

"We Dream our Dream Still": Ruralism, Empire and Contemporary Reactions to New Australia in Britain

In 1893 'a gallant band' of one hundred and ninety-nine reformers and bohemians left Sydney on the ship the *Royal Tar* to establish an ideal community in Paraguay.¹ Over a hundred years after its foundation the story of the settlement persists as a curiosity item in newspapers and on television. Voyeuristic rediscoveries of the descendants of the colonists have dismissed the project as a mere oddity: Rockhampton's *Morning Bulletin* described it as of interest only to students of 'the strange freaks of history'.² Recently, two major accounts of the colony have been produced, and it frequently emerges in the recollections of the life of its most famous resident, the Australian writer Mary Gilmore, who edited the settlement's official newspaper.³ Often viewed merely as a cult, subsequently disavowed by many of those who had participated in it, the project sits uneasily within conventional accounts of Australian history. In later years those who returned from the settlement as prodigal sons became objects of disdain and derision.⁴ This article is more than just an exercise in the reclamation of the marginal and the peripheral. A re-examination of the colony provides insights into the Australian cultural nationalism of the 1890s, shows the persistence of English ruralist impulses in the Australian colonies, and demonstrates the existence of an audience for the settlement overseas. Rather than constituting a footnote in the story of the 'Nervous Nineties', the 'New Australia' colony generated an important literature that held apparent lessons for the development of the White Settler colonies, and the British public at 'Home'. Using discussion of the colony in the British and Dominion press, this paper places the 'New Australia' colony in context, considers its utopian (or more properly dystopian) qualities, and examines the image of Australia mediated through the memory of the Paraguayan colony.

I

The 'New Australia' colonists present a perverse and aberrant image; they migrated from an increasingly popular destination for migrants, and, whilst declaring themselves as Australians in search of a 'New Australia', rejected domestic Australian cultural nationalism at the time of its fullest expression in the years before Federation in 1901. As Helen Irving remarks of the colony: 'its impact in Australia was largely limited to the removal from the country of many who might have contributed actively to the emerging debate about national identity'.⁵ Moreover, rather than furthering the cause of labour in Australia, for some critics Lane's colony drained away much of the energy and naïve optimism of the early Labor Party, contributing to its role as a pragmatic engine for winning elections, but depriving it of the energy and vision that might have led it towards a more flexible, less statist, radicalism.⁶ In later decades some of the descendants of the Lane colonists moved away from the democratic spirit of the 1890s in the Australian colonies altogether, embracing Paraguayan Stroessnerite politics, and turning their backs on the vision of the founders of the colony. Traditional accounts have seen the project simply as an outgrowth of the eccentricities of its leader, the trades unionist and radical journalist, William Lane. In an assessment in the *Sydney Bulletin*, the project was dismissed as naive and ill-considered, and represented as overly-dependant on the mercurial temperament of Lane himself.⁷ Now viewed less as a utopian vision, and more as an adventure story, recent discussion of the colony of New Australia have settled on an image of

Australian migrants out of place and time, engaged on a fool's errand, cast incongruously against the backdrop of a pitiless Paraguayan jungle that tested their Australian grit and resolution.

The 'New Australia' colony has tended to be examined in terms of its implications for Australia alone. In reality, the colony recruited willing participants from throughout the empire, and especially from Britain and New Zealand. Voyeuristic accounts of the decline and dissolution of the colony became popular staples of colonial newspapers.⁸ Drawing on less frequently examined discussions of the settlement in the British domestic and colonial press, this article scrutinises the origins of the colony and locates its history within the recent literature on a 'British World'.⁹ Once divorced from its close connections with the radical and reform movement in the Australian colonies, interpretations of the colony reveal the image of Australia preserved in the settlement. New Australia carried meanings that resonated far beyond Australia. The antecedents of the scheme lay in a tradition of alternative community-building experiments exported from Britain, whose benefits were accentuated by the crisis on the land in the 1870s.¹⁰ Many of the posthumous accounts of the colony in Britain arose from an interest in these utopian projects and a belief in their inherently flawed nature.¹¹ Lane, himself, was marked by the conservative and traditionalist values of English rural society. 'Disraeli and Queen Victoria were our god and goddess, while Gladstone and John Morley symbolised all that was evil and destructive', recalled his brother, Ernest.¹² William Lane's own patriotism and fervent jingoism, which sat uneasily alongside his militancy in the cause of labour, can be traced back to these influences. In his later career in New Zealand he simply reverted to type. This article, then, seeks to construct a holistic vision of the career of William Lane, and attempts to place 'New Australia' in the broader context of the empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The project was transformative for the image of Australian communities overseas in this period.¹³ The depth of this experience should not, however, obscure the trans-national and imperial roots of the endeavour. For British colonists the settlement's object was less the exploration of an extra-Australian utopia, and more about rectifying traditional English dispossession from the land. Moreover, for British opponents of the project it demonstrated that the insufficiently 'British' character of the Australian colonies made them vulnerable to threats from the radicals and socialists who had inaugurated the settlement. Returned to its contemporary context therefore, 'New Australia' demonstrates the contradictions about the Australian colonies and Australians as imperial subjects in the European and British imaginations.

William Lane is a figure that embodies many of the confusions between English and Australian colonial identities in the late nineteenth century. Born near Bristol in 1861, he arrived in Brisbane in the mid-1880s after a period in Canada and the United States. Like other English migrants and exiles, Lane was exuberant about the possibilities he saw opened up in the Australian colonies to new arrivals from 'Home'. In company with numerous fellow emigrant radicals from Britain he saw the Australian colonies as spaces of re-invention and renewal for jaded British migrants.¹⁴ Establishing a strong presence in the volatile ferment of Queensland politics, he appealed to a broad constituency of trade union and radical support.¹⁵ Lane's views harmonised well with the diffuse European and British origins of colonial radicalism during this period in which figures as diverse as Johann Rodbertus, Bismarck, Laurence Gronlund, Ferdinand Lassalle, Jesus Christ and Herbert Spencer provided

ready reference points for an agitation in a state of flux.¹⁶ Versed in the literature of Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Laurence Gronlund, and the Viennese political economist, Theodor Hertzka, author of *Freeland*, Lane rapidly established a reputation as a polemicist and a radical reformer.¹⁷ He was a prime mover in the Australian Labor Federation in 1889, and editor of *The Boomerang*, which offered a fierce critique of Queensland as a 'happy exploiting ground of the syndicate and capitalist'.¹⁸ Lane also founded the formative labour journal, *The Worker* that serialised the new progressivist literature for the masses.¹⁹ Through his journalism he did much to shape the politics and opinions of the shearers during a volatile period in the shearing industry.²⁰ In the early 1890s he became less certain about the advantages offered by emigration to the colonies, and of the freedoms and benefits proffered by the Australian social model. As one British radical commented about recent migrants to Australia: 'many of them left old lands to escape from the evils of competition and surplus labour, only to find the evils existent in the new land'.²¹ Lane's novel, *The Working Man's Paradise* in 1892, designed to raise money for Queensland shearers imprisoned on charges of conspiracy, provided a bitter rebuke to the prevailing vision of the Australian colonies as places of prosperity and social advancement for the lower orders. In a famous scene in Paddy's Market in Sydney, he wrote of the despair of passersby: 'All around were like this. All! All! All! Everyone in this swarming multitude of Sydney. On the faces of all was misery written. Buyers and sellers and passers-by alike were hateful of life'.²² The novel captured the despondency of a generation of radicals disillusioned by the experience of social and political conditions in the Australian colonies, and scarred by the bitter labour disputes in the shearers' camps around Barcaldine.²³ Thereafter he retreated into morbid dystopian fantasies about racial and military threats to Australia.²⁴ His retreat was also a physical one, leading to descriptions of him as a reclusive 'Utopian dreamer'.²⁵ Lane was opposed to an Australia that, in the view of *The Bulletin*, was beholden to a country that 'has a reverence for everything that is ancient and pretentious and utterly useless'.²⁶ From 1893 he was instrumental in the foundation of the colony of 'New Australia' in Paraguay, where a group of loyal followers and bohemian radicals sought to recreate an Australia renewed and revived, shorn of the accretions and retrograde tendencies of the Old World. For Lane and his followers these corruptions had simply been transported to the 'New' via the imported gubernatorial system, English traditions of landownership, and pre-existing British hierarchies that contributed to an 'Old' Australia fettered to traditional British power and titles.²⁷ Repeated references to Lane's expedition to Paraguay as a band of 'Pilgrim Fathers' aboard a new *Mayflower* accentuated his distance from the 'Old World' features of British Australia.²⁸ For him, salvation was to be found in a society that displayed the levelling and meritocratic tendencies he had experienced whilst resident in the United States. This in turn reflected debates current in the Australian colonies about whether Australia should retain the British link, or seek an independent separatist destiny on the North American model.²⁹

II

The story of the 'New Australia' colony is well-known in Australia, but was also widely reported in the United Kingdom. William Lane's career reflects the intertwining of British and Australian radical traditions that was such a marked feature of the later nineteenth century.³⁰ Lane lived in Britain until his middle teens. There his autobiographical memories reflected the economic and social problems on the land in the later nineteenth century. William Lane was a representative type of the

dispossessed rural poor. His family life was touched by the collapse of the peasant smallholder in Britain, and the decrepitude of English village life. The son of an alcoholic father, his early years were spent in rustic poverty.³¹ In many ways he was an ideal type of the emigrant British labourer that Mary Gilmore recalled as having 'the land hunger of the land starved English farm labourer'.³² In his writings he offered up a vision of English rural culture in dissolution. As a young man he was much influenced by the social segregation and inherently unjust nature of village life in the shires. Recalling his earliest experiences, he remembered the forbidden vision of manicured lawns and exotic plants hidden behind the walls of the local aristocratic estate and remodelled as private enclosed parkland. In *The Working Man's Paradise* he places such reminiscences in the mouth of the English emigrant, Ford:

It made me radical...It knocked respect for constitutional authority out of me. I didn't know enough to understand the wrong of one lazy idler having this splendid place while the people he lived on kennelled in hovels. But it struck me as so villainously selfish to build that wall, to prevent us outside from ever looking at the beautiful lawn and flowers. I was only a little chap, but I recollect wondering if it would hurt the place to let me look, and when I couldn't see that it would, I began to hate the wall like poison.³³

Images of the 'lost' greens and open spaces of England haunted Lane throughout his life. In New Zealand in later years he still reminisced about the green places of rural English society and their place in history: 'They were essential to the physical health and prowess of the smallest community. It was from the village green that the archers came who won Crecy and Agincourt. It was on the cricket field that the victors of Waterloo got grit and endurance'.³⁴ Lane's writings displayed a faith in the elemental power of nature to reform and redeem. In this they were of a piece with the work of the Australian naturalist movement that drew inspiration from memories of English village culture and rural authors like Gilbert White and Richard Jeffries that expressed the persistence of English rural society in the face of the major social changes of the nineteenth century.³⁵

Lane's articles also spoke of a common Anglo-Saxon pedigree and a nascent colonial democracy emerging from the constraints of Neo-Norman and long-standing feudal values exported to the colonies. Lane wrote in his newspaper, *The Boomerang*: 'We want no aristocracy with its rank that the people gave not. We want no militarism to pension the drones and stifle liberty. We want no connection with Europe except our share of the knowledge which our fathers suffered, for the fruits of which, unjust governance now robs from our brothers. We want to be left alone and here in Australia to work out a new civilisation'.³⁶ The colonial radical tradition that Lane represented was a mixed one that drew on many established features of British platform politics.³⁷ Long-standing images of Anglo-Saxon 'freeborn Englishmen' also migrated to the Australian colonies in opposition to the squatters. Most accounts of Lane emphasise his 'Saxonness' and the antecedence of his ideas in notions of traditional English liberties. Some depictions represent him as touched 'by an adventurous spirit, inherited from the old seafaring stock from which he sprang'. He was often placed in company with English religious divines like Bunyan and William Tyndall, or sometimes next to representative English radicals like Gerard Winstanley and Oliver Cromwell.³⁸ Lane's ideas spoke reflexively to a predominantly British settler society, in which radical political ideas remained firmly embedded in the

discourses of figures like Thomas Carlyle and Charles Kingsley.³⁹ In Lane's speeches all the bile of English emigrant Lane's dislike of the British aristocracy and monopolistic land ownership, imposed by the Normans and transposed on Australia by their aristocratic descendants, emerges strongly. Lane was much inspired by British Owenite community models and the mythology surrounding the free Teutonic peoples of the German forests. He remarked:

We Germanic peoples come into history as communists. From our communal villages we drew the strength which broke Rome down, the energy which even yet lets us live. Not where men beg landless for work in electric-lighted factories, not where women poverty-fearing amid heaps of riches, shrink from child-bearing, was courage born that still keeps the drum-tap beating with the sun. It was from wife-kept homes in free villages, where the land was common and all were equal, and only the sluggard and the criminal were outcasts, where every man had friends to stand by him in his need.⁴⁰

Australian radical journals featured numerous complaints about titled ruffians in the Australian colonies terrorising the small selectors and bearing the same names as the aristocratic families at home who were also busy clearing the poor off the land. The term 'squattocracy' much used about them was a hybrid, evoking some of the long-established hostility to traditional aristocracies and symbolising a visceral dislike for English manners and customs that echoed 'Old World Ways'.⁴¹ Australian radicals, like their British counterparts, collated lists of corrupt, immoral and venal British landed dynasties, and revealed their debased pedigrees, and violent and acquisitive ways.⁴² Against this background, the cry of 'busting up the big estates' echoed as loudly in colonial Victoria as it did in rural Berkshire or Hampshire.⁴³ As one migrant Chartist resident in Melbourne put it in the 1850s: 'here the lands are locked'.⁴⁴

Lane was one of the many colonial radicals influenced by Henry George in this regard. As Paul Mulvey has demonstrated, Georgeites like Josiah C. Wedgwood and Alfred Milner were drawn to the characteristics of minimal government, small, rural producerism and rugged self-reliance that they believed typified White settlement in the broader empire.⁴⁵ In Victoria and New South Wales, Georgeite visions for the restoration of the 'cottage homes of England' in the settler colonies gained strong support in the trough of the depression in the 1890s. As Bruce Scates has commented, a land tax had 'arresting relevance' in the aftermath of the land speculation and accumulation that disfigured the colonial economies during the 1890s.⁴⁶ In common with a number of prominent reformers Lane passed through the penumbra of Georgeist ideas in the late 1880s. A member of the Knights of Labor whilst resident in the United States, his ideas expressed many of the notions of sympathy for Georgeism, workplace fraternity, and secular religiosity that were current in that organisation.⁴⁷ Appealing to the displaced and dispossessed 'Goths and Vandals' that feature in George's writings, Lane became 'more and more fanatical in his support for land reform'.⁴⁸ His early appeal was to the constituency of selectors and subsistence farmers who embraced the Georgeite gospel. In the contemporary writings of Henry Lawson they feature as otherworldly visionaries, unable to prevent their calves from breaking into the vineyard, but able to excel 'in propounding...the doctrines of Henry George'.⁴⁹ Prior to the establishment of the Australian Labour Party in 1891, and its formalisation as a government -in-waiting after 1904, the Georgeites in the Australian

colonies exercised considerable influence amongst the fluid and shifting groups that comprised organised labour in embryo.⁵⁰

In 1896 and 1897 William Lane made recruiting trips to Britain where he gave lectures on the colony accompanied by lantern slides.⁵¹ Thereafter the fate of the 'New Australia' colonists became very familiar to the British reading public.⁵² In the rural Cotswolds, lecturers from Paraguay encouraged the formation of imitative ideal communities like that at Whiteway outside Stroud.⁵³ In 1895 the Foreign Office report on the colony noted: 'It must not be inferred from the term 'New Australia' that the movement was confined to Australians; there was a large number, and it is even said the majority, who were not Australians at all in the strict sense of the term, but who had come from Britain and Ireland and some there were too of foreign nationality'.⁵⁴ The 'New Australians' often spoke of themselves as essentially British, a feature of life in the colonies that was reflective of the British orientation of settlers in the White dominions. The British labour press recorded evenings in the colony devoted to Yorkshire dialect reading and the perusal of British novels.⁵⁵ Here there is evidence of the cultural transplantation of social capital to the broader Anglophone world noted by Gary Magee and Andrew Thompson.⁵⁶ Moreover, the same romance of South America spoke to Britons and Australians alike. They shared a common interest in totemic folk heroes like Garibaldi, whose adventures in Uruguay laid the basis for his future political career, and who portrayed the gaucho culture of Argentina as a unique society and a model for truly free men.⁵⁷ Indeed the eventual fate of the colonists and attempts to rescue them by both the British and New South Wales governments working in tandem was commonly seen as retarding ambitions towards Australian nationalism rather than encouraging them.⁵⁸ Witnesses reported the sight of returning colonists cheering a barque flying the British flag during their evacuation down the Parana River.⁵⁹ In 1903 survivors of the colony in Lane's Cosme settlement still described themselves as 'about an average lot of British outlanders with fully average faculties but having a bit more than the average amount of persistence'.⁶⁰ Accusations that the British settlers were amongst the laziest demonstrate an interfamily squabble, within the imperial community, rather than an accurate picture of relations within the various camps in the settlement.⁶¹

For Lane himself, and for many of the colonists who shared his aims, his 'Anglo-Saxonism' was malleable, drawing on memories of Norman dispossession, and the single tax on land values, but also reflecting wider aspirations towards a united Anglo-Saxon brotherhood in the White settler colonies, rooted in common bonds of blood and kinship. In Lane's vision such societies would exclude non-White, Black or indigenous cultures. In his writings he saw only White Anglo-Saxon males as capable of the monogamy necessary for the creation of stable family units, in contrast to the predatory tendencies of the Chinese or of indigenous cultures that bred promiscuity, debauchery and the sexual abuse of children.⁶² In New Australia he enforced a rigid segregation of White settlers from the local population. Rose-Soley reported that: 'Intermarriage with natives entails expulsion from the community, and though all white-blooded nationalities are admitted to membership (French, Germans and Swedes have joined the pioneers) coloured blood, of whatever race, is a hopeless bar'.⁶³ The indigenous Guarani Indian population was relegated to the role of mere servants and day labourers.⁶⁴ These issues were echoed in other ideal colonies in Central and Latin America. In the Bellamyite colony of Topolobampo in Mexico, founded in a rejection of local indigenous society and with the aim to Aryanise the

country, there were also attempts to exclude; the intention to reject those of from 'semitic or Mongolian races' was a stated feature of its advertising propaganda.⁶⁵ Such ideas unsettled some British radicals. *Justice* commented of Lane's colony they reflected fears about the degeneration of 'the great and good Anglo-Saxon race'.⁶⁶ In Paraguay, which had been left devastated and depopulated after the War of the Triple Alliance with neighbouring Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, the colony provided the opportunity to reverse predictions about the inevitable victory of non-white peoples over Europeans in the tropics. It is possible to detect here the influence of the British academic and Australian politician, Charles H. Pearson. In his writings the British race in the tropics was doomed to be supplanted and overwhelmed by indigenous peoples resistant to disease and able to adapt European technologies to the local environment. Lane, it seems, hoped to reverse this process.⁶⁷ Moving away from his initial ambitions for the project, by the end of his period of residence at the Cosme colony, Lane saw the settlement as a way of furthering Anglo-Saxon domination in the Southern Hemisphere, portraying the White Australian settlers there as the basis for a new White empire of the Southland.⁶⁸ Such notions tied in strongly with already deeply ingrained conceptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority in the broader empire and the threats it faced in the future from indigenous, Asiatic and non-European cultures in the Southern Hemisphere and in Latin America.⁶⁹

III

Lane's attempt to establish an ideal colony of Australian exiles in Paraguay is frequently cited in debates about the counter-cultural forms characteristic of popular labourism in the 'Nervous Nineties'. The broader image of Australia mediated through the Paraguayan colony is, however, less well understood. In Stewart Grahame's *Where Socialism Failed* (1912) the colony stood for the perceived failures of communal and expropriatory socialism, and provided an example of the apparent inconsistencies that accumulated around a radical reformist posture. Grahame's work strongly influenced the received image of Australia in the United Kingdom. It raised the spectre of 'reverse emigration' and ran counter to visions of Australia as a 'working-man's paradise' prevalent in Britain since the support provided by port-workers in the Australian colonies for striking dockers in the Pool of London in 1889.⁷⁰ Moreover, it substituted for images of Australia as a refuge and place of haven, notions of Australia as a land of failure and of despair. The publicity material produced by the 'New Australia' company made great play of the poor conditions existing in Australian towns and cities, applying images that were redolent of contemporary descriptions of European town life:

Our critics are pleased to inform us that it is a 'far cry' from the world's civilisation to our proposed future home in South America. Civilisation! Is it in the great city streets where side by side are found the mansions of the rich and the miserable hovels of the poor; where our workers are driven from poorly-paid slavery to the still deeper degradation of the loafer; where our daughters are forced to hide their misery in dens of shame; where our little ones are denied the blessing of fresh air; where the health-giving sun can only reach them through the opaque atmosphere that hangs over our cities like one vast funeral pall, a fit emblem of the premature disease, decay and death that overtake all centralisation, and which science itself cannot check?⁷¹

The project drew strength from the reaction against the rapid growth of urban Australia in the 1880s, where apparent over-investment, greed and narrow self-interest led to the contraction of the urban economy and the collapse of the land boom in Melbourne with disastrous consequences for the Australian colonies. The 'instant city' of Melbourne became an embodiment of unregulated and uncontained urbanism that blighted Australia's rural image.⁷² As Graeme Davison points out, the utopian projects of Rev. H.F. Tucker, the Georgeite Murtho Village Settlement in South Australia, and the work of other exponents of 'back to the land' values in Victoria and New South Wales, were fuelled by a reaction to urban excess that mimicked the traditional English dislike of cities and urban commercial activity.⁷³ In what follows, this article re-examines the contemporary image of 'New Australia' and locates the debates it aroused within contemporary panics about socialism and the platform of social reformism in the Australian colonies in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Sometimes depicted as an impractical dreamer, or as a misguided visionary, Lane's ideas accord with the tone of 'cosmic mooning' noted by E.P. Thompson as a feature of the reform energies, land evangelism and ethical socialism of the period.⁷⁴ Lane turned his back on unionism and industrial conflict and sought to enact the ideas of his heroes William Morris and Henry George, by embracing rustic escapism. In this sense, Lane is occasionally seen as part of a debate about 'New World' arcadianism in which the Antipodes provided an alternative rural environment that might swallow up the social features of Old World culture and create an alternative, non-hierarchical and 'purified' England.⁷⁵ Lane's retreat to Paraguay and later refuge in New Zealand showed his personal despair at the failure of this project. Following a traditional route of exile taken by those disgraced in the Australian colonies, in many ways Lane found his arcadian dream in New Zealand where he bought into New Zealand settler myths of an ideal society of yeoman pastoralists and notions of a 'Better Britain'.⁷⁶ There was a marked tendency here to invoke a 'lost' Europe restored in the farthest outpost of empire. Lane's own personal history and family history of conservatism, led him to make an abrupt break with his utopian land-reforming zeal. In New Zealand, he became a well-known exponent of jingoism on the conservative *New Zealand Herald* and supported the British war effort at the time of the outbreak of the Great War in 1914.⁷⁷ Once resident in New Zealand, and with his erstwhile ardour for the project dampened, his stated aim of writing a sequel to the *Working Man's Paradise* that explored the personal redemption of the novel's characters through their experience in the Paraguayan colony evaporated.

For many hopeful migrants, the 'New Australia' colony was the quintessence of Australian pluck, grit and determination. Commonly portrayed as created and populated by predominantly Australian colonists, the challenges posed by the new community encouraged the first wave of settlers to invoke the pioneering spirit of the outback. Stewart Grahame saw the movement as emerging from, and attracting, the small selector class who languished in the 'back blocks' and responded readily to Lane's charismatic vision of a South American utopia dependent on skills acquired in the Bush and populated by a community impervious to the rigours and hardships imposed by distance. The scheme was rooted in Lane's own nostalgic vision of a return to the imagined social harmony existing at the height of the gold rush in early Victoria and New South Wales, when democracy reigned on the gold fields and small

squatters and miners lived in apparent amity.⁷⁸ For sympathisers and exponents it also provided the opportunity for a practical application of the ideas proposed by the various Henry Georgeite societies and Edward Bellamy clubs that acted as the backbone of the labour movement in the United Kingdom and the White settler colonies.⁷⁹ Indeed, for some, it was the very failure of the colony to live up to Bellamy's vision that condemned it.⁸⁰ For its critics, the colony seemingly appealed to those Australian radical separatists who hoped that seeking shelter beneath the Paraguayan flag would 'guarantee them their "emancipation" from all the ills of the British yoke'.⁸¹

IV

Outside Australia, the colony of 'New Australia' stood for far more. Widely reported in Britain in the years after 1893, it became a totem for those critical of radical and socialist alternative cultures.⁸² Late in the day for experiments of this nature, and inevitably summoning up memories of the Owenite and Icarian colonies of the 1840s, it came to stand for the follies, eccentricities, and idiosyncracies of alternative living.⁸³ Hostile accounts of the programme abounded.⁸⁴ In many accounts it became the Australian equivalent of the so-called 'nut' colonies of Georgeites and 'New Lifers' in the United States, in which descriptions of vegetarianism, free love and temperance were highlighted.⁸⁵ Moreover, the settlement demonstrated that many of the utopian projects once commonplace in Britain, had now migrated south to the White settler colonies, where they apparently posed a threat to newer societies, with more brittle foundations, that were less able to cope with them. As Helen Irving has pointed out, such utopian thinking was commonplace in the Australian colonies in the build-up to Federation.⁸⁶ Lane's references to the writings of Hertzka were significant here. Rose-Soley, noting that the prospectus of the New Australian Co-operative Society was issued 'almost on the day, when Professor Hertzka, in far off Europe, was signing the preface to his work on an imaginary free land', wrote in the *Westminster Review*: 'That two similar movements should take place simultaneously at opposite corners of the earth is sufficiently significant; we need no further proof that philosophers consider the old social systems worn out, the old remedies useless, save for purposes of temporary expediency'.⁸⁷

The colony featured widely in discussions about the inevitable failures of socialist models. In 1909, following many years of debate about the continuing problems of those who were involved with the New Australia project, it was taken up with some gusto by the Anti-Socialist Union in Britain. A newly established organisation affiliated to the Conservative Party and dedicated to exposing the inconsistencies within 'socialism', the Union commissioned a number of works that recorded in a scurrilous manner and in sensationalist prose, the problems experienced by the colonists.⁸⁸ Graeme Douglas Williams (who wrote under the pseudonym of 'Stewart Grahame') wrote prolifically on this subject, and returned obsessively to the colony time and time again to record his impressions.⁸⁹ Through interviews with leading figures involved in the colony, and study of documentary and newspaper sources he built up a highly partisan account of the movement behind 'New Australia', which he augmented with his own observations. 'I am no stranger to old Australia', he wrote 'and have slept over five hundred nights in a mud hut in "New Australia."' ⁹⁰ Much of this material was prepared for publication to mark the centenary year of the colony in

1912. Grahame's treatment of 'New Australia' demonstrates the confusions about Australia in the European imagination, and illustrates the tendency to populate it with spectres of European revolt. For the exponents of an anti-socialist platform in Britain, the back-to-the-land movements that were a marked feature of the period were a screen for more revolutionary doctrines, and presented a distorted and hopelessly optimistic vision of human nature that made them prey to infiltration by extreme, foreign and malign agitators. Here Bloomsburyites consorted unawares with dangerous European secret agents. In John Buchan's *Mr Standfast* written in 1919, the action begins in an English Garden Village project run on Morrisonian lines, where the ideal community has become the unwitting host for a group of idealistic, but misguided, 'militant pacifists', prepared to do a deal with the German government to bring the war to an end on German terms. The inhabitants are unpatriotic, foreign-orientated, pretentious and other-wordly, proving oblivious to the spies operating in their midst. Their conversations range across hostility to Tsarism, alternative medicine, and African nationalism. Seen in the words of one inhabitant as 'one great laboratory of thought' the city is in reality a place of ineffectual and impotent introspection where the inhabitants achieve little'.⁹¹

Much the same vision of an otherworldly and misguided community prey to outside manipulation operates in British descriptions of Lane's 'New Australia'. For Stewart Grahame, the colony placed a burden of expectation on the colonists that proved beyond the human spirit to fulfil. The project was overshadowed and, to some extent, inspired, by memories of the successful Jesuit empire in Paraguay. Jesuit missionaries and William Lane's followers alike could find solace in the same canonical text: Thomas More's *Utopia*.⁹² Comparing the disintegration of Lane's socialist colony in Paraguay to the Jesuit missions, Grahame extolled the virtues of the early Jesuit farms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that bloomed against the backdrop of the same landscape and drew on a traditional Christian morality. Here an authentic egalitarianism apparently reigned which excluded materialistic concerns and, even, money. Lane's role as a messianic figure led contemporaries to compare him to colourful religious demagogues of the past. From Nonconformist Bristol, he was a product of classic English Puritanism. Moreover, in the United States he was exposed to the brotherly religious harmony of the Knights of Labor.⁹³ In Queensland, he thrived on the unionism that W.G. Spence described as coming to 'the Australian bushman as a religion...bringing salvation from years of tyranny'.⁹⁴ Pursuing this religious metaphor, Jack Lang remarked that 'when it came to swaying people and ideas...Lane was a regular Savonarola'.⁹⁵ In the authentic and successful Christianity of the Jesuits in Paraguay, it appeared, true religious feeling and belief won out over the ersatz-faith espoused by Lane in his 'new exodus'.⁹⁶ Lane, by way of contrast, offered a quack remedy and a religion that sold his followers short. Stewart Grahame wrote:

At every period of the world's history there have been visionaries, obsessed with the idea that it is possible, by readjusting the established order of society, to provide a panacea for all sufferings and tribulations of mankind. Notwithstanding the repeated failure of all utopians, however, there are still those who believe that life in a communistic or socialistic state would be a paradise on earth! No better example than New Australia! The story of their enthusiasm, struggles, trials and eventual abandonment of their original ideal should serve as an object lesson and a warning to future generations.⁹⁷

In hostile accounts of the colony accusations of free love and other evidence of moral laxity surfaced regularly to illustrate the moral decay of a community, impossible to discipline without religion.⁹⁸ Incidents of suicide and self-harm were similarly highlighted as a life-denying feature of the colony. Such accounts emphasised that “‘Heaven on Earth” was a hell in reality’.⁹⁹

The debate about ‘New Australia’ also had important implications for contemporary visions of Australia itself. For many progressives and reformers the Australian colonies were ‘a working man’s paradise’ that provided a model for popular enfranchisement, graduated social welfare reforms, and industrial arbitration.¹⁰⁰ The emergence of successful Trade Unions and the Australian Labor Party held out the prospect for the formation of Labor governments at state and national level. The Australian colonies and the Federated state after 1901 were both an inspiration and an example to progressives and reformers in Europe. On a visit to Australia in 1908, Keir Hardie, the leader of the British Labour Party, expressed his fervent belief that the country would be the first to be taken over and run in the interests of the labouring classes.¹⁰¹

Behind the debate about ‘New Australia’ there were larger issues about the direction William Lane’s utopian project in Paraguay might inspire the mother country to take. The failure of ‘New Australia’ and Lane’s Cosme colony were totemic. At a time when Sir Charles Dilke and William Pember Reeves saw a future model and possible course of development for Britain rooted in the precedents provided by Australasian state socialism, the Cosme scheme bore out a more pessimistic reading of the social reformism that underpinned Australian popular politics.¹⁰² For Conservatives in Britain the scheme demonstrated the hollowness of the vision held out by Australian labour successes. ‘New Australia’ embraced a communitarian ideal apparently unsuited to farming life in hard South American jungle country. As one writer commented: ‘The incentives which go to make pioneering the most interesting and attractive profession possible were all wanting. The freedom, individuality, personal initiative, security of tenure, and the glory of battle single-handed against the hostile forces of nature did not enter into their lives’.¹⁰³ The pessimism of some critics about collective action was borne out by the survival of a final few settler families, prospering as rugged individualists in competition with their fellow ‘Cosmeans’ and neighbouring farmers. The abandonment of good fellowship and ‘mateship’ in favour of private ownership and a free-for-all for the remaining land and equipment left over following the collapse of the colony seemed to demonstrate that private enterprise and initiative, not communitarian impulses, showed the way. The *New Zealand Times* predicted: ‘The people who go, will all go to Paraguay as Communists, but they will hive off and remain in the country, the government tempting them to become successful individualists. And in their capacity as individualists, the industrial training they will get in their passage through the Communistic system, may be the making of them.’¹⁰⁴ Even for well-disposed critics of the project, the colony apparently suffered from the smothering effect of an over-mighty bureaucracy that stifled individual effort, and demonstrated the drawbacks to collective, state-directed action:

A horrible habit of holding meetings and appointing boards and committees and sub-committees spread among the argonauts and everyone who wasn’t

on a board or a committee rose in revolt against everyone who was. Meanwhile, the figureheads of the show continued to issue vast masses of futile rules and regulations and the expedition was governed altogether too much. By the time it arrived in Paraguay it seems to have been practically reduced to chaos'.¹⁰⁵

For some, the government of the colony amounted to little more than 'mob rule'.¹⁰⁶ In this sense New Australia was apparently a microcosm of the problems of socialist models of political organisation and the controversies they generated. New Australia, therefore, had an incarnation outside Australia, and implications for European political debates that are much less frequently addressed in recent treatments of the colony.

Moreover, Lane's administration of the colony laid him open to charges of dictatorship and favouritism in which early expectations of 'mateship' imported from the Australian colonies, were confounded by Lane's pretensions to leadership, and a steady drift towards 'Bonapartism' and paternalism. Inevitably for many community members, he was seen merely as an ersatz-squire, and acquired the sobriquet of 'King Billy'. In this context the colony conformed to the pattern of other community experiments established by charismatic leaders in the US and elsewhere, and showed a renunciation of the mutualism Lane had absorbed from his time in the Knights of Labor.¹⁰⁷ For Grahame, these despotic tendencies in the colony contradicted Lane's own predictions that freed from the shackles of capitalism, 'they would all dwell together in brotherly love'.¹⁰⁸ The tyrannical spirit abroad in the colony was symbolised by Lane's appropriation of the title of 'Chairman', which contravened his own frequent declarations in favour of egalitarianism and popular fellowship. For some critics Lane's title indicated the inevitable direction taken by the charismatic politics of personality and demagoguery, once freed of the spirit of 'mateship'.¹⁰⁹ Schisms rapidly emerged that led to secessions from the original group and the foundation of a second colony of Lane loyalists at Cosme, a few miles from the site of the initial settlement. Within Australian radical circles, the experience of the project highlighted the divisions and tensions within the radical community, and became a fertile source of reminiscences and memoirs for a number of years afterwards.¹¹⁰ The Sydney radical, Mary Jane Gilmore, wrote: 'First one person was chairman, then another; one arrangement followed another, troubles and dissensions grew; parties formed ready to cut one another's throats, each one petitioning the government against the other'.¹¹¹ These arguments and disagreements obscured the fate of the colonists, and made it difficult to arrive at a balanced conclusion about the success of the colony, or the later career of Lane. Alfred Rogers reported in 1896: 'For some two years a thick darkness has overspread the affairs of the New Australia co-operative colony in Paraguay, and perhaps the most common belief has been that since William Lane, the organiser of the colony, and his personal following quitted the main body of settlers, the whole movement has gone to pieces and been abandoned'.¹¹²

Marked too, were the prevalence of images from Europe's own tradition of revolt and revolution that it appeared impossible to disentangle from the fate of 'New Australia'. Grahame saw 'New Australia' as both a warning, and an example of the excesses of socialism that emerged with uncontrolled vigour against the background of a new society lacking the social constraints of 'Old Europe'. In hostile accounts extreme radicalism raged unchecked in Queensland and New South Wales in the

eighteen-nineties, to transplant itself finally into the shacks of Lane's colony in Cosme. Grahame's account of 'New Australia' formulated the parameters of later 'Red Scare' material, and transposed images of the Paris Commune of 1871 and of the French republic of 1793 onto Australia. Spectres of the Paris Commune loomed large here. Lane, rooted strongly in the European tradition of revolt, opened himself up to such interpretations. Quoting Cromwell, Cabet, Kossuth and Garibaldi, and known as 'Australia's Robert Owen', his ideas showed the congruences between European historical memories of direct action politics, and popular radicalism in the Australian colonies.¹¹³ Like William, his brother, Ernest, embraced the images and memory of the Commune in his early adolescence.¹¹⁴ For critics, the events of the 1890s demonstrated that revolution might take root anywhere, even in an apparently prosperous environment. Stewart Grahame wrote: 'The student of history will discern a close similarity between the march of events at New Australia and that classic pattern of socialist administration - the Reign of Terror. By an interesting coincidence exactly a century elapsed between the two experiments'.¹¹⁵ Lane, for his detractors, was a French revolutionary figure who, like Marat, had lived in several countries, was a professional man, and founded *The Worker*, exactly a hundred years after Marat established *L'Ami du Peuple* in 1789. French Revolutionary comparisons abounded about Lane. St. Ledger christened him 'the arch-Girondin of Australian socialism', who, like his namesakes, broke away from the excesses of the mainstream movement.¹¹⁶ Stewart Grahame believed that the 'New Australia' scheme was gestated in revolutionary Queensland amongst strikers in the itinerant outback camps. Here the conditions of the Paris Commune were duplicated; 'red revolution raged', with possibilities for socialism, 'which they hoped to achieve at one blow in Australia, which was to become a Paradise of Socialism'.¹¹⁷ In Queensland, striking shearers also consoled themselves with a mythical cycle of revolt, in which 1891 took on the same ominous quality as 1851 (marked by Louis Napoleon's coup) and 1871 (the year of the Commune).¹¹⁸

For British critics of Lane's project, the prevalence of such doctrines in the Australian colonies demonstrated the unique vulnerability of younger, newer countries to revolutionary impulses. As Rose-Soley pointed out, they were not simply a feature of 'overcrowding and senility in worn-out nationalities', but gravitated to the 'New World' as well.¹¹⁹ A review of Stewart Grahame's critique of 'New Australia' pointed out the apparent absence in new societies of those stabilising factors that held revolution at bay in Europe: 'The old world populations of Europe are perhaps growing immune to the extremer forms, but in a new country a mental as well as a bodily disease spreads like wildfire'.¹²⁰ For Australian radicals, these aspects of the colonies were a positive virtue, to be embraced: 'It would almost appear that there is a certain plasticity about Australia and its institutions which makes important transformation comparatively rapid. It may well be that young nations are much more responsive to new ideas and easily moulded into more new forms than old nations, just as children are much more easily modified mentally or physically by adults'.¹²¹ Critics, however, saw the Australian colonies as fatally weakened by the absence of those hereditary and hierarchical institutions that underpinned the social stability of Britain. In this debate there were echoes of the sentiment that the Australian colonies were insufficiently 'British' and therefore too easily stirred by militant outsiders to resist radicalisation.¹²² The help bestowed on the East End dock-workers by Australian trades unionists also betokened the power and strength of the new unions in Australia, which apparently commanded vast resources, were able to work across

state boundaries, and, even, on occasion, operated in international contexts. Dockworkers, facing outwards in their commitments and employment, were seen as uniquely vulnerable to the appeal of internationalist notions and doctrines.¹²³ In short, this was a socialism capable of undermining employers, fomenting world-wide revolution, and dragging down wage levels to create even more inflammatory social situations. For its detractors, the rationale behind Lane's project was chiefly the intention of reversing the defeat experienced by the shearers, through a policy in which 'it is still possible to checkmate capital by withdrawing labour, not temporarily by means of another strike, but bodily to a new country, where none but the workers themselves shall profit by their industry'.¹²⁴ Lane hoped that his colony would undermine unstable employment markets. With the brightest and best workers lured away, conservative critics of the programme believed that the Australian economy would contract still further, shattering prospects for economic recovery after the damaging strikes of the early 1890s and imperilling the position of the White dominions.

V

Like many other community experiments in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Paraguayan settlement became a by-word for failure. An eclectic mixture of theories and economic impulses lay behind the project to transplant Australian settlers to Paraguay. In this, it drew on many of the pre-existing schemes to introduce urban settlers into the rural sector of the economies of colonial Australia.¹²⁵ Under the pressure of conditions in the Paraguayan jungle many of the communal and fraternal bonds of those who emigrated evaporated. Ambitions to realise the utopian aspect of the scheme were abandoned by the early 1900s.¹²⁶ By this stage Lane's statement that 'we dream our dream still' misrepresented the reality of the colony.¹²⁷ The ideas of Henry George were one component element of the scheme. As with formalised attempts to implement the single tax, there were variable results in Paraguay.¹²⁸ Survivors of the project, however, bought up the land of departing colonists, embraced rural small-landholdings, and flourished under the ethos of small proprietorship. As critics pointed out, here the colony validated arguments for systems of wide yeoman land-ownership, and the diffusion of rural land more broadly.¹²⁹ In this, the fate of the colonists supported Georgeite perspectives on the distribution and benefits of small landed proprietorships over other contemporary methods for land redistribution.

By the middle years of the twentieth century the New Australia and Cosme colonies were a septic Eden. The rapid descent of the colonists into subsistence farming and a 'White tribal' culture that seemed to presage the loss of their European roots alarmed those Australians who examined the colony in the twentieth century. In the 1950s it became a metaphor for the fragility of European culture in the Southern Hemisphere. Stewart Grahame was alert to the implications of this, seeing the plight of the colonising Australians in Paraguay as redolent of the position of the orphaned White communities of the Southern Hemisphere. He portrayed the colonists 'with their illusions gone', with 'nothing to do but sit in their mud huts, and endure their manifold miseries, with a hopeless feeling that they would have to put up with to the end of their days'.¹³⁰ The narrative of his book was interwoven throughout with images of White children in rags, without shoes, or prey to venomous snakes. Against

the background of the 'White Australia' policy 'New Australia' provided a warning of what might happen when Australians lived in proximity to non-White peoples, losing their language, culture and distinctiveness, and becoming, instead, a recidivist mixed, non-English speaking community, divorced from its European roots. Above all, however, the message that Grahame drew finally from the failure of the 'New Australians' was that the colonists had laid themselves open to the pollution of socialism, and socialist methods, itself a kind of primitivism. For him socialism and barbarism were synonymous: 'Those who have studied at close quarters the manners and customs of primitive races will see a close correspondence between their habits and the ideals of socialism. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that State Socialism amounts to nothing less than a hideous form of state-enforced barbarism'.¹³¹

'New Australia' and the Cosme colony provided an unlikely context for competing visions of Australia. Behind the images generated by the debate about the colony's success lay a narrative about the perception of Australia overseas. It brought notions of a collectivist, egalitarian nation into conflict with fears about the potential for socialism to undermine Anglo-Saxon communities in the wider empire. In Europe, both radicals and anti-radicals were critical of the scheme. The anarchist Peter Kropotkin famously condemned it out of hand, suggesting that the colonists should have stayed at home.¹³² Revelations about the mismanagement of the project helped undermine notions of Australia as a 'working man's paradise' that appealed strongly to progressivist opinion in Britain.¹³³ Even sympathetic radicals were mystified by the revival of such outmoded utopian ideals in a society that was making important gains in welfare policy, franchise reform and the planned arbitration of industrial disputes.¹³⁴ Amongst conservatives there were fears that the contamination of Australia by socialist ideas boded badly for England, showing the susceptibility of the White Settler colonies to extreme opinions, and providing solid evidence of an Anglo-Saxon community suborned by socialist ideas. In neighbouring New Zealand (usually perceived as more stable and British) the scheme provided opportunities for some quiet gloating at the durability of the New Zealand social model, and discussion of the propensity to disloyalty of the Australian colonies: 'Australia where the industrial conditions appear to the workers hopeless, yearns for Paraguay, and finds hundreds of pilgrims for the new *Mayflower* – the *Royal Tar* to wit – while New Zealand, where labour has no reason to be dissatisfied with its lot, has so far contributed but four heads of families'.¹³⁵ The decline of the colony in the early twentieth century, and the survival of only a few settlers through the application of 'wage slavery' and capitalist farming methods in contravention of the declared intentions of the colony's founders, gave proof positive to its detractors of the superiority of capitalism and individualism, and illustrated the apparent bankruptcy of William Lane's egalitarian 'mateship'.

In the 1950s and 1960s the colony of New Australia provided a perverse image. A place of 'reverse' migration, it was a paradox, a home to migrants from a country that was the envied destination of most migratory endeavour. Joining the colony, one 'New Australia' settler declared that 'under the rugged Andes, the same old southern cross, which marks the road for the bushman here, will shine down on a new and better Australia'.¹³⁶ In reality the colony was unable to disassociate itself from traditional European preoccupations with socialism and conservatism. Steeped in images from the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, and described in terms reminiscent of the attacks made on the Owenite communities in the 1840s, 'New

Australia' illustrated the complexities that persisted in European perceptions of Australia.

¹ *Labour Prophet*, 1 August 1895, p. 116.

² *Morning Bulletin*, 9 July 1921, p. 9.

³ Mary Gilmore, *Old Days, Old Ways: A Book of Recollections* (Sydney, 1934), pp. 82-3 and 179-83.

⁴ See the post-Paraguay career of the South Australian Georgeite journalist, Harry Taylor outlined in Melissa Bellanta, 'Transcending Class? Australia's Single Taxers in the Early 1890s', *Labour History*, 92 (2007), pp. 17-30.

⁵ Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 42.

⁶ Graeme Duncan, *The Australian Labor Party: A Model for Others* (Fabian Society, London, 1989), p. 2 and Anthony J. J. St. Ledger, *Australian Socialism: An Historical Sketch of its History and Development* (London, 1909), pp. 37-8.

⁷ 'The New Australia Madness', *The Bulletin*, 10 June 1893, p. 6.

⁸ *Ibid*, 31 March 1894, pp. 6-7.

⁹ See especially Stephen Constantine, 'British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880: From Overseas Settlement to Diaspora?' in Carl Bridge

and Kent Fedorowich (eds.) *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London, 2003), pp. 16-35.

¹⁰ For an analysis of nineteenth-century arguments about the land in Britain, see Paul Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity and the Politics of Land, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, 1998), chs. 6 and 8.

¹¹ See articles in *Freedom*, 29 May, 5 June and 12 June 1957 and *Tribune*, 24 July 1963, p. 6

¹² E. H. Lane ('Jack Cade'), *Dawn to Dusk: Reminiscences of a Rebel* (Brisbane, 1939), p. 26.

¹³ There is only a small literature on Australians living overseas during this period, but for a rare study see Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism and Modernity* (Cambridge, 2001).

¹⁴ Andrew Messner, 'Land, Leadership, Culture and Emigration: Some Problems of Chartist Historiography', *Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), pp. 1093-1109.

¹⁵ Ross Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland: From the Dreaming to 1915* (St. Lucia, 1982), pp. 317-20.

¹⁶ Raymond Markey, *The Making of the Labor Party in New South Wales* (Sydney, 1988), pp. 297-8.

¹⁷ Hertzka's, *Freeland: A Social Anticipation*, which appeared in an English translation in 1891, preached collective ownership, an end to exclusive property rights and a profit sharing system. It had a strong impact on the form taken by Lane's 'New Australia' colony in Paraguay. For Hertzka's projects, see *Seed-Time*, 1 January 1892, pp. 4-10.

¹⁸ 'A Swagman's Farewell' from *The Boomerang*, quoted in *Freedom*, 22 June 1889, p. 196.

¹⁹ Michael Wilding, 'William Lane and the *Worker Book Fund*: "Progressive Books at Cost"', *Southerly*, 3 (1981), 329-334 and Harry J. Powell, 'The Labor Party in Queensland', *The Contemporary Review*, 69 (1896), pp. 404-7.

²⁰ Lloyd Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement* (Sydney, 1935; reissued, 1981), pp. 24-54.

²¹ D. Levy, 'The Labor Party in Queensland', *The Social Democrat*, 1 June 1897, p. 173.

²² Michael Wilding (ed.), *The Working Man's Paradise: An Australian novel by 'John Miller' (William Lane)* (Sydney, 1980) p. 36.

²³ St. Ledger, *Australian Socialism*, pp. 4-19 and John Docker, *The Nervous Nineties* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 132-49.

²⁴ See Kay Saunders and Katie McConnel, 'The Question of the Day: The Maintenance of Racial Rhetoric in Queensland, Australia: William Lane and Pauline Hanson as Racial Ideologues', *Immigrants and Minorities*, vol. 19 (2000), 45-66, John Kellett, 'William Lane and "New Australia": A Reassessment', *Labour History*, 72 (1997), pp. 1-17, Janeen Webb and Andrew Eustice, *Aliens and Savages: Fiction, Politics and Prejudice in Australia* (Sydney, 1998), pp. 150-9 and for the best overview of Australian popular politics during this period, Bruce Scates, *A New Australia: Citizenship, Radicalism and the First Republic* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 6.

²⁵ Frank Bongiorno, *The People's Party: Victorian Labor and the Radical Tradition, 1875-1914* (Melbourne, 1996), pp. 135-6.

²⁶ *The Bulletin*, 24 March 1894, p. 4.

²⁷ Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, pp. 63-66 and Peter Love, *Labour and the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism* (Melbourne, 1984), pp. 1-19.

²⁸ *Freedom*, 29 May 1957.

²⁹ For the best account of these debates, see Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), chs. 11-14.

³⁰ Frank Bongiorno, 'Fabian Socialism and British Australia, 1890-1972' in Phillip Buckner and R Douglas Francis (eds) *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary, 2005), pp. 209-360.

³¹ Lane, *Dawn to Dusk*, pp. 26-7.

³² Gilmore, *Old Days, Old Ways*, p. 26.

³³ Wilding (ed.), *The Working Man's Paradise*, pp. 79-80. For the same story recounted of his early years see Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, pp. 25-6.

³⁴ *Selections from the Writings of 'Tohunga'* (William Lane) (*New Zealand Herald*, Auckland, 1917), p. 42.

³⁵ Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: the Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), ch. 6.

³⁶ *Selections from the Writings of 'Tohunga'*, pp. 64-5

³⁷ See for the overlap between British and Australian labourist politics, Stefan Berger, 'Labour in Comparative Perspective', in Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane and Nick Tiratsoo (eds.) *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 309-40 and Paul Pickering, 'Loyalty and Rebellion in Colonial Politics: The Campaign Against Convict

Transportation in Australia' in Buckner and Douglas Francis (eds.) *Rediscovering the British World*, pp. 87-107.

³⁸ Untitled cuttings assembled by Herbert Roth in 'New Australia Movement – Research Notes and Clippings, 1895, 1905, 1957', [94-106-17/20], Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Extracts from 1893; Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, pp. 159, 166-7 and 253, and A.J. Rose-Soley, "'New Australia": Communistic Work at the Antipodes', *Westminster Review*, 140 (1893), pp. 525 and 531. For images of Elizabethan seafarers in imperial discourses see Peter J. Cain, 'Empire and the Languages of Character and Virtue in Later Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4 (2007), pp. 249-73.

³⁹ Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, p. 116 and for the British origins of many of the key debates about colonial reform agendas, see Mark McKenna, *The Captive Republic: A History of Republicanism in Australia, 1788-1996* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 5-9. Henry Kingsley, Charles Kingsley's brother, lived in the Australian colonies for a time and produced an early Australian romance which contains the first allusion to Australia as a 'Working-Man's Paradise', see Henry Kingsley, *The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn* (London, 1859).

⁴⁰ From a lecture by William Lane's brother, John Lane, in Brisbane in May 1924 which drew on Lane's original writings. Quoted in Llano Colonist, *Communities of the Past and the Present* (New Llano, Louisiana, 1924), p. 50. See a similar speech in Wilding (ed.), *The Working Man's Paradise*, p. 110.

⁴¹ For the squatters in Victoria and New South Wales, see Stephen H. Roberts, *The Squatting Age in Australia, 1835-47* (Melbourne, 1935), pp. 372-77 and A.G.L. Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District: Victoria before Separation* (Melbourne, 1996) ch. 6.

⁴² See, for example, *The Truth*, 3 October 1897, p. 1, and George Black, *Why I Am a Republican* (Sydney, 1891), pp. 13-19.

⁴³ Francis Adams, *The Australians: A Social Sketch* (London, 1893), pp. 63 and 195.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Paul Pickering, 'Betrayal and Exile: A Forgotten Chartist Experience' in Michael T. Davis and Paul Pickering (eds.), *Unrespectable Radicals? Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 201-217.

⁴⁵ Paul Mulvey, *The Political Life of Josiah C. Wedgwood* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁶ Scates, *A New Australia*, p. 66.

⁴⁷ Robert E. Weir, *Beyond Labour's Veil: the Culture of the Knights of Labor* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 72-3.

⁴⁸ Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labour Movement*, p. 57.

⁴⁹ Quoted in *Loc cit.*

⁵⁰ See Bellanta, 'Transcending class?', pp. 17-30.

⁵¹ *Seed-Time*, 1 October 1895, p. 15 and 1 July 1897, p. 15.

⁵² The foundation of the colony, and appeals for funds, were reported extensively in the British radical press: see, for example, *Land and Labour*, 1 March 1894, p. 24, and *The Clarion*, 20 February 1897, p. 60.

⁵³ M.J. Spargo, 'My Visit to the Tolstoyan Colony at Whiteway', *Social Democrat*, vol. 5 (1901), p. 273.

⁵⁴ *Report on Subjects of General and Commercial Interest, Paraguay: Report on the 'New' Australia Colony in Paraguay*, (No. 358, Foreign Office, May 1895), p. 3.

⁵⁵ *The Clarion*, 24 October 1896, p. 338. Even the simple visit of a brass band from Lancashire to Australia and New Zealand could stir these latent British sentiments. *The Gisborne Times* reported 'The simple and popular old English melodies known to all wherever the atlas is painted vermillion, assume a deeper meaning, and a stronger hold upon the people when interpreted by the Besses'. *The Gisborne Times*, 5 May 1907, quoted in *Tour of the Besses o' th' Barn Band* (Radcliffe, 1908), p. 2

⁵⁶ Gary S. Magee and Andrew Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World c.1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 45-63.

⁵⁷ Garibaldi fought for Uruguay against the Argentine Confederation in the 1840s. See Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven, 2007), pp. 37-46 and for the

appeal of South America to radicals more generally, see R. B. Cunningham Graham, *Thirteen Stories* (London, 1942 [1900]), pp. 45-6.

⁵⁸ *The Bulletin*, 17 March 1894, p. 6

⁵⁹ *Report on the 'New' Australia Colony in Paraguay*, p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Cosme*, November, December, January, 1903-04, p. 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁶² Jacqueline Dickenson, *Renegades and Rats: Betrayal and Remaking of Radical Organisations in Britain and Australia* (Melbourne, 2006), p. 39.

⁶³ Rose-Soley, 'New Australia', p. 537.

⁶⁴ In contrast to Lane and the 'New Australia' settlers, R. B. Cunningham Graham, who had travelled the region, expressed sympathy for the plight of the Guarani; see Cunningham Graham, *Thirteen Stories*, pp. 34 and 39.

⁶⁵ *Seed-Time*, 1 July 1893, pp. 5-8.

⁶⁶ *Justice*, 23 March 1901, p. 8.

⁶⁷ See Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (London, 1893), pp. 59-64

⁶⁸ Stewart Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed: An Actual Experiment* (London, 1912), p. 82 and Anne Whitehead, *Paradise Mislaid: In Search of the Australian Tribe of Paraguay* (St. Lucia, Queensland, 1998), p. 60.

⁶⁹ Paul Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge, 1986), ch. 1.

⁷⁰ For 'reverse migration' see Eric Richards, 'Running Home from Australia: Intercontinental Mobility and Migrant Expectations in the Nineteenth Century' in Marjory Harper (ed.) *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants 1600-2000* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 77-104.

⁷¹ *New Australia: the Journal of the New Australia Co-operative Settlement Association*, 28 January 1892, p. 1. For Lane's comments on the 'city plague' of urban living, see 'John Miller', 'The Essential Condition of Social Reconstruction' in *Seed-Time*, 1 July 1895, pp. 6-11.

⁷² Graeme Davison, 'Gold Rush Melbourne', in Iain McCalman, Alexander Cook and Andrew Reeves (eds.), *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia* (Cambridge, 2001).

⁷³ Graeme Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* (1978; Melbourne, 2004), ch. 10.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Stephen Yeo, 'A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1880-1896', *History Workshop*, no. 4 (1977), p. 14

⁷⁵ James Bennett, *'Rats and Revolutionaries': The Labour Movement in Australia and New Zealand, 1890-1940* (Dunedin, 2004), pp. 60-62.

⁷⁶ See Rollo Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s* (Wellington, 1981), pp. 260 and 354 and James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Hololulu, 2000), pp. 77-8.

⁷⁷ In New Zealand Lane wrote for the conservative *New Zealand Herald* under the name 'Tohunga' or 'priest/medical man' between 1900 and his death in 1917. He was also a member of the imperialist Defence League. See R.M. Hackett – G. H. Scholefield, 24 January 1938, in 'Letters and Biographical Data for *Who's Who in New Zealand*', [MS Papers - 0212-C/03A], Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, the *New Zealand Freelance*, 22 October 1904, p. 3 and 27 November 1909, p. 4 and articles by Lane in the *New Zealand Herald*, 11 June 1900 and 18 August 1917.

⁷⁸ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, pp. 15-16 and Kellett, 'William Lane and 'New Australia'', p. 20.

⁷⁹ See for the influence of Edward Bellamy in Britain and the colonies Matthew Beaumont, 'William Reeves and Late Victorian Radical Publishing: Unpacking the Bellamy Library', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 55 (2003), pp. 91-110 and Robin Gollan, 'The Australian Impact' in Sylvia E. Bowman (ed.), *Edward Bellamy Abroad: An American Prophet's Influence* (New York, 1962), pp. 119-36. Bellamy's utopian novel, *Looking Backward* had a significant cult following in Britain and the colonies. One veteran British radical recalled a meeting at which the speaker declared 'with a magnificent sweep of his arm, that he would rather be the author of *Looking Backward*, than have written the Bible'. See the *Labour Leader*, 29 March 1913, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement*, p. 232. Bellamy envisaged an urban paradise of squares, colossal public buildings and 'architectural grandeur'. See Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (London, 1908 edn.), p. 30.

⁸¹ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, p. 82.

⁸² See, for example, an article on the 'New Australia colony; an experiment in socialism' in *The Times*, 14 April 1896, p. 3

⁸³ Sidney and Beatrice Webb were amongst those who noted the comparisons between the projects of Robert Owen and William Lane, see A.G. Austin (ed.), *The Webbs' Australian Diary, 1898* (Melbourne, 1965), p. 40.

⁸⁴ W.H.G. Armytage, *Heaven's Below: Utopian Experiments in England, 1560-1960* (London, 1961), pp. 359-69.

⁸⁵ See the orator Frank Stephens speaking of the Henry Georgeite colony of Arden in Delaware in the *Single Tax*, 1 November 1923, p. 203. A number of the New Australia and Cosme colonists adhered to a vegetarian diet; see *Cosme Monthly*, 1 February 1898, p. 4.

⁸⁶ Irving, *To Constitute a Nation*, ch.. 2 and Thomas S. Roydhouse, 'Memories of William Lane – "New Australia" Recalled', in *Selections from the Writings of 'Tohunga'*, pp. 140-2.

⁸⁷ Rose-Soley, "'New Australia'", pp. 523-37.

⁸⁸ See Kenneth D. Brown, 'The Anti-Socialist Union', 1908-1949' in Brown (ed) *Essays in Anti-Labour History: Responses to the Rise of Labour in Britain* (London, 1974), pp. 234-61 and E.H.H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of British Conservatism, 1880-1914* (London, 1995).

⁸⁹ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, chs. 1-3 and *idem*, *New Australia, Where Socialism Failed: The Story of a South American Colony* (London, 1909).

⁹⁰ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, xi-xii.

⁹¹ John Buchan, *Mr Standfast* (1919; re-printed, London, 1988), p. 33.

⁹² Whitehead, *Paradise Mislaid*, pp. 450-70. More's Utopia was a staple of contemporary social reform texts; see the *Warrington Dawn*, vol. I, 11 (1901), pp. 121-2.

⁹³ For the centrality of Puritanism to English radical politics, see Raphael Samuel, *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (London, 1998), pp. 276-322 and for the pious fraternal harmony of the Knights of Labor, Weir, *Beyond Labor's Veil*, ch. 2.

⁹⁴ W.G. Spence, *Australia's Awakening: Thirty Years in the Life of an Australian Agitator* (Sydney, 1909), p. 78

⁹⁵ Jack Lang, *I Remember* (Sydney, 1956), ch. 3.

⁹⁶ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, pp. 30-32.

⁹⁷ *Idem*, *New Australia*, p. 3. The same point is made by supporters of the communitarian idea in an article by J.C. Kenworthy in *Freedom*, 1 August 1896, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, p. 53. Ideal communities in both the Old World and the New were frequently accused of experimentation in free love and alternative moralities; see for American examples of such calumnies, John B. Ellis, *Free Love and its Votaries or American Socialism Unmasked* (San Francisco, 1870), pp. 9-13.

⁹⁹ *Freedom*, 5 June 1957.

¹⁰⁰ Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity, 1688-1980* (Sydney, 1981), ch. 3

¹⁰¹ See the *Labour Leader*, 10 April 1908, p. 228.

¹⁰² Pat Moloney, 'State Socialism and William Pember Reeves: A Reassessment' in Pat Moloney and Kerry Taylor (eds.), *On the Left: Essays on Socialism in New Zealand* (Dunedin, 2002), pp. 39-57 and for a review of the literature on state socialism, *The Individualist*, 1 April 1903, pp. 29-30.

¹⁰³ Alexander Macdonald, *Picturesque Paraguay: Sport, Pioneering, Travel* (London, 1911), p. 240

¹⁰⁴ *New Zealand Times*, 16 April 1894.

¹⁰⁵ *The Bulletin*, 2 June 1894, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ Macdonald, *Picturesque Paraguay*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁷ For the slur of 'King Billy' against Lane, see Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, p. 50. For comments on the drift of American community experiments into 'religious dictatorship' see Goldwin Smith, *Reminiscences* (London, 1910), pp. 375-6.

¹⁰⁸ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, pp. 92-3.

¹⁰⁹ For ‘betrayal’ in the British and Australian labour movements, see Jacqueline Dickenson, ‘Chasing the Rat: The Language of Betrayal in Britain and Australia’, *Labour History Review*, 68 (2003), pp. 162-179.

¹¹⁰ See Gavin Souter, *A Peculiar People: The Australians in Paraguay* (Sydney, 1968 edn.) and Whitehead, *Paradise Mislaid*, especially chs. 1-3.

¹¹¹ Mary Jane Gilmore, ‘Calonia Cosme: The New Australia Experiment, with some Personal Recollections of Life as a Colonist’, *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 5 November 1902, p. 7, and further reflections on the colony in *ibid*, 6 November 1902, p. 7 and 7 November 1902, p. 6.

¹¹² MS transcript of Alfred Rogers, ‘The New Australia Colony, Report of Mr Alfred Rogers of the British Board of the New Australia Association, 26 March 1896’ in the Jules Prudhommeaux Papers, Communates aux Etat-Unis no. 71, New Australia, Paraguay 1895-7. International Institute for the Study of Social History, Amsterdam. There is a review of the finished report in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, 9 August 1896.

¹¹³ Souter, *A Peculiar People*, pp. 11 and 96.

¹¹⁴ Lane, *Dawn to Dusk*, pp. 61-2.

¹¹⁵ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, p. 117.

¹¹⁶ St Ledger, *Australian Socialism*, p. 37.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp.7, 9 and 117.

¹¹⁸ Souter, *A Peculiar People*, pp. 7, 16-17 and 7.

¹¹⁹ Rose-Soley, “New Australia”, p. 524.

¹²⁰ *The Spectator*, 23 April 1910, pp. 676-7.

¹²¹ Extract from the *Weekly Herald* (Canterbury) 12 September 1912, tipped into the copy of the *New Australia Co-operative Settlement Association Mutual Agreement* (Sydney, 1893), in the Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

¹²² David Cannadine has argued persuasively that titles and imperial honours were established in the colonies in order to stabilise new societies around exported English-style hierarchies; see David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (London, 2002), ch. 7.

¹²³ V. Burgmann, ‘Premature Labour: The Maritime Strike and the Parliamentary Strategy’, in J. Hagan and A. Wells (eds.) *The Maritime Strike: A Centennial Retrospective* (Wollongong, 1992), pp. 90-1.

¹²⁴ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, p. 12.

¹²⁵ Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901*

(Manchester, 2008), pp. 70-74.

¹²⁶ In its way, this was not untypical. The utopian elements of colonisation were often abandoned in the face of the extreme conditions that faced settler society: see James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 152-69.

¹²⁷ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, p. 192.

¹²⁸ See Robert V. Andelson, 'Introduction', in Andelson (ed.), *Land-Value Taxation Around the World* (London, 2000), xviii-xlii. .

¹²⁹ Grahame, *Where Socialism Failed*, pp. 239-40.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 151.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 238.

¹³² Peter Kropotkin, 'Advice to those about to Emigrate', *Freedom*, 1 March 1893, pp. 13-14.

¹³³ Neville Kirk, *Comrades and Cousins: Globalisation, Workers and Labour Movements in Britain, the USA and Australia from the 1880s to 1914* (London, 2003), ch.2.

¹³⁴ St. Ledger, *Australian Socialism*, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁵ *New Zealand Times*, 16 April 1894.

¹³⁶ Souter, *A Peculiar People*, p. 205.