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deprivations could mean more stability seemed odd; yet it was profoundly true. One might argue that countervailing tendencies should have received more emphasis. As was repeatedly pointed out, the costs of the brutal and crude methods of Stalin's "initial socialist accumulation" were bound to become intolerably high as the reserve of the unutilized peasant manpower was approaching exhaustion, pressures for higher living standards coming from the increasingly urbanized population were gaining strength, and economic burdens of the "competition of two systems" in the nuclear age were mounting. The vested interest in tension and in ordering people around as much as possible still persisted. Yet neither considerations of static and dynamic efficiency, nor consumers' demands could be relegated to the back seat much longer without putting stresses and strains beyond safety limits and without inhibiting the attempts to narrow the gap in technology. Gerschenkron did not deny that concessions to consumers had been made and that there was a modicum of over-all decompresion. Yet he viewed it as a harbinger of growing instability—although in the introduction to his Continuity in History (1968) he noted that unsettling effects have not yet materialized.

A brief sketch cannot conceivably provide more than an inkling of the richness of Gerschenkron's work. Only a few salient points have been discussed. The finely chiseled details had to be left out, although, in this particular case, great spurs of innovative thought must certainly not be allowed to overshadow the extensions, refinements, and explorations in depth; suffice to mention the learned essay on philosophical foundations of the continuity concept, the fascinating debate with Rosario Romeo on problems of Italian industrial development, or the seminal paper on the agrarian policies of prerevolutionary Russia. Gerschenkron's scholarly interests ranged across the whole spectrum of social sciences and beyond; the beautiful essay on Doctor Zhivago and the devastatingly erudite review of Nabokov's translation of Evgenii Onegin have become classics. He will be remembered as one of the great polymath of our time.

Alexander Erlich

Works by Gerschenkron

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Supplementary Bibliography


GEYL, PIETER

The career of Pieter Catharinus Arie Geyl (1887–1966), one of the most outstanding Dutch historians of the twentieth century, embodied a deep paradox. When in 1940 he was interned as a hostage by the Germans, he had already transformed the understanding of the history of the Low Countries, yet he was virtually unknown outside the Netherlands except to a handful of specialists. Only his activity as a Dutch supporter of the Flemish movement in Belgium during the 1920s and 1930s had brought him local notoriety, especially when he was expelled by the Belgian government. After World War II, he quickly gained international recognition as a historical critic and essayist, while at home his innovative ideas, which a few decades before had been attacked by traditional
ns, became part of the generally ac-

historical picture.

was of mixed German and Dutch origin.
her was a medical doctor in Dordrecht.

early retirement, due to mental illness,

emotional and financial hardship dur-

eyl's youth. The family moved to the

, where he attended a Gymnasium. In 1906

ered the University of Leiden as a student

tch language and literature, but he was

 to history by C. H. T. Bussemaker, and

 to this field after a novel he wrote was

tatingly faulted by the distinguished critic

Verwey. He completed his doctorate in

under the guidance of P. J. Blok, a sound

omewhat dreary scholar, but probably the

Dutch historian of his generation. His disti-

tion on Christofforo Suriano, the Venetian

ent at the Hague from 1616 to 1623, was

itional work, a study in political history

directly from the sources, but it was al-

by notable for the swiftness of its research

writing.

eyl then gave up his embryonic career as a

as teacher and in 1914 moved to Lon-

as correspondent for the Nieuwe Rotter-

asche Courant, the preeminent daily new-

er of the Netherlands. This post gave him

ontact with outstanding political leaders

ain and a reputation as a quick, lively

ier. As a result, he was soon well known

ong intellectual and political circles in

iland. A year after the end of World War I,

air in Dutch studies was created for him at

iversity of London, with the support of

e Dutch government. His salary was not su-

ient and he supplemented it with work as an

official press attaché for the Netherlands em-

assy. Insecurity, however, did not keep him

om taking up the controversial Flemish ques-

on in Belgium, to the annoyance and some-

times dismay of the Dutch government.

The Flemish issue provided Geyl with the

eme of his early writings. Viewing the Flem-

ings as brothers of the Dutch, he soon chal-

enged the interpretation of Low Countries his-

ory that had been most clearly expressed in the

Histoire de Belgique (1900–1932) by that

country's most eminent historian, Henri Pirenne.

ccording to this view, Belgium since its earliest

istory had been essentially a separate country

 Holland, and the implication followed that

the Netherlands had no fundamental ties to Bel-

gium and therefore to the Dutch-speaking

 Flemings in Belgium. In this interpretation, the

separation of the northern and southern Nether-

lands into distinct countries and peoples during

the late sixteenth-century revolt of the Low

Countries is seen as the culmination of their

historical development over many centuries; by

contrast, their unity under the Burgundian

ukes in the fifteen and early sixteenth cen-

turies had been a historical accident. Pirenne's

view, which most historians in Holland accepted

and adapted to their own national history, was

to Geyl essentially inaccurate. He had publicly

jected it in lectures at University College

ondon in 1920, and he published various ar-

les and lectures expanding his argument in

De Groot-Nederlandsche Gedachte ("The Great

etherlands Idea"; 1925). Geyl then began a

emonumental project based upon this idea that

resulted in the publication of the three-volume

schiedenis van de Nederlandsche Stam


The "Great Netherlands" of these works was

a nation in a special sense of the term: a lin-

uistic community possessing or seeking politi-

cal form and expression in its own state. Geyl

therefore excluded from the "Great Nether-

lands" the Walloon provinces that had been part

of the Burgundian Low Countries and that had

become the culturally and politically dominant

ent of independent Belgium in the nineteenth

tury. He dismissed or disregarded other

ories of the nation, both the view of the

ation as the creation by states of a historic

munity of shared institutions and sentiments,

and the anthropological view, which saw it as a

munity sharing an entire range of

customs and attitudes, not merely language.

hat he did see, vividly and clearly, was that

he speakers of Flemish in nineteenth- and early

twentieth-century Belgium, where French was

language of culture and the chief language

government, suffered many deprivations and

hardships. He failed to keep in mind, however,

his own repeated warnings about anachronism—

pecifically, that before the modern age of mass

ics and culture, those who spoke Dutch–

 Flemish in the southern Netherlands had suf-

ered little or no disadvantage. His strong

political commitment to at least the federal re-

organization of the Belgian state—if not its ac-

tual breakup, with the Flemish provinces joining

the Netherlands—is strongly reflected in his es-

ays on Dutch–Belgian relations.

In his political activity, Geyl favored the

 Flemish activists, but the flirtation of extre-

ists, some of whom were his close friends, with
theories of violence and with German racism led him to emphasize democracy as well as nationalism. The rise of the Nazi movement in Germany moved him to a passionate advocacy of political freedom and thus to an estrangement from those Flemish separatists who did not share this commitment.

Geyl's Great Netherlands idea was extensively developed in his strictly historical works. He demonstrated, with a wealth of evidence and argument, that the formation of separate states in the northern and southern Netherlands during the sixteenth-century revolt was not the result of profound cultural, religious, or political differences. Rather, it stemmed directly from the outcome of military events. Neither Catholicism nor Calvinism had been characteristically indigenous to south or north; each section had been consolidated by political and military victories—by the Spanish Habsburgs in the former case, and by the forces of independence in the latter. Geyl recognized that the two regions had grown apart over the next two centuries, and he deeply regretted that the experiment in unity under King William I had failed.

In all these studies, Geyl neglected the question of the status of the French-speaking provinces in a polity committed to predominance of Dutch—Flemish speakers. Although his views on the Flemish question in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries won anything but universal acclaim, his reinterpretation of the sixteenth-century revolt was so persuasive that within two or three decades it replaced the older picture.

While Geyl was working on his Great Netherlands theme in London, he began studies that became fundamental for a new understanding of the place in Dutch history of the House of Orange. Where it had been taken for granted, except by the minority of Dutch Catholics, that the country was essentially Protestant in character and that the Orange stadholders under the Republic and the kings after 1813 were the pure embodiment of Dutch nationhood, Geyl called attention to the dynastic interests pursued by the stadholders, from Frederick Henry to William III, in their relations with England and, to a lesser degree, Prussia. The republican ("States") party, far from being narrowly provincial and unnational, had performed a necessary national task in opposing Orange dynasticism, which fostered dependence upon the stadholders' foreign relatives (see 1924; 1939). The impact of Geyl's works on this theme upon Dutch historical writing was not as dramatic as that of the Great Netherlands idea, but narrow Orangism was displaced by more balanced understanding of all the parties in the history of the Republic.

In 1936 Geyl was appointed professor of history at the University of Utrecht, despite the difficulties that stemmed from his reputation as a stormy petrel lacking the sedate dignity characteristic of the Dutch academic world and from his connections with the Flemish movement in Belgium. He did not become the founder of a school of disciples, partly because he favored in his students (of whom the best known are J. C. Boogman, A. J. Veenendaal, J. W. Smit, and D. J. Roorda) the same kind of independence of spirit that he himself possessed.

He continued his warnings of the Nazi menace right up to the German invasion on May 10, 1940, and did not keep silent even afterwards. On October 7, he and approximately one hundred other eminent Dutchmen were arrested and sent to Buchenwald, where they were held as hostages in retaliation for the internment of Germans in the Netherlands West Indies. Thirteen months later, along with most of his fellow hostages, he was sent back to the Netherlands for continued internment. After several months' hospitalization during 1943 and 1944, he was released and permitted to return home in February 1944. He provided hiding places for resistance fighters in his home, barely escaping detection and arrest. At the same time he worked at his writing, although he had been dismissed from his professorship by the German authorities in 1942. After the liberation of Holland in 1945, he was restored to his chair.

Geyl's writing now largely changed character. His energy for primary research flagged, but he turned his attention to historical criticism, the philosophy of history (although he insisted that he was no philosopher), and comment on public events. At the same time he broadened the area of his writing from his native Netherlands to all of Europe as well as America. He wrote frequently for the weekly newspaper Vrij Nederland, using new books for the themes of essays on a great variety of subjects. Always concerned with the influence of contemporary events upon a historian's choice of subject and his interpretations, he began to look into the past for greater understanding of the turbulent era through which he was living. At the same time he drew upon his own experiences for deeper insight into the past. During the last months of the occupation, he had written a book on the
changing picture of Napoleon—an obvious parallel to Hitler—in French historical writing (1946b). To show, as he did, that French historians’ views of Napoleon had changed over the decades, depending on their political and ideological commitments, was hardly novel; but to draw the conclusion that the understanding of Napoleon had been enriched by these different interpretations was to take up the cudgel against historical relativism, veering over into outright skepticism, which had characterized historical thought in the 1930s. History, he proclaimed, was “an argument without end” and was the better for it. This book was followed a year later by a short study (1947), which rehabilitated the democratic movement in the final decades of the republic of the United Provinces against the contention of H. T. Colenbrander that the Patriots had been no more than puppets in the hands of the French. He also carefully distinguished the leaders of the Batavian Republic, who put the Patriot principles into practice with the support of a French army of occupation, from the NSB’ers, the Dutch Nazis, noting that the Batavian leaders had sought to rebuild their country upon democratic principles and sought its welfare under complex and trying conditions, none of which could be said of the NSB’ers, traitors to their country and its historical traditions.

Geyl first began to receive wide attention in other countries, however, when he attacked the historical views of Arnold J. Toynbee as presented in A Study of History (1934–1961). He accused the English historian of twisting facts to fit his grandiose system, defended the legitimacy of nations and nationalism against Toynbee’s universalism, and rejected the judgment that Christianity was the only true religion and the only salvation of mankind. Although accused of himself indulging in system making in his Great Netherlands historical writing, he asserted that he had been trying to take account of facts and to make his historical picture correspond to them, rather than twisting them to fit his preconceptions.

Geyl defined himself by argument with other historians, especially of the Netherlands. He had few strictly historical arguments with his greatest contemporary Johan Huizinga, who died in 1945, although his method of work and style of writing were very different from that of the subtle esthete Huizinga. Where Huizinga’s view of the contemporary world was deeply pessimistic, Geyl defended against him what he called in his own final lecture on the occasion of his retirement “the vitality of Western civilization.” Although himself as much a man of high culture as Huizinga, he was far readier to accept the coarse vigor of the common man, and he felt that the problems of Western civilization did not arise from democracy in government or society. He saw totalitarian barbarity not as an exaggeration of faults within democracy itself, but as an attack upon the central spirit of democracy. He was even more critical, therefore, of Jan Romme, a highly influential and respected Marxist at the University of Amsterdam, because his historical vision rested not upon evidence and argument but upon his strongly felt subjective convictions. Geyl had no sympathy for Marxism, accusing it of combining utopian dreaming with Machiavellian practice of power politics in the present. He only joined the postwar Labor party (the former Social-Democratic party) after it abandoned its prior Marxist doctrines, feeling that it had become the best defender of liberal democracy. Although he has sometimes been described as a socialist because of this membership, there is no sign that he believed in socialism as a pattern for the future organization of society; indeed, he continued to proclaim himself a liberal, but not a defender of the capitalist status quo.

In the polemical and journalistic essays of the last two decades of his life, he reaffirmed his own vision of history and life. Even as death neared, he did not fall back on either traditional religion or the mysticism with which many intellectuals replaced it; he accepted the rational structure of the universe and the ability of man’s rational mind to comprehend it, and he saw rationality as the basis for a healthy emotional life. His vision of the world was this-worldly. Quite unreligious himself, he defended the rights of Catholics and other non-Calvinists to full membership in the Dutch community. His belief in liberal democracy, separated from the tie established in classical liberalism between political democracy and free-enterprise capitalism, was only intensified by the attacks upon it from right and left. He was not as sensitive as many others to the social and economic problems faced by democracy, but he thought all totalitarian alternatives were false solutions. These ideas were never brought together into a full-scale exposition and therefore hardly present a neatly coherent picture. His significance lies not in the originality of his beliefs, which cannot be asserted, but in the extraordinary
vigor with which he defended them at a time when advocates of the middle way seemed to have lost their certitudes and their self-confidence.

His primary impact, however, remained his revisions in Dutch history and his historiographical and critical writings. As these became known in the Western world, he was invited to visiting professorships and lectureships in the United States, England, and other countries, and he became the best-known Dutch scholar in the postwar world. He died at his home in Utrecht on the last day of December 1966.

HERBERT H. ROWEN

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GHURYE, G. S.

Govind Sadashiv Ghurye was born into a Saraswat Brahmin family in Malvan, India, in 1893. He completed his high school and college education in Bombay, where he studied English and