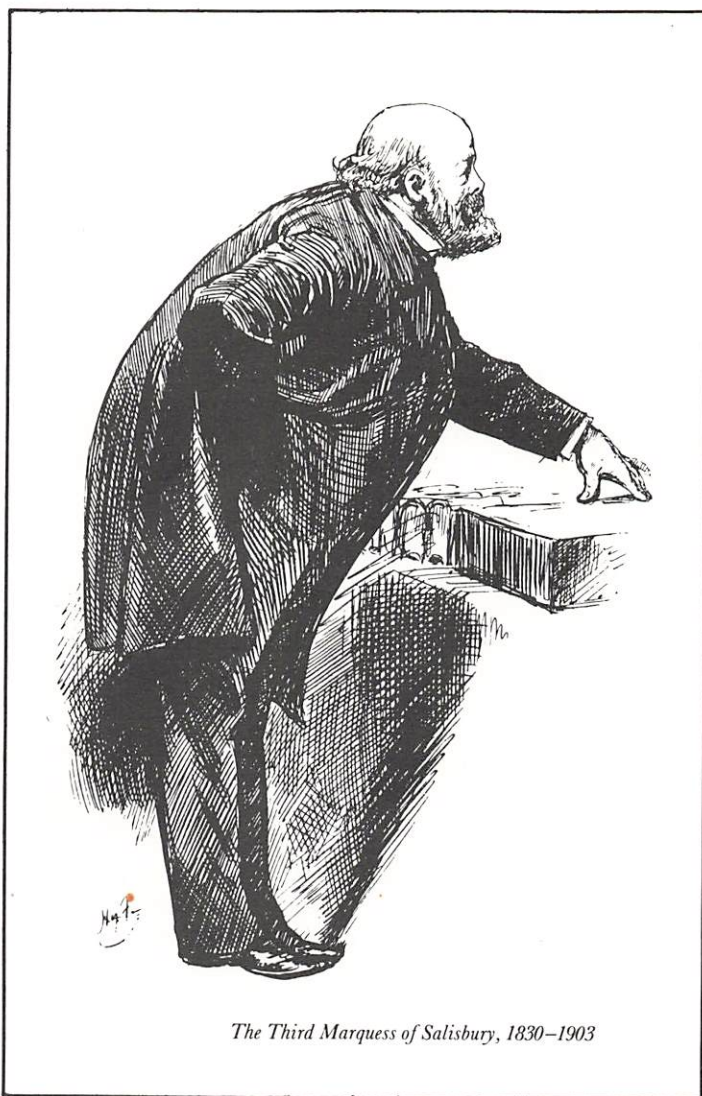


The Salisbury Review

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT



The Third Marquess of Salisbury, 1830–1903

John Gray

J. Enoch Powell

David Martin

David J. Levy

R. A. D. Grant

Vacláv Racek

Barry Bracewell-Milnes

Charles Pickthorn

Eric Griffiths

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Ian Crowther

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David Dale

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‘There is no objective definition of what constitutes a nation. It is that which thinks it is a nation’. So wrote Enoch Powell and Angus Maude in 1955. In subsequent writings and speeches Powell has refined and deepened his idea of the subjective identity of the nation. In this issue we print one of his recent deliberations, in which he argues that, in the interests of an integrated sovereignty, we may have to repudiate the Atlantic Alliance. Whatever the merits of Powell’s nationalism, it cannot, we believe, provide sufficient foundation for our foreign policy. We have therefore taken this opportunity, in our Editorial, to argue the conservative case against Powell. By bringing this complex issue to the surface, we hope to begin the important task of seeking an international outlook that is neither isolationist nor subjugated, and yet which remains obedient to our native conception of legitimate government.

Perhaps the most important idea of legitimacy that has prevailed in Britain has been that of monarchy. David Levy argues that it is one of the virtues of monarchy to align our perception of legitimate government with the unfathomable given-ness of human life, and so to abolish that fruitless quest for abstract principles which inspires and embitters the constitutional theorists of liberalism. This theme, in one way near to the ‘national particularism’ of Enoch Powell, is reminiscent too of our greatest modern conservative thinker – Michael Oakeshott. In an extended examination, Robert Grant explores the many facets of this subtle and sophisticated philosopher, who has attacked in so many ways the contemporary desire to divorce the principles of political conduct from the circumstances of political life. Powell would not be the only one to agree with Oakeshott, that the nation can never be reduced to a purposeful association, or a business enterprise. We must all recognize, in the end, that ‘political obligation’ is *sui generis*, not only in its structure, but also in its value. And it is only when we accept the peculiarities of civil association – its irreducibility to contract, partnership or command – that we can see the meaning of political freedom. As Ian Crowther argues, in a consideration of current Tory thinking about the family, this freedom must be understood, not as easy licence, but as arduous responsibility.

We continue our series devoted to the neglected foun-

datations of political experience with an article on the politics of nature. Diana Spearman argues that political thought has ignored for too long the questions posed by the fragility of nature. Nature, like the institutions and traditions which provide the focus of conservative politics, is easy to destroy and difficult to restore. Surely, therefore, there is no available political doctrine more suited to encompass this problem than conservatism. If politicians have neglected it, Diana Spearman shows, it is largely because the conservation of nature cannot easily become an election issue.

The attempt to make ecology into an election issue has, however, been made, and has led to the emergence of the Green party in West Germany, whose natural constituents are wryly described by Harold James. That same uprooted enthusiasm which leads to the romantic feudalism of the Greens – in this respect the most reactionary party to have emerged since National Socialism – leads also to the ‘peace movement’, whose reluctance to consider the true causes of peace and war is causing such consternation. John Gray exposes the ‘moral inversion’ of this latter-day millenarian sect, and argues that only a total reordering of social values can overcome its desire to pour uncontrolled religious sentiment into earthen vessels that cannot contain it. The fear stirred and exploited by the peace campaigners is that which defines our moral condition: the fear of death. This fear can be stilled, not by mass hysteria, but only by the solemn recognition that death does not extinguish value, and that our obligations transcend its frontier. John Casey describes our obligation to the dead, and displays an attitude which, if it were preached from every pulpit, would be sufficient to turn believers from the belligerent shallowness of CND. However, David Martin gives little hope to those who look to pulpits for the timely utterance of timeless truth. His painstaking documentation of reverses cannot give grounds for optimism. One thing is certain however: the work of people like Martin forces our institutions, if not to be themselves, at least to remember themselves, and so to die remembering. Memory, which redeems death, also renews life, by creating the terms upon which life is offered and accepted. Hence a cause lost by conservatives, need not be a lost cause.

CONTENTS

How can we have a Duty to the Dead? <i>John Casey</i>	4	The Bank's New Governor <i>Charles Pickthorn</i>	36
The Politics of Nature <i>Diana Spearman</i>	7	Where Stands the Prayer Book Now? <i>David Martin</i>	38
The Peace Movement and Moral Inversion <i>John Gray</i>	10	Mrs Thatcher's Idea of the Good Society <i>Ian Crowther</i>	41
Conservative Thinkers: Michael Oakeshott <i>R. A. D. Grant</i>	12	Capital Taxation and the Destruction of Capitalism <i>Barry Bracewell-Milnes</i>	43
The Real and the Royal <i>David J. Levy</i>	17	EDITORIAL: Powell and the Alliance	45
Letters	20	BOOK REVIEWS Ian Crowther, Eric Griffiths, Mark Le Fanu, David Dale, R. A. D. Grant,	47
Thinkers of the Left: Michel Foucault <i>Roger Scruton</i>	21		
Hoarse Voices <i>Daniel Johnson</i>	27	Annual subscription £10 (£2 + 50p postage for individual copies). Student and School rate £6. Overseas rate: \$19 surface mail, \$24 air mail. Please send cheque to <i>The Salisbury Review</i> , 7 Lord North Street, London SW1.	
Britain and the Alliance <i>J. Enoch Powell</i>	28		
In Search of Central Europe	30		
Germany: the Victors and the Opposition <i>Harold James</i>	33		
Adenauer's Posthumous Victory <i>Otto von Habsburg</i>	35	© <i>The Salisbury Review</i> Photo-typeset by PARAGON PHOTASET, Aylesbury, Bucks. Printed and Bound in Great Britain by SHORT RUN PRESS LTD., Exeter, Devon.	

Conservative Journals: *MODERN AGE*

Modern Age, the most enduring and distinguished of American conservative journals, was founded by the publisher Henry Regnery and the writer Russell Kirk in 1956. It is a quarterly, attractively produced and invariably substantial in content. Indeed, anyone wanting to familiarise himself with the history of intellectual conservatism in the U.S.A. over the last quarter century could not do better than read the back volumes of the review. Over the years many of the most important figures in American conservatism have written in its pages – Kirk and Regnery themselves, Frank Meyer, Stephen Tonsor, George Carey, Thomas Molnar, Eliseo Vivas, Eric Voegelin. . . . The list is long and the quality of contributions shows no sign of falling off.

Modern Age has provided a forum for debate

between libertarian and traditionalist/corporatist strains in conservative thought, but the traditionalists have tended to predominate in its pages except where opposed positions have been deliberately counterposed in the interest of provoking debate. It will surprise many that America should contain so many literate and thoughtful spokesmen for a political and cultural position akin to our own High Tory tradition.

Modern Age is now edited by Dr David S. Collier and is published by Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 14 S. Bryn Mawr Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA. 19010. The subscription is 10 dollars the year. A subscriber can expect to find about eight essays in each issue as well as a wide-ranging book review section edited by George A. Panichas.

How can we have a Duty to the Dead?¹

John Casey

*'Ricorditi di me che son la Pia;
Siena mi fe', disfecemi Maremma'*
(*'Remember me who am la Pia; Siena made me,
Maremma unmade me'*) – Dante, *Purgatorio* V

How can we have a duty to the dead?

In the lines which I have just quoted from Dante's *Purgatorio* a woman of whose life all reliable tradition has been lost, but who was born in Siena and perhaps murdered by her husband in the Maremma region of Tuscany, begs to be remembered. After the long account of the death by violence of two famous men earlier in the Canto, the few lines of this unknown woman who wishes simply to be remembered have a particular quality of desolation.

To *remember* the dead would seem to be the simplest duty we could have towards them, and the one which we might most easily imagine them wishing to lay upon us, if they could. In the *Odyssey* (Book XI) Odysseus's mother, Anticleia, appears to him, and tells the story of her death, how she died from longing for her son, for his counsels and tender-heartedness. And she ends by saying 'Haste thee to the light with what speed thou mayest, and bear all these things in mind, that thou mayest hereafter tell them to thy wife.' She wishes her story to be known and remembered in the world of the living, and especially by another woman, who will more fully understand her grief.

We perhaps find it as natural as did Homer and Dante to imagine that the dead would, if they could, lay upon us the duty to remember them. We unreflectively think that to be remembered after death is a human good, and to pass into oblivion a human evil: 'And some there be, which have no memorial; Who are perished as though they had never been, And are become as though they had never been born.' These words convey not only the idea of a human evil, but also something like a rebuke. For being remembered after one's death is taken to be a reward for righteousness, even a sign of it: 'But these were merciful men, Whose righteousness hath not been forgotten. . . . Their bodies are buried in peace, But their name liveth for evermore.'

It is natural for us, then, as for the writer of *Ecclesiasticus*, to think that to be remembered after death is a human good, and to think also that we might have a duty to the dead – to some of them, at least – that we remembered them.

But although it is natural, is it right? Can we really have a duty to the dead? For we must remember that there is also a tradition of thought, deeply embedded in our intellectual (one might almost say, our spiritual)

tradition, which holds that such feelings, although natural, are seriously mistaken. The arguments are simple, but cogent, and go back to antiquity. What they ask is this: How can the absence of a possible good count as an evil for anyone, unless someone *mind* about this deprivation, unless someone consciously suffer from it? But the dead do not mind: they feel neither pain at our neglect, nor pleasure in our dutifulness. The dead cannot be harmed; neither can they be benefited. And for me to fear that I will be forgotten after my death, that I shall perish as though I have never been, is irrational. For even apart from the fact that the most famous of men are not thought of as often after their death by those who admire them as they were during their lifetime by those who loved them, it is also true that after death one will have no experience of this neglect, and so no one who has died will mind it. It will be utterly different from being neglected and lonely during one's lifetime.

And this consideration, that the dead cannot be harmed, since they can have no experience of what happens after their death, and hence cannot mind it, stands behind the most celebrated attempt in antiquity to prove that death itself is not an evil. Lucretius argued that it is as irrational to think with horror of the eternity of time after one's death in which one will not exist as it would be to think with horror of the stretch of time before one was born in which one *did* not exist. So long as a man is alive, then he has not died, and so does not experience the evil of death. Once he has died, then he no longer exists, and so does not experience the evil of not existing. Hence there can be nothing about the state of being dead that is itself an evil; and being dead for a future eternity after death is no different from, and no worse than not having existed for an eternity before one was born. And that no one will think of us at some time after our death is no more terrible than that no one thought of us before we were born.

This line of thought is powerful, and it perhaps strikes modern men especially as containing the truth, of showing that feelings that are indeed natural to us may nonetheless be deluded or self-deceived. And a very persuasive philosophical picture stands behind these arguments and gives them their plausibility, a picture which centrally expresses a modern view of the human person. According to this picture, what is good and evil for human beings can in the end only be what human beings can actually experience as pleasant and painful. For a person is in the end a mind, a centre of consciousness, a soul that thinks. And the story of a man is the story of his conscious experiences. And those things only can be good and evil

which can be the pleasant and painful experiences of a conscious mind. Therefore nothing bad can happen to a person which it is quite impossible that he could experience as unpleasant and therefore think of as bad. And this flows from the conviction that to be a person just is to be conscious, to think – a conviction that has been dominant in our culture since the seventeenth century.

The conclusion is that the dead cannot be benefited, and that therefore we cannot truly be said to have a duty towards them. For what is it to have a duty? What is it, for instance, to have a duty towards the living? Is it not to acknowledge a claim of service, or gratitude, or love? But if the living were completely unconscious of these claims, unaware of whether we fulfilled them or not, unmoved by our neglect, and untouched by our dutifulness, then surely duties even to the living would lose their meaning and become incomprehensible. For a moral obligation can only be understood if it has some palpable effects upon other conscious beings.

Yet now let us consider some consequences of this line of thought.² Imagine a brilliant man just entering upon a career of distinguished intellectual achievement. He is injured in a motor accident and reduced to the mental condition of a contented two year old. We call this a tragedy and pity him. But *he* cannot regard it as a tragedy, *he* is quite contented. Where, then, is the tragedy? Yet our natural instinct is to pity him, to find it a tragedy for *him* – and not just for the world that will lose his contribution.

Or consider the case of a man who is calumniated behind his back. He does not know of the wrong, and his career (we may suppose) does not suffer from it. Our instinct is to think that this is an evil nonetheless, that a wrong has been done. And it is not just the fact that he would be unhappy if he found out that makes it an evil. He would be unhappy if he found out because to be calumniated is itself an evil – an evil because it is a wrong, and a wrong because it is an injustice.

The truth is that there is much in human life that we rightly regard as good and evil quite apart from how a man thinks of it at the time, or how he experiences it. Much that is important in the story of a man transcends what happens to his body, and even what he thinks and feels. We naturally think that whether a man is honoured, whether his motives are justly assessed, whether after his death his will be set aside, or works that he has written be wrongly credited to another – all these things are part of the story of a man.

For many and perhaps most of the obligations we have transcend what people care about and are conscious of. Parents have an obligation to their children to do them good that the children cannot know about at the time, and may never know about or care about. Indeed, people may feel an obligation to unborn generations, and hold that it would be wicked to destroy what these would otherwise inherit.

Obligations transcend caring and knowing. And so we are convinced that to set aside a man's will is a wrong done to the dead, that justice is outraged. And justice may be outraged also in the killing of an unborn infant who in the nature of things cannot know that its life has been cut off.

Justice is to be done, and the doing of justice does not simply depend upon those whom it benefits caring about it.

Thoughts such as these give us an understanding of the human person as not just a thinking soul, a purely individual centre of sensations, but as necessarily part of a community, and one with a history. The characteristic ancient Greek view was that a person was a man with ancestors, with descendants, the citizen of a particular city, someone who has done certain deeds, and who has merited a certain reputation, perhaps a certain honour. In his funeral oration Pericles says 'For the love of honour alone is untouched by age, and when one comes to the ineffectual period of life it is not 'gain' as some say, that gives the greater satisfaction, but honour.' (*Thucydides*, Book 11, XLIV). It was a characteristic vision of the ancient world, and again of the Renaissance, that a human being was not just the sum total of his thoughts and feelings, but the whole pattern taken by his life, his deeds, his reputation, the true assessment of his life, his glory after death, his inheritance of a particular form of life, his citizenship of a particular city. The ancient Athenian view, expressed for all time in Pericles's funeral speech, was that the hero was one who identified himself with his city, lived beyond himself in the life of the *polis*, and hence lived beyond death in his fame among his people.³ Therefore human fulfilment (*eudaimonia*) is only complete in reputation and glory after death – a glory owed to the dead hero by the city which he has benefited by his death.

There are two ancient words that cover our duties towards the dead; in the Greek *eusebeia*; in the Latin *pietas*. St Thomas Aquinas took over the Roman term *pietas* to describe the sorts of respect that good men show to all that transcends and sustains us, to blood relations, benefactors, country, Church and God. *Pietas* is a rendering of due homage (*cultum*), respect, reverence, loving admiration, allegiance. It would include respect for old age, for those to whom one owes the debt of life, for a hallowed place, for those to whom one owes the security of one's country. The man of *pietas* is a serious man, who knows how to feel, who has a sense of 'whatsoever is grave and constant'⁴ in the human condition. Aquinas considered *pietas* to be a 'part' of justice. And we might say that the man without *pietas* would not know in the widest sense how to feel and behave. He would not fully understand what constituted insult; he would not see old age as venerable; he would lack attachment to forms, traditions, language, liturgy; he would lack any sense of a hallowed place, of a *genius loci*. And all this means that he would lack the deepest sense of community, of being born into a human tradition, of life being not his unique possession, but something common to all. He would not know how to speak of the dead. Indeed, he would not see why we *should* speak of the dead. Such a man, lacking the fullest sense of what it is to be a man among men, would lack real understanding of himself, and of the pattern taken by his own life.

Is my conclusion then that what is good about a sense of duty to the dead is what it does for the living? That it

rescues the living from shallowness? Partly, but not entirely. The truth is perhaps that where a living community remembers the dead, then it ceases to think of itself as existing purely in the present, as though only the present were real. It becomes more possible to understand a human society as being in its deepest nature, in Burke's words 'a partnership not only between those who are living and those who are dead, but between those who are living and those who are dead, and those who are to be born'.⁵ It is only in the context of such a *general* human solidarity that the idea of justice itself can genuinely be distinguished from one of mere advantage, and also that the idea of justice can be brought into relation with a still wider idea – that of charity. For in the end a duty to the dead that we remember them is one of charity still more profoundly than it is one of justice.

Yet although we may have a duty to remember the dead, is it a duty which we can in practice fulfill? For think how difficult it is really (rather than simply notionally)⁶ to remember even the living, not to reduce those even whom we know well to stereotypes. And usually when we call to mind men of the past we use them to confirm our own beliefs and reinforce our certainties. It may be that it is only the great writer who really, deeply understands even his contemporaries. Really to understand and remember men of the past in *this* sense might seem almost impossible. Indeed, to understand them may require an effort of imagination, an establishing of new and unexpected links with the past, such that our understanding of men of the past will be in a form utterly different from that in which they understood themselves. As T. S. Eliot put it in *Little Gidding*:

And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the
language of the Living.

And Eliot's constant practice as a poet, his lifelong attempt to bring the language of past poets alive in the present, to see the essential present in relation to the essential past, and hence 'urge the mind to aftersight and foresight' (*Little Gidding* 11) is itself a lesson in the enormous intellectual and moral effort it is *really* to remember the dead.

But that is not, perhaps, the effort that we are *obliged* to make. We *have* an obligation to the dead, and the only way in which we can practically fulfill it is by calling to our aid existing traditions, existing forms of life, existing rituals which we find we inherit. Traditions such as the poet looks for, to establish a deeper understanding of the past, can be 'recreated' only with great labour.⁷ But it is at least practically sufficient for us that we actually inherit a continuous tradition within a continuing society, that has existed in the same place, and met in this place, for many centuries. And we fulfill our duty, not imaginatively perhaps, and perhaps not creatively, but at least piously, by holding a service in commemoration of our College benefactors. For indeed (to quote some more lines from *Little Gidding*)

You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid.

Notes

1. A Sermon preached at the *Commemoration of Benefactors*, Caius College, Sunday, 31st October 1982.
2. For a source of many of these considerations, vide Thomas Nagel, 'Death', in *Mortal Questions*.
3. Cf. Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 190.
4. Cf. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p. 209.
5. Edmund Burke, *An Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs*.
6. For the distinction between 'real' and 'notional' assent, vide J. H. Newman, *The Grammar of Assent*.
7. Cf. T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *Selected Essays*.

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The Politics of Nature

Diana Spearman

Man's relation to nature has become a political issue; it is everywhere undermining the assumptions upon which the policies of governments, and especially their economic policies, have been based. The problems are enormous, difficult to assess with any certainty, and calculated to create the maximum ill-will between developed and undeveloped countries, touching as they do on such sensitive questions as relative population growth and the ultimate responsibility for the deterioration of the environment.

The ecological movement is fed from two distinct sources: one, hard-headed calculations about the depletion of natural resources and the effects of agricultural and industrial practices, and the other, soft-hearted feelings which persuade us that a beautiful landscape, or an animal species, has an intrinsic value, so that it is morally wrong to destroy it. The hard-headed calculations remain man-centred, and insofar as they impinge on politics, are merely the extension of the usual concerns of government into new fields. The moral feelings, however, involve a reversal of what for most of recorded history has been the normal human attitude. Such feelings repudiate all arguments for the care of the environment based merely on instrumental benefits.

Fraser Darling, for instance, argues thus:

'I am not greatly moved when I hear the supporters of the national park and nature reserve movement argue that living things have educational value, that the beauties of nature give pleasure to humanity, that they are of scientific usefulness, and that we cannot afford to lose them. The essential attitude is not far in advance of that of the timber merchant. Life exists in its own right, and this we must acknowledge.'¹

Such exponents of the political importance of ecology demand a new ethic, or rather the extension of moral considerations to activities previously thought to be morally neutral. Aldo Leopold, who may be regarded as almost the founder of ethical and political ecology, said forty years ago that 'A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise'.²

Not all, perhaps not many, of the scientists engaged in ecological studies accept the Leopold-Darling attitude. However, the scientific and ethical views are linked by a recognition of the interdependence of all forms of life in the ecosystem. It is, for instance, not possible to eliminate a 'pest' without producing unintended and unforeseen consequences on other species, including our own. The effects of the organo-chlorine chemicals on bird

populations are well known in this country because of the controversy over DDT, which killed not only the insects at which it was aimed but also the birds who fed on them. DDT thereby starting a chain of poisoning involving birds, fish and mammals. Since crop yields were increased, the process has been defended. Unfortunately, however, insects gradually acquire immunity to any pesticide; the prospect did not seem distant of an explosion of insect life without the control exercised by birds, in which case, crop yields would have diminished disastrously. In this country DDT was phased out, although we are still supplying it to the Third World. Other pesticides, however, continue to have similar if less dramatic effects.

The example suggests some of the difficulties faced by governments, when encountering the unintended consequences of apparently desirable activities. In addition politicians are dependent on scientists for estimates of the precise character of the problem. It is not easy to construct a convincing election manifesto out of such material, especially as no guidance is provided by the principles of any party. Political theories have been concerned with the relations of human beings to one another, or to collective entities, – such as nations, states, churches, and economic systems. The natural environment, except for local and limited catastrophes, has been assumed to be an unchanging background against which the human drama is enacted. No one has supposed that society ought to be, or might have to be, altered in response to the requirements of nature: quite the reverse. There has been opposition to industrialisation on aesthetic as well as on moral and social grounds, but not on grounds of its danger to animal or human survival.

One method of coping with these problems is to ignore them, or, what comes to the same thing, to maintain that there are values which transcend ecological questions, the solution to which can be postponed until after we have satisfied the demands of social justice and economic welfare. Rix Lowenthal, the intellectual mentor of the German Social Democrats, argued in a paper published in the Party's magazine, that: 'paying attention to environmental considerations would ultimately have to be quantified for its social and political-democratic justification'.⁴ This is also the view of the more extreme of the American free market economists. Its irrelevance is best illustrated by one of the most serious threats, the increase in the burning of fossil fuels. If this continues at its present rate, the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will double by the first quarter of the next century, raising the mean temperature to a level which could create drought in the main wheat growing areas of the world. Further-

more, the polar ice could melt, drowning London and other cities near the coast. Of course, it is not certain that the carbon dioxide *would* increase to the extent predicted, or that if it did, the climatic effects *would* necessarily follow. And one of the main difficulties which face governments in such matters is precisely the uncertainty which surrounds them. Nevertheless, even so sober and cautious a scientist as Kenneth Mellenby, formerly Head of the Monkswood Research Station, has suggested that we might have suddenly to close our coalfields, since even a gradual run-down could result in 'devastation'.⁵ How could such a sudden transformation be effected by the operation of the free market alone?

Perhaps the amount of carbon dioxide produced by the already industrialised nations could be harmlessly absorbed. The problem becomes intractable, however, when we consider the industrialisation of the Third World. It is in the Third World countries too that the rain forests are situated. These absorb carbon dioxide, but are now rapidly being destroyed, thus leaving more carbon dioxide to accumulate in the atmosphere. Nor can the blame be simply transferred. The Third World countries may retort that they are responding to our demand for forest products.

It is hard to see what bearing 'social and political democratic justification' could have on a problem as vast as this, or even on the less universally threatening, but still disturbing, effects of the emissions from factories and power stations. Although the principle bodies concerned with conservation – The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the World Wild Life Fund and the Flora and Fauna Preservation Society – have no wish to be involved in electoral politics or to be associated with any political party, the political implications of the problems are so far reaching, and touch on so many issues, that it was probably inevitable that political groups should coalesce around them. One would have supposed that ecologically-minded politicians would have inclined to some form of conservatism, if not to the form dominant at the moment. The idea of 'the conquest of nature', often blamed by ecologists for our disregard for the environment, may be rooted, as they maintain, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Politically, however, it is associated with progressive rather than conservative ideas; with the kind of anthropocentric liberalism which attacks the parks of great houses as a waste of useful land, and which once exulted with Macaulay over the extinction of the fish eagle, or with Lowe over the destruction of Epping Forest. Many conservatives may have shared this attitude in their dealings with the world. But it is certainly not typical of conservative thought, which has always stressed the limits to social improvement set by the nature of things, as well as by the nature of man.

The romantic attitude to nature, which in some ways anticipated the ethical aspect of ecology was, in this country, most eloquently expressed by the Tory writers, Scott, Southey and Wordsworth, who made the first protest against the results of industrialism. Their protest arose largely from a generally conservative attitude to life, an attitude which found significance in the attachment to

customs and institutions, and not in the pursuit of social novelties. Wordsworth's view had indeed been formed in his radical youth; but he still held to it after his conversion to conservatism. Although such writers were mainly concerned with the effects of the new industry on people, they were also conscious of the threat to nature, which they saw as the symbol of all true human tranquillity. They were inspired by this highly civilised love of nature rather than by scientific knowledge. However, a modern socio-biologist might add that a love of beauty in nature serves as a protection against too much technology, and that this fact constitutes its value for survival.

The leftward stance of ecological movements is no doubt partly due to more recent conservative attitudes; but the fundamental reason for the stance is the belief that it is capitalism which has ravaged landscapes and exterminated species. There is a certain plausibility in such a view; capitalist industry has burned fossil fuel on an unprecedented scale, has destroyed habitats, spread pesticides, and other complex poisons. But the operative term here is not 'capitalist' but 'industry'. Communist industry had done precisely the same, in an even more wholesale manner. The Russians have managed to lower the level of the Black Sea and to poison considerable parts of it, together with Lake Baikal, while the ruin of Southern Poland and the forests of Bohemia has led to enormous popular disaffection. The Russians, at least, have become aware of the dangers. But some of the proposed remedies, such as turning rivers from flowing north to flowing south, offer threats as great as the original projects.

In capitalist countries themselves it is governments, not untrammelled free enterprise, which have initiated the most damaging projects, because it is governments which embark on the largest and most expensive schemes, and which are under the least obligation to respect existing property rights. The free market, left to itself, would not have produced nuclear weapons or nuclear power, nor would it have built the giant dams in Brazil or Tasmania. Likewise, it is the Common Market agricultural policy which gives financial inducements to English farmers to grow wheat, of which Europe has an unmarketable surplus, and to disregard the beauty or the wild life of the countryside.

Some of the more enthusiastic supporters of the free market, in this instance a mirror image of the Green Party, have argued that ecological, like all other problems, could be solved by the democratic process. By this, they mean not the democratic process of voting, but that of consumer choice. They have concentrated on such topics as clean air in cities, and have suggested that methods could be devised for finding out how much the inhabitants were prepared to pay for the elimination of pollutants. In this particular case, no doubt, such methods could be devised. But it is obvious that they could not be applied to the more serious problems. Indeed the suggestions shows a misunderstanding of the way in which a free market operates. Both theory and experience demonstrate that in any given situation the free market produces the highest income per head of the population, compatible with satisfying the tastes of individuals. But it does not and cannot provide

for all collective needs, as anyone can learn from Adam Smith. In his list of the functions of the state Smith included the duty 'of erecting and maintaining certain public works and public institutions, which, though they may be in the highest degree advantageous to a great society, are, however, of such a nature that the profit could never repay the expense to any individual or small group of individuals, and which therefore they cannot be expected to erect or maintain'.⁶ Nothing illustrates the need more vividly than the enormous increase in human population and the explosive development of technology. The protection of the land and of animals is costly; moreover it can be frustrated by one individual who refuses to abide by voluntary agreements. There is no danger to the free enterprise system in admitting its limitations; it can only operate within a legal framework, and the character of the framework must be decided by the character of the problems of the moment as well as by the political ideas on which it is founded. There is, in principle, no more difficulty in introducing measures to protect the environment than has been found in introducing measures to protect public health.

Suppose, then, that we reject *laissez-faire*, and adopt an active political stance towards ecology. What policy should we adopt? The involvement of the ecology movement in politics has caused proponents to consider the ecosystem not as it is in itself, but rather as it directly affects human beings. This might appear to be the only way of influencing the general public. In fact, however, it is the moral aspect of environmental problems which has had the most impact, and not only on the ordinary newspaper reader. It has engaged the attention of philosophers, and has even influenced military arrangements in the Falkland Islands. Furthermore, even if the dangers are exaggerated, the question of whether we are justified in subordinating the whole of nature to the needs of man, would still remain. The destruction of an animal species, whether or not deliberate, raises the question in its clearest form. It is a distinct, and in many ways novel, moral issue. It is distinct, for example, from the moral problems connected with the causing of pain to sentient beings, although this too may enter the ecological argument. (Consider, the poaching of elephants for ivory, or the continuance of whaling by Russia and Japan in spite of the depletion of stocks. Such practices do not pose

any new moral problem and no-one disputes that they are morally indefensible.) The fundamental ecological question is how far man has any responsibility towards the other inhabitants of the planet. It has been argued that he has none, and that he can look with indifference on the vanishing of species simply because species come and go inevitably in the course of evolution. But we are considering not the natural death of a species, but something more like its murder.

The subject is difficult to discuss. Mankind is divided between those who have an intuitive belief that other species have intrinsic value and those who regard other species with indifference or dislike. Even the latter would, however, agree that it is in some sense wrong to destroy forever what is beautiful. Even to them the disappearance of a species which has taken millions of years to evolve may seem a somewhat excessive price to pay for a 10% increase in the income of farmers. However hard one may try, it is of course, impossible to discuss ecological themes without reference to the interests of man. The loss of animal life curtails the experience of human beings and restricts the range of their imagination, impoverishing the life of everyone. But such anthropocentric considerations in their turn merely serve to show the deep relation between man and his environment, and the inscrutable bond which unites them.

Such thoughts may seem remote from political realities. However, they engage with real and serious feelings. Governments will therefore more and more have to face conflicts between concern for the environment and economic growth. Until now the choice has always been in favour of immediate economic advantage. However, as public awareness and concern increase, there will be ever-greater pressure towards putting short-term economic benefits in second place. The situation will then produce immense problems for politicians, who may have to persuade their electorates to accept unpalatable facts. The intellectual Right has hitherto avoided the subject of the environment. It should now be prepared with a coherent and soundly based view that could be presented to the public. And any such view must recognise, in its very description of the human condition, the inseparable relation between man and nature and the absurdity of a philosophy which regards nature as no more than subordinate to our designs.

Notes

1. F. Fraser Darling 'Man's Responsibility for the Environment' in *Biology and Ethics. Symposia of the Institute of Biology* No. 18, Edited by F. J. Ebling.
2. Aldo Leopold *A Sand County Almanac*.
3. Rix Lowenthal quoted in François Bondy: 'A European Diary' *Encounter* March 1982.
4. Kenneth Melanby: 'An Environmentalist's Case for Sizewell's PWR.' *New Scientist* Jan: 13th 1983.
5. Thomas Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol I Chapter 3.
6. Adam Smith: *The Wealth of Nations*, Book 5, Chapter 1, Part 3.

The Peace Movement and Moral Inversion

John Gray

In no area of public controversy are the errors of fashionable progressive opinion better illuminated than in current debate about unilateralism and the European peace movement. Among its opponents, including the great majority of its conservative critics, the Peace Movement is represented as a body of well-meaning but dangerously misguided men and women, whose horror of modern war may indeed be exploited by those whose motives focus on the strengthening of Soviet power, but whose support for unilateral nuclear disarmament embodies what are in essence a series of intellectual mistakes about the realities and implications of the present strategic balance. These errors, being essentially intellectual in character, are for that reason supposed to be corrigible by evidence and argument. The passions which inspire that great majority of the Peace Movement which is not consciously pro-Soviet are taken to be sound and beyond the reach of moral criticism. All of us see that a nuclear war would be a catastrophe for civilisation, and perhaps the Peace Movement merely expresses a more urgent and vivid sense of the catastrophe by which we are threatened.

This conventional interpretation of the moral psychology of the Peace Movement, influential as it is in conservative circles as much as in the realms of moderate opinion, embodies a potentially disastrous naiveté as to the real roots of contemporary nuclear pacifism. I do not mean by this that nuclear pacifists are the tools, unwitting or otherwise, of Soviet policy. If the Soviet policy makers are expending time and money on support for the European peace movements, it is probably largely wasted. For we must understand the Peace Movement as an eruption, having deep roots in much popular sentiment and in intellectual opinion, of the phenomenon of moral inversion which has been analysed in the writings of that neglected thinker, Michael Polanyi. The idea of moral inversion as Polanyi uses it is bound up with his complex and subtle account of the development of European culture, but in substance it denotes the transformation of Christian moral passions into instruments of destructive social criticism.

By contrast with the religions and philosophies of the ancient world and with Judaism, Christianity kindled in mankind vast moral hopes. In its earliest forms, after all, Christianity combined an antinomian moral life with an eschatological sense of the world – a mixture deeply hostile to the central institutions of a lasting social order. Throughout its history, Christianity has had always a tendency to recur to the most primitive form of its moral

life in which the necessary disciplines of social and political order, so prominent in the religions of the Romans and the Jews, are neglected or despised. In the Pauline and Augustinian traditions of Christian moral theology, an enduring response to the demands of civilisation seemed to have been achieved. In these traditions, the unrealisable moral hopes of primitive Christianity were tempered by a realistic conception of the intractabilities of human nature as captured in the doctrine of Original Sin; and the assertiveness of Christian moral life was restrained by the affirmation of a transcendental order in which the unavoidable and otherwise irremediable injustices of the human world were to be redressed. Strengthened by the absorption of Aristotelian ethics into Catholic Christianity, these traditions of moral thought were able for more than a thousand years to contain the destructive implications of primitive Christian sentiment for the maintenance of social order.

In its Pauline and Thomistic version, Christian moral theory expresses a profound response to the realities of human life. The danger of Christian moral life lies in a return to its most primitive form. Most dangerous of all, however, is Christian moral hope severed from its context in religious faith and secularised as moral inversion. In the phenomenon of moral inversion, the moral hopes of Christianity become detached from their historical home in a pessimistic and transcendental faith, and are turned in a frenzy of masochistic self-criticism on all important social institutions and all structures of authority. This mutation of Christian ethics into a cult of political antinomianism has occurred in many sectors of social life, but its promotion has been the special preserve of the lumpenintelligentsia, which in the schools and in higher education has reproduced in secular form the destructive caricature of Christian moral ideals perpetrated by the millenarian agitators of late mediaeval Europe.

In no important respect do the progressive political faiths of our time represent an abandonment of Christian moral hopes. Rather, these hopes are the inspiration of the dominant movements of political and cultural protest. The moral life which these movements harbour is, however, a desolate and vulgarised form of Christian sentiment, devoid of its millennial adaptations to human realities and denuded of its healing transcendental dimension. In the contemporary phenomenon of moral inversion, we see the moral passions which Christianity awakened in the world turning against their religious vehicle and becoming an autonomous force of awesome

destructive potential. They bid fair to conquer the Christian churches themselves, and thus to extirpate the civilising heritage of St Augustine. In moral inversion, we find another proof (if such were needed) that modern moral and political life can be understood only in the terms given by the long crisis of Christianity. We find modern sensibility repudiating or transforming out of all recognition the historic understanding of Christian commitment, clinging to Christian moral hope even as it ditches theology and eschatology, shrinking from acceptance of a truly pagan moral outlook even as it parades its emancipation from the traditional virtues of Christendom.

Only by invoking the phenomenon of moral inversion can we explain the peculiar blindness of the Peace Movement to the militarist and expansionist aspect of Soviet policy and institutions. The moral passion animating the Peace Movement, far more often than not, is a hatred of our own societies rather than an innocent longing for release from the threat of nuclear holocaust. The truly tragic dimensions of our current predicament, in which irreversible proliferation of nuclear technologies spells an end to all reasonable hope for genuine and lasting disarmament, are lost on all those whose moral life is convulsed by an ungovernable rage for secular perfection. It is ironic in the last degree that so many Christians, who officially profess a religion of mystery and tragedy, should be in the forefront of a movement founded in blindness to the fateful consequences of evil. It is hardly less ironic that modern secular humanists, whose avowed tradition is that of Greek classical morality, should be so particularly deficient in the Greek sense of an overpower-

ing historical fate, which we may resist but which we cannot hope to avert.

None of this suggests that current debate about defence can or should be insulated from moral criticism. The Peace Movement has stirred us from our dogmatic slumbers, if only in illuminating the questionable aspects of any doctrine of the Just War in a context of weapons which are bound to wreak indiscriminate destruction upon civilian populations. Again, we should never forget that, among the victims of a nuclear conflict, would be the enslaved peoples of the Communist blocs. If there is any real substance in recent proposals by Andropov for arms control, they should be accorded a serious response. It is a fundamental error, however, to ignore the emotional imperatives and psychological roots in moral inversion of the Peace Movement. Because it is inspired by a death-wish brought on by moral passions severed from their context in Christian religious commitment, the Peace Movement is not amenable to rational argument and it will not be reversed by propaganda which merely harps on the Soviet threat. All these considerations, in themselves rather depressing, suggest the futility of topical projects for an intellectual counter-attack on unilateralism. What is needed, rather, is a fundamental shift in moral attitudes, grounded in a realistic acknowledgment of the tragic necessities of political action. It is not to be expected that such a shift will occur suddenly or soon, but it can only be postponed indefinitely by a campaign against unilateralism which accepts and uses the moral idiom in which the passions of the Peace Movement are expressed.

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Conservative Thinkers: Michael Oakeshott

The Poet of Practice

R. A. D. Grant

Reading Oakeshott constantly over fifteen years has been a priceless education for which I feel nothing but gratitude. Whatever the contemporary relevance of his thought (which is considerable), Oakeshott has created a complete world of imagination, a vision of great scope, depth and power. He is in all probability our greatest political philosopher since Hobbes, and a matchlessly civilised mind. To make such claims is of course to beg many questions. But I hope that some of them will be answered below.

Contrary to general belief, Oakeshott is a voluminous writer. Even the works I shall mention compose a very substantial corpus. His work falls into three main blocks. His first book, a systematic work of metaphysics called *Experience and its Modes* (1933), appeared when he was thirty-one. His next appeared twenty-nine years later. *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* is a compilation of all his longer writings between 1947 and 1962. Many bear the marks of the Attlee period, which came to a symbolic end with Oakeshott's appointment to Harold Laski's Chair of Political Science at the London School of Economics. *Rationalism in Politics* is less systematic, but intellectually no less coherent, than its predecessor. Oakeshott's most recent major work is the treatise *On Human Conduct* (1974). Drawing on phenomenology, history and political philosophy, it elaborates ideal types of individuality, citizenship and the rule of law. More recently still there have been two short books, *Hobbes on Civil Association* and (at the moment of writing) *On History*. The latter will be duly reviewed in this journal, but a quick glance at each suggests that they are in part codicils to *On Human Conduct*. There is also an indispensable anthology of *The Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe* (1939), an introduction to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, two major essays on education, a good many sizeable articles from the *Cambridge Journal* (for example on 'The Universities' and 'Contemporary British Politics'), and a piece called 'The Masses in Representative Democracy'.¹

Experience and its Modes is Idealist in inspiration and (superficially) has nothing to do with politics.² It starts from monistic assumptions. Since everything is what it is by virtue of its context, and every context is defined by a wider context, Reality as a whole must be single and indivisible. The Whole is logically prior to our everyday awareness of diversity. Although we cannot see it as a Whole it must exist as a whole, not in some transcendental realm, but here and now. Moreover only the Whole is 'concrete'. Everything partial – life as we know it – is,

Oakeshott argues (in defiance of common usage), 'abstract' and hence (from the standpoint of Reality) defective. Philosophy alone can explicate the Whole, and the word Experience properly pertains only to the Whole.

Experience divides into discrete worlds of appearance called 'modes'. Oakeshott has chosen for analysis the three most familiar, History, Science and Practice (everyday life). Each is a separate, totally exclusive perspective on the Whole. So nothing can be modally ambiguous. 'A glass of water' and 'H₂O' are not two different aspects of the same substance, but two entirely different, abstract 'things'. Thus History, Science and Practice are all *sui generis*, mutually opaque. Being unique, incomparable, and all equally abstract, they cannot be ranged in any hierarchy. So Practice has no authority over contemplative pursuits, nor they over it.

Experience and its Modes establishes most of the salient features of Oakeshott's later thought. First, there is his scepticism. If Reality is single, then the diversity of our immediate experience is an illusion. Secondly, there is the view (later to acquire great significance) of the practical mode as containing separate individuals (persons and things) related only by desire. Given a political twist, this is the world of Hobbes, or of Hobbes as subsequently interpreted (highly convincingly) by Oakeshott. Thirdly, Oakeshott believes that truth-criteria and interpretative methods hold good only within the modes in which they arise. To apply them anywhere else is to mistake one's material and to be guilty of irrelevance or *ignoratio elenchi*. This rigorous conception of appropriateness is the source of Oakeshott's famous later attack on 'rationalism'. It also underlies much of his educational thinking. Incidentally, it has the consequence that political philosophy, construed literally, is impossible. For politics is one thing, and philosophy another. Nevertheless, Oakeshott's metaphysic undoubtedly throws political shadows and we ought not to hold him to the letter of his system. Besides, for Oakeshott, politics and philosophy have a common origin in 'practice' and in that human solvent, may be held, however inscrutably, together.

Rationalism in Politics falls into two inter-related halves, more or less chronologically divided. The first includes the title essay, and is in my view the more cogent. Here Oakeshott applies his notion of relevance to political and moral conduct, clearly with an eye on the current pretensions of socialist thought to 'rationality'. What he shows in essence is that rationality consists in the appropriate adaptation of means to ends, and that the

ends of human conduct are not what idealists, socialists and other collectivists take them to be. Such people go wrong in supposing that political and moral (i.e. social) conduct consists in the achievement of some independent and premeditated 'purpose'. Politics, for example, is not a project to be executed or a problem to be solved. It has no affinity with the scientific, military or commercial enterprises which so often furnish the social engineer (the 'rationalist') with his blueprints for a better world – in other words, with his 'ideology'. Nor is it amenable to supervision by ideologies of purely political origin, such as doctrines of abstract 'right'. For these are mere 'abridgements' of living political traditions, unnecessary (if natural) in the societies from which they arise, and generally useless or harmful when transplanted. Written constitutions, says Oakeshott, are essentially ideologies of this kind, and he is accordingly sceptical as to their practical value. Indeed, he is generally sceptical about any visible institution in which social man might seek to confirm his identity: the Church, say, or the monarchy. Symbols, like ideals, can always be resolved back into the tacit, concrete practices they supposedly represent. Such practices are traditions. Though fluid, they are the bedrock of social existence and (it seems) require no visible means of support. Their maintenance, repair and development are spontaneous if unhampered by the 'planner'. The rationalist, offering to supersede them with his rigid, comprehensive schemes of perfection, has misunderstood their nature. He is guilty of irrelevance. So rationalism is actually a form of irrationality.

The other half of *Rationalism in Politics*, for the most part, develops Oakeshott's modal theory. The 'concrete Whole' has disappeared. We now have a 'conversation' between the modes, which have also added Poetry (art) to their number. But they are still mutually opaque, so their so-called conversation is really only a frictionless jostling. Of course, within each mode there is genuine communication, since there is by definition a common language. But it clearly cannot be communication between whole persons. Each individual as a whole seems bound into the same solipsism as the separate modes between which he distributes his existence. He will be simply the unique focus of a number of discrepant imaginary worlds.

And here a major objection must be raised. Following Oakeshott, I have spoken of the modes as though they conversed in some abstract world. But in fact they exist only in individual human beings. All human activity consists, says Oakeshott, of 'imagining'. Why then confine the practical mode in which we spend most of our life to the operations of unqualified 'desire', except for the purposes of persuasive definition? And if Oakeshott's picture of practical life is correct, why does he set up the universal 'conversation' as also being the true model of civilised intercourse?

These questions will have to wait for their implicit answers. But for a moment, if practice should in the event be conversational, its political analogue, as presented by Oakeshott, is surely a bundle of simultaneous monologues, each guaranteed a voice (if not a hearing) by

some system of accepted rules. This is essentially the liberal picture, of individualist society under the rule of law. In *On Human Conduct* Oakeshott attempts to moralise the rule of law by seeing it as something more than a regulative device. But I am far from convinced of his success, and therefore I am unsure that his is not a version of the classical liberal analysis of political order.

On Human Conduct multiplies ideal categories *praeter necessitatem*; there must be a full score of them. None is entirely without its power to illuminate. But each is subject to so many qualifications, so pared away by endless exclusions and negative definitions, as frequently to finish up like Lichtenberg's knife, the one without a blade that had no handle. The most important of the ideal categories is 'civil association'. This is an exceedingly tricky, not to say slippery, concept. As I have intimated civil association is, for Oakeshott, essentially citizenship under the rule of law. It is a relationship consisting solely in common subscription to a 'practice'. 'Practices' specify the conditions for 'performances', viz. exercises in 'self-enactment'. As a language does not enjoin specific utterances, so neither does a practice enjoin specific actions. Civil association is said (partly following Aristotle) to be an end in itself, a dilute form of friendship (perhaps akin to respect). It is, in short, a moral relationship. However, it seems too neutral and desiccated to excite much loyalty on its own account, either between citizens or between each citizen and itself as embodied in the rule of law. For civil association is an abstraction from law, not the concrete institution possessed of dramatic moral and coercive power. Men have gone to prison for their language, but never, surely, for its grammar. Civil association, I think, is really only an ideal utility, and hence (by itself) non-moral. Oakeshott, however, is clearly anxious not to regard it as instrumental. But there is nothing so very banal about seeing it as a means to, or precondition for, a state of affairs – social life – which clearly is an end in itself. Such an end might well endow the means to it with some of its own moral force, if it possesses any: and why should that not both explain the content, and justify the form, of law?

But here we come up against another difficulty. For Oakeshott, social life is too diffuse an image to compel any positive allegiance. It is merely a congeries of private or group activities without any common focus.³ In short, it is not a culture, a nation, or a state, but simply an amorphous, fissiparous 'freedom', a form without a content. In this respect Oakeshott belongs with libertarians like Hayek or Friedman,⁴ and his philosophy suffers from the same abridgement – the same reluctance to affirm the validity of this or that concrete form of life – which undermines the prescriptions of libertarian thought.

Freedom from arbitrary power (the rule of law) is clearly a precious thing, and I do not mean to disparage it. But I do not see that it has any necessary connection with Oakeshott's favoured *civitas peregrina* (as he calls it). The *civitas peregrina* has a Bloomsbury flavour. As described by Oakeshott, it seems to me to endanger precisely that respect between individuals that civil association is said

(obscurely) to engender. It contains two classes of person. The more interesting are genuine 'individuals'. These disport themselves to advantage, rowdily or quietly as may be, but always with style, in various postures of 'self-enactment'. The rest are 'individuals *manqués*'. These unfortunates are not up to improvising their own lives from the scattered cultural materials allowed them. I have some sympathy for them. In the absence of a common culture their humble endeavours will seem no more than meaningless gestures, empty of either dignity or necessity. Yet for Oakeshott, though they qualify for a degree of pity, they pose only a political (I had almost said hygienic), and not a moral problem. That the pious pipers of collectivism should find a ready audience among them is, however, hardly surprising. For even bogus concern is preferable to indifference or condescension. It is significant that for Oakeshott the word 'alienation' is little more than journalists' cant. He does not see – or perhaps care – that this most real and complex of human conditions may be a consequence of the individualism he celebrates.

Oakeshott's world is, for the most part, incurably egoistic. I do not think it needs to be, but that is how he persists in presenting it. All desire is categorically one: *bonum est in quod tendit appetitus*. There is no scale of values, for that would (presumably) imply an external criterion and would hence be irrelevant or 'rationalistic'. Thus others' doings have no objective necessity, any more than my own. Man lives, as for Sartre, in a world of arbitrary choice. He is passionate, but his passion is useless. Sartre extracts a kind of tragic dignity from this recognition. Man is forced into an acceptance of absolute responsibility for his own choices, and that constitutes his 'necessity'. But for Oakeshott, as for Wilde, uselessness is the hallmark of the aesthetic. To the philosopher, practice takes on the character of poetry. All the world's a stage, a theatre for 'self-enactment'. Oakeshott's muse is comic, and his presiding deity Siva, Lord of the Dance. Seriousness is at a discount, and irony the mark of awareness. Love is an intermittent infatuation, and piety an affectionate nostalgia: in neither do we really escape the self. Death is neither the culmination nor the shaping spirit of life, except in so far as it exhorts us to eat, drink and be merry while we may. Death is merely the terminus of desire, to be accepted because it cannot be shirked, but above all because it provides the cue for a graceful exit. The true end of life – true only because inescapable – is the pursuit of Hobbes's 'felicity', the gratification of a continuous succession of transitory velleities.

To many this will seem an attractive picture.⁵ Oakeshott has, indeed, an omnivorous appetite for the variety of experience, a Hopkinsian relish for 'all trades, their gear and tackle and trim'. Cooks, plumbers, cricketers, dancers, firemen and barrow-boys stalk his pages, each with his mite of skill or wisdom to contribute. But in all this shifting kaleidoscope there is nothing 'whose beauty is past change'. Nor is there suffering. Johnson could not have written of Oakeshott that

When fainting nature called for aid,
And hovering death prepared the blow,

His vigorous remedy displayed
The power of art without the show.

Oakeshott would no doubt regard this observation as philistine and misconceived. For art, in his view, is all show. And so is life: art is 'a dream within the dream of life'. Life, to the philosopher, is a spectator sport. Seen at a distance, through binoculars, it is full of vitality but devoid of meaning.

What might this 'seeing from the outside' entail in specific cases? For Oakeshott, standards of value (like standards of truth) arise internally. They are applicable only to the activities from which they arise. Morality, for example, is said to be a kind of congelation of 'moral practice'. But I think this is an error. 'Moral practice' does not pre-date morality, for without moral awareness moral practice, conceived as the class of actions recognised as subject to moral assessment, would be indistinguishable from practice in general. The 'moral' either derives from, or arises concurrently with, morality. Either way, as a mere psychological fact, it is 'objective', that is, it seems objectively 'right' to the agent. If morality is not seen through the agent's eyes, as something more than a mere preference (the pursuit of a certain ambitious form of 'satisfaction'), then it may be doubted whether it has truly been 'seen' at all. To reduce it to mere preference is, in fact, to denature it. (Here I think Oakeshott swerves from the anti-reductionist position established in the first part of *On Human Conduct*.⁶)

What follows from this implicit denial of objective 'right' is important, and bears on Oakeshott's view of the state. For if there is no 'right', then 'rights' (other than specified, positive rights) also disappear. Political authority, as in liberalism, becomes an administrative convenience. One might feel affection for it (as towards an old overcoat), but its necessity would be purely contingent. And yet it is surely only in virtue of its *moral* authority that a state can legitimately conscript its citizens, deprive them of their lives or liberty, tax them, or requisition their property. Such things as authority, allegiance, coercion and punishment hardly enter Oakeshott's purview. He will discuss some of them very occasionally, but his versions are so attenuated as in no way to coincide with the normal citizen's robust sense of their necessity. Moreover, many of the traditional practices Oakeshott has so eloquently defended must similarly lack conviction. Without objective right, the activities of parents and teachers, and the various institutions in which cultural authority is embodied, are neither justifiable nor perceived as necessary. It is the radical's strength to have perceived this truth. It is curious that Oakeshott, of all people, should prove his unwitting ally. Conservatives would do well to ponder this point. And so too would liberals. If liberalism is to protect what it values, it must first see what it values as objectively right. That thing may be described as 'freedom' but will always turn out to be something more specific. Only thus can liberalism defend itself vigorously and with a clear conscience. If in so doing it transforms itself into conservatism, that will be no bad thing.

I have implied that taken in the round Oakeshott's world is both deficient in certain important respects and in some ways an unsuitable model for conservative practice. Nevertheless I think that he is, not only a thinker of great stature, but also, and importantly, a conservative thinker. This is in large part because Oakeshott's two most important insights point in the opposite direction to the one he has actually taken, namely away from individualism. The first concerns the idea of tradition.

In his account of tradition Oakeshott probably comes closest to the conservative vision of culture. Any given tradition within a culture consists of knowledge. But for Oakeshott this knowledge is not mere information. Rather, it is a knowledge of how to select, interpret, assimilate, transform and use that information. That is, it is a skill, a concrete practice. Its 'traditional' character means exactly that it is handed on from individual to individual, by a process of example and demonstration. And this is the only way in which it can be learnt: since it cannot be reduced to precept, it cannot be learnt from books. It has to be taught. Each individual, of course, is the product of several teachers, and they in their turn of others. Now for Oakeshott in *On Human Conduct* this fact makes the individual the sole factor in the process. A man learns, he argues with some warmth, only from other individuals, not from 'society'.⁷ But this is only a half-truth, as Oakeshott's own discussion makes clear. For what individuals pass on to each other is a trans-individual thing. Any learner is the product, not only of those who have actually taught him personally, but of numberless individuals before them, all unknown to him and mostly not even by repute. And since each individual is the focus of many different traditional practices (most, like morality, unprofessional), it is not to be supposed that these practices will lie inertly side by side in his consciousness in the manner of Oakeshott's modes. They will blend together into one, and their unity will in fact constitute the individual as an individual.

Separate traditions, therefore, both issue from, and collectively compose, a single matrix, namely 'tradition' or 'culture', a living, growing aggregate. Its moral force, and its political strength, derive from the fact that the individual cannot finally distinguish it from his personal identity. For although it is possessed by and exists only in individuals, they 'realise themselves' only in possessing it. It will vary from individual to individual according to circumstances and disposition, but the area of overlap will be enormously more than any common subscription to (say) a belief in the rule of law. It will amount to a shared identity. Culture exists, it is collective, it peters out into retrospective anonymity, but it is nothing other than human. A man entirely isolated from it would not be a 'savage' (for there is no such person), he would be virtually an animal like the Wild Boy of Aveyron.⁸ Such a conception of culture seems to me jointly to satisfy the desiderata of 'freedom' and 'community' that the liberal and the collectivist are each, in his purblind way, groping towards. It is greatly to be regretted that Oakeshott has never explicitly addressed himself to the question of

culture as a whole. But the question is certainly implicit in the earlier part of *Rationalism in Politics* and above all in his two superb essays on education (1967 and 1972). All of these, in their different ways, are urgent pleas on behalf of a single civilisation threatened with destruction by ignorant reformers.

The second point I wish to make concerns Oakeshott's modal theory. This, as was famously said of Hegel, is standing on its head. All that is necessary is to turn it the right way up. Critics have rightly detected a problem in how or why the modes actually arise from the Whole. But the real problem is how the Whole comes to be logically extrapolated from the world of appearance. Oakeshott's metaphysic is rationalist, not in his, but in the original sense; he offers to correct our everyday awareness from a platform constructed in logical outer space. But he has forgotten that he used the human world as a launching pad. The basic premise is really the human world, not the Whole. The Whole, not life, is the abstraction. Of course the modes do exist, and in the concrete. That science, history and practice are different universes is intuitively obvious to every educated person. But they are not exactly as the philosopher represents them. Particularly in the case of the so-called human sciences (history, anthropology, sociology, 'poetry', and so on), their boundaries are shifting and permeable. A mode is much more than its principle of differentiation. To define history purely in terms of its 'pastness' (howsoever qualified), or art in terms of 'fiction', is itself a rationalistic 'abridgement', convenient perhaps, but insufficient.⁹ And modal 'truths' are not just 'true in their own terms' (though they are also that). What matters is not their truth but, as Aristotle noted of tragedy, their plausibility. The modes, in fact, are loose subdivisions not of a logical, rational Whole, but of a shared, present world.

It is in the vision of this present world as 'practice' that much of the strength of Oakeshott's position lies. No doubt, as in his more restricted universe, our present world is governed by desire and satisfaction. However, if one is to criticise Oakeshott's account of practice, it is partly because this blanket designation obliterates fundamental distinctions. In one sense all desire is selfish (since only a self can desire anything) – but that contention is trivial. The contemplative modes all have something in common that is essential, if intermittent, in practical life. They all involve the willing suspension of selfish desire in the interests of the object. We might call this imagination, sympathy or, if we are given to technicalities, *verstehen*. An anthropologist, an historian, or a novelist¹⁰ all try to enter the lives of people other than themselves, with no other object than that of becoming one with them in imagination, of understanding things in their own intimate familiar terms. Even in science – a form of curiosity – we renounce the desire to bend nature to human purposes and preconceptions and thereby allow it to emerge 'as it really is'. Knowledge will always be subject to limitations. But it can be obtained only through this sort of imaginative altruism: anything else, in science, history, or art, is 'ideology', propaganda, or wish-fulfilment. Objectivity is not only a feature of

morality, but also a moral achievement. In it, we are imaginatively enlarged: we are put at liberty and our real experience is enriched.

We must, therefore, reaffirm, with Oakeshott, the primacy of practice. Our contemplative pursuits are offshoots of practice, distant echoes or rehearsals of all that matters most to us in the everyday world: love, friendship, religion, patriotism, moral goodness. A minimum of egoism is, I suppose, essential to life (though it will not be 'individualism'). But persisted in, it merely insulates us from reality. Nothing is more pathetic than the confirmed egoist's would-be 'realism'. For reality – in

which I include self-knowledge – is only finally apprehended through self-surrender. And it is *that* which confers on life the only permanent value, the only truly 'aesthetic' quality it can be said to have. The spectator (or 'theorist') has access to reality only so far as he also commits himself to life through real or imagined participation. Here at last Truth, Beauty and Goodness converge. It is in pointing, however indirectly, to the value of this convergence, as well as to the immense uncertainty of our pilgrimage towards it, that Oakeshott has made such a powerful and unforgettable contribution to conservative thought.

Notes

1. 'The Masses in Representative Democracy': in *Freedom and Serfdom: An Anthology of Western Thought* (ed. A. Hunold, Dordrecht, 1961). The essay anticipates the treatment of the 'individual' in *On Human Conduct*. The two pieces on education are: (i) 'Learning and Teaching' in R. S. Peters (ed.), *The Concept of Education*, RKP, 1967 (ii) 'Education: the Engagement and its Frustration' in Dearden, Hirst and Peters (eds.), *Education and the Development of Reason*, RKP, 1972.
2. Oakeshott acknowledges Hegel and Bradley as his immediate masters, but there is also a resemblance to Collingwood. More remotely, the influences of Schopenhauer, Leibniz and Spinoza may be suspected.
3. For the opposite of this view, in which work and leisure, tradition and innovation, art and life, city and nation, individual and community, are all kept distinct yet are realised and completed in, and as, a single culture, one can hardly do better than cite the world of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, a work of astonishing wealth, profundity and intelligence.
4. Oakeshott favours Chicago economics (see 'The Political Economy of Freedom' in *Rationalism in Politics*), but it should be added that he sees economics as always and inherently subject to a political vision.
5. Cf. Auden's 'In Praise of Limestone', a very Oakeshottian vision. Both Auden and Oakeshott admire Rilke. But in neither is there anything resembling Rilke's 'angels', *schrecklich* or otherwise.
6. See *On Human Conduct*, pp. 36ff. 89.
7. *ibid.*, pp. 86–7.
8. See François Truffaut's film *L'Enfant Sauvage*.
9. I put some of these points to Oakeshott on the only occasion I met him, which was very briefly. 'Ah,' he said puckishly, 'I can see you're a moralist, just like Leavis.'
10. Of course it cannot be denied that *much* art and literature *does* fall into the category of 'poetry' as Oakeshott conceives it, i.e. as having the capacity to do nothing but 'delight'. Sidney's *Arcadia* would fit this specification very well; see Virginia Woolf, 'The Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*' in *Collected Essays*, Vol. I.

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The Real and the Royal

David J. Levy

In such a climate of opinion as our's, now and in England, it may seem to show a deficiency of tact, if not of taste, for a conservative to consider the institution of monarchy in the perspective of political philosophy. The crown, as common wisdom has it, is 'above politics', and, the implication runs, must so remain if it is to survive a century that has hardly been kind to the monarchical principle. Few people doubt that the British monarchy will survive because few think that it will abandon a supra-political position so long in the making. Fewer still think it should. Only a very few, on the revolutionary Left and the traditionalist Right, go so far as to disbelieve altogether in the idea that the monarchy is or could be above politics. But their's are wider conceptions of politics, and each recognises in the crown an institution of great potency, which, in its command of popular and unconsidered allegiance, serves as a symbolic centre for a form of life or type of civilisation – an order which the one wishes to destroy and replace as much as the other wants to conserve and restore. Such an institution, far from being 'above politics', is seen as a major part of the institutional core of a particular variety of society. The revolutionary socialist who is not a conscious republican is a fool.

If it seems tactless to talk of monarchy as an institution not above politics but implicated in a form of it, that is because, from the conservative, monarchist point of view, it appears advantageous that the crown should not become a matter for serious political dispute, as, for instance the House of Lords has become. If the Left does not raise the issue, let it lie. To seek to place monarchy in the framework of a particular political argument will tend to make arguable an institution which had, mercifully, remained largely immune to the corrosion of destructive criticism. For when people say that the crown is 'above politics' what they mean is that, in a world divided by rival ideologies and the clash of factions, the institution of monarchy and the person of the Queen command not only respect but a love transcending party. It is because the Left know this as well as anyone that they too seek to keep the monarchy out of the immediate agenda of politics. Believing in their hearts that they have history on their side, they have all the time in the world to wait. Indeed, one is sometimes tempted to think that the Leftist's not unreasonable concern with nuclear extinction has less to do with a commitment to the continuation of life in itself than with a feeling that premature annihilation would cheat mankind of the socialist fruits of generations of hard graft in factory and committee.

So the Left like the Right has a certain interest in

keeping the monarchy out of practical and theoretical political discourse. The revolutionary does so because he has other, more acceptable cards to play: the conservative because he wishes to continue playing a game in which the royal cards are reserved. There is wisdom in this conservative view, but it is a wisdom that rests upon a covert fear. It is, at best, foundation for a defensive royalism – a sentimental and utilitarian creed resting upon attachment to what is familiar and seems to work well enough, but lacking any conviction that monarchy could pass the test of a political judgement based upon reason. The extent to which the positive argument in favour of the hereditary principle, which is a strong one, goes largely by default in arguments over the future of the House of Lords – the reliance by many of its defenders on cultural inertia alone – shows well enough where many suspect the weakness of an overt and considered royalism to lie.

Defensive royalism has its virtues: of that there is no doubt. It is true and significant that people love and respect the Queen, her family and the institution they embody in their persons. It is no less true or significant that our being an hereditary monarchy has its uses in saving us from the crises of authority and constitutional identity which, from time to time, befall our republican neighbours. Prior to all argument the British crown stands justified in the love of its subjects and by the test of good works in the service of the nation. These are no mean arguments in its favour, and it may seem greedy to ask for others which are more philosophical in character.

The stoutest, most consistent of Tories could object that an existing institution requires no justification beyond its conformity with tradition and the imperatives of national survival. I sympathise with this view. In a reasonable world – one unscarred by the ideological distortion of the principle of sufficient reason – we should not, and would not, demand that each institution be justified by argument. Such a demand is hardly a requirement of the conditions of existence: indeed, it is generally subversive of them. The man who is ever seeking positive justification for his life is unlikely to be either happy or successful. Life is an unsolicited gift, enjoyed subject to certain conditions, and most people are persuaded that it is worth living without recourse to metaphysics and in the absence of the sort of balance sheet which only hindsight could afford. Valuing life, it is natural for men to value the institutions which give it form and, through language and the symbols of religious and political allegiance, provide the very terms in which personal identity is comprehended. Knowing life from within, we value it as

concerned participants, and not as impersonal arbiters of what should or should not be. We value life not as an abstract concentration of energy but in the uniqueness of our historically constituted selves. The same instinct directing a man to preserve his life, undergirds his attachment to the institutions which inform his life as a participant in the historical stream of the national culture. At this level, an Englishman's attachment to the monarchy requires no more justification than his desire for self-preservation; nor could it be explained in any more rational terms.

This, however, is hardly an argument in favour of the monarchical principle as such. It articulates the inner logic of any attachment to familiar or traditional ways. It is a general argument utterly particular in its application and, though undoubtedly an integral part of the conservative frame of mind, is favourable to monarchy only where kingship remains, as it does in England, a part of the established order. It is essentially defensive and while serving the interests of conservation well enough could hardly provide grounds for restoration if the institutional thread were long broken. Many English conservatives accept this and find curious and even eccentric the activities of those monarchists by conviction, in France and elsewhere, who work to restore the monarchy in a political and cultural environment suffused with potent republican symbols. Glad that they at least do not have to celebrate so absurd an event as the storming of the Bastille – an attack on supposedly arbitrary power which opened the gates of history to such as Robespierre and Saint-Just – they leave concern with the intellectual justification of monarchy to those whom destiny has chosen to live beyond the narrow seas.

This is complacency of a high order. It would represent the path of prudence only if monarchy were so irrational an institution that it could not be justified except in terms of local habit. This is far from being the case. There is, indeed, something to be said for the opposite view – that monarchy is the form of regime most apt for the government of society and most conducive to the preservation of what Aristotle disarmingly calls 'the good life'. There is nothing eccentric in this view. It was held by philosophers as contrasted as St. Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, and Hegel. Nor are the generalised arguments in favour of monarchy put forward by such opponents of republican and revolutionary regimes as de Maistre, Burke, de Bonald, and Maurras so intellectually contemptible that they should be denied consideration by a twentieth-century English conservative. The affairs of men have not changed so drastically in the sphere of politics that we may consign to oblivion the works of men whose fault or luck it was to live before us. It is interesting to note that liberals and socialists, looking back to Mill or Marx and beyond, often seem to have a better developed sense of the relevance of past thought to present circumstance than their conservative opponents.

It is, however, not my purpose here to recommend particular books and authors, still less to provide a digest of arguments still relevant to the conservative cause. Rather, I wish to suggest one line of argument that a

monarchist, by conviction as well as by habit, can employ in defence of the institution of hereditary kingship. No political argument can proceed regardless of time and place. The most universal and essential of institutions appear always in local guise. Today people tend to assume that there is something more intrinsically rational in republican forms of government than in hereditary monarchy. Only special circumstances justify the preservation of the latter in the face of the evident rationality – in conception if not in practice – of republicanism. Monarchy, they say, is fine for England but the wider world would do better to look to republican models. If my argument is accepted, the opposite would seem to be true – that while peculiar historical circumstances may justify the presence of republics here and there, Switzerland or the United States for instance, the proper state of man is to be subject to a monarch.

To put such a case in the 1980s will appear to some as out of time and place as to wander the streets of London or New York in powdered wig and tricorn hat. The first point to note is that there is a fundamental difference between these two apparent anachronisms. To dress today like an eighteenth century gentleman is, except for the purposes of theatre, to seek to clothe one's identity in the particularities of an age which has passed. To argue for the general worth of monarchical institutions in human societies is, in contrast, to refer not to what was peculiar to a century or decade but to universal features of human society. The association between monarchy and the past and between republics and the present is incidental and not essential. Matters looked very different in the seventeenth century, or the first for that matter, and today's view may simply testify to the fact that, on this matter at least, we understand issues concerning the nature of political order rather less clearly than some of our predecessors.

For instance, when people talk of the monarchy as being 'above politics' they are thinking of politics as a sphere of internal division within the nation. The supposedly supra-political character of the crown is supposed to guarantee that it at least can serve as focus for a unity still desired. By 'politics' they mean the pitting of policy against policy, interest against interest, and, increasingly, one socially reformist ideology against another incompatible one. This can hardly be seen as getting to the heart of matters, for the national unity which the practice of party politics is popularly seen to deny – whatever the justification behind the 'national party' rhetoric of Conservatives – is itself a political creation, and the nation is a politically formed reality.

By this I mean that a nation is, in contrast to an anthill, an effective unity not because its members are bound into a structure by the imperatives of unquestionable instinct, but because they feel themselves to be Englishmen, Scotsmen, Portuguese as the case may be. They identify themselves as what they are because what they are depends so considerably on the inheritance of language, thought and practice which clothes their animal nakedness as each matures from infancy to adulthood. They become members of the commonwealth by participation in the common wealth of symbols which is made available

to them. While the unity of the human species, which admits of significant variations, is biological, the unity of the nation is primarily cultural and even spiritual. It is a nation only when it experiences itself to be so. As a matter of fact, there is usually a considerable degree of biological, ethnic, continuity in the national composition, but this is not because a particular ethnic strain produces and maintains of genetic necessity a certain cultural identity, as racial determinists argue, but because people interbreed with those about them. Parents, and therefore children, usually belong to the same cultural universe. Therefore, while it is true to say that a particular ethnic group is often the historical bearer of certain values it is not the biological composition of the group which determines those values. As Maurras used to say, in words no less appropriate to England, 'France is more than a race; it is a nation'.

A nation continues to exist so long as it maintains its cultural identity. It continues free if it is able, through the development of institutions commanding its member's allegiance, to preserve its civic order within and its defence without. It is one of the sound things about the work of modern political scientists that they often insist on the importance of the fact that institutions must be representative if they are to be effective and secure. Unfortunately they usually narrow the concept of representation down to a notion that is not only empirically false but logically incoherent. Under the influence of democratic ideology, they tend to see institutions as representative only to the extent that they are composed of people elected by the choice of the majority, and is so far as the social features of the representatives reflect the social composition of the electorate. Since those whom people choose may not be those most like themselves there is an impassable divide between the equally democratic ideals of electoral and statistical representation. More important, people often feel themselves represented as well by someone they did not choose but with whom they identify, as by a man or woman elected through the ballot box.

If we consider the terms 'representative' and 'representation' as they are commonly used we find an interesting ambiguity. There are two spheres in which people tend to use the language of representation. These are, on the one hand, politics and commerce and, on the other, art. When we speak of a representative in the first case we mean someone who acts effectively on our behalf. In the second, representation refers to the quality of a constituted image of something which is not part of the art object but which in a non-material sense is perceived in and through it. These usages seem to me useful in understanding the real foundation of hereditary monarchy. They also suggest why it is that a reasonably thoughtful individual need make no apology for being a monarchist by reason as well as sentiment.

First note that there is nothing very convincing about the ideological restriction which democrats impose upon the idea of representation. Though the liberal constitutionalist in each of us rebels at the thought, people have often preferred representation through the acts of a

Führer, a Caudillo or an Ayotollah than through the niceties of a carefully balanced electoral process. The lawyer trained in London in the details of constitutional law may be a good judge of how to design a constitution for his fellow lawyers, but he is not likely to produce anything that will be seen as truly representative by an African population which interprets its existence in terms foreign to the concepts of English law. They know who or what represents them, and it is not the gentleman in the black coat and striped trousers. It is a part of English conservatism to wish to maintain our representative system, for it is a historical development rooted in the experience that has given us our identity. But only the dogmatic liberal regards it as appropriate to every foreign case. Since our's is, by every human standard, one of the systems most conducive to the pursuit of the good life we may speak properly of its superiority to those of less happy lands. What we cannot assume is that such lands would be made any happier were our system to be imposed. The British system is good in itself, being generally encouraging to the fulfilment of man's potentialities for positive achievement and, thus far, effective in restraining his capacities of evil. It is effective, however, only because it is anchored in his of the nation.

If I seem to be retreating from the promise of a general justification of monarchy, this is not really so. All I have sought to say in the previous paragraph is that representation has less to do with the manner by which the representative arrives at his position than with his capacity to be or seem to be the effective expression of group identity. Thus a hereditary monarch is not, in principle, any less representative than an elected deputy. He may well be more so. In fact, in England, there is considerable evidence in popular attitudes to suggest that people feel the Queen to represent them in a way that democratic politicians cannot easily do. She represents the political unity which is a more fundamental political achievement in the face of potential disorder and conquest than the thrust and counter-thrust of electoral struggles. It is, in truth, the necessary precondition of the latter, as anyone who tries to run a multi-party system in an essentially divided nation will testify.

But there is another side to the argument. A nation is a historically formed entity which endures across generations. It is, for the vast majority of its inhabitants, a community into which they are born. Life is not chosen by the one who enjoys and endures it. We are not fated to every particular of our lives, much depends on individual initiative, but we are subject to the conditions of time and place which precede birth and accompany us through earthly existence. In the second, aesthetic, sense of representation, hereditary monarchy, embodied in the person of a monarch fated to his position by birth and a dynasty which extends from past into future through the momentary instant of the present, represents the true image of the structure of human life in a way that no republican regime can do. It represents the chance and necessity inseparable from life and carries the thread of continuity in visible form across the chasms of birth and

death. The monarchy is the articulation of national unity not only because it stands above the factions of the moment but because, in the most concrete possible way, it incarnates the spirit that links us to those dead and those

who are yet to be born. For a being like man, who lives by the light of his image of the world and identifies himself through the symbols of culture, this is, perhaps, the most important link between the real and the royal.

Letters

Left Rights

Sir: It is fitting that Roger Scruton should take the eminent jurist Ronald Dworkin as his second 'Thinker of the Left', for much of leftist thinking rests on a jurisprudential misconception as to the nature of rights.

As your editorialist states elsewhere: 'There is a right only where there is a duty to enforce it and a duty only where there is a power.' This was first articulated by another American jurist, W. N. Hohfeld, who also drew a sharp distinction between rights properly so-called and liberties. The 'right' to swing your fist which ends where my nose begins is in fact a liberty: I have no duty to allow you to swing your fist. The same applies to many of the much vaunted rights of liberal/left rhetoric, including those which Professor Dworkin invites us to take seriously.

John Stevens

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Bournemouth

Rationalisation and PR

Sir: I am utterly confounded by the arguments of Mr D. Robbins in his letter in the Winter Issue and his anxiety that 'conservative understanding' of the parliamentary process should be properly argued to prevent the ideas of proportional representation becoming acceptable by default.

No conservative political philosophy worth consideration is opposed to change per se; certainly not the ethical humanitarian approach of Sir Ian Gilmour, nor the historical analytical ideas of Michael Oakeshott. In practice it has been clearly demonstrated that our present first-past-the-post system is capable of producing absurd anomalies, and is likely to be manifestly unrepresentative and dangerous from henceforward. A minority of total votes can secure quite easily a majority of seats.

The advent of the Alliance in the equation can lead to even more ridiculous distortions, as exemplified by extrapolating the Hillhead voting pattern at the time of the by-election, which would lead to a nationwide distribution of: Labour 284 seats, Alliance 248, Conservatives 78. Unlikely, but this is what our present system could produce. A further, more likely, projection: Conservative 35% of votes leads to 271 seats, Labour 32% votes 293 seats, Alliance 30% votes 46 seats. What rational conservative, or any other except dictatorial,

philosophy can argue that such a faulty and erroneous system should not be reformed? There is no implicit right within such reform for all shades of opinion to be represented at the end of the political process. A true reflection of the wishes of the electorate, with an indispensable safeguard against extremism, is something which appeals not only to liberals and the media.

Sydney Shenton

95 The Crescent,
Davenport,
Stockport

Turkey and Cyprus

Sir: I am sure that I am not alone among Turkish cypriots in welcoming the analysis which you give of Turkey's search for a stable foundation of constitutional government. I found your remarks most illuminating, especially on the issue of judicial independence, which has indeed been crucial, not only in Turkey, but also here in Cyprus. However, here it was a legacy of your own imperial presence, and did not survive your departure. The violence which overtook our island began under influence from a Greek mainland government which had renounced democratic values. It was brought to an end only by the intervention of the Turkish army, in an action which has in effect imposed a partition – the solution which Turkish cypriots had always wanted, as the only guarantee of their security.

I should like to point out, however, that, while you are of course right in implying that the Eoka fanatics who massacred our villagers could hardly be described as Christians, either in belief or in spirit, it is equally true that those of our people who responded in kind could not be described as Muslims. It is important for both of our communities to accept whatever blame might be theirs; this is so even if, as we hope, the solution of partition gains eventual international recognition. I therefore think that it is important for political commentators such as yourself to refrain from abusing either side to the conflict, and to address themselves to the important question – which is, how is our conflict to be resolved? This too, if I am not mistaken, is a matter of some importance to the Western alliance.

Mrs S. Dervish

Lefkosa,
Nicosia

Thinkers of the Left – Michel Foucault

Roger Scruton

Nowhere has the outlook of the left entered more firmly into the national culture than in France, the motherland of revolution. Whatever power has reigned in the skies of politics, French intellectual life has tended to adopt the ways and manners of the Jacobins. Even the exceptions – Chateaubriand, de Maistre, de Tocqueville, Maurras – have focused their attention on the standard of revolution, hoping to glimpse some strategy that would fortify their restorationist designs. And every movement away from the left – Ultramontanism, *Action Française*, *Nouvelle Droite* – has felt called upon to match the theoretical absolutism of its opponents. It has taken up the socialist challenge to present a rival system, a rival intellectual machine, with which to generate answers to all the problems of modern man.

No doubt this desire for system, and for universalist answers, shares some of the character of Roman Catholicism. But far more important in the thinking of the left has been the Enlightenment rationalism, which seeks to penetrate through human subterfuge, and to display the hidden core of unreason that lies within our acts. The modern *gauchiste* shares the rationalist's suspicion of human institutions, and his contempt for superstition. But he is distinguished by a boundless cynicism. He no longer believes that the process of 'discovery' – whereby the ploys of unreason are exposed – will present the opportunity for some new and 'rational' alternative. The Reason of the Jacobins is also an illusion, and the only advice that the *gauchiste* is disposed, in the end, to offer, is the advice given by Genet and Sartre: be true to nothing, so as to be true to yourself. There are no solutions, only problems, and our duty is to ensure that we are not deceived.

In the ensuing quest for authenticity the *gauchiste* has a permanent need for an enemy. His system is one of destruction. He knows the illusoriness of values, and finds his identity in a life lived without the easy deceptions which rule the lives of others. Since he has no values, his thought and action can be given only a negative guarantee. He must fortify himself by unmasking the deceptions of others. Moreover, this unmasking cannot be done once and for all. It must be perpetually renewed, so as to fill the moral vacuum which lies at the centre of existence. Only if there is some readily identifiable, and, so to speak, renewable opponent, can this struggle for authenticity – which is in fact the most acute struggle for existence – be sustained. The enemy must be a fount of humbug and deception; he must also possess elaborate and secret power, power sustained through the very system of lies which underscores his values. Such an

enemy deserves unmasking, and there is a kind of heroic virtue in his assailant, who frees the world from the stranglehold of secret influence.

It is to the French aristocracy that we owe the contemptuous label by which this enemy is known. The renewable opponent is the 'bourgeois': the pillar of the community, whose hypocritical respectability and social incompetence have inspired every variety of renewable contempt. Of course this creature has undergone considerable transformation since Molière first ridiculed his social pretensions. During the nineteenth century he acquired a complex dual character. Marx represented him as the principal agent and principal beneficiary of the French Revolution – the new enslaver, whose tentacles reach into every pocket of influence and power – while the café intellectuals continued, in more bitter accents, the scathing mockery of the aristocracy. *Épater les bourgeois* (Flaubert's expression) became the signature of the disaffected artist, the guarantee of his social credentials, whereby he demonstrated his aristocratic entitlement, and his contempt for the usurpatory dominion of the rising middle class. Under the dual influence of Marx and poetry, the bourgeois emerged from the nineteenth century as a monster transformed out of all recognition from his humble origins. He was the 'class enemy' of Leninist dogma, the creature whom we are commanded by history to destroy; he was also the repository of all morality, all convention, all codes of conduct that might hamper the freedom and crush the ebullience of *la vie bohème*. The Marxian theory of ideology tried to knit the two halves of the portrait together, describing the 'comfortable' values as the social disguise of real economic power. But the theory was vague and schematic, lacking the concrete quality which is necessary for a rewarding and renewable contempt. Much of the efforts of the French left in our century have therefore been devoted to completing the portrait. The aim has been to create the perfect enemy: the object against which to define and sharpen one's authenticity, an authenticity guaranteed by its transformation into wit.

The invention of the ideal bourgeois was finally accomplished in 1952, with the publication of the masterpiece of modern satanism, Sartre's *Saint Genet*, in which the 'bourgeois' is characterised by an extraordinary complexity of emotions, ranging from rooted heterosexuality to a hostility to crime. The bourgeois finally emerges as the champion of an illusory 'normality', concerned to forbid and to oppress all those who, in challenging his normality, challenge also the social and political dominion which it both validates and conceals.

The anti-bourgeois sentiment which lies at the root of French left-wing thinking, explains its rejection of all roles and functions that are not creations of its own. Its main power base has been, not the university, but the café: to occupy positions of influence within the 'structures' of the bourgeois state is incompatible with the demands of revolutionary rectitude. Whatever influence the *gauchiste* enjoys must be acquired through his own intellectual labour, in producing words and images which challenge the *status quo*. The café becomes the symbol of his social position. He observes the passing show, but does not join it. Instead, he waits for those who, attracted by his gaze, separate themselves from the crowd and 'come over' to his position.

By the same token we must recognise the intimate dependency that exists between the *gauchiste* and the true middle class. In a certain manner, the *gauchiste* is the confessor of the middle class. He presents to it an idealised image of its sinful condition. The 'bourgeois' of recent iconography is a myth. But he bears a resemblance to the ordinary city-dweller who, seeing himself distorted in this portrait, is troubled by the thought of moral possibilities. He enthusiastically confesses to purely hypothetical crimes. He begins to extol the *gauchiste* as the absolver of his corrupted conscience. The *gauchiste* therefore becomes the redeemer of the class whose illusions he has been appointed to unmask. Hence, despite his rudeness – which is, in truth, no more than the necessary virtue of his profession – he enjoys abundant social privilege. He is born aloft on the shoulders of the bourgeoisie whose habits he tramples, and enjoys again the aristocrat's place in the sun. At the best Parisian parties he will appear in person: but even the meanest reception will take place against bookshelves loaded with his writings. So close, indeed, is this symbiotic relation between the *gauchiste* and his victim as to resemble that previous, seemingly indissoluble, bond between aristocrat and peasant. The major difference is this: the aristocrat both exalted the peasant in his words (creating the idealised 'shepherd' the spectacle of whose virtues would refresh the wearied courtier), and at the same time abused and oppressed him in his actions. The *gauchiste* judiciously reverses the priorities: he does no more than bark at the hand which feeds him. In this he shows, indeed, a greater wisdom, and a healthy instinct for survival.

I have singled out Michel Foucault, the social philosopher and historian of ideas, as representative of the French intellectual left. It must be pointed out at once that Foucault's position has been constantly shifting, and that he shows a sophisticated contempt for all convenient labels. He is also a critic (although a fairly insipid critic) of modern communism. Nevertheless, Foucault is the most powerful and most ambitious of those who aim to 'unmask' the bourgeoisie, and the position of the left has been substantially reinforced by his writings. It is impossible to do full justice in this article to his achievement. His imagination and intellectual fluency have generated abundant theories, concepts and *aperçus*, and the compendious, synthesising poetry of his style is nothing if not disarming. Foucault is unable to encounter

opposition without at once rising, under the impulse of his intellectual energy, to the superior 'theoretical' perspective, from which opposition is seen in terms of the interests which are advanced by it. Opposition relativised, is also opposition discounted. It is not what you say, but that you say it, which awakens Foucault's criticism. '*D'où parles-tu?*' is his question, and his stance remains outside the reach of every answer.

The unifying thread in Foucault's work is the search for the secret structures of power. Power is what he wishes to unmask behind every practice, behind every institution, and behind language itself. He originally described his method as an 'archeology of knowledge', and his subject-matter as truth – truth considered as the product of 'discourse', taking both form and content from the language in which it is conveyed. A problem of terminology immediately arises, and proves to be something more than a problem of terminology. What is meant by a 'knowledge' that can be overthrown by new experience, or by a 'truth' that exists only within the discourse which frames it? The language here is Hegelian, and the method implied is that of idealism. Foucault's 'truth' is created and re-created by the experiences through which we 'know' it. Like Hegel, therefore, Foucault is able to derive some surprising and even disquieting results, from a historical method which dramatises change as a mute obedience to a changing consciousness.

Thus in *Les Mots et les Choses*, 1966,¹ we are told that man is a recent invention: truly an original idea! On inspection it turns out that Foucault means no more than this: that it is only since the Renaissance that the fact of being a man (rather than, say, a farmer, a soldier or a nobleman) has acquired the special significance that we now attribute to it. By such arguments we could show that the dinosaur too is a recent invention. Of course, there is a point to Foucault's remark. He means to emphasise the extent to which the sciences which have taken man as their object are recent inventions, already outmoded as forms of 'knowledge'. The idea of man is as fragile and transitory as any other idea in the history of human understanding, and must give way under the impulse of a new *episteme* (structure of 'knowledge') to something which we cannot name. Each *episteme*, for Foucault, is the servant of some rising power, and has had, as its principal function, the creation of a 'truth' which serves the interest of power. Thus there are no received truths which are not also convenient truths.

There are many insights in Foucault's early writings. But the Hegelian method – which identifies reality with a way of apprehending it – must lead us to doubt that they are hard-won. There is a cheat involved in this method, which allows its proponent to jump across to the finishing line of historical enquiry, without running the hard track of empirical analysis. (Consider what would *really* have to be proved, by someone who believed man to be an artefact, and a recent one at that – more recent even than the medieval and Renaissance humanists who extolled his virtues.) A proper assessment of Foucault's thought must therefore try to separate its two components: the Hegelian

sleight of hand (which would lead us too simply to dismiss him), and the 'diagnostic' analysis of the secret ways of power. It is the second which is interesting, and which is expressed in Foucault's claim that each successive form of 'knowledge' is devoted to the creation of a discourse favourable to, and symbolic of, the structures of prevailing power.

In *Historie de la folie à l'âge classique*, (1961)² Foucault gives the first glimpse of this thesis. He traces the confinement of madmen to its origins in the seventeenth century, associating this confinement with the ethic of work and the rise of the middle classes. Foucault's idealism – his impatience with explanations that are merely causal – leads him constantly to thicken his plot. Thus he says, not that the economic reorganisation of urban society brought about confinement, but that 'it was in a certain experience of labour that the indissolubly economic and moral demand for confinement was formulated'. But this should be seen largely as an embellishment to categories of historical explanation which derive ultimately from Marx.

The madman is 'other' in what Foucault calls the 'classical' age because he points to the limits of the prevailing ethic, and alienates himself from its demands. There is a kind of virtuous disdain in his refusal of convention. He must therefore be brought to order. Through confinement madness is subject to the rule of reason: the madman now lives under the jurisdiction of those who are sane, confined by their laws, and instructed by their morality. The recourse of reason in this close encounter is to reveal to madness its own 'truth' – the truth through which reason 'knows' it. To lack reason is, for 'classical' thought, to be an animal. The madman must therefore be made to act the part of an animal. He is used as a beast of burden, and by this confrontation with his own 'truth' is finally made whole. Each successive age finds a similar 'truth' through which the experience of madness is transcended into sanity (i.e. into that condition which is condoned and fostered by prevailing power). But Foucault suggests that this stock of 'truths' is now exhausted. The book ends with a satanic encomium of madness, in which Foucault appeals to the gods of the modern French Olympus – Goya, de Sade, Hölderlin, Nerval, Van Gogh, Artaud, Nietzsche – to testify to this exhaustion. This encomium gains no substance from the studies that precede it, and consists largely in the ritual rehearsal of what has become, in France, a critical commonplace. Thus, although it is impossible for a sane reader to detect literary merit in de Sade, for example, it is liturgically necessary to sing his praises, as *le plus gros des épateurs*. A second-rate hack thereby becomes the literary representative of post-Revolutionary France.

It was clear to the eighteenth century, according to Foucault, that, while madness was able to express itself, it had no language in which to do so besides that which reason provides. The only phenomenology of madness lies in sanity. Surely then, the eighteenth century had at least one sound intuition about the nature of unreason? The province of language and the province of reason are

coextensive, and if madness contains its own 'truths', as Foucault claims, these are essentially inexpressible. How then can we rightly imagine a 'language' of unreason in which the truths of madness are expressed, and to which we must now attune our ears? The idea of such a language is the idea of a delirious monologue, which neither the man of reason, nor the madman himself, could understand. The voice of madness is a voice that *belongs to no-one*, since it violates the grammar of the self. It could bear no resemblance to the remorseless logic of *The Twilight of the Idols*, or to the precise symbolism of *Les Chimères*. Foucault's heroes would have been unable to use this language, even in their final dissolution, and if we can understand them it is without its aid.

For the nineteenth century, according to Foucault, the experience of 'unreason' characteristic of the 'classical' period becomes dissociated: madness is confined within a moral intuition, and the fantasy of an unceasing monologue of madness, in a language inaccessible to reason, is forgotten. This idea is to be resuscitated, however, at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the Freudian theory of the unconscious thought-processes that determine the behaviour of the irrational man. In the nineteenth century, madness has become a threat to the whole structure of bourgeois life, and the madman, while superficially innocent, is profoundly guilty in his failure to submit to familiar norms. The greatest offence of madness is against the 'bourgeois family', as Foucault calls it, and it is the experience of this family that dictates the paternalistic structure of the asylum. The ethos of judgement and reprobation in the asylum is part of a new attitude to madness – madness is at least *observed*. It is no longer thought that the madman has anything to say or symbolise; he is an anomaly in the world of action, responsible only for his visible behaviour.

In the asylum the man of reason is presented as an adult, the madman as a child, so that madness may be construed as an incessant attack against the Father. The madman must be brought to recognise his error, and reveal to the Father a consciousness of his guilt. Thus there is a natural transition from the 'confession in crisis' characteristic of the asylum, to the Freudian dialogue, in which the analyst listens to and translates the language of unreason, but in which madness is still forced to see itself as a disobedience and a transgression. Finally, Foucault intimates, it is because psychoanalysis has refused to suppress the family structure as the only one through which madness can be seen or known, that its introduction of a dialogue with madness leads to no understanding of its interlocutor.

Beneath all this fascinating analysis – part insight, part rhetoric – it is possible to discern a persistent and discredited historical perspective. Despite his apparent scholarship, Foucault remains wedded to the mythopoeic guide to modern history presented in *The Communist Manifesto*. The world divides conveniently into the 'classical' and the 'bourgeois' eras, the first beginning at the late Renaissance and ending with the 'bourgeois revolution' of 1789. It is only thereafter that we witness the characteristic features of modern life: the nuclear

family, transferable property, the legally constituted state, and the modern structures of influence and power. Engels made an heroic attempt to give credence to the 'bourgeois family', and this has proved useful to left-wing demonology. But Engel's icon is now threadbare and faded, and only marginally more persuasive than the idea that the French Revolution involved a transition from feudal to capitalist modes of production, from an 'aristocratic' to a 'bourgeois' social structure, from entailed to transferable property. Less persuasive still is the idea that the 'classical' outlook of Racine and La Fontaine is the principal index of post Renaissance, pre-Revolutionary culture in France. All this is based on an elaborate and, to tell the truth, culpable simplification of historical data, the prime aim of which is not truth but propaganda. Foucault's rhetoric is supposed to mesmerise us into a sense of some intrinsic connection between 'bourgeois', 'family', 'paternalistic' and 'authoritarian'. Historical facts – such as that the peasant family is more authoritarian, the aristocratic family more paternalistic, than the family known as 'bourgeois'; or that the middle class shows an ability to relax the temper of domestic life which has seldom been matched at the upper or lower ends of the social spectrum – all such facts are kept out of mind. The reader finds no argument over evidence, no search for instance or counter-instance, which could sow the seeds of doubt. For facts have an abrasive quality. They blur the figures and erase the lineaments of the necessary icon. When the image fades, so too does the idea: we can no longer believe that the secret power which created the categories of mental illness, which confined the innocent sufferer, and which moralised him into 'abnormality', also generated the family and its egregious norms. Far less can we believe that the nature of this power is summarised in the single word 'bourgeois', although doubtless that word has liturgical value, as designating the object of acceptable contempt.

The schematic historiography survives in Foucault's later works. In particular, he makes abundant use of the concept of a 'classical' époque. But the enemy who stalks through his pages seems somehow to have lost his respectable clothing. He appears as naked power, without style, dignity of status. If the term 'bourgeois' is sometimes applied to him it is a flourish, like an insult thrown by the wrestler to his opponent. There is no longer the same liberating confidence in the enemy's identity. Nevertheless, the method and the results remain, and each of Foucault's books repeats the hidden agenda of *L'histoire de la folie*.

In *Naissance de la Clinique. Une Archeologie du regard médical*, (1963),³ Foucault extends the ideas of 'observation', and 'normality', so as to explain, not only the confinement of madmen, but also the confinement of the sick. (He will shortly extend the analysis further, to prisons and punishment. If he stops short of schools and universities it is not for want of conviction.) That patients should be gathered together for observation shows a need to divide the world into the normal and the abnormal, and to confront the abnormal with an image of its 'truth'. The need is also for a classification of illness, a 'measured

language' which places each disease within the competence of the observer. Now there is truth in those ideas: who would deny that the growing understanding of disease implied isolation, observation and selective treatment? But what a simple truth, and what an innocent occurrence! Clearly it needs unmasking. So here, in characteristic language, is what the hospital – surely one of the more benign of human accomplishments – becomes:

Over all these endeavours on the part of clinical thought to define its methods and scientific norms hovers the great myth of a pure Gaze that would be pure Language: a speaking eye. It would scan the entire hospital field, taking in and gathering together each of the singular events that occurred within it; and as it saw, as it saw ever more clearly, it would turn into speech that states and teaches; the truth, which events, in their repetitions and convergences, would outline under its gaze, would, by this same gaze and in the same order, be reserved, in the form of teaching, to those who do not know and have not yet seen. This speaking eye would be the servant of things and the master of truth.⁴

There is an accomplished rhetoric here, a rhythmic movement which, feeding on the simple fact of scientific observation, becomes a haunting and persecuted awareness of the hidden source of power. Behind this concept of the Gaze (a Sartrean term more familiar, perhaps, to French than to English readers) lurks a great suspicion, the same suspicion of human decencies that inhabits the pages of *Being and Nothingness*. It tells us not to be deceived, not to believe that anything is undertaken, or anything achieved, except in the interests of power.

The idea takes a further step in Foucault's most brilliant book *Surveiller et Punir*,⁵ subtitled 'the birth of the prison'. (The *surveiller* of the title is hard to translate: it refers, once again, to the Gaze of the guardians.) It is natural that the near-simultaneous rise of the prison system, the hospital, and the lunatic asylum, will not go unnoticed by the suspicious iconographer of bourgeois man. And there is something persuasive in Foucault's initial analysis of the transition from the exemplary punishments of our ancestors, to the system of physical confinement. To call the first 'classical', the second 'bourgeois' is of little interest. But it is surely illuminating to see the earlier system as embodying a kind of corporal language of crime. The aim of torture was to imprint the crime on the patient's body, in the living language of pain, so as to symbolise the criminal's intention. Foucault contrasts the prison system, which, he argues, was founded in a juridical conception of individual rights, under which punishment has the character of a forfeit. The contracting individualist can be legitimately made to suffer in no other way. And, as Foucault elegantly remarks, even capital punishment under the new regime of prison has a juridical character:

The guillotine takes life almost without touching the body, just as prison deprives of liberty or a fine

reduces wealth. It is intended to apply the law not so much to a real body capable of feeling pain as to a juridical subject, the possessor, among other rights, of the right to exist. It had to have the abstraction of the law itself.⁶

Foucault proceeds to draw the usual abundance of surprising and not so surprising conclusions. It is surprising to be told that punishment is an element in the genealogy of the human soul, so that the Cartesian ego is precisely what is conjured on the rack: the gazing subject who exists as the observer of this pain. It is surprising to learn that the modern soul is a product, if not of the prison system, at least of the juridical idea of the subject, as a complex of legal rights.

It is less surprising to be told that criminal justice operates in the 'production of truth', and that it is part of one of those systems of 'knowledge' which, for Foucault, go hand in hand with power. Nor is it surprising to find that punishment undergoes the same transition as medicine, from a system of symbolism, to a system of surveillance. In an impressive description of Bentham's 'panopticon' (a *machine à corriger*, in which all prisoners could be observed from a single post), Foucault relates the discipline of prison to the newly emerging power of the invisible over the visible, which is, if I understand him, the power expressed in law. The law is the invisible possessor of that 'normalising gaze' which both singles out the criminal as an abnormal specimen, and also deprives him of his rights until such a time as he should once again be able to take up the burden of normality.

There then occurs one of those forced, *marxisant*, explanations which mar the poetry of Foucault's far from unimaginative writing. We are told that the prison disciplines exhibit a 'tactics of power', with three fundamental purposes: to exert power at lowest cost, to extend power as far and as deeply as possible, and 'to link this 'economic' growth of power with the output of the apparatuses (educational, military, industrial or medical), within which it is exercised'.⁷ All of which is meant to suggest a connection between prison and the 'economic take-off of the West', which 'began with the techniques that made possible the accumulation of capital'.⁸ Such impulsive observations are produced not by scholarship, but by the association of ideas, the principal idea being the historical morphology of the *Communist Manifesto*. And if we are asked why that discredited and – to, tell the truth, somewhat adolescent – morphology is still accepted by so sophisticated a modern thinker, the answer is to be found, I believe, in its providing the preliminary sketches for the portrait of the enemy. It inspires such passages as the following:

Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue to multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble

factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?⁹

No, it is not surprising. For if we unmask human institutions far enough, we will always find that hidden core of power by which Foucault is outraged and fascinated. The only question is whether this unmasking reveals the truth about its subject, or whether it is not, on the contrary, a new and sophisticated form of lying. We must ask ourselves whether the idealist who observes 'at the very centre of the carceral city, the formation of the insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties, small acts of cunning, calculated methods, techniques, 'sciences' that permit the fabrication of the disciplinary individual'¹⁰ – whether such an observer is not in fact also the inventor of what he observes.

But it is not easy to unmask this observer. That his writings exhibit mythomania, and even paranoia, is, I believe, indisputable. But that they systematically falsify and propagandise what they describe is more difficult to establish. A writer who can glibly declare that 'the bourgeoisie could not care less about delinquents, about their punishment and rehabilitation, which economically have little importance';¹¹ that 'the bourgeoisie is perfectly well aware that a new constitution or legislature will not suffice to establish its hegemony';¹² that '... 'dangerous' people had to be isolated (in prison, in the Hôpital Général, in the galleys, in the colonies) so that they could not act as a spearhead for popular resistance'¹³ – such a writer is clearly more concerned with rhetorical impact than with historical accuracy. However, I believe that it would be a mistake to dismiss Foucault on the evidence of such pronouncements. As I have argued, we must separate Foucault's analysis of the workings of power from the facile idealism which opens such easy paths to theory. And paranoia is no more than a localised idealism – a specific and focused manifestation of the desire that reality be subservient to thought, that the other have an identity entirely determined by one's own response to him. What is important is, not the disposition to find, in human thought and action, the smiling masks of persecution, but rather the idea that, by unmasking them as forms of power, we come closer to an understanding of their nature. It is precisely this which I doubt.

In a pair of lectures delivered in 1976,¹⁴ Foucault deliberates over what he means by 'power', and distinguishes two approaches, the Reichian (which argues that 'the mechanisms of power are those of repression'), and the Nietzschean, which holds that the 'basis of the relationship of power lies in the hostile engagement of forces'.¹⁵ In an obscure and muddled account of this distinction, Foucault aligns himself with the second approach, and he tries to show (in *L'Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 1, 1976)¹⁶ how this conception of power enables us to see even sexual relations as instances of the 'hostile engagement of forces'. But it is significant that Foucault offers no real explanation of what he means by 'power'. The 'Reichian' and the 'Nietzschean' approaches are entirely compatible, and both are explained in terms –

'repression', 'force' – which are at least as obscure as the 'power' which they are supposed to illuminate.

The problem becomes more and more acute. We are repeatedly told that Foucault is concerned with power in its 'capillary' form, the form which 'reaches into the very grain of individuals'.¹⁷ But we are never told who or what is active in this 'power': or rather, we are told, but in terms that carry no conviction. In an interview, Foucault admits that, for him, 'power is coextensive with the social body'.¹⁸ And it is, of course, indisputable that social order, like every order, embodies power. A society, like an organism, can sustain itself only by constant inter-action among its parts. And all interaction is an exercise of power: the power of a cause to produce its effect. But that is merely trivial. What is not trivial is the entirely unwarranted and ideologically inspired idea of dominance with which Foucault glosses his conclusions. He at once assumes that if there is power, then it is exercised in the interests of some dominant agent. Hence, by sleight of hand, he is able to present any feature of social order – even the disposition to heal the sick – as a covert exercise of dominion, which aims to further the interests of 'those in power'. Foucault writes: 'I believe that anything can be deduced from the general phenomenon of the domination of the bourgeois class'.¹⁹ It would be truer to say that he believes that the general thesis of the domination of the bourgeois class can be deduced from anything. For, having decided, along with the *Communist Manifesto*, that the bourgeois class has been dominant since the summer of 1789, Foucault deduces that all power subsequently embodied in the social order has been exercised by that class, and in its interests. Any fact of social order will necessarily bear the fingerprints of bourgeois domination. The triviality of the argument needs no comment; what is astounding is the philosophical naivety from which it stems.

As an instance of an old Marxian confusion (the confusion which identifies a class as the product of power, and then power as the pursuit of a class) Foucault's analysis may be left to one side. But it is necessary to remind ourselves of its important political consequences. In a remarkable discussion with a group of 68 Maoists, Foucault draws some of the political morals from his analysis of law, as yet another 'capillary' mode of power, yet another way of 'introducing contradictions among the masses'.²⁰ The revolution, he assures us, 'can only take place via the radical elimination of the judicial apparatus, and anything which could reintroduce the penal apparatus, anything which could reintroduce its ideology and enable this ideology surreptitiously to creep back into popular practices, must be banished'.²¹ He recommends

the banishment of adjudication, and every form of court, and gestures, in the negative manner characteristic of Utopian thinking, towards a new form of 'proletarian' justice, which will not require the services of a judge. With characteristic effrontery, he tells us that the French Revolution was a 'rebellion against the judiciary': and such, he implies, is the nature of every honest revolution.

But what does this mean in practice? It means that there shall be no third party present at the trial of the accused, no-one with the responsibility to sift the evidence, no-one to mediate between the parties, no-one to look impartially on the facts, or on the consequences of judgement. It means that the criminality of the act will be as unpredictable as the penalty which it occurs, for no law could exist which would determine the outcome. It means that all 'justice' will be reduced to a 'struggle' between opposing factions, a trial by ordeal in which, presumably, he who speaks with the voice of the proletariat will take the prize. And in order to prove that he speaks with the voice of the proletariat, the victor need do one thing, and one thing only: overcome his opponent. Having done so he will call himself judge, and sanctify his action with the ideology of 'proletarian justice'. And we know how this proletarian judge will then comport himself.²² In short, it is only the greatest naivety, about human nature and human history, that can permit Foucault to believe that his 'proletarian justice' is a form of justice, or that, in working towards it, he is freeing society from the blight of power. On the contrary, all social order is composed of Foucault's 'power', and a rule of law, which is the highest form of order, is simply the best and most mitigated form of it.

The example is minatory. What is true of adjudication is true of other institutions. The attempt to remove the 'mask' from human institutions simply reduces them to a single, commodity: a 'power' which, considered in itself, is neither good nor evil. It also removes those dimensions of human thought and action which enable the relative virtues of our institutions to be assessed. Hence it points to a far greater tyranny than the one against which it is wielded. It seems to me that Foucault's political naiveties are a direct result of a false idea of 'essence', according to which the essence of human things lies never on the surface, but always in the 'hidden' depths. The search for this 'depth' is, in fact, the greatest shallowness. Foucault's 'unmasking' reveals, not the essence of human thought and action, but merely the underlying substance out of which all human institutions, and life itself, are made. To reduce everything to this 'hidden' core is in effect to reduce it to nothing. And we should not be surprised to find that it is precisely this nothing which then becomes the hidden god.

Notes

1. *The Order of Things, An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, (tr. Anon), London 1970.
2. *Madness and Civilisation, A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, (tr. R. Howard), New York, 1965.
3. *The Birth of the Clinic. An Archeology of Medical Perception*, (tr. A.

- M. Sheridan), London 1973.
4. *cit.*, p. 114–5.
5. *Discipline and Punish. Birth of the Prison*, (tr. A. M. Sheridan), London, 1977.
6. *Discipline and Punish, cit.*, p. 13.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 218
8. *Ibid.*, p. 220
9. *Ibid.*, p. 227–8.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
11. *Power/Knowledge. Selected interviews and other Writings*, 1972–1977, ed. Colin Gordon, Brighton 1980, p. 102.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 78–108.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
16. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. I: An Introduction*, (tr. R. Hurley) New York, 1978.
17. *Power/Knowledge*, *cit.*, p. 39.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
22. See, for example. Otto Ulč, *The Judge in a Communist State, a View from Within*, Ohio 1972.

Hoarse Voices

Daniel Johnson

If you want to talk about art in West Berlin at 'the moment, there is nothing for it but to make the trip down to the Wall, where a vast exhibition called 'Zeitgeist' is inhabiting the half-renovated arts-and-crafts museum near Checkpoint Charlie. There you may stalk the elusive spirit of our culture – the pictures and sculptures, drawn from all over the world, were all produced in 1982 – and from the cavernous galleries look out over the Iron Curtain. When I looked there were two toiling men guarded by a motionless soldier. At least their division of labour was clear enough; that between me, the paying spectator, and the assorted leather-clad boys and girls paid to guard these works of art, was less obvious. The pictures had two chief characteristics in common: they were big, big enough to force you not to look too closely at the label telling you what the artist was trying to do, nor at what he or she had done – but not big enough to blot out the vista across the Wall of the toiling men and the soldier. They also made great use of words: their messages were either too complicated, or not complicated enough, to make their points without graffiti.

Hans Werner Henze's *Voices* (Radio 3, 4/1/83) comes from the same milieu as this show. It is much newer than the music of Berg, Weill and Eisler, from which it derives and to which it adds very little; but it is already far more dated. The texts of Henze's songs are either by the same man, Brecht, or might as well be, since they are as derivative as the music. The sanctity of the work of art forestalls any moral criticism of songs about fictional American rewards paid for killing Vietnamese children, sung years after the Cambodian genocide. Since another song tells us that everything must be destroyed before we can even begin to think about the future, these blind spots are not even surprising. More interesting are the claims made by the BBC for the architectonic novelty of the

work: no ordinary song-cycle this, we were told: not like that fellow Schubert's old warhorses. Though it was never explained quite how formal – how actual, indeed – these intended modifications were, the author of the notes was certainly on to something. Henze's texts have a far more weighty rôle to play than do Schubert's, for without them his music would lose all articulation. Schubert could often use musical ideas from his songs in emotionally very different contexts because a poem was only the occasion for his inspiration, not a text charged with outrage requiring a musical exegesis. Schubert claimed no monopoly for his interpretations of shrewdly chosen masterpieces by Goethe and Schiller, Körner and Heine; he knew that they did not need his music to live, and this knowledge freed him for slavish programme music. The mediocrity of Henze's texts – I speak only of their aesthetic value: morally they are either inane or far worse than mediocre – is the key to the mediocrity of his settings: he knows that these poems will mostly live only as audible graffiti upon his scores, and that if they are not to seem out of place even there, he had better not use a musical language richer in ideas than these quotations. Henze only permits his talent any scope when the text is at least interesting, as in the Brecht poem about the stripper. Schubert did not handicap himself thus: there is plenty of indifferent verse in *Winterreise*, for instance. But those like Henze who know all about the moral depravity of aestheticism can afford to despise the details of execution on the page in exchange for extravagant fussiness in performance. This in turn distracts the audience from the verbosity and prosiness of the songs, and even these are less fatal qualities than those which they obscure: resentment and aggression, the cynicism of the successful moral blackmailer, the despair of the epigone, and the nightmare of the utopian dreamer.

Britain and the Alliance

J. Enoch Powell

The events of 1982 will be found in retrospect to have had an effect like that of a pebble shattering a windscreen of toughened glass. Suddenly, from a single point of impact, the whole polished, transparent surface is fractured at a thousand fissures. Until 1982 to call in question or attempt to debate the conventional assumptions of Britain's foreign policy was a mark of being either on the outer left wing in politics or irresponsibly addicted to exploring wild hypotheses for mere intellectual titillation. The centrepiece of those assumptions was the indispensability of the American alliance as institutionalised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, to which an undefinable odour adhered, if not of sanctity, at least of righteousness and beneficence. This assumption implied acceptance not only of the strategic analysis of the United States but of the United States' moral outlook on the world. For nearly thirty-five years, since (say) the Berlin blockade, all but a fringe of the British public have identified Britain's interest and ideals with those of the United States and been content to adopt as their own the vocabulary and the philosophy of the American State Department.

The British debacle of Suez and the American debacle of Vietnam had left all this untouched. The British public continued to see the world as overshadowed by two giants, the USA and the USSR, identified respectively with good and evil, democracy and communism, liberty and servitude. How could Britain's choice between the two be in doubt? Once made, that choice allotted to Britain the role of the faithful but subordinate ally.

Then suddenly in April 1982 the British opened their eyes and looked; and behold, it was not so. Whatever tactful phrases the government, the politicians and the media chose to employ, the public were under no misapprehension. America was against us, determined, if it could, to prevent us from repossessing our own in the South Atlantic. Presently, the British observed something else: they noticed that America had not been able to prevent us.

Thus was broken the spell which had held a whole generation captive. For the first time in many years Britain now no longer looked upon itself and the world through American spectacles, and the view was astonishingly different. It was more rational; and it was more congenial; for, after all, it was our own view. The change was so sudden that it left many observers behind. *The Times* as late as the 1st May in a leading article entitled 'A Friend Indeed' hailed with fulsome gratitude the reluctant acceptance by the State Department that Britain could not be stopped, and delivered itself of this

astonishing assertion: 'Real power in the Western world is exercised nowadays by the United States.' Well, it isn't; but the breath-taking absurdity and self-abasement of those words are a measure of the trancelike state in which we and *The Times* have lived so long.

Less than four months later, a Mr Bush, who I understand holds some office in the American government, addressed us as follows from Chicago: 'We've heard a lot of protests,' he said, 'from our European allies. I am sorry. The United States is the leader of the free world, and under this administration we are beginning to act like it'. He was as much behind the times as *The Times*. A few months earlier such a statement would have encountered no demur; it was, after all, no other than this generation had been taught at school to repeat by rote. As it was, the spontaneous reaction in Britain was similar to that when Wilhelm II in 1914 announced that he would 'drive the contemptibly small British army into the sea'. People asked: 'What 'leader'?' And 'Who appointed America 'leader'?' They also began to ask a much more searching and far-reaching question: 'What 'free world'?'

Let no one suppose that Mr Bush's words were untypical or unmeant. On the contrary, they came straight out of that 'heart of darkness' which is the American myth and the American nightmare. Let me quote you from a lecture by a professor at Denver University, who happens to be an emigré Czech – name Libor Brom:

I believe there is a great difference between Americans and the people of other countries. Whenever I travel I recognise this difference. These people have a dream, a sense that there exists a powerful force capable of leading the world to justice and peace. They are aware that there is a unique society in the world, where God has put together all nationalities, races, and interests of the globe for one purpose – to show the rest of the world how to live. The dream around the world, in spite of all contrary propaganda, is America.

As companion piece, here is this from a Canadian-born American pastor, by name Neuhaus:

I do believe that it is not with embarrassment but with a profound sense of accountability to the transcendent judgment of God, that we can say it remains true today that this America, this proposition, this experiment, is the last best hope of earth.

The manic exaltation of the American illusion has its dark counterpart, its depressive phase, I found the following a remarkably apt description of the American nightmare. The words are those of the Executive Director of a New York-based group called the Committee for the Free World: 'Do we wish, if we can, to preside over the beginning of the break-up of the Soviet empire, or do we wish to accommodate ourselves to the idea that we may one day find ourselves all alone in a sea of grim and envious and unfree people?'

These are the notions, entertained by scores of millions in that other continent, which obsess the United States with the belief that it is 'the leader of the free world' and that in 'acting like it' they are authorised, possibly by the deity, to intervene, openly or covertly, in the internal affairs of other countries anywhere in the world – entitled, for example, to manipulate the internal affairs of the United Kingdom with a view of bringing the island of Ireland within the ambit of the American alliance, or entitled to land their troops and tanks in the Levant in pursuit of a settlement in that part of the world which accords with their wishes, their prejudices and their interests.

The year 1982 is one in which the British will begin to ask a certain further question, for many years unvoiced. 'What business have the Americans interfering in the Middle East?' That question will not be repressed by the guilty knowledge that the EEC has of late taken upon itself to ape the behaviour of the United States, so that we now have countries like Denmark or Luxembourg favouring the world with their views and their bluster about people and places in a quarter where they have no more power and therefore no more responsibility than a European housefly.

The collective hallucination which enables a continental people on the other side of the globe 'without embarrassment' (if I may use the reverend pastor's words) not merely to declare what ought and what ought not to happen in the Levant but to endeavour by force, covert or overt, to bring it to pass, is not a British hallucination. Their ideas are not our ideas, their thoughts are not our thoughts, their view of the world is not our view of the world, their purposes are not our purposes, and their interests, except by occasional coincidence, are not our interests; but we have been content up to now to keep up appearances. In 1982 the appearances wore so thin that they tore.

It is not in Britain's self-interest alone that Britain should once again assert her own position. A world in which the American myth and the American nightmare go unchallenged by question or contradiction is not a world as safe or as peaceable as human reason, prudence and realism can make it. I am sorry to keep quoting *The Times*; but it really is such a museum of obsolescent attitudes as to be impossible to avoid. When the late massacres took place in Beirut, that newspaper sat down in the judgment seat to apportion blame. The PLO, of course; the Israelis, no doubt; but after that? 'The

Americans', it continued, 'and others concerned in negotiating the circumstances of the PLO's departure must also bear a share of responsibility'. That was not all. 'Even powers like Britain, which chose to take no active part, may be considered guilty by omission. Britain is, after all, a permanent member of the UN Security Council; moreover, she bears some historic responsibility for the fate of the Palestinians.'

What is astonishing about all this is the blatant assumption that there only has to be internecine strife somewhere on the globe like the massacres in Beirut after the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon or the far huger massacres in India after the British withdrew – and we are all to blame if we do not pile in. Not only is this one of those 'bloody instructions which, being taught, return to plague the inventor'. It assumes what is highly contestable, namely, that those outside, by taking responsibility through intervention, reduce rather than enhance the sum of evil.

The boundaries of the peoples of the Middle East will settle down along lines of force which cannot be predicted *a priori*. 'Lebanon', says the same leading article, 'is in such a state of anarchy that some outside force is now almost certainly needed to restore order'. So might Russia one day say of Poland; so did America once say of South Vietnam; but is it what *we* say? Do we not rather say that the order imposed by an external force is least likely to be stable and thus most likely to prolong and intensify the process by which equilibrium will eventually be reached between the various opposing magnitudes? Out beyond this, there lies a moral question which the use of the term 'responsibility' invokes. Responsible action is action for which oneself bears the ultimate consequences. It is in the nature, however, of any external force, especially external force exerted from such fantastically long range as by Britain or even more America in the Middle East, that it literally cannot bear those consequences, whether it wishes to or not. The power to create mischief is in these circumstances correlative with the power to get out from under, having created it.

It would be idle to pretend that all this revision of the conventional post-World War II British outlook on America will leave the nuclear controversy untouched. The grand theory of nuclear deterrence, upon which depend both the British nuclear deterrent and British acceptance of American nuclear bases in Britain, is in the last resort less a military theory than a geopolitical theory. It depends on scenarios which are part and parcel of the American nightmare and of which the realism fades as participation in that nightmare diminishes. This is a controversy which was hitherto monopolised by the pacifists and the weirdy wing of the Labour Party, who were inhibited from conducting it rigorously because they too, in their old-fashioned way, accepted the American apocalyptic vision of the world. It will become a different debate altogether, and a debate between a different sort of political participants, when it starts by questioning that vision.

In Search of Central Europe

The following article was sent to us from Czechoslovakia, by an author who writes under the pseudonym of Vacláv Racek, and who is already known in the West for his courageous and pertinent replies to E. P. Thompson. (See *The Salisbury Review* no. 1, p. 15. The questions which it raises are of the first importance for anyone who wishes to understand the spiritual condition of modern communism. Most importantly, however, it draws the challenging conclusion that modern totalitarian government is simply the complete expression of a crisis in belief which threatens our entire civilisation. The atheistical world of communism, Racek argues, is no more than a logical development of the secularised world of modern democracy:

Totalitarianism in 1983

There is a common view in the West that the world behind the Iron Curtain is governed by a strange monolithic dictatorship of the Asiatic type. It would perhaps be surprising to argue for the decisive affiliations of this system of European originals. However, an outstanding expert on Russia, Thomas G. Masaryk, wrote this:

‘Russian nihilism differs from the half-belief which is widespread in Europe, not in nature, but in degree; its mixture of stronger contradictions merely gives a sharper tint. The Russian illness is the illness of the whole world, but the Russians suffer it to a much greater extent than the rest of us. The Greek orthodoxy which prevails in Russia is here dissolved by the influence of a free German protestantism; but that is the only difference. The more human minds are used to the leadership of a church, the more do they become vague and bewildered, when their moral support is taken away. Hence Russian nihilism is the greatest of modern *vagueness*; it is, indeed, the rudest *vagueness* in the world.’¹

This Russian illness, which, as Masaryk argues, ‘is the illness of the whole world’, contributed decisively to creating the world behind the Iron Curtain. This fact explains why a democratic European country like Czechoslovakia could nevertheless be included in the totalitarian enclave. The transformation occurred when the moral support of the nation had been taken away, so that it was defenceless before the influence of the totalitarian left. Since that time our totalitarian managers have tried to create a new society and a new man; and what is more, they have succeeded.

It is worth mentioning that, in present-day Czechoslovakia, there is no true distinction between society and state. Both spheres operate only as systems for transmitting the decisions of the ruling party, and this is their principal purpose. Except for a tiny minority of committed communist party members, nobody can take such institutions as the trade unions, youth organisations, mass media, and so on, to be genuine institutions of society, in which citizens associate for the purposes which the institutions provide. The totalitarian state recognises no autonomous institution, no freedom of association, and no division of powers, so that legislature, executive and judiciary are inseparable parts of a single mechanism of control. Elections provide no choice among alternative candidates, and any refusal to take part in them, or to vote for the only candidates, has serious and potentially disastrous existential consequences.

In such a situation ‘life goes on’ . . . Men and women live and work, raise their children, spend their holidays, retire and die. To live under a totalitarian system means first of all to live in a state of permanent existential danger, which is always perceived. Everybody realises this danger and is confronted by it on many levels. One of them is official propaganda. In every shop window there is some official ideological slogan or poster. Nobody studies it, but everybody perceives its existence, as a symbol of the undeniable reality of the totalitarian system. The same purpose is expressed in the frequent political and ideological training which citizens must undergo. Everybody is put in the position of a pupil, facing ‘mature tutors’ of the highest possible Marxist science. The effect of these and similar arrangements is of an impressive warning: we, representatives of a new historical era, are still here, and if you will not respect us, you will be treated accordingly.

The highly elaborate system of social control reaches far beyond the police force. In every house, in every smallest district, there lives or operates some person, or some organised group, whose task is to watch over people and to report their conduct to the nearest communist organisation, which in turn hands important information to other bodies. A similar network is established in every office, factory and school. The system of surveillance penetrates into the very capillaries of society, and decisively influences the conduct and the experience of everyday life.

Caution is the highest imperative for those who wish to survive. The second imperative for those who seek a quiet life is conformity. Any failure to conform to the present political and ideological line of the communist party will jeopardise the cycle of life. The most important immediate

victims of nonconformism are children, who play a momentous role in workings of the system. Children are hostages of the system, effectively ensuring the 'proper' conduct of their parents. Any nonconformist utterance or behaviour means not only one's own risk, but, by the same token, a risk to the career of one's children. The admission of new students to technical colleges and universities is massively influenced by their parents' 'political profile', as recorded by the surveillance system.

There is no doubt that this totalitarian control strongly influences the philosophy and style of everyday life. People are coerced by it into conduct entirely absorbed by the provision of important commodities, such as food, relatively comfortable holidays, alternative sources of income, and cars. However, there can be no real guarantee of economic security under totalitarian socialism. Hence, comfortable resignation cannot be ensured as the fundamental state of mind of the 'new socialist man'. A permanent existential insecurity remains; it is the perceivable aspect of his life-style, the shadow cast by the system of surveillance and the economic instability under which he lives.

The time of the Stalinist terror is over. However, nobody can be sure that it will never return. The present kind of terror is mostly psychological; a terror of admonishing examples. Everybody knows what happens to the spokesmen and signatories of Charter 77 and to their supporters. The majority of people prefer caution and conformity to any such dangerous dissent.

In such a situation the prospects of free life in a democratic republic seem to many citizens like a dream. The sheer existence of western democracies nurtures our hopes for a better future. But in the wake of Munich, of 1948, and of 1968, there is a widespread consciousness that we cannot hope for any direct military intervention by the West against the totalitarianism which crushes us. The example of Poland has been taken as a final confirmation of that. During 1980–1981 a mixture of hope and scepticism was by no means rare among Czech. After martial law was imposed on the 13th of December 1981, scepticism prevailed despite the resolve shown by the Americans. What most dashed our hopes was the attitude of Western Europe, and in particular the conduct of the West German Social Democrats, and the tug-of-war with America over the Soviet pipeline.

The most revealing feature of the Czech intellectual atmosphere of the eighties, is the growing religious revival, which you described in part in *The Salisbury Review* No. 2. The younger generation, entirely disappointed by the perspectives offered to it by the system, has tried to find firm ground, and a meaning for life, which will be unpolluted by the disgusting material and ideological 'needs' propounded by the régime. In these circumstances, religion is inevitably enormously attractive. However, the officially permitted churches in Czechoslovakia can be active only within a very restricted framework. It is well-known that the secret police attend every act of worship as a matter of course. Ministers and priests receive their salaries from the state, and if they become too popular, they are regularly transferred or dismissed from their

post. An official paper of the Ministry of Education bans children from religious families from admission to technical colleges and universities. Atheism is an indispensable part of the official ideology, and the less people are able to believe it, the more ardently is it asserted.

The ideal of man and society enforced by the totalitarian system must be understood as an answer to the increasing complexity of our modern secularised world. In place of the synthesising role of the religious life conceived and encouraged by the medieval church, it offers a life of ideological and material compulsion. From the ideological point of view, the awesome complexity of life and the world disappears, and everything is supposed to become as clear and easy as it was in the happy time of childhood. However, complexity is conquered in this case, not by simplicity, but by vagueness. And this type of vagueness requires a special kind of responsibility, which is not so much the moral responsibility of the individual, as a permanent readiness to appear compliant to every ideological shift. Every trait of independent individuality must be eliminated, and this is the citizen's first and final duty to the state. Thus, if we accept ideology as the highest possible knowledge, all the existential problems of human life are 'resolved'. They disappear once and for all, because ideological vagueness has been declared to be the highest clarity. The world is no longer problematic or complex; it is a very simple entity, compounded only of positive and negative elements. Anything what does not fit into such a polarity is either wrongly understood, or else a remnant of some previous time which has yet to be clear about its 'true historical role'.

There are some fifteen million 'remnants of previous times' (in other words, people who are not willing to identify themselves with the totalitarian system) in Czechoslovakia. Yet the system is very successful in its effort to atomise them, so as to prevent any organised resistance. In particular, the population of the smaller towns is to a large extent frightened. The system tries to intimidate everybody who is not yet intimidated. Therefore, it worries seriously about the orientation of the younger generation, about the newcomers, who have not yet experienced the dangerous machine which manages and manipulates society. Supervision of the young is therefore one of the main official tasks, and involves a sophisticated system of communist youth organisations.

The result of this systematic endeavour is a considerable privatisation of life in Czechoslovakia. Nearly everybody looks forward to weekends and holidays, as a time when it will be possible to speak and behave openly without being afraid of existential sanctions.

An important role in intimidation is played by the experience of Soviet aggression in 1968, and by the presence of the Soviet army in the country. Since August 1968, an influential line of argument has been advanced against all organised and resolute resistance, in every state of the Eastern block. It runs: any resistance by the whole nation could imply mass slaughter, and also annexation of the country by the Soviet Union. This was the key official argument of Jaruzelski's coup d'état, and it is a very

important part of any private review of the situation conducted by a Czechoslovak citizen. Thus the system successively feeds us with the idea of alternatives which are more terrible than the status quo, and so perpetuates itself by threat.

In such circumstances, the admirable activity of Charter 77 is of the greatest importance. For us, it is a light of hope in our darkness. The relatively isolated and mostly persecuted speakers and signatories of this document – our most worthy civil initiative of recent years – openly reveal what would undoubtedly be the public opinion, were public opinion to exist in our society.

After 1968 the regime tried to console a depressed people with improved facilities for consumption. In the early seventies this policy was in part effective; however, when the fruits of the re-established socialist economy ripened, the depression revealed itself again on a larger scale. The managers of the country still try at any price to prevent the collapse of consumption. But this desperate endeavour is observed by the population with growing mockery and sarcasm.

Permanent shortage in goods and services cause a considerable wastage of time to everyone except the tiny ruling caste. Almost everyone tries to find the best possible way to meet his needs, hunting among offered scarcities, and a gigantic corruption proliferates everywhere. In this respect the regime is very successful in restricting the leisure of its serfs, so as to prevent the undesirable forms of association whereby they may learn

to understand themselves and their predicament.

A main concern of the regime has been to accomplish the liquidation of almost all non-Marxist ways of thinking. Therefore the ideological policy of the Communist party has been the most important aspect of the system since 1969. The effects of this emphasis are most obvious in the destruction of culture and humane education. Instead of a free cultural life there exists a poor residue of sub-standard art and literature. The leadership knows very well how dangerous a true work of art can be to the totalitarian system. For a work of art is an act of free communication, which respects no ideological limits. The so called 'cultural policy' is therefore one of the most elaborate interests of our rulers. In this policy, as in everything, the system aims for a domination of vagueness in all levels of society, and therefore the liquidation of all activities independent of the official ideological canon. A considerable part of this task has been fulfilled. People who choose vagueness, abdicate by the same token all personal responsibility for their lives, in exchange for the security of immediate orders. Such people accept a kind of totalitarian sophistry. They maintain that everything is relative, and therefore their obedience should not be blamed; it too can be shown to be right. This is the reasoning of the 'new socialist man', *homo sovieticus*, for whom vagueness is the proper meaning of life and of the world. In this respect however, totalitarianism encapsulates and carries to fruition the spiritual uncertainty of all civilised nations in our century.

Note

1. T. G Masaryk, *Suicide as a Mass Phenomenon of Modern Civilisation*.

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Germany: the Victors and the Opposition

Harold James

On the 6th of March the CDU/CSU won a striking electoral victory; its share of the vote (49%) was higher than in any post-war election with the exception of 1957. The result also represented a major blow for the SPD, whose vote, although higher than figures indicated by opinion polls last summer, was the lowest since 1961.

That the election was an important one for Germany, her neighbours, and the world, was demonstrated by the rather heavy-handed interventions of Andropov and Gromyko and Olva Palme on one side and of Reagan and Bush on the other. But to conclude from the extent of the election victory that at least four years of political stability of the centre-right will follow is to make a mistake about the current nature of the German political system. The stability of the Adenauer era was the product not only of the government, but also of the opposition. The kinds of criticism that the SPD made of Adenauer regime underlined the legitimacy of the system and created a climate of consensus; on the other hand, the events of 1982–3 have destroyed any possibility of consensus and have polarised West Germany.

The ghosts of the past stalked through the election campaign. The first ghost was a constitutional one. By a curious coincidence the elections to the West German Bundestag on the 6th of March fell almost precisely on the fiftieth anniversary of the Reichstag election of 1933 (5th of March), the first and only election in the Third Reich, when Hitler used his hold on the Chancellorship to secure in new elections a larger majority for the Nazis and their allies. Hitler could in fact have worked with the old Reichstag (which had been elected in November 1932 and which had four years to run); and he had given assurances to his non-Nazi allies before he became Chancellor that he would keep the old Reichstag, which had provided some kind of check on the Hitler government. He disregarded these assurances.

Helmut Kohl in December 1982 dissolved the Bundestag with the connivance of the Federal President by engineering his own defeat in a vote of confidence. This was the first time in the history of the Federal Republic that a Chancellor with a working majority attempted to dissolve the Bundestag prematurely (the other case of a premature dissolution was in 1972, when defections had led to the erosion of the SPD–FDP coalition majority). Such a manoeuvre to make an existing majority more secure by winning a longer term of office had indeed once been considered by Konrad Adenauer, but was ruled out as contrary to the spirit of a constitution constructed with the purpose of avoiding the chronic political instability that had first paralysed and eventually destroyed the

Weimar Republic. Some Germans, including members of his own party, criticised Kohl's action, and a case brought against the Government with the aim of banning the March election was only resolved by the Federal Constitutional Court on Ash Wednesday, 16th of February, two and a half weeks before the planned poll.

Not only the constitutional spectre haunted the campaign: for the two issues which dominated the battle of ideas – the economic question and the peace issue – look curiously like the issues of the last year of Weimar. Then there was a major depression: of the over six million unemployed, many supported Hitler and even more supported the Communist Party. Both parties challenged the legitimacy of the capitalist order. Now there are two and a half million without work in West Germany. Then the major powers were discussing world disarmament at Geneva; now they are still doing exactly that. National Socialism's two major goals were the alteration of economic policy so that Germans would no longer face unemployment; and the frustration of the attempts of the Western powers to keep Germany disarmed. The alternation of the ideology of the political left in 1970s Germany and the rise of the Green movement involve the formulation of new economic policies and new defence policies. The anti-Western tone of the disarmament proposals of the Greens and their friends within the SPD is very powerful: its key note is a strident anti-Americanism.

Both the Green movement and the new left in the SPD emerged as a consequence of the breakdown of a consensus about economic planning and economic growth that had existed before the thirteen years of SPD–FDP coalition since 1969, but that found its most powerful exponents under the social-liberal coalition. Karl Schiller and Helmut Schmidt had a powerful belief in the efficacy of *dirigisme*. However, a rising state share of National Income (from 38% of GDP in 1969 to 48% in 1982) coincided with a slowing down of the growth rate and with severe recessions (1975 and 1982): and several varieties of disillusion set in.

The Greens represent one reaction to the collapse of *étatisme*. Their importance in German politics is far greater than their relatively weak showing in the polls (5.6%) suggests. They derive their support from a curious mixture of peasants who dislike being near new nuclear power stations; old ladies who are frightened that the Teutonic woods and forests, through which their ancestors, the Huns and Goths, once rampaged, will be defoliated by sulphuric acid falling as rain; and a youth movement, disappointed by official socialism and by

unions whose wage policies and restrictive practices make it more difficult to get jobs, and frustrated by the homelessness created by a peculiarly devastating combination of rent control and property speculation. This potent mixture of very disparate elements on the fringes of German middle-class prosperity – the angry middle-class marginalia – is united under the banner of anti-technology and anti-capitalism. Their concepts of a new economic order is intellectually unsophisticated, and absolutely no thought is given to the effect of the zero or negative growth which they advocate on an economy structurally dependent on exporting and on continued growth. But unsophisticated ideas are powerful influences over the actions of a frustrated middle class.

A romantic, nationalistic and anti-Western movement opposed to the values of industrial civilisation, which nevertheless claims to represent the Germany of tomorrow: it is not difficult to see why many commentators speak of a green fascism. The Greens themselves show signs of being aware that a link might be made: in an attempt to avoid any kind of *Führerprinzip* they have devised systems for a rotating leadership and rotating mandates in parliament. Unfortunately such systems echo another Nazi ideology – anti-parliamentarism.

The danger presented by the Greens lies not so much in their own strength, but rather in their effect on an oppositional SPD. There are some, though not very many, straightforward Marxists in the Green movement; in general the movement is too romantic in its beliefs to be able to accommodate such a scientifically rigorous ideology as Marxism. But there are many greens in the SPD. The Württemberg SPD leader, Erhard Eppler, and Jochen Steffen of Schleswig-Holstein have since the mid-1970s opposed nuclear power and been sceptical about NATO. Significantly, they come from areas of Germany where there is little old-style industry, and where the new marginal middle class, the class that produces the Greens, flourishes.

The rise to the SPD leadership of Hans-Jochen Vogel is not comprehensible without a consideration of his relation with the Greens. He was traditionally regarded as being on the right of the SPD – a competent and dynamic lawyer who had become Oberbürgermeister of Munich at an early age. As Federal Minister of Justice he took a tough line against the terrorist threat, and he appeared as a man after the mould of Helmut Schmidt. Then he was sent to Berlin, after the SPD there had suffered because of its deep involvement in the shadier sides of property speculation. He found in Berlin a large number of young dissidents, many of whom supported environmentalist groupings. As his hair turned a distinguished grey over the problems of Berlin, his mind went green; and his skill in dealing with

the Greens made him appear the natural figure to bring back youth to the SPD.

His mission was not altogether successful: while he hoped to absorb the Greens back into the SPD, the Green movement still won over 5% of the vote. Critics will say that the lack of success of the SPD was a result of its failure to tread more boldly the Green path: during the election campaign the SPD was still arguing that it was necessary to deploy American missiles if the Soviet Union made *no* concessions on the stationing of the SS-20s; and that, if the electricity industry could afford to build safe nuclear power plants without government loans or grants (it probably could not), it would be permitted to do that. The new SPD sees, however, in its rôle as an opposition, an opportunity to renew itself ideologically, to abandon the legacy of the Brandt-Schmidt era; and to change its social basis.

Already in the Weimar Republic the SPD turned from being a party based on the working class vote alone towards becoming a party with a substantial middle class constituency. The change was only formally acknowledged, however, at a party congress in Bad Godesberg in 1959. By the late 1970s, a second shift had been accomplished: the party lost more and more of its industrial votes and became a party of the marginal middle class – people who resented the consumer prosperity of the Bonn Republic, in some cases because they had not enough of it, in more cases because they had too much. The task of the SPD in 1983 will be to perform a new Godesberg – to reshape the party programme so that it no longer requires for its fulfilment the smooth growth of the state-guided economy.

The scale of Kohl's election victory was clearly due to his party's opposition to the interventionist state. This opposition explains the defection in September and October 1982 of the liberals from the social-liberal coalition. But Kohl's is a balanced, moderate sort of conservatism; and his rather old-fashioned appeal to the traditional values he is proud of embodying may well run into difficulties. In the first place, the economic upswing that he promised in his campaign ('Vote for the Upswing') is likely to be limited. It is unrealistic to suppose that, in the present condition of the world economy, there could be a return to the fast rates of growth of the Erhard years of the 1950s. Secondly, Kohl can never win over the hearts of the marginal middle class: their version of neutralist nationalism is far headier than the staid conservatism of a state (West Germany) without a nation. Their reaction, and their control over the SPD, raises a frightening spectre – of a really popular fascism of the left. And, at the latest, in the next election, four years from now, that fascism of the left will pose a powerful challenge not only to German but also to international stability.

Adenauer's Posthumous Victory

Otto von Habsburg

In the mythology of the political scientists the notion of 'trends' plays a major role. More than once refuted by the facts, it generally reappears when a result has to be explained which does not conform to the ideological scheme.

That has happened again. It was easier to explain the crushing victory of the Christian Democratic Parties in Germany by a mythical force, and thus to avoid a realistic analysis of prevailing conditions. Those who believe in trends were furthermore helped by the fact that simultaneously, although for different reasons, the non-socialist parties won in the French municipal elections. Other facts, of course were overlooked: the Australian Socialists obtained an overwhelming majority on the 5th of March, and only a few months ago the Spanish Socialists, under the leadership of Felipe Gonzalez, crushingly defeated the non-socialist UCD.

In democratic politics, with few exceptions, only three things count: credible personalities; a clear and honest language; untiring work. Here is the recipe for the victory of the Christian Democrats in Germany, especially of Franz Josef Strauss's CSU. The latter surpassed its best previous results, something even optimists had considered impossible.

The Christian Democratic candidate for the post of Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was a credible man. He inspired confidence, because people knew that he would do what he had said. His courageous decision to take unpopular measures already before the elections, increased this favourable impression. By contrast, his Socialist rival, Hans-Jochen Vogel, was known as an opportunist, of whom one could rightly say that he always joins the stronger battalions.

The character of Chancellor Kohl shows in his statements. He has no 'maybe's' but only 'Yes' or 'No'. Vogel, on the other hand, is a past master of double-talk. Significant from this point of view was the last television debate of the top candidates, in which the Socialist standard-bearer avoided taking any position concerning the NATO rearmament decisions. One saw quite obviously that he tried simultaneously to placate the pacifist General Bastian, and the right wing of his party. He did not realise that this was bound to make the worst possible impression.

Furthermore, the Christian Democrats, especially the Bavarian CSU, had worked intensely at the base. They were truly united. The Socialists, on the other hand, were split and were consequently more busy attacking each other than mobilising their supporters against the political opponent.

Amongst the statements of Kohl – and this was scarcely noted in the world press – Europe took a prominent place. There was not a single speech in which he did not mention this issue. This too reflects the attitude of the new German Chancellor. Kohl, who comes from the shores of the Rhine, considers himself heir to Chancellor Adenauer. He is a highly educated historian, who has intensively studied the Holy Roman Empire in Germany. He has an imperial attitude – hence his European orientation. Adenauer was more than once called a 'Carolingian' by his foes. In fact this is an honourable title, since Charlemagne had been one of the predecessors of a united Europe with his Christian Empire extending from Spain to Saxony. This is the tradition from which Helmut Kohl stems.

Kohl has furthermore a deep sense of loyalty towards the German Fundamental Law, which is also part of the Adenauer inheritance. The Constitution contains a principle which has all too often been forgotten during 13 years of socialist rule: Germans are called upon to work for the re-unification of their country. Kohl takes this mandate very seriously. Like Adenauer, he is a realist. He knows that a purely German re-unification is impossible, that a larger framework is needed. He is aware that Honecker, East-Germany's boss, is not a normal politician, but a Gauleiter of the Soviet Union. A conversation between the two German States can consequently deal only with problems which are not vital to Moscow. On major questions the Kremlin says the last word. One can therefore act only if strong enough to be respected even by the Russians. This strength will never be achieved by the German Federal Republic alone, but only by a united Europe. The latter is therefore the precondition for the implementation of the German Constitution.

This attitude has determined Kohl's entire political career. He is a European by reason and heart. Europe is for him a primary issue.

Kohl wants a new beginning. The great European advances in the fifties were due to the fact that Adenauer's Germany was the motor of unification. When the Socialist Party took over, Bonn became a retarding element. There was first a Chancellor Brandt, who sacrificed the interests of Europe and Germany in the pursuit of an ill-considered 'Ostpolitik'. Then came Schmidt, a politician believing himself to be a world-statesman, who had great visions but no relations to the ground under his feet. Schmidt's speeches show this clearly. Under Kohl there will be once again a realistic European policy. This is of major importance, now that the institutional debates in the European Parliament are about to take place.

The partnership Kohl-Mitterrand-Thatcher is not only a guarantee of a safe future for the West; it will also be a major element in the further development of European unity. One can hence, without undue optimism, expect progress of a kind which, a year ago, was unthinkable. In this perspective the 6th of March, 1983, was not only an important step ahead in the recovery of Germany. It was also a great day for European unification. Under a Chancellor Vogel things would have been worse even than under Brandt.

Furthermore, the decision of the German nation is a renewed proof of its political maturity. Today, when the enemies of the West try everything to dis-unite the

partners in NATO, one of their major instruments of propaganda is the promotion of distrust towards Germany. It is no accident that everything is presently undertaken to unearth Hitler from under the ruins of the Reichskanzlei and to give him a new, though artificial, life. German voters have once again shown that the Nazi empire was a solitary tragic exception, a moment of madness, in an otherwise great and respectable history. They have strengthened the confidence in Germany, which Adenauer had re-established following the Second World War. In this sense Kohl is the legitimate successor of Adenauer. This is what Europe expects of him. It will not be disappointed.

The Bank's New Governor

Charles Pickthorn

When an outsider wins a horse race the bookies are usually delighted. But the professional punters – other than those few who had spotted that the outsider was underrated – feel aggrieved. Apart from the damage to their pockets, their self-esteem suffers.

Similar feelings amongst senior financial commentators may partly explain the chorus of criticism which followed the announcement that Robert, always known as Robin, Leigh-Pemberton would succeed Gordon Richardson as Governor of the Bank of England on the 1st of July, 1983 when Richardson's second 5-year term ends. In the weeks before the announcement financial journalists had solemnly reviewed the runners and made their reasoned predictions. Only one – Patrick Sergeant of the *Daily Mail* – tipped Leigh-Pemberton.

The most absurd criticism was the warning given by *The Economist* that Pemberton would have difficulty working with subordinates whose intellectual powers are greater than his. When Pemberton sat the Eton scholarship examination, which is not a competition for intellectual slow-coaches, he was placed third in order of merit. Instead of going into College like the other scholars, Pemberton's parents chose the more relaxed atmosphere of an Oppidan house for their brainy 13-year old. He kept pace – in a relaxed manner – with his intellectual peers in College.

Having served in Palestine with the Grenadiers during the murderous last period of the Mandate, he was nearly 22 when he reached Oxford, where he read 'Shortened Greats' – a course lasting for two years instead of the normal four. He admits that he did not distinguish himself in the exams, and says that he cannot remember anyone who did.

Now aged 55, he came late to banking. He left the Bar in 1960 to manage the family estate in Kent. Soon after he was elected a county councillor (Conservative) and from

1972 to 1975 he was Chairman of the Kent County Council. In 1970 he was made a local director of the National Westminster Bank; in 1972 he was asked to join the main board; in 1974 he was made Deputy Chairman and in 1977 Chairman. The picture is of someone who has not had to struggle for preferment but who has been chosen by colleagues to lead, after they have got to know him.

The Nat West has flourished under Pemberton's Chairmanship and, of the big UK banks, it is least embroiled in the defaults of foreign governments and third world debtors – partly because it has no long established business in the areas principally affected. In this it is unlike Lloyds (South America) or Barclays (Africa and the Carribean).

Successful and fortunate though Pemberton has been, he has no direct experience of central banking. He is not an 'expert', as Gordon Richardson, who would have been prepared to continue, and 'Kit' McMahon, the Deputy Governor of the Bank, undoubtedly are. It is believed that Richardson, who has been a distinguished Governor, and McMahon, who has great intellectual gifts and professional experience, have on occasions been less nimble than Mrs Thatcher wished in adjusting the Bank's practices to the requirements of her monetarist policies. One implication of Pemberton's appointment is that the defeat of inflation remains the first priority of Mrs Thatcher's Government. In the minds of Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe, devotion to that objective is of greater importance than proven expertise in international financial relations or skill in the central banking techniques used to influence short-term interest rates.

The appointment may also indicate that experts in academic macro-economics and central banking techniques ought to be devalued just a little. Fellows of All Souls and Kings College, Cambridge are clever fellows. But there are others, with practical experience of affairs,

who are equally capable of clear and objective thought, even though less disposed to express their thought in technicalities.

Pemberton, for example, assisted by his boyhood experience of translating English into Latin or Greek, would not expect to find even an approximate equivalent for the verb 'to re-schedule' in Lewis & Short or Liddell & Scott. The realities behind the euphemistic English – realities with which the Greeks and Romans were familiar – must first be established. 'I re-schedule' – I have decided to repay the bank early; 'he re-schedules' – he has not paid the latest instalment; 'we re-schedule' – we would be happy to extend the credit in your case; 'they re-schedule' – they will not or cannot pay and, unless their loans are increased, they threaten a simultaneous announcement of default which will wreak havoc on our balance sheet and destroy our depositors' confidence.

In a television interview immediately after his appointment Pemberton said that he regarded inflation as 'vastly more dangerous to Western democracy than Communism'. Lenin, who said that destruction of the capitalist currencies was a necessary preliminary to Communism, might have agreed. Pemberton's answer to the question, whether he would find difficulty in adjusting to an economic policy different to Mrs Thatcher's, was more provocative. He said that the prime duty of the Governor was to protect the currency, and that if policies were proposed which were likely to devalue the currency

seriously 'it would be my duty to advise the Government of the consequences of that policy and, I think, to resist it'.

Peter Shore, Labour's Shadow Chancellor whose recently published *Programme for Recovery* called for a 30% sterling devaluation, demanded an assurance that Pemberton would do what he is told if Labour were in power. The Labour leadership also indicated that, if it forms the next government, it would consider dismissing Pemberton.

In response to Shore, Pemberton said that he was 'aware of the constitutional position of the Governor'. A Governor can be dismissed for misconduct or incompetence but there is no statutory provision that he can be dismissed at will. The Bank of England Act 1946 provides that in the event of irreconcilable disagreement between the Bank and the Treasury, the Treasury can serve written instructions on the Bank which the Bank must then obey. If this were to happen for any prolonged period, presumably the Governor would resign in the hope that a successor might regain some independence for the Bank.

At the moment the early return of a Labour Government seems doubtful and Pemberton may reasonably hope to complete his 5-year term without a test of the constitutional arrangements for dismissing a Governor of the Bank of England. He may also draw some comfort from the fact that Richardson started with a bad press but subsequently won golden opinions.



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Where Stands the Prayer Book Now Part II

David Martin

This article continues and concludes David Martin's contribution to the last issue of *The Salisbury Review*

In the first part of this article, I considered the BBC religious broadcasting, because it is an area where decisions can be made without constraint and where there is a definable pocket of power. In these features the BBC resembles the theological colleges. However, the situation in the schools, including the independent sector, is no less alarming, despite the ostensible control that may be exerted over the form and content of the curriculum.

So far as the public sector is concerned (and this concerns 92% of all pupils), the situation is part of a general disarray in Religious Education. There is good work done in Religious Education, there is also considerable denigration and neglect. The use of modern translations of the Bible in schools could surely not be criticised, were they used alongside the Authorised Version, and were it the case that at least the great passages in the Authorised version were taught. But this is not how things are. We must also notice an attack on traditional hymnody, which has so far made its greatest impact in the schools. Much of what is now offered consists of trite or contentless ditties beside which the ASB looks like a work of imaginative genius. These ditties characteristically go to jig-a-jig tunes in pathetic emulation of outdated pop music. This is tragic, since there is, amongst a large amount of expendable rubbish, a corpus of classic hymnody central to the English religious inheritance.

I have recently had some useful association with the Bloxham Project, concerned with Religious Education in the independent schools. Professor Basil Mitchell, the Rev Bruce Reid and myself have stressed the importance of the Prayer Book and Authorised Version in deepening the imaginative life of pupils. We have argued that such masterworks act like powerful icons, touching the deepest layers of response, and, moreover, that these icons are set in the context of our literature and history. They are keystones in the arch of cultural continuity. Such arguments are listened to respectfully, though an appeal was made to me not to go all out along a line which would 'appeal to the natural instincts of headmasters'! All the same it is clear enough that most chaplains have attempted to introduce the new services. A letter of enquiry has gone from Sir John Colville to heads of independent schools, and the replies are presently being collated and analysed by the Principal of St David's University College. Some of them illustrate a remarkable triumph of conformity over education, e.g. 'We give them the ASB because that is what they will encounter outside'.

It may be useful to summarise the arguments used in support of liturgical change. These arguments differ, of course, in their type and weight. Nevertheless, one may say that those who defend what has happened believe:-

- (a) That the Church should not appear antiquated, at least in the key area of the spoken word.
- (b) That failure is in significant measure due to not being understood.
- (c) That 'cultural' concerns are 'middle class' and must therefore be jettisoned if the Church is to widen its constituency.
- (d) That the 'established' connection is an uncertain blessing. This feeling can be expressed in a considerable ambivalence towards the state prayers and the 'regalism' of the Prayer Book. It is also expressed by using the ASB as a kind of totem of ecclesiastical independence, and by a generalised resentment towards those who regard the Church as a walled-off enclave of the 'spiritual', a sort of biddable spiritual side-show.
- (e) That common texts, however poor, are useful in the politics of ecumenism and give a sense of common cause to Christians otherwise divided.
- (f) That the Church is not primarily connected to 'Little England' but to the ecclesiastical equivalent of the E.E.C., or the Third World. The Prayer Book then suffers because of its distinctively English character.
- (g) That participation, even if mainly symbolic, is more easily congruent with the ASB, and that such participation is the most faithful realisation of the reformers' intentions for our own time.
- (h) That the form of the traditional eucharist does not conform to primitive models: four-fold action etc.
- (i) That the renewal of theology, including a theology of the incorporation of new members and of marriage, cannot avoid a break with the traditional framework.
- (j) That theology, both contemporary and primitive, is bound to regard the traditional form as over-emphasising sin and atonement and under-emphasising Resurrection and the action of the Holy Spirit.
- (k) That there is a sharp division to be made between verbal form and the substance of meaning. The raw core of meaning is primary.
- (l) That the Church must adopt one particular (and rather Puritanical) view of the relation between the beautiful and the holy. Thus all criticism that fastens onto the aesthetic aspect is not truly theological.

Those who hold this view often argue, that because it is possible to say a profoundly Christian prayer in a graceless hut or a prison, then Lincoln Cathedral is a dispensable superfluity. Art is an extra to those things which are *real*, or else to those attitudes which are *sincere*. Art is a seductive agency which leads humankind away from God, not a primary channel of divinity. This kind of argument is often developed to include the notion that art necessarily introduces complexity where there should be simplicity. (The Rev John Wesley and the Rev John Newton objected to Handel's Messiah on the ground that they couldn't hear all the words.)

Obviously, critics of recent changes may be sympathetic to some of these arguments. Personally, I am sympathetic towards the argument which claims that the Church is not a walled-off enclave of spirituality, I know, in particular, of people who care greatly about the Prayer Book, for example, the Dean of Clare, Dr Arthur Peacocke, and who yet see the advantages of ecumenism in prayers shared in common. Nevertheless, one has to say that difficulties often appear once one pursues the above arguments beyond the level at which they can be used to blend the faithful either with liturgical science or with received ideas. The logic of the argument about simplicity, for example, must counter the facts of Christian history. Consider the power of Baroque (e.g. Mexican) churches to induct simple peasants into the divine presence. Even if one regards a huge part of the Christian architectural inheritance as falling away from the proper Cistercian or Puritan ideals, nevertheless, it is precisely the Cistercian and Puritan examples which show that art and simplicity are perfectly compatible.¹ Similarly, the Book of Common Prayer is, in the best sense, 'artful', while remaining very simple. The relationship of the beautiful and the 'artful' to the holy is a subject of great complexity which cannot be set aside by unexamined clichés.

It will be useful, perhaps, to give some other examples of how debateable the current wisdom becomes once examined a little more carefully. For example, those who do not care for the shift from 'I believe' to 'We believe', often argue, with W. H. Auden, that to say 'I believe' involves an assumption of personal responsibility for belief. They are countered by examples of primitive practice, which however turn out to be quite equivocal in their import. So equivocal are they that the Roman Catholic Missa Normativa retains Credo, and scholars translating that Mass into the various other vernaculars have often retained the first person singular. Exactly why those who translated the Missa Normativa into the English 'vernacular' were more impressed than other scholars by the arguments for 'We' is a puzzle. However, there can be little doubt that many people are influenced to accept the 'We' by the *gemeinschaftlich* (or, if you like, collectivist) overtone. In the same way it seems odd that RC scholars in Washington should adopt the bathetic 'And also with you' and that scholars in our own Church should thrust it upon us, while several other Roman Catholic language groups retain 'And with thy spirit' – 'und mit deinem Geist'.

To take a quite different instance, objections to the NEB as the sole vehicle for readings are often rebutted by reference to the faithfulness to the texts achieved by the modern translators. Yet, the Rev Professor Kenneth Grayson (Methodist) in *Confessions of a Biblical Translator*² which is to some extent an apology for the NEB, makes it clear that such vaunted accuracy is impossible. Moreover, it can be persuasively argued that the Authorised Version is often more accurate.³ Gerald Hammond argues that part of the archaic and powerful texture of the Authorised Version derives from precisely its faithfulness to the original.⁴ Ian Robinson in 'The Survival of English' extends this point by relating the unconvincing tone of the NEB to faithlessness at a deeper level i.e. the failure of men and women in our time to find a religious language which conveys either meaning or conviction.

I could give endless examples where the criteria adduced for a particular change are so debateable that one concludes that it was political considerations which were really decisive. The learned journal *Worship* published in Collegeville, Minnesota, USA, and a notable source of liturgical innovation, will provide a whole battery of examples, including the charge that the brutalism of the Englishing of the Mass, so widely transferred to our own liturgical work, was partly based on mistranslation of an allocution of Paul II defining the guiding criteria to be followed. Again, the fragmentary texts of Hippolytus Romanus are much cited as giving us guidance to early Eucharistic practice, and this primitive character is held to be authoritative for our times. But the same people who parade Hippolytus Romanus as an authority will quite calmly jettison the most primitive layers of the new Testament, i.e. the Epistles, at any point where they prove to be inconvenient. I have no doubt that many people find the 1662 view of the reasons for marriage offensive, but the 'offensiveness' in question has clear authority in the New Testament. Criteria of selection are entirely arbitrary: the custom of the Kiss of Peace looked attractive by the standards of contemporary *Zeitgeist*, whereas primitive directions concerning the display of female hair are conspicuously lacking in appeal. Of course, if the new reformers prefer what Kierkegaard rightly characterised as a Jewish view of the family and marriage to their own most authoritative sources, (not to mention the fourth century Discit Fathers), then that is understandable; but it means that all criteria invoking authority dissolve on inspection into arbitrary existential preferences, or mere 'feel'. When scholars are picking their way selectively through the various authoritative layers of Christian tradition they can usually rely on the Holy Spirit to revoke His previous inconvenient revelations as 'culture bound', thus giving us full authority to select in accordance with the cultural assumptions of our place and time.

Beliefs about the nature of modern speech are equally odd, as are beliefs about what people can understand. Charles Sisson, writing in the *TLS*, argued that the ASB contains hardly a single modern sentence. Fraser Steel, in his contribution to *Ritual Murder* (p. 122), comments:

'In the Te Deum, for instance, what principle of consistency reconciles the functionalist unpunctuated, bluntness of 'You are God we please you' with the sham-antique of 'Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim you: Father of majesty abounded'?'. The new Te Deum also includes respectable essays in Victoriana ('the white-robed army of martyrs', for example). This is acceptable, but hardly modern, or simpler than the traditional version. Professor Randolph Quick has argued that the new versions often have a more difficult vocabulary than the old (which is perhaps why one Bishop told me that critics have the same trouble with the ASB as musicians had with Wagner!) It seems unbelievable, but the previous Vice-Principal of Westcott House told me that the Commission actually voted on a proposal to remove the image of the Lamb, since lambs are not part of our contemporary urban experience. So much for 'Little Lamb, who made thee', which presumably should be banned from schools as archaic English, referring to an unknown animal. The Principal of St John's, involved in so much of the present reformists passion accused me of being the sort of person who thought people could understand the phrase (in the service for the Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony): 'like brute beasts that have no understanding'. Indeed, I *am* that sort of person. People know what brutes and beasts are and they understand what it is to have no understanding. It is in this ability to convey simple, universal, and profound apprehensions, that the merit of the Prayer Book lies.

What then do I conclude? I think one must distinguish between institutional *mauvaise foi* and individual *mauvaise foi*. When you talk to an institution, you find that nobody is responsible. I mean both that you cannot trace a primary agent of what has happened, and that everyone refers to someone else. The ball is never directly in someone's court, but flying in the air. The buck never stops, not even with those apparently in authority. This is not to say that once a line has emerged certain powerful agencies cannot be identified which maintain it in being. The Secretary-General of the General Synod, for example, has reacted to criticisms with comments which give clear indications of where the weight of ecclesiastical bureaucracy is placed. After the Gallup Poll, he said that he would be sceptical about any Poll with which I was associated, and also said that the critics have now 'shot their bolt'. The Archbishop of York has responded to complaints with public remarks which throw judicious neutrality to the winds and make clear where the weight of authority in the Northern Province lies.

Nevertheless, I do not conclude when talking to individuals, even the most open partisans of the new rites, like the Rev Colin Buchanan, Principal of St Johns, that they are engaged in deception, or even, in many cases, that they are insensitive to the issues. The Church of England has not suddenly become bereft of learned and godly men or been taken over by crass Philistines. The logic of institutional change is more subtle than such suppositions allow. Some individuals who give assent to what has happened openly admit to a continual daily

mortification of the soul when using the new rites. It only requires one mistaken supposition about why the Church of England is not succeeding, or one illegitimate inference from the success of some lively charismatic congregations, for a man to do penance in this way or for a man to conclude that, however poor in content and expression, the changes must be supported. The Rev Professor Kenneth Grayston openly argues that because modern English is slack, feeble and unimpressive, a truly modern translation, such as the NEB, can only reproduce these characteristics. Just one mistaken inference can lead then to a personal stance which supports the enfeeblement of the word. The institutional line, which constrains future generations to its pattern, with the weight of hands no longer active or even dead, is in this case bad faith of a very clear kind.

The previous Deputy Leader of the Labour Party is undoubtedly right in asserting that the collective entity we call 'The Church of England' has quietly stolen away from the understandings which lay behind the Worship and Doctrine Measure of 1974. The evidence of a disparity between provision and preference is too clear. There is an obvious lack of accountability to the wider community in general, and to that wider community of the faithful who do not engage in the internal politics of the Church, and who see no reason why faith demands a spell of ecclesiastical politicking. The quasi-democratic apparatus develops a momentum at odds with the constituency it claims to serve, and the rules it claims to follow. Those who occupy key roles in that apparatus are forced to use formalistic defences which obscure the real injustice.

The situation is paradoxical. The Church of England is now a pocket of privatised spiritual power, which rejects admonition or pressure from public authority as 'Erastian'. The right of ecclesiastical authorities to order their own affairs and exercise what they see as a divine commission is, without doubt, important, but it can be too easily defended by an appeal to precisely that kind of privatised power which lacks responsibility to the wider community. That is why the American Bishops, who are simply part of a private religious corporation, within the broader international consortium of the Anglican Church, are able to act in such an authoritarian way, and even to exhibit the unacceptable face of authoritarian liberalism.

When the Houses of Parliament made their gestures of disquiet in April 1981, there were some who confused the right of a Church (meaning the whole body of the faithful) to autonomy, with the exercise of power over against a very large part of the laity. The participation of the laity, like the dialogue with the secular world, was plainly understood as confined to areas where it did not inconvenience that power. Two smokescreens were sent up. One was a threat of disestablishment, which the Bishops mostly do not want and which a recent poll shows is confined to a minority of the clergy as a whole. The other was a battle cry of God against Caesar, raised by the Rev Colin Buchanan. Plainly Mr Buchanan thinks that God has been pocketed by the ecclesiastical apparatus and

himself, and his remark 'They will not change us from the outside' shows a sectarian view of ecclesiastical boundaries. That, in fact, is the problem: the definition of inside and outside which affects the contemporary Church of England, and turns it into a defensive denomination, aside from either contemporary culture or the continuity of the nation over time, is a definition cast and imposed by an uncertain and resentful minority.

What can be done about the situation I do not know. I am not an Erastian (or more correctly, I am not a follower of Marsiglio of Padua) and the appeal to Parliament was a last resort, when petitions, polls, remonstrances and the critical protest of the serious press had produced no response, beyond a resentful silence. But perhaps silence is all that can be expected from a power that has become so divorced from the sources of its authority.

Notes

1. I am thinking of the classic simplicity of early dissenting architecture, and the immense architectural deposit of New England from 1680 onwards.
2. *New Universities Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3, Summer 1979.
3. See Geoffrey Strickland, 'The Holy Bible, Translation and Belief', *New Universities Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3, Summer 1979.
4. G. Hammond 'The English Bible' in *Poetry Nation Review*,

No. 24, 1981. Ian Robinson 'The Word of God Now', *Poetry Nation Review* No. 13, 1979, and Andor Gomme 'The New Religious English' in B. Morris (ed.) *Ritual Murder*, 1979.

Professor C. B. Cranfield of Durham, has a sharply critical view of the accuracy of the NEB and gives some examples in his *Changes of Person and Number in Paul's Epistles* (Paul and Paulinson, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. D. Wilson).

Mrs Thatcher's Idea of the Good Society

Ian Crowther

The Labour party's triumph at the polls in 1945 and its subsequent installation of the Welfare State owed much to the collective spirit bred in wartime and carried over into Britain's peacetime politics. Labour's electoral defeat in 1951 was due in some measure to the evaporation of this collective spirit and its replacement by a new-found individualism.

Conservatives recently have been inclined to focus exclusively on the attachment of successive administrations after 1951, their own included, to collectivist remedies. This fixation is understandable, since patently the centralised state stands in the way of the freer society to which Conservatives now aspire. But assuming Mrs Thatcher is returned to office for a second term, her task may be complicated by the fact that the post-war era witnessed a growth not only in the powers of the state, but equally in those of the individual. And paradoxical as it may sound, the individualism which reached its apogee in the sixties, and which still affects much of our behaviour today, could prove as inimical to Mrs Thatcher's purposes in the long run as the collectivism she now strenuously opposes.

To understand why this might be so, one needs to look rather more closely at the post-war 'consensus' and the political system which gave rise to it. It was a system under which individuals and institutions were permitted to pursue their ends largely unhindered by the state, on the principal condition that they contributed sufficient by way of tax to sustain the burgeoning welfare bureaucracy. No collective spirit of the sort which had briefly been apparent after 1945 informed this new consensus. On the

contrary, state capitalism, or the mixed economy as the adherents of this system liked to call it, contributed to a sense of personal freedom which admitted little sense of personal responsibility. The act of social provision, since it was performed mechanically and unfeelingly, did not engender public-spiritedness. Rather it licensed individuals to think only of themselves and the accomplishment of their private purposes. Each person was left free to follow his appetites, always provided that, when it came to life's important decisions, he deferred to others: social workers, education 'experts', public health officials, and the like. In this way the citizen was reduced to an 'idiot', in the original Greek sense of the word: a person anaesthetised against the pain of personal decision-making, and preoccupied by immediate sensual needs.

The utilitarian hedonism, which is the mixed economy's most characteristic legacy, arose from the premise that an individual's wants are of sovereign importance. Why? Because the mainspring of this economy was 'net aggregate demand', which in effect meant that individual wants, when maximised and multiplied, confer upon society the Midas touch, securing economic growth, mass affluence and full employment. As a consequence of this view, all demands are assumed to be of equal importance, and therefore any attempt to discriminate between them on the basis of reason is taken to be futile. That each individual's appetites are sovereign and deserving of instant gratification received support also from modern psychological theories, purporting to show the 'goodness' of guilt-free enjoyments, irrespective of their content.

Keynes, of course, provides the connecting link between the economic system we have been describing and its moral consciousness. His oft-quoted 'In the long run we are all dead' summarily encapsulated an entire philosophy which was hostile to savings and stewardship and to the postponement of pleasures which these virtues had entailed. This philosophy, whose roots were in Bloomsbury, bore luxurious fruits in the 'consumer society' and in the lotus-eating ethic which accompanied it. Keynes envisaged, and the Keynesian economy enshrined, an updated idea of bourgeois liberty without any trace of bourgeois virtue. The individual 'self' was liberated to do as it liked, since abstinence was neither economically nor ethically virtuous.

Mrs Thatcher's admiration for the Victorian virtues which Keynes despised should awaken conservatives to the realisation that the state is not their only enemy. They have inherited, along with the socialised state, the unsocialised individual. Collectivism and individualism have been feeding each other in an unhealthy dialectic throughout the post-war period. Institutional and individual freedom alike have been understood as existing in a social and moral vacuum, which vacuum only the state could properly fill. Nothing, in short, has prepared people for the more burdensome type of freedom which this government seeks to extend to them.

As the fetters are removed from the marketplace, will the inclinations to self-indulgence diminish, and to self-discipline increase? We may grant that in Victorian times the habits of thrift, frugality and self-respect were associated with capitalism. But they were never intrinsic to it. The myth to which many Conservatives cling is that, because free enterprise once gave expression to solid middle-class virtues, it also gave rise to them. But the capitalist system is morally neutral; its mores have always been supplied from outside. When culturally everything is permitted, it is questionable whether the free marketplace will manifest the 'ordered freedom' which Mrs Thatcher favours: rather it might exhibit patterns of behaviour abhorrent to all but the most hardened libertarian. Will consumers turn away from the pleasures, and entrepreneurs from the profits, afforded by pornography? Will today's 'Captains of Industry' refrain, for example, from discharging toxic elements into the atmosphere or blighting areas of natural beauty? Will capitalists take the high road of industrial regeneration and new product development, or the low road of mergers and asset-stripping?

The idea that the promptings of individual self interest will tend towards the interests of society as a whole was never very plausible. It is even less so in the moral circumstances of our time, when greater freedom and a greater sense of individual responsibility cannot be assumed automatically to go hand in hand. To which the conservative might reply that the law can take care of such abuses of individual freedom as occur. Up to a point, that is true, but the law alone cannot be expected to maintain moral order. A society which has grown drunk on a spirit of nihilism will not easily be sobered by the statute book. Solzhenitsyn, in his Harvard address, saw the

fact that modern Western societies are extremely legalistic as a mark of their moral decadence. Having cast off the shackles of custom, community, church and family, we expect the legal system to bear the whole weight of what is left of our moral tradition. We feel we can operate to the limits of the law, since outside those limits there is little to restrain our impulses.

Such qualms will no doubt seem strange indeed to those libertarians who regard Mrs Thatcher's economic counter-revolution as completely in harmony with the individualism of our area. Liberal economists cannot normally abide talk of 'social responsibility'; for them it is a Trojan Horse which has no business in the capitalist citadel, and which has been smuggled in there by the enemies of freedom. This is to damn the term with guilt by association. But the contemporary association of 'social responsibility' with the bureaucratic state is contingent, it arises only because subsidiary institutions neglect to perform the duties proper to them, so generating the illusion that these duties can and will be performed by the state.

That all institutions, from the family up, have a social and moral bearing, even when they have primarily economic ends in view, is a truth Mrs Thatcher appears to recognise. The confidential Cabinet papers, which were leaked to *The Guardian* in February, reveal an old-fashioned concern among the Prime Minister's advisers for a mode of freedom that is compatible with virtue. The so-called Family Policy Group and its attendant committees are frankly moralistic in many of their recommendations: evidently not all expressions of individual freedom are to be treated as of equal value. Mr Ferdinand Mount, who now heads up the No. 10 Home Policy Unit, looks forward to a 'renewal of Society's Values' and to ensuring that 'all the Government's domestic policies help to promote self-respect and a sense of individual responsibility'.

Implicit in the Group's thinking is a rejection of the welfare economist's identification of liberty with freedom from material want. But neither does one detect any obvious enthusiasm for what Sir Isaiah Berlin has called 'negative liberty': that is, liberty defined simply as the absence of coercion. Such liberty does not sit comfortably with the positive suggestion to 'identify characteristics of behaviour and attitude which government might legitimately hope to see adults possess or, conversely, avoid . . .' And one senses that the Group's support for education vouchers is motivated by the belief not only that, it is good for parents to be allowed a greater choice of schools, but also that parents are generally the best judges of what is good for their children. Not that there is any suggestion that the state should be neutral with regard to the ends of education. On the contrary, behind the proposal to encourage schools with a 'clear moral base' lies the conservative's traditional solicitude for inherited moral values, and his determination to preserve them against the rust of time. Conservative freedom does not entail 'liberating' children from their national and religious heritage.

Neither, it seems, does it entail 'liberating' women from the home. The idea mooted by the Group that mothers

should be encouraged not to go out to work must be anathema to those who view domesticity as the single greatest threat to female self-fulfilment. This idea, coupled with the proposal that families should be more involved in the care of their elderly and dependent relatives, signals a return to an understanding of the family as the primary society: a unit which is at once interpersonal and intergenerational. Such a unit does not lend itself to the liberal theory that all forms of human society can be subsumed under the idea of contract.

Finally, if the Group has its way, Conservative rhetoric about 'private ownership' might soon be given more substance. During the Keynesian era Conservative politicians lauded the market largely as an efficient promoter of economic growth, instead of seeing it as a means of acquiring that modest ownership which makes men virtuous and free. Now there are signs that Mrs Thatcher's Government will make genuine efforts to diffuse capital more widely among people, by encouraging small firms, profit-sharing schemes and industrial co-partnership.

By now, it should be clear that Mrs Thatcher's idea of the free society is of a good society. She evinces little taste for the individualism of our age and the freedom from social bonds which it has implied. She has set herself the

task in her second term of creating institutional arrangements and a moral climate in which people will be encouraged to consult their higher natures and not merely their sensual tastes. Conservatives cannot shirk this task, because otherwise they may find they have created a freer society in moral circumstances which make it intolerable. A free market set in a matrix of libertinism and envy would be a dissolvent of all that conservatives hold dear: not a training ground for self-reliant characters, but a playground for the self-indulgent spirits unleashed by the genie of psychotherapy.

It may turn out to be Mrs Thatcher's greatest strength that, for all the attention she devotes to economic policy, she recognises with Burke that the nation is something more than 'a partnership agreement in a trade . . . to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties'. It is possible that the British people have now found a leader who is prepared to define, in public utterances and policies, the qualities of character which make this nation something more than a business partnership. This would be a more elevated role for Mrs Thatcher than the economists and calculators among her supporters have assigned to her, but it is one which, as her handling of the Falklands campaign demonstrated, she seems admirably suited to perform.

Capital Taxation and the Destruction of Capitalism

Barry Bracewell-Milnes

When Sir William Harcourt said 'we are all socialists now' and introduced estate duty in 1894, the new tax was strenuously opposed by the Conservatives. After an interval of eighty-nine years, during which the Conservatives have been in power most of the time, the tax on bequests to children or grandchildren rises to 75%, which is the highest top rate in Europe and over two and a half times as high as the average top rate in sixteen other West European countries.

This article discusses the effect of capital taxes on the economy and society and the reasons why the Conservative Party has connived in their extension and intensification for nearly a century. It argues that their abolition ought to appeal to both the traditionalist and classical liberal wings of the Party.

The Capital Taxes

The taxes on capital are as follows, with yields in 1982-83 as forecast at the beginning of the fiscal year and the percentage of total tax revenue represented by each tax.

	£m	
(1) Capital transfer tax	465	(.61%)
(2) Capital gains tax (on individuals and trustees)	600	(.79%)
	1,065	(1.40%)
(3) Investment income surcharge	240	(.31%)
	1,305	(1.71%)
(4) Development land tax	40	(.05%)
(5) Stamp duties	810	(1.06%)
	2,155	(2.82%)

The rise in total tax revenue has recently been over £7 billion or about 10 per cent each year. The yield of taxes on capital is thus between a quarter and a third of the annual *increase* in tax revenue: in other words, these taxes could be abolished *for ever* if the *increase* in government spending (and thus in the tax revenue required to support it) were reduced by between a quarter and a third in any *single* year (and by proportionately less if the reduction of the rise in government spending were spread over two

years or more). Thus, although tax revenue of over £2 billion is important in the Budgetary calculations for any one year, the cost of the abolition of these taxes could easily be borne over a short period by a more effective control over the growth of government spending. If these taxes are allowed to remain a permanent part of the tax system, therefore, the reasons can have little or nothing to do with Budgetary necessity and must be sought elsewhere. Moreover, the reasons differ from tax to tax.

Stamp duties are levied on house purchase and a number of other financial transactions. The low minimal rates of duty are deceptive since the duties are levied on the capital value and represent a much larger proportion of the annual income from the asset; they are thus a serious obstacle to the movement of labour and capital to the most profitable employments. However, it is arguable whether, or by how much, they are worse than income tax, national insurance contributions and other imposts which do similar damage by distorting economic decisions. The case for abolishing stamp duties is not dramatically different from the case for reducing income tax at equivalent revenue cost.

Development land tax is quite another matter. The annual yield of £40 million is about the sum involved in a single major development; so I leave to the imagination the cost imposed on the economy by the need for developers so to tailor their developments as to avoid this penal charge. Development land tax is not intended to raise revenue or to serve any economic purpose. Its purpose is to protect governments from the consequences of their own financial mismanagement. The great Heath-Barber inflation of the early nineteen-seventies enabled property developers to make large temporary profits (many of which subsequently turned into large permanent losses). Property developers were made a principal scapegoat for the inflation of those years, although the real culprit was the government's own monetary incontinence. The development land tax was ostensibly introduced to give the government a major share in substantial gains from property development; it has been kept on the statute book as a means of protecting governments from political criticism, even though the only gains from property development that are exposed to political attack are those resulting from acts of government. The cost imposed by this tax in the distortion and frustration of development probably runs to hundreds of millions of pounds a year; but the damage is concentrated in a particular sector, and it is not central to the theme of this article.

I wish to consider the other three taxes – capital transfer tax, capital gains tax and the investment income surcharge (which last is a tax on capital in substance, even though not in form, because it is an additional tax on income from capital). These three taxes are sometimes called the political taxes, because they are levied, not for fiscal or economic purposes, but with the political aim of attacking the ownership of wealth by individuals. In this sense the three taxes bear a strong resemblance to each other and stand in contrast to development land tax and stamp duties, which serve other purposes.

I have analysed the three political taxes and their inter-relationships elsewhere.¹ The present article discusses the three political taxes in general. At the time of writing (just before the Budget), the investment surcharge looks the most vulnerable of the three to reform or even abolition; capital transfer tax and capital gains tax are both likely to survive, for some years at least, in one form or another.

The Effect on the Economy

The three political taxes are levied on saving but not on spending; and on saving in private hands, but not on saving in the hands of the government or its creatures. Capital transfer tax and the investment income surcharge are levied on saving in the hands of individuals and trustees but not on saving in the hands of corporate bodies such as financial institutions.

The effect of the political taxes is thus to shift resources from saving to spending, from the private sector to the government, and from personal owners to impersonal corporate bodies. I analysed the economic effect of this shift of resources in a recent book,² wherein it was shown that the damage is done not only through a loss of income resulting from a shift from more to less efficient activities, but also through a loss of the economic value obtainable from the institution of personal ownership as such. Because it is not an element of the national income, wealth created by personal ownership is in fact generally neglected. In *Land and Heritage: The Public Interest in Personal Ownership*³ I applied the general argument for the value of personal ownership to land, and to other assets which are worth more to a particular personal owner than they would be worth in any other hands and which thereby acquire 'surplus value'. The empirical evidence for the argument that a tax-induced shift of assets from personal owners to impersonal corporations is inefficient and wasteful is notably strengthened by a book due for publication this year:⁴ the authors have found that, over the period of their research (1966–79), the unquoted sector performed better than the quoted sector by most if not all of the criteria used. And I need not argue here for the wastefulness of taxing assets out of private hands and into the hands of the government, since the inefficient use of resources by government-sector businesses has been at the heart of Britain's economic problems for nearly forty years.

The Political Consequences

The political consequences of capital taxation range from the economic consequences, in the broad sense of 'political economy', to purely party-political considerations.

In the broadest sense, the damage done by capital taxes in general and capital transfer tax in particular is disproportionate to their derisory yield to the revenue. Before the introduction of estate duty, the typical businessman was an entrepreneur seeking to maximise his

income and wealth. Such businessmen still exist, but they are a beleaguered minority: the destruction of capitalism is neither complete nor irreversible, but it is far advanced. If the profile of today's typical businessman is drawn up, not from a headcount (where small businessmen inevitably predominate) but by the criterion of assets controlled, his main financial concerns in his personal capacity are his salary, his pension and the mortgage on his house. He has more in common with a British civil servant or a Soviet factory manager than with an entrepreneur in any serious sense of that term. It is not surprising, therefore, that business opinion is currently dominated by the corporatist mentality.

At the general and party-political level, the Conservative Party has for nearly a century presided over the destruction of the firms that both served the community best and also constituted the Party's most loyal supporters. Many or most people prefer to deal with a local concern, whether as customers, suppliers or employees, rather than with a larger firm based elsewhere, if they can obtain equivalent or comparable terms; and it is just this equivalence which capital transfer tax and the other taxes on capital make impossible. Socially, local firms make a real contribution to the life of the community because the owner-managers live there and are involved not only financially but also personally; the contribution of London-based and international concerns, though welcome, is exclusively financial. As for industrial relations, smaller firms have consistently and understandably a much better record than larger concerns. Politically, local firms have been bastions of Conservatism, since both the owner-managers and their employees have identified themselves with the market economy and with the private ownership of capital.

None of this seems to have carried much weight with the Conservative Party, which for nearly a century has offered little effective resistance to the gradual annihilation of its most loyal supporters by capital taxes. The Conservative Party has acquiesced in a fiscal process by which its natural constituency of owner-managers, and a workforce identifying with them, has been replaced by a

class of salaried managers, who tend rather to identify with their own employees.

Manchester versus Salisbury?

Why has this been so? Support for capital transfer tax, in particular, has been based neither on principle nor on conviction. Present Treasury Ministers argue for the tax on the grounds that some form of tax on death has been levied for centuries and that the Labour Party would make a fuss if it were abolished. Praise could hardly be fainter than that.

Part of the answer is that each of the two main elements of which the Conservative Party is composed has underrated the strength and importance of the case against a tax on death and the other taxes on capital. The Whig or 'Manchester' wing of classical liberals has tended to base its principles on the individual rather than the family, thereby implying that a tax on the individual's corpse is less harmful or more justifiable than a tax on his living body. The Tory or 'Salisbury' wing has been unimpressed by the damage done to the market economy by taxes on capital because it is indifferent or hostile to classical liberalism, and it has not argued from principle against the damage done to the family and the continuity of society because it does not generally feel comfortable when arguing from principle at all.

The present article has discussed the damage done by capital taxes in general and capital transfer tax in particular to the British economy, British society and the interests of the Conservative Party. I have argued elsewhere that capital taxes are counterproductive even by the criterion of the egalitarian purposes they are intended to serve.⁵ The abolition of capital taxes, especially capital transfer tax, ought to appeal equally to both wings of the Party, since the attack on ownership which these taxes constitute is an attack both on the market economy and on continuity and tradition. The benefits obtainable from the abolition of these taxes have been neglected for too long; they should now be realised.

Notes

1. *Is Capital Taxation Fair? The Tradition and the Truth*, Institute of Directors, London, 1974; *A Tax for the Axe: The Case for Abolishing Tax on Capital Transfers*, CUT, The Taxpayers' Union, London, 1980.
2. *The Taxation of Industry: Fiscal Barriers to the Creation of Wealth*, Panopticum Press, Upminster, through The Alternative Bookshop, Covent Garden, 1982.
3. Hobart Paper 93, The Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1982.
4. D. J. Morris and D. A. Hay: *Study of the Private Sector in the UK*, to be published by Macmillan in 1983.
5. *Redistribution in Reverse: More Equal Shares of Wealth Mean Less Equal Shares of Spending*, Aims of Industry, London, 1974; *The Meade Report and the Taxation of Capital*, British Tax Review 1/1979; *The Poor Pay Most: The Paradox of 'Progressive' Taxation*, Bow Group, London, June 1979; *Lifetime Cumulation of Transfers*, British Tax Review 6/1979; *The Taxation of Industry*, especially Appendix III: *The 'Regressiveness' of Taxes on Saving*.

EDITORIAL: Powell and the Alliance

In his article, 'Britain and the Alliance', printed in this issue, Enoch Powell sets out to question certain assumptions upon which our relations with the United States have hitherto been based. His arguments are vivid, imaginative, and, in the present climate of opinion, calculated to resound in the minds of many who would not otherwise question the basis of our foreign policy. If accepted they would surely have momentous consequences: for Britain, for Europe, for the world. We believe, however, that they ought not to be accepted, and not only because of consequences would be disastrous.

Powell invites us to understand American foreign policy in terms of a dream and a nightmare: the one involving a naive and uncritical sense of mission, the other an exaggerated sense of threat. Few would deny, of course, that both these impulses exist, or that they play a part in determining the temper of American politics. But to imply that they are the primary foundation, not only of American foreign policy, but also of the alliance which includes us, is surely to ignore the real conditions of modern politics. It is to invite us to believe either that the Soviet Union has only acceptable designs on Western Europe, or that it could be controlled without the aid of our alliance. Neither of those propositions is true.

Many who believe in the benign intentions of the Soviet Union are guided by that broad historical perspective which plays such a creative part in Powell's thinking. They argue that the Soviet Union should be seen primarily as the heir to imperial Russia, and that the Bolshevik Revolution, while it changed the rhetoric of Russian policy, did not change its content. On this view we ought to see the division in Europe as the natural boundary of historically determined 'spheres of influence' which, in expanding so far, have created the conditions for peaceful coexistence. Powell may himself believe something like this; it seems to be implied, for example, in his idea that the Middle East 'will settle down along lines of force which cannot be predicted *a priori*'.

But surely matters are not so simple. One does not have to be motivated by anti-Soviet hysteria to doubt that the Russian 'sphere of influence' could expire through natural exhaustion, so as to settle peaceably along 'lines of force'. Is the Berlin Wall such a 'line of force'? As the example suggests, we should not really speak of a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe but rather of a sphere of control. Influence and control are both forms of power. Indeed, they shade into each other, and a power which tries to influence things may end up – as the Americans in Vietnam – trying to control them. But the American power over us remains one of influence, whereas the Soviet power over Eastern Europe is one of control. And the difference is enormous. Surely, then, it is possible to

predict how the Middle East would settle if the Americans ceased to exert their influence, just as it was possible to predict what would happen to Afghanistan, once the Americans lost their influence in Persia. The prediction may be *a posteriori*, but it is all the more believable for that.

For what is left out of consideration by the 'broad historical perspective' is not the ideology of communism – which indeed, taken by itself, is of no significance – but the structural transformation which communism inspired. The domestic aspect of this transformation is described in these pages by Václav Racek; but it has an international aspect as well. The paranoid suspicion with which communist government fills the capillaries of civil life is extended far beyond its borders, into infinite space. No individual member of the ruling elite, and perhaps no member of the public, is disposed to believe in the 'imperialist threat'. Nevertheless an aggressive foreign policy has become a structural requirement. For the system lacks those institutions – representative government, judicial independence, freedom of association and expression – which permit the emergence of a 'loyal opposition'. It therefore feels threatened by every voice raised against it, whether from inside or from outside its territories. In consequence every voice of dissent is regarded as potentially treasonable, and the apparatus of public opinion is abolished. How this came about is by no means easy to explain. But that it is so is surely beyond question. And in such circumstances it is inevitable that the organs of government should endeavour to suppress opposition, not only within the designated territories, but also beyond them. The need to do this in no way depends upon the extent to which the official ideology is believed; it has long been accepted that belief is irrelevant. Belief has been displayed by litany. Each citizen is constantly called upon to rehearse his loyalty in empty phrases. Should he by any slip of the tongue, reveal the disaffection that underlies his superficial calm, he at once becomes an enemy of the people. Such a condition cannot exist merely in the domestic life of a political order: inevitably its effect will extend into the furthest reaches of foreign policy.

A parliamentarian like Powell must be the first to appreciate that a society without representative institutions, which has grown upon a foundation of dogmatic hostility to disagreement, lacks an essential component of political equilibrium. It is in a continual state of crisis, and will feel threatened by every dissenting voice over which it cannot assert its coercion. Whatever we may feel about the naivety and self-deception of the American dream, at least we can treat it as a moral failing, and not as the sign of incurable mental disease. In allying ourselves with America, we do not simply turn to one presumptuous bully, so as to escape the embraces of

another. We turn, rather, to a culpable sentimentalist, who alone has the power to save us from a maniac. Can there be any doubt about the choice?

Many argue that Soviet control would be no terrible thing, that it would amount only to Finlandisation, and enforced neutrality. But such an argument is extremely unrealistic. It is impossible for a whole continent of active and independently-minded nations to be controlled as Finland is controlled. The civil life of Western Europe is directed, for better or for worse, towards free economic activity, free expression of opinion, free development of institutions. For communism to continue to exercise the necessary control over its subjects, these features of Western society must be either concealed from those in the East who envy them, or else removed from the West. The first solution has been hitherto forced upon the Communist Party, at enormous cost to its credibility and with a noticeable heightening of its paranoia. How can we expect this first solution to continue to be adopted, when the conditions which require it have been removed? Surely the second solution is far simpler, and once adopted, need never be renewed.

It has been suggested that our position may nevertheless be secure outside NATO. The example of France is sometimes given, as showing the possibilities available to a power which refuses large-scales alliances. But again the argument is unrealistic. French foreign policy is predicated on the Western alliance. Without the umbrella provided by NATO it is inconceivable that France should engage in those gestures of defiance towards the Soviet Union which seem so heartening, but which are in fact to be compared to the gesture of a child who, clinging to his father's coat-tails, impertinently sticks out his tongue. We cannot be content, in so important a matter, to exchange certainty for possibility. To give up security for the precarious isolation which Powell favours would be culpable lack of foresight.

It is important again to contrast the situation within the major power blocs. NATO is, for better or worse, a voluntary association of nations, held together by mutual influence and common interests. The Warsaw Pact is no such thing. It is held together by coercion, and in the interests of a single party. It has, in recent history, invaded the territory of one of its members; and, where it can exert its control, the price for raising one's voice against it is imprisonment or death. The Falklands War, which according to Mr Powell revealed so much to us, revealed also this: that we can act with unimpaired sovereignty, outside the alliance, and against the interests of our friendly superpower. Should we not value that sovereignty? Is it not, in fact, all important, and the real essence of our international position?

Powell's remarks stem from a serious and passionately held belief that, in the last analysis, it is the nation which provides both the premise and the conclusion of coherent politics – of political action which is open and scrutable to those affected by it. The nation is the sole repository of the values which confer legitimacy on government. On this view, the attempt to see politics in terms of ends that transcend those national boundaries and 'lines of force' which history has determined, is a dangerous fantasy – a turning away from what is immediate and cogent, towards what is unknowable and even unintelligible. Many conservatives feel drawn to such an outlook. And from the narrowing perspective of the left, conservatism often seems to be nothing more than a concentrated nationalism, which sets up the nation as a mystical and not-to-be-examined ideal, thereby justifying conservative politics on the basis of the historical accidents which engendered it. But, whatever the effect of the national ideal in nineteenth-century European thinking, it is not one that can now be embraced with the fervour of earlier generations. The conditions which generated the nation state no longer exist in uncorrupted form. Each nation is held in a web of international influence, and holds its independence as a precious accomplishment, on terms that must be constantly renegotiated. The hope for a purely national politics is forlorn and self-defeating. We must all value the idea of the nation, as the most immediate and intelligible description of that concentration of political purpose without which no society can endure. But the realities of modern politics forbid the simple nationalism which seeks to live by that one idea alone. The present climate requires an internationalist perspective; we must therefore look for the principles which will guide us in our dealings with the world.

In this area – where the local is balanced against the general, and particular values against their universal shadows – it is hard to avoid the most damaging confusions. We can do no more than point towards those principles upon which our international thinking should be founded. But let us be clear about one thing, which is that a nation is something more than the people who compose it, or the customs and interests which unite them. It is also a set of institutions – legal, constitutional, religious and educational. It is wise therefore to ally ourselves – since ally ourselves we must – with those nations who share, in whatever variegated form, the institutions which temper our politics. In which case the United States – with a system of government bequeathed to it by the English common law – must be our most natural partner in the difficult business of survival.

BOOK REVIEWS

CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATES

Ian Crowther

Prejudices. A Philosophical Dictionary. Robert Nisbet. (Harvard University Press £14.00)

Ever since Feuerbach unmasked God, revealing Him to be ourselves in our better moments, most social critics have set out to be debunkers and demythologisers. They have taken the view that appearances are always deceptive and that the truth lies buried beneath them, to be mined at whatever cost to the existing mental landscape. This of course is a revolutionary project which breeds suspicion and cynicism: suspicion of ordinary human motives and cynicism about the inherited hierarchy of human purposes. We are told that the highest ends of mature, civilised man merely serve to conceal his lowest and most primitive urges.

Conservatives, whose historical vocation is to conserve civilised values, are peculiarly vulnerable to the 'hermeneutics of suspicion.' In so far as they seek to uphold custom and convention, they are stigmatised as selfish defenders either of economic privilege (old left) or psychic repression (new left). Against this reductionist assault upon their beliefs, conservatives who wish to stand their ground really only have one recourse: to what Paul Ricoeur has called a 'restorative hermeneutics'. A society's manners and myths and rituals are not lightly to be explained away, but to be regarded with due reverence as the means of expressing man's permanent needs.

Robert Nisbet's 'philosophical dictionary' is a restorative work, in that it re-introduces into polite company words and concepts which radicals had sought to ostracise on the grounds that they were *Prejudices*. Nisbet, in conscious imitation of Burke, approaches a prejudice as one might a ceremony hallowed by long usage, with the intention of bringing to light its 'latent wisdom'. His dictionary is an exercise in respect for the 'givens' of life and society.

Respect, and also affection, have always been apparent in Nisbet's attitude towards that 'assemblage of historically evolved authorities which make up the social order.' But in the mind of the eighteenth-century *philosophe*, every kind of social authority was contrary to nature and reason: 'the authority of the traditional patriarchal family, the guild, the aristocracy, the ancient commune, above all the church in its many divisions and parts.' More than once Nisbet lists these institutions of the *ancien régime*, conjuring up for the reader the strong local loyalties and sense of place which were inherent in feudal society. Indeed under 'Feudalism' Nisbet writes feelingly of feudalism's virtues. He even speculates on its possible resurgence in a period when manifestly government is failing in many of its primary duties.

The revolutionary attack upon the constitution of

reality, which commenced in rationalism, has culminated in psychologism. Commonly now in our culture we find people who, having renounced what is objectively given, retreat into a psychic subjectivism. Under 'Psychobabble' Nisbet exposes the logic of this culture of the self. 'If the truest experience is direct experience of self, unmediated, untrammelled by use of the conscious rational mind, then it follows that there is much to learn from those in asylums whose renunciation of the external world is almost total.' From a subjectivist standpoint, there is certainly very little to be learnt from observation of 'the external world, its history, its geography and place in the universe,' for these facts stubbornly refuse to be affected by our feelings.

Nisbet is no admirer of Shakespeare's 'unaccommodated man', who lives for himself alone, without external ties or loyalties. This lonely being is the end-product of a process of social pulverisation which, Nisbet contends, has been chiefly the work of the modern centralising state. Another name for modern man's estranged condition is 'Anomie', an essay subject also covered in this book. Once upon a time, Nisbet tells us, 'every individual and people possessed a *nomos*, an identifying corpus of custom and convention. Anyone separated from his *nomos* was to be pitied and also feared, as the 'lawless' or 'masterless' person was pitied and feared in the Middle Ages.' The affliction of anomie is widespread in the twentieth century, not least among those who have been disoriented by their often involuntary exile from familiar religious and social contexts. But to Nisbet 'the most pernicious form of anomie is that which expresses itself in the philosophy of the goodness of natural man and the tyrannical effect of all disciplines, coercion, and institutions.'

The anomic individual is likely to exhibit a pathological craving for community, and the type of community will invariably matter less than the escape from the void which it offers. One of Nisbet's earliest books, published in 1953, was entitled *The Quest For Community*, and its central thesis has been an ever present motif in Nisbet's writings. It is summed up in *Prejudices*, naturally enough under 'Community':

'Because state power has enfeebled, even killed community in the historic sense of the word, there is no place for those seeking community to go . . . but the often bizarre communes, or to the numberless cults . . . which promise relief for their members' craving.'

After 'Community' comes 'Conservatism', whose elusive character defies easy definition. Nisbet, however, has no doubt that its essence consists of an attachment to all those social ties which prevent society from becoming 'a rabble of disconnected atoms.' But Nisbet admits that there is a 'fragility' about his kind of conservatism. The 'liberal provider state' has swallowed up the natural social order and Nisbet finds it difficult to imagine how its 'sheer mass' might be reduced. There is consequently, in the best of the essays in *Prejudices*, an elegiac note, arising perhaps

from a sense of what is irrecoverable in our past. There is also an assurance of style which is the mark of a mind at once civilised and at rest with its conclusions. That may signify prejudice to the liberal, but to this reviewer it is evidence of a mind which has reflected to some good purpose.

BRAVE NEW WORD

Eric Griffiths

The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse ed. Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion. (Penguin £1.95)

Poets should not write Last Lines to their poems. The belief that a Good Last Line can redeem a slack poem, a belief much in evidence in this anthology, is, though pious, imprudent. People are not always saved between the stirrup and the ground. A danger of the belief for the poet is that the earlier sections of his poem may come to look to a canny reader as intrinsically threadbare and purely lubricative as the manoeuvres of a beau plying a lady with dinner and trinkets to get her into bed; everything serves only some imagined climax which, if the girl is smart, or the reader seasoned, won't arrive. There are several types of Last Line favoured in this collection: the Domestically Portentous (or Casual-Emblematic) – 'to fill/that gap between the Sunday papers and lunch' from Fleur Adcock is a good instance, the 'gap' is so small, meant to be abysmal, but it is a chasm at which I yawn; the Epiphanic – 'Her feathers full of water and her neck/ Under the water like a bar of light' (Michael Longley); this may shade into the Achieved Metaphor, where the poet struggles home at last into the triumphantly figurative, as when Penelope Shuttle, whose initials warningly reverse those of Sylvia Plath, clinches 'First Foetal Movements of My Daughter' with 'Leapfrogger,/ her olympics in the womb's stadium'; the Offkey Humble – 'Looking forward to a visit from the cat' (Douglas Dunn), the difficulty with this one being to stop it arrogating (to itself) a pathos of the dowdy. The poets in this anthology are mostly very self-conscious according to its editors, so it shouldn't be thought that my arch capitals are sarcastic. They merely testify to the fact that I know that they know that I know that they know.

Like anybody fraught with self-consciousness, these poets naturally sometimes yearn for a grand completeness of instinct to shear through the coils of scruple and quandary. This is why Craig Raine is fond of doing things 'without thinking' in his poems (the phrase appears twice in the dozen poems offered to our curiosity here). Raine, along with Christopher Reid, is regarded as a member of the 'Martian School' of new poetry; one thing we may be grateful to this school for is its demonstration that there is no intelligent life on another planet. Raine in particular has been striving for years now to bring calculated silliness to a perfect acme of stupidity, in imitation, perhaps, of Flaubert's noble ambition to write in *Bouvard et Pécuchet* a book so stupid that it would seem to have been composed by an imbecile. But then Flaubert was genius enough to take on cretinism, while Raine is overstretching himself in the endeavour. His poetry works by

stringing together similes that are designed to catch and astound the eye by their intellectual and perceptual agility, such as 'The new crocuses come up, like used Q-tips/yellow with intimacies' or 'The lamp is a heron, it angles/over me as I write'. Actually, I made up these instances myself, thinking it better not to promote Raine's brilliances by quotation. The trick is very easy to do; once you emancipate simile and metaphor from any obligation to nourish understanding of their resembling terms, to suggest and inspect a community, real or imaginative, through the detected resemblance, you easily produce '*des forêts de symboles*' but you will not be able to see the wood for the trees, and you will certainly not find correspondences '*qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens*' as Baudelaire's did. Poets interest themselves in resemblance because a resemblance can be made to make a discovery about the world, or of a world, but Raine's poetry aspires rather to the condition of pop-corn, oily, inflated, to be consumed while your attention is really altogether elsewhere; he debases the conceit to an advertising jingle, and he is himself the product he vends, cosily dissatisfied, sweetly bemused in face of a domesticated world he doesn't care enough to contemplate. He is to the imagination what Edward de Bono is to intelligence. Christopher Reid's work makes clear that these poets are not the Martian but the Mercian school. By which I mean that, as is perfectly proper, they are indebted to the great English poet of the last twenty-five years, Geoffrey Hill, and to his 1971 book, *Mercian Hymns*. It's necessary to point this out as the editors of the anthology, quite improperly, nowhere mention Hill. Yet *Mercian Hymns*, with a refinement of purpose beyond the poets here vaunted, achieved a language for the bizarrerie of our homes nearly a decade before Raine and Reid burst upon the literary scene. Of course, Hill isn't 'dazzling' in the way these poets hope to be, but something better: luminous. Anybody who wants to get the measure of a poet like Reid should put his 'Pea Soup' against the nineteenth Mercian hymn; the lineaments of the epigone are soon discerned.

It's an odd ritual of our literary scene this century that every twenty years somebody produces an anthology to proclaim that 'now, after a spell of lethargy, British poetry is once again undergoing a transition' (Motion and Morrison) – somewhat of a bathos that word, 'transition', the reader might have hoped that British poetry was undergoing something more, a 'renaissance' or major surgery. The ritual may have the sort of point a stockbroker's weekly game of squash can be imagined to have: a demonstrative bout of activity undertaken to assure oneself that the tissues haven't yet degenerated. Medical reports suggest that these weekly ferocities are not good for stockbrokers, and reading anthologies with epochal pretensions isn't heartening either. A clutch of minor, mostly very minor, poets such as this breathes a thickly period atmosphere, and the critic is tempted to a sociological purchase on what has failed to please. Most of these writers were in their twenties in the Sixties; thus, they encountered the chill of adult responsibilities just as the technological confidences of the Sixties began to tremble. They arrived in a world where the necessity of being 'wise to' things amply precluded being wise about anything; both their illusions and their disillusion – disillusion about the world, illusions about themselves – were so entirely and only 'stylish' that they could not foster a style. Hence, they are idolaters of cultural dismay; what they desire is disaster, round every corner, each

line-end; the major hunger is for a catastrophe that will remain politely always just imminent, as if the sword of Damocles were something every well-appointed sitting-room should sport. Consider what Tom Paulin, one of the more decent poets in the book, does with William Empson's elegantly-provoked 'This Last Pain'.

Empson:

. . . build an edifice of form
For house where phantoms may keep warm.

Imagine, then, by miracle with me,
(Ambiguous gifts, as what gods give must be)
What could not possibly be there,
And learn a style from a despair.

Paulin:

In your absence I climbed to a square room
where there were dried flowers, folders of sonnets
and crossword puzzles; call them musical

snuffboxes or mannered anachronisms,
they were all too uselessly intricate,
caskets of the dead spirit. Their bitter
constraints and formal pleasures were a style
of being perfect in despair; they spoke

with the vicious trapped crying of a wren.

Empson drily tests out the formalities he inhabits and hollows; something is learned from despair and about style. Paulin merely strings along his thoughts in padded lines of upholstered lifelessness; like many poets in this book, he cannot construct a poem but has to come at one by accretion. The list of items in the second to fourth lines I quote has neither undertow nor prospectiveness of view; the poem remains a thin series of things mentioned, fails to grow into a weave of considerations reciprocally adjusted and pointed. The words do not think, they tag along after a prefabricated attitude. These 'dried flowers' etc. count only as stage-properties emblematic of a riddling culture, against which is set the (rhythmically incompetent) voice of true anguish – 'the anguished' = 'the true' for many of these poets; they may have no faith but they have the superstitions of their times – the authenticity of the animal kingdom, the only kingdom worth pretending to, it seems.

As for Messrs Motion and Morrison, the comic duo who compere this shambling vaudeville, they also provide the literary sociologist with a rich exemplum, of the sad failings of our university English departments. They write with the bright, groundless assurance of an undergraduate who is acquiring the delight of a terminology to make literature plane. Identifying themselves as 'close observers' of the new British poetry, they find all about them 'greater imaginative freedom and linguistic daring' than in the previous literary generation. A close observer, to judge from their performance, is someone who knows a few literary words like 'metonymy' or 'ludic', and this is a comforting idea because it means there must be very many close observers of British poetry. But how well do they know their own words? We are told that Heaney's 'bog people' are his 'objective correlative' (a reliable critical term, the authors evidently suppose) but we are not told what they are a correlative for. Many of the poets

anthologised are said to be 'drawing attention to the problem of perception' but the editors choose not to reveal what *the* problem of perception is. Obviously, everyone is expected to know what the problem is, so there is at least one thing the perception of which is unproblematic: the problem of perception. They seem not to realise that Dr Johnson's description of Metaphysical poetry as 'heterogeneous ideas . . . yoked by violence together' was intended as a condemnation of pedantic wilfulness, but the phrase probably matters to them less for its critical sanity than as a recognisably celebrated remark which will confer on us literate bearings we have been at few pains to acquire, a culture not so much common as shopworn. This is how they begin their 'Introduction':

There are points in literary history when decisive shifts of sensibility occur. New, usually aggressive notes are struck; conventions are challenged or broken or simply exposed as being conventions; innovations of form accompany the broaching of unfamiliar subject matter. For a time young poets of very different backgrounds and temperaments may feel themselves, or be felt by critics, to be working along similar lines.

This may have cleared their throats but it clouds the issues: do shifts of sensibility, decisive or not, occur at 'points'? is the relation between formal innovation and new subject matter one of discreet accompaniment? do the poets who set off these mild cataclysms have to be young, or of 'very different backgrounds and temperaments'? Is there always more than one of them? and so on – there is scarcely a phrase here which isn't either anodyne or contentious or both. As I often tell my pupils, literary critics should not write Opening Sentences.

A HUMANIST PROPHET

Mark Le Fanu

The Critic as Anti-Philosopher F. R. Leavis (Chatto and Windus, £9.95)

Leavis died in 1978. The volume here represents a collection of papers that he was working on just prior to his death. Gathered together, they conclude a triptych of 'late Leavis' commenced by *The Living Principle* (1975), then continued by a companion volume of the following year – his second work on D. H. Lawrence – *Thought, Words and Creativity*. The essays here were mainly written in the early 1970s, but in order to balance the book out the present editor, Professor Singh, has included – judiciously enough, I think – a number of earlier papers. These include the fine sceptical essay on James Joyce and 'The Revolution of the Word' (1933); the Introduction (1957) to Morris Shapira's collection of Henry James criticism (perhaps, on second thoughts, a bit of a 'filler': the volume is fairly available); a couple of essays from *Scrutiny* in the 1930s on Arnold and Coleridge as critics; finally a pioneering 1940 essay from *The Southern Review*, on Hardy as poet. Of the more recent work, to which the interest of the volume will be found in the main to attach, half are late reconsiderations of major poets (Blake, Wordsworth,

Hopkins, Eliot, Montale) while the other half forms an extended meditation on social theory and philosophy, with a focus on the figure of Wittgenstein.

Leavis was a marvellous writer. Before anything else the pleasure this book provides is the pleasure of a scintillating prose. How pleasing to find this confirmed, when a more recognisable epithet condemns him so often as clumsy and obscure and pedantic. If Leavis is the weightiest and most serious of critics, he is also – there is no paradox intended – the wittiest and most elegant. The wiry muscular urbanity of his prose inevitably puts one in mind of the later Henry James, yet without James's corresponding prolixity. And with James, in general, the comparison stands ready to be extended. It used to amaze me, knowing what one did about Leavis's background – his petit-bourgeois Cambridge upbringing, his fierce puritanism, his lifelong dislike of metropolitan cliques – that the American novelist could have been so genially 'appreciated'. A novel like *The Awkward Age*, after all, is exceedingly decadent – as well as being exceedingly brilliant. Yet Leavis (in *The Great Tradition*) is at home to its sultriest nuance, unfoxed by its perverse immorality. I know artists are different from critics, but somehow it is tempting, *mutatis mutandis*, to apply to Leavis the verdict that in this volume (p. 151) is applied to Montale, hazarding that '... in a wholly unpejorative sense, Montale [or Leavis] ... is as truly *sophisticated* as a major artist can be.'

'Sophisticated' is a dangerous word, to be used with appropriate caution. Leavis's writing is that, but it is also surprisingly friendly. Nothing in his prose is abstract or ideological. No arguments are used in his writing, it would seem, that couldn't also be used in conversation. The lesson for other writers is this, that good expository prose ought to maintain conversation's temperature, otherwise it spins off into unproductive solipsism. Leavis's mode of address is occasionally repetitious, but the repetition itself is a strange courtesy: when matters are as habitually well stated as they are here, we are pleased to hear them stated again! For surely, it is a mistake of modern criticism to insist that the critic has got to be polymath. One of the sanest things about Leavis is the wryness of his intelligence as to what constitutes, in the educated mind, the extent of being well-read. We have only – any of us – a limited amount of time at our disposal, and it is better that our allegiances should be clear and particular, than strung-out and rapidly inclusive.

This brings up the question as to who, in Leavis's own case, were considered the recognised masters. Had he himself too exiguous a preference? The question may be answered in various ways. His published works on the one hand represent a reading of the history of English literature remarkable for its completeness and depth. Far more than many more polymathic scholars, Leavis's work covers the English centuries from the time of the Elizabethans to our own. Books like *Revaluation*, *The Great Tradition* and *The Common Pursuit* stand up as an alternative literary history to the literary history practised in days of old by writers like Saintsbury and Gosse. One cannot be expected – as these men miraculously managed – to have read every minor figure in the canon. But a critic can fairly be expected to have confronted and wrestled with, the figures of major importance. The professors who *really* succeed in doing this are few enough. Leavis's meditation on the dissociation of sensibility, on the Augustan Age, on the Romantics, on the 19th century, on the development

of the novel, constitutes, in this context, its own irrefutable record: it is work done, a solid, ungainsayable achievement.

However, there is a narrowness in Leavis that has to be confronted and thought about. One finds it most of all in his treatment of the twentieth century, which comes back again and again to rest on the contrasted figures of Eliot and Lawrence, as if the towering genius of these mighty and exemplary poets rendered redundant the exploration of all other writers of our time. I wonder whether Leavis succeeds in justifying his colossal admiration for these men. The difficulty, for me, is not so much with Lawrence (although Lawrence has plenty of enemies) as with Leavis's treatment and estimate of Eliot. The extended analysis of 'Four Quartets' in *The Living Principle* is one of the most sustained and bravura pieces of criticism one has ever come across: a classic of rigorous argument and disinterested noble intelligence. But I am afraid that, speaking personally, to emerge through it, is to be no more convinced that 'Four Quartets' actually represents great poetry, than before one sat down and began. There is a deepseated ambivalence to the exegesis that can be stated in the formulation, that his arguments seem to contradict his conclusions. For Leavis's conclusion is that 'Four Quartets', in fact, 'rescinds on' life. Yet the passionate detail with which he examines the individual passages implies the greater esteem – even towards those Eliotic formulations of human possibility (or failure of human possibility) that would fail, in Leavis's estimate, to add up to wisdom and truth. Leavis never manages to encounter the hostile argument: that the poem is impossibly obscure, that it is dull and cryptic and pompous, that it lacks altogether the playfulness of spirit – the poet's fine madness – which even in serious art (Shakespeare's for instance) is a non-negotiable aesthetic demand.

Criticism the institution, however, operates by addressing itself to serious issues. If Leavis has failed to tell us what he thought about many modern novelists and poets, it is, perhaps, for a valid and defensible reason: he is a critic and not a reviewer. At issue are subtly different pastimes. A critic's task, properly conceived, has to do with the permanent and serious relation of the past to the present; he is concerned with the classical and eternal and not with the diurnal and contemporary. The contrast between Lawrence and Eliot, it could be argued, was large enough and general enough – they represent sufficiently disparate (indeed opposite) focuses of literature's possibility – for Leavis to be able to extract from their comparison a philosophical discourse at the very highest level on the nature of literature and life. I do not know whether I quite believe this; but it is a defence that may plausibly be pondered.

At the centre of the present collection stands an invigorating essay on Wittgenstein. As Leavis grew older his writing (it had always been personal) became, for the first time, friendly to anecdote and reminiscence. Leavis's account of his first meeting with the Austrian philosopher, their subsequent walks over the flat Cambridge fenlands, their odd, out-of-term trips by punt, their encounters and midnight disagreements, is related here (to go back to my original comparison) with a wonderfully Jamesian amplitude: and with a Jamesian eye, too, to inherent possibilities of allegory that underly the banalest adventure. The essay possesses overall the rare rigour and delicacy which characterise Leavis's best writing. And the delicacy is here placed at the disposal of a

difficult question, as to the precise human meaning of Wittgenstein's 'genius'. That he *was* a genius, is Leavis's unshakeable conviction. But what exactly is genius? Is it a spiritual affliction? Unlike the Bloomsbury crowd whom he mixed with (and who Leavis, it is well known, disliked) Wittgenstein had no time at all for cultivating the art of 'politeness'. Yet how far rudeness itself *constitutes* genius, or how far, in Wittgenstein's case, rudeness is the name for a spiritual forthrightness, a going straight to the heart of things beyond the powers of ordinary mortals (the name, in fact, for a *delicacy*) it is the achievement of this essay – in its quiet reminiscential manner – to explore and negotiate profoundly.

Wittgenstein once advised Leavis to 'abandon literary criticism'. The relation between philosophy and literary criticism is the subject of a number of other fine essays in the book – in addition to providing the title of the volume. 'Anti-philosopher', in this formulation, stands towards 'philosopher', I think, as anti-matter stands towards matter – a formal, not a moral distinction. Yet maybe it is a bit 'moral'. The background to the quarrel is that Leavis had been accused of introducing to his students' attention, as relevant to the needs of undergraduate studies in literature, the works of philosophers (Marjorie Grene and Michael Polanyi, notably) not really 'considered' by the profession. The matter is extraordinarily difficult, and perhaps best expressed by saying that although it is hard to see how a student trained in English rather than philosophy could arrive, unaided, at any very relevant formulation or philosophical insight, the sense (the faith, the conviction) that there *is* a connection between philosophy and literature remains, for a literary critic, one of the profoundest conditions of his seriousness. The freedom or reserve which the literary critic retains in this delicate debate is that it isn't *necessarily* to 'other recognised philosophers' that he must first address himself in order to have cogent opinions about philosophy. Leavis's reply along these lines to Michael Tanner in the final essay printed in this volume is, in my opinion, an unsurpassed model of how these matters have to be approached, as well as being itself, in the rigour of its overall argument and the clarity of its distinctions, a masterpiece of philosophical prose.

The Critic as Anti-Philosopher, so 'sensible' and genial in its local and concrete observations, is finally, however, and unavoidably, the work of a prophet. A vein of apocalypse runs through Leavis's later writing, an urgency, a radicalism, a conviction that time is running out. The considered attachment of Leavis in this volume to unearthly, end-of-the-world writers like Blake and Lawrence is a timely reminder of how much he resists, in ordinary classification, being docketed with labels like 'liberal' or 'conservative'. At times this rises to a bitter contention indeed: 'The whole lot will have to go!' (Yet naturally: this is the voice of the reactionary as well as the revolutionist.) At other times, and more usually, it expresses itself as a ceaseless concern for the health and well-being and continued importance of the university – and especially of course, of the university department of English. The stress here for the purposes of 'maintaining standards' which he lays on the work of an active and well-constituted minority – an *avant-garde* – has laid him open since time immemorial to the charge of a difficult élitism. Yet on the other hand, the collaborative public nature of the university enterprise at Downing, when measured against the bounds of liberal individualism,

reveals itself, at the very least, as a serious attempt at a politics. What kind of a radical politics this is and how practically it can come near to changing things (what indeed it is, precisely and accurately, that it wishes to change) are questions that are never really answered by this book. The sceptic will be left puzzled as to how the nation's salvation may truly be forwarded through submission to even the austere university discipline; and may end up concluding that if it *is* salvation that is at issue, it would be as well to think of seeking it in more traditional and time-honoured places.

I mean by this last remark, I think, that I am personally in favour of individualism. The 'collaborative activity', as institutionalised in the university, is these days too ideological for comfort. Thus, separated from the individual essays in which alone his wit and his spirit reside, Leavis's 'ideas' have become processed by the public into the sort of instant reductive sociology which, taken to a last resort, pitches his memory and his life-work in an all-or-nothing battle against – structuralism! In this new mythology, either you are a 'structuralist' or a 'Leavisite'. Yet to me this is a dull way of thinking – better abandoned to the Agenda pages of *The Guardian*, and to the deliberations of semi-Marxist academics. Leavis's best work is addressed to the spirit. He is one of the few rare interpreters – and in my opinion one of the finest humanist writers of the century.

THE HISTORY OF ORDER

David Dale

Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History Eugene Webb. (University of Washington Press £16.00)

The Voegelinian Revolution Ellis Sandoz. (Louisiana State University Press £16.00)

Eric Voegelin's Thought: A Critical Appraisal ed. Ellis Sandoz. (Duke University Press £21.10)

Nowadays, when conformity to this or that ideological position seems to be a precondition for recognition in the human sciences, it is not surprising that Eric Voegelin remains a comparatively unknown figure. Voegelin defies easy categorisation despite the fact that his list of publications extends back over half a century. And if this presents difficulties to the potential reader, anxious to identify the author with a disciplinary label, it is entirely consistent with Voegelin's approach to the philosophy of politics and history. What he offers is the antithesis of those ideological approaches which purport to explain, or explain away, the mysteries of human existence in terms of some single factor. His is an enquiry in the classic, Platonic sense – a search for the truth of reality as it is experienced and articulated by the human beings who participate in its process. Such an inquiry transcends ideology and breaks the boundaries which modern educational institutions have erected between the various disciplines that study man.

Voegelin presents his enquiry in the form of a philosophy of history, but one entirely different from the type peddled by Hegel, Comte or Marx. Unlike these,

Voegelin does not seek to impose an order of history upon the history of order. There is no single intelligible story which history tells, no law whose discovery would permit us to understand the secret of our destiny. Rather, such order as history possesses emerges through clarification of the symbolic representations in terms of which human beings have interpreted their existence.

Voegelin draws his material from the past but one should not be misled into treating it as simply of historical interest. Voegelin is the most modern of thinkers, and what he says to our time is crucial to the understanding of the crisis of the modern world, ravaged as it is by the attempt to apply the fantasies of ideologists. Where the element of transcendent mystery, evoked by the symbols of religion, is shut out of man's self-interpretation – when the unknowable is expelled from reality – grotesque ideologies emerge and fill the experiential vacuum with their imagined answers. The realm of the certain lie is imposed upon the uncertain truth of reality. Actions come to be justified in terms of a speculative vision of a better world to come – a world purified of 'illusions'. Questions about the world as it is are disallowed. Metaphysics and theology are dismissed in the name of a pseudo-science of the future. Karl Marx put the point with characteristic bluntness: 'Give up your abstractions and you will give up your questions with them.' His followers have loyally implemented the master's dictum with varying degrees of ruthlessness. Reality is assaulted to make way for utopia that never comes, and philosophy is suppressed in the name of an ideology that presents itself as science.

In the face of this the increasing interest in Voegelin's work, as evidenced by these three excellent volumes, is welcome and timely. The collection of essays by leading students of his work, edited by Ellis Sandoz, throws light on some of the complexities in his writings, through the perspectives of political science, philosophy of history and theology. Of particular note is the superb opening essay by Gregor Sebba, a friend of Voegelin's since their days together in pre-war Vienna. Here is a biographical and topical introduction to the scope of the work which is a model of clarity, capturing the essence and excitement of Voegelin's own quest to understand the disorder of his time.

Jürgen Gebhardt's essay is important for the light it sheds on the early development of what was to become the core of Voegelin's philosophy, his theory of consciousness. Gebhardt refers to Voegelin's dissatisfaction with the limitations of Max Weber's rationalism, and to the influence of Max Scheler's philosophical anthropology; these were the major strands which came together in Voegelin's devastating analysis of the lies and half-truths of National Socialism. From Scheler, Voegelin drew a conception of man and political society as hierarchies ordered by the work of a human consciousness rather than determined by biological inheritance. He saw through the political and moral phenomenon of National Socialism to the spiritual disorder that lay behind it.

Eugene Webb's book offers a simpler introduction to Voegelin's work. He divides his book between a clarification of Voegelin's philosophical principles and a shorter summary of their application to the study of history. The principles are drawn from an examination of the content of human experience, symbolised in the tension between man's finite presence and the mystery of the order of which he knows himself to be a part. To deny this experience is to deny the structure of reality. At the

lowest level, man comes to misunderstand his finitude as an aimless and intrinsically absurd condition – on such a misunderstanding is founded the existentialism of Sartre. At the height of fantasy, man imagines that he is destined to become a superman, free from the constraints of his real nature and capable of reconstructing reality according to the whims of his imagination.

Ellis Sandoz's book is less concerned with the disorders introduced into the world by modern ideologies. But it is in some ways the most satisfying of the three volumes. This is partly because it includes an autobiographical memoir in which Voegelin relates his theories to the political experiences which provided their impetus. Sandoz stresses what he sees as the revolutionary character of Voegelin's work, in comparison with the way the human sciences were and are habitually practised. The heart of this 'revolution' lies in Voegelin's reformulation of the questions raised by human existence. We come to see that it is the character of the questions themselves, and not the dogmatic answers of modern secular ideologies, which give us the only clues we have to understanding our condition.

Books such as these should go far towards introducing Voegelin's work to an audience which lives in the shadow of powers brought into being by the ideological forces whose pretensions to truth he so completely undermines.

THE EMPIRE OF THOUGHT

R. A. D. Grant

The Will to Believe: Novelists of the Nineteen-Thirties Richard Johnstone (Cambridge University Press, £9.50)

Ours has been a century of self-conscious ideologies or 'isms'. As traditional values have seemingly crumbled, various intellectual edifices, from the tawdry to the imposing, have been erected in their stead. The Thirties saw a general scramble to get one such roof or other over one's head. Two systems in particular tower above the babel. According to a Catholic journal of the time (quoted by Richard Johnstone), Marxism and Roman Catholicism were 'the only two views of life which count in the modern world'. This claim is characteristically portentous. But it was also the plain truth about the educated young. These gentry are Mr Johnstone's prime concern, above all as revealed in their fiction. His subjects are Waugh and Greene (Catholic converts), Edward Upward (Communist), Rex Warner and Christopher Isherwood (fellow travellers, then defectors), and George Orwell (George Orwell). His book is sometimes a bit colourless, but no more so than his texts. Nevertheless it stands out from the usual run of academic publications by being clear, informative, sensible, unpretentious, and short.

Thirties' fiction, on the whole, has not worn well. But it is of some historical interest, if only because the impulses behind it are perennial. There is nothing new about the impatient presumption of the young. But for the first time it borrowed real countenance from the helpless perplexity of their elders. Traditional statesmanship and liberal illusions alike lay dead in Flanders. Versailles and the

Depression had fostered a Continental menace of unignorable dimensions. But, fearing another war, the older generation chose the way of the ostrich. At the most they flapped their hands feebly in a futile attempt to placate the implacable. They had their excuse. But so too did the young. Their intellectual complacency rested, like the 'peace' movement's today, on a justified but misdirected anxiety. Innocent as they were, they took Fascism, as they took Marxism, at its own preposterous valuation. Fascism was a universal Idea, a creeping conspiracy to be fought with ideological weapons, Spain notwithstanding. But the Nazi-Soviet pact put a stop to all that. When it came to the crunch, the younger generation found itself fighting, not for an ideology but for a traditional way of life that neither they, nor the Depression, nor Hitler had been able to destroy.

The modes of Thirties' fiction throw some light on its content. According to Mr Johnstone, the genuine 'proletarian novel' (*Love on the Dole, A Scots Quair*) was a disappointment to the left-inclined bourgeoisie. Their patronage, like Mrs Jellyby's philanthropy, was telescopic. On closer inspection the working classes turned out to be just as 'bourgeois' as anyone else. Even under the worst deprivations, so it seemed, they obstinately preferred the conventional wisdom with its banal certitudes to the lofty historical role scripted for them by their betters. Accordingly the youthful intelligentsia adopted other vehicles. Some affected the pseudo-Kafkan fable, prized mostly for the specious coherence and urgency it conferred on the sophomore's muddled intuitions. Isherwood, on the other hand, went in, like Mass Observation, for 'objective' reportage (I am a camera'). This was something quite different from proletarian realism. For human facts are not to be recorded by cameras. Twenty years later Isherwood wrote a valediction to his Thirties' novels which Mr Johnstone might usefully have quoted. It dismisses the allied cults of the fable and 'objectivity' in a single unanswerable criticism: 'What repels me about *Mr Norris* is its heartlessness . . . a heartless fairy-story about a real city in which human beings were suffering the miseries of political violence and near-starvation.' It is Orwell's merit, alone among the practitioners of 'reportage', never to have pretended to objectivity. His Thirties' novels, like nearly everything he wrote, are little more than opinionated journalism. Yet even the feeblest are still marginally readable. They smell, if not with an invariable fragrance, of the human.

The opposite of the human is the abstract. And it may be asked, what persuaded educated people to favour it, in fiction and belief alike? Simply this, I think: the human world is not fully apprehensible in propositional form. But all propositions, from the inertly factual to the most fantastically hypothetical, have an immediate appeal. Unlike the concrete knowledge of human things, they are accessible to inexperience (cf. Plato's *Meno*). They flatter one's mental powers by the ease with which they can be grasped. However complex, they are, as Pascal says, 'manageable': '*elles se laissent manier*'. A philosophy compounded of authoritative-sounding propositions, true or otherwise, gives an illusion of mastery. And such will be the natural resort of youthful intellectuals when oppressed by political circumstances which, in defying simple explanation, seem to paralyse the will. The very clarity of an ideology will be taken for an earnest of its truth. Ideologies were, so to speak, tailor-made for the Thirties'

generation. 'Thought's empire over thought' was constantly confirmed in the Emperor's new clothes.

Johnstone takes his title from William James, but does not appear to have read him or any other relevant thinkers. Nevertheless, by sticking closely to his texts he illustrates something of what such thinkers say. His account of ideological commitment seems just. Beliefs, he notes, is an act of will, and therefore of self-assertion. At the same time it unites the individual with an objective order. But for some, the apostles of 'permanent revolution', even this solace was a threat. Such people could define themselves only by an unremitting opposition to everything. Utopia, while it remained the theoretical justification for action, was indefinitely postponed. Their immediate aims were as nebulous as the omnipresent Enemy. But their existential integrity could rest secure in the certainty of perpetual struggle. Such a schoolboy medley of narcissism and paranoia makes for tiresome fiction. Which is why no-one now reads Upward, and why Warner's only useful legacy from the period is his anti-Utopian fantasy *The Aerodrome* ('a poetic image of the politics of rationalism' – Oakeshott).

Whether or not Catholicism is an ideology seems to depend on the manner in which it is adhered to. Newman emphasised that religion proper is based in knowledge of a Person, that is, in the concrete. A continuum between concrete experience and sophisticated reflection is frequently desirable – and nowhere more so than in religion – but it is not a necessary condition of thought. Ideology consists in thought that has been severed from experience, while nevertheless held to be applicable to it. Speculative theology, therefore, which confines itself to the intrinsically unknowable, is not really ideology, not, at least, in the sense in which the nostra of utopianism are ideology.

Waugh's Catholicism began in intellectual assent. Thus far, unlike a secular ideology, it did not pretend to the status of concrete knowledge. Such knowledge – which Waugh also had – is the stuff of the novel. *A Handful of Dust* succeeds, partly because, within its deliberate constraints, it is humanly plausible. It concerns, in fact, precisely the inappropriateness of an abstract moral code to changed human circumstances. Tony Last's gentlemanliness has become a form of nostalgic self-indulgence. He is horribly punished by having to spend the rest of his life reading Dickens to a greedier and less scrupulous sentimentalist than himself. No doubt the book may be said to have a religion-shaped hole in the centre. But Waugh neither needs nor offers to fill it. *Brideshead Revisited*, however, like a jam tart, is deliberately constructed round such a hole. It is filled with all the sentimentality of true abstraction. The characters' Catholicism, though held up for our admiration, is dramatically unrealised. It is not the living motive of their actions, but a mere occult factor, an arbitrary-seeming concomitant of their somewhat repulsive eccentricities. It is as remote from palpable circumstance as Tony Last's passive, uncomprehending rigidity. In short, it resembles an ideology. But that is Waugh's fault, not Catholicism's.

In Greene's 'Catholic' novels sentimentality becomes melodrama. The absolute act of commitment – even to self-damnation – is secretly an occasion for reflexive self-display. *The Power and the Glory* is a laudable exception, in as much as the priest's self-sacrifice for the dying bandit is a genuine, other-directed act of charity, untainted by self-regard. But in general Greene belongs to an

existentialist tradition that goes back through the tight-rope walker in *Zarathustra* to the spiritual acrobatics of Kierkegaard (whom Wittgenstein actually likened to a tight-rope walker). *The Power and the Glory* apart, Catholicism in Greene's novels is really only a stage prop. He is the ideologue, rather, of a raw, unconditioned and basically Protestant individualism. His settings, like his characters, are lurid, perfunctory, and abstract. The individual is thus more readily detached from the human world and spirited away into a fantastic limbo inhabited only by himself and God. Here the real relationship is power: God's power to punish man and man's power to compel him to do so. Greene is a gifted and highly sophisticated writer. He has the less excuse, then, for the cruelty, the lovelessness, the disturbing cheapness of his conceptions. If we have to choose between ideologies, even Marxism seems preferable.

But no such choice is forced upon us. There is another way, and it is not that of the ostrich. Orwell took it, as eventually did Warner. Concrete knowledge is embedded in all culture. It surrounds us in our infancy, and increasingly so in our maturity, for it may be refined, developed and reasoned about (and must be if it is to be defended). It resists precise formulation, but it is real enough, and as tough as Orwell's indestructible

aspidistra. Greene, who knew and despised it, travestied it in the stout-sodden Ida Arnold (in *Brighton Rock*). That lady's mundane belief in justice and morality – which is to say, her knowledge of them – is made to seem as shallow, disgusting, and monotonous a reflex as her Guinness's propensity to repeat. But it may be that Guinness is good for you. It is certainly less harmful than tight-rope antics. And Warner's village pub, perhaps for its very aimlessness, is seen as richer in human possibility than his murderous aerodrome, consecrated to the sinister end 'that the world may be clean'. Johnstone has exhumed Auden's 'low, dishonest decade'. Let us re-inter it with Shelley's devastating epitaph on all who succumb to what he called 'thought's empire over thought':

their lore

Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night
Caught them ere evening.

And let us add a single clarification. Human reality, within or without, shares in the ultimate mystery of the given. But for most practical purposes it seems mysterious only to those who refuse to recognise it.

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