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The Salisbury Review

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

The Third Marquess of Salisbury, 1830–1903

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A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

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The Conservative Party has won the confidence of the electorate. Let us hope that it has also won the confidence of itself – sufficient confidence, at least to permit it to review its links with history. Widespread unemployment is not a new condition, nor is it new for Tories to criticize their opponents for the unreal answers which they offer to this most real of social evils. Carlyle, writing in 1842, described the workings of the new Poor Laws in terms that might equally apply to many a state-controlled factory in the modern 'socialist' world:

> They sit there. . . . in workhouses, pleasantly so named, because work cannot be done in them. Twelve hundred thousand workers in England alone; their cunning right-hand lamed, lying idle in their sorrowful bosom; their hopes, outlooks, share of this fair world; shut in by narrow walls. They sit there, pent up, as in a kind of horrid enchantment; glad to be imprisoned and enchanted, that they may not perish starved.

The Labour Party has lost an election in which it promised jobs. The electorate was rightly sceptical. The State cannot provide work where there is no work, although it can confine its citizens within narrow walls, and call their idleness labour. But the State can show itself indifferent to the sufferings of the indigent, and when it does so it earns their just disdain.

It is thanks to such ardent Tories as Lord John Manners that English Conservatism has not, until now, been identified with the narrow imperatives of commercial progress. We print a series of extracts from Manners's diaries, in which he expresses his vision of social order and ancient harmony. Romantic and deluded though the vision of Young England now appears, *The Salisbury Review* must applaud its sense that the problems of politics are not to be solved by economics alone, and that the conservative cannot ignore those who do not enjoy the privileges which he justifies.

This sense is shared by E. J. Mishan, who delivers a melancholy warning to the dogmatists to the market. Even if the market is not the panacea of politics, however, we should not be blind to its virtues. As John Gray argues, on Hayek's behalf, the market is an indispensable store of tacit knowledge; and he who destroys it deprives himself of the means to understand his condition.

We may not be tempted by the nostalgia which caused Lord John Manners to look to the Seventeenth Century for a picture of social order. But we should approve of a vision which seeks for concrete historical experience, rather than abstract theory, upon which to build. This search for historical roots is not a prerogative of conservatism. Our thinker of the Left, Raymond Williams, also looks to the past – and again to that golden age of conflict between King and Parliament – for much of his critical inspiration. Parliament is, however, no longer the institution which ruled the skies of seventeenth-century politics; nor is it the passionate debating society of Gladstone, Disraeli, and Manners. Indeed if Lord Cranborne is right, it has now become another pressure group, striving for influence within a political process that it does not control.

We follow David Martin's discussion of the Prayer Book with an article by the Dean of St. Albans, in which some of the wider implications of recent Church Reforms are critically considered. The traditions to which the Dean refers are elements in a genuine free association, which Richard Cronin eloquently distinguishes from its mendacious substitutes. That we should value freedom is obvious: that we should value the tradition which makes freedom possible is less obvious, only because a habit of vagueness has blinded us to fundamental truths. If anyone needs to be reminded of these truths, let him ponder the sobering remarks of Ivan Volgin, whose disturbing view of the 're-enchantment' of the world of Soviet man, adds a new and surprising twist to the thoughts expressed in our last issue by Václav Racek. To control the world, you must first control language – this is the message of the totalitarian state, and Volgin illustrates this message in a way that bears terrifying witness to the truths explored by Sally Shreir. If the politics of language is important, it is not merely because language is so easily abused; it is also because it forms the prime example of free association, and the basis of all lasting social order.

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Conservative Journals: THE SOUTHERN PARTISAN

One of the newest, and most curious, American conservative journals is *The Southern Partisan*, a quarterly, begun in 1979 with the aim of articulating the cultural traditions of the Old South. It views the modern world from a highly local and historically isolated vantage point, believing that, only by being true to the spirit of the place where we live, can we also become aware of genuine universal values. It is dedicated, therefore, to the overthrow of spurious universalities. Its editor, Richard Quinn, has succeeded in giving a distinct flavour to the journal which is evidently popular among the circles for whom it is intended. As well as carrying appreciations of great statesmen of the South such as John C. Calhoun, it renews the commitment to such important Southern causes as States Rights, in a vigorous and educated language. It is nostalgic, but not sentimental; it is also alert to the events that pass on the stage of American politics, and pursues the more disreputable actors on that stage with astringent satire. Many of its articles celebrate the folk-culture of the Deep South, and an English reader may find the emphasis on Dixie and 'tater pone' a trifle quaint, for all the good natured self-irony with which it is informed.

The spirit of the journal is that of Allen Tate: mourning what it has been forbidden to mourn, searching for shoots beneath ashes that have not been stirred. Its satirical comment on contemporary culture is exact and stimulating. Moreover its emphasis on the vital American tradition of local government – which Tocqueville counted as the most worthwhile product of American democracy – is far-sighted, and expressed in persuasive terms. Writers for *The Southern Partisan* include Russell Kirk, J. Evetts Haley, Ellen Campbell and Reid Buckley, and it carries reviews most of which relate to the social, cultural and political concerns of the American South. The journal's outlook is summarized by one of its contributors – Robert W. Whitaker – in 'The Partisan Dictionary': 'Cosmopolitan – one who is familiar with many surfaces and no depths; universalist – a champion of that which consists almost entirely of empty space; myth – a statement contrary to the prevailing eternal verity; economics – the art of making predictions, and the science of forgetting them.' In short, it is that rare thing: an organ of American High Toryism.

The address of *The Southern Partisan* is PO Box 11708, Columbia, South Carolina 29211.

Tradition and Worship

Peter Moore

Every single one of us, even he who is most loud in the denial of it, is an heir to tradition. We are born into a family, into a community; we are members of a school, a club, a church; we are members of a political party, or of a party that tries strictly to refrain from politics. But, wherever we are and whatever we do, we emerge from the past. That is not to imply that we must approve of the past; but it is to admit that there is a sort of umbilical cord which feeds us and which we sever at our peril. Even those who reject tradition also, in the last analysis, depend upon it for their rebellion. It is important therefore, that we should have a proper understanding of the vital place that tradition plays in our lives. By tradition I mean something that is alive, something that is handed down from one person to another as precious; not always intentionally passed on, but passed on nonetheless. Tradition is not just the way we do things, or the way they have always been done. It is rather an experience of continuity and association; of community, family, group or church. And just as it is constantly drawing on its roots in the past, so it is constantly responding to new experiences and adapting itself to changing circumstances.

This is true of all enduring institutions, but of none more than the Church. In a famous hymn we sing that the Church is one foundation, is Jesus Christ her Lord. This is a fact, and will even remain so. The Church has grown out of the teaching, the acts, and the sacrifice of Jesus. When he hung upon the Cross he commended his mother to St. John. His followers therefore grew as a new community, a new family. If we wish to understand the Church today, we have constantly to go back to the traditions which have made and moulded it through many centuries. For, like any family, it cannot be identified with a single generation, or fixed in a single time.

The faith once delivered to the Saints was continued in the apostolic doctrine and fellowship. For the Orthodox Christians, at least, the writings of the early Fathers are definitive. The Orthodox Church is still largely directed by their wisdom, and its form of worship has changed scarcely at all in a thousand years. For us in the West there have been many changes. Nevertheless, the Church has slowly established its teachings, basing itself upon the early practices of Christians, as well as upon the Bible. Tradition and doctrine were committed to writing by the early Fathers and handed on through the Reformation to the Anglican Church, so nourishing that great renaissance of Anglican learning exemplified in the Caroline divines. The scholarship of these divines was rooted and grounded in the Fathers and in the history of the church, sifted, as well as enriched, in the Middle Ages, reformed and renewed in the 16th century. It remains the basis of traditional Anglicanism in the 20th century, despite all the changes wrought by the industrial revolution, by the movement of people from the country to the town, and by the rise, or rather the separation, of Methodism. At the same time, throughout these centuries, the two pillars of Anglicanism have been the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Both are now subject to challenge.

The place of the Bible in modern Anglicanism has been disturbed by biblical scholarship, which has often been interpreted as undermining the truth that the Bible contains. There is no longer that unhappy hostility between scripture and science which broke out in the last century; indeed the discovery of the vastness of the universe has done nothing to diminish our belief in God. Nevertheless, modern commentators have viewed the Bible not as the expression of revealed truth, but as an imperfect and fallible historical document. And if it is fallible as history, why then should it not also be fallible as doctrine? The other cause of disturbance has been the multiplicity of Biblical translations. Until thirty years ago there was one Authorised Version, which entered the subconscious mind of the whole Anglican congregation. Now there is what can only be recognized as a confusion of translations, helpful perhaps to the scholar, but undeniably baffling to the ordinary worshipper. Familiarity enabled words of Scripture to pass into daily life; this familiarity no longer exists and one must inevitably wonder what the result will be. When someone is sick or dying he will rely upon memory; but the memory of the Bible is now a memory not of clarity but of confusion. What comfort, then does it bring, in the hour of need?

The other pillar of Anglicanism, the Book of Common Prayer, contains important material like the catechism and the 39 Articles, as well as the form of Ordination to our three-fold Ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon. But it is now no longer universally used. It continues to hold its primary place, since it contains the Ordinals of the Church of England and the Statement of Faith. Nevertheless, the Alternative Service Book may eventually displace the Book of Common Prayer, and many would welcome such a result. The Alternative Service Book should certainly be accepted side by side with the Prayer Book, as a real help to the many who find old-fashioned language difficult, or off-putting. However, the claim of the traditionalists to have the Book of Common Prayer used, must also be respected. It is foolish not to recognise the fact that new generations of Anglicans are growing up who have never known the Book of Common Prayer, and

have never used it. Moreover, we have reason to be anxious, because the teaching which was enshrined in the Prayer Book is not enshrined in the ASB. And if the latter becomes the normal instrument of devotion, then we shall be in danger of having forms of worship which are unsupported by doctrine.

In social matters it has always been understood that the Church is a body whose standards of morality have permeated the thought of the countrty. Britain in the past has regarded itself as Christian, and, so far as England is concerned, mainly Anglican. Again things have greatly changed. We can no longer readily assume that ours is a Christian country. Our society has distanced itself from the Church, producing a form of State education which does not support the unique claims of Christ. Moreover, traditional standards of morality are challenged, if not in theory then in practice. Modern morality consists in doing what is generally done, rather than in doing what ought to be done. The teaching of the Bible has always been fundamental to our accepted moral code, but knowledge of the Bible is no longer widely disseminated, and is, in any case, at variance with the easy morality of the times. Concerning many social problems the Church's voice has been hesitant, equivocal, even non-existent. The Church, in her desire to be with it in the world, has sometimes been without it in the spirit. She has so successfully identified herself with the world which she came to redeem, as to have been tempted by its merely earthly values.

It is one thing for the world to reject the standards taught by the Church, another for the Church herself to surrender those standards. But, because the gap between the ways of the world and the teachings of the Church is now so wide, the Church must inevitably feel the pangs of isolation, and be tempted to relinquish her teaching. Consider the pressures on the Christian family and its integrity. Widespread divorce has shattered home life and done great injury to a large number of people. Remarriage is now so much part of the social scene that the Church is expected to provide for it. But the Church has a primary duty to proclaim the standards of the Kingdom, while exercising the pastoral care for individuals to which she is called. The Church exists primarily for sinners, not for saints. But this means that she must offer firm guidance to her congregation; her failure to do so may well be in part responsible for the present dissolution of the family.

The role of the Established church has of course changed down the centuries, and most obviously it is not the exclusive role that it used to be. Society is pluriform; there are many religions represented and followed. However, the United Kingdom remains, at least nominally, a Christian state. This should not be overlooked in our proper anxiety to give other faiths their place, and it may be questioned how far schools add to the confusion rather than the enlightenment of their pupils by teaching 'comparative religion' before the Christian faith has been properly understood.

It is certainly difficult to discern much authoritative teaching in the Church of England today. Authority may now be a dirty word; but it can never be dissociated from the discipleship of Jesus Christ. The social Gospel is neither the beginning nor the end of the Church's vocation, for she is called to evangelise and to preach the Gospel with great fervour – and with a greater fervour than she has shown in the immediate past. The Church has the laws of God to proclaim and the resurrected life to live. She is to be the Ark where holiness can grow and where the life of Christ can be shown forth. It is perhaps in this absence of holiness that the modern Church is most seriously deficient. We are (and the challenge echoes throughout the pages of the Bible) we are called to be holy. It is this which characterises the Church of England; this which characterises her followers; this which characterises her message.

The Church in this country has her roots in firm ground, in a great tradition of service to the State as well as to her own people.

First and foremost, the church prays for the State; for the Queen and the Royal Family and for her Government. This happens at every Holy Communion, whether B.C.P. or A.S.B., and it happens at Matins, Evensong and in the Litany. The church is a pointer for holiness, not success, and it pleads for that holiness to be evident in its rulers and to inform the administration of justice, law and order. The ritual involvement of the Church of England in State Functions, the presence of Bishops in the House of Lords – such facts witness, perhaps imperfectly, but at least in some measure, to the explicitly Christian basis of our institutions. Nor should we overlook the place of the Crown in church appointments. Some wish this to be modified, but few wish it to be abandoned. Clergy are appointed as Chaplains in the Armed Forces, and because of the establishment, have entry to every house in the land which is ready to welcome them. This last fact is of inestimable importance. It is the basis of our church's pastoral ministry and care. The Church of England, in spite of everything, still remains the Church of England – of the land and of all those who are bound to it by a civil obligation.

The Church of England's mission is therefore intelligible in terms of a continuous loyalty and an unbroken history. By calling on tradition, we inevitably address ourselves to a spirit that is both greater than ourselves, and a part of our history. In these times of vacillation there can be few more effective ways of renewing our faith. Through the acceptance of our tradition, we turn away from the temptations of immediate impulse, and join ourselves to the communion of the Saints.

The Politics of Language

Sally Shreir

It is a prevailing myth in the West that language is somehow politically neutral – a fact of nature, outside the purview of political action. Under communism such a grave error of judgement would be impossible. For language, like every other aspect of human life, has been gathered up into a collective enterprise, and at the same time poisoned by a ruling ideology. Communism has revealed the 'true' political essence of language, and also destroyed every consoling illusion upon which civilised communication depends.

Like many of our cherished assumptions, the belief in the neutrality of language descends from the prevailing spirit of liberalism. Liberalism is the premise upon which Western politics is built. Regardless of who is empowered to govern, it pervades all modes of social life, and determines the parameters of political choice. Anyone who has a conscience talks as if it is the property of liberalism. And while it is not wholly respectable, and not wholly wise, to talk as a liberal within earshot of the hard left, in most domains it is undoubtedly the safest and most congenial option. Given this privileged position – this lasting and stable influence – which somehow never manages to translate itself into concrete politics, it is not surprising to find that all within the orbit of liberal perception is apt to seem inevitable. Indeed, if there is one redeeming feature of liberalism, it is the capacity to saturate institutions and values with a sense of their own naturalness. And that which is natural must surely be neutral.

Liberalism succeeds in depoliticising the inherently political, partly because it has itself grown out of a political system designed to subdue all that is most inflammatory in human affairs. We owe our stability to centuries of constitutional government, which have defined clear, if inarticulable, limits to the realm of the politically possible. These limits are at once both broad and narrow. For while they admit political transformation of a seemingly radical kind (thus accommodating the modern need for change), all which threatens to transcend them appears unthinkable: unthinkable, not just in the sense of undesirable, but in the sense of impossible, perhaps even indescribable. The resulting stability has conferred on our social and political order the appearance, not of a human artefact, but of an unchangeable fact of nature. If communism prides itself on having produced no similar illusions, it is because communism allows no worthwhile human artefact to survive for long enough to be deemed natural.

Much the same notion of naturalness attaches to our conception of language, and for some of the same reasons. Language in the West, having escaped the deliberate political manipulation practised in the communist states, seems to spring naturally and unheeded from the changing needs of human communication. Moreover, freedom of speech is so integral to our political heritage, that we are apt to think of it as guaranteeing unlimited powers of expression. By creating the desired freedom in the political sphere, we put out of mind the idea that language may impose its own constraints on thought and feeling. Just as the flexibility of our institutions serves to protect and conceal their highly contingent foundations, so freedom of speech serves to render insignificant, benign, or inevitable, the structural biases of our language. It is not surprising, then, that the 'common man' fails to perceive the political nature of language. If the state does not attempt (or only rarely) to restrain his speech, what could he conceivably want to say that cannot be said? Language is surely inherently creative; a linguistic need, once generated, will automatically be fulfilled.

Such a view implies, however tacitly, that consciousness determines language, but cannot be constrained by it. Philosophically it is certainly contentious. But it is not naïve; and at a certain level it may even be true. It is also socially beneficent. For it generates what might reasonably be called the language of conciliation. The man who conceives of language as transparent to his understanding and malleable to his needs, helps to forge a world of shared expectations and mutual trust. His words – his discussions and disagreements – presuppose a common background of public meanings, where no party has privileged ability to diagnose the surreptitious bias of the other. This is the language of appearances, and it is, in the end, the only language in which the human condition may be described.

But of course the common man is rarely respected, and least of all by those who claim to represent him. Marxism aims to reveal the deceit and exploitation in every merely liberal arrangement, and sees language – or at least the 'bourgeois' language which I have just described – as both the accomplice and the expression of a systematic lie. It believes language to be a social appearance, which conceals the 'essence' of dominion and power. Marxism's championship of the common man is therefore apt to coexist with a sneering contempt for the realm of appearance in which he pursues his imperfect satisfactions.

This Marxian suspiciousness has many times made its mark on Western politics. Recently, however, it has been feminism – representative, not of the common man but of the not so common woman – which has tried to sniff out the prejudice in innocent rules of grammar. If I concentrate on communism in what follows, it is largely because it exemplifies at its most successful the extra-

ordinary project into which both Marxism and feminism have been led: the project of making the language anew, in a form that will render the old ideology inexpressible. In the case of communism the result has been disastrous: a language not freed from ideology, but enslaved by it.

It should not surprise us to find that communism ignores the vital political energy which natural language contains. The role of language in symbolising and fostering national unity – in defining a 'we' through which each man's aspirations can be socially enhanced – has been sacrificed to the universalist aspirations of ideology. Perhaps we should not be dismayed by this sacrifice. Perhaps it is a small price to pay for the scientific interest to be gleaned from reshaping the human psyche. But it is useful to begin by comparing the communist project with another, in which the vital significance of language was not overridden, but noticed and put to use.

Atatürk perceived that the identity and destiny of a nation are inextricably bound up with the identity and destiny of its language. Believing that the future of Turkey lay in independence from its Islamic neighbours, and in a Western-looking political culture, he ordered the replacement of the Arabic script with its Roman counterpart, and founded a Language Institute, whose purpose was to recover and implement a pure Anatolian language, purged of all Arabic and Persian derivations. The attempt was serious, scholarly, and successful, giving expression and consummation to the spirit of Turkish nationalism. But its very self-consciousness exposed it to danger. For it placed the language of the people in the hands of intellectuals. And when intellectuals cease to be patriots (as tends to happen) they become internationalists. Internationalists look, not for a historical identity, but for a universal doctrine, a description of their condition that will transcend place and time. In the context of twentieth century Turkey, this doctrine was not hard to find: it was victorious, indeed, along Turkey's Eastern border.

It was therefore not long before the Institute had been infiltrated by Soviet servants, intent on filling the Turkish language with words bearing no relation to an Anatolian heritage, but having a marked resemblance to the newspeak of Moscow communism. When the Turks recently awoke to the danger it was already difficult for the newly educated townsman to follow political broadcasts that did not issue from Bulgaria, East Germany or Soviet Russia.

One might be forgiven for thinking that there is little to distinguish the linguistic manipulation of Atatürk from that of the communists. Since both sought to regulate the development of language for political ends, we might be tempted to think that a preference for the one over the other is merely a preference of ideology. In fact, however, the differences are far more profound. National identity is founded on natural emotions and natural allegiances – on those very things which communism has attempted to destroy and to replace with the altogether unnatural allegiance to a ruling party. To put it another way: national unity is an example of the same kind of spontaneous social order as language itself. The affinity between national unity and linguistic conformity lies in the very nature of things. To realign them, is simply to fulfil their common inclination. Atatürk sought to bind the Turkish language to its cultural heritage; to embrace the unity of the past, so as to ensure the unity of the future. Communism seeks to impose a language never yet known to man; a language divorced from every cultural constraint, and unlikely ever to be generated in a way that may be experienced as natural.

Strangely – or not so strangely, since we are talking of the haven of mendacity – it is communism which claims to have nature on its side. It is a tenet of the communist gospel that ideology is the preserve of those social orders whose injustice is so pronounced that they must endeavour to conceal it. The only order which can be free from ideology is that of communism, since it is – according to the myth – the only order without a ruling class. Of course, it is difficult for us to recognise this, for we are the proverbial victims of 'false consciousness', and must be grateful to communism for perceiving what we could never have perceived ourselves. Without communism, we might never have realised that centuries of civilised government were in fact centuries of systematic oppression.

To win acceptance for such a myth is an amazing achievement, which defied the mental powers of all the rulers of the past. This success was made possible by the persuasive charm of Marxism. It was Marx who revealed that price has nothing to do with supply and demand or invested capital, but is instead an expression of congealed labour. It was Marx who enjoined us to work for nothing, since the payment of wages is the mark of exploitation. It was thus Marx who introduced a systematic way of undermining all that has, over the centuries, enabled men to work together by agreement rather than constraint, all that has enabled men to resolve the conflicts born of survival, and to live peaceably in free association. Not only are we urged by the Marxists to shatter every institution and to renounce all respect for legality and legitimacy – we must also relinquish our way of perceiving and describing the world. We must abandon the language of enchantment and conciliation and replace it with the language of conflict and confrontation, for it is only the latter, we are told, which represents the world as it really is.

While Marx's discoveries were undeniably complex, requiring a fair amount of theoretical exposition and a great deal of theoretical duplicity for their support, they resulted in one overriding and unifying conclusion which does not require theory for its embodiment. The identification and annihilation of an ever-present enemy has been made into a principal theme of modern communism, and its rhetoric of 'struggle' and 'overthrow' together with its tone of incitement and intimidation reflect this. Hatred requires no understanding. It can be harnessed in a few slogans and given credence by acts of ritual violence. If we are tempted to believe that Marx – the man who loved children and desired only that we all be allowed to indulge our natural propensities for hunting, fishing, and literary criticism – cannot be held fully responsible for the system which bears his name, it is a temptation that we must

resist. For it is no accident that a theory which fostered suspicion of all humane social arrangements, which branded an entire stratum of the population as an enemy, and which abrogated as mere deception all those concepts with which we have come to understand ourselves, should have produced a system which acts and speaks as if opposition were intolerable to it, and as if life were one long exorcism of a mythical oppressor. Even communism does not believe in accidents of this sort.

There is no doubt that in the 'struggle' against the universal enemy, communism's capacity to encapsulate every human thought in a slogan and every human fear in an indictment is an invaluable ally. A people dominated by slogans and indictments is a people numbed into submission. Its victims are bombarded by shrill pronouncements spoken in a language which is no less foreign to them than it is to us. For this is a language which cannot touch the human heart. It can only arouse the need for acceptance, the need to belong to the crowd and to participate in whatever irrational feelings seem to move it. Indeed, within the countries which speak this language, it would be unwise not to be anonymous. Rhetoric, and particularly the rhetoric of totalitarianism, is manipulative. There is no possibility of dissent, not least because there is no real possibility of assent. A slogan, by its very nature, defies belief and replaces it with overt articulation and submission. One cannot believe in the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' because, in isolation, one cannot understand what it means, and if one did understand one would never be persuaded to believe it. One cannot deny the charge of 'deviationist' or 'revisionist' or 'infantile communist' because outside the context in which they are applied, these heresies have no meaning. All meaning, all understanding, all potential for explanation has been sacrificed to the dubious charms of a ritual incantation. Like a people possessed, the masses must recite the relevant words at the relevant moment, their minds swamped by the heady rhythms and mesmeric cries of a ritual war dance.

It is indeed curious that a dogma which has condemned all respect for the form of things; which has destroyed all the illusions surrounding social existence and outlawed most worthwhile art as mere 'formalism' – that such a dogma should be so crucially dependent on the form of its own pronouncements. But this is just one more 'dialectical' contradiction with which communism struggles. In all other respects, it has been true to its promises, and has delivered what might only be called (appropriately enough) a materialist conception of language – in other words, a language which attempts to ignore the fact that people have minds. Indeed, within the framework of communist rhetoric there is little need of them. The slogan says it all, and woe betide the man who attempts to say more. The only belief required, or possible, is the belief in the infallibility of the party. Once this is acquired, there is little left to do except acquiesce. The slogan, with its abrasive incitements and emotive enjoinders, has effectively excluded the politics of persuasion. No wonder that the system which depends on this mode of intellectual development has proved so sterile and so resistant to change. Anyone who might be tempted to have a thought of his own must measure it carefully against the one permissible standard. This standard has neither the latitude nor the legitimacy of objective truth. But against such a 'truth' it is impossible to argue – a fact admirably detailed by Milosz, who well knew the impotence of attempting to argue against those whose 'statements are enriched by the cumulated thought of the masters and their commentators.'[1]

Communism has thus introduced a language which is as profoundly impenetrable to rational analysis and as insusceptible to development as the cries of a wild animal. And it is this which has enabled it to conceal its true nature, both from many of its subjugants and from the naive and sentimental in the West. How else could those of broadly liberal sentiments be expected to 'believe' in the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'? They believe because the word 'proletariat' has been glorified out of all recognition, and because they cannot conceive that any system would dare to proclaim itself a dictatorship unless it were benign. The world has thus been mesmerised by an ideology which speaks as if it were victorious, and which appears to have an answer for everything because in truth it has an answer for nothing, having quashed the right to ask the relevant questions. The language of self-congratulation and self-enhancement – the language which can be heard in any official communist pronouncement and read by anyone who wishes to step into an appropriate embassy[2] – would be greeted with ridicule, were it not spoken by those for whom questions of truth and falsehood can no longer be genuinely raised.

Were this the only way in which communism has perverted language, we might have less cause for concern. We should expect a counter-revolution any day, against such gross hypocrisy. But communism's linguistic manipulation does not extend only to the form of political rhetoric, to fierce censorship, to a liturgy of imaginary struggles. Hand in hand with this enterprise goes an attempt to abrogate or subvert the concepts with which the outside world may be described, or through which it may be desired. It is thus that communism expects to transform the human mind, moulding it to its own specifications. Whether this can be achieved, depends ultimately on the relation between words and meanings. If communism is to abrogate a meaning from the realm of human aspirations it must do this through the abrogation of the word habitually used to express it. If meanings can survive, as the common man believes they can, independently of the words that previously conveyed them, then the attempt is doomed to failure. That does not mean of course that it will be without other consequences. But communism believes that meanings can actually be abolished, and it has evolved two powerful methods whereby to accomplish this design.

The first method is the total abrogation of certain words from the language. In what claims to be *An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Marxism, Socialism, and Communism*[3], and is indeed a mighty tome dedicated to the communist cause, there are no entries on *freedom* or *representation*. Another work,[4] which is admittedly less comprehensive, but may

be no less illuminating since it speaks to us from the 'commanding heights' of the Novosti Press in Moscow, somehow omits to mention *justice* and *law*. One might suspect that this is because these concepts are thought so fundamental to our political lives that they do not require theoretical exposition. But when one considers that 'actually existing' entries include concepts as impervious to human understanding as *party secretary* and *Bank of China* (as well as every other communist owned bank and car-park) other explanations inevitably spring to mind. The truth is that communism has implemented, in 'real life', the Orwellian linguistic category of 'crimethink'. And, as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the concepts subsumed by this category have been robbed of meaning, save for the all-pervasive one of constituting an expression of treachery against the state.

Communism's approach to this matter is undoubtedly curious, for it seems to imply that the same one-to-one correspondence between words and meanings obtains in the political sphere as obtains in religious worship. Curious indeed, for a system which claims that politics, or at least its own theory, constitutes a science. The liturgy, like poetry, does not admit of idiomatic translation. Its meanings are rooted not just in *what* we say, but in the *way* that we say it; in the specific words that we use. Almost every word is saturated with significance, and almost every meaning is inseparable from the words in which it is conveyed. The difference between 'Thou art . . .' and 'You are . . . ' is not, strictly speaking, a semantic one, yet it is undeniable that the two forms of address imply very different conceptions of our relation to God. It was an appreciation of this fact which provoked the understandable revulsion towards the 'alternative liturgies'. To revise the liturgy is inevitably to change its meaning. It is also to challenge its status as a sacred article.

The liturgy is perhaps the quintessential example of a language with political undertones. For though its pronouncements do not carry the status of law in a thoroughly secular world, those who speak its words and whose promises are sanctified by its blessings, can lay claim to be taken seriously in almost any other context. The traditional liturgy defines and protects a community in much the same way as the law defines a state and protects its people. Any alternative cannot assure the worshipper the same relation either to God or to His Church in this world.

Communism shares with the writers of the modern liturgy a desire to prune away the roots of human discourse and leave only the branches. Yet, implicit in its attempted abrogation of certain words from the language of politics, is the assumption that the related concepts depend on them, and on them alone. In one sense the communists are right about this, but in another sense they are wrong. A concept is, as it were, the point of intersection between many words; it may be identified and expressed in many different ways. *Freedom* may be a concept *sui generis*, but were we deprived of the word, we might still find it possible to convey the idea. We could refer, perhaps, to the 'absence of constraint': a thorough-minded communist might have to abolish that phrase as well. And so it could continue. At the same time, a distinction that can only be made through circumlocutions, will soon lose its immediacy. Gradually it may come to seem arcane, specialised, and outside our common concerns. In this way, the circumlocution will kill the concept, by undermining the spontaneous desire to divide reality into those things which it does, and those which it does not, describe. It is not merely that the emotive appeal of 'freedom' is lost. It is that the free and the unfree are no longer readily separated; an important segment of the social world has been clouded with hesitation. In this way, the 'language of conciliation' – the language through which social encounters are conducted – is gradually impoverished. Social relations take on a less and less spontaneous form, as people learn to hesitate about what should be most immediate and secure.

Communism's second strategy in pursuit of the purified mind is more subtle, more insidious, and likely to be more successful: the gradual subversion of a word, with the hope of appropriating a meaning. This strategy has been handed on to left-wing movements in the West. The 'peace' movement is a very good example, and shows an interesting lexicographical continuity with Soviet propaganda.[5] For CND the word 'peace' has come to mean, not the absence of hostilities, but the 'absence of effective weapons'. The success of this persuasive definition, its dissemination among the public, indeed, the success of the movement itself, have been aided by the emotive connotations of the word. Who, in responding to the question, 'Do you want peace?' would answer in the negative? To do so would be inhuman. Yet, if we answer 'yes' to CND, we answer yes to a very different question from the one that we had envisaged. The meaning which we understood has been subtly removed from us, and a new one substituted in its place. Successive instances of this substitution will inevitably result in a change in the word's meaning. Do we then lose the concept 'absence of hostility'? Again, the question is complex. Certainly, we stand to lose the succinct and emotive way of referring to it as *peace*. More importantly, we will use this word, with all its persuasive power, to convey another meaning, which is servant to a very different cause – the cause of 'peace with socialism', to use Lenin's sinister slogan, in which socialism's implacable hostility to its opponent coexists with an 'absence of effective weapons' in the opponent's hands. It is this kind of mystification which has served communism so well. It has been able thereby to posture as the maligned non-aggressor in every conflict that it has initiated or provoked, and the benign provider of every good at home. But while it can distort words so as to allow this kind of description, can it also distort perception so far as to make these descriptions seem true?

We return, then, to the view of the common man, that consciousness cannot be constrained by language. Intuitively, we might be inclined to agree, and to think that, while we may lose succinct, emotive terminology, we will never lose the aspirations that we now describe as 'peace' or 'freedom'. More importantly, we will never lose the ability to perceive these things for what they really are, or to be dissatisfied with the substitutes which appro-

priate their names. Communism may appropriate words, but it can never appropriate meanings.

However, as we have already hinted, such a view is by no means obvious. The repeated slurring of distinctions, the repeated balancing of incomparables (as when American 'aggression' in supporting the elected government of El Salvador is balanced against the 'fraternal assistance' offered to the 'people' of Cambodia or Afghanistan) – all such rhetoric must have its corrosive influence. On the one hand it abolishes the all-important immediacy with which crucial distinctions are perceived; filling the social world with that chronic vagueness which has been so movingly described by Václav Racek.[6] At the same time it drives meanings underground, and so abolishes them. A private meaning – one that I can entertain only in the solitude of my own heart – is not truly a meaning. Meanings are public, and exist within the social practices of those who utter them.

Of course it is appealing to think otherwise: to imagine that a meaning can survive *in camera*, and live beyond the reaches of the vigilant police. If meanings can be supposed to be private mental events, locked within the sanctum of the Cartesian ego, then at least they are safe. Whatever else they take from me, they cannot take these! But we must repudiate the philosophy which sustains that view, and not only for the reasons that Wittgenstein and others have abundantly provided. Even if a secret meaning could exist, its very absence from the language of conciliation makes it dangerous: it serves as a tragic reminder of impotence, a corrosive doubt that negates the value of human encounter. Better to discard it, and to live in peace – or rather in that substitute for peace which CND encourages us to call by a stolen name.

The purpose of linguistic vandalism is to confuse our perceptions, to place us off our guard, to cause us not to see the value of that which is valuable, by confusing it with that which is not. This is the motive for the assault on those words – such as 'peace', 'freedom', 'people', 'liberation', 'aggression' – which do not merely describe the world, but also focus the emotions through which we act on it. The communist 'law' of the unity of opposites encourages every vagueness. 'War is Peace': the slogan of Orwell's *1984* captures its effrontery, and foreshadows its success. The work of destruction which has mutilated the public language of Eastern Europe and deprived all opposition of a voice, represents itself as a work of construction. And in a sense this is true: something has indeed been constructed: a tower of Babel, the bricks of which are slogans, and the mortar of which is mutual distrust.

Notes

1. Czeslaw Milosz; *The Captive Mind*, 1953.
2. Witness a passage sent by the Czech party to Andropov on his election; 'We are convinced that the heroic Soviet people will under the leadership of its glorious Communist Party. . . .' or this, from an address by the Czech prime minister at a meeting to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the USSR; 'The long, difficult and dramatic road of the struggles of mankind for social progress and peace is lined by milestones, which are the climaxes of the continuous fight for a truly human life of the working man'. Both extracts, and there are many more like them, taken from an Information Bulletin published by the CPC Central Committee.
3. By Jozef Wilczynski, 1981.
4. *Political Terms, A Short Guide.*
5. See Vladimir Bukovsky. *The Soviet Union and the Peace Movement*, Orwell Press, 1982.
6. Václav Racek: 'Totalitarianism in 1983', *Salisbury Review* no. 3, 1983.

The Aims of Education

Oliver Knox

Of course *I* am an educated man – the first person always is – but how many educated men do most of us number among our friends, acquaintances, colleagues, clients, advisers, servants? A High Court judge, deploring the virtual necessity for the young, nowadays, to read for a law degree at the University, said that it meant 'there will be fewer and fewer educated lawyers' and presumably, in time, fewer and fewer educated judges. On the other side of the fence, I was told that a distinguished convict once lamented that none of his public school fellow-inmates seemed willing to learn during their time inside – 'they simply gave up educating themselves'. We all miss our opportunities.

At this point I shall courageously resist the temptation to define what I mean by the 'educated man' and stalk my victim in a more roundabout way by advancing these propositions: first, that the production of the educated man should be the primary aim of education after the age of fifteen, inside or outside schools and universities (though not, I agree, necessarily including polytechnics): second, that no educated man will ever regard his education as having come to a close – that past participle is a mis-ending: third, that the world without the leaven of the educated man would certainly be a less agreeable, and probably an even more dangerous place.

That my first proposition is not quite self-evident is clear when one briefly glances at the bizarre straitjackets into which people commonly squeeze the aims of education: for example, some say it should be relevant to the needs of society, others that it should develop each person's potential to the full, others that it should serve the cause of equality, and so on. It is tedious to have to eradicate such weeds: alas, like most weeds they are hardy and do not die from benign neglect.

The practical objection to relevance in education should be sufficient in itself: how can one possibly hope to foretell the needs of the next generation? Granted, an attempt to do so, and to construct suitable syllabi and schemes of training, may help to create a host of fictitious needs. Problems arise to fill the time of those employed to solve them. Up to a point, this may not matter very much in the case of, say, dentists. There may be almost infinite openings in the case of teeth – I don't know. But if you train a million social workers able to attend a hundred patients a year, it can be guaranteed that a hundred million social problems will be identified (plus an extra few million to maintain the momentum). Admittedly financial constraints will eventually burst the bubble, but how much comfort is that?

However, it will be seen that I slipped into the use of the word 'training'. For the idea of relevance is open to a much graver objection than the practical one. To suggest that the beam of education should be directed upon one particular point in space or time is barbaric (why else should man ever do more than make better and better arrowheads?). Whereas it is the pleasure and duty of the educated man to draw sustenance from poetry, beliefs, and sciences not only of his own but of other civilisations; and to offer the distillations of his experience to voyagers on similar quests.

To suggest that it is the purpose of education to develop a man's potential to the full may not, at first sight, seem quite so absurd as to preach the necessity of relevance. We may pass over the objections or – if you prefer – the recommendation that, since the gifted have more potential to realise, such a concept is anti-egalitarian: would favour Leonardo rather than Pooter. The real trouble with any such suggestion lies elsewhere, somewhere nearer to the Pierian spring. Of how many sources of knowledge should we attempt to drink deep? Merely to ask the question is to reveal its fatuity. It simply does not matter, to the educated man, that there are many springs which he will never taste. Polymathy is not an object of education: education is not a game of numbers. For all I know, Yehudi Menuhin had – and has – it in him to become a great agronomist, botanist, Chinese scholar and so on through the alphabet, but few I imagine will regret that the main thrust of his education lies in music. 'A man is what he learns to become: this is the human condition.' Thus Professor Oakeshott, and I suppose a man becomes educated by never ceasing to learn. Indeed, the minute he believes he *has* developed his full potential, he ceases to be an educated man.

The animal I am discussing – forgive the metaphor – does not give up when he realises that his journey is without any visible or even attainable end. Nor does he put on blinkers, in the pathetic belief that this will enable him to proceed further and faster towards the receding goal. He will allow himself to nibble occasionally on the verges. He may well neigh with agreeable surprise when fellow-travellers, on different courses, cross his path; he will even allow himself brief excursions in their company before returning to his own chosen road. What a civilised horse he is becoming, to be sure! Aware of his existential solitariness, his incomparability, he does not presume to worry too much about social questions . . . but I must stop being carried away by this picture of his trotting along a primrose path of education enticingly into the blue distances. An educated man does not dwell in Utopia.

I can no longer put off a tedious reference to ideas of equality. I find it strange that these have never been pressed to their obvious conclusion. When will zealous levellers begin to propound the necessity of 'positively' handicapping those children who are unfairly equipped by virtue of birth or environment? Why should not Eton be turned into an establishment for de-education, all books banned? (Of course those who believed in 'relevance' as well as 'equality' might allow pupils to read a few old classics. Parallels with the operation of the 'double negative' would then arise.) Yet even under the most co-ercive system there will still be losers as well as winners. Who can the former then blame – God for having designed men so hideously unequal, or human beings for having designed such inefficient handicaps? The sum of resentment and envy is certainly not decreased. The chimera of social justice retreats further into the thickets, laughing. The population of educated men is more scattered than ever: Ausonius left alone in Bordeaux with his copy of Lucretius.

But if my desire to inhabit a world in which I can listen to conversation with educated men, in homes, books, newspapers and even on TV, was no more than an expression of present preference, then my remarks on the proper aim of education could be dismissed as frivolous. My contention goes beyond this. I believe that a world without the leaven of educated men ceases *ipso facto* to deserve the name of civilisation. Doubtless life in an age of barbarism may be still sustainable – as it has been in the past – a sane language, for example that of religion, may not altogether disappear. And, who knows, with the rediscovery of the humanities, civilisation *might* eventually reappear a second time. Courage!

But let me close on a less doom-laden note. The educated man should not, perhaps cannot, be too nicely defined. It is a question of an attitude, or style, which permeates and colours all the instincts, beliefs, thoughts, intentions and even emotions which make up the complex bundle of a human being. Confronted by problems, he tends to look, listen, enquire, consider, and discuss. In his own mind, at least, even if not necessarily in his outward behaviour, he will preserve a measure of humility, recognising that his education is never at an end, his ignorance bottomless. This is not to say that he is necessarily an intellectual at all. He may be employed in a factory, on a farm, his formal education may be slight; but he will try to refer his ideas and judgments to the discipline of such learning as he has, and continues to acquire. I do not pretend that this or any other description is exhaustive or complete; but I do claim that if the criterion is used, many of the practical problems relating to the organisation and syllabi of schools and universities, the training of teachers, the selection of pupils and so on will be more wisely and fruitfully discussed.

Multi-ethnic Intolerance

R. Honeyford

A growing number of Afro-Asian settler children are now in our schools. Their presence alongside indigenous children – working and playing together – presents a real opportunity to establish a society that is both multi-racial and free from racial prejudice. It is very difficult for either English or settler children to view each other as odd, much less as inferior, when they have grown up together. Exposure to the enormous range of natural variations within racial groups will prevent the growth of fixed ideas about group characteristics – the individual will be viewed as such, regardless of his origins or colour. But this great opportunity is in danger of turning into a multi-ethnic nightmare – created, in large part, by a new and insidious form of intolerance.

There is now within the education service a group of people who have been called 'the multi-ethnic brigade'. They claim to be concerned for the welfare and future of ethnic minorities; in practice their ideas do great damage to the minorities, by prompting a backlash from the overwhelming majority of tolerant teachers and parents. I suspect that at the heart of this group – which no doubt began with good, humane intentions – is the sort of extremism already well established in the feminist movement and in radical politics. Indeed adherents are invariably militant in all three areas. Anyone questioning the validity or wisdom of their ideology is dismissed as a 'racist' – a device which has two effects: the stifling of open and frank discussion, and the building up in the adversary of strong internal resentments. And yet the central ideas of this latter-day, inverted McCarthyism have only to be stated to be exposed as both questionable and dangerous.

For instance, I recently heard a volatile Sikh, whose anti-white prejudice was apparent to everyone but himself, passionately arguing not only for the teaching of Indian languages in English schools – a reasonable if, at the moment, impracticable suggestion – but for the use of a minority language as the medium of instruction. Now this is, quite simply, a prescription for linguistic chaos in the classroom. Moreover, it would seriously impede the acquisition of fluent English by Asian children – and English is the key to such a child's future in the Western work place. If the principle were conceded it would set a precedent, which would be used by the large number of other nationalities whose children have been in English

schools for generations. If Urdu is used for teaching, then why not Polish, Hungarian, Italian, German, or Hebrew? I cannot think of a measure more likely to create faction and confusion.

The assertion is also frequently made that the schools have a duty not simply to study other cultures as an aid to understanding – a process established in English schools long before Asia and West Indian immigration here – but to foster and maintain distinctive, foreign cultures in opposition to the majority culture. This notion is as impracticable as it is undesirable. The natural, organic location of a minority culture is outside the school, within the minority group itself – in the family and neighbourhood; a fact long since established by our successful Jewish, Polish, Hungarian and other communities, and already in evidence in Moslem neighbourhoods in Bradford and Birmingham.

We are also – if we are to pass muster – to teach all our pupils to denigrate the British Empire. This unbalanced view of history inconceivably overlooks the fact that the builders of the British Empire, despite their many sins, laid the foundations of our multi-ethnic society, by conferring British citizenship on people from Asia, Africa and the West Indies. As a result of this anti-British prejudice, the opportunity that our post-colonial, multifarious, society affords for tolerant and humane courses on the development of the British Commonwealth cannot be exploited.

The same intolerance is evidenced by the fanatical determination of multi-ethnic 'experts' to purge and satinise our school libraries. Gillian Klein, of the 'Centre for Urban Educational Studies' in London, has actually issued guidelines by which all books are to be judged. All existing books and other materials are to be rigorously examined, and weeded out if they fail the multi-ethnic purity test. And woe betide the author of any new book whose imagination strays from the multi-ethnic straight and narrow. Is the sort of mind which underlies this literary censoriousness likely to produce a wise and balanced policy for creating school libraries?

A fundamental of respect for racial minorities is reflected in the notion of 'positive discrimination' in education. According to this idea schools, universities and the professions should be compelled – by law if necessary – to accept lower standards from young black people; unaccountably, this does not appear to be necessary for youngsters whose skin happens to be brown or yellow. The purpose is to enable blacks to cope with the demands of a meritocracy. What an insult to the individual and his origins, and what a cast-iron method of confirming the prejudice of those psychologists who argue that blacks are intellectually inferior! The creation of a formally established second-rate citizenry could not be more effectively assured. Nor could the abolition of genuinely balanced multi-ethnic schools more reliably follow than from the multiracialist assault – via the so-called Commission for Racial Equality – on bussing. The Local Education Authorities' humane and sensible desire has been to create schools reflecting racial proportions in the populations. But this policy is certain to be replaced in many areas by the creation of mono-ethnic, minority schools. Such institutions are widely regarded, even by many 'immigrant' parents, as ghetto schools.

Worst of all this insidious movement's claims has been the assertion that black children suffer from some sort of defective 'self-concept' – an offensive and patronising myth effectively demolished by the West Indian sociologist Maureen Stone in her recent book, '*The Education of the Black Child in Britain: The Myth of Multiracial Education*'. The school, it has been claimed, is not only in large measure responsible for this mysterious aberration in the black child's psyche, it should also be charged with remedying it. This belief has issued in such absurdities as the seconding of an English teacher to the West Indies to learn Creole, in order to teach it on his return to London-born youngsters who, while knowing no Creole, happen to be black. The comparative failure of West Indian children to acquire basic educational skills and qualifications may be due to this sort of nonsense. In any case, the failure has been implicitly accepted by those concerned West Indian parents who have set up their own Saturday schools, institutions which teach the basic skills formally within a context of respect for authority – a concept correctly understood by the vast majority of West Indian parents as being central to the process of real education.

The multiculturists are a curious mixture: well-meaning liberals and clergymen suffering from a rapidly dating post-Imperial guilt; teachers building a career by jumping onto the latest educational bandwaggon; a small but increasing group of 'professional' Asian and West Indian intellectuals; and a hard-core of left-wing political extremists, often with a background of polytechnic sociology. They are united by two false and subversive notions: that we all ought to sentimentalise and patronise ethnic minorities, and that society has a duty to impose racial tolerance by government dictat. The same people often welcome race riots as signs of healthy revolt, rather than as the criminal violence of a small proportion of adolescent thugs, from both black and white communities. Such people insist that personal responsibility is a bourgeois archaism, and that people act criminally because of social or racial deprivation – a demonstrable and insulting fallacy in the British context. They are supported by an irrelevant, if not positively malign, quango (The 'Commission for Racial Equality'), by a huge ragbag of dubious voluntary organisations; and by a growing army of so-called 'advisers' hired by misguided authorities in order to prove their progressive intentions.

This movement is creating a wholly artificial and unhealthy colour consciousness in our schools. In those of us who believe in good relationships, high expectations, and the natural tolerance of children it is producing growing frustration and mute despair.

The Diary of Lord John Manners – Part I

'I, John James Robert Manners, being now within I year and six months of the mature age of 21, do from this time purpose to keep a kind of journal, not of each specific day, but in a more general manner for my own use and amusement'. Lord John Manners thus begins the diary which he kept intermittently for most of the rest of his life. The manuscript volumes remain in the library at Belvoir, and, while some extracts, inaccurately transcribed and eccentrically commented, have appeared in Charles Whibley's *Lord John Manners and his Friends* (1925), the bulk of the work has not before been published. By kind permission of the Duke of Rutland, we are now able to present long extracts from this fascinating journal, kept by a statesman whose modesty, lively imagination, and alert sympathy for others, made him one of the most endearing public figures of his time.

John Manners, second son of the fifth Duke of Rutland, was led into politics by a passionate concern to improve the conditions of the poor, and by a romantic vision of human community which he did not hesitate to describe as 'feudal'. His imagination, nurtured on the Oxford Movement and on the works of Scott, was profoundly at odds with the commercial spirit of 'political economy', and, when he joined with George Smythe, Alexander Cochrane-Baillie, and Benjamin Disraeli, to form the group which came to be known as the 'Young England Party', it was in order to revive that 'feudal principle' which its members had absorbed from Scott – the romantic ideal of a society bound by reciprocal obligations, tied to the land and the institutions that had grown from it, unharassed by poverty, and guided by genial customs and pious faith.

Manners looked first to the Church as a remedy to the social evils of his day. In his diary for August 5th 1841, he records his reaction to Thomas More's Utopia, which he read shortly after becoming Member for Newark:

> Finished More's Utopia – a very memorable book to be written by a man who died for the Roman Catholic faith. There is much in it to suggest melancholy reflections on our present state. I will not think that Property is wicked *per se*, or that it necessarily draws a curse with it, but it is a fearful consideration, how few there are among our richest men, who look on their property as a sacred trust for others, rather than for themselves. The more I think of it, the more am I convinced that the Church must rectify our evils – an Archbishop Laud, to make or mar, is wanted. If More could so deplore the overdue regard for wealth (disregarded as it was, more or less, unless allied to rank or birth) what would he say now to our manufacturers? Must they not be curbed? Would to God they could . . .

After his visit to Lancashire – described in these abstracts – Manners softened somewhat in his attitude to the 'millocrats' (as he called them). He was impressed by several responsible, and indeed 'feudal' employers. But he never lost his conviction that, without the active cooperation of the Church, and the foundation of religious institutions, the social disorder of the manufacturing towns could not be fully remedied.

It was not uncommon at the time to denigrate the idea of a feudal obligation between the factory baron and the industrial serf. And all such ideas continue to be dismissed by socialists as reactionary, sentimental, and uninformed by a consciousness of history. Nevertheless, their present influence upon the industrial economy of Japan shows them to be neither impractical nor unappealing. Manners was not a thinker, and his visit to the North, which was almost contemporaneous with the experiences that inspired Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England*, did not launch him on a lifetime of theoretical inquiry. Nevertheless his ideas are of greater application in our times than are those of the more brilliant German millocrat, precisely because he was not subject to the temptation to produce theories about a matter which no-one has really understood.

Manners recognised that, for practical purposes, there are not the three alternatives envisaged by the theoretical socialist – feudalism which binds, capitalism which exploits, and socialism which emancipates – but only two. Property is either constrained by an obligation to those who sustain it, or else freed to run riot in the world. Control by the state can prevent the second, but it cannot guarantee the first. This first arrangement – called feudalism by Manners – is one towards which we are again tending, with a chasened sense that the benefits of ownership are justly held only when held conditionally. And the primary condition is the responsiveness to obligation which Lord John Manners so eloquently extolled in his parliamentary speeches.

We have chosen our extracts to illustrate, both the various periods in Manners's political career – from the days of Young England to his ministerial post in Lord Salisbury's second administration – and the keen observations and warm sensitivity of a man for whom Tory politics was an offshoot of patriotism, and charity an extension of the love of life. We begin with the moment when he first entered the house of Commons. Manners was 23, energetic, charming, and frequently in love. He hunted, went to balls, and stayed in country houses, but

paid for his pleasures on his knees, with an unaffected religious devotion that remained with him to the end of his life.

1841. March 12th. Wednesday. Debate on sugar duties still going on. Clear and eloquent speech of Gladstone's. What a role that man has to play, an he have the pluck. I now often think if they who have so much learning & genius & application do in effect so little, who am I to hope for success or fame? Courage no doubt will go far, but have I even that sufficiently?

Sunday June 6th. After much haggling I am to stand for Newark; the Cambridgeshire people will not or cannot raise any money, and £600 is all that is wanted for Newark. Wrote an address and sent it down two days ago. Gladstone[1] and I to stand together, but there are many conflicting interests, so great care must be taken not to offend the different magnates who I can see hate each other like cat and dog. *England's Trust*[2] has been favourably reviewed by *The Times*.

Sunday 20th. We finished our canvass yesterday, having met with almost unanimous kindness. One woman, to be sure, when I offered to shake hands, said 'No Sir, a good blue will not shake hands with a red and a good red will not shake hands with a blue'.[3] At close of canvass a goodly procession was formed, and we marched, band playing and flags flying, round the town, and then spoke from Clinton Arms. Gladstone at some length and seriously on Corn Laws; so I tried the facetious and succeeded pretty well. Dined tête-a-tête with Gladstone, and had a long argument with him over 1688, which was stopped by a blue band with one flag marching through the market place and giving faint groans under the window; and then we were called to the committee room to hear the result of the canvass.

Wednesday 30th. Monday nomination; dull, showery day; very nervous; had prepared a speech, but forgot whole links of it. Gladstone spoke well, but not quite so well as I expected. Hobhouse much too long, but clever in parts. Show of hands in his and Gladstone's favour. I forgot to say on Sunday, after morning service, we (G. and self) walked to a village called Hawton, some 2 miles from Newark, which was once a town; beautiful Parish Church, and unencumbered with pews: on each side of the altar is a beautiful shrine with the richest tracery, but spoilt with white-wash. A right jovial farmer – Sampey – made us sit in his pew – one of the very few in the Church. There was a Baptism and the Clergyman preached a good, plain sermon on the subject. Had much conversation with G. *The Tablet* has a very long article headed 'Election Tactics of Ld John Manners'. Clever, outrageous, and unfair. *The Spectator* a sharp review of Poems, and *The Argus* a favouring one. Gladstone does not agree with Newman in thinking Romanism offers scope for awe, reverence, &c, and asserts – too much, I think, on German authority – that it tends directly to weaken the conscience and degrade men to beasts. On poor laws we are much together, both looking to the Church as the proper remedy. On Sunday an uncomfortable dinner at Lawton's: the committee of course anxious and hurried; in the evening a row took place in the market place; one fellow seriously hurt. Yesterday woke nervous and fidgetty; at 8 went into Town Hall booth, and round into others – from 1st no reason to fear. I was ahead till 3 o'clock, when Gladstone equalled me, and at 4, the numbers were: Gladstone 633, Manners 630, Hobhouse 394. So much for my first electioneering attempt. We then thanked the electors, and I did that well. In the morning Pack, Cattle, and a host of tenants came in, prepared to guard the voters, and about midday a fight did take place and many windows were smashed in the market place, but it was soon ended. . . .

Monday August 23rd. Came to town on Saturday: went to Lady Cawdor's in the evening; felt nervous and stiffish: what a picture of laughing innocence is Lady Elizabeth – I could gaze on her sunshine face forever, and to think that she must rub and be rubbed by the dirty selfish world! Yesterday was a remarkable day for me. My sins stood up very promiscuously before me. I went to Margaret Chapel and received the sacrament in a penitent mind – then read a sermon of Newman's and went to St James's Church. Brookfield preached a startling sermon on 'Thy sin shall find thee out'. I suffered agony: remorse, fear of worldly discovery, which may come, like a thunderclap, when all is bright and hopeful; and a sort of feeling that I shall never conquer myself almost maddened me, & in going out I came upon Lady C. and March; this quite upset me. I said something so incoherently that I believe she saw I was in a state, and told me she would see me if I would call. I left them in a short manner, and very nearly ran home into my bedroom, where I fell on my knees and prayed. I never felt so keenly before; oh how truly are 'our pleasant vices scourges to flog ourselves withal' – Took a long walk with Ralph Neville in Kensington Gardens and got quite composed again. Dined with Emmiline. John Wortley is to prepare amendments to the Address. Wortley talked sensibly about Peel's difficulties, but I think a loan, which he looks to, is a great fallacy; 'tis but a staving off of the evil day. Heard this morning from Ellison, who says "many eyes" are on me: ah me! if people could only see the weakness and littleness of those they think great! I am now trembling like a child going to plunge into cold water for the first time, and see nothing but doubt & difficulty & contradiction on every side.

Took my seat: a dreadful oath to be swallowed, which I could not have taken some years ago, about renouncing the Stuarts;[4] now it's a mere dead letter, and ought to be abolished. Smythe came into the House just as I had sworn; we walked back together and sate with Hope some time discussing things; then walked in Kensington Gardens; he is entirely for toleration of all sorts – Grant to Maynooth,[5] against Educational Extension, etc; agreed when I said that must be on the principle that the defensive alliance between Church and State is at an end, and repeal of Mortmain, and other Church-clogging laws, must follow. Up to this year 1841 all that has been done has been done by the State – *Ecclesia Recalcitrante*. Smythe told me something about Miss Wyndham, which grieved

me, for I think her a truthful girl. Dined with the Wortleys.

Wednesday 23rd. . . . called in Portland Place, and sat some time alone with her, in whom, after all, I believe my affections are entered, blushing up to the tip of my hair when the Duke with my father, who were in the next room, came in. To the House with Smythe. Henry Baillie slashed the manufacturers, with arguments too, proving from returns that, as the exportations of manufacturers increased, so did the wages decrease, while the deaths are fearfully augmented. Grattan made a speech worthy of poor Power, which convulsed us all. . . .

[On September 9th Manners went with Cochrane to Bridport to support him in his election campaign there – Cochrane was later elected unopposed. Manners took the opportunity to visit a flax mill:]

Friday 17th September. . . . went over a flax mill. Very interesting, and got some little insight into the state of manufacturing affairs. Mr Roberts, the proprietor, inveighed against Lord Ashley's bill,[6] and appealed to the appearance of the girls in his mill, which was certainly healthy – but their stature struck me as stunted; they earn from 6 to 9d a day. Men are only employed in the first operation, called hackling, which is pulling the flax through pricks of iron – the men get 2s 6d a day, but they had all been out of work for 16 weeks this year. Hoskins gave a supper party to about 40 people, and I pitched in my notion of a more cordial union between the different classes, which pleased the farmers, who are in truth the strength of England at the moment. Played the tomfool with some pretty, languishing girls, the manufacturer's daughters. . . .

[In October Manners and Smythe went to Lancashire to see the Cotton Mills. A fascinating account of Manners's encounter with the brothers Grant (portrayed by Dickens as the brothers Cheeryble in *Nicholas Nickleby*) has been printed by Whilbye. We take up the narrative on the following day].

Wednesday (28th October). Up early, and off with Henderson in a carriage to breakfast at Hyde, 6 miles off, with Mr Ashton, one of the richest Whig Millocrats in Lancashire: a jolly, unassuming, clear-headed, and kind-hearted man, his son accomplished and gentleman-like. Mr Ashton's, like Packall's and the Grants', is a colony of his own, and he is lord and master of it all; the system is perfect, and more powerful and compact than Feudalism in its palmiest days. After a capital breakfast, we walked first into the schools, of which there are 3: infant, boys, and girls. Those under 13 who work in the mill work 6 hours, and give 3 others to school: the girls were remarkably clean, fine-skinned and healthy looking – and the boys intelligent, fine Saxon-looking fellows. We then went into several of the cottages, which are admirable: 2 rooms on each floor, with a back yard, an unlimited supply of water in each kitchen, and coals within a hundred yards. The rent of each is 3s per week, which is stopped out of the wages every fortnight, Ashton paying taxes, rates, repairs, and having furnished the cottage with all the fixtures. One cottage we entered was that of a woman from Hampshire with 10 children. When she came, when asked if she would like to go back, she shook her head, laughed, and said no. She was cooking dinner for her children when they should come out of the mill – it was beef and potatoes. The average of wages here too is 12s. Deduct 3s for rent – 9s per head remains, or, taking 3 as working in a house, 27s per week. Mr Ashton gave a bad account of the agricultural labourers introduced in '34 – no doubt they were the worst specimens; he complained much of Lord Ashley's conduct in never going near any of the best mills, and getting his information from the worst sort of Radicals. In talking of the rise of foreign manufactures, and the export of machinery, he said, 'I don't care for all that; let us only keep our Englishmen at home, I care not for all the rest. They are the best, most honest and industrious men in the world, and if kindly treated will do anything, and when treated otherwise, when they turn and kick, I can't say they are wrong.' I did not find the atmosphere in any of his rooms oppressive, and A. assured us that the process which requires the greatest heat (that where the cloth is starched) is favourable to consumptive cases, and that he has rarely a case of illness among his people; as to their leaving off work from ill health early he pointed out a man who he said was at work in the mill when he [presumably Ashton] was born. On the whole I am disposed to rate very highly Mr Ashton, his humanity, sound sense, moderation, and good English feeling. After partaking of some lunch, and thanking our host most warmly for his hospitality, we got into our carriage and drove off, as we fondly imagined, to Stockport. A drive of an hour and a half brought us to a town. 'Is this Stockport?' – 'No sir, this be Hoyde' – the very place we had started from! Another hour brought us to that city of the dead, at the beginning of which we left our vehicle, and wandered through the deserted streets. Cobden had said that he should soon be without constituents, and with truth. Every fourth house was closed. As we gazed on this mournful sight, a fellow in a fustian jacked cried out, 'Do you want a borough gentlemen? This is to be let or sold.' The great Church bell was tolling, and that funereal sound was all we heard. We walked into the Church: very noble plain old Gothic, with beautiful pillars: a huge pulpit and reading desk in the centre of the chancel with back to the altar, and no pew seats. Got into the railroad back to Manchester, and to Grants' warehouse; bought a roll of stuff for summer waistcoats at 6d a piece.

Thursday (29th October). Left Manchester directly after breakfast for Bolton, where Mr Ashworth, the Quaker who had the dispute with Sir R. Peel, met us. We stopped in one of the more retired streets to satisfy ourselves of the real state of this town; I almost wish we had not done so: we soon met a half-starved man with a sort of tray, accompanied by his wife. He was a weaver, who had been earning his 2 or 3 shillings a day, now for some time trying to sell salt. We relieved him and set out again. Next we fell upon an intelligent handloom weaver, who in answer to our questions said he would take us first to his own house, and then to some of his neighbours. He was content with his fortune, for he was still making 7s per week, and his wife about half that sum, as their style of work was fancy. But in a lane we then entered, what an

awful tale of distress did every cottage tell! In no one of the dozen houses we went into was there a blanket, and in some no fires. In the bedrooms upstairs an old mattress would be all the furniture and bedding of a family. One woman, who seemed to be a shade better off, when asked what had become of her blanket, said she sold it last week for 4d, after she had gone without food for two days. In one of the most desolate stood a portable pulpit, and from this in the cold evenings the hapless wretches, who had lost all hope on earth, and against whom the Church doors are shut, would try to win some comfort. We did what we could to relieve them, and as we left each cottage, some squalid, haggard being would rush up, and pray us to visit his or her misery. Yet in all this we heard no threats, hardly a murmur; they had got a stage beyond active despair. A few were getting a shilling or so from the Poor Laws, but many, having no legal claim, were utterly destitute. We ended our tour of horrors in a little provision shop hard by, the owner of which declared that penn'orths of bread and potatoes were the articles she now deals in. We stood by and watched the people as they came to buy their dinner: the woman's account was quite true: one mother of 6 children bought 1½d of potatoes and 1d of bread as her's and their dinner – and so it went on. We gave something to each, and left the town. 'Now,' said Mr Ashworth, 'you have seen with your own eyes in what state the people are'. He laid it all to the aristocrats and their Corn Law. His mill is very prettily situated, with the largest water-wheel in the world: it is 180 feet in circumference, 60 feet high, 30 wide, revolves nearly three times a minute. His average of wages is rather lower than those given by the other great manufacturers – being 9s. His cottages are rather larger than those of Ashton, and half a dozen we entered were filled with comforts: chests of drawers full of good clothes, and the bedrooms upstairs beautifully clean. Several of these families were earning £3 a week; teetotalism prevails a good deal. Ashworth evidently took great pride and pleasure in the comfortable condition of his people, and more than once said: 'yes – and all these must be ruined to suit the pockets of the landlord.' He would not hear of Peel doing anything for them, averring he was entirely in the hands of the aristocrats, and spoke with great bitterness of Lord Ashburton and all the other noblemen he had seen in London in the spring. He expressed pleased surprise when I told him of Beasley's language at Waltham. His great argument is, that corn in England has a natural protection of 40s – as land is let at £1 per acre, an acre will produce 4 quarters; and the freight of imported corn is 10s, thus on every acre is there a natural protection of £2. In all the rooms in the Mill are placed thermometers. I looked at one, it stood at 65 (I think) – 70 is the highest they permit. He pays away £1700 a week in wages and has about 4000 mouths dependent on him. Said that not more than 10,000 agricultural labourers came in '34-5 altogether. I spoke to one who came from Suffolk, and asked him if he ever ate any bread there not of fine wheat. He answered me no. Saw 3 Chartist papers lying about. The school here was more wonderful than that at Hyde. First came an examination in geography; boys remarkably perfect: then questions in summing – which must have been rote-work; answers to all manner of difficult problems, almost before the questions were put; but sums in addition were all fairly added up, with a quickness truly surprising. The girls work beside: one pretty little agricultural product was brought up to show us her proficiency in sewing. I confess I'm rather alarmed at all this hotbed intellect – there, however, it is, and we must make the best of it. Among other queries, by the way, the Master put this: 'What remarkable man was born in Bethlehem?' On my saying to Mr A, that he was the most despairful of, and went further than, all his friends that we had seen, he answered bitterly. 'I have 10 children growing up, and can I bear to see them ruined to keep the purses of the landlords full?' We dined with him at 3. He has a nice house on a pretty elevation; had to take Mrs A – a quiet Quakeress – into dinner; grace was said by each one in silence; asked her to drink wine with me, which she seemed to think wrong. However, it all did very well, and at 5 we, including Mr A, were railroading it to Liverpool. He drank tea with us, and argued, giving us his account of the quarrel between Sir R. Peel and himself. He said that Sir R. put up with language from Smith that no man of spirit would have borne; Smythe in surprise said 'Why, you would not have had him call him out?' – 'I'd have had him do whatever society recognises to be right' – a bellicose Quaker truly! I take it from the general tenor of his talk that he is one of those who would wage inextinguishable war against Agriculture, looking on Manufactures as the 'summum bonum' – of course then with him no satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at. And so ended our week's tour in Lancashire, during which we saw a great deal to be wondered at and thought upon. This is clear: nothing but monastic institutions can Christianize Manchester and the large manufacturing towns, where the Church seems to be on hardly as favourable a ground as all sorts of dissent.

[There follows a visit to Ireland, to which we will refer in a subsequent issue, when illustrating Manners's life-long connection with Irish affairs]

Monday December 6th. A long vaccum, which I spent in reading, writing and hunting. . . . De Tocqueville interests me much: can it be as he says, and as I often fear, that in a few years republicanism will be triumphant in Europe? He averrs that all the benefits and sanctions of, and good old prejudices for, monarchy are gone or going, that Religion itself has lost its power over men's hearts, and that democracy is the only element left of order upon earth. This is unquestionably in great part true: perhaps more true of France than of England, but still true of us also. But what if it be possible to restore old feelings, old ties, old benefits? At any rate, the attempt is gloriously worth making, and it is being made now these ten years by the Oxford men, and those who in any way agree with them. There are plenty of materials still, if our aristocracy could be brought to see their danger and the sole means of avoiding it.

Sunday December 12th. . . . de Tocqueville ends with discussing the probable fates of the Indians and the Negroes: for the former he sees nothing but destruction,

for the latter, at some time or other, Empire in the South, unless the North will think it worth while to join the whites and keep them under by arms. '*Sera tamen tacitis poena venit pedibus*'. Read the Port Royal article in *The Critic*, by young [blank] who wrote the letters to *The Universe*. It is interesting, but the question of miracles comes up again in that. What is one to think? That they were preeminently pure and holy in the midst of a sinful country is beyond doubt. (Madame de Sévigné calls it an Eden, a Paradise). Still one's old habits of doubt come in the way of one's belief. That contest is waxing fiercer and fiercer. I fear things will come to an open rupture: there are rumours that Newman has been to Ascott, and has separated from Pusey, and is going over. Heaven forfend. I thank God that at present I am tolerably settled. When I think of what England is, what her Manufactures are, how entirely separated the different interests and classes are, and what I am – ambition goes to the winds and I could cry with sorrow and despair: then I brace myself up again and swear to brave it all.

Friday, last day of 1841. . . . Fortescue (Abrington, I should say), has written to me a long letter, expressing his sorrow at my non-conversion by Taylor, and entering fully into some of the celibacy arguments. We agree in the necessity of introducing into some of our large towns some religious agency other than the parochial system. I would have religious houses, he unbound young men etc. Lyttleton writes me word that Gladstone has withdrawn from the Jerusalem B. affair, and that a synod of Bishops is to be assembled, against which Hope has published a legal pamphlet: the clouds are waxing blacker.

18th January 1842. . . . Came back to Belvoir on Monday 17th on which day a large party came – Duke of Cambridge, Prince George &c – Croker[7] among others. Had one or two talks with him. He looks on the Oxford men as insane except Pusey, whom he praised. Said he was 'Puseyite up to no. 30'[8] I said he must allow that all who held Church Principles of any kind owed a debt of gratitude to the whole set. No he answered, I do not allow it. Nay, I replied, had it not been for them, who would have propounded Church Principles at all? 'Humble layman as I am,' he said 'the articles I wrote in The Quarterly were sufficient – they stopped the calls for innovation in the liturgy'. I answered that people wanted some more tangible visible guides than anonymous articles, however just or clever. Croker then said that his consolation was in thinking that all who had distinguished themselves by going far were mad. I asked if he thought Newman mad? C. replied: no, he did not.

Monday 3rd February. . . . In afternoon with Cochrane to St Pauls, which I had never seen. To my taste, barring space which is noble, proportions which are faultless, it is miserable as a church, and vile as a Cathedral. The windows are those of a factory, the architecture bastard Grecian, with pilasters and arches; the choir is deficient in all ecclesiastical beauty, the altar is hid – a common glass-paned window comes down almost to it, and as for the rest of this vast pile, what is it?

Thursday 17th. Keep this journal I can't. The whirl of politics is unceasing. I am reading in the morning Scott's *Napoleon*. On Monday began the Corn Law debate. The first act closed at ½ past 2 this morning, 349 voting with Peel, 226 for Lord John Russell's fixed duty. During the 3 days I spent 30 hours in or about the house, which enabled me to keep Lent, as far as abstinence goes, very well, though I am very fagged with it. Lord John's was a fine speech; I compare him and his situation to Mounier (?) and his. Gladstone followed him in a very masterly manner. Nearly all the speeches on the other side ended with gloomy forebodings, or violent threats. Williams, the M for Coventry, advised us to reflect on the conduct of the French aristocracy in '90, and asked, where were they in 5 years? Certainly I see much resemblance in the situations: if our aristocracy does not set itself to work, and become really the great head and guide of the people, as under a modern Feudalism, I cannot hope for a long quiet. But then, we must go back, not forwards. Roebuck made a wonderful speech last night, in which he attributed our evils to Pitt's policy &c. I say go further back – to 1688. Then began the system of debt, of ruinous foreign wars, of taxes, of high protecting corn laws, and a general abandonment of the old notions of headship and Feudalism. Peel made a sensible, weighty speech, and with a flowery declamation from Palmerston it ended. Both Smythe and myself got up to speak, but failed to catch the Speaker's eye. All this turmoil interferes sadly with my religious duties . . .

Monday March 14th. Made rather an ass of myself on Friday. Had prepared some finished sentences about a proposal of Napier's to reduce the proposed West India Bishopries from 3 to 2. House worn out with Peel's exposé, and I got flustered. Peel spoke for 3 hours and a half. It was interesting to watch people's faces, especially of the opposition, when he announced an income tax. Ward nearly jumped with delight; many of them looked highly pleased. I don't pretend to understand these matters, but the general principle of taxing the rich, and letting the poor go free, is quite right. All incomes under 150 a year exempted. . . .

Tuesday. Debate last night on Ward's motion for enquiry into burdens on land. A very telling speech from Cobden, whose style is much softened. He said, and most truly, that for the last 200 years all that had been wrested from the Crown had gone to the landowners. It is something for him to have found this out. I take it to be undeniable that as power is weakened and diffused, so are the poor disregarded. The Queen now takes no part in governing, is not expected to interfere in behalf of the poor: government has passed from her, nominally to the people, virtually to that part which has time, wealth, and talent. Power too, feudal power, has passed from the aristocracy. They have nothing to do with any but their immediate dependents; if they pay their debts, taxes and servants, nothing more is expected of them. Thus, 'ravished by the whistling of a name', the poor are disregarded. Have finished 'Sublime and Beautiful',[9] and read two or three of Burke's letters. They strengthen my notions. In one, to Mr Elliott, he avows his belief that something out of the common must be done, that republican aggression must be met with republican opposition: is not this just our

case? I wish I had courage and talent to throw myself at the head of those who, as O'Brien said t'other day, fight for the poor while asserting more power to Church and Throne. Did not dine yesterday.

Thursday July 7th. . . . Disraeli wishes us to form a party, with certain general principles, not to interfere with acceptance of office. He says even 6 men acting together would have great weight. I think a good deal about our present and possible future state; perhaps there never was a House of Commons in which there was so many young talent frittered away. For myself, I fairly own I'm cowed. For the future: a dire commotion. Faber's conversation with me in St John's Glen in '38 seems approaching a reality – shall we be the better for it? Some days ago came home from the Duchess of Buccleugh's breakfast with Gladstone. He said he had no faith at all in political remedies, that it all depended on the Church, and on this hope he seemed sanguine. How strange it was to hear the man who night after night had been gallantly and earnestly battling for his new political creeds, quietly admitting them to be 'nauci, nihil, pili'. Does Peel think the same?

October 21st (at Willey). . . . Smythe has written me what he truly calls an important letter, announcing to me the formation of a new party which for some months has been agitated, the idea of which was fostered by the Fourier scheme. At Paris he, Cochrane, and Disraeli agreed that they and myself should form an esoteric party, to decide a course to be taken on all important political questions, to sit together and vote together in the house. I note this down, for if we succeed, and Smythe seems sanguine, or if we fail, which I think very likely, it will be equally amusing. This then is the germ of our party: no particular principle but a hotch potch, each surrendering his own to the majority.

[Earlier (4th October) he had noted: Faber has written dissuading me from forming a party in the house of commons, advising patience. I think he is right, but I shall be much guided by Smythe – what they do, I will].

Monday 7th (November). . . . Cochrane and Disraeli seem rather going ahead. He writes word that they have settled down upon Walter as our leader, whereupon I have today fired off a letter strongly against so stupid a choice. Lyttleton has told me much; says that Gladstone means not to notice any objectionable speeches or plans of individual members of government, but when any cabinet measure which he cannot agree to is persisted in, to resign office. Perhaps he is right, though I wish he would throw himself more into the front of the battle than he seems inclined to.

Further extracts in the next issue.

Notes

1. Gladstone was at that time the rising hope of the 'stern, unbending Tories'.
2. Manners's first book of poems, in which occur the unfortunate lines:
   Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
   But leave us still our old Nobility.
   These lines were to be used against Manners on a hundred election platforms, and helped to defeat him when he opposed Rothschild in the City of London. By 'nobility', of course, he meant, not the rank and privilege of the class to which he belonged, but a frame of mind which he reproached his class for jettisoning.
3. A 'True blue' was a Whig, while in Manners's day, red was the colour for the Tories.
4. Manners's romantic admiration for the Stuarts was of a piece with his view that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 represented the overthrow of England's legitimate order, and the introduction of an unbridled commercialism which had brought ruin to its people.
5. The Royal Catholic College of Maynooth, founded by an Act of the Irish parliament in 1795, and the chief seminary for the education of Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland. The wider issue was the general one of religious toleration towards the Catholics.
6. The Ten Hour Bill, which Lord Ashley (Later 7th Earl of Shaftesbury) unsuccessfully introduced into the Commons in 1841, and which was finally adopted, after strenuous efforts by Ashley and Manners, in 1847.
7. John Wilson Croker, (1780–1857), Tory statesman and man of letters, leading contributor to *The Quarterly Review*, and at the time an ardent supporter of Peel.
8. Presumably no. 30 of *Tracts for the Times*.
9. Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*.

The Career of Politics

Robert Cranborne

The science of psephology is reaching new levels of sophistication. Desperate to discover what he should but does not yet know about his constituency, every Member of Parliament is rushing to his bookseller to buy Robert Waller's 'Almanack of British Politics'. A very good read it is too, and a distinguished contribution to the analytical as opposed to synthetic approach to politics.

In a way it is a shame that Mr Waller's book is so very good. Politicians have become increasingly obsessed with analysis since the war and less and less with synthesis. Nowhere has this become more apparent than in the work of Parliament. We live in the age of the specialist and the House of Commons has not escaped the effects of this. Thirty years ago, the Shadow Cabinet did not exist.

Opposition front benches tended to pursue the subjects which they found interesting, although there was no convention which prevented them from suddenly making a speech about foreign policy after twenty years' concentration on the price of corn.

Now things are rather different; and who could argue that the complexities of modern life, and in particular the perpetually flowing statistics, do not warrant our abandoning our former dilettantism? At the same time, however pleased we may be at our new-found professionalism, the drugs which we take in order to appear boundlessly energetic are having some rather curious side-effects.

To begin with we must swallow a great deal of raw information. There is so much of it, indeed, that in order to be able to speak with any authority on any subject a Member of Parliament feels he must specialise in it to the virtual exclusion of everything else. Let us suppose, for example, that he decides, rather quixotically for there are no votes in it except in moments of crisis, on Foreign Affairs. He may have travelled a bit. He may even be something of an expert already. He embarks on his self-appointed task with enthusiasm. He already subscribes to *Le Monde* and *Frankfurter Algemeine Zeitung*, to *The New York Times* and one or two other American newspapers, as well as to *The Economist* and most of the 'heavy' press. However, he feels that perhaps he ought also to read *Foreign Affairs* and the other specialist periodicals; he accordingly adds them to his reading list. A little practical experience, too, might seem advisable. He would like to meet the Foreign Affairs establishment, and therefore joins Chatham House; he tries to secure an invitation to a conference at Ditchley or Wilton Park. He begins to haunt diplomatic receptions and if he is a Bennite Socialist or a Social Democrat and therefore rich enough to have a smart house in one of the more accessible parts of London he will begin to ask distinguished foreigners to lunch and dine. In the House of Commons he will ask questions at question time designed to impress his audience with the depth of his knowledge and the range both of his acquaintance and of his travels. In due course his assiduity receives its just reward, and he accepts an invitation either to stand for election as an officer of his party's back bench Foreign Affairs Committee or to become a member of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. He will find, too, that he is beginning to travel on Parliamentary delegations to countries of whose importance he had previously been blissfully unaware. On his return from touring Ruritania with half a dozen of his colleagues, shaking hands with the highest official available and touring the new prize widget factory, he immediately becomes one of the House's recognised experts on Ruritanian affairs. In fact he is beginning to become a specialist within his speciality.

This development receives distinct encouragement as he becomes aware of the vastness of his chosen field. Every one knows something about the U.S.A. and the Middle East. He either must know more than they or else find a more esoteric part of the world to study. The first alternative needs money and time (Parliamentary delegations rarely provide the opportunity for detailed study or long solo conversations with important foreigners) and the second means little chance of glory. Ruritania may shake a good Slivovitz cocktail but it is only once in three generations that it shakes the world.

Besides, there are other calls on our Member's time. The Chief Whip requires his presence, particularly for running whips during the long summer slog. So does his wife. If he is a Conservative he will almost certainly have needed one in order to get an interview at any selection conference. Finally, of course, there is his constituency. He naturally loves it dearly, whether it be glorious Dorset or the grimy East End. It must be filled with unusually perspicacious people because not only did at least a plurality of them vote for him, but some of them listen to what he has to say. This is more than the House of Commons does if he can ever catch the Speaker's eye, or the national press or radio, who are more interested in the political views of show business personalities than of professional politicians. More importantly, he can sometimes achieve something in his constituency. There he is a biggish fish. Most of the councillors are rather idle and so his constituents write to him and come to see him more and more about council matters. A word in the right ear can sometimes settle something that has been making an old lady miserable for years. He begins to acquire a reputation for getting things done and his duties multiply as do his 'surgery' patients. All in all he begins to spend more and more time in his constituency and wonders whether those of his colleagues who do not are fit to be Members of Parliament. It is perhaps the only part of his job he does well.

As the calls on his time multiply, he becomes more of a specialist in the House. He also takes on staff. He already has a secretary. He now acquires a research assistant. The amount of paper he shifts is phenomenal. The hours he puts in are a testament to his stamina, to his wife's patience and to the soundness of his examiners' judgment when they awarded him his good second or, what is increasingly likely statistically, his first.

There is, however, one small difficulty. In spite of his efforts and those of his equally eager colleagues, the Mother of Parliaments is creaking in her joints. Never has she been more full of intelligent, honest and hard-working citizens. Never have her Members been better informed or had more staff, or been more highly paid. Never have more specialist committees shadowed government departments more assiduously. But never have politicians been held in less respect and never have they commanded less enthusiasm from the electorate.

Why? Part of the answer lies in the fact that the world is changing rapidly. In particular, Parliament and the government which is responsible to it, have far less control that they used to have over the events which affect the British people. The theory of absolute sovereignty becomes daily less cogent as the nations of the world become more inter-dependent, and the ship of state is rocked by the storms of international politics.

Part of the answer, however, also lies in the nature of Parliament itself and its function. In the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries it was widely assumed that the House of Commons had a single major function, which was to vote supply in exchange for the reddress of grievances. The House of Lords then represented the great concentrations of power in the country, and Parliament as a whole could be seen as the forum where power was broked. The nation looked to Parliament as the crucible of politics, the place where powers were held aloft, ceremonially measured, and magically fused.

Things have changed. Power no longer resides exclusively in Parliament, although Parliament still possesses great residual power. Some very powerful interests are not represented there. Some – from the government in its many forms, to international companies and trades unions – do not need to be, in order to exercise their influence. The House of Lords has become an elegant debating and revising chamber, the House of Commons merely one of the ladders whereby the ambitious climb to power. Of course, both Houses have always possessed these attributes. The difference now is that, whatever constitutional theory may say to the contrary, Parliament is no longer sovereign. It shares its power increasingly with others.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that an increasing number of the young Members of the House of Commons on the government side want so desperately to become ministers. Only as ministers, it seems, can they use their abilities to any great effect. Only as ministers, they think, can they exercise power so as to improve the lot of their fellow countrymen. They therefore bend their energies towards political advancement. The first step is to impress the fount of all junior patronage: the Government Chief Whip. Members therefore slave to impress in all the ways described above. Some of them succeed and, after their moment of glory at Number Ten, settle back into their ministerial cars and begin to exercise power.

Or do they? It is a curious phenomenon that as the power of Parliament has declined, so the number of ministers has risen. In 1920, when the United Kingdom ruled a quarter of the earth and acted as the arbiter of the fate of nations, there were 8 ministers. Her Majesty's Government now enjoys the services of 105.

What do they do, all these Ministers of State, waiting for Cabinet rank, all these earnest Under-Secretaries of State on their way to higher things? They are hardly idle. Rather the reverse: they never stop opening by-passes, answering adjournment debates, chairing committees. They are busy because they are kept busy by their civil servants. With less to do they might begin to think. That would not help their department. Without office they might begin to make trouble on the back benches. That would inconvenience the Chief Whip. They must therefore be given office and be kept busy.

The trouble is that there are more young men with ideas than even the inflated number of junior ministerial jobs can accommodate. Hence, the Whips have a reserve power of patronage to call on: the ambivalent position of Parliamentary Private Secretary. Except in rare circumstances this involves little work, but it holds the promise of office, and ties the incumbent to the government. The number of P.P.S.'s has therefore increased dramatically, with the Whips' active encouragement and approval.

The net result is that Parliament becomes exclusively an avenue for advancement. If you subtract the payroll vote (Ministers and P.P.S.'s) from the total of government supporters in the House of Commons there remain a few loyal government men, retired ministers resigned to their lot, a minority faction who hope for office under a new leadership, together with a lunatic fringe and a few independent spirits. What is so remarkable is that this rump can still worry the government, despite the fact that so many of the brightest and best hold office.

Paradoxically, this is perhaps a measure of the weakness of the Parliamentary system in its present form. After all, the Government's prestige depends on unquestioning obedience. If it did not, a smaller majority in a minor vote, let alone a defeat, would not worry the government whips as much as it does. Parliament has in fact become so weak as an independent body that the Government requires absolute obedience from its nominal supporters.

This begins to explain the increased power of the Whips Office, both in the Parliamentary Party and as a stepping stone of preferment. Until the late 1950's the Chief Whip and his minions were the servants of the Party. Now it is rare for Ministers with a future to achieve office under a Conservative Government, without first passing through the Whip's Office. Indeed, the Office of Chief Whip has become a passort to the very top. How useful it is, the old sweats explain, to know the nuts and bolts of Parliamentary procedure. Perhaps; but what has really happened is that the way to the top is beginning to reflect the decline in the power of Parliament and the increase in the power of government. The new masters need an instrument to deliver the approval of Parliament, and the power to approve is Parliament's residual privilege. That instrument is the Whips' Office. If government is to retain its power then the instrument must not fail. Hence the Government Whips' Office is the only efficient political machine in the House of Commons.

It is a matter for conjecture as to whether the decline in the power of Parliament is a good or a bad thing. Traditionalists and romantics might deplore it, and they may be right. What is surely indisputable is that an atrophy now infects our nominally Parliamentary system of government. This must inevitably have a corrosive effect on the liberties which Parliament alone can protect. The Whips' Office will be compelled to fudge crucial issues, exchanging representation for executive efficiency. The inevitable disillusion of the electorate will infect those who now seek power through the cultivation of the inessential. They will find that under this system they will easily achieve office but rarely acquire influence. The Ancien Regime in France found the same. It was the hardening of the arteries in a time of change that led to the overthrow of the system, and not the revolutionary fervour of the Jacobins.

The House of Commons may be past saving. However, if British representative government is to survive, the House of Commons must acquire a greater influence on

the exercise of power. Mr St. John-Stevas and many other Members argue that one way is to develop the new system of select committees. They may be right; if they are, then Parliament may be nearer salvation than sometimes appears. However, the select committees concern themselves with policy, not with power. Perhaps that is why they seem to shun the central issues of policy in favour of the smaller details, upon which committees that consist of members of more than one party can still agree. They are also developing a corporate view of their chosen subjects, which closely approximates to that of the Ministries whose shadows they are.

It is not the business of Members of Parliament to agree except in the joint pursuit of power. Upon such an unworthy synthesis is constructed good Parliamentary government. Further pursuit of the analytical approach will encourage Parliament to become more and more the ceremonial accompaniment of government, rather than the guardian of the nation's liberties.

Paradoxically, the House of Commons might recover its role as the fount of power by reducing its numbers. Six hundred and fifty Members need to be occupied. Four hundred might concentrate on essentials. A House of Commons with four hundred Members could hardly sustain as many ministers, let alone P.P.S.'s, as six hundred and fifty. Four hundred constituencies might induce councillors to do more, and so relieve the load on Members of Parliament. Four hundred Members might concern themselves more with power than with the minutiae of policy. Sadly it will never happen. The great Lord Salisbury was a true Tory and therefore a pessimist. There is at least one of his descendants who sees no more reason for optimism now than his forbear did in 1890.

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Thinkers of the Left: Raymond Williams

Roger Scruton

No outlook is more profoundly attached than is British Socialism, to the place and process from which it has grown, or to historic occasions enshrined in myth and memory. The idea of history, which is common currency in left wing movements, here takes on a dramatic meaning. While Marx, Engels and Lenin showed an enormous interest in the past, they were adamant that they had no attachment to it; their lust for action fed upon a vision of the future, and nothing earlier than the future could sustain it. The influential parts of Marxian theory are those which fuelled the rage of Lenin, for whom all destruction and all violence were permitted, in the name of a matricidal future that would be born only in torment. From the perspective of this future, our history is merely 'pre-history', and the past is no stronger than a ghost.

While British socialism has occasionally paid lip-service to Marxism, it repudiates that apocalyptic vision. It is imbued with our native sense that the source of legitimacy lies, not before, but behind us. All political action, all social inspiration, take their meaning from their antecedents, and the more firmly rooted these antecedents are, in an historic experience of community, the more claim do they have on our allegiance. We are products of our national history, and to the extent that we find in the past the traces of a spirit that presently moves us, to that extent are we rightly moved, and to that extent are we heartened by our community with the men and women who have gone before.

British socialism is therefore haunted by 'ancestral voices', which speak from the pages of *Piers Plowman* and *Everyman*, from the speeches of Protestant radicals and non-conformist divines, and from the great age of Parliament, in which free, dissenting Englishmen seemingly abolished the constraints of hereditary power. This last extraordinary period of English history has been a major preoccupation of the British Left: for a while our national air seemed to hum with possibilities, and the honey of those summer days has sustained the disappointed 'people' through the desolation that came after them. The most heartfelt nostalgia of the Left, and its most romantic sense of loss, have been applied to the histiography of the Interregnum and the events which led up to it. Without the mythopoeic description of this period undertaken by such historians as Tawney and Hill, modern British socialism would be a far less self-confident, far less swaggering, and indeed far less smiling presence in our political culture. It has been established in the mind of the British socialist that his thought and action are quintessentially legitimate, the legacy of a long experiment in constitutional government, and the renewed flowering of the free-born Englishman's struggle to possess the land and culture that are rightly his.

In discussing Michel Foucault I tried to display the important place of iconography in French left-wing thinking, much of which is devoted to the detailed delineation of the 'bourgeois' enemy. British socialism is also iconographic; but its efforts are devoted to the portrait of a friend. This friend appears as the idealized John Hamden of Tawney, as the heroic dissenter of Christopher Hill, and as that industrial 'working class' the sentimentalizing of which provides so ardent a motive to the work of Thompson, Hoggart and Williams. There is naturally something endearing in this outlook, which looks for friends before declaring enemies, and which has endowed British socialism with a local, and perhaps even parochial, colouring. While not yet a property of the National Trust, British socialism is as far from that 'internationalist' attitude espoused by Marx (himself too uprooted a product of a divided Germany to find solace in any other view) as is British conservatism. It is a movement that the conservative meets on home territory, and which is fired by a passion for home and territory that the conservative must inevitably share.

Anyone aware of those facts will know that Marxism could never be more than a subsidiary influence on British left-wing thinking. Of far greater significance is the unique tradition of social and literary criticism, which can justly claim to be one of the most important intellectual achievements of modern England. It would be wrong to think that this tradition has any natural bias towards socialism. It began with the highly conservative thought of Burke, Coleridge and Wordsworth, and showed – in the works of Carlyle and Arnold – an anti-egalitarian tendency which it has preserved to this day. Its greatest representative in the present century – F. R. Leavis – has been described as our major twentieth-century conservative voice. But, interwoven with the melancholy reflections of such defenders of high culture, we find the left-leaning thought of Ruskin and Morris, of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, of Cobbett, Shaw and the Fabians. It is a further testimony to the rootedness of English socialism that, in the central emphasis and spiritual tendency of this critical tradition, socialist and conservative thinkers have been bound together in mutual influence.

Although Raymond Williams has, in recent years, posed as a Marxist, his roots are firmly in the soil of English socialism, and his best writings exhibit the sad attachment to place and people that has been the leading inspiration of our modern literature. His substantial literary corpus divides into various segments. In two use-

ful works, – *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (Formerly, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot,* 1952) and *Modern Tragedy* (1966) – he has displayed the common virtues of the tradition from which he springs: the ability to use literary criticism as a vehicle for social comment and analysis. These books, together with *Drama in Performance*, and *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (1973), exemplify a serious and original literary scholarship, in which Williams's distinctive social and political vision finds relatively temperate expression. In such works as *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1958), *The Long Revolution* (1961), and *The Country and the City* (1973), Williams has expressed his point of view more directly. In these volumes, a vision of the English working class is brought into relation with a theory of social democracy, to give a fresh and personal perspective on the past and present of the Labour Movement. This perspective finds more concrete expression in two intensely nostalgic novels, *Border Country* and *Second Generation.* Finally, in recent studies such as *Keywords* (1976), and *Marxism and Literature* (1977), Williams attempts to heighten the appeal of his outlook, by clothing it in fashionable abstractions, mostly borrowed from the wardrobe of the French and German New Left. Throughout this corpus the reader finds a relentless preoccupation with the working class, its hopes, fears and sufferings, and with the 'long revolution' which is to lead us from class, capitalism and privilege, to the equality and deomocracy which belong to us by right.

Ruskin, Arnold and Morris observed the Industrial Revolution with grief and dismay. In all their thoughts can be discerned the same anxiety: what of civilization will remain when the manufacturers have done their work, when the countryside is empty and the towns brimming with human dross, when the rhythm of rural life has everywhere given way to the regularity of industrial production? Each writer provided a prophylactic against society's decay, and each proposed education and religion as the all-important ingredients in the remedy. Williams, who shares their sense of tragedy, takes no comfort in religious usage, and indeed hardly mentions, in his social criticism, this overwhelming social fact. Instead, he seeks to go back over the territory explored by his nineteenth-century forebears, and to redescribe both the cause of their disquiet and its cure. Like them he believes in education – and here and there he is disposed to sketch an ideal syllabus that will prepare the child for a 'participating democracy'.[1] But he can accept neither the religious vision not the reactionary social doctrine of Ruskin and Morris. He seeks, not a religious, but a secular, redemption from alienated labour, and his 'long revolution' is another name for the slow, steady, erosion of power and privilege by the surge and flow of democracy. It would be wrong to say that Williams's faith in democracy is boundless – for if one thing is clear from his humourless, suspicion-laden paragraphs, it is that Williams does not have boundless faith in anything. It is simply that 'more democracy' is the only answer that he is prepared to offer. Occasionally he puts it forward with a naive generality, writing that:

> . . . The democratic revolution . . . is insistently creative, in its appeal to all of us to take power to direct our own lives . . .
> . . . The industrial revolution and the revolution in communications are only fully grasped in terms of the progress of democracy, which cannot be limited to simple political change, but insists, finally, on conceptions of an open society and of freely co-operating individual which are alone capable of releasing the creative potentiality of the changes in working skills and communication. . . .[2]

But such is his pessimistic temper, that Williams at once abandons his enthusiasm. He withdraws behind a curtain of qualifications, hinting at a solution far more intricate and far more subtle than any that he overtly reveals:

> The long revolution, which is now at the centre of our history, is not for democracy as a political system alone, nor for the equitable distribution of more products, nor for general access to the means of learning and communication. Such changes, difficult enough in themselves, derive meaning and direction, finally, from new conceptions of man and society which many have worked to describe and interpret. Perhaps those conceptions can only be given in experience. The metaphors of creativity and growth seek to enact them, but the pressure, now, must be towards particulars, for here or nowhere are they confirmed . . .[3]

This emphasis on the concrete and particular is one of several ideas that Williams shares with modern conservative thinking; so too is the emphasis on 'culture', upon which some of the detail of his outlook depends. 'Culture', for Williams, denotes the patterns of communication, and the 'structures of feeling',[4] which determine the experience of society at all levels. The major purpose of *Culture and Society* is to document the theories and practices which have created modern culture, and which have either advanced or impeded the 'true democracy' which promises emancipation to the working class. Williams's purpose is to remove from the study of culture all élitist overtones, every suggestion that culture might be a value accessible only to the few. To the extent that culture defines an élite, to that extent is it not a value.

The major question raised by such a viewpoint is that of 'true democracy'. For Williams, this involves the establishment of genuine community between people,[5] and his model for community is found in the 'solidarity' of a former labouring class, a sense of shared hopes and sufferings, and a need to stand together against unjust abuse. He believes that capitalism, class and privilege are enemies of community, and he does not hesitate constantly to recommend the abolition of 'private property in the means of production'. He shows little awareness of any tension between this aim and the promotion of democracy among people most of whom would like a stake in the means of production. Instead, he tries to identify those features of 'capitalist' and 'class' society which militate against the realization of his democratic ideal.

These inimical features include 'the reduction of use to consumption . . . the widespread extension of the "selling" ethic . . . and also . . . the visible moral decline of the labour movement.'[6] Leaving aside that last factor – itself more a symptom than a cause of the process – we can see that the principal complaint is against the social condition of 'consumerism', or (to use the expression favoured by Marx) against 'the fetishism of commodities'. Williams does not really describe this condition; instead, he documents its absence from the chronicles of the labouring poor. In so far as he attends to the causes of modern consumption . . . the widespread extension of the "selling" capitalism and private property. Later, however, he writes as though the entire Christian ethic were responsible for our false priorities. He profits from a chance remark of Rosa Luxemburg's, to argue that Christian charity is a 'charity of consumption', while socialist charity is a 'charity of production' – 'of loving relations between men actually working and producing what is ultimately, in whatever proportions, to be shared'.[7]

It is to this point that Williams returns with the greatest insistence: capitalism, with its consumer ethic, its exploitation, its sovereign indifference to place and people, is the great solvent of community. True community is to be achieved through a 'participating democracy'. And this in turn is possible only if men achieve that 'equality of being' without which the 'struggle for democracy' is nothing.[8] And 'Equality of being' requires that we dismantle the apparatus of privilege and class.

That combination of views is at the root of English socialism. I believe it to be wholly untenable. If it survives intact in Williams's writings, this is largely because of a supreme effort of sentimentalization, whereby he hides from himself the basic facts of life and history. 'Consumerism', far from being the enemy of democracy, is its economic expression. It arises inevitably from the market economy, being merely the psychological correlate of the fact that products are made not merely for use, but also for exchange. The production of goods for sale is the real condition of the emancipated worker, who is able to turn his labour into money, and therefore into goods other than those which he produces. Without that capacity he remains either dependent upon the labour of others, or else wedded to forms of production which radically restrict his powers. The market itself is an expression of his free choice – of such free choice as he may, in these circumstances, acquire. It is a mechanism of distribution operated entirely by the voluntary transactions of individuals, each of whom secures his own advantage by soliciting the agreement of those with whom he deals. 'Consumer sovereignty' is another name for that day-to-day 'equality of being' which allows each person's choice to influence the outcome of a social process. The result is not very edifying – but the results of democracy seldom are.

I have sketched an argument which a Marxist will dismiss as 'ideology', arguing that there is an 'alternative', in which 'true democracy' will coexist with 'communist ownership', the absence of a market, and production for use and not for exchange. But how is it to be done? That is; how is it to be done, given what we know of man's limited sympathies, finite expectations, and mortal fears? We have never been told – and the myth of the 'new socialist man' is merely a way of dodging the issue, as Williams dodges it. Not only has 'actually existing socialism' retained wage-labour, money, exchange, and sale: it has also abolished most forms of democracy. Moreover, by interfering in the market process, it has created scarcities which can hardly be said to confer that 'equality of being' for which Williams hankers. The theoretical issues here are vast, and not to be resolved in a paragraph. But, given the observed facts of history and human nature, it must be concluded that the onus lies with the socialist, to spell out the conditions for the 'true democracy' which he favours. Who, in this democracy, controls what, and how? The market is the only human institution which is collectively controlled by its participants. How is its abolition to be reconciled with a government in which everyone has influence and participating power? And if we are to retain the market, how are we to dispose of that private property in the means of production with which it is organically inter-connected? The neglect of such questions is not merely intellectually disreputable; given the fervour with which Williams seeks to advance his purposes, it is also pernicious. For it permits the easy justification of actions whose consequences are in no way understood.

It is in fact an important part of Williams's appeal that he should fail to defend socialism at the required intellectual level. For his appeal is sentimental. It is captured in the reference to 'loving relations between men actually working and producing what is ultimately . . . shared.' Here are the long-suffering, tender-hearted workers of E. P. Thompson, who need only the abolition of the capitalist in order to live together in spontaneous brotherhood, sharing the fruits of their labour. There is hardly an English socialist who has not waxed mellow over this vision, and acquired thereby a compelling emotional motive to refrain from observing what it means. For, of course, while it is true that there is a comradeship and solidarity among the oppressed, it is the product of their oppression. Released from their bonds, men see each other as rivals, and only when they are bound together by contracts and agreements – only when subjected to a market economy in the widest sense – can they be brought again into peaceable association. That is the true meaning of democracy, which is the principle of unsentimental union between rivals and strangers, and which involves the erosion of all bonds of piety and obedience by contracts founded in respect for the other, and love of the self.

The 'long revolution' which Williams praises, was described more cautiously by a thinker to whom Williams only once refers: Alexis de Tocqueville. For Tocqueville, self-obsession, individualism and social fragmentation were different aspects of democracy's 'inevitable' advance. In *Democracy in America* (1835), he argues that the 'principle of equality', far from being an invention of the labour movement (which hardly existed when Tocqueville wrote), has been the ruling principle of European development since the Middle Ages. Tocqueville's

prescient analysis of 'equality of being' ought perhaps to have given pause. For he argues that the condition of social impermanence and cultural mediocrity which for Williams is the pernicious consequence of privilege and power, is in fact the result of the democratic process. It is the erosion of privilege, the loss of diverse classes and estates, the destruction of hereditary entitlement, which, for Tocqueville, cause men to break lose from community. It is these changes which render piety and allegiance redundant, and which awaken in men the desire to found society on contract, self-interest and consent. We may not agree with Tocqueville's conclusion. But we ought to recognize that he discharges the onus which Williams is either too intellectually timorous, or too emotionally committed, to take up.

The reluctance to be circumspect emerges as the greatest single fault in Williams's later writings. Like many who have vested too much love in an imagined friend, he re-charges his emotion through hatred of an imagined enemy. The lower class fades from view, and the upper class emerges as the principal object of his attentions. In *The Country and the City* a seething and vindictive resentment forms premise and conclusion of the argument, carrying the reader through one of the most two-dimensional surveys of English Literature ever to have retained the lineaments of academic respectability. It is perhaps a sense of the hopelessness of his own nostalgia, that causes Williams in this book to turn with such vengeance on the nostalgia of others, and in particular on that quintessentially English nostalgia – fundamental to our socialist tradition – which finds the ideal of social harmony in a rural past.

Williams is right to see a simplifying Arcadianism in this attitude. But he is equally wrong to see nothing else. So fired is he by hatred of privilege, patronage, and leisure, that no writer who is disposed to recognize that the upper class contains members of the human race can escape his condemnation. Stephen Duck is dismissed for 'writing, with the worst of them, his imitations from the classics'; Crabbe, whose major crime is to have been private chaplain to a Duke, must therefore be whipped for his 'static' social vision, which condemns the rich, but rests with condemnation. Jane Austen is castigated for her 'monetary' vision, and for a morality which confines her to the inside of a country house, neither seeing nor feeling the misery that lies at her gate. So the book proceeds, through every writer who has sought to paint human society as it is, and who has recognized that the human exists on many social levels and in many styles, and is in every style imperfect.

Williams represents his hatred of the ruling class as a version of the distaste for capitalism. But, even if he can hide from himself, he cannot hide from his reader, the fact that capitalism does not hold his attention long enough to inspire even the beginnings of an analysis, and that his hostility is directed indiscriminately towards the 'haves' on behalf of the 'have nots', whatever the prevailing social order, and whatever the source of complaint. By the end of the book, the iconographical intention is directed not to the friend, but to the enemy – or rather, to a sentimentalized friend, made attractive only by the egregious wickedness of those who persecute him:

> The men and women who came from the country to the cities did not need to be told what they had lost, any more than they needed to be told what they might struggle to gain in their new world . . . But then it mattered very much whether an experience of the country . . . was ranged for or against them, as they struggled to readjust. A selection of the experience – the view of the landlord or the resident, the 'pastoral' or the 'traditional' descriptions – was in fact made and used, as an abstract idea, against their children, and their children's children: against democracy, against education, against the labour movement.

And so Williams condemns the tenor of our pastoral literature, saying:

> I have watched it [= roughly, that complex attitude just reviled] settle into what is now a convention – in literary education especially – [and] I have felt it as an outrage, in a continuing crisis and on a persistent border. The song of the land, the song of rural labour, the song of delight in the many forms of life with which we share our physical world, is too important and too moving to be tamely given up, in an embittered betrayal, to the confident enemies of all significant and actual independence and renewal.[9]

The quotations typify Williams's recent idiom: self-referential, vague and sloganizing. With the loss of confidence in the romantic socialism of *The Long Revolution* and *Border Country*, slogans acquire an increasing importance in his style. Unable or unwilling to analyze either what he loves or what he hates, he rests his commitment instead in certain 'keywords', to which the magic of socialism clings, and which can be used to create the illusion of theory in the absence of the fact of it.

One such word is 'revolution', which Williams applies to every transformation of which he approves. In *Modern Tragedy* he extols the 'living alternative' of our time, which consists in 'the recognition of revolution as a whole action of living men'[10] – and the language is characteristic. Williams does not *argue* for revolution, nor does he describe it; rather he takes the *word* 'revolution' and cushions it in winsome abstractions: it is a 'whole action' of 'living men'. (It could hardly be a part action of ghosts.) Hence, 'most urgently, in our own time, we need to return the idea of revolution, in its ordinary sense of the crisis of a society, to its necessary context as part of a whole action, within which alone it can be understood'.[11] Such breathless prose must again be understood as iconographic. Revolution is made pleasing through associated ideas: the aim is to discourage thought, and to elicit fantasy. Revolution is to become an essentially alluring, rather than a critical, idea. But we must be clear, all the same, that it is revolution, and not evolution that we pursue. 'The majority comprise, evade, or seek to delay, and the most destructive form of this breakdown – for simple

reaction is easily recognized – is the characteristic substitution of evolution for revolution as a social model'.[12]

Intellectually speaking, Williams has, in defending the 'long revolution', committed precisely that crime. Not in his *words*, of course, but in the ideas that advance through them. He therefore increases his fervour, in order to show that he means 'revolution' in just the sense of communist rhetoric. 'Since 1917' he tells us, choosing the crucial date, 'we have been living in a world of successful social revolutions.'[13] And, more significantly,:

> I am told by friends in the Soviet Union that the decisive battle of the revolution has been won in nearly half the world, and that the communist future is evident. I listen to this with respect, but I think that they have quite as much still to do as we have, and that a feeling that the revolution is over can be quite as disabling as the feeling that in any case it is pointless . . .[14]

Like his friends in the Soviet Union, Williams is practised in the art of doubelethink. He is able to make his attachment to icons, and his aversion to ideas, into a stance that is both academically serious and ideologically impeccable.

In *Keywords* – 'the record of an inquiry into a *vocabulary*' – he reveals the word-magic whereby he thrives. In this volume, which is neither dictionary nor glossary, but a work of ideological self-exposure, Williams attacks another bastion of the ruling class: the *OED*, whose alleged 'neutrality' is merely the expression of a 'bourgeois humanism', of the values of a class that feels no need to justify its dominion.

In contrast to the *OED*, Williams is unashamedly radical. He describes our society, without a hint of self-doubt, as an example of 'late bourgeois' civilization; and he regards the sense of the word 'media' in which newspapers are regarded as media for other things (for advertising, for example, or – presumably – for propaganda) as a specifically 'capitalist' sense of the term. The implied belief throughout is, that if you use 'keywords' correctly, the result is not just clarity, but socialism.

His fascination with iconic words makes it impossible for Williams to cast any more than the faintest light on the meanings which he considers. Take, for example, the entry of 'family'. It is interesting and useful to know that this word derives from the Latin *famulus* (a servant), and that it used to have a much wider meaning (both of kinship and of household) than it now has. None of that is of any great revelance to contemporary discussions of the nature and value of primary social relations, as Williams realizes. Consequently, in his discussion of the modern usages of the term he contrives to introduce something called the *bourgeois family*, such use of the term 'family' bringing with it, apparently, a sense of 'household and property'. The simplification involved in that – implying as it does the existence of non-bourgeois family, which presumably does not have associations of household and property, of a kind of family which is not, as Williams puts it, an 'economic unit' – goes quite unnoticed. But consider some typical 'non-bourgeois' families. The Homeric *oikos* (from which word our own 'economy' is derived) had associations of household and property; the modern proletarian family has such associations; so too did the exended aristocratic family of the Renaissance. And all these represent 'economic units'. The implication which Williams attempts to put across – that the particular family structure which exists at present is integral to the institution of private property and that both are somehow dispensable – that implication depends upon the shallowest of observations, none the less shallow for being commonplace.

From the same corpus of received ideas comes Williams's description of literary criticism as 'ideological'.

> not only in the sense that it assumes the position of the *consumer*, but also in the sense that it masks this position by a succession of abstractions of its real terms of response (as *judgment, taste, cultivation, discrimination, sensibility, disinterested, qualified, rigorous*, and so on). This then actively prevents that understanding of response which does not assume the habit (or right or duty) of judgment.[15]

The implication is that Dr Johnson, F. R. Leavis, and the other great 'consumers' of literature rely for their authority on the questionable assumption that literary response and literary judgment are one and the same. The word 'consumer' here is a magic counter: it is meant to draw us, by association of ideas, towards Williams's perspective. What he is really criticizing, we are to suppose, and what hides behind the neutral mask of literary criticism, is the familiar capitalist spectre who stalks through all contemporary culture. Having rejected 'consumerism', we then recognize the possibility of a response to literature that is spontaneous, remaining on the level of 'specificity' characteristic of 'practice'.

Williams – invoking in the icon 'practice' the praiseworthy associations of a Marxist view of art – seeks in a few lines to dispose not only of the entire tradition of English literary criticism, but also of the aesthetic philosophy which has its roots in Kant, and which holds that aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgment are inseparable. Williams conveys no sense that anybody might actually have *argued* for the view which he rejects. On the contrary, he presents it as though it were an unconscious assumption of the language of criticism, as assumption from which we can free ourselves simply by changing our words.

Consider the parallel case of moral experience. Could there be such a thing as a response to someone's cruelty or cowardice which involved no judgment? And if there could be such a thing, would it have any value? Clearly, judgment is here *part* of the response, and the man who always observed the wickedness of others without the faintest stirring of contempt or indignation could only be described as insensible. It is some such model of insensibility that Williams must be recommending as the ideal stance towards works of art, for here too we are compelled to recognize (once we begin to think about it) that

response and judgment go together, and that an attitude towards art that left no place for taste or discrimination would be an attitude which showed no understanding of its object.

The word-magic of Williams's later work arises, I believe, from a desire at all costs to maintain the level of emotional commitment, and to distract attention from any argument or perception that would show it to be self-deceived. This posture, which leads him to the 'etymological' stance of *Keywords*, leads also to the attempt to shelter his lamp within the box-like abstractions of the New Left. To burn in secret is still to burn, and the vehement passions of *The Country and the City* continue to glow in the Marxian dark:

> 'Art' as a categorically separate dimension, or body of objects; 'the aesthetic' as an isolable extra-social phenomenon: each has been broken up by a return to the variability, the relativity, and the multiplicity of actual social practice. We can then see more clearly the ideological function of the specializing abstractions of 'art' and 'the aesthetic' . . .[16]

The jargon here is that of a writer who has imprisoned his thought, in language over which he exerts no intellectual control. While we can all guess what follows from this – that the categories of 'art' and 'the aesthetic' belong integrally to bourgeois modes of production, that they come into prominence with the manufacture of commodities for exchange – it follows with the logic of ritual, and not with the logic of argument. Only the emotional tension of the prose reminds us of the writer: the emotional tension of a man who stills fights a distant battle, lost on a distant shore.

Notes

1. *The Long Revolution*, pp. 174–5.
2. *ibid.*, pp. 140–1.
3. *ibid.*, pp. 141.
4. *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*, p. 17.
5. *The Long Revolution*, p. 363.
6. *ibid.*, p. 328.
7. *The Country and the City*, pp. 43–4.
8. *Culture and Society*, p. 322.
9. *The Country and the City*, p. 325.
10. *Modern Tragedy*, p. 65.
11. *ibid.*, p. 66.
12. *ibid.*, p. 70.
13. *ibid.*, p. 73.
14. *The Long Revolution*, p. 376.
15. *Keywords*, p. 76.
16. *Marxism and Literature*, p. 153.

A Language Fit for Politics?

Duke Maskell

There's more to conservatism than an uncritical reverence for business, says Ian Crowther (in the first issue of *The Salisbury Review*); but not all Conservatives know it. They need to learn – and, one wants to add, not just for their own sakes – that to be truly a conservative you must think like one, and before that, you must *think*. Mr Crowther knows someone they can learn to think from, Eric Voegelin, 'the most distinguished exemplar' of those European emigrants who transplanted to America 'the classic tradition of European conservatism', illustrating what we lack, 'a philosophic conservatism', someone in whose company 'we may yet find our way home'. But, judged by what Mr Crowther quotes, no one could learn to think politically from Eric Voegelin, though people might, I suppose, learn to think and write like him.

Writing like him means writing that's *very* hard to read, not just to understand, but to attend to at all. The pieces Mr Crowther quotes as compelling evidence of their author's importance – not just his importance in the abstract, his importance to us, now – don't compel one's attention. It certainly doesn't go to them of its own accord. It has to be forced on them, in a labour of duty, on sentences like the following:

> This privatisation of the spirit left the field open for a respiritualisation of the public sphere from other sources, in the forms of nationalism, humanitarianism, economism both liberal and socialist, biologism, and psychologism.

Someone might speak of 'glorifying businessmen' (D. H. Lawrence does of E. M. Forster in *Howards End*). Mr Crowther speaks of an 'uncritical reverence for business'. What Eric Voegelin speaks of – and Mr Crowther thinks we might learn to speak like it too, 'philosophically' – is: 'the respiritualisation of the public sphere in the form of liberal economism'. But what have we learnt and where have we been guided to when we have learnt it? Are we home? Is Eric Voegelin himself at home? In America and the English of American social science? Is that where home is?

Is it a trivial objection to say of this that it is the way people speak of things they have forgotten, or only know by hearsay? Things which, perhaps – you can't tell – were *once* real to them? When they were home and spoke their mother tongue? Truths which, in some other idiom, might be someone's, in this idiom are no-one's, vast balloons of

characterless universality floating through no-space and no-time, truth made abstract and anonymous, truth in exile: 'a plurality of counter spirits', 'the traditional spiritual institutions', 'the new pluralist world of politics', 'the socially revelant stratum of the body politic', 'the leadership of Western political units', 'the anti-Christian anthropology in politics' (part of, 'the symbol of the anti- . . .', in turn part of, 'this inversion of direction becomes the symbol of . . .'), 'communication with transcendental reality', 'the problematic of the spirit and its transcendence', 'the position of a spiritual reality', 'the internal structure of man', 'the structure of reality', and so on and on, an endless string of abstractions knotted together by prepositions, the copula and verbs which even if they aren't actually grammatically passive might as well be, the abstractions that are their subjects – and objects – giving them so little to *do*. The totalitarianism of the abstract: blotting paper, absorbing, merging, cancelling all difference and distinction. A *conservative* idiom?

The fault, the fatal fault, with this way of talking is not just that it is clumsy and hard to understand but that it is clumsy and hard to understand because it denies what its author wants to affirm. What it speaks most eloquently of is his wish to say things which, in it, cannot be said. We cannot speak religiously, or politically, just by choosing to. We must have a language that permits us to. Is Eric Voegelin's such a language? This adapted academic-abstract, social science spiritualised? Is there no more to speaking the truths of the spirit – or even to speaking up for them – *in* the time of 'the secularisation and the privatisation of the spirit' – than this? No more work to do than to breathe out dust – and wait for it to settle as living words? Is *this* what thought is?

Like Mr Crowther and Eric Voegelin, I am ready to believe that, 'the formation of conduct through external management' is an evil; but how am I to believe, as they want me to believe, that, 'the growth of the soul through an internal process which is nourished through communication with transcendental reality' is any better? The 'formation of conduct' being, in itself, no bad thing (it wouldn't have been to Jane Austen – or Burke) and 'the growth of the soul', in itself, not a particular good (it depends, I suppose, what the soul grows into), the essential difference between them must lie in the phrases which qualify them. But then, why should an 'internal process' be so much better a thing than 'external management?' Is 'internal' good, 'external' bad? What has 'process' to do with good or bad? Even when 'nourished' by 'communication' with 'transcendental reality'? *God* I know is good; but transcendental reality? Does it love me? Will it show me mercy? Can I trust myself to it, unreservedly? Infinitely less reservedly than I may trust myself to my parents, or my children may trust themselves to me? What is 'transcendental reality' but the name we give God after we have ceased to believe in Him? What is it to 'communicate' with it but to pray and to worship after we have ceased to be able to pray or to worship? What are 'the traditional spiritual institutions' but churches without congregations, congregations without faith? *What* – to bring the question home, home to politics – is 'the leadership of Western political units' but the leaders of the nations of Europe and America to a people that has ceased to believe either in leaders or in nations, at a time when the very idea of 'nation', 'nationhood', 'nationality' – in any but a positivistic and legal, or else a sentimental, sense – is dead and gone, the debris of history, in the memory? And this is what Mr Crowther recommends to us, as answering to a general need of our time, as answering to our need, in politics and out, for the means by which we may find our way home. It is no such thing. It is the way men talk *after* the great change has taken place and when they are still lost. It proves that the public sphere *has* been respiritualised from other sources and conduct formed though external management. It is the way men talk when they have forgotten the things of which they talk, and forgotten that they have forgotten. A language in which to speak religiously, or politically, is impossible.

There are lessons to be learned from Eric Voegelin but the main one is that to think is even harder than Mr Crowther knows it to be. We must have a language to think in, a language fit for thought. And Voegelin's is no such language. What he wants to say – what we ourselves want to say – can't be said in it, can't be found out in it: the language of a continental European who has learned his English in present-day America, the English, and the America, of the modern, science-habituated academy, proving itself most positivistic when thinking itself least so.

A Rejoinder to Maskell

That Voegelin is often difficult to understand, I wouldn't deny. But then what philosopher worth the name isn't?

That his language is not always free of abstractions may also be granted. At least since Socrates philosophers have sought the generally true by abstracting from what is partial and particular.

However, Voegelin dwells only intermittently on the peaks of abstraction. He has spent the greater part of his intellectual life in the valleys of experience, gathering material for his detailed exegeses of symbols, myths and texts, in which his work abounds. (Regrettably it is impossible to report such encyclopaedic detail in the space of an article.)

Hence Voegelin's philosophy is not of the free-floating kind, but is grounded in a range of historical experiences which reach beyond the phenomenal plane of politics into mankind's recurring consciousness of itself as radically dependent on cosmic or transcendent order.

This consciousness having contracted in our time to the *amor sui*, we should be grateful to any one who attempts to recover it, albeit in an elaborative language which mirrors the complexity of reality.

Ian Crowther

In Search of Central Europe

The following article, smuggled to us from Moscow, continues in a surprising direction the reflections given in *Salisbury Review no. 3*, by Václav Racek. The author, who writes under the pseudonym of Ivan Volgin, was for a time employed 'within the system'. His writings are published, under another name, in *samizdat*.

The Magic World of *Homo Sovieticus*.

Václav Racek has given an interesting picture of life in Czechoslovakia: interesting, not only for you, but also for us, who are curious to know what communism feels like, to those who remember or imagine another existence. For us there is no such memory, and even, to tell the truth, no such imagination. What we envisage of this 'other' life is vague, elusive, and also vulnerable to our distrust – to the distrust which is for us the condition of survival. The 'other' life exists only beyond the grave – the grave in which capitalism was buried. It distracts us, but we do not attend to it. After all, if you stare too long at a ghost, you risk your sanity. Perhaps that needs to be said to you, who find it so difficult to understand why our 'dissidents' are cast into psychiatric 'hospitals'. You really do have to be a little mad, to live for that 'other' life which the communists abolished in 1917.

But it is not madness which concerns me. Rather, a peculiar form of sanity: the sanity of those who experience our government as a form of 'reasonable' behaviour. No doubt, from the outside, totalitarian communism seems to be the greatest lunacy. But we are not outside, and to be inside a force which so overwhelms and controls you, you must make good its deficiencies in reasonableness. You must try to understand it as another reasonable being, which will be neither deaf to your appeals, nor entirely without its own secret need for your existence.

Primitive people, faced with the overwhelming power of natural forces, find consolation in the idea of nature as a rational being – to be precise, as a collection of such beings, who act always for secret reasons of their own, but who can be influenced and cajoled by ritual and prayer. The primitive man therefore has recourse to magic. Magic restores sanity, by making nature also sane. It tells him that nature will not threaten him, so long as he puts no ideas into her head; that nature will do as he wishes, provided only that he show her the way. Tabus and incantations are therefore the terms of a rational discourse – and the only possible terms when one party so manifestly controls the other.

Mr Racek refers to the omnipresent 'existential danger' of the communist system. Say rather that the system has, for us, the character that nature has for a savage. The common Russian knows only that the system can destroy him at a moment's notice, and in ways which encompass every variety of annihilation. Rational discussion with such a force requires magic. And magic has never been far from the Russian soul. Shamanism abundantly compensates for the deficient promises of religion, and exists in many varieties, ready to meet every variety of human need.

Word magic in particular has been all-important in the recent struggle to survive. The primitive mind knows that events exist only so long as they are named. To take one example: the Russian peasant never speaks of the bear which threatens him, but only of *hozayin* (the boss), or *General Toptigyn* (the general who walks heavily). It is in this way that we should understand what is sometimes called 'ideology'. Trotsky was not simply repudiated by the Party: he was also killed by it. His death followed his apostasy with the logic of divine retribution. Consequently he has since been *tabu*. Our tabus are not like those of Polynesia, where at least the chieftain retains the right to touch and ponder what is otherwise forbidden. So horrifying is the power of the tabu that even the leader – even Comrade Andropov – cannot violate it. Our latest edition of the Soviet Encyclopedia reiterates the essential myths of Stalinism. The Encyclopedia mentions no purges. Therefore there were no purges. Only the named events took place, and those events represent communism as an arduous but sane companion in the everyday business of survival. Provided that you accompany your thoughts and deeds with appropriate incantations, provided that you mention only what is mentionable, and do only what is done, then communism will abide by its unwritten agreement; it will ignore you. *Hozayin* is not insane.

Word magic is therefore a major principle of communist society. And this should be remembered by those who study our leaders. When Comrade Kruschev shrieked out his message on the rostrum of the United Nations, crying 'We will bury you!', he was giving voice to an incantation. Had a Western leader behaved like this you would have dismissed him as insane. But Kruschev was not insane: on the contrary, he was responding to the rational imperatives of the system, which compelled him to cast these spells at his opponents, and so bring about their ruin.

Communism is a religion of mummies. Somewhere inside the brainless head of Lenin a scarab is ticking, and we listen attentively to its sound. Do not doubt that the crowds who come before this scarab come in worship! At every crucial juncture of our public life, the cry goes up, '*Lenin zhiv*!' – Lenin lives! – and even if we do not quite believe it, that makes no difference to the magic power. Twice a year – on November 7th and May 1st – we celebrate

our 'proletarian' achievements, and each village soviet shows its loyalty by spontaneously electing the entire Politburo of the day. This necessary precaution is accompanied by the announcement that 'Comrade Lenin is with us today'. And these words have a literal meaning. He is really there! That is his face in the photograph! Those are his eyes observing you! This is his will which is now enacted!

It was the tradition of the Russian icon-maker, to paint his images in a style that deliberately emphasized their two-dimensional quality. The true worshipper would then labour to supply the third dimension. Suddenly he would succeed, and he would seem to step into the universe of the picture. This was the saint's reward for his prayers. It is with a view of re-creating this everyday mystery, that our hagiographers give us such schematic and two-dimensional depictions of our sacred spirits. And it is indeed true that, for the mass of people, Lenin lives.

Such 'spiritualism' is the ultimate authority for every dogma, including those of Marxism-Leninism. When we are taught to emphasize the 'scientific' nature of what is, to be frank, the most absurd piece of 'science' ever to have survived a century of refutations – we understand the word 'science' in a novel way. Science does not record the truth: it creates it; or rather, it creates that dark and imponderable alternative to truth, which is the condition of our public discourse. It is this which is hinted at in Statin's strange but haunting pleonasm: 'The theories of Marx are true, because they are correct!' The very repetition has a liturgical quality, as though, like any truth of religion, the purpose was, not to instruct, but to *fortify*.

The source of this 'new truth' is simple: fear of the unknown. For a long while, rumour has it, an illiterate fortune teller resided at the *dacha* of General Gryechko. Many of the highest people in Moscow would visit her. It is said that Comrade Brezhnev himself consulted her concerning détente – the policy which so brilliantly persuaded the 'forces of imperialsim' to stay off their guard. Few Russians are surprised by this story. In a condition of life so thoroughly subject to the laws of magic, it is not to be supposed that the leader is able to think in some other way.

At the same time, his own magic powers are formidable. After the war a film was made, showing the defence of Stalingrad. A certain sequence displays a frightened soldier, who drops his rifle and begins to run. At that moment the spirit of Stalin takes shape in the clouds, and this fatherly – though perhaps slightly comic – figure stoops down to retrieve the rifle and restore it to the soldier's hands. Stalin ordered the sequence to be deleted, but it made the most vivid impression on those who saw it. It confronted the ordinary Russian with the actual content of his superstition.

It is by virtue of magic powers that the leader achieves his victories. 'Stalin won the war!' we were told. And then suddenly the history books changed, and it seemed that 'Kruschev won the war!' When the cry went up again for Brezhnev, it prompted a joke: 'Who is the most modest man in the world? – Brezhnev, who won the war and kept quiet about it for thirty years!' As for Comrade Andropov, we are still awaiting the details of his war effort: until the next edition of the Encycopedia we dare not speculate. But every Russian knows in his heart that, the day when our leaders are no longer veterans of the war against 'fascism' – that day will a fundamental cornerstone of the national religion be prized loose. And it will be a day, not of rejoicing, but of fear.

Perhaps nothing is more pronounced in the Russian soul than the belief in miracles. This too has had its part to play. Journals of our official culture – *Literaturnaya Gazyeta*, *Vokana Svyeta*, *Neydelya* – all are full of articles concerning UFOs and other 'occult' or 'inexplicable' phenomena. At a certain period there was no figure more widely featured than Uri Geller – that extraordinary product of man's disposition to locate the miraculous in what is most banal! The 'economic miracle' of socialism has in fact been fashioned for just such a mundane gullibility, and is served up to the people with all the trimmings of religious belief. The system is, of course, wary of rival miracles. Comrade Kruschev in particular became impatient with every God who had not personally contributed to the miracle of his own rise to power. He turned with exceptional savagery on the Orthodox Church, and ordered the dynamiting of 20,000 places of worship. The church survived: and that too is greeted, by the pious, as a miracle. In Russia there are miracles for every taste. But none is more universal than communism, which lives on indestructibility, despite the fact that it cannot exist!

We might trace this magic element in communism to something primitive, which ironically repossesses the human soul precisely when the 'Enlightenment' philosophy of Marx has cleared it of every other residue. But in truth it is far from 'primitive'. On the contrary, it bears all the marks of the 'new man' which communism set itself to create, and which, as Mr Racek says, it has succeeded in creating. But in fact, if you will forgive me, this *homo sovieticus* is far worse, far less corrigible, than Mr Racek's novice. *Homo sovieticus* is the living disproof of modern psychiatry – although perhaps not of *our* 'psychiatry'. He is the sane schizophrenic, who lives quite reasonably in two incommensurable worlds, and who travels by spells between them. In a society of such 'new men', the individual who values his 'integrity' (by which I mean the desire to live in a single world) is the one who is insane. For he has failed to enter into that discourse with the system which is the hallmark of the reasonable being.

Soviet political culture has adapted itself perfectly to the requirements of the rational schizophrenic, and produces, quite openly, but with complications unintelligible to those outside, two separate systems of thought: *sovyetskaya kultura*, which is officially sanctioned, and plain *kultura*. Western observers often mistake the second for the 'underground': in fact it is part of the surface, and integral to the 'soviet' culture with which it is entwined. It is not illegal – indeed, as most anthropologists now realize, the distinction between the legal and the illegal can be only dubiously applied to the life of *homo sovieticus*. In Russia, rather, there is a vast area of the *nerekomyendovano* – the 'non-recommended' – and 'legal' and 'illegal' are alike

hung upon this single peg. It is officially recognized that the new man cannot live by *sovyetskaya kultura* alone, and he is therefore left free to explore the wider *kultura*, into which, however, he strays only with a heightened sense of risk, accompanying his actions with the most elaborate incantations.

In 1965–6, during the 'thaw', there was talk of abolishing *glavlyt* (the official censorship), in order to make these necessary forays into the 'non-recommended' a little safer. But it was at once realized that this 'new man' will, in his fear of unknown sanctions, impose such a severe self-censorship as to kill the unofficial culture forever. The leadership was reminded that fear, like every other ingredient in the life of the new man, must be administered from above, in due proportions. *Homo sovieticus* cannot be trusted even to scare himself: in this too he might go too far!

Meanwhile, of course, *sovyetskaya kultura* – which is the culture of an enclosed territory, lacking every element of rejuvenation, and in truth now only semi-literate – expands uncontrollably, assuming the most monstrous forms. This gross fool, staring impotently at the vital culture of the West, often explodes in rage against it. But, like the medieval *Spielman*, he is able to whip only the shadow of the nobleman, and can never touch his body. For a time the new man watched with some interest as *sovyetskaya kultura* whipped the shadows of men like Picasso and Schoenberg. But these antics are no longer interesting, except for the advice that they may contain concerning everyday precautions.

Homo sovieticus knows that he lives in a world of unlimited privileges, which can be conjured from the system by those with the true propitiating touch. Perhaps one of the clearest symbols of his existence is the 'privilege of information'. *Tass*, which filters all information, so as to provide the man in the street with a diet of safe opinions, is also published in special editions – white *Tass*, blue *Tass*, and so on – which you cannot buy, and which are graded according to the information contained in them. A 'privileged citizen' may receive his own grade of *Tass*, but no-one else may know about it, and every citizen is beset by the doubt that he may be currently talking to someone with an entitlement to information that is higher than his own. This secret mark of class produces added caution, and *homo sovieticus* will be especially careful not to appear to 'know above his station'. He will keep quiet, even about what is common knowledge; indeed, especially about that. Of course, there is the BBC, and *dachas* in the those parts where the BBC is obtainable sell at quite a premium! But *what* you know is not so important. The important question is always, who sanctioned your knowledge, when, and why? As in every system of magic, the unbridgeable social gap must be maintained between those who are initiated, and those who are not. It is the magical authority of initiation that the system seeks to preserve: knowledge itself is only an instrument.

Let us hope that, in your pages, we – who have been so effectively cut off from your way of thinking – can acquaint you with an experience of our own. It is our ambition to share your thought: to share that temperate, sceptical idea of legitimacy, and that vision of a free but authoritative social order, which you so eloquently express. And we too have lost all patience with those foolish 'thinkers of the left' for whom modern history has not occurred, and for whom man is nothing but an abstraction. But what is thinkable depends crucially upon the conditions of the thinker: and our conditions, as you see, have effectively separated us from the only conception of legitimacy that we should care to understand.

The Meaning of Freedom

Richard Cronin

Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* is the story of how a decent man is persuaded to confess to crimes that he did not commit. The novel is so disturbing not because Rubashov is intimidated into making a false confession – no physical violence is used against him – but because he is persuaded. He yields not to the power but to the logic of his interrogators:

> There are two conceptions of human ethics, and they are at opposite poles. One of them is Christian and humane, declares the individual to be sacrosanct, and asserts that the rules of arithmetic are not to be applied to human units. The other starts from the basic principle that a collective aim justifies all means, and not only allows, but demands, that the individual should in every way be subordinated and sacrificed to the community – which may dispose of it as an experimentation rabbit or a sacrificial lamb.

These words are spoken by Ivanov, one of Rubashov's interrogators, and it would be hard to deny that he presents the rival ethical conceptions with remarkable disinterestedness. He tries not at all to engage Rubashov sentimentally in a devotion to the totalitarian state. He feels no need to appeal to Rubashov's emotions, because, and it is this that makes him impressive, he is utterly confident that logic is on his side. And his confidence is justified. Rubashov confesses, and when he does so he agrees that truth is a matter not for him but for the party to determine. 'Truth is what is useful to humanity', and that is for the party to decide. Rubashov confesses, and we grieve, not so much because the party waits only for his confession before killing him, as because in making that confession he has at last surrendered to the state his humanity.

I take my title from Philip Drew's monumental *The Meaning of Freedom*,[1] and a large part of what I shall have to say amounts to no more than a bald summary of the problem that occupies him in the final three chapters of that book. *Darkness at Noon* illuminates for Philip Drew a peculiarly worrying dilemma, for he believes that if we accept the choice that Rubashov is offered, a choice between a belief in the individual defined by his independence from other people and the collective state, Rubashov is right to choose the state.[2]

Drew's discussion of *Darkness of Noon* is poignantly placed. It occurs immediately after a striking chapter in which he shows that to found our notion of human freedom on the individual is inevitably to arrive at the baleful conclusion that freedom is to be looked for only in unnatural brutality or in madness, that the two most distinctive actions of the free individual are murder and suicide.

How is a man to set about proving that he is a free individual? He must begin by rejecting as factitious all those aspects of himself that smack of social conformity. Hence he must abandon any notion of moral law, for no moral principle could possibly apply to a human being who defines himself in terms of his individuality, his independence from all other human beings. The free individual is necessarily an aesthete, his only values sensations. Dorian Gray is Philip Drew's example of the type.

Dorian has the good luck to find in Lord Henry Wotton an aesthetic tutor. 'All influence,' rules Wotton, 'is immoral', because to yield to the authority of another person is to lose authenticity, to become 'an actor of a part'. There is only one creditable ambition, 'to realise one's nature perfectly', and that is a task of heroic self-indulgence, a task that the common run of men smugly shirk, disguising their cowardice as moral or religious principle. 'Be always seeking for new sensations,' he tells Dorian, 'Be afraid of nothing'. Dorian is an apt pupil. At first he finds sensations that are innocent enough, perfumes, jewels, and so on, but he is soon caught up in that process of infinite regression that is the inevitable lot of the individual who would be free. In admiring jewels and perfumes his tastes are the same as ours, he can claim only greater refinement. He cannot assert his individuality by prizing, even with exquisite taste, what all men prize. He gives up the worship of beauty for the worship of ugliness, recognising that only by indulging in a perverse taste can he satisfy the need to assert the freedom of his impulses. From the worship of ugliness he takes the necessary step to the worship of sin, and quickly runs through the spectrum of vice, becoming at last a murderer. The man he kills is a painter who had painted Dorian's portrait as a young man. Magically, Dorian's career of self-indulgence has ravaged not his own body, which remains as perfectly beautiful as it was when his portrait was painted, but the picture. The thought of that foul image of himself preys on Dorian's mind until he takes a knife and slashes the canvas. He falls dead, the picture is restored to its original beauty, and he lies, self-murdered on the floor, 'withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage.' It is a memorable climax. The inevitable terminus of the free individual's quest has never been so compactly expressed as in Dorian's act of murderous violence which becomes in its commission suicide. The man who aspires to be autonomous is

frustrated by the very existence of other people: he must kill them. And at the last he is frustrated by the existence of himself. The final mad gesture of Dorian and all his crew is first to kill other people and then to kill themselves.

The chapter ends with a brisk volley fired at Dorian's followers: those almost as aware as Wilde of the absurdity of the quest that they describe – Gide; those whose awareness of this absurdity is just one more perverse delight – Genet; those who plume themselves on having achieved a pristine mindlessness – Artaud; and those, like Ionesco and Beckett, who judge the free spirit's most apt mode of self-expression not to be meaningless violence so much as meaninglessness. Philip Drew leaves us with two types of the actions to which a man will ultimately be driven if he seeks to assert his autonomous self: an act of gratuitous violence which is valued the more if it outrages the humanity of its perpetrator as much as that of its victim, and the Orator's final speech in *Les Chaises*: 'He, Mme, mm. Ju, gou, hou, hou. Heu, heu, gu, gou, gueue.'

It is immediately after this grim conclusion that Philip Drew quotes the passage in which Ivanov asks Rubashov to choose whether to look for his values to the autonomous individual or to the collective state. The choice has been established as no choice at all. What sort of man could it be who aspired, as it were, to be William Burroughs rather than a Soviet citizen?

I could say much of the lucidity and the elegance with which Philip Drew establishes this dilemma. But it is more important to note that it is intolerable. It cannot be true that we must choose between asserting the value of the individual as an isolated unit, and ascribing value to the unit only as it is a part of the collective state. And nor is it. Rubashov loses his life and himself, not because Ivanov's case is unanswerable, but because he lacks a model of human freedom that will enable him to resist the seductive call of the totalitarian state that he yield his all to its authority. He is a victim of Stalin, but he is also the victim of a feeble tradition of political thought that has contrived to oppose the power of the state with no more than an assertion of the value of the individual. The individualist, Rubashov discovers bitterly, is the totalitarian's friend. His fate is the tragic version of a truth of which the public career of Jean Paul Sartre is the comic counterpart.

To find the way out of the impasse we must return to Philip Drew's account of Oscar Wilde and his successors. He quotes from one of Wilde's letters – 'A man whose desire is to be something separate from himself, to be a Member of Parliament, or a successful grocer, or a prominent solicitor, or a judge, or something equally tedious, invariably succeeds in being what he wants to be. That is his punishment. Those who want a mask have to wear it.' Artaud makes the same point more insanely: 'And finally from a human viewpoint we can see that the theatre action is as beneficial as the plague, impelling us to see ourselves as we are, making the masks fall and divulging our world's lies . . .' (human viewpoint!). It seems obvious to Wilde that to adopt a role, any role, is to lose authenticity and become ridiculous. Artaud assumes that the only proper funtion of theatre must be to penetrate beneath all merely social appearances.

It scarcely needs saying that neither Wilde's account of human freedom, nor Artaud's, bears any relation to our ordinary experience. They, of course, take pride in that, but there is no reason for us to follow them. We prize freedom not because we aspire to some factitious existential dignity but because we wish to be free to assume social roles – successful grocer, certainly, but also husband, father, friend. To assume any one of those roles is, of course, to exchange a freedom for the constraints of social life. But who could possibly regret the loss? It is only by entering into social bonds with our fellows that we receive knowledge of our own humanity, in the act of discovering the humanity of others. Freedom, as Philip Drew suggests, is like cash: it has value only in that it may be spent. Or, in a nobler formulation, 'the value of freedom depends on the willingness to surrender it'.

But Rubashov surrenders his freedom to Stalin, and there is nothing noble about that. What we need, then, is some ground from which we may argue that the state has only a limited right to demand that we surrender to it our freedom. Some freedoms we must retain, not to enjoy them in private, for the lonely pleasure of the miser locked away from the world in secret contemplation of his gold, but rather to surrender elsewhere. The state has a right to tax us, but not to command all our income. To put this another way, we need some ground from which we can insist on the distinction between Rubashov's death, sacrificed to the state, and the death of the man who gives his life for his country.

Philip Drew feels this need, and it is in response to it that he invokes Tönnies distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, community and society. A community is an 'unorganised group which has evolved on a basis of natural friendship', whereas a society is 'a deliberately organised association brought together by a rational calculation of the advantages of concerted action or the dangers of isolation'. He goes on to consider sympathetically John Macmurray's championing of the claims of community over those of society, of 'groups held together by friendship' over groups 'held together by interest and fear'. Drew does not much care for the terms 'community' and 'society'. He picks them up with his fingertips and holds them fastidiously at arm's length. I care for them so little that I would rather drop them altogether. It is hard to imagine a 'community' acting as the custodian of any human activities more valuable than morris dancing or free love, and 'society', once a splendid word – Milton's saints in Heaven move 'In solemn troops and sweet societies' – has been irremediably contaminated. I would be happier with terms I have used already, country and state, and use the word 'country' to denote that in a nation which commands our love, and 'state' for that in a nation which exacts our obedience. The duty of the state is to secure our lives and our property, the role of the country is to make us happy. The state has done its work if we grow up in safety: the country has done its work if we grow up able to give and receive love.

This is, I admit, a less than rigorous distinction. There is, however, a rule of thumb that serves to define what a country is in some detail, for the country is what a totalitarian state must destroy in order to arrogate to itself absolute power. Take, for example, happiness. It is obviously useful if the state can offer its citizens a measure of happiness, for unhappy citizens threaten disorder. Totalitarian states take such threats seriously, for they do not prize order merely as a condition of happiness, but as an end in itself. So, the first action of the totalitarian state is to arrogate to itself responsibility for human happiness. But it will seek only the most efficient and the most economical method of dispensing just that level of happiness that will render its citizens susceptible to control. Huxley's totalitarian offers soma, Orwell's Victory gin, the Soviet Union cheap vodka. If a totalitarian regime is ever voted into power in a parliamentary democracy it will take an early opportunity to legalise the sale of marijuana.

One of the reasons that I chose the word 'country' is for its elasticity. It can reach out to accommodate a nation, or it can be used more narrowly, as in expressions like Burns country, Constable country, to denote that narrower round of people and places that is the precinct of our more intimate loves. The totalitarian state is rarely more ferocious than when attacking these little countries. It will re-write the map, substituting brutal straight lines for the wavy contours of human geography. Regional languages will be extirpated, places re-named, and local customs vilified. Schoolchildren will be taught to say not that they are Georgians but that they are Soviet citizens. It will not rest until all that is left of a once vital local culture is a harmless fragment or two, probably folk dancing. Should totalitarians ever achieve power in Britain they would certainly legislate our counties out of existence. Not for them the disruptive diversity of a nation populated by Cornishmen and Yorkshiremen. Oh, dear . . .

The family will be a chief, perhaps the prime, target, for it is the family on which the country is built, and that teaches its values. Parents educate their children: they share with their children their ideal of human nature. But their aim in doing so is, as Philip Drew notes, to enrich and diversify their children's experience. The family has ends directly opposed to that of the totalitarian state, which requires its citizens to be uniform, and their responses to be automatic, and hence predictable.

But no government that we are likely to get will dare do much to threaten the family.[3] Our systems of education, our schools and universities, are much more vulnerable. There are two reasons for this. First, the necessary distinction, between indoctrination and education, is hard to insist on as vigorously as one would like, because it is so hard to define. Second, formal education in this country, as in the Soviet Union, is largely organised by the state. Most teachers in Britain, as in Russia, are state employees.

I do not see that education and indoctrination can be distinguished other than morally. Like all moral distinctions, this distinction cannot be made without reference to the intentions of the agent. A teacher, like a parent, seeks to enrich the intellectual experience of his pupils. He asserts authority over them, certainly, for without authority he could not teach, but he asserts authority only so that he can fulfil his intention, and that intention itself limits the extent of the authority that he is prepared to claim. The indoctrinator is concerned only that his pupils think what he wants them to think, and that they all think the same. The most important political task for every educator is to secure that distinction and insist on it. If a totalitarian attack is ever made on our schools and universities it will be prefaced by a strident intellectual campaign insisting that the only difference between the educator and the indoctrinator is that the educator unconsciously transmits to his pupils the ruling ideology, whereas the indoctrinator has at least the dignity of self-knowledge. (The campaigners will have a champion and, things being what they are, he will probably be a French intellectual. It might be amusing to invent a name for him.[4])

But education is threatened both by totalitarian teachers, and by the state. The state holds the purse strings. This is dangerous, there seems little prospect of averting the danger, and the only safeguard would seem to be sustained vigilance. There, is however, one practical measure that can be taken. Philip Drew writes, 'The prohibition of any schools except those directed by the government is an assertion of the rights of the state at the expense of the rights of individuals which constitutes a final, because irreversible, step towards a totalitarian society.' This seems extreme, but it is true. We must have public schools not only, nor even most importantly, to protect the rights of those parents who wish, and can afford, to send their children to them, but because their existence is a necessary defence of the pupils in state schools. A totalitarian state could not take control of education without first abolishing private schools. That is reason enough to defend them vigorously.

One of the functions of art is to foster our attachment to our country. Constable, Elgar and John Betjeman, each of them in his own way, refine and make present to us, our sense of belonging to a country. I suspect that it is this art, the art of the common man, the art to which every bosom returns an echo, rather than the subversive art prized by disaffected intellectuals, that prompts the general hatred of the totalitarian state for all things beautiful. But it is architecture that bears the brunt of the attack, and domestic architecture in particular. The impulse of a totalitarian confronting a row of houses, each with its garden, each bearing the imprint of the family that lives there, is to tear it up and replace it with a tower block. The thwarting of this impulse, the victory of the people over the tower block, is, I would say, not only the most heartening, but the most important political victory of the last twenty years. For to destroy a town's architecture is to take a significant step towards making us feel strangers in our neighbourhoods, ill at ease, with nowhere to turn for security but the abstract arms of the state. We need not, of course, insist that all art serve the one purpose of feeding our love for our country. There may be a case for abstract painting, concrete poetry, and even for the construction

by the state of monuments to its own glory, but if it were true, as David Hockney alleges, that a major national gallery like the Tate uses its authority to discourage portraiture, the art that celebrates a man's bond with his fellows, and landscape, the art that celebrates man's wedding with his world, then this would be cause for concern.

What I have said of the pre-eminence of architecture is, I think, true of all European countries, but it is not true of our own. Britain is singular in that its sense of itself as a country is most completely expressed not in its buildings but in the work of a poet. Huxley recognised in *Brave New World* that to set up in Britain a totalitarian state it was first necessary to abolish Shakespeare. His mistake was to imagine that this was most easily done by burning his books, whereas, as it has since been discovered, the same effect is more easily achieved by fostering a general illiteracy, by putting a stop to a child's contact at Sunday school with the rhythms and the vocabulary of Shakespeare's English, and by generally contriving it that *King Lear* become as available to the mass of the British People as the *Bhagavad Gita.*

The country is, if you like, an idea, but it is not an abstract idea. In the family, in schools and in the arts it is made palpable, and passed from one generation to another. We do not choose our country, we are given it, and bound to it, in Wordsworth's phrase, by 'the mild necessity of use.' But to wish that it were otherwise is to wish to exchange for the heart's ease of being at home with one's place and one's neighbours the constrained and negative freedom of the exile.

State and country are interdependent. Without the state the country is defenceless and could not long survive: without the country the state is pointless. Or rather it becomes a totalitarian state, and therefore with no purpose other than its own survival. In a healthy nation, state and country are not opposed, but rather merge with one another, as blue merges with green. Any boundary between them will be artificial, and hence a proper matter for political debate. The boundary shifts in response to circumstances. In time of war the state makes, and must inevitably make, large incursions into the country. On occasions of national rejoicing, royal weddings, for example, the country pushes back the state. People obstruct the roads with street parties, bathe in public fountains, take helmets from policemen's heads and insist that the policemen dance with them. Wars and royal weddings, in their very different ways, both offer glimpses of a human dream, that state and country might become identical. It is the dream that haunts Shakespeare in his chronicle plays, for to Shakespeare the King embodies both country and state, unites them in his person. But Shakespeare allows his dream to intersect with time only at privileged moments, in Henry V's speech to his troops before Agincourt, at the baptism of the young Elizabeth in *Henry VIII.* I would much prefer it that the union of state and country remained for us, what it was for Shakespeare, a dream. I doubt that it is given to fallen man to achieve it. I distrust thinkers of the left who unite the two terms in the word 'society', and thinkers of the right who unite them in the word 'nation'. I suspect that the limits of human happiness have been reached if we can love our country deeply, and obey the state with reasonable cheerfulness. It would be rash, and perhaps dangerous, to expect a man gazing at an income tax demand, or returning to his car to find a parking ticket tucked under his windscreen wiper, to feel anything more devout than a more or less tolerant irritation. If he were to respond otherwise he would too nearly resemble the poor citizens in *1984*, cheering the announcement that their chocolate ration has been increased from half a pound to four ounces. We must love our country and obey the state: that state and country are not opposed is the condition of our happiness, that they are not identical is the condition of our freedom.

Notes

1. Philip Drew offers a history of the literary treatment of freedom and of the forces that limit it from Chaucer to the present day. It is proper to note that the question of political freedom, my own concern, occupies no more than a minor place in the book as a whole.
2. Ivanov, of course, presents Rubashov with a false dilemma, for neither a Christian nor a humane morality is founded simply on the notion that the individual is sacrosanct. The individual soul expresses itself most perfectly when the individual takes his place within a Christian fellowship; to describe a man as humane would be nonsensical were the description to have no reference to his dealings with other human beings.
3. Václav Racek movingly describes, in *Salisbury Review* no.3, how the state in Czechoslovakia vilely intrudes into the family by using children as hostages to ensure their parents' political conformity.
4. At present the two leading candidates for this role are Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. Foucault is the more likely winner because, whereas Althusser is in the difficult position of maintaining that intellectuals like himself can free themselves from the distortions of the prevailing ideology, Foucault has succeeded in closing perfectly the circle of his thought.

Letters

Capital Taxation

Sir: I must object to Barry Bracewell-Milnes's article on Capital Taxation in the Spring edition of the Salisbury Review.

Since its first budget in June 1979 the Conservative Government has radically reformed Capital Gains and Capital Transfer Taxes. While the threshold for Stamp Duty on house purchase has been raised to £25,000, this is the only capital tax which requires a thorough revision; its abolition would be unwise if only because the expense involved in raising the revenue is minimal.

With regard to Capital Gains Tax, the relief is now £5300 and a Conservative Government is likely to continue to increase this in line with inflation. Business retirement relief has been increased from £50,000 to £100,000 on actual disposals at age 65; lower proportionate limits apply from age 60.

As far as Capital Transfer Tax is concerned, the nil rate band has been increased from £25,000 to £60,000 during this Government's term of office. Furthermore, in the 1982 Budget the top rate of tax on lifetime transfers ('gifts tax') was slashed from 75% to 50%. The Government is actually encouraging people to give away during lifetime as after 10 years, any exempt transfers or those within the nil rate band would no longer have any potential sweeping up CTT.

Investment income surcharge now only applies to a taxpayer with over £7100 investment income; this is likely to be indexed in line with inflation. West Germany is often cited as a nation which does not distinguish between earned and investment income, but it must be remembered that a wealth tax was in force before the socialist coalition in 1969.

By the careful use of exemptions it should be possible for the prudent capitalist to avoid much of capital taxation. I am sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would prefer to retain the various capital taxes in a modified and now simplified form, so that further reductions in income tax can be made in the next Parliament.

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The Peace Movement

Sir: John Gray is right to highlight the moral bankruptcy of a Peace Movement based on what he, through Polanyi, calls moral inversion. But his conclusion that there is a need for a 'fundamental shift in moral attitudes, grounded in a realistic acknowledgment of the tragic necessities of political action' shows that he had no more of a practical answer than they. The true response must be to re-invert the moral inversion – that is, to put the 'Christ' back into Christian morality, which is sustained by the pre-eminence of the first commandment over the second, and not by an idealistic antinomianism on the one hand, nor by the traditions of St. Augustine tempered by Aristotelian ethics on the other. St. Paul knew his audience when he wrote, 'Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.' The difficulty is that no one can say that without meeting Foucault's riposte: 'D'où parles-tu?'. Roger Scruton so excellently pointed out the negativism inherent in this left-winger's question; if we believe that truth is the most important ingredient of moral thought perhaps the place to begin is with the Man who claimed to be the way, the truth and the light.

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Sir: Mr John Gray may be right (in the Spring Issue, no. 3) to see what Polanyi calls 'moral inversion' in some of the public utterances of C.N.D., but he fails to do justice to the variety of possible attitudes to the possession of nuclear weapons. The millenarian agitators of mediaeval Europe, with whom he compares C.N.D., have their counterpart, surely, at least as much among those American protestants who claim to regard nuclear annihilation as preferable to submission to communist rule. A love of the world as it is, with its tolerance and seeming immunity to danger from a less tolerant world outside, characterises the thinking of the members of C.N.D. that I know. They do not, as Mr Gray claims, feel 'deeply hostile' to what they see as 'the central institutions of a lasting social order', including those of the Welfare State. I myself believe in the need to maintain the British nuclear deterrent. We live in a world, apparently, where in order to prevent the murder of millions of innocent people we may have to threaten to murder millions. However, I have at least as much in common with those who regard nuclear war as the ultimate evil as I do with those who think we are better red than dead.

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Not by Economics Alone

E. J. Mishan

Excerpts from an Address given to the Vancouver Institute

The two premises that are basic to modern economic judgments of social wellbeing are first that a more equal distribution of the nation's output of economic goods constitutes an improvement in social welfare, and second, that an increase in goods per capita and the availability of new goods likewise constitute an improvement in welfare. Although the arguments connecting economic growth with social progress draw heavily on these two propositions, and although indeed each would command considerable political support today, they do not stand up to examination.

The first premise is clearly a value judgment. Yet in so far as such a judgment is influenced by the belief that a more egalitarian society, and the measures designed to implement it, are themselves conducive to contentment or stability, factual judgments are also involved. At the best of times and in the best of company, debates about values are difficult. And the best of times to question the worth of the egalitarian ideal is not an age in which the tide of populist sentiment runs so strongly as it does today – an age in which any serious charge of 'privilege' or 'discrimination' can be depended upon to raise a storm of protest. Once the distribution of income and wealth has come to be accepted as one of the chief components, if not the touchstone, of social justice, it must follow that no matter what considerable virtues other civilisations may have possessed, any evidence of their unconcern about contemporary inequalities is enough to mark them in our eyes as irredeemably flawed. Compared with our hyper-conscious endeavours to establish a welfare planet, other ages are invariably seen as being deficient in 'compassion', the commodity in which our own age excels – as evidenced in every Western country by the growing variety and scale of 'hand-outs' supported by a rising flow of funds and administered by an expanding army of bureaucrats (a trend only temporarily halted by the current 'recession').

Indeed, by modern lights, a good life enjoyed by any class, group, or vocation, far from counting in favour of the age, counts against it. This is particularly so when the sort of life led by other classes or groups is held to be harsh or degrading – as it is apt to appear when seen from the lofty heights of current real income, and from ideas of comfort and propriety that have been shaped by modern gadgetry. Thus the civilisation of Periclean Athens, and that of the great days of the English squirearchy, are alike condemned. The economy of the former depended in part upon a slave population; the latter upon a servant class.

Nonetheless, if the quality and the character of life in any civilisation is an agendum, the fact (if it can be established) that life was beautiful for an elite, or was rich, serene, and enjoyable for a privileged minority, remains a fact for all that – just as it is also a fact, or at least a judgment of fact, that although the mass of people today in the prosperous West have access to medical and other welfare services, travel extensively, and own television sets, refrigerators, and automobiles, life for them is anything but rich, serene, or beautiful. Indeed, it can be convincingly maintained that the good life once enjoyed by the privileged orders of society is today no longer available to anyone.

As a footnote to the above, however, and in order to guard against misunderstanding, let me add that I recognise that the existence of privilege and wealth, and that the exercise of power by such groups, do not suffice to produce the good life to which I refer. Privilege, wealth, and power are compatible with frivolity, foppery, and social irresponsibility; compatible also with tyranny and barbarism. But I affirm – again as a judgment of fact – that life cannot be rich and rewarding and beautiful for any privileged group without adherence to the basic decencies, without a sense of *noblesse oblige*, and above all without deference to rules of law resting on a broadly based moral consensus.

Turning briefly to the second basic economic premise: if per capita income is the sovereign index of social welfare – sometimes more cautiously phrased as 'want-satisfaction' – why, then is not the age in which we live the happiest ever experienced by Western man? If it is, earlier ages must indeed have been bleak; but of course, the conclusion, is far from plausible. Although production statistics, cost-of-living indices, longevity comparisons, infant mortality figures, epidemiological data, and the like are essential agenda for the modern welfare state, and the pure juice of life for the army of experts gainfully employed in producing them, their relation to people's actual sense of material and spiritual wellbeing is tenuous and largely inscrutable.

Certainly in comparing any two periods we cannot reasonably assume life to be better in that period during which wealth was greater and more equally distributed. At the turn of this century, for instance, the British were among the proudest and most confident of all nations. Their island was guarded by the greatest navy the world had ever known. Their institutions were – or, at least, the British people believed they were – the envy of the rest of the world. Bank tellers paid out in jingling gold sovereigns. Income tax was never more than a shilling in a twenty-shilling pound. Food was cheap and plentiful. The

British piqued themselves on being the world's greatest trading power. And, as the international currency *par excellence*, sterling was unchallenged.

True, there were slums as well as pomp and pageantry. But poverty is not among the worst of social evils. As a people, the British were proud, resourceful, and confident, for all that.

Compare the British today. Per capita income is more than thrice as high. Income is far more equally distributed, with the welfare state on tap at all times. Yet what a sorry lot we have become, fitfully flagellating ourselves for our poor economic performance, quick to make invidious comparisons with other economies. Pride, patriotism, confidence, have been replaced by cynicism, resentment and avarice. As a people we are plunged into internecine turmoil, squabbling for the spoils of industry, each organised occupation only too ready to blackmail the community in the hope of swelling its own pay packet. Serious reflection on this historical contrast should serve to dampen the convictions of those who still repose their hopes for a rosier future in more equality and more economic growth.

The greater the shadows of doubt cast by such perspectives, the less confidence one can have in the staple themes of the economic libertarians – often referred to as the Radical Right (to distinguish them from the Conservative Right) – and more particularly in their emphasis on the primacy of individual freedom, economic and political, in any consideration of social wellbeing. From such beliefs springs the ideal of a competitive capitalism, though one operating within a legal framework maintained by a government limited to specific functions: for economists such as Hayek, Friedman, Buchanan, and others of the Montpelerin persuasion, readily acknowledge that the efficient operation of a competitive market must be supported by an institutional framework that encompasses a well-defined system of property rights along with the maintenance of law and order.

From such doctrine follows the policy of reducing the size of government and the extent of its intervention in the economy. On the question of the factors responsible for the expansion of governments since World War I, however, little is said. Powerful as are the arguments of Hayek in his *Road to Serfdom* (1945) and Friedman in his *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), the impression they convey, inadvertently perhaps, is that the growth of government has been the result of intellectual error and economic naiveté, especially among socialist thinkers. At all events, their writing seems to suggest that if only ordinary people can be convinced that the market is a far more effective way of organising resources to meet people's wants, they would eventually vote for and bring about a contraction of the government sector and, as a result, an expansion of the private sector of the economy. This is indeed wishful thinking. And it stems from the persistent disregard of a crucial fact that the Radical Right cannot stomach: namely, that the conditions which render plausible the traditional presumption in favour of competitive private enterprise and small government no longer prevail. For that matter, no type of economic system – certainly not a centrally planned one – may be presumed to be conferring net benefits over time in a relatively affluent society.

In order to persuade the reader that this is not too sweeping a statement I shall restrict myself to three comments, bringing into the arena of economic debate the phenomenon almost wholly neglected by the Radical Right; namely, the growing power of modern technology in shaping our mode of life.

Economic activity *per se*, contrary to popular political propaganda, no longer holds the key to our future. Economic activity increasingly reflects and diffuses technological innovations that, over time, exert a potent and seemingly irresistible influence on our institutions, on our beliefs, and on our national character. What is alarming is not merely that – whatever its manifest benefits – this technology now threatens to wreck man's habitat.[1] It is equally true that it threatens to erode the moral substructure in which our civilisation is embedded.

Even those who are less pessimistic than I will acknowledge the unprecedented speed and power of modern technology in transforming our lives. It follows that any government which places its responsibility to the nation above electoral considerations will have to steel itself to abandon the low ground of familiar economic issues, familiar party tactics, familiar political rhetoric, for the less explored but more commanding heights. More particularly, such a government will have to shift the focus of its primary concern away from the daily bread of economic afflictions, and economic goals. Instead, its primary concern will have to be with the gathering momentum of technological advance which, left to itself, may so weaken our institutions, and so disorient our minds, as to make survival possible only under the aegis of a totalitarian state.[2]

If, therefore, in what follows, I address myself in the main to what may be called – rather tamely – 'sources of market failure', it is simply because the Radical Right, clinging nostalgically to its economic nostrums, will not face up to their vulnerability and diminishing relevance, in a universe whose familiar landmarks are being swept aside by the triumphant surge of scientific and technological discoveries.

Unemployment and inflation are topics that are too controversial to be broached in this article. At the same time they are less disturbing and not nearly so unnerving as others we shall touch upon. During the interwar period, massive unemployment was undoubtedly a major factor in disposing people in the West to favour the idea of socialism and economic planning. Since the war, however, disenchantment with the Soviet utopias, and scepticism of Marxist ideology, have reconciled populations in the West to being more tolerant of their economic ills. Moreover, the experience of near-full employment for about thirty years after the second world war has left the impression that unemployment is not, as Marxists would have it, an inevitable feature of 'capitalist systems.' It is regarded, rather, as a 'recession' through which we are passing, as a result of the attempt to reduce inflation rates to tolerable levels. It may be the central

political issue just now. But it excites concern, not despair.

Again, I shall say little here about fears of an impending shortage of natural resources; no more, in fact, than to voice an opinion that the reasons offered by some economists for their optimism are ill-founded. However, the public apprehension at the continuing global destruction of tropical rain forests, of vast ecological reservoirs, and of unique areas of natural beauty, or at the cavalier extinction over the past thirty years of many species of flora and fauna, is one that I share. And I can conceive of no system of enforceable property rights that would effectively check these destructive trends, given the existing diffusion of technical know-how and equipment. Moreover, environmental problems are as bad or worse in existing Soviet economies. And though more benign forms of socialism are of course readily conceivable, as are also more benign forms of capitalism, there is no clear sign that they are emerging. Environmental concern is certainly not high on the list of priorities for the kind of socialist state as envisaged, say, by the British Labour Party's Tony Benn.

Be that as it may, market failure is also in evidence even when we narrow our focus to the bread-and-butter issues that form the chief agenda of the Radical Right. Far from being the impartial economic mechanism envisaged by economists, the market suffers from *consumer bias*. In describing the operation of the market in response to changes in demand, economists of the Radical Right tend to dwell on instances in which workers are attracted to move into new industries or areas by the prospect of material gain. What receives less attention and sympathy, however, is the other side of the coin. For following a shift of consumer expenditure, labour becomes subjected to 'the harsh discipline of the market' (Hayek) which, in this context, means that the workers who are laid off by the declining industries may well endure much anxiety and hardship until re-employed. They may be impelled also to incur heavy 'search costs' and possibly moving and retraining costs, to say nothing of those 'psychic costs' associated with leaving a familiar neighbourhood and settling in a new one.

It is no easy task for the economist to devise some quantitative criterion that would measure the increase in consumer satisfaction, from enlarging his freedom of choice in respect to market goods, against the increase in hardship suffered by the worker in attempts to respond to the vicissitudes of consumer demand. Even if it could be conclusively demonstrated that the losses suffered by members of a community in their capacity as producers exceeded the gains conferred on members of the same community in their capacity as consumers, economists could always begin to discuss the long term advantages of having a more flexible and 'dynamic' economy, or the long term disadvantages of introducing additional government restrictions.

Without drawing any firm conclusions, however, it is reasonable to suppose that, inasmuch as the vicissitudes of consumer demand may be expected to grow along with affluence and innovation, the unavoidable 'trade-off' of consumer satisfaction for worker dissatisfaction will become less advantageous. For in high-consumption societies, increments to the existing area of consumer choice become less valuable, whereas the consequent increase in worker readjustment becomes more painful.

My expectation of an increasing versatility of consumer demand arises chiefly from the fact of continuing technical advance. In the first place, the mass affluence in Western countries, which is the product of technical progress, leaves a large margin for 'impulse buying' – in contrast to those much less affluent countries where the bulk of consumption expenditure is restricted to staple items. This fickleness of consumer demand, even among broad categories of goods, is aggravated both by competitive advertising and by competitive international trade. Looked at without doctrinaire commitment, then, the value to society of enlarging consumer freedom under economic conditions prevailing in the West is easy to overestimate.

Two other aspects of this theme may be stressed. As a result of the decline in freight costs over the last hundred years or so, the bulk of the goods being traded between industrial countries – as a particular instance, between Common-Market countries – are close substitutes for one another, thereby (according to standard economic theory) conferring but limited benefit. The fierce international competition today in autos, stereos, television sets, cameras, watches, computers, cassettes, and a host of other devices and accessories, if allowed to prevail without hindrance in accordance with this radical doctrine, could be painfully disruptive of the domestic economy, inflicting anxieties and hardships out of all proportion to the conventional estimates of consumer gains. The tariff and trade controls despised by free-traders are, of course, the means by which producers and workers seek to protect themselves and their families from anxiety and hardship.

Again, continuing innovation entails not only new consumer goods but also new technologies, the adoption of which may render hard-earned skills virtually obsolete overnight. In these circumstances, it is easy to understand the obstinate resistance of workers to the introduction of new and 'more efficient' technologies, and also to sympathise with the more recent concern of trade unions not merely with real wages, but also with maintaining the actual employment-level of their members. If such technological trends continue – and there is no reason to believe otherwise – society as a whole may become yet more willing to restrict consumer choice in order to reduce the strain on the families of domestic workers.

In sum, the consumer bias of the market, which operates against the economic security of the worker in conditions of affluence and rapid technical change, is among the secular problems that will grow in importance.

Let us turn now to the attention currently paid in Western countries to the many effects subsumed under the umbrella term 'spillovers' – those incidental effects, good or (more usually) bad, that are the by-products of legitimate economic activity.

Over the last two decades the economic literature on this topic has swollen to astonishing dimensions, a significant part of the resulting controversies being of a

doctrinal complexion. At one extreme, within orthodox economics, there is the 'Chicago School' holding to the belief that with a more carefully delineated system of property rights the unfettered market could comfortably cope with the spillover problem. At the other extreme are those economists, like myself, who dismiss this belief as a doctrinal delusion: indeed, who maintain that the more serious problems being generated by current technologies cannot be resolved by any system of enforceable property rights whatsoever. In the present section I touch upon only one aspect of the problem, that implied, engagingly enough, by the title of a recent popular book written by Professor and Mrs. Friedman, *Free to Choose* (1979).

Since the title and contents have a ring of liberation about them, it might be as well to state some obvious truths in order to dispel exaggerated anticipations of joy. For the fact is that virtually nobody can choose what he really wants. If I want to be as strong as Hercules, as wise as Solomon, as talented as Michaelangelo, I shall want in vain. One need not be quite so ambitious, however, to experience unavoidable frustrations. A great many people ardently wish that they were taller, handsomer, and more gifted than nature ever intended they should become. And there may be moments in their lives when all the tea in China – assuming it could be sold at a reasonable price – would not suffice to compensate for their unfulfilment. Clearly then people choose what they want, even in the most liberal democracy and most competitive market, only in the narrow sense that the policies enacted by the party in power, and the flow of market goods, are adapted over time to the changing demands of people.

Limited as is this area of choice for society as a whole, it is much further restricted for the individual citizen. As far as government policies are concerned, he has to accept much that goes against the grain of his political convictions. As for the market, it may be that he wants all he buys. But he certainly does not buy all he wants. He has to accept as unalterable data the physical features of the environment in which he dwells. The law permits him to go wherever he pleases provided he does not trespass on private or government-segregated property, and to buy whatever he pleases subject, however, to the constraints of his income, the time at his disposal, and the range of goods available at market prices. Again, he can choose any job he wants – provided he is qualified to hold it and provided it is offered to him.

In addition to these obvious limitations, each person's choice of purchase is subject to innumerable laws and regulations. The manufacture, sale, and consumption of various items may be regulated or prohibited by law. Restrictions abound with respect to location of property, shape of building, to hours of business, to manufacturing processes, and to the employment of labour. We may conclude that whatever the general level of consumption, a person obtains what he wants – or rather what he chooses – only in a very limited sense.

With more chastened spirit let us return to the restricted area in which the Friedmans propose to enlarge the freedom of individual choice. The issues they raise turn always on alleged economic losses that result from the extent and the methods of government intervention. Their broad thesis is simple enough, and is admittedly argued with lucidity and conviction: the more the public sector takes over from the private sector of the economy, the less the choice remaining for the individual, since his money is used by government agencies to produce goods he may have no interest in consuming or in amounts he may not wish for.

So far, so good. But the expansion of government in displacing privately produced goods is not the only, nor the chief, development which effectively reduces individual choice. Spillovers have a similar, and yet more serious effect. If the keen environmentalist deplores the increase in smog or the increase of aircraft noise within his vicinity, it affords him no consolation to be assured by the economist that – bearing in mind 'transactions costs' and the like – the evils he suffers are being produced at optimal levels. He may himself have no use whatever for the goods being produced by the smog-creating economic activity or for air travel. And even if he does, he still has no choice but to bear with their evil consequences. He cannot, so to speak, 'decompose' these packages of goods-cum-evils; he cannot, that is, at given market prices, choose both the amounts of the market goods being produced – automobiles, air services, or any of a range of other industrial products – and *also* the amounts of the 'evils' he is willing to absorb.

So restricted, he is worse off than he would be with a tied sale, since he can always refuse the tied-sale package if on balance it makes him worse off. Hence, in an area of great sensitivity, having occasionally a drastic influence on the welfare of at least some groups, the operation of competitive markets can offer the individual no insurance against significant reductions in his choice.

Difficulties of dealing satisfactorily with environmental spillovers assume a new dimension once we consider the epidemic of new hazards that has descended upon the globe since the second world war. The almost daily discovery of these hazards, and the media publicity accorded to them, have begun to affect a fundamental change in people's attitude toward science and technology. They are beginning to see themselves not only as the beneficiaries of 'progress' but also as its victims. Public alarm and the resulting opposition to specific technologies have occasionaly thwarted the plans of governments and planning agencies who, in their turn, allege that the safety assurances being demanded by vociferous segments of the public 'threaten the nation's economic future'.

In the meantime, vital public decisions have to be made under conditions in which the necessary analysis or appraisal, dominated as it so often is by a large element of uncertainty, cannot be expected to be rational. For a variety of reasons, there can be no individual choice in respect of these new hazards. Nor is there the remotest prospect of the market transmuting collective choices, whether made explicitly or else made *implicity* (that is, in the absence of public debate, taking no action to curb such hazards) into individual ones. Whatever the nature and the extent of the new risk in question, the risk is

involuntary for the individual – a part of the *non*-decomposable package gifted to him with the compliments of the Scientific Establishment. Inevitably, therefore, there will be a growing public demand for more government controls, and for agencies empowered to implement them, so diminishing further the prospect of any reduction in the power of governments and of an increase of freedom for the citizen. . . .

. . . I cannot, in this article, develop the theme of the quality of life in a future conditioned by accelarating technological transformation. Suffice it to say that the greatest of our modern writers have concurred in the judgment that the increasing sophistication of means brings with it an increasing loss of ends. The point of a life from which all trial and obstacle is removed, from which the material needs that generate moral obligations are extruded, and in which the rapid proliferation of unreal 'options' which are merely the equal and equally worthless benefits offered by impersonal machine, is no longer certain. We cannot allow ourselves blindly to be swept along into a future which threatens the very moral vision that would enable us to judge it. In the face of this problem, all attempts to assess the quality of life in statistical terms – terms which make technological progress an immovable part of human improvement – must misrepresent our true predicament. It is clear, however, that no government can allow itself to ignore the problem, if it is to fulfil its duty toward those under its command.

But let us, in conclusion, return from that vast and difficult conundrum to the problems that have concerned us in this paper. What can an honest government do in a world subject to capricious and untoward developments over which, currently, it has little control? Certainly no confidence can be reposed in the simplistic policy of a return to small government and more competitive private enterprise. When it finally realises the full strength of the disintegrative forces exerted on the community by modern science and technology, an honest government has also to recognise that it cannot hope to hold the nation together unless it drastically changes its priorities.

Put otherwise, a government that follows political precedent, continuing to visualise itself as the nation's seasoned helmsman steering the economy through dangerous waters, continuing to equate more goods-in-the-home with a better life for the people, tediously insisting that 'greater efficiency in industry is vital if Britain is to survive in the modern competitive world' (economic balderdash, this!), perceiving in new technologies nothing more than economic progress and export opportunities, is a government with its head buried in the sands. If this is the case, then a major effort by more sophisticated Tories may be necessary to coax a Conservative government to pull its head out of the sands. I say a major effort if only because, encouraged by the pervasive media coverage, especially television coverage, M.P.s, in and out of office, are sorely tempted to make political capital out of every chance event, domestic or foreign. Being too busy scoring over their opponents, jostling for headlines and media attention, they have no time to raise their sights above the noisy political cross fire. Individually or as a group, they act, or rather they react, only when danger is clear and imminent. Of all peoples, politicians as a body are perhaps the most unworldly – save in political machination.

It is no part of this article to outline a Tory policy for the times. But if government policy is to succeed in some degree in facing the dangers that beset us, and in checking the evident apathy of our citizens, it must begin by recognising the heavy price we are paying for the unchecked opportunity to innovate and expand, at a time when the control of the planet is beginning to slip from our grasp.

In particular, the moral infrastructure of society which our nineteenth century reformers took for granted and which, apparently, the Radical Right still takes for granted, has begun to sag. In all conscience we cannot go on acting as if economic and hedonic opportunity will suffice to overlay a yawning spiritual void that is the culminating heritage of over three centuries of science and secularisation. We cannot go on acting as if the nation can be held together as a free people by *economic* policies alone, held together without pride in a common history, without confidence in a way of life, without esteem for institutions, without respect for leaders and without purpose, faith, or hope.

Notes

1. See Diana Spearman, 'The Politics of Nature', *Salisbury Review* no. 3, Spring, 1983.
2. In a short article it is plainly impossible to do justice to my interpretation of events. For a more searching study and for more comprehensive arguments the interested reader is referred to my *Economic Growth Debate: An Assessment* (Allen & Unwin, 1977).

Hayek as a Conservative Thinker

John Gray

Is Hayek a conservative? Many conservatives will quickly deny that he can be anything of the kind. They will cite the famous Postscript to his *Constitution of Liberty*, 'Why I am not a Conservative', in which Hayek disavows the characteristically conservative project of using the power and authority of the state to protect endangered moral traditions and to shore up threatened social hierarchies, and argues instead for the classical liberal view, that the primary task is the curbing of all such political power. Conservatives often invoke this and other evidence in support of a picture of Hayek as a doctrinaire defender of liberty, whose general outlook is little different from that of a Lockean theorist of natural rights such as Robert Nozick, or a partisan of laisser-faire such as Milton Friedman. It is a short step from radical libertarianism to an ideology which, while centred on the defence of the market economy, is neglectful of the moral tradition which makes a market economy possible. Hayek's conservative critics take this step on his behalf, and condemn his accordingly.

It is not hard to show that the standard conservative view of Hayek's thought is ill-founded. Hayek's position is distinctive, to be sure. It embodies the best elements of classical liberalism and also suggests a criticism of many conventional conservative positions. At the same time it derives from some of the most profound insights of conservative philosophy, and puts them to work in an original and uncompromising fashion.

We must recall Hayek's birth and education in the last two decades of the Hapsburg Empire, in whose defence he fought as an aircraftsman, and remember that his formative intellectual influences were not those of English-speaking empiricist philosophy. Central among these influences were the philosophies of Immanuel Kant and Ernst Mach, variants of which dominated the intellectual life by which Hayek was surrounded in his youth. Hayek's thought also bears the imprint of the Viennese critics of language: of Karl Kraus, of the now almost forgotten Fritz Mauthner, and of Hayek's cousin, Ludwig Wittgenstein. The reflections of these men on the decay of intelligence wrought by the perversion of language have always inspired Hayek, and have played a part in many of his later writings. (Hayek's devastating analysis of the expression, 'social justice',[1] in which he illuminates its workings so as to make clear its utter lack of definite sense, may be best understood as continuing the Krausian tradition of resisting the modern idolatry of general words.)

Most importantly, though, Hayek's writings reflect his lifelong aspiration to come to terms with the debacle of the First World War, when the high civilisation and the rule of law established in Hapsburg Austria-Hungary gave way to chaos and barbarism. As a liberal conservative of aristocratic origins and aristocratic tastes, Hayek has sought to diagnose the weakness of traditional authority and of established liberal institutions. As a result of this weakness, Europe has been engulfed by vast movements dedicated to the repudiation of the European inheritance. Hayek's attempt to synthesize the deepest insights of conservatism with the best elements of classical liberalism merits our closest scrutiny, if only because the experience which inspired it – the experience of an apparently inexorable drift to dissolution and barbarism in all the central institutions of society – may not be so far from our own. His researches into the ultimate sources of the current malaise of civilised authority led him deeply into the theory of knowledge and into philosophical psychology: for it is Hayek's view that the impossible ambitions spawned by contemporary culture arise from a false understanding of the human mind itself.

The well-spring of all Hayek's work in social philosophy and in economic theory is, then, a conception of human knowledge. Hayek's theory of knowledge can be understood, in the first place, as a sceptical variant of Kantianism. For Hayek, as for Kant, our knowledge is not based in incorrigible sensations,[2] and the empiricist attempt so to reconstruct it is forlorn. Our minds are no more passive receptacles for sensory data than they are mirrors for reflecting the necessities of the world: they are creative powers, imposing order on a primordial confusion by way of a built-in set of categories. Philosophy cannot hope to step outside these categories so as to attain a transcendental point of view, or to reach an Archimedean point of leverage from which to assess or reform human thought. For Hayek, as for Kant, philosophy is reflexive and critical rather than transcendental or constructive: it plots the limits of the understanding but cannot hope to govern it.

Hayek's sceptical Kantianism has features, however, which take it far from anything that Kant could have accepted, and which give to it a wholly distinctive turn. The organising categories of the human mind are, for Hayek, neither immutable nor universal; rather they express evolutionary adaptations to a world that is in itself unknowable. Hayek's thought has here a real point of affinity with that of his friend Sir Karl Popper, who has long expounded a naturalistic and evolutionary theory, in which human knowledge is regarded as continuous with animal belief. More decisively, however, Hayek differs from Kant in denying that the governing principles of our

minds are fully knowable to us. We will always be governed by rules of action and perception, which structure our experience and behaviour down to their last details, and some of which will necessarily elude our powers of critical inquiry. In recognising these elements of our mental life – these 'meta-conscious rules' of action and perception, as he calls them[3] – Hayek identifies a limit to the powers of reason more severe than any Kant could have admitted. For if such rules exist, then (though we can at no point learn their content), we can be sure that critical thought itself is governed by them. Hence our own minds, no less than the external world, must in the end remain a domain of mystery for us, being governed by rules whose content we cannot describe.

Hayek is a Kantian, then, in denying that we can know things as they are in themselves things, or can ever step out from the categories which govern our understanding. He goes further than Kant, in seeing the categories of our understanding as mutable and variable, and in some major degree unknowable to us. Most distinctive in Hayek's sceptical and Kantian theory of knowledge, however, is his insight that all our theoretical, propositional or explicit knowledge presupposes a vast background of tacit, practical and inarticulate knowledge. Hayek's insight here parallels those of Oakeshott, Ryle and Polanyi; like them he perceives that the kind of knowledge that can be embodied in theories is not only distinct from, but also at every point dependent upon, another sort of knowledge, embodied in habits and dispositions to act. Some of this practical knowledge is found in rules of action and perception imprinted in the nervous system and transmitted by genetic inheritance. But much the most significant part of the practical knowledge expressed in our dealings with each other is passed on mimetically, in the cultural transmission of traditions or practices, some of which are bound to be inaccessible to critical enquiry. In all our relations with the social world we are informed and sustained by these elements of tacit knowledge, which we know to be pervasive in our thought and conduct, but whose content we can scarcely guess at.

In his own view, and surely rightly, Hayek's conception of the human mind as governed by rules some of which must escape conscious scrutiny, has the largest consequences for social philosophy. For it entails the bankruptcy of the rationalist project, undertaken in different ways by Bacon and Descartes, of subjecting the mind to a systematic purge of tradition and prejudice. We can never know our own minds sufficiently to be able to govern them, since our explicit knowledge is only the visible surface of a vast fund of tacit knowing. Hence the rationalist ideal of the government of the mind by itself is delusive. How much more of a mirage, then, is the ideal of a society of minds which governs itself by the light of conscious reason. The myriad projects of modern rationalism – constructivist rationalism, as Hayek calls it – all founder on the awkward fact that conscious reason is not the mother of order in the life of the mind, but rather its humble stepchild. All of the modern radical movements – liberalism after the younger Mill as much as Marxism – are for Hayek attempts to achieve the impossible. For they seek to translate tacit knowledge into theoretical form, and to govern social life by explicit doctrine. But only tacit knowledge can engender government, and tacit knowledge is lost by its translation into explicit form. Hayek is here developing, in its political implications, a version of the thesis of the primacy of practice in the constitution of knowledge. This thesis has a distinguished pedigree in the writings of a number of contemporary writers, of whom Oakeshott, Wittgenstein and Heidegger are perhaps the most notable.

The thesis of the primacy of practice leads Hayek to refine the argument that rational resource-allocation under socialism is impossible – an argument which Hayek inherited from his teacher L. von Mises. In his disputes with socialist economists, Mises had contended that, in the absence of market pricing of all factors of production, chaos in calculations was bound to ensue, and could be avoided only by relying on world capitalist markets and domestic black markets. (Saul Kripke has noted[4] an interesting analogy between this argument of Mises's and Wittgenstein's arguments against the possibility of a private language – an analogy I can only remark upon, but not pursue here.) Hayek sees, as his mentor Mises did not, that the knowledge which is yielded by market pricing cannot be collected by a central authority or programmed into a mechanical device, not just because it is too complex, nor yet because it is knowledge of a fleeting reality (though this is closer to the nub of the matter), but rather because it is knowledge given to us only in use. It is knowledge stored in habits and in practice, displayed in entrepreneurial flair, and preserved in the countless conventions of business life. Unhampered markets transmit this knowledge, which is otherwise irretrievably dispersed in millions of people. One may almost say that, for Hayek, this practical knowledge achieves a full social realisation *only* when market pricing is not interfered with. For – like much traditional knowledge – it is holistic, a property of the entire society, and not the private possession of any of its separate elements or members.

Hayek's case against socialist planning, and in favour of the unhampered market, rests upon these considerations rather than upon any Lockean theory of property rights, or upon a fanaticism for laisser-faire. The impossibility of socialism, and of successful intervention in the economy, is an *epistemological* impossibility. His differences with Keynes, for example, are imperfectly understood if one does not grasp that the Keynesian macro-economic manager must claim knowledge which Hayek insists is available to no one. The Keynesian planner may indeed achieve temporary successes, by exploiting money illusion and manipulating business confidence, but this is bound to be a short-lived victory. Such Keynesian policies work only insofar as they are contrary to the established expectations which they cannot help eroding. Moreover, they take no account of the inevitable discoordination of relative prices and incomes. Governments can do next to nothing to remedy these consequences, since it is given to no-one to know what is the correct relative price-structure. Hayek nowhere suggests that market failure is an apodictic impossibility; but he is surely on firm ground

in arguing that it is in the unhampered operation of the market process itself that we have the best assurance of economic coordination.

Socialism and interventionism, then, are but long shadows cast by a false philosophy of mind. The order we find in society, no less than that which prevails in our own minds and bodies, is a sponaneous order, and not a product of rational design. The dominant superstition of the Age of Reason is the belief that vital social institutions – the law, language, and morality, as well as the market – must be or become products of conscious contrivance and control, if they are effectively to serve human purposes. This modern superstition results from an anthropomorphic transposition of mentalistic categories to the life of society. Hayek's criticism echoes a distinguished line of anti-rationalist thinkers, of whom Pascal is perhaps the closest to him, in his celebrated distinction between *l'esprit de géométrie* and *l'esprit de finesse*. It is because the rational principles of social life are immanent in its practices that we cannot trust our reason in its speculative projections for reform.

This is why, especially in his later writings, Hayek attaches so great an importance to the spontaneous development of the law in the institution of an independent judiciary. He goes so far as to see, in the contemporary recourse to legislation, a major threat to liberty and to social stability. There is, indeed, an important analogy between Hayek's arguments for the impossibility of comprehensive economic planning and his criticism of a legal system that is dominated – as all now are – by statute. Just as no economic plan can approach the sensitivity and subtlety of the market process in integrating men's plans and achieving coordination in the use of resources, so statutory legislation cannot match the sensitivity of the common law in responding to and adjudicating the concrete problems of man's social existence. But the common law, which relies on the doctrine of precedent, cannot survive without a strong, independent and decentralised judiciary.

It is not that Hayek supposes that a modern state can altogether forswear legislation,[5] any more than it can wholly dispense with economic policy; but in both cases the balance needs to be redressed, in favour of spontaneous order, whether that of the market or that of the judicial process. The two issues of economic planning and the rule of law are therefore inseparably connected for Hayek. He sees clearly that the rise of the administrative state, together with the prevalence of grandiose projects for redistribution and social welfare, pose a major threat to the rule of law, and therefore to individual liberty. A government which seeks to regulate prices and incomes is bound to transfer large powers to administrative authorities. In the nature of things these authorities will exercise a terrifying discretion over the lives and fortunes of the citizens. Such authorities may clothe their arbitrariness in a mythology of basic needs, or they may attempt to revive the doctrine of the Just Wage. But their decisions cannot be contained within the rule of law, for they crucially depend upon a claim to knowledge which no-one possesses – a claim which, in the nature of things, cannot be adjudicated.

Aside, then, from the fact that policies of intervention in the market and in the provision of social goods tend to expand as their failures are recognised, such policies necessarily involve a transfer of authority over our lives to administrators effectively unconstrained by law, and often uninhibited by common moral sentiments. Hayek's criticism of the ambitions of the administrative and welfare states should be less implausible in conservative circles than it was when his *Road to Serfdom* appeared. We can see now the accuracy of his prediction that the expansionist state will be captured by movements and professions whose outlook and interests are deeply at odds with the preservation of established ways of life.

What in turn may conservatives learn from Hayek's thought? His chief importance, I think, is that he has freed classical liberalism from the burden of an hubristic rationalism. He has thereby produced a defence of liberty which reconciles the modern sense of individuality with the claims of tradition. Hayek shows that we are bound to rely primarily on inherited traditions of thought and conduct in all our dealings with each other. The inarticulate character of the great submerged part of our knowledge means that we always know far more than we can ever say. It also means, crucially, that the rational criticism of social life must come to a stop when it reaches the tacit component of our practices.

There is an uncomfortable lesson here for conservatives, since Hayek's diagnosis condemns the attempt to retard or reverse the flood of social change, no less than it undermines the reformer's desire to remodel society, according to some more 'rational' plan. Hayek would heartily endorse Wittgenstein's remark, that trying to salvage damaged traditions by wilful effort is like trying with one's bare hands to repair a broken spider's web. The most we can do is to remove those artificial impediments to the vitality of our traditions which have been imposed by the state. And with its policies in education and housing, the state has surely been a far greater destroyer of traditions and communities than has the market.

Hayek's chief lesson for conservatives, then, is that it is a delusion to think that conservative values can be protected by a successful capture of the expansionist state. The damage done to social life by an invasive state is integral to its existence, and conservative governments are better occupied during their tenure of office in whittling down the state and in restoring initiative to the people, than in the futile enterprise of trying to convert the state's bureaucracies to a conservative view of things.

This is not to say that Hayek's thought is not open to legitimate conservative criticism. At times he seems to subscribe to a doctrine of historical progress which, though it was accepted by such conservatives as Burke and Hegel, cannot be endorsed by any twentieth century thinker. Here I think we must turn to Michael Oakeshott's writings[6] for the insight that human history is not to be construed as a single evolutionary process, but rather as a series of distinct adventures in civilisation. Although Hayek is surely right to see the conquest of the world by European individuality as an historical fate, which it is idle to wish away, he is perhaps too ready to see

this as a stage in a global progressive development. There is a faint echo in his writings, which a conservative would wish could not be heard, of the historical theodicy of the Enlightenment. This theodity is an indefensible part of the inheritance of classical liberalism, which in other respects we are wise to cherish.

Finally, Hayek's thought poses a dilemma for conservatives which few of them have yet come to recognise. The dilemma is found in his perception, especially in his later writings, that the modern development of age-old European moral and intellectual traditions has produced an outlook that is deeply destructive of civilised institutions. The peculiarly modern outlook – a combination, I should say, of homeless moral passion with rationalist fantasy – is now so pervasive as to have acquired deep roots in popular sentiment and a secure place in virtually all the disciplines of thought. It results in what Hayek calls 'unviable moralities'[7] systems of moral thought and sentiment incapable of sustaining any stable social order; in the bizarre intellectual constructs of contemporary sociology; and even, as in architecture, in a corruption of the practical arts. Taken together, these developments create a climate of culture which is profoundly hostile, not only to its traditional inheritance, but even to its own continued existence. We confront the phenomenon of a culture permeated throughout by a hatred of its own identity, and by a sense of its purely provisional character. This culture is not without sources in our most ancient religious and moral traditions – for example, in Platonic rationalism and in Christian moral hope.[8] In his writings on Mandeville, Hayek has made clear that the defence of the market economy may demand a far from conservative revision of ordinary morality.[9] His latest thoughts on the phenomenon of intellectual and moral inversion[10] suggest that he has illuminated what is, from a conservative viewpoint, an even greater problem: since much of contemporary culture is possessed by a death-wish brought on by pathological developments in some of our oldest traditions, a modern conservative must also be a moral and intellectual radical.

Notes

1. See especially, volume 2 of his trilogy, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: the Mirage of Social Justice.*
2. Hayek's epistemology is most systematically presented in his treatise on philosophical psychology, *The Sensory Order*, and in the earlier essays collected in his *Studies in Philosophy, Politics & Economics.*
3. For the intriguing idea of a meta-conscious rule, see Hayek's *Studies in Philosophy, Politics & Economics*, pp. 60–63.
4. Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, footnote 88.
5. Hayek acknowledges the inevitability of legislation in the modern state in his response to the most interesting and original criticism of his views in Bruno Leoni's *Freedom and the Law.* See Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty, vol. 1: Rules and Order*, p. 168, footnote 35.
6. I refer, most especially, to Oakeshott's *Human Conduct*, pp. 274–278, for its masterly evocation of the sources and character of the modern European sense of individuality.
7. For Hayek's conception of an unviable morality, see *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, vol. 2: *The Mirage of Social Justice*, Chapter Eleven.
8. On the Platonist and Christian roots of Marxism, see L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 1, Chapter One.
9. For a conservative criticism of Hayek's Mandevillian argument, see Irving Kristol, 'When Virtue Loses all her Loveliness – Some Reflections on Capitalism and "The Free Society" ' in Kristol's *On the Democratic Idea in America.*
10. For a profound interpretation of contemporary moral inversion, see Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge*, Chapter Seven, sections 9–16.

Editorial: The Tory Opportunity

Mrs Thatcher's leadership has been strengthened, and her immediate intentions are plain. But what of her long term strategy? Much emphasis has been placed on the 'ideological' character of the recent election, on its supposed reference to issues that run deeper than immediate policy. And to some extent this emphasis is justified. The ruling socialist idea – that powers assumed by the state can be used to benefit society, while powers assumed by the individual will be used only to benefit himself – is no longer credible. The rising generation has witnessed its effects in the 'socialist' societies, and – despite massive propaganda – has been duly impressed by what it has seen. There is no doubt that the Conservative Party was able to profit from this, and to convince the electorate that its present emphasis on the individual – his rights, duties and freedoms – was the necessary prophylactic against creeping bureaucracy, political stasis, and economic decline.

At the same time, the long term intentions of the Conservative Party are far from obvious, and the 'ideology' which supposedly won the election was little more than a negation offered to its rival. The Tory Party is a party of pragmatic adjustment. Its members are united around the cause of equilibrium, but also conscious that equilibrium is the gift of history, and cannot be created from the abstract matter of ideas. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Labour Party – which has repeatedly announced an 'irreversible shift' towards socialism, and a 'way forward' into a future that will have only tenuous connections with the past – has done massive damage to our institutions, and promises to do more. Nor is it only the Labour Party that has shown, in recent years, a taste

for ill-considered novelties, or a contempt for the slow process of political adjustment. In any event, the nation has reached a turning point: it is now necessary not merely (in Burke's words) 'to reform in order to conserve', but also to contemplate radical measures, in order that radical measures will not be the norm.

We have tried – in a series of articles – to draw attention to those aspects of politics which are too serious, and too fundamental, to be repeatedly exposed to the political process. Such matters – language, the environment, sexual conduct, national identity – form the background of political choice, and repeatedly to put them in question, is to invite the chaos of a choice that proceeds from no firm premises. Once they have been placed in question, however, whether by ill-considered policies or by social upheaval, it is necessary to resolve, as best one can, the political problems which they generate. Thus, as John Casey argued in our first issue, the cumulative effect of unwise immigration laws can no longer be ignored. While we may disagree with the policy of compulsory repatriation – a policy which Casey at least entertained, whether or not he wished finally to recommend it – there is no doubt that, merely to arrest the flow of immigrants cannot solve the social problem. Constructive efforts are required, both to encourage those who wish to return, and to ensure the integration of those who do not.

Robert Grant alerted us to the social dangers implied in the ready availability of pornographic and indecent material. These dangers, he argued, stem not just from the confused perception of human relations which pornography engenders, but also, and more especially, from the confused perception of the self. Again we believe that a Conservative administration must act to reduce this danger. And it is well equipped to understand the need to do so. For conservatism – at least, the form of conservatism which seeks to define itself in our pages – is primarily a social attitude, rooted in a vision of personal life. Unlike socialism – with its overriding pursuit of the 'fair' society – and unlike liberalism – which retreats from the 'private' sphere into the clean public air of rights and freedoms – conservatism takes its inspiration from the immediate facts of personal experience. It seeks to be true to the intuitions by which we live, and especially to the perceptions which reveal our mortal condition. Eros and Thanatos, which rule our lives, must also rule our perceptions, and those who are surprised by an outlook which construes sexual love and family life as political institutions, are those who would divorce politics from the energies and interests of people. To effect such a divorce is to remove the motive from political obligation, and to set up, not a government, but a machinery of social control. It seems to us, therefore, that the legal measures considered by Grant – or something like them – must be made part of any long term conservative policy.

Our third issue – the environment – is also one to which a Conservative Government is well suited to attend. As Diana Spearman argued, it is the sense of the fragility of worthwhile things that motivates conservative politics. Now, and perhaps for the first time, the fragility of human institutions has communicated itself to nature. We can no longer permit the wanton wrecking of our planet: our obligation to future generations and to ourselves, compels us to curtail our recklessness. A complex stratagem is necessary, in order to reconcile the conflicting demands of the present and the future: the need for present growth, and the greater need for prudence and stability. It would be culpable lack of foresight to neglect the present opportunity, when a near universal consensus demands that we make use of it.

Many other issues have been discussed in this journal, but two deserve mention, not because they are commonly overlooked, but because they are basic to coherent politics. We have argued on several occasions that our national identity is predicated upon alliances, and that everything must be done to identify and support our allies in a vacillating world. To some extent the Soviet Union has helped us in this task, by the relentless malignity which it extends towards us. But for many reasons the Soviet Union and its satellites are misperceived, and if we have tried to rectify this misperception, it is partly because of those within our ranks who take comfort in their own blindness. Conservatism is founded in local attachments; but it is also aware that political institutions reach out beyond the territories which nurture them, and seek naturally to ally themselves with those whose complexion resembles their own. By perceiving enmity where enmity is offered, we will better equip ourselves to unite with friends.

The cornerstone of free association is private property: that which is given and taken in free exchange. The Tory Party – which has always perceived this – has therefore been clear since its beginnings that it is income and not property that should bear the burden of taxation. Income tax was indeed a Tory invention, and an early use of it is referred to in these pages by Lord John Manners. Capital taxes have always been repugnant to the Tory Party, as being an expropriation of the individual substance. Yet in recent years it has neglected the opportunity to abolish them. As Barry Bracewell-Milnes has argued, capital taxes are neither economically advantageous nor politically wise. We believe that the time has come to abolish them; for their motive is a pernicious one. They aim, not to support the state, but to penalise the citizen. Their true foundation lies, not in fiscal necessity, but in sterile resentment. And the politics of resentment is neither genial nor free.

Those policies are radical. But the long term view requires them, and it is not possible to persist among present threats and uncertainties, without a long-term view.

Book Reviews

THE ROCK OF CONSTITUTION

H. W. R. Wade

The Constitution In Flux Philip Norton; Martin Robertson, Oxford; 1982; 300 pp. + index; £17 hardback, £5.95 paperback.

The constitution in flux? Indeed it should be. But the flux is to be found mainly in the minds of a handful of people who think and write about it. A few academics, lawyers, journalists and professional politicians are to be heard advocating constitutional reforms, but their ideas wash around the rocks of the established order in feeble eddies. Such few innovations as there have been, like the extended committee system in the House of Commons and the use on two occasions of referendums, fit comfortably into the traditional framework. For the rest, it has mostly been a tale of abortive effort: failure to reform the House of Lords, the rejection of devolution for Scotland and Wales, the hostility of the House of Commons to electoral reform and to a bill of rights. Admittedly, the ombudsman has broken into the preserves formerly guarded by an exaggerated doctrine of ministerial responsibility, the sovereignty of Parliament has been surrendered (though only de facto) to Brussels, and British governments can be indicted at Strasbourg for violating human rights. But of any desire to make a proper review of the ancient and unplanned constitution of this country there is no real sign. The grandiloquently entitled Royal Commission on the Constitution missed its opportunity by declining, contrary to the wishes of some of its members, to look further than the end of its nose. Instead, if confined itself to the project of devolution, which was wrongly supposed to be wanted by the Celtic minorities.

Nevertheless there is a continuing debate, indicative of at least a measure of public dissatisfaction. This debate is the subject of Philip Norton's book, and by his survey of the pros and cons he has made a worthwhile contribution to it. He modestly offers his text to sixth-formers and undergraduates, and to any others interested. For himself, he is neither a reformer, nor a partisan, nor an axe-grinder. On subjects like membership of the EEC, a bill of rights and electoral reform he discusses the issue, sets out the arguments for and against, and then, under the heading 'conclusions', makes a few dispassionate remarks which might better be described as non-conclusions. On the way he provides much useful detail, with a high standard of accuracy and a wealth of illustrations, including many from the wilder shores of politics. But the only proposition to which he really commits himself is that the House of Commons should recover some of its lost power vis-à-vis the government, by developing still further the system of select committees which began to blossom in 1979 – hardly now a very exciting suggestion.

The year 1974 is seen as the transition between 'the years of the managers' when 'the emphasis was on problem-solving and creating a rational and efficient structure for government', and the later period, when 'the need for a reformulated constitutional framework' came to the fore. The disappointing results of 'managerial tinkering' – the superministries, the 'think-tank', the reforms of the civil service, the health service and local government – led to a shift of interest towards more radical remedies. But the more radical the remedies, the less the chance of obtaining them, and the more academic the debate. The simple truth is that both the main political parties, united in nothing else, have a common horror of constitutional reform. For it threatens to break the monopoly power which they have turn by turn enjoyed. Lord Hailsham has been a faithful friend to the campaign for a bill of rights. With his support the House of Lords has twice passed such a Bill, based on the European Convention. But the government in which he is Lord Chancellor firmly refuses to allow the House of Commons to take it up. A bill of rights would be even less popular, if that were possible, with a Labour government. For, as Mr Norton appreciates, it would almost certainly conflict with socialist legislation. He justly observes that the EEC and other international institutions are regarded as 'essentially socialist creations', while referendums are unwelcome as 'negating socialist goals' such as the abolition of the House of Lords. When it comes to constitutional reform, therefore, the Labour Party is more conservative than the Conservatives.

Mr Norton does not ignore the judiciary, who have greatly strenghthened, if not reformed, the constitutional protection of the citizen. (He might note, however that unlawful ministerial orders are quashed, not 'squashed'.) Lord Denning's achievements as a one-man law reform agency have naturally had most of the limelight, especially when his decisions were adverse to trade unions or Labour-controlled councils. It was noticeable that the politicians who did not hesitate to attack judges in Parliament on these occasions sang a very different tune when the High Court invalidated Mr Heseltine's order against the Brent LBC last year, making full use of the decision to castigate the government for its disregard of the law. 'Is the judiciary a guardian or a threat?', asks Mr Norton. He does not offer an answer, but leaves us with the reflections that there is serious disagreement as to the role and functioning of the judges, that they have added a new dimension to the constitution, that they now have greater political significance and that they may have more in the future. All of which is true.

Two topics which receive only bare mention, but which have real constitutional significance, are the ombudsman and the European Convention on Human Rights. It would have been helpful to explain that the Bill of Rights twice passed by the House of Lords was merely an attempt to enact the European Convention, which this country has in any case accepted as an international obligation. In the chapter on electoral reform sixth-formers and under-

graduates are likely to be baffled by the references to the alternative vote and to the single transferable vote, without any account of how they work. There is some slangy writing: things are 'not terribly relevant' and persons are 'not too sympathetic;' grammar is also jettisoned in sentences like: 'Denied the power to question Acts of Parliament and unwilling to exercise their powers over the executive, few judicial decisions entered the realms of controversy.' But this is in general a well organised and useful book, covering much controversial ground. It will be a good guide to future constitutional battlefields, if and when the flux begins.

KNIGHT ERRANT

John D. Wood

Britain Can Work Sir Ian Gilmour, Martin Robertson, Oxford, £8.95

Britain can Work is yet another gallant effort by Sir Ian Gilmour to save the Tory party from the economists. What is attempted is magnificent, but it isn't the war, and the book compels the same kind of admiration that must have been felt by those onlookers who were lucky enough to watch the more extraordinary feats of Don Quixote.

Sir Ian, like Don Quixote, seems to mistake his targets, confusing the friends of the Tory party with its enemies, which for him are, of course, monetarism and market forces (as inseparable as Siamese twins) and behind them most of the Nineteenth Century classical economists and on to Friedman and Hayek. For his economics Sir Ian prefers to rely more on Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott; Sismondi, Ruskin, Kaldor and Balogh also receive favourable mentions.

The attack on traditional economics lacks interest, however, because Sir Ian simply forgets that 'laissez-faire', – his preferred label for a market economy – was never advocated by any of the great economists on whom he turns his lance. They were always aware that market forces needed a framework of law to enable them to work properly, and also that the market system does not provide all the answers in all circumstances – even outside the well-known 'no-go' areas of defence, law and order; for example, the list of 'public goods' which may best be provided collectively can, arguably, be made quite long.

So it seems a little hard, at a time when well over half the national income passes through government hands, to read the following critical description of Britain's plight in 1983:

> 'The free market is all, and interference with it is both self-defeating and ill-intentioned. We have returned to early nineteenth century laissez-faire.'

Really, Sir Ian? 1820? or 1830? Such a distortion of history matches the famous transformation of the windmills into giants. We must hope that the consequences will not be similar, since Don Quixote was unseated.

The opposite policies to monetarism and markets are inflation and interventionism, and it is with these that Sir Ian would presumably equip the Tory party. But to debauch the currency (again) and to restrict public choice with the aid of a large and expensive bureaucracy hardly seems part of the Tory tradition. Something rather similar has been tried out in France recently, and reflation there (so strongly urged on us here by the author) has ended, predictably, in tears.

Sir Ian frequently emphasises the importance of 'scepticism', and 'a sense of the limitations of human reason' as dominant traits in the Conservative intellectual tradition, so it is difficult to imagine how he supposes that political processes organised by fallible men, can even begin to substitute for the market system in registering consumers' preferences and allocating resources accordingly. The suggestion of a televised 'House of Industry', composed of representatives of govenment, industry, unions and consumers, as forum for settling wages and anything else in dispute between competing interests is naive. Sir Ian's claim for it – 'the forum would legitimate the corporate forces' – is ominous.

Is the real reason for the hostility of many politicians to the market that they fear the technological unemployment which greater reliance on market forces would bring to their calling? In an economy in which markets worked as widely as possible, there would be much less for politicians to do, and the uneasy feeling that they may be largely dispensable in many of the roles they have created for themselves may underly their hostility to classical economics. It remains true that 'politics is more important than economics', but even then it is better to work towards political objectives through the price mechanism (by using taxes or subsidies) than to try to side-step it or to destroy it altogether.

Nor should there by any conflict with that 'sense of community' which Tories are so anxious to foster. Are not the civic virtues more likely to flourish amongst free men, responsible for themselves and their families, than in a society marked by general dependence on state welfare? Evidently Sir Ian thinks not, and says

> '. . . economic liberalism, à la Professor Hayek, because of its starkness and its failure to create a sense of community, is not a safeguard of political freedom but a threat to it . . .'

To substantiate such a remarkable assertion would need a more powerful book than this one, and no doubt Sir Ian will try again. He clearly enjoys his self-imposed task, and writes with panache and cheerfulness. Knight errant he may be, but not a knight with a woeful countenance.

CANONS OF TAXATION

Arthur Shenfield

The Taxation of Industry Barry Bracewell-Milnes. Panopticum Press, 1981. £9.50. Available through The Alternative Bookshop.

Of the writing of books on taxation there is no end. Textbooks on taxation law have their own special province and provenance, and as the law almost everywhere grows in complexity and confusion, their appeal narrows itself to the specialist lawyers and accountants whose difficult, and sometimes impossible, task is to

construe the law. Works on the principles and policies of taxation are of a different order, and their appeal is still to the intelligent layman, as well as to the specialist scholar of public finance. As the great majority of politicians and commentators of public affairs, as well as a goodly proportion of professional economists, belong to the family of laymen in this field, one might by now have expected to find a widespread measure of intelligent understanding of taxation among the general public. Obviously the reverse is the case.

Although two centuries have passed since Adam Smith propounded his famous canons of taxation, and countless others have had their say on taxation principles and policies since his day, it is obvious that the enlightenment even of the intelligent layman is little more than skin-deep, while the general public display knee-jerk reactions to their taxes, which have little coherence or consistency. It might be expected that at least in point of dislike of taxes, most people would show some consistency, but, as we all know, they do not. For many, probably most, people are in favour of taxes which appear to be borne, or borne more heavily, by others (being oblivious of the ways in which such taxes may recoil upon themselves). It is unlikely that the intelligent layman's thinking can acquire a firmer bottom, or that of the general public be elevated, without some fundamentally fresh and original analysis of taxation problems. Those who are familiar with Dr Bracewell-Milnes' work know, even if they do not agree with his recommendations, that he has the very kind of original and penetrating mind which is needed for this purpose. This book displays his exceptional talent in abundance.

Works on taxation principles and policies usually set out to examine the requirements of fiscal equity and efficiency. Equity is generally thought to be based upon relative capacity to pay, with an occasional nod to differences in value of governmental services to the taxpayers. Efficiency is thought to depend upon the effect of taxes on work, enterprise, saving and investment. On these foundations it is no doubt possible to get within fair distance of the truth of the matter, though controversy will rage about what the truth is. Yet there is something missing in this approach.

Consider equity. Suppose that some taxes are inherently more inequitable or less equitable than others, and that they fall upon the rich while the others fall upon the poor. Then equity may require that the poor be relatively more heavily taxed than the rich. Of course the case would rarely be so clear-cut. Nevertheless any serious consideration of equity must take account of this kind of factor.

Consider efficiency. Determination of the effect of taxes on work, enterprise, saving and investment calls for some definition of the wealth which is to be taxed. Suppose that, as is traditionally the case, this wealth is construed to be the stock or flow of goods and services, comprehended as far as they can be, in computations of the Gross National Product. But suppose also that this misses important elements of wealth not only for the simple reason that they are not statistically measurable, but also for the deeper reason that they are of a different order from that of tangible goods and conventional services. Then taxes may do unperceived and unappreciated harm to efficiency. To correct this possible error, it is first necessary to see how and in what forms wealth may be created. It is here that conventional efficiency analysis has generally been defective.

Dr Bracewell-Milnes sets out four ways in which wealth may be created.

First, by investment in industrial assets. This is how tangible goods and conventional services are produced.

Secondly, by the institution of private ownership. Private ownership in itself produces wealth over and above the market value of what is owned. If it did not, the owner would be as ready to sell his property, which at current market value he is by definition always able to do, as to hold it. If he does not sell, it means that he values it more in possession than in sale. The difference between value in possession and value in sale is always positive either to the buyer or to the non-seller, and often very substantial. In many cases the basis for the difference is sentimental, but nonetheless real for that. The satisfaction arising from ownership is a very real form of wealth, sometimes very great wealth. Market values can never give it full measure, for otherwise no one would buy anything to hold. In the majority of humdrum cases it may be the simple fact that goods are more valuable in use than their original market value, which is why they were bought in the first place, and perhaps much more than their current market value. It follows from the phenomenon of ownership as wealth that wealth can be created by transfer of property from so-called public to private hands, and destroyed by the reverse process.

Thirdly, by investment in assets already in existence. This creates wealth because the assets are thus transferred from where they are relatively less valued to where they are more valued. The appreciation in value may arise simply from the ability of the purchaser to put the assets to more profitable use than the vendor, a situation almost daily in evidence in industry, but also from the enhanced value of ownership satisfaction in one pair of hands above that in another.

Fourthly, by entrepreneurship in ideas. Entrepreneurs in ideas may be artists, teachers, preachers, reformers, inventors *et al*, whose work creates a shift in sentiment or valuation which creates a satisfaction or enhances an existing one. Satisfaction is the very essence of wealth.

Of these four methods of wealth creation, the first involves a real cost. Wealth is then created by the difference between input and output, which is not always positive (in which case wealth is destroyed). The other three methods create wealth as it were out of thin air. To ignore them or to miss their significance is likely to produce policies which grievously destroy wealth, offending against both equity and efficiency. As Dr Bracewell-Milnes eloquently argues, the preference for, indeed the exclusive attention to, the first method, is sadly superstitious.

His exposition of these four methods of wealth creation is the basis for a penetrating analysis of current taxation policies. The reader of the book will find his mind constantly jogged by some fresh piece of wisdom or, more often, by some fresh exposition of old, established, but nowadays largely forgotten wisdom. Here attention ought perhaps to be especially drawn to the following:

1. By its very nature, and apart from its unsurpassed efficiency in the production of goods and conventional services, capitalism is a wealth creator; in fact a costless wealth creator. Systems which require state ownership, control or direction, or any state activity other than the establishment and maintenance of a due framework of law

for dispersed private activity, are wealth destroyers.

2. Taxes on saving, and not only those thought to be 'excessive', are wealth destroyers and ought to be abolished.

3. In most respects, and in some cases in all respects, the British fiscal system is more destructive of wealth than the systems of other comparable developed countries.

As always Dr Bracewell-Milnes writes in taut and elegant language, so taut in fact that the reader should weigh the words before him with great care before concluding that he has grasped their full import. However this reviewer must express dismay at what appears to him to be a very uncharacteristic gaffe. Dr Bracewell-Milnes again and again describes the first method of wealth creation (see list above) as production by brute force. No doubt he is entitled also to call it, as he does, Adam's curse, but brute force! It makes no difference to the weight of the argument, but it may well repel some readers who would otherwise persist with the instruction which the book can give them.

THE FAITH OF MAURRAS

C. H. Sisson

Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics 1890–1914 Michael Sutton (Cambridge University Press, £25)

The name of Charles Maurras cannot be mentioned, even now, without arousing violent hostility. His ghost could hardly complain, for he was endlessly combative and, from the *Affaire Dreyfus* to his own trial in Lyons in 1945, one of the strands of his argument was a virulent anti-semitism. There are those for whom this precludes sympathy with any aspect of his work. The life and work of Maurras are, however, so implicated in the political and intellectual life of the twentieth century that a failure to understand him places a limit on one's understanding of our times. This was no doubt well understood by Professor Kedourie, who suggested to Mr Sutton that 'the Positivism of Charles Maurras might be a fruitful object of enquiry.' In the event, Michael Sutton has gone beyond that subject to consider the impact of Maurras on Catholic thinkers in France in the years coming up to 1914. One might indeed regret that this second – and closely related – topic appears to have become his central concern, for, important and interesting though it is, it involves a good deal of matter of less direct relevance to our own day than the subject originally proposed by Kedourie. The outline of Maurras's own work is inevitably a little blurred by this shift of emphasis. There was no need for elaborate argument to demonstrate that Maurras's conception of the Church was not Christian, since he had from the first admitted to a brand of paganism; the only argument, therefore, was among the Catholics, as to whether they could accommodate themselves to his political conceptions without violence to their understanding of their own religion.

The years 1890–1914, with which Michael Sutton is concerned, were the formative years for Maurras. What followed in the thirty or so years after that were applications rather than developments of his essential thinking. Yet in a sense most of the work done even before the first war is only an application of the first glimmerings in Provence. The whole oeuvre is extraordinarily consistent and it is as if, setting out from his native Martigues, he had brought with him a perception of the Helleno-Roman character of French civilisation which determined at once his practical objectives and the course of his argument. The recollections which recur in his writings of these first scenes, of his masters in Aix and of the world of Mistral, are fundamental. One might even say that his vision of Provence was a disproportionate part of his vision of France, as many would say that France had a disproportionate place in his vision of the world. He was a man who admitted such limitations with more frankness than is fashionable in the latter half of the twentieth century. Moreover, in spite of his love of dialectic and his not altogether absurd claim to have established a doctrine, he was, and understood himself to be, not a philosopher, but a writer and a man of action. 'My own search,' he says in a passage Sutton quotes from *L'Action française et la religion catholique*, 'has resulted in only extremely subjective syntheses. In short, I did not succeed. In aesthetics and politics, I have had the joy of grasping leading ideas in all their evidence; in pure philosophy not at all.'

The notion of a 'subjective synthesis' was at the centre of what Maurras owed to Comte; indeed it *was* what he owed to Comte. The founder of Positivism had sought a way out of the confusion of affection, speculation and action, which is, so to speak, the raw material of human life, by seeking to order his thinking by reference to the service of a 'Great Being'. This 'Great Being' was none other than man in the collective. In this scheme of things, 'the individual' is, as Sutton puts it, 'only of consequence insofar as he is an integral part of a collective grouping', and 'while the individual is transitory, collectives are normally of a much more permanent nature.' Hence family, state, and finally humanity itself, are the sources of a man's obligations and the measure of his conduct. Maurras, with his distrust of the metaphysical and his unwillingness to venture beyond the world of direct experience said, in one of those brilliant phrases, conveying both a truth and a half-truth, for which he had so dangerous a talent: 'Humanity does not exist – at least not yet. The largest group binding men together is still that which is given expression in the idea of nationality . . . He who defends his nationality and his State is engaged in the defence of all that is real and all that is concrete in the idea of Humanity.' Maurras regarded himself as being a nationalist only because nationalism was the central fact of political life. So he thought in 1899; he would have said the same in 1939. Had the contemporary world been different, he could have conceived of his duties as emanating from a city-state, or from some collectivity wider than France. In a world of nation-states he was bound by what he conceived of as the good of 'la France, la seule France'. So undoubtedly it was during the war of 1939–45 for, whatever one may think of his practical judgment of events, the charge of pro-Germanism or pro-Nazism, which of course has been levelled against him, is certainly a grotesque absurdity.

The Comtian notion of a Great societal Being and a pyramid of obligations descending from it is a transfer

from Christian theology. But it greatly diminishes, perhaps even extinguishes, the notion of the individual. In the Christian system, the individual is made in the image of God and has the possibility of communion with him, whether through mediators or immediately. The shell of the Catholic system might, however, seem acceptable to a Positivist. Equally the Catholic might see the system of Comte as a defective and incomplete version of the Catholic system, rather than as something hostile to it. This ambiguity lies at the base of much of the Catholic approach to Maurras in the years under review. Maurras himself saw 'the ideas of the *Système de politique positive*' as 'limpid for a Catholic' but 'unintelligible to a Huguenot' and added that the opposite was true for Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, that product of Protestant Koenigsberg. 'Individualism,' as Sutton rightly says, 'was the central obsession of Maurras that encompassed all others'. Indeed, 'in his concern with what he viewed as the maladies of the individual conscience and the egocentric self' is to be found the clue to the coherence and the far-reaching interdependence of the various elements of his thought. His critique of Romanticism is in essence at one with his critique of Protestantism. The essence of Maurras's support for the Roman Church is the claim that it had tamed and broken the anarchic Judaeo-Christian element in religious tradition and that it enshrined the elements of discipline and order which are the heritage from imperial Rome. This point of view was of course easier to maintain in relation to the Church of 1912 or indeed of the nineteenth century, than it would be to a Church conditioned by modern clerical manners.

The notion that Christianity had to be rendered harmless, and that only the Roman tradition could do this, naturally scandalised many French Catholics. But one can see how Maurras, educated by classically-minded Roman priests with a keen sense of ecclesiastical discipline, might feel that the Church was an indispensible part of the national tradition. Some of Maurras's French critics – even Sutton himself – are slightly disoriented in thinking of him to be primarily a theorist. In fact, his real driving forces, theorist though he was, were esthetic and practical. Maurras sought an alliance with Catholics only because according to his lights, they represented a solid body in the essential French tradition and therefore had a place in his political scheme of things. His personal submission to the Church was deferred until he received the last rites in 1952 and – (the evidence suggests) it was a submission to custom – to what his mother had done before him – rather than to the true meaning of the act. It was almost certainly a Roman rather than a Christian gesture; and the distinction is at the root of all Maurras's thought.

There is more in Maurras to assist an English reader in his general understanding of France than to help him directly with contemporary political problems. None the less the Catholic controversies of the period covered by this book bear on the recent political activity in Christian churches. When Laberthonnière says 'we must come to understand that our rôle is not to defend institutions but to propagate *Christian life*' he points to a difficulty which has never been satisfactorily resolved, though an Englishman might think that the old Prayer Book system, now virtually abandoned, came nearest to solving it. Laberthonnière himself thought that 'the Church's own action must be pursued exclusively through spiritual means.' However, the history of the Papacy points in quite another direction. A large organisation claiming a supranational status has special temptations, but any organisation, whatever its *raison d'être*, is of its nature political. So to be 'implacably opposed,' as Sutton tells us Laberthinnière was, 'to all ecclesiological ideas that entailed a politicisation of the Church's rôle in the furthering of Christianity' means living in a state of delusion as to the nature of human institutions. And, whatever else it is, the Church is certainly a human institution. There is a special comedy about the political action of churches in a world in which there is a continuing competition as to who can say the kindest things in public about what.

Michael Sutton's book is not written with any unusually keen sense of current political realities; but it is an extremely well-informed study of the politico-religious controversies of what must now seem to be a very remote epoch. Sutton is certainly right in suggesting that Maurras's history of France was highly selective and involved a 'backward reading of the past', to the time preceding what he regarded as the disaster of 1789. Indeed Maurras's study of contemporary events was a continuing pursuit of the disintegrations which he saw as the consequences of the Revolution. Sutton plays down the nationalist and still more the monarchist themes in Maurras in favour of the Catholic controversy. For Maurras, however, it was really the Catholic controversy which was subordinate. In the later years (which fall outside Sutton's scope) Maurras was above all the acute and prescient observer of the actions and reactions of national – including Russian – pressures in Europe. His analyses during those years are faulty like any other. But they demonstrate again and again the merits of a critque which takes interest rather than morality as its premise.

OBJECTIVE HISTORY?

Richard Miller

The Ominous Parallels, The End of Freedom in America Leonard Peikhoff (Stein and Day £11.50)

In this interesting but misguided book Dr Peikhoff argues that the United States is threatened by the same ideas which led to the rise of Hitler. This thesis might have been expected from the dottier fringes of the American Left but to find it being propounded by so dedicated a defender of capitalism as Dr Peikhoff is at first surprising. However, such astonishment is misplaced, because in their offensive against the liberal consensus American conservatives have collected some strange allies on the Right. The most extraordinary of these sects are the objectivists, or followers of Ayn Rand. Rand was a forbidding woman of letters, whose major philosophic novel *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) was devastatingly reviewed by that remarkable and tragic right-wing hero Whittaker Chambers, in *The National Review*. Rand and her followers, of whom there are several, including the economist Alan Greenspan, are dedicated rationalists. They are intolerant of religion, charity and all forms of collectivism. Indeed, Rand developed her philosophy of rational self-

interest as a way of defending capitalism, without, as she saw it, the disadvantage of having to show that it was compatible with Christianity or any other ethical sysem that did not revolve around the individual.

Rand's individualism provides the metaphysical basis on which Peikhoff's argument rests. Consequently Rand contributed an enthusiastic introduction, in which she welcomed the first work of objectivist scholarship by a writer other than herself. She draws attention to the 'breadth of [Peikhoff's] vision and the stunning scale of his philosophic integration'. This might be praise indeed if Peikhoff's procedure had been philosophical. But since he in fact develops an historical case, or at least claims that his philosophical deductions are confirmed by the historical evidence, Rand's tribute acts as much as a warning as an advertisement. She is nevertheless right about the scale of his undertaking. He claims that there have been two contrasting strands in Western thought, one starting with Plato, and including Augustine, Luther, Kant, Hegel, together with the modern theoreticians of totalitarianism, and the other consisting of Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, the enlightenment philosophers and of course, Ayn Rand. In the ideas of the former group, and especially in their ethics, Peikhoff sees the roots of authoritarianism, and in the latter group he finds all hope for the future. Peikhoff shares Rand's conviction that the United States is undergoing a profound philosophic crisis which threatens to plunge it into collectivism, and he, like her, attributes this danger to the way the Americans have allowed themselves to be subverted by European decadence. Peikhoff is especially troubled by the influence exerted by Kant and the German idealists, both in Germany, where he claims that they were ultimately responsible for the triumph of the Nazis, and in the United States, where they have deluded the American people into abandoning the heritage of the enlightenment and thus placing their free institutions in danger – the same danger that destroyed the Weimar Republic.

This reviewer is not competent to judge the enormous range of Peikhoff's assertions. But the closer some of them are investigated the less persuasive the argument becomes. In her introduction Rand singles out for particular praise Peikhoff's chapter 'The Nation of the Enlightenment'. According to Peikhoff the Founding Fathers of the American republic 'proposed to create a nation whose institutions would be without precedent, and to do it on the basis of a theory. An abstract theory of the nature of man and of the universe.' This is just not so. Dr Bradford of The University of Dallas has recently demonstrated that far from being enlightened rationalists, the huge bulk of those who signed The Declaration of Independence were devout Christians, and indeed that famous document ends with a solemn invocation of Providence that was inserted into Jefferson's originally Godless draft. Moreover, far from trying to use revolutionary violence to create a Utopia, they believed that they were defending the traditional rights of Englishmen which had been usurped by the King. Their Whig history was no doubt faulty, but to depict them simply as rationalists with no sense of religion or the past is fanciful. Despite genuflections to the evidence Peikhoff is determined to force the facts into the pattern demanded by his theory, and this is perhaps why he fails to deal with obvious difficulties. (If, for example, the Enlightenment was so essential to the development of capitalism how has capitalism 'taken' so well in Hong Kong?). Moreover Peikhoff's intolerance for the inconvenient explains why his language is sometimes less than academic – it is so much easier to abuse than to understand.

Peikhoff's failure to grasp the history of his own country suggests that his mastery of Hitler's rise to power may also be less than complete. Nevertheless he has done a useful job in describing the cultural and political shambles of the Weimar Republic, and he has at least raised the central question that faces all those who attempt to understand National Socialism. Was Nazism a consistent ideology or was it a revolt against all ideas? But having raised the question Peikhoff answers it inadequately. He claims that the Nazis were both dogmatists and pragmatists, and argues that this involved them in no contradiction, since their dogmatism explained the value that they placed on the *Volk* and their pragmatism related to the way that the individual was always to be sacrificed for Germany. For Peikhoff the Nazis were theoretical dogmatists, but operational pragmatists. This is a neat distinction and seems helpful, but it founders on a host of facts. If the Nazis really had the welfare of the German people at heart – the rather surprising conclusion that seems to be implied by Peikhoff's argument – why did Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler all glory in the destruction they were bringing on their country? And why, if they were operational pragmatists, did the Nazis use scarce resources, particularly rolling stock, in their extermination programme, rather than for the defence of the Reich? Once again Peikhoff has been misled by his desire to see the world as a simple place free of paradox. To the objective metaphysician A may be A, but to the historian struggling with sources of varying value, conflicting evidence, and complicated chains of events, the world is neither so easily understood nor so easily described. Indeed, the best the historian can hope to do is to isolate various strands of causation and present them with the humility that becomes a scholar.

Nevertheless for all its arrogance, Peikhoff's work is far from valueless. Indeed he has rediscovered, and in some ways developed, the thought of Herman Rauschning (1883–1961), one of the profoundest analysts of the National Socialist nightmare. Although Rauschning's evidence about Hitler has been questioned – a circumstance Peikhoff does not seem to be aware of – his emphasis on the amoralism and destructiveness of the Nazis is generally accepted. This is a theme that Peikhoff brilliantly develops in the chapters 'The Culture of Hatred' and 'The Concentration Camps'; the latter is particularly good and provides good reason both for reading his book, and perhaps also for rejecting his thesis. Auschwitz and Belsen are not only horrors but questions. How is it that such places were even thought of? According to Rauschning and Peikhoff the Nazis were to a significant extent animated by a hatred for the world around them. Despite the fact that Rauschning's most important book *Germany's Revolution of Destruction* (1938) was written before the war, he described the violently destructive tendencies that led to the concentration camps. Peikhoff makes the point that the camps were not used for anything constructive. Certainly some of the prisoners were used as slave labourers; but Peikhoff demonstrates that any contribution the prisoners could make to the war effort was less important to the camp administrators than the aim of transforming them into a

mindless herd, in which all distinctively human activity was extinguished. The squalor in which they existed made all their previous experience irrelevant. At the same time they were effectively not allowed to notice what was happening. They were forbidden to express any opinions even if they were pro-Nazi, and many of the tasks they were made to perform were pointless. They would be ordered to erect a fence and then to demolish it, and obliged to carry boulders in their hands when wheelbarrows were available. Peikhoff thus sees the concentration camps as being alternative worlds without sense, logic, or any coherent purpose at all except destruction. Perhaps the climax of this book comes when he reports how an inmate asked a guard 'Why?' after he had been forbidden to touch an icicle. 'There is no why here,' replied the SS man. As Peikhoff points out, the implications of this incident are haunting, but paradoxically the atheistical world inhabited by Peikhoff and Rand is one in which the most important why-question of all is not only unanswered but unasked. Far from being a triumph of mysticism, the impersonal machinery of destruction perfected by the Nazis could only have existed in a society that had forgotten the Sermon on the Mount as completely as any objectivist could wish. It is doubly unfortunate that Dr Peikhoff, for all his skill and learning, has failed to see this. For the violence of his rhetoric shows that he has learned not only his thought, but also his intolerance, from Miss Rand, an intolerance which prompted Whittaker Chambers to say that he detected within her writings the terrible note of hatred – 'to the gas chambers – go'.

MENTION ASSEZ-BIEN

Edward Pearce

The Wheat and the Chaff: The personal diaries of the President of France. François Mitterrand (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.50)

A friendly notice in this journal may not be what M. François Mitterand most wants, but it is the only possible one to give to the author of these memoirs in diary form, who is now President of the French Republic

One has heard Mitterrand compared with Michael Foot, but it is a tenuous comparison, based on not much more than the personal amiability and old-fashioned taste for reading which they share. The amiability is for sure, and shines out of these compiled jottings, where this mild man notes down the most unamiable language used about his Socialist predecessors by leaders of French Communism: 'Blum, traitor of the Working Class, of the people, of France itself (Bonte)', '. . . the working class cannot fail to pillor this moral and political monster. It cannot fail to reject with horror and disgust Blum-the-bourgeois, Blum-the-non-interventionist, Blum-the-policeman, Blum-the-warmonger (Thorez).' Elsewhere, Thorez referred to the then socialist leader as 'a jackal whose snake-like hissing was loathsome.'

While Mitterrand lightly remarks that the style and address has changed, now that he is dealing with Marchais and Fiterman, one is grateful for his long historical memory. The vein of *naïveté* in the President of France is not profound. In a good Palmerstonian way, as the leader of his party he has interests, not friends. He is obliged to the Communists for his majority, but as President of France he adopts a defence policy far more hard-nosed and illusionless than that of his friends of West Germany. The comparison with Michael Foot is too cruel to contemplate. For despite superficial affinities between the lover of the Charante and the Strolling Devonian of Hampstead, the champion of Paul Foot and the admirer of Hazlitt, the leaders of the left-wing parties of Britain and France seem to play cross-handed duets, with the President reaching over far to the right of his fellow performer.

One can never too often recall that the socialist coalition which M. Mitterrand put together in his wilderness years has roots in other traditions besides that of socialism. Although he himself belonged, under the Fourth Republic, to a tiny but stragetically well-placed faction, its allies at that time and the men who provided his early schooling were the Radicals – *Partie Radicale et Radical Socialiste.* These were heirs of the Third Republic, genial apostles of immobility. Despite their florid title they can be placed on the left only if you pick up the whole spectrum and throw it either sideways or back to 1900, and the great priest-eating Dreyfusard days of Émile Combes.

France, being fundamentally a country more unequal than Britain, possesses a democratic tradition enfiladed by larger groups of authoritarian extremists. Mitterrand did France a service in the days of the universal 'Oui' to De Gaulle, by not being part of it. His hostility to De Gaulle's sycophantic court and to the off-colour politics of so large a part of the French Right were surely entirely justified. The Right had excellent economists, but sleek and unpleasant politicians.

It should have surprised nobody that, on the things which matter, like the defence of Western Europe, François Mitterrand should have emerged as the unequivocal advocate of strength and boldness, much like our own Prime Minister. Indeed, for a man of the Left he has few illusions about the re-creation of nineteenth-century French-Russian affinity, and little or nothing of the ego-rolling anti-Americanism of his unlamented predecessors. He will probably get the economy wrong (the best socialists usually do). However, the man who emerges from this book is a decent and durable creature, who has slipped deftly between the authoritarian traditions of Gaullism and the standing army of the left – the old strong Communist Party of the unspeakable Thorez. He has chastened the first, and shrunk the second to a state of humiliating debilitation, creating as a consequence a feasible party of the centre Left. One can disagree with his party's economics, but still think that it ought to exist. And France, which has had a surfeit of one-party rule, is now politically healthier than it was, and a better ally.

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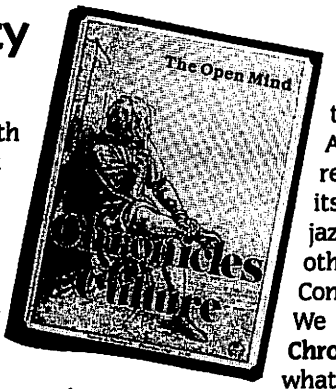

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