic Chapel' (which held about 800 people) became the focus of various forms of local educational, temperance, social, and religious activity in the Chartist period, as well as hosting regular Chartist meetings.¹⁵⁹ One of the constant problems which faced London activists in the 1840s, on the other hand, was the failure to secure an adequate indoor forum on a permanent basis.¹⁶⁰ As a *Star* writer noted in early 1848, 'Chartism in the North has many country-houses; it has its Halls in Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Birmingham etc.', but 'there is no "CHARTIST HALL" in London, worthy of the metropolis'.¹⁶¹

Following the *Hashemy* demonstrations Hawksley made a similar point in Sydney:

A place to meet in you must have, and the only alternative is, to BUILD ONE. Yes we must have in Sydney, as there are in many towns of England, a PEOPLE'S

¹⁵⁷ *People's Advocate*, 4 August 1849, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* For meetings held at Driver's premises see *People's Advocate*, 21 July 1849, p. 7; 11 August 1849, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ See Epstein, 'Some organisational and cultural aspects of the Chartist movement in Nottingham', pp. 233-9.

¹⁶⁰ Note that the City Chartist Hall, Turnagain Lane, Holborn and the South London Chartist Hall, Blackfriars Road were both in regular use during the mid-1840s.

¹⁶¹ *Northern Star*, 8 January 1848, p. 4. Emphasis in original. See also 22 January 1848, p. 4.

HALL, and a PEOPLE'S LIBRARY, where you may meet and acquire that instruction which is essential to your political existence.¹⁶²

This was a significant suggestion, as the very presence of a substantial and independently controlled indoor meeting place would have made symbolic claims about political legitimacy, durability and respectability – particularly in a society such as New South Wales. To build a People's Hall was to build a future. In early August Hawksley's pleas became more urgent as he railed against the sudden attempt at prohibiting political meetings at licensed premises.¹⁶³ But numerous attempts to publicise and raise funds for the Hall by way of the open letter during 1849 seem to have failed.¹⁶⁴ In the Chartist fashion, a Provisional Committee to oversee the planning of the building was formed in late July, and shares were set at one pound each (payable by small instalments) to raise £3,000 in capital.¹⁶⁵ It was envisioned that the building would hold 2,000-3,000 people, and be equipped with a reading room and library.¹⁶⁶ Hawksley even offered to change the name to something less flammable in order to facilitate subscriptions.¹⁶⁷ However, few *Advocate* readers appear to have contributed. 'Although I have met with some disappointment in respect to its progress', he admitted as early as August 1849, 'I am not yet disheartened; when I first took up my pen in the cause of the Working Classes of New South Wales I was well aware of the difficulties I should have to contend with'.¹⁶⁸ By December he was forced to confess: 'Some people may think this a mad project'. Nevertheless,

¹⁶² *People's Advocate*, 7 July 1849, p. 1. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶³ *People's Advocate*, 4 August 1849, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ *People's Advocate*, 14 July 1849, p. 3. See also 25 August 1849, p. 1; 1 December 1849, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶⁵ *People's Advocate*, 21 July 1849, p. 11; 28 July 1849, p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ *People's Advocate*, 21 July 1849, p. 11.

¹⁶⁷ *People's Advocate*, 14 July 1849, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ *People's Advocate*, 25 August 1849, p. 1.

Hawksley again enjoined his readers to unite, subscribe and build a tangible showpiece of democratic culture.¹⁶⁹

Another preferred subject Hawksley returned to in the aftermath of the *Hashemy* excitement was the land. '[R]emember that the land is *yours* – yours by right; and that the reason why you do not possess it, is because you have been most shamefully *robbed* of it'.¹⁷⁰ At times O'Connor and Hawksley almost seemed to speak in unison on this subject from opposite ends of the earth. In Sydney Hawksley put the problem thus:

THE LAND! Whose is it? To whom does it belong? How ought it to be managed? For whose benefit is it to be disposed of? Are the People at large the rightful owners of the soil? Is the right of ownership vested only in the Government and those to whom the Government may sell; or have the People an inalienable and imprescriptable right to the land? ... Not in one country alone, but in the states of the world, the question of land ownership and land management is demanding and receiving attention.¹⁷¹

As we have seen, O'Connor commended the agrarian arguments he had spotted in the *Advocate*, and Hawksley's opposition to colonial land policy had been made clear from the first numbers of the paper. 'The whole of these regulations', he contended in the second issue, 'are most iniquitous; and there can be no chance for the working man until they are totally and forever swept away'.¹⁷² 'Not only must the squatting system be abolished', he continued, 'but the price of land must be reduced to its real value; and it must be sold in such small allotments as to enable the man of small means to become a proprietor of the soil'.¹⁷³ The ramifications of these arguments for Australia's indigenous population, however, received no consideration. They were simply not deemed to be of 'the People'.

¹⁶⁹ *People's Advocate*, 8 December 1849, p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ *People's Advocate*, 30 June 1849, p. 6. Italics in original.

¹⁷¹ *People's Advocate*, 24 February 1849, p. 1. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷² *People's Advocate*, 9 December 1848, p. 2.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

In 1849 the New South Wales economy was still largely reliant on the pastoral industry. Vast tracts of land were controlled by a small clique of wealthy leaseholders (or 'squatters') primarily engaged in the woollen industry. Hawksley's rhetorical presentation of the colonial interior actually had many similarities with the negative depiction of Australia which can be found in Ernest Jones' anti-emigration propaganda of the early 1850s. Hawksley claimed that the 'depravity which exists in the bush, the horrible, the nameless sins which are there perpetrated, that is to say in the far distant interior beyond what is called the boundaries of location are such as no man dare to write'.¹⁷⁴ Although these isolated areas might befit the 'Pagan Chinese', 'South Sea Island cannibals', 'Indian thugs and cut-throat Coolies', 'the great sheep-walks' (previously tended by convict labour) were no place for an honest British mechanic.¹⁷⁵ The only solution, Hawksley warned, was the abolition of pastoral endeavours and the opening up of these lands to more virtuous forms of agriculture facilitated by 'a judicious and proper system of European immigration'.¹⁷⁶

One intriguing scheme Hawksley propounded in the columns of the *Advocate* which has not been commented upon by historians was his proposal to set up a Land Plan in Sydney on the O'Connorite model. As touched upon in chapter two, many agrarian experiments were undertaken by Chartists during the 1840s, a decade which also saw the birth of the Liberal freehold land movement.¹⁷⁷ In April 1849 Hawksley criticised the 'exclusive' character of a Building Society which had been recently established in the city.¹⁷⁸ The kind of organisation he contemplated, on the contrary,

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *People's Advocate*, 12 May 1849, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ M. Chase, 'Out of radicalism: the mid-Victorian freehold land movement', *English Historical Review*, 56 (1991), pp. 319-45.

¹⁷⁸ *People's Advocate*, 7 April 1849, p. 1. See also 21 July 1849, p. 7. Hawksley appears to be referring to the Australian Benefit Investment and Building Society, established at 470 George

should be based upon the most simple principles; its rules should be so clear that they may at once be understood and acted upon by the most illiterate ... In a word, the sort of thing we contemplate must be emphatically a society for the PEOPLE ... and of which they themselves shall be the sole managers and administrators.¹⁷⁹

‘Supposing that some three or four hundred of the labouring population of Sydney were to establish a club’, he continued,

and each contribute from half-a-crown to three shillings a week, or less or more according to circumstances, what a fund would soon be raised for the purchase of land, either allotments in town, or suburban blocks of five, ten, twenty, or more acres; and how soon would the contributions suffice for the erection of neat cottages, which would be allotted to the members by ballot.¹⁸⁰

Although Hawksley stressed that the ‘details of the plan have yet to be gone into’, and although the colonial environment necessitated some striking differences in the scale of the undertaking, the basic similarities with O’Connor’s Land Plan are obvious.

Hawksley’s depiction of his plan’s virtues could certainly have come straight from O’Connor’s pen:

This would be the means ... of establishing what we so much want in this colony, a class of small and independent proprietors in land, who, having a fixed stake in the welfare of this colony, would be guardians of the political rights we now have, and the pioneers to further and more extensive privileges than we at present enjoy.¹⁸¹

Independence, security, prosperity and ‘A STAKE IN THE HEDGE’: these were some of the definitive themes propagated by O’Connor and Land Plan lecturers in the mid-to-late 1840s. Perhaps the most significant organisational point of convergence, however, was the idea of a lottery (rather than a ‘priority system’) to distribute allotments. This feature had been the cause of much of the Chartist Plan’s legal

Street in July 1848. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 1849, p. 1 (n.p.).

¹⁷⁹ *People's Advocate*, 7 April 1849, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Compare Alexander Harris’ comments in *An Emigrant Mechanic, Settlers and convicts: recollections of sixteen years' labour in the Australian backwoods* (Melbourne, 1969 rep.), p. 226 upon the need for the establishment of ‘a new and most useful class’ of small farmers, which Harris believed would check ‘the strong feeling of political disaffection’ growing amongst the Australian-born population.

¹⁸¹ *People's Advocate*, 28 April 1849, p. 1.

travails, as the state had repeatedly refused to sanction its registration as a friendly society, interpreting the lottery as a contravention of existing legislation.¹⁸² Hawksley's continued faith in this essentially democratic mode of distribution is telling, as he must have been aware of the controversy which surrounded O'Connor's scheme following the Parliamentary investigation of 1848. Like the Sydney People's Hall, however, Hawksley's agrarian dream failed to get beyond the pages of the *Advocate*. These schemes and plans, ultimately, were elements of a political imagination somewhat removed from the realities of colonial life.

Hawksley's vision of a democratic society will not be adequately understood until we engage with a mature understanding of the international manifestation of late-Chartism. The 'six points' were obviously important, and certainly cannot be ignored. But they tell us little of the breadth and character of the political culture Hawksley attempted to transpose to a society emerging from the shadow of its penal history. There was no formal Chartist movement in Australia. Nevertheless, the *People's Advocate* could be fairly described as a Chartist newspaper, and Hawksley a Chartist from afar. Undoubtedly, the colonial environment presented many problems: Quite different forms of symbolic creativity were required, and local laws presented democrats with challenges that had passed in Britain. Hawksley's attempts at raising a People's Hall failed – as did his Land Plan. The formation of the Constitutional Association in late 1848, as momentous as it was, simply did not amount to an organisational basis upon which such ambitious counter-cultural projects could be realised. And whilst Hawksley may have implicitly embraced the ex-convict in his definition of 'The People', he plainly excluded the non-Briton, and was silent on the

¹⁸² Yeo, 'Some practices and problems of Chartist democracy', pp. 368-72.

position of women. These tendencies were also evident in radical-democratic political culture in Victoria during the 1850s, the subject to which we now turn.