

KEYNES AND THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN'S
RECONSTRUCTION SUPPLEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This introduction explains why and how Keynes became associated with the project for publishing Reconstruction Supplements that would circulate throughout Europe in 1922-3. The idea came from C.P. Scott, the long-serving editor and proprietor of the Manchester Guardian, Britain's most prestigious liberal newspaper. Keynes agreed to edit the proposed series, to recruit contributors from across Europe, and to write a number of essays himself. This was a new kind of journalistic challenge for him, but it brought both prestige and considerable financial rewards. The proposal was intimately linked with the commission for Keynes to attend the international Genoa Conference in the spring of 1922 as a special correspondent, contributing a series of articles that were widely syndicated. All this came at a critical moment in his personal life, at the beginning of his relationship with the Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova, who was to become his wife. Her impact on the project should not be underestimated, encouraging Keynes to write in a more accessible way than previously. The results were seen not only in the publication of the Supplements themselves but also in the subsequent book that Keynes published, *A Tract on Monetary Reform*, which owes much to the Supplements both in style and in substance.

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INTRODUCTION

The devastating effects upon Europe of the First World War can hardly be exaggerated. We think first of the death toll among the millions of young men who fought each other, not only on the western front in France

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but on the less well-commemorated eastern front or that between Italy and the Habsburg Empire. A vast number of others – men, women and children alike – perished through violence, famine and disease. Great empires collapsed: the Romanovs first but then inexorably the Habsburgs, the Hohenzollerns and the Ottomans. The two leading European Allies, Britain and France, eventually claimed victory; true, the peace treaties aggrandised them territorially, especially in the Middle East – with long-term results that we are still confronting today.

But the only real winner was the United States, especially in establishing its economic supremacy in a way that challenged *all* Europeans, though initially it fell to the victors among them to remake the world after this ‘war to end war’. The fact that the United States, having acted as the supreme arbiter at the peace conference in Paris in 1919, then refused to ratify the resulting treaties was a body-blow to liberal hopes. The League of Nations had been the brainchild of President Wilson and was set up as an organisation premised on American leadership, yet it subsequently became a forum from which the United States excluded itself.

John Maynard Keynes made his name in writing about the economic consequences of these successive events. Until 1914, when he turned thirty-one, he had been virtually unknown outside the University of Cambridge. He was then a young economist, but one with unusually wide interests, not only methodologically through his philosophical work on probability, but also in his political, social and cultural commitments. It was the war that brought him into a key role in the British Treasury, first on an *ad hoc* basis in advising the Government to maintain specie payment, signalling a continued commitment, despite the war, to the international gold standard. Keynes was subsequently recruited as a Treasury official and thus became largely responsible for the external finance of the British war effort. This was still nominally conducted under the gold standard, by means of huge dollar loans, some of which were in reality on behalf of Britain’s allies (France, Italy, Russia, Belgium, Serbia *etcetera*) since their own credit rating failed to satisfy the Americans.

In this way Keynes acquired a unique perspective on the issue of war debts, not least because of his own (unacknowledged) responsibility for running them up on such a large scale. Equally obvious is the link with reparations, as demanded from Germany by the victors in Paris much to Keynes’s disapproval. Here, then, lay the reasons for this young British Treasury official to resign his important government post in the early summer of 1919 and devote his time to the composition of his book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, published at the end of the year.

This was no mere economic analysis by a technical expert. It was a polemical work of great artistry and eloquence that took the world by storm.

Keynes's close friend, Lytton Strachey, the author of the recent bestseller *Eminent Victorians* (1918), could hardly have bettered the literary effect of the some of the early chapters of the *Economic Consequences*, with their feline portraits of Lloyd George and Wilson, both of them professed liberals in whom Keynes was now bitterly disappointed. Accordingly, in both Britain and the United States the book found ready admirers, especially but not exclusively on the left; in France, conversely, it faced scorn, not least because it was widely perceived as pro-German; and in Germany, it is true, Keynes's arguments were soon put to work in justifying the 'innocence campaign' against German liability for reparations, as demanded under the Treaty of Versailles. Keynes was henceforth a central figure in these international debates (Clarke 2017: 255-318).

Keynes's career as an academic economist in Cambridge, already interrupted by his wartime service as a Treasury official, was now eclipsed by his fame as a polemicist, with prestigious newspapers anxious to seek contributions from him and to print articles that were syndicated throughout the world. Only in such a context can we understand the origins, the nature and the impact of the famous Supplements that the *Manchester Guardian* commissioned under Keynes's editorship, with the general title *Reconstruction in Europe*.

It was on 12 October 1921 that the editor of the paper, Charles Prestwich Scott, met Keynes face to face. Scott, at seventy-five, was now a living legend, still sitting in the editor's chair that he had occupied in Manchester for half a century and notorious for having the ear of the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. (Scott's self-appointed role was to act as Lloyd George's liberal conscience when he strayed from the paths of righteousness.) Scott was also ready to travel to London to meet Keynes, a man half his own age, in order to sell the idea of a series of special supplements. These were to be supervised by Keynes and to be printed not only in Manchester but with translation for French, German, Spanish and Italian editions. This proposal clearly proved attractive, in more senses than one. "I like the idea and I think I might be able to make a good job of it", Keynes responded after thinking it over for a week, while making it clear that, if he agreed, it would not be a nominal commitment: "In fact, I am not prepared for my name to appear in a way that implies responsibility unless I can really exercise pretty detailed supervision over the writers" (CW 17: 320).

The proposal held two big attractions and faced two major distractions. The money on offer was obviously attractive, as Keynes immediately made clear to Scott. "The question of the disposal of the American Rights in the articles is important, for I think they could be disposed of for a very substantial sum, which would have the effect of greatly reducing the the burden on you of payment to the authors." He went into some detail about this

before committing himself. "I suggest that remuneration to myself should be at the rate of £200 issue, with additional payments for any articles which I should contribute myself" [CW 17: 321]. Thus, for each number as editor, he demanded a sum that would be worth about £8000 today; and, together with payments for his dozen signed articles, as eventually published, his total remuneration was about four thousand pounds (say, £160,000 in today's money). In the 1920s the annual salary of a Cambridge professor – A.C. Pigou, for example, who now held Alfred Marshall's former chair in economics – was around one thousand pounds a year; and Keynes was in every way junior to Pigou in the academic hierarchy. But by this time Keynes was not just an academic economist but an internationally renowned liberal publicist whom Scott very much wanted to recruit. The terms of his contract were not the problem.

There was another obvious attraction for Keynes. For in his eyes the *Manchester Guardian* was not just any old newspaper. The fact that it was published in Manchester rather than in London announced its status, speaking for the commercial and industrial interests of Britain, as it had since the days of the 'Manchester School' with its laissez-faire ethos in the nineteenth century. Until the First World War, Lancashire was still the home of a thriving cotton industry that accounted for over a quarter of Britain's visible exports. A commitment to free trade was shared by both the Liberal party and the infant Labour party; Scott had long seen it as his mission to preach the need for a progressive alliance between them, with a common commitment to social reform. Keynes knew, if only from his upbringing in a Liberal household, that Scott was both editor and proprietor of a newspaper that pre-eminently represented a strain of progressive politics with which Keynes instinctively identified.

Hence the peculiar attractiveness for him of the offer, which Keynes soon accepted despite two intervening distractions. One of these was a prior commitment to go to India to serve on a government commission. This invitation in the summer of 1921 was itself a mark of the esteem in which Keynes was now held. The fact that the invitation came from an old friend, Edwin Montagu, who was now Lloyd George's Secretary of State for India, had no doubt encouraged Keynes to accept; and the personal link likewise made it embarrassing for him to withdraw his agreement. But Keynes nonetheless did so in the following January.

By then there was a further potential distraction, one of much greater significance in Keynes's life. For this was the beginning of his love affair with Lydia Lopokova. She enjoyed, at the time, as much celebrity status as he did: not, of course, as an economist but as a Russian ballerina who had made her name with the Diaghilev company. It was in the winter of 1921-2 that the two of them reignited a relationship that was to result in their im-

probable but highly successful marriage, once Lydia's legally complicated marital status had been resolved. For Maynard, who had previously confined his romantic attentions to his own sex, this marked a major turning-point in his life. His decision to withdraw from his Indian commitment was clearly linked to his suddenly consuming relationship with Lydia.

His decision not to travel to India removed a significant obstacle to proceeding with the Reconstruction Supplements on the timetable desired by C.P. Scott. The old editor's patience was evidently taxed, as shown in his private comment in March 1922 to a trusted friend (J.L. Hammond): "Keynes is a brilliant and original thinker in his own subjects, but he is also about the most obstinate and self-centred man I ever encountered" (Skidelsky 1992: 102). Perhaps that is why Scott's two sons in the family business (Ted and John) took over from their father in handling most of the subsequent arrangements. As events turned out, the impact of Lydia upon Maynard's career did not, in the end, constitute a separate chapter from the economist's work for the *Manchester Guardian*; there was a highly significant interaction that had far-reaching consequences.

The Reconstruction Supplements began publication on 20 April 1922. In the English edition, they were printed in a format half the size of the ordinary daily editions of the *Manchester Guardian* itself, which was in those days a full broadsheet (approximately 30 inches by 24 inches, or 75 centimetres by 60 centimetres). There were illustrations – a large photograph of Lloyd George in the first issue, for example, with a message conveying his best wishes for the enterprise, printed along with messages from the Prime Ministers of Italy and Czechoslovakia. The articles were printed in three columns to the page, giving a rather crowded look to the modern eye; and Keynes evidently felt some unease. "I agree that the Supplement looks very fine indeed," he told Ted Scott on receiving the first number. "My only regret is that it should be of such large dimensions. It is very difficult to handle so large a page combined with so thick a volume" (CW 17: 353).

There were in the end twelve supplements, originally promised to conclude by early October 1922. In fact, the last under Keynes's editorship did not appear until January 1923, completing the enterprise in 782 pages of text. There were also up to fifty pages of advertisements in each issue, often coordinated with the themes covered – shipping, textiles, oil, railways, for example – which made good sense in a paper that circulated among businessmen in the north of England. But the international reach of the enterprise was integral. The first number printed – and sold – 30,000 in its English edition, though it seems that the 10,000 printed in German proved

over-optimistic; and 4000 were printed in each of the French, Italian and Spanish translations. “The financial results are a good deal below expectation (owing to Germany)”, Ted Scott told Keynes as the last issue went to press. But he still took an optimistic view of what had been achieved: “Even if we made a loss of £1000 the *Commercial* will have gained more in circulation than it could possibly have gained by the expenditure of the same amount of money in any other way. Also it has gained enormously, of course, in prestige and future developments will be easier” (CW 17: 447).

The European ambit of the enterprise was essential, as Keynes made clear in his editorial foreword to the first number. “We offer a forum to Europe”, he wrote. “I dare say that each of our readers, of whatever complexion, will be able to pick out some author as being, in *his* view, very wicked, but I hope that he will also find another whom he will deem perfectly virtuous”. He also admitted that selection of contributors was not random. “The intellectual forces of Europe will here assemble in order to reinforce those of generous impulse”, was how he put it. “We shall assume that there is nothing wrong in all men talking together; that a common purpose of mutual advantage is not chimerical; and that whatever scares and panics and excommunications may be raised by some, it is quite certain that the patient peoples of Europe are not ‘plotting’ against one another anywhere” (CW 17: 351-352).

In practice this meant that there was an undoubted liberal or left-wing bias among the various contributors. Conversely, the right-wing Prime Minister of France, Raymond Poincaré, with whom Keynes had already clashed over the terms of the Versailles Treaty, could not be recruited to offer support. Since the French edition, for reasons of economy, was printed in Germany and needed official permission to be imported into France, even its circulation in France was under threat at one point. A solution of sorts was found but it is fair to say that the Reconstruction Supplements were somewhat tainted in France by the editor’s reputation as author of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*.

The final rollcall of contributors remains impressive – even those from France. The 2nd number (18 May 1922) deliberately included a contribution from the right-wing, anglophobe diplomat and writer Gabriel Hanotaux – a “brilliant article”, as Keynes hailed it in singling it out for a riposte in his own general introduction (CW 17: 431). The 5th number (27 July 1922) printed contributions from the French left-wingers Leon Blum and Eduard Herriot and also from Joseph Caillaux, who had frequently served as finance minister over the preceding twenty years but whom Poincaré regarded as pro-German, thus reinforcing his own hostility to the project.

This number focused on the national finances of Europe. It also included articles by H.H. Asquith, the former Liberal Prime Minister of the

United Kingdom and an early patron of Keynes; by Sidney Webb, the British Fabian socialist; and by Luigi Einaudi, the doyen of Italian economists. In other numbers, there were articles by other eminent European economists, for example Gustav Cassel on Scandinavia, as well as by American financial advisers and publicists with whom Keynes had had previous contacts in Paris, like Thomas Lamont, R.C. Leffingwell, Walter Lippmann and O.M.W. Sprague. Likewise, Carl Melchior, with whom Keynes had established a friendship from the days when Melchior participated in the peace negotiations, gave crucial assistance in recruiting other German contributors as well as writing himself.

Financial expertise was by no means the only criterion in the selection of contributors. The historian Lewis Namier, now making his name in Britain, was enlisted to write on Galicia and (later) on the agrarian revolution; another historian, R.H. Tawney, already well-known as a left-wing polemicist, wrote on the coal industry. Nor were the British politicians all Liberals: Lord Robert Cecil was a prominent Conservative supporter of the League of Nations; Ramsay MacDonald was the leader of the Labour Party, Philip Snowden and Arthur Greenwood his colleagues; and intellectual supporters of the Labour Party, including H.J. Laski and G.D.H. Cole, also wrote articles. The contributors whom Keynes recruited, in short, ranged from Dr Hjalmar Schacht, the later architect of financial policy in Hitler's Germany, to the glamorous Queen Marie of Rumania (with a large photograph of her majesty accompanying her plea for her adopted country).

By the time the first Supplement appeared on 20 April 1922, regular readers of the *Manchester Guardian* were already thoroughly familiar with the byline J.M. Keynes. During the previous ten days the paper had printed on its main editorial page a series of special articles by him, sent from the Genoa international conference. This assembly was convened largely at Lloyd George's instigation in hopes of softening the terms of the Versailles settlement, as imposed by the Allies without real negotiation after the Armistice; his aim was to bring European leaders together in a process unkindly dubbed 'casino diplomacy'. At Genoa, for the first time since the war, Germany and Russia, neither of them members of the League of Nations, were invited to participate in an international conference; the other notable non-member, the United States, had declined to attend.

Keynes, although Lloyd George's notorious critic over Versailles, recognised with approval this change of course in British policy. It was naturally applauded also by the *Manchester Guardian* – with the venerable Scott, as usual, acting as keeper of Lloyd George's conscience. It made good sense, then, for the paper to commission Keynes's despatches from Genoa, despite the fact that it also had a special correspondent there whose any-

mous reports conscientiously supplied a less opinionated account of how the conference was proceeding.

The interlocking relationship between Keynes's Genoa despatches and the Reconstruction Supplements is therefore obvious. In fact, his article "The Stabilisation of the European Exchanges: a plan for Genoa", appearing in the first Supplement on 20 April, had already been published in the daily edition of the *Manchester Guardian* on 6 April, on the eve of Keynes's departure for Genoa. There were to be twelve of his subsequent despatches from Genoa itself, published between 10 April and 4 May 1922. All of these have been reprinted in the relevant volume of the *Collected Writings* (CW 17: 370-420). This volume is now the accessible modern source, preserving these articles for posterity in a far more satisfactory format than the two densely printed columns on the editorial pages of the *Manchester Guardian* in which they originally appeared, day by day.

There is, however, another source that allows us a glimpse of the contemporary impact that Keynes's articles made upon one impressionable reader – and also conveys some telling advice to the famous economist about the style in which it was most effective to clothe his thoughts. For Lydia had quickly emerged as a transformative influence in the shaping of Maynard's life in ways that affected the trajectory of his career, not least in the way that he chose to propagate his ideas. She was now living in Maynard's London house in Gordon Square, which Maynard had acquired alongside his culturally sympathetic Bloomsbury neighbours, notably Clive and Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf.

Lydia's relationship with them, however, was not easy, especially after her lover had left for Genoa. "It is very empty Maynard, without your walk of life", she had written to him on the day of his departure, 8 April; and luckily her letters to him for the rest of April 1922 have been preserved (unlike most of his in reply) and published in a useful modern edition, from which my quotations are taken. "I gobble you my dear Maynard", Lydia wrote on 10 April. "I am not like you talented in idea put into words, I express myself better in impulses to you" [Hill and Keynes (eds.) 1989: 31]. The intensity of her feelings, and her warm sensuality, are inimitably expressed, in ways that triumph over her eccentric syntax and her idiosyncratic grasp of the English language.

Lydia was well aware that Maynard was not acting exclusively for the *Manchester Guardian*, a daily newspaper that was often difficult to obtain in London on the morning of publication, and one with which she was hitherto unfamiliar. Keynes had in fact arranged for syndication of his articles,

well aware of the financial advantages. Hence the misconception, naturally seized upon in the French press and in Conservative newspapers in Britain, that he was in Genoa simply on behalf of a German newspaper. On 15 April he issued a clarification – “the newspapers for which I am acting as correspondent being the following: the *Manchester Guardian*; the *Daily Express* of London; the *New York World* and Syndicated Press of America; *L'Ère Nouvelle*; *Corriere della Sera* of Milan; *Berliner Tageblatt*; *Prager Presse*; *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna; *Algemeen Handelsblad* of Amsterdam; *Dagens Nyheter* of Stockholm” (CW 17: 380).

“So very famous”, Lydia had commented on 12 April, with admiration (though also with some disappointment that her own picture had only appeared in the popular newspaper the *Daily Express*) [Hill and Keynes (eds.) 1989: 32]. It was a couple of days before she caught up with the published version of Maynard’s first despatch from Genoa, which she specially commended. The style Maynard now adopted was hardly that of an academic economist. “Not much flourish of trumpets this time”, was how he began and he was positively theatrical in setting the scene. “The British prime minister steps on the stage, no longer clothed in the imperial purple with the emblems of victory and omnipotence, but in the drab garment of an itinerant friar, weary, sorrowful for the world, a preacher; or as another Charles V, on his way to the monastery of Yuste, taking Genoa en route” (CW 17: 370).

The essential conflict, Keynes maintained, was not a struggle between Russian Bolshevism and “the bourgeois states of the nineteenth-century type”. It was instead, in his view, “between that view of the world, termed liberalism or radicalism, for which the primary object of government and of foreign policy is peace, freedom of trade and intercourse, and economic wealth, and that other view, militarist or, rather, diplomatic, which thinks in terms of power, prestige, national or personal glory, the imposition of a culture, and hereditary or racial prejudice”. Any contest between a bourgeois and a socialist form of state was a secondary struggle to be measured by their relative efficiency in generating the economic wealth of the community. “Soldiers and diplomatists – they are the permanent, the immortal foe” (CW 17: 373). And the chief significance of the Genoa Conference, as it seemed to Keynes on his arrival, lay in the fact that both Germany and Russia had duly accepted their invitations to attend.

In particular, the Russian representative, Georgy Chicherin, was identified as a key figure. Distantly related to Pushkin, Chicherin came from a noble family; he was himself a homosexual and now well established as Soviet foreign minister (1918-30). He was a worldly, cultured figure whom Keynes found sympathetic and the fact that Chicherin had brought with him copies of both *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919) and its

sequel, *A Revision of the Treaty* (1921), obviously ingratiated him to the author, who now used the *Manchester Guardian* to commend Chicherin, along with Lloyd George, as the two statesmen quick-witted enough to rescue the conference from the usual stalemate.

On many of the international financial issues, Keynes was himself playing a double game. He was, as an acknowledged expert, confidentially urging upon the British delegation his own plans for currency reform, while simultaneously, as a journalist, writing despatches in support. Lydia's comment, that "you always go in advance of all the others" may betray some naivety in her admiring comments; but she was right to seize on the prominence of his role. "You are very famous, Maynard" [Hill and Keynes (eds.) 1989: 34].

This famous economist evoked from the Russian ballerina an even warmer response when he tackled the subject of the old tsarist debts, left over from the war and repudiated by the Bolshevik regime. For Poincaré's France, with its million bondholders, this was hardly less of an issue than Germany's liability for the payment of reparations under the Versailles Treaty. From his own perspective, Keynes made the same comparison, but suggested that "Russian debt is a miserable repetition of reparations and inter-Allied debt". He pointed to the hollowness of the Anglo-French demand: not a demand for the actual payment of the supposed milliards of money at stake, but merely a demand for "recognition" of the debt by Russia – "just as we successfully pressed Germany to repeat words which certainly did not express sincere intention". Here was the common taint of humbug in the treatment of Germany and Russia alike. "We act as high priests, not debt collectors", Keynes mockingly commented. "The heretics must repeat our creed" (CW 17: 388).

This article, his fifth despatch and filed on Monday 17 April, was printed in next day's *Manchester Guardian*, headlined "Rubbish about Milliards". It was duly applauded by Lydia in London, appreciative of the sympathy shown for her compatriots; but by then, as she could now read in the main news column of the same day's paper, events had moved on in a dramatic way. What threw everything into disarray in Genoa was that the Germans and Russians had meanwhile slipped away for the Easter weekend for a bilateral meeting at nearby Rapallo, where they had signed a treaty of mutual recognition, cancelling outstanding financial claims between them. This move, which certainly gave Chicherin the initiative, effectively upstaged the Genoa Conference itself.

It took some adroit footwork by Lloyd George to salvage the work of the international gathering that he had himself summoned. As in Paris in the early summer of 1919, this great pragmatist saw his role as that of making the best of bad situation; and, now as then, the real question was how

far the French could be brought to an accommodation over debts. Any idea of wiping the slate clean at this point would not be condoned by a French government, least of all by one under Poincaré, who sat out most of the conference in Paris, fearful of any personal contagion from Lloyd George.

In his despatches, Keynes blamed the Germans rather than the Russians for any breach of faith in concluding their Rapallo Treaty. In London, as ever, he found at least one appreciative reader of his proposal on a Russian settlement. "I do want it to be adopted. It is clever", Lydia assured him. "When I read what you write somehow I feel bigger than I am" [Hill and Keynes (eds.) 1989: 35]. Keynes also put some of the blame on the British Prime Minister, for having talked mainly to the other wartime Allies – "he should have remembered that M. Chicherin is one of the most brilliant diplomatists in Europe and by no means in the position of a vanquished suppliant" (CW 17: 396). The *Manchester Guardian*, though always inclined to give Lloyd George the benefit of the doubt, backed up its correspondent in this reading of the situation, with supportive leading articles on both 18 and 19 April.

This helpful orchestration reached its climax on Thursday 20 April. The *Manchester Guardian* now printed a further sympathetic editorial alongside Keynes's seventh despatch on page 6 of the paper; not only that, but on page 4 there was half a page advertising the first number of the Reconstruction Supplements, published that day; and on page 8 of the paper a photograph displayed the debonair figure of its own man in Genoa, respectably clad in his homburg hat, his waistcoat and watch-chain, and carrying his walking stick. "Another surprise – you in M.G. quite a big photo", wrote Lydia. "Very famous!" [Hill and Keynes (eds.) 1989: 36; the despatch is misdated 21 April in CW 17: 394; the photograph appears as frontispiece to that volume].

The launch of the *Manchester Guardian* Reconstruction Supplements could hardly have had more loyal and prominent support. We do not have Maynard's letters to Lydia at this point but we can surely infer from her responses that he must have evinced some modesty (real or affected), thus earning her reprimand: "Do not speak against your articles in journalism – just think how many peoples read, understand and remember it; and when you go to bed have the feeling of the work you have done with mind and inspiration" [Hill and Keynes (eds.) 1989: 36]. Lydia was clearly pleased that Maynard was devoting so much attention to Russia in his later despatches – those published on 26 April, 1 May and 4 May especially – and approved too of their tone of sceptical sympathy towards the Bolshevik experiment.

Chicherin indeed emerged from Keynes's despatches as the most impressive figure at the conference, entitled to "retire home with dignity and an enhanced prestige" as a statesman who was both "astute and skilful"

[CW 17: 419]. But any chauvinism on Lydia's part was, in the end, less significant than her influence in encouraging Maynard to communicate his ideas in an idiom that would reach a wide readership. When the first Reconstruction Supplement appeared, Keynes was still in Genoa and was to contribute five further despatches over the next two weeks. By then he had fulfilled his contract as correspondent to the newspaper, even if the conference was still limping on. In rather the same mood that he had quit Paris before the peace conference was finished in 1919, he returned to England at the beginning of May 1922, and he now devoted his energies that summer into making his ideas about the Reconstruction of Europe as persuasive as possible to the thousands of readers across Europe who had by this time subscribed to the *Manchester Guardian* Supplements.

The point about Keynes's journalism is not just that he found that he was good at it, nor that it earned him sums of money that elevated him far above the income of a professor of economics, nor that he was indeed famous as a result. The point is also that it is in his journalism that we find the origins of some of his animating ideas. And when he developed these later, in less ephemeral publications for a more professional readership, he was now content to do so in a style that still carried the marks of the format in which he had written as a journalist – arresting in expression, striving for simplicity in exposition, with few arcane allusions that would only appeal to a highly-educated readership, but instead with a spontaneous resort to the vernacular in clinching his arguments.

Keynes's book *A Tract on Monetary Reform* (1923) deals with complex issues in economic policy and international finance. It certainly earned the respect of some of the most rigorous academic economists of the day. "The book will differ from my other recent volumes", Keynes had explained to his publisher, "in that it will be suitable for use as a textbook in universities, and as it contains a considerable amount of new matter adapted either for advanced or relatively elementary work I think it might have a considerable vogue as time goes on for this purpose" (CW 19: 77). Yet this purported economics textbook had its origin in the Reconstruction Supplements of the *Manchester Guardian*. The edition of the *Tract* that we use today, published under the auspices of the Royal Economic Society, allows us to identify the precise extent to which Keynes modified his original articles.

That he modified them so little is itself remarkable. True, Keynes put in a prefatory note acknowledging his use of "the material, much revised and rewritten, of some articles which were published during 1922 in the Reconstruction Supplements of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial*" (CW 4: XII).

But this formula made light of his borrowings from the Supplements; the revision and rewriting was trivial – a word changed here or there – throughout a substantial part of the book. The first chapter, “The consequences to society of changes in the value of money” (CW 4: 1-36) follows the text of a long article in the 5th number, 27 July 1922. The second chapter, “Public finance and changes in the value of money” (CW 4: 37-42), follows, paragraph by paragraph, an earlier article in the 5th number, thus inverting their original sequence but otherwise printing substantially the same text, except for a variant ending (with the original printed as an appendix in the modern edition) (CW 4: 161-163). The third chapter, “The theory of money and the exchanges”, after a new beginning, prints a version of another of the articles that Keynes had published in the Supplement’s first number (CW 4: 70-80). After some divergence, this chapter reverts to a substantial borrowing from a further article in the first number (CW 4: 94-115). Thus, while chapters four and five of the *Tract* are new, the first three chapters, running to about eighty pages or half the book, represent a very light reworking of what had first appeared in the Reconstruction Supplements.

There is nothing disreputable in this. After all, the notion of self-plagiarism is itself a contradiction in terms; Keynes himself had offered some acknowledgment of his debt; and there was no conflict of interest with the original publisher. The *Manchester Guardian* felt sufficiently rewarded for its own role in publishing the twelve Reconstruction Supplements under Keynes’s editorship, stating in the final number on 4 January 1923: “The reception accorded to what has been described as ‘the most ambitious journalistic venture of modern times’ has been very gratifying”. Keynes’s contract with the *Manchester Guardian*, moreover, had always protected his own rights to republication of his own articles. “You indicated to me in conversation”, he had told C.P. Scott back in October 1921, “that the idea of possible republication did not much interest you, as it will be a trifling affair compared with the main project and a complication not worth bothering about” (CW 17: 322). For himself, as he already sensed, the balance of comparative advantage tipped the other way.

Much as he valued the opportunity to assume the editorship of this great enterprise, then, his perspective was not just that of a journalist but that of an economist who knew that his impact would finally be measured and enhanced by what appeared in print between hard covers. Conversely, the process of editing the Reconstruction Supplements for the *Manchester Guardian*, and of simultaneously representing the newspaper at the Genoa conference, enhanced his consciousness of the gifts of expression that these tasks stimulated in him. The familiar quotation for which he is popularly known to the general public – “*In the long run we are all dead*” – is a sentence that first appeared in chapter 3 of his *Tract on Monetary Reform*;

and the very next paragraph of this 'textbook' duly reverts to an altogether different vocabulary: "In actual experience, a change of n is liable to have a reaction both on k and k' " and on r " (CW 4: 65). As Lydia had assured Maynard, his adventure in journalism was not to be despised. What he wrote for the *Manchester Guardian* in 1922 addressed immediate issues of the moment in Europe; and in doing so, it stimulated a kind of analysis that has an enduring relevance for us today.

Then as now, problems of debt sundered Europe. In those days the debts on which international debate focused were those generated by the war and now owed by the successor regimes in Germany and Russia (whose public reconciliation at Rapallo thus had its own logic). Keynes had already spoken, with considerable influence, on the German problem. In his introduction to the Reconstruction Supplements, he contested Hano-taux's notion that his local mayor, still condemned to living in the cellar of his war-damaged French house, could reproach the unfeeling author of the *Economic Consequences* for not helping him to rebuild the house. Hence Keynes's riposte: "I protest in the name of good sense and our own interests, and tell the mayor very confidently that his house will be rebuilt much sooner by my economics than by the sentimental miscalculations of M. Poincaré" (CW 17: 432). In the 8th number of the Reconstruction Supplements Keynes returned to his theme, dismissing "the fallacy, which deceives many Frenchmen, that the extremity of France's need enlarges Germany's capacity" (CW 18: 33). In short, his analysis rested on the perception that this was not in fact a zero-sum game, however prevalent the misconceptions to the contrary.

The economic consequences for Russia became central to Keynes's agenda in 1922, as he made clear to readers of the *Manchester Guardian*. "If we practise on Russia what we have already practised on Germany, and compel her under force of economic pressure to recite a promise which she cannot keep and which we know she does not mean to keep, we shall have disgraced ourselves" (CW 17: 391). He was confident that a settlement of the old Russian debts to the bondholders was possible. His premise here (again a message unwelcome to French ears) was that private investors had no right to any public guarantees: "Those who lent money to the tsar's government took a big risk" (CW 17: 391). In short, having lost their bet against history, such investors needed to take a haircut in order to allow the world to move on. Now as then, we may well think today, problems of debt as between different parts of Europe need rational solutions at an inter-governmental level, writing down debts that will never be collected in order to liberate and stimulate the forces of economic recovery.

Keynes's verdict on the Genoa Conference was given in the 3rd number of the Reconstruction Supplements, published in June 1922. It was double-

edged. “The creation of atmosphere, the development of public sentiment, the precise emotional suggestion of the cant phrases of the hour, the gradual shifting of what it is correct for the conventional person to think and say – these things are very important; but chiefly *as a means* to make possible the other task of government – a right policy of action” (CW 17: 420-421]. He thus allowed Lloyd George some credit – yet only for achieving the first of these objectives in his policy at Genoa. “But if we regard it not as propaganda but as an attempt to draw up a well-considered plan for the economic reconstruction of Europe, then the unfavourable judgment of the world must be accepted” (CW 17: 421-422). And it was “on the general grounds of our eventual advantage in promoting the health of Europe”, that he set the real criterion by which any policy should be judged (CW 17: 424). The theme of the Reconstruction Supplements in 1922 was the need to restore and promote the health of Europe as an organic whole – a criterion easier to state than to implement but surely well worth identifying.

Original files of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Manchester Guardian Commercial Supplements* were consulted in the Cambridge University Library – dates as give in the text. There are useful sections on the Supplements in Harrod (1951: 315-16); Skidelsky (1992: 102-106); and Moggridge (1992: 376-379).

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