# Bastions, black spots and other variations: in and beyond the specificities of the Little Moscow

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The Durham mining village of Chopwell was one of the best-known of Britain's 'little Moscows'. '*Clutching Hand of Communism. Spectre of a Miniature Russia*', screamed a 1925 newspaper headline. Another described it as England's reddest village, with its Marx and Lenin terraces, its proletarian Sunday schools and the depiction of Lenin on the banner of the local miners' lodge.[1] It is sobering, therefore, to stumble across it again in a communist party document from the height of the depression. '*Chopwell*: 5 members, all unemployed, one a wife of a member. The comrades are very sincere but politically very backward. Main activity: unemployed and Daily Worker.' Even in the Communist Party of Great Britain's (CPGB) ailing Tyneside district, other pit villages like Felling and Dawdon had more communists than this.[2]

Was Chopwell really a Miniature Russia? And if so, what did this actually mean? The idea of the little Moscow has certainly retained its currency for historians of 'local communisms'. Published in 1980, Stuart Macintyre's *Little Moscows* remains a key point of reference, both in a British context and internationally.[3] In the best traditions of the British marxist historians, Macintyre approached the depression years from a fresh perspective that was bottom-up, geographically peripheral and politically engaged. Within the context of the delimited party histories then available, he also showed how much more there was to the study of communism than a narrowly conceived institutional history. Focusing on three local case studies, Macintyre's approach was suggestive of wider possibilities for comparative research, and in a recent article in the

*International Review of Social History* Ad Knotter draws on an impressive range of sources in seeking to extend the treatment of what he calls 'small-place communism' both geographically and chronologically.[4] The Glamorgan conference on local communisms on which this issue of *Twentieth Century Communism* draws provides a further evidence of the same concerns.

Any such attempt to get beyond the national framing of so much communist historiography is to be welcomed. Knotter's recognition of the importance of factors of political ecology, in which he includes those of geographical situation, occupational structure, immigrant participation, religious attitudes, militant traditions and communist sociability, offers particular scope in this regard. Nevertheless, the image of that handful of Chopwell communists gives us pause for thought. How could the moment of the little Moscow have passed so quickly? Were there perhaps other forms of 'defiant locality' than that of local communisms, and, if so, what was the relationship between them? For the headline writer, fixated on Moscow, such distinctions may hardly have mattered. Comparative history, on the other hand, requires a degree of precision as to what it is that is being compared. The generalisation of a notion of the Little Moscow sets out one aspect of an important question, namely why the patterns of communist influence are so markedly differentiated over time and place. If, on the other hand, it overlooks specificities of time, place and political affiliation, we will not necessarily get very far in answering it.

Rather than consider the details of any one or several militant localities, these reflections are therefore addressed to the more basic issue of how the phenomenon of local communisms may most usefully be conceptualised by the comparative historian. Often reference is made to a process of local implantation. Julian Mischi, in an important recent French study, seeks to avoid this term because of what he sees as its implications of external agency.[5] Even so, one can think of worse expressions. It not only carries the sense of process, as does Mischi's preferred term *structuration locale*. It also carries the sense of agency, as *structuration locale* conceivably does not. One would not even want to exclude the factor of external agency. That Chopwell had for decades before the 1920s had the reputation of a defiant locality may quite possibly be explicable at local level. But where

this defiance became more specifically identified with communism, a movement that was established internationally in the space of just a few years, it seems impossible to discount the role of exogenous factors, were it only the *Daily Worker*s which Chopwell's little muscovites went to collect from the London train. Whether one starts with the local political cultures that identified with communism, or with the communist seed that took root in these same localities, the comparative historian will want to ask how it is that these local communisms can have been spread so unevenly. However useful the data that can be collected under such headings, the contention made here is that we need to be wary of any reified notion of these local communisms that may obscure rather than illuminate these variations.

In the first place, the relationship between the generic local communism and the Little Moscow may be usefully clarified. The specificity of the latter notion lies in its double connotation. On the one hand, it implies smallness of place. More fundamentally, it carries the clear connotation of exceptionality. To paraphrase E P Thompson's famous adage, it signifies not so much a thing as a relationship, that is, a relationship between particular communities and the wider society which was one of overt differentiation.[6] Implicit in the designation is therefore an ascription both of scale, i.e. littleness, and of density, i.e. of sufficient uncommonness to justify the Moscow epithet. In a case like Berlin's Wedding, the epithet 'red' may have the sense of exemplarity than of exceptionality. Nevertheless, one would hardly refer to a miniature Russia in Russia, or even in regions in which the orientation to Russia was widely shared. At least in the cases with which I am familiar, the little Moscow thus carries the suggestion of a distinctly minority status, to the extent that it is almost as suggestive of national or regional weakness as of local strength.[7] More precisely, the relationship it signified was one of political differentiation. As Gwyn Williams observed in his preface to *Little Moscows*, there was nothing otherwise unusual about these communities and socially they were 'exemplary of their regions'.[8] This is not so different from Chris Williams' suggestion that 'local communism was only a radicalised manifestation of regional militancy', with the radicalisation itself identified as distinguishing feature.[9] The combination of social typicality with political atypicality poses specific methodological

challenges, and we will not get far in isolating the circumstances in which the atypical emerged if we fail to identify those features of these communities which were also atypical.

A familiar problem is that of not seeing the wood for the trees. In isolating the discrete Little Moscow the issue may be that of failing to see the trees in relation to the wood, or of seeing the trees that stand out by not being in a wood. If we prefer to the Little Moscow a more neutral phrase like local communisms, the point that will surely register first with the comparativist, and demand recognition in the comparisons that we make, is that of the massive variation in the incidence of these local communisms. Comparing France and Britain alone, wide disparities over both place and time are immediately apparent. In parts of France, local-level communisms so proliferated as to become subsumed within the wider phenomenon of the 'red' belt or conglomeration inviting comparison of radicalisation at the level of the region.[10] There is also the significant matter of variation over time. In a British context, Macintyre chose the title *Little Moscows* because it contained his subject 'within the inter-war years'.[11] Lenin got painted over where his image had once appeared; Gwyn Williams described it as a 'brief secession from Britain's hypocrite polity'.[12] It was in precisely this later period, however, that the communists in France consolidated their hold on a quarter of the country's electorate, and in a case like the Longwy basin, described by Mischi, it is only in this period that we can trace a communist influence that peaked as late as the 1970s.

Variations over time need addressing because we need to know what trigger factors gave rise to Little Moscows in some circumstances but not in others, even in the same locality. Over a period of decades, place itself might be reconfigured, for example through processes of (sub) urbanisation or of inward or outward migration. Careful periodisation is in any case crucial in respect of communist history. Few historians now wish to essentialise a communism as if regardless of its diverse settings, and this must in part lie behind Mischi's wariness of the idea of implantation. There is nevertheless the risk of downplaying the political distinctiveness of this form of radicalisation if we treat it as if it were the same basic process irrespective of such period contexts as bolshevisation, third period, anti-fascism, foreign occupation, cold war and (in France)

common programme. Communist parties, as we know only too well, could not simply fabricate a Little Moscow. On the other hand, changes in party strategy and political environment can, according to what are once more highly differentiated patterns, be linked with changes in both the character and extent of communist support. As one of the indicators and expressions of that support, the Little Moscow could hardly be unaffected.

There is a further consideration that goes to the heart of how we define the Little Moscow. Changes in the communists' political orientation in every case involved changes in their conceptions of possible allies, rivals and antagonists, and thus, very often, of strategies of local implantation such as the attitude to electoral politics. Mischi rightly notes the crucial bearing that party and other forms of political competition had on the prospects of communist success in any particular region or locality.[13] In this respect, there is a basic distinction between those opposed to the militancy of the defiant locality and those offering rival claims to the same radical credentials. Chopwell, with its fingers-of-one-hand communist party, was a case in point. Its most famous son, later the Mineworkers' national president, was Will Lawther. Lawther had been a student at the marxist Central Labour College, a staunch anti-militarist throughout the First World War and an organiser of what was locally dubbed the 'anarchist school'. He was also imprisoned for two months during the miners' dispute of 1926 and the following year headed a large British delegation to Russian on the tenth anniversary of the revolution. Lawther was therefore a sort of epitome of the Little Moscow. Nevertheless, he never joined the CPGB, was a Labour parliamentary candidate and sometime MP, and for three years in the 1920s was a member of the Labour Party's national executive.[14] If Chopwell in its notoriety had only five communists, this merely underlines the fact that there were other forms of radicalism than communism. In the words of a local Labour councillor who revelled in the Little Moscow appellation, 'as far as the Communist Party was concerned, I think it was just a spirit of fighting the boss, you see that was the idea, fighting the boss'.[15]

For the historian of local communisms, this is a crucial distinction. In Britain, most of the outstanding examples of localised working-class militancy – 'Poplarism' in the 1920s, the Clay Cross revolt of the 1970s,

Militant-led Liverpool in the 1980s – were not primarily associated with the CPGB at all. Even within his inter-war context, Macintyre identifies the Little Moscow, not necessarily with local communist strength, but with 'the political and industrial leadership … [of] Communists or Labour militants whose conception of politics was decisively shaped by the Russian Revolution'.[16] It is arguably a specificity of the British case that there were within the Labour movement so many of these militants who did not become communists but did strongly identify with the defiant locality which on an international scale was Russia itself.[17] At the same, the boundaries can become somewhat blurred: in one Little Moscow Macintyre mentions not a Lenin Terrace but Hardie, Engels, Burns and Lansbury terraces – which even the most zealous anti-muscovite need hardly have renamed.[18] However we view this phenomenon, there are quite distinct research questions to be addressed: first, what social factors were conducive to the militant activism we may identify with the defiant locality, or with the wider militancies of which this was a radicalised expression; and secondly, what further factors explain why – in Britain in a minority of cases, in some other countries in much more significant numbers – such local forms of activism adopted the brand or party affiliation of the communist party.[19] Nobody would mistake Red Vienna for a communist stronghold, and one must be careful in invoking Red Poplar and Red Clydeside in the context of communist history.[20]

If we are approaching these local communisms to explore some wider historiographical issue, a degree of imprecision may be immaterial. Macintyre's, for example, was just such an 'essay in exploration' in the hitherto neglected social history of British communism.[21] On the other hand, if we want to compare these local communisms, and by comparing them to isolate the conditions in which they were likely to emerge, then the issues of variation over time and place and of basic definition will be of fundamental importance. For example, if local communisms were so much more prevalent in France than in Britain, or became interwoven with regional communisms that have no British counterpart, it seems unlikely that this was primarily attributable to differences between the two countries in matters such as occupational structure, social geography and migration patterns. Though Ross McKibbin has presented an

exceptionalist account of the British left that is developed in this way, it is notable that it presents an implicitly comparative argument without any real attempt to demonstrate it comparatively.[22] If socially comparable localities gave rise to local communisms in some conditions but not in others, one of the issues for the historians of communism is to attempt to isolate what these conditions were.

With the variations over time, the point is more obvious still. I have described elsewhere how the communist vote in East Rhondda, where it had long been strongest in Britain, collapsed between 1945 and 1950.[23] Ad Knotter in his wider comparison tabulates electoral data from East Rhondda that ends in 1945 along with data from Longwy that begins in 1959, by which time the parliamentary vote in virtually any constituency in Britain was less than half the average percentage in France *as a whole*. Where the rationale and criteria are clearly established, the diachronic collation of data may well be justified.[24] Nevertheless, the possible significance of such variations – why communist support in the Rhondda collapsed just as it was beginning to be established on a comparable scale in some other locations – will remain to be addressed. The issue of longevity is also a consideration. In Macintyre's Little Moscows, the life history of these local communisms can be confined within a period of barely twenty years. We therefore need to ask, not just why these places and not others, but why this moment and not others even in the same places. Where the signifiers of the Little Moscow changed so quickly – as in the loss in East Rhondda of three-quarters of the communist vote in five years – explanation only in terms of long-term social factors cannot in itself be adequate.

The other key methodological point is that a comparative method focusing on the Little Moscows alone is inherently not designed to demonstrate the features that differentiated these communities politically. Comparison certainly means identifying possible common features. Nevertheless, it also needs to address differentiating variables if it is to get beyond the descriptive characterisation of these features. In *Little Moscows* itself it is noticeably in the chapters on politics and forms of authority that more distinctive local patterns emerge, for this is where the distinctiveness of these localities lay. Chapters on the family and unemployment, on the other hand, may be read more productively as

local instantiations of wider patterns from which they appear difficult to extricate.[25] These again may represent radicalised variations in political response such as define the Little Moscow, but not such variations in the social experience of unemployment as would explain why there should have been such different responses. The distinction between descriptive and analytic political ecology matters here. Local communisms may have been characterised by the sexual division of household labour, the legality of communist activities, the wearing of clothes in public places, or any other social, political and cultural feature. But unless it is shown that these differentiated the Little Moscows from less militant localities, these are observational statements without immediate explanatory value.

If *Little Moscows* remains an exemplary work of communist social history, it is, if one accepts this line of argument, as a national case study, the case being that of the British Little Moscow of the depression years. If we wish to explore the phenomenon more comparatively we might nevertheless follow the example of Mischi, who in his study of communist milieux in France dissociates himself from the preoccupation only with communist 'bastions' and proposes comparison through the method of 'dramatic contrasts'.[26] Mischi's case studies thus include examples of both weak and medium communist influence as well as contrasting cases – one industrial, one rural – that conform more closely to the notion of the stronghold. British scholarship on the coalfield militancy so central to *Little Moscows* has also sought to identify conditions conducive to this militancy by comparison with politically and industrially more moderate coalfields.[27] Dramatic contrast is arguably inherent in the designation Little Moscow, and Macintyre's account aimed at interpolating such a note into the historiography of inter-war Britain, so that '[b]y studying the exceptions, we seek to isolate the factors that distinguished them from the more familiar'.[28] The only thing different about Chopwell, said local councillor Harry Bolton, was that it was 'a little bit higher in intelligence and in outlook than most of the other towns'.[29] Gwyn Williams wrote of a 'particular constellation of forces, some accidental', and Macintyre similarly of 'particular circumstances' that fostered an initial obduracy.[30] In all these cases, a wider regional or national context was more or less assumed. But if we want to generalise our understanding of these differentiating circumstances, whether of intelligence levels or

any other possible variations, we will need some sense of these other localities as well.

There are other ways than locality of trying to understand these variations in communist influence and the different forms which it took. These other ways of approaching the patterns of communist implantation may also offer a fresh perspective on the phenomenon of the local communism itself. In our book *Communists in British Society* the organising principle was not place but the communist party members themselves. In assessing the extremely uneven patterns of their adherence to the CPGB, we gave due weight to factors like geographical situation, occupational structure and migration, which we extended to themes such as gender and inter-generational relations which were themselves subject to variation according to region, locality or ethnicity. Such an approach meant the refusal of reductionist or monocausal explanations of communist implantation (or structuration) in favour of the 'need in complex societies for a multi-contextual approach to human relationships, focused on patterns of conflict and interaction at several levels'.[31] If any single motif could be described as a 'final resting point', we suggested that it might be generation; but we nevertheless described this as 'overlapping, indeterminate and continuously interactive' and depending not only on encompassing social movements but on influences of work, education, home and immediate social environment.[32] The significance of generation is certainly apparent in the case of those localities whose longer history of defiance was, for just a (political) generation or so, expressed in the form of the Little Moscow. Our approach to these and other issues was prosopographical: we were interested in diverse life histories and their interconnections, as these were shaped by wider social influences. We also adopted what we called an open research methodology: that is, we did not organise our data according to normative categories like the communist locality, but sought to record it as neutrally as possible. The findings we reached were in some cases unexpected and even counter-intuitive.

One which we had not anticipated was that locality emerged as a less compelling theme than mobility, both social and geographical.[33] Both figuratively and literally this meant a move away from the Little Moscow. Ours was not organised as a comparative study. It did nevertheless seek

to encompass the dramatic contrasts in the communist party presence in Britain, and it made explicit use of comparison in trying to account for them. A contrast if not an outright paradox was that communist party membership in Britain was at its lowest in just the period we identify with the emergence of the Little Moscow. Between the height of the slump in 1930 and the end of the Second World War, the CPGB's membership increased by a factor of fifteen. Most of this increase could be dated from the late 1930s. The fastest growing districts were those in the relatively booming English south and midlands. London far outstripped any other district, four new districts were established in the home counties and the communists in 1945 gained their highest ever English parliamentary vote in the London dormitory suburb of Hornsey. In 1938 the London district membership of the YCL was over sixty times that of the 'old' industrial districts of Lancashire, Yorkshire and South Wales combined.

If we had compared only the local communisms of mono-industrial areas, we would certainly have found that these areas were usually mono-industrial. But these areas were not necessarily typical of communist recruitment in Britain, which, despite persistent preconceptions to the contrary, is most commonly associated with both areas and periods of high or full employment. It is here that the move away from the Little Moscows figures in a more literal sense. Approached from a prosopographical perspective, places large and small are populated and depopulated as people move in and out of them. A settled conception of place, disregarding its reconfiguration over time, may be particularly problematic in the case of industrial regions experiencing, as in these cases, the outward migration of as many as a third of the young people who were likeliest to become communist activists. The Lawthers may have been the foremost family of Chopwell militants, but we know that after 1926 at least two of the Lawther brothers went to Canada and another to the coal mines in rural Kent. As we documented in our book, these outward migrants were distinctly more likely to become communist activists away from the old industrial areas than within them. We suggested that the likeliest reason for this, apart from the experience of migration itself, was the combination of a formative culture of militancy with the political space offered the communists in areas in which the established Labour movement was not yet a preponderating

presence. In significant numbers of cases, we linked an early politicisation in areas like the coalfields with adhesion to the communist party only once the move to a new social and political environment had been made. The phenomenon we uncovered was thus one of the 'relocation and redefinition of broader radical or socialist values acquired in work, family or community environments where these had already exercised a formative influence' and a 'prior socialisation into the older cultures of the left, combined with a process of disassociation that was as likely to be social or geographical in character as political'.[34]

We did not necessarily identify these environments with local communisms. We spoke instead of 'communities of the faithful', which might be conceptualised spatially and measured according to conventional electoral criteria, but often in the case of British communists were not. As well as the new manufacturing areas of the English south and midlands, we thus noted the disproportionate communist influence in the emerging white-collar unions and the perennially renewed spaces of the youth and student movement. What also stood out was the 'multiplier' or 'snowball' effect whereby the establishment of an effective party presence might itself then attract new recruits from environments hitherto untouched by communism or active socialist commitments; indeed, to the extent that external implantation is ruled out, this might be regarded as a precondition for such adhesions. Relatively small numbers of experienced activists, often from the 'old' industrial Britain, thus played a disproportionate role in the spatial and other concentrations of communist party membership and help explain their uneven correlation with structural or ecological factors.[35]

In his discussion of the Little Moscows Ad Knotter deploys this as a sort of counter-argument to which factors of political ecology are proposed as an alternative. In part this represents a simple misunderstanding. Our arguments were not specifically addressed to the issue of the Little Moscows; indeed, their primary object was try to understand why so much communist recruitment took place in times and places far removed from localities describable as such. Disavowing any generic hypothesis regarding the communists' local implantation, we offered a clearly delimited case study in what might be called small-party communism, and in respect of the role played locally by key

individuals we explicitly suggested a possible contrast with the French case.[36] Recognition of factors of human agency need not therefore imply a sort of exercise in voluntarism dislocated from the social and environmental preconditions which we sought to describe. On the other hand, 'ecological' factors such as immigrant participation and militant traditions are difficult to conceptualise without such human agents as may, for example, migrate or uphold these traditions. Some scholars prefer the term situated agency. We cited the sociologist Mike Savage in proposing that a prosopographical approach allowed a more dynamic view of diverse social relationships, not as 'macro-social constraints', but 'working biographically through the individual'.[37]

Particular clarity is required as to what it is about these local communisms that we are seeking to explain. Even if one regards them as a radicalised expression of some wider phenomenon, as we in many respects would,[38] locating their political specificity means addressing how this radicalisation took place as well as the wider environment within which it sometimes did so. Rather than the Little Moscow as such, we were interested in the 'extremely localised pattern of communist implantation' of which the Little Moscow was one expression.[39] However it is defined, the issue in any case goes beyond the more generic sense of the militant locality. Should one successfully identify the social and environmental preconditions of an effective local communism, one still has to explain why, of the many localities meeting such preconditions, only a minority, in certain periods, had a significant communist presence. If fighting the boss clearly mattered in localities like Chopwell, the challenge for the comparative historian is, not why some of these localities can be labelled Little Moscows, but why in Britain this was so exceptional.

In citing Annie Kriegel, it is possible that we overstated the difference between the French and British cases. From Mischi's account, for example, we might have noted the pivotal role in Longwy of the brothers Louis and Marcel Dupont and Mischi's rejection of a purely quantitative analysis of the party's emergence in recognition of the 'crucial character of a period in which the party's activist elite took shape'.[40] Nevertheless, in the age-old issue of the relation between wider social factors and the agency of particular actors, there is no transhistorical golden mean

and it is reasonable to suppose that the balance will vary with the exceptionality or otherwise of the phenomenon being discussed. As we argued in *Communists in British Society*, 'in almost any conceivable social grouping … the numbers joining the CPGB are so small that one is always looking for exceptional factors, or combinations of factors, to make sense of them'. That would not necessarily be true of Chartism, or of those European communist or social-democratic parties which established something credibly resembling a counter-society. Given the Labour's Party electoral preponderance in huge swathes of industrial Britain, it would similarly be a bold and even perverse claim to attribute this to individual agency. But it would be no less problematic to attach an explanatory significance to widely shared characteristics which, in the majority of cases, cannot be identified with the phenomenon we are seeking to explain. As Ad Knotter rightly notes in his article, the collation of such data does not in the end provide more than an 'inventory of possible factors' which as such are essentially descriptive in character. While the politicisation of a communist like Harry Pollitt cannot be understood without his formative experiences of family poverty and workplace exploitation, these alone cannot help us understand why there were not tens of thousands of Harry Pollitts. Just the same is true of the communist locality.

Perhaps this is why the issue of agency has registered more with historians of these minority socialist organisations in Britain than with those of mass organisations like the pre-1914 German SPD or the post-war Italian communist party. For a classic exposition one might cite Thompson's 'Homage to Tom Maguire', with its clear recognition that no individual could 'create a movement of thousands', but at the same time that the spread of socialist ideas 'was not spontaneous but the result of the work, over many years, of a group of exceptionally gifted propagandists and trade unionists'.[41] Even in the coalfields, agency has been seen as a factor missing in explanations of militancy that focus on the attributes of the isolated mass.[42] If 'communist sociability' is admitted as an ecological factor, it is difficult to see how one can conceive of this without some conception of agency, and our own account was specifically addressed to what we described as the gregarious nature of political commitment.

One might consider the analogy with family communism. Raphael Samuel made the point that communism in Britain tended to run 'in families' and this 'principle of family succession' is strongly borne out by many studies, including our own.[43] Theoretically, one might seek out the structural peculiarities of these families to understand what differentiated them economically and sociologically from the non-communist families surrounding them. But even intuitively one suspects that this might be hard going. In Blaydon, close by Chopwell, there were for example '7 members, mainly belonging to one family, unemployed, and 3 wives of Party members'. Few would seek to explain these clusters of activism without reference to forms of association 'working biographically' through the members of these families. Nor is there any reason why such factors of sociability should have been exclusive to the family and not similarly have been extended to neighbours or workmates. How otherwise did one join the communist party, and, without these seven, where was there even a communist party to join? If national organs like the *Daily Worker* provided exposure to the 'militant traditions' claimed by the communists, how else was one exposed to these in the absence of any normal commercial distribution?

Local communisms matter both as a recognition of the importance of place in the making of social and political movements and as a register of those differences of scale and level of activity which in an older communist historiography were largely disregarded. Nevertheless, a comparative perspective on local communisms also needs to recognise that these were only one expression of the highly differentiated patterns of communist implantation, and that depending on time and place they were not necessarily the most important one. In Britain, certainly, the passing of the 'Little Moscow' phenomenon may in part be identified with the diversion of communist energies into more productive fields of activity, notably the trade unions. In the 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' of the 1980s, one may indeed trace a sort of confluence of Labour's unassailable electoral hegemony with a powerful communist presence in the dominant local engineering unions. While this provides yet another example of the generic phenomenon of the defiant locality (or in this case city), it should not be confused with the partisan sub-category that can justly be characterised as a local communism.

For the uneven, sporadic and often unpredictable distribution of these local communisms, no convincing explanation has yet been offered. We would suggest that it is only by exploring what differentiated these Little Moscows that we can establish which of their many descriptive characteristics may also provide explanatory variables. On the basis of the smaller British party, but without seeking to generalise on that basis, we would also draw attention to the historical agents by whom such social factors as migration, sociability and tradition were animated, and to the need to historicise the processes by which their communist identities were established at both the individual and the local level.

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## Notes

1. Stuart Macintyre, *Little Moscows. Communism and Working-Class Militancy in Inter-war Britain*, London: Croom Helm, 1980, p13.
2. RGASPI 495/100, 'Organisational situation of the party', 15 August 1931.
3. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p7 and passim.
4. Ad Knotter, '"Little Moscows" in Western Europe: the political ecology of small-place communism', *International Review of Social History*, 56, 3, 2011, pp475-510.
5. Julian Mischi, *Servir la classe ouvrière. Sociabilités militantes au PCF*, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010, p23, n28.
6. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Gollancz, 1963, pp9-11
7. Knotter, '"Little Moscows"', p510, cites usages in Britain, the Netherlands and rural France which seem to be consistent with this.
8. Williams in Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p6.
9. Williams cited Knotter, '"Little Moscows"', p482.
10. See Tyler Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
11. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p20.
12. Williams in Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p5.

13. Mischi, *Servir*, pp27-8.
14. See the entry by John Saville in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, vol. 32, pp908-9.
15. Hester Barron, *The 1926 Miners' Lockout. Meanings of community in the Durham coalfield*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp11-14.
16. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p20.
17. A theme more fully developed in Kevin Morgan, *Labour Legends and Russian Gold. Bolshevism and the British Left part one*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2006, pp9-21 and passim.
18. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p106.
19. Mischi, *Servir*, pp19-20 refers to the marque politique of communism.
20. Compare Knotter, '"Little Moscows"', p476.
21. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p7.
22. Ross McKibbin, 'Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?', *English Historical Review* 99, 1984, pp299-331.
23. On this, see Kevin Morgan, 'Harry Pollitt, Rhondda East and the Cold War collapse of the British communist electorate', *Llafur*, 10, 4, 2011, pp16-31.
24. For such an approach see for example Stefan Berger, *The British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats 1900-1931*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
25. In respect of work and unemployment, for example, the three distinguishing features are noted of (i) the securing of limited advances in relief; (ii) resistance to the social exclusion of the unemployed; and (iii) the refusal of the unemployed to surrender to their condition (Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p130).
26. Mischi, *Servir*, pp24-8.
27. David Gilbert, *Class, Community, and Collective Action. Social change in two British coalfields, 1850-1926*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
28. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, pp17-18.
29. Cited Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, p17.
30. Macintyre, *Little Moscows*, pp6 and 19-20.
31. Kevin Morgan, Gidon Cohen and Andrew Flinn, *Communists in British Society 1910-1991*, London: Rivers Oram, 2006, p6.
32. Morgan et al, *Communists*, pp230-3, 273.

33. The theme is more fully explored in Kevin Morgan, 'Socialists and "mobility" in twentieth-century Britain: images and experiences in the life histories of British communists', *Social History*, 36, 2, 2011, pp143-68.

34. Morgan et al, *Communists*, pp29-30.

35. Morgan et al, *Communists*, ch. 2.

36. Morgan et al, *Communists*, pp111-12.

37. Morgan et al, *Communists*, p33.

38. See Kevin Morgan, 'Labour with knobs on. The recent historiography of the British Communist Party', *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen*, 27, 2002, pp69-84.

39. Morgan et al, *Communists*, p30.

40. Mischi, *Servir*, pp36-7.

41. E.P. Thompson, 'Homage to Tom Maguire', in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds), *Essays in Labour History*, London: Macmillan, 1967, pp279-80.

42. Gilbert, *Class, Community, and Collective Action*, p12.

43. Morgan et al, *Lost World*, ch7.