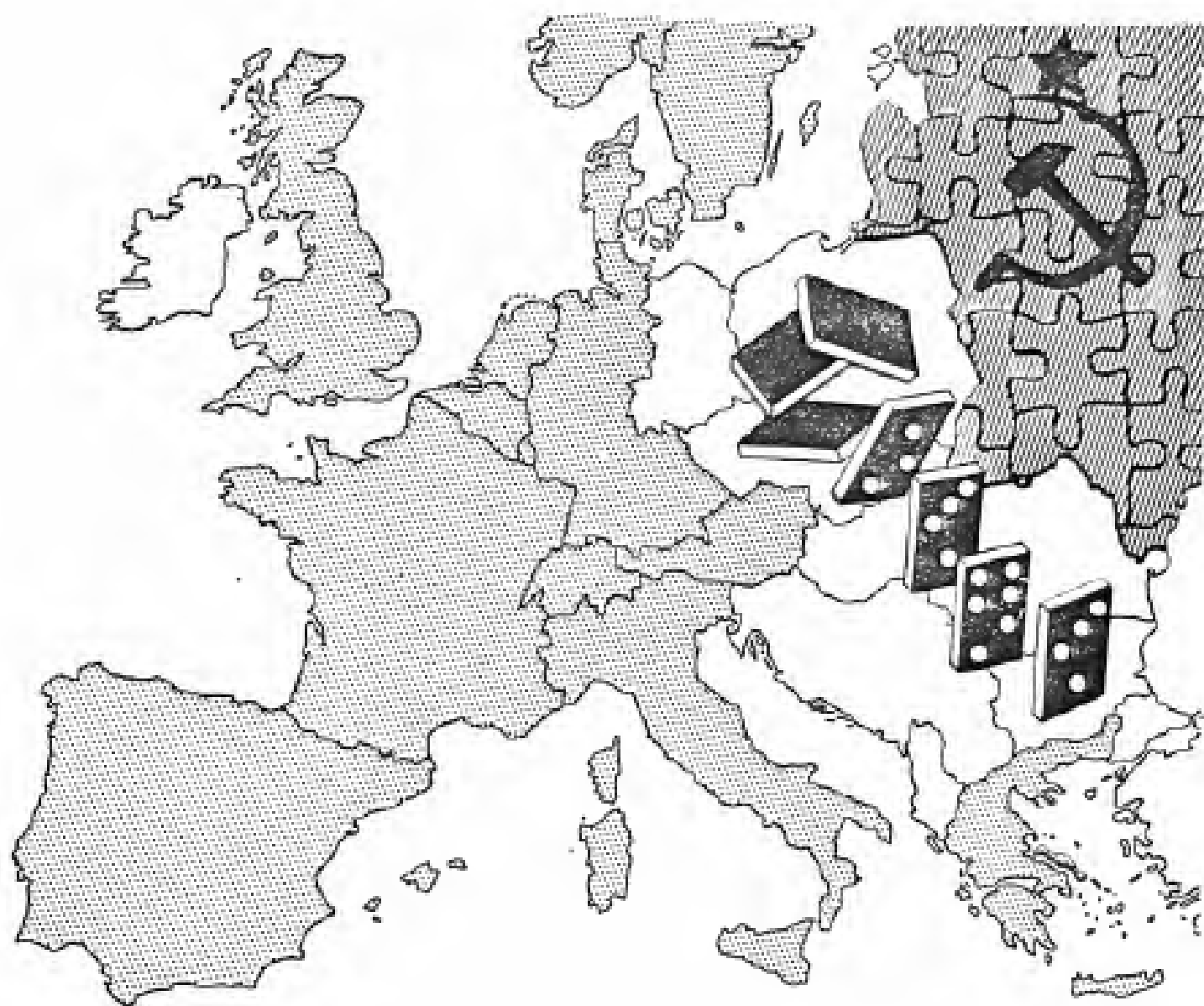


CHIMERA NO. 5 1990



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PREFACE

21 March, 1990

Spring is the season of renewal, of hope, of anticipation. The difficult business of individual scholarly research and learning also needs the well-springs of inspiration, also needs renewal and certainly requires group encouragement and support. By its very nature, the discipline of Geography - long concerned with the understanding and appreciation of places and peoples - inspires much cooperative effort amongst students and staff whether in the field, in the mapping laboratory or wherever. The blossoming of Chimera this mid-March epitomises the quality of this esprit de corps amongst all the geography students.

However, other students will forgive me if this year I single out not only the critical role which the postgraduates have played in the production of Chimera, but also the critical role which the postgraduates play in the life of the department. For a good postgraduate programme to develop, the most critical requirement is a threshold of good postgraduate students working together - debating, criticising, sharing ideas and references, above all developing their own particular insights and skills and always keeping the permanent academic staff on their toes. Postgraduates also gain a lot from, and contribute much to, the teaching arena. Across all aspects of the department's activities - in cartography, in mapping and physical laboratory work, in Geography and European Studies tutorials and seminars, and indeed in providing backup support for staff in undergraduate field work activities - the postgrad-tutors play a key role. Chimera is first of all, therefore, a reflection of the strength of postgraduate involvement in both research and teaching in the department. To Joint Editors Paul Ryan (now in the Land Registry in Dublin) and Ian O'Connell, and to all the production team, go our particular thanks.

Contributions to this volume, however, not only come from postgraduate students but also includes articles by undergraduates in Geography and European Studies and Higher Diploma students as well as the odd staff member. It is a pleasure also for a discipline, whose bailiwick is the whole wide world, to see contributors from Australia and America as well as Europe. It is also refreshing to see aspects of provincial life in places like Avila in Spain explored as well as the intimacies of life in places nearer home. The breadth of the discipline of geography is also suggested by contributions

ranging from urban planning and landscape ecology, through to historical and applied climatology, from political and historical geography, 'humanistic' and 'time' geography to the urban geography of public houses, graffiti and youth cultures. It is also good to see that methodologies vary from the rigours of 'the scientific method' to an appreciation of more 'subjective' approaches to peoples, places and landscapes.

The student Geographical Society has also given much backup support to this publication. The list of its social activities and visiting lecturers also indicates much vitality. In particular, the significant role which such student university societies play in integrating our new group of visiting ERASMUS students - from France, Spain, Italy or wherever - into the life and rhythm of the campus should be noted. Likewise the Society and department have benefited enormously from a wider range of visiting speakers, many now coming from and with perspectives rooted in mainland Europe.

William J. Smyth