Journal of Historical Geography 60 (2018) 24–40

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Historical Geography

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jhg

'The map that would save Europe': Clive Morrison-Bell, the Tariff Walls Map, and the politics of cartographic display

Mike Heffernan*, Benjamin J. Thorpe

School of Geography, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 19 May 2017
Received in revised form
21 November 2017
Accepted 30 November 2017

Keywords:
Clive Morrison-Bell
European cartography
free trade
protectionism
tariff reform

ABSTRACT

This essay uses the personal archives of Clive Morrison-Bell (1871–1956), a campaigning Conservative politician who made extensive use of maps and cartographic models, to consider the entangled histories of cartography, economics and geopolitics in early twentieth-century Britain. Particular attention is paid to Morrison-Bell's Tariff Walls Map (TWM), a large three-dimensional model of Europe on which international borders were represented by actual physical walls, the varying heights of which indicated average tariff restrictions imposed on traded goods by each European country. The TWM was one of the most widely debated maps of the 1920s and 1930s. Versions were exhibited in national parliaments, government ministries, chambers of commerce, and at international conferences across Europe and the United States, part of an ultimately unsuccessful campaign against economic protectionism. By depicting nation-states as volumetric spaces separated by physical barriers, the TWM contributed significantly to the idea of the 'wall' as an economic and geopolitical division.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

'Something there is that doesn't love a wall'

Robert Frost, *Mending Wall*, 1914

Clive Morrison-Bell (1871–1956) was a British member of parliament who made repeated use of maps and cartographic models in political campaigns before and after World War One, some associated with the Conservative Party, others of a more general character (Fig. 1). Drawing on his personal archives, this essay examines how Morrison-Bell's cartographies were implicated in economic debates from the 1910s to the Great Depression as analytical tools and as forms of political practice. Particular attention is paid to the Tariff Walls Map (TWM), Morrison-Bell's most famous creation and one of the most widely reproduced cartographic images of the interwar years.[1]

The TWM was a three-dimensional cartographic model of Europe, originally constructed in 1926, on which international borders were represented by actual physical walls, the varying heights of which reflected the average tariffs levied by each country upon imported goods. Different versions of the TWM were displayed through the late 1920s and early 1930s in national parliaments, ministries, chambers of commerce, international conferences and at social gatherings of the rich and powerful in Britain, continental Europe and the United States, part of a spirited but ultimately unsuccessful campaign against

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: mike.heffernan@nottingham.ac.uk (M. Heffernan).

[1] Morrison-Bell's papers are housed in the Parliamentary Archives in London at PA/MOR1-6. These files include annotated press cuttings (PA/MOR1), an unpublished autobiography (PA/MOR2), diaries (PA/MOR3) and a 'cartographical auto-biography' based on an Ordnance Survey map of Britain (PA/MOR5). Full bibliographical details are provided in the following pages only for the more important newspaper articles from PA/MOR1. Other references to this file relate to information derived from several newspaper articles on the cited pages. Further Morrison-Bell correspondence can be found in the Archives of the League of Nations in Geneva at ALN/10c/1355/231 and ALN/50/53188/36229 and in the Imperial War Museum at IWM/Documents.811. See also A.C. Morrison-Bell, *Tariff Walls: A European Crusade*, London, 1930.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2017.11.010
0305-7488/© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

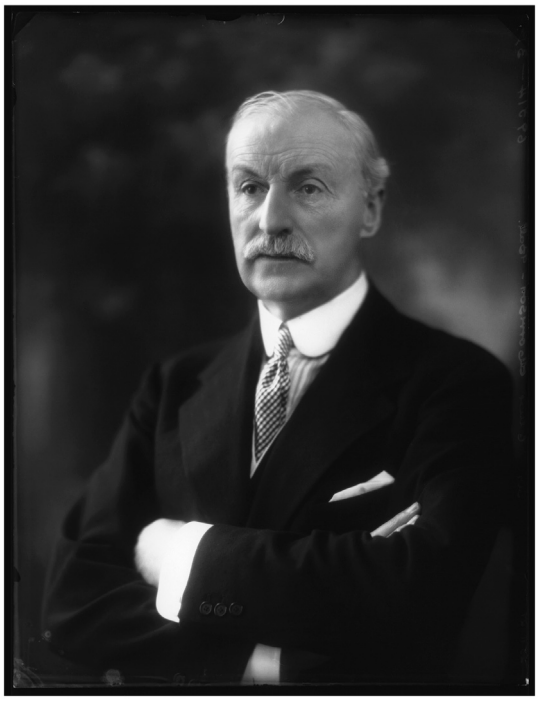

Fig. 1. Clive Morrison-Bell in 1927, aged 56. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

the 'beggar-thy-neighbour' protectionism embraced by many countries after World War One.

As an experimental form of interwar geopolitical cartography, conceived and promoted by a British parliamentarian, the TWM stands apart from the more extensively researched geopolitical maps and cartographic propaganda produced in this period in fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.[2] Morrison-Bell's free-trade critique of Europe's economic and political malaise after World War One reflected his fundamentally liberal world-view. His maps and cartographic models were therefore examples of a previously overlooked liberal geopolitical imagination between the wars.

Morrison-Bell's campaigns have surprising relevance today. The TWM, in particular, highlighted questions of free trade, protectionism, European unity and Britain's relationship with Europe and the wider world that are as important now as they were in the 1920s, especially since the UK's recent decision to withdraw from the European Union and the subsequent election of an overtly protectionist US president. As an artefact designed to improve popular understanding of complex and intangible economic processes, the TWM speaks directly to current debates about the limitations of economic expertise, modelling and forecasting, and the role of the media in political campaigns.[3] And as we shall see, the story of the TWM reveals the protean character of visual messages in political debate and the propensity of images to escape the intentions of their creators.

Depicting Europe's economic geography as a three-dimensional terrain model, the TWM was an early attempt to visualise the continent vertically as well as horizontally, and by reference to enclosed, walled spaces – a powerful metaphor in the 1920s and 1930s, and a brutal geopolitical reality after 1945. As we confront the prospect of real and rhetorical walls reappearing in various parts of the world, the story of Morrison-Bell's TWM provides a salutary historical lesson about the potency of walls in the geopolitical imagination.[4]

Campaigning cartography

Clive Morrison-Bell was born in 1871 into what he called, rather tautologically, a 'conventional ordinary early-Victorian family'.[5] His father, a distinguished soldier of traditional Tory views, owned a small estate in Sussex where he raised his four sons and two daughters to ride, shoot and 'hate Mr. Gladstone'.[6] From Eton, Morrison-Bell progressed to Sandhurst, the Scots Guards and the first South African War, after which he spent four years in Canada as *aide-de-camp* to Lord Minto, the governor-general.[7] When Minto became viceroy of India in 1905, Morrison-Bell returned to London as 'organizing secretary' of the Society of Miniature Rifle Clubs (SMRC), an organisation established four years earlier by Lord Roberts, commander-in-chief of Britain's armed forces, to counter the appeal of pacifism and socialism among working men.[8] Here Morrison-Bell began to experiment with maps as organisational and campaigning devices, using a large map of Britain to plot the distribution of rifle clubs and to target resources at regions where SMRC recruitment was weak.[9]

Encouraged by Roberts, Morrison-Bell began to involve himself in Conservative politics, just as Tory fortunes slumped as a consequence of the acrimonious split between the advocates of free trade, previously the dominant force in Conservative ranks, and the supporters of Joseph Chamberlain's Tariff Reform League, a grassroots Tory movement that had campaigned since 1903 for a more protectionist policy of imperial preference. While free traders insisted that Britain's prosperity could only be secured by the traditional policy of minimising the tariffs imposed on imported goods, tariff reformers argued that Britain was falling behind more protectionist states, especially Germany and the United States, and had no alternative but to impose higher duties, specifically upon goods from outside the

[2] The literature on the interwar European geopolitical movements is impressively large, especially for Germany, though studies focusing specifically on geopolitical cartography in this period include G. Herb, *Under the Map of Germany: Nationalism and Propaganda, 1918–1945*, London, 1997; D. Atkinson, Geopolitical imaginations in modern Italy, in K. Dodds and D. Atkinson (Eds), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought*, London, 2000, 93–117; J. Hagen, Mapping the Polish corridor: ethnicity, economics and geopolitics, *Imago Mundi* 62 (2009) 63–82; E. Boria, Geopolitical maps: a sketch history of a neglected trend in cartography, *Geopolitics* 13 (2008) 278–308; M. Heffernan, The interrogation of Sándor Radó: geography, communism and espionage between World War Two and the Cold War, *Journal of Historical Geography* 27 (2015) 74–88.

[3] See J. Earle, C. Moran and Z. Wood-Perkins, *The Econocracy: The Perils of Leaving Economics to the Experts*, Manchester, 2016.

[4] See, for example, P. Wright, *Iron Curtain: From Stage to Cold War*, Oxford, 2009; W. Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, New York, 2010; R. Jones, *Border Walls: Security and the War on Terror in the United States, Israel and India*, London, 2012. On the geopolitical impact of topographic models, see E. Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza*, London, 2011, 65–98. For wider discussions on the politics of verticality and the visual, see J. Haffner, *The View From Above: The Science of Social Space*, Cambridge, MA, 2013; S. Elden, Secure the volume: vertical geopolitics and the depth of power, *Political Geography* 34 (2013) 35–51; S. Graham, *Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers*, London, 2016.

[5] PA/MOR2/I/3.

[6] PA/MOR2/I/4. The family name was Bell until 1905 when 'Morrison' was added by Royal Licence: *London Gazette*, 17 November 1905, 7706.

[7] PA/MOR2/I/6; PA/MOR2/II-V. Morrison-Bell was known by his middle name Clive (or nickname 'Cloche') although his first name was Arthur and he often used the initials A.C.

[8] PA/MOR2/VI/10.

[9] PA/MOR2/VI/12-3.

Download English Version:

https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7446744

Download Persian Version:

https://daneshyari.com/article/7446744

Daneshyari.com