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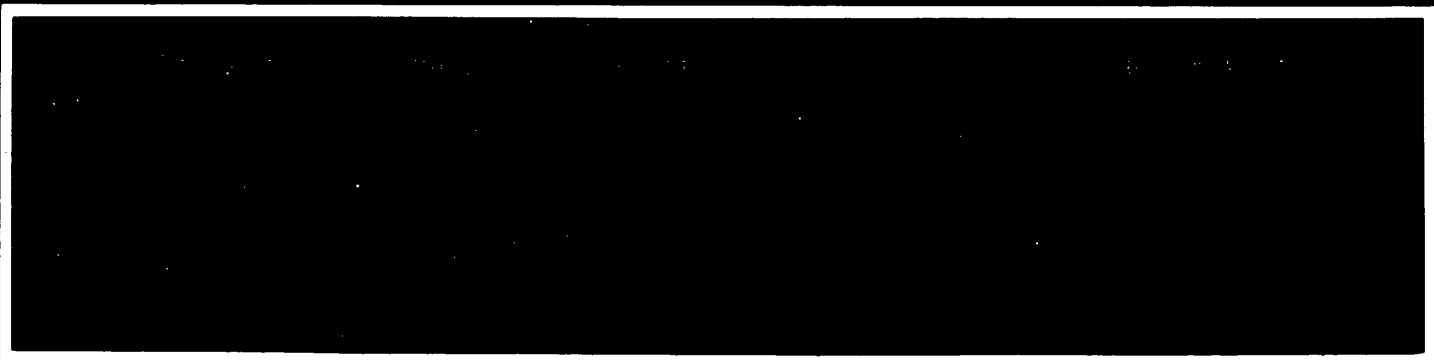
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The *Salisbury Review*

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT



The Third Marquess of Salisbury, 1830–1903



The Salisbury Review

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

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Socialists and conservatives disagree about many things. They also agree about many things, and would recognise the fact, had they but world enough and time. For example, they agree that the state is a person. Of course, neither will spontaneously express himself in such terms. Nevertheless the idea of the personal state captures a common belief. When the socialist complains against the 'injustice' of a given social order, his very language indicates his belief in the agent who gives and withholds. And who is this agent, if not the state, which can be praised and blamed for its acts and deficiencies? And when the conservative invokes the authority of the state, the legitimacy of its constitution, and the title of its sovereign, he too supposes an agency which is not the agency of any individual, and which is the ultimate object of our political allegiance. He too recognises the person in whom our corporate existence is made cogent to one another, and manifest to the world.

The conception of sovereignty as a personal attribute is entirely lacking from Marxist thinking, which has tended to bury the problems of legitimacy in abstract mumbo-jumbo, of the kind offered by our current thinker of the left, Louis Althusser. However, it is not absent from the British socialist tradition, nor (as Paul Helm demonstrates, in an article which provides a corrective to the Anglican idealism of several previous contributors) is it absent from the non-conformist church. Nor indeed is it absent from Republican America, although whether one need go so far, in affirming this, as John Jamieson – so as to advocate the restoration of monarchy in realms which have repudiated it – must remain, even for *The Salisbury Review*, a matter of doubt.

Like any self-respecting person, the state cannot be on an equal footing with allcomers. Moreover, it carries the responsibilities and dignities of authority and law, and these place an additional barrier between the state and the citizen. It is one of the most powerful arguments for the

monarchy advocated by Jamieson, that the embodiment of authority and law in a human being renders these attributes coherent and perceivable, even to those who are irremediably at a distance from them. It is such an idea of 'perceivable legitimacy' that taxed the mind of Shakespeare in his many political reflections. Robert Grant shows the contribution made by our greatest playwright to conservative thinking, and shows too that many neglected conceptions can be revitalised through the language which Shakespeare provided for them.

The concern for an 'embodied legitimacy' is continuous with the concern for inheritance. It is therefore difficult to accept the principle of monarchy, and at the same time to deny the validity of hereditary entitlement to land. For it is precisely this conjunction of ideas which provides the foundation for our conception of a sovereign *country*. The Duke of Buccleuch presents here a part of the overwhelming case for the hereditary private estate, and shows that many of the concerns which motivate the socialist attack on the private landowner ought really to motivate the defence of him.

Of all inheritance, the inheritance of knowledge is the least tangible and the most difficult to secure. Geoffrey Partington continues our discussion of educational decline, with a demonstration of the threat posed by current strategies of politicisation, particularly those followed by the ILEA, while Patrick Reyntiens reflects on the underlying assumptions about learning and about mankind, that have led to so exaggerated an emphasis in the school curriculum, upon the principle of *skepsis*, at the cost of the principle of belief. Belief, as Reyntiens calls it – the secure sense of tried and proven certainties – can be handed on from generation to generation, and may permit the steady growth of a civilised order. Doubt, however, renews itself at every moment, and is always at the end what it was in the beginning: a refusal to belong, a refusal to be bound, a refusal to inherit.

The Salisbury Review

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Conservative Journals: THE GADFLY

It is characteristic of Leavisism that its message should have sounded so immediately and so ringingly in the ears of teachers. Yet if one looks for the inheritors of Leavisism, one looks in vain – or almost in vain. The University English departments, most of which used to teach by the method of practical criticism, following a syllabus permeable to the Leavisite conceptions of tradition and value, have fragmented into worthless specialisms, revising their method and their syllabus in accordance with the whimsical pedantries of the *Nouvelle Critique*. English teachers in schools are fighting for the survival of literacy, and for the salvation of minds eroded by the television images which lap unceasingly against them. Such teachers have either lost the will to renew the Leavisite's concern for moral inheritance, or else have dismissed that concern as 'elitist'.

One voice, however, continues to sound with the old challenge, the old exasperation, and the old sense that a national culture is worth fighting for – the voice of Ian Robinson, whose journal *The Gadfly* is not so much the phoenix which arose from the ashes of its predecessor, *The Human World*, as the ashes themselves, which glow undauntedly, and harbour in secret a familiar flame. Readers of *The Salisbury Review* will recognise some of *The Gadfly's* concerns: education, the liturgy, opposition to moral and political

Benthamism, the search for political roots which are not economic but cultural. *The Gadfly*, however, describes itself as a 'Quarterly Review of English Letters', and devotes a considerable space to poetry and fiction. It also contains a 'samizdat' section, printed by offset process directly from the typescript – a procedure made necessary by the journal's precarious financial situation. Regular writers include Duke Maskell, David Holbrook, Roy Kerridge, and Ian Robinson himself, whose determined stand against the erosion of humane education must inevitably be welcome to a reader of conservative inclinations.

The current issue contains a long editorial challenge to Mrs Thatcher, a wry demolition of the ethos of social work by Roy Kerridge, and two pleas for theological centrality, one from Peter Mullen, and one from Roger Nash. In these and other articles the journal displays its lonely political identity, and continues to burn with that buried fire which – who knows – may one day again spurt forth its bright shoots of phlogiston. Meanwhile, however, fuel is needed, in the form of subscriptions.

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The American Monarchist

T. John Jamieson

We are not all Republicans now. The American civil war of 1775–1781 did not abolish human nature, particularly that imaginative faculty of the mass mind which invests a mere human family with the charismatic attraction of a dynasty. Thus, at its worst, the American public exalts a tribe of ambitious bootleggers, the Kennedys, to quasi-royal status. At its best, it finds a genuine royal family, the British, irresistible. First Lady Betty Ford naïvely manifested a typically American attitude when she unintentionally slighted some other nation's sovereign by referring, before the press, to HM Elizabeth II as 'the *real* queen.' By its Windsorite fervor, of course, America not only reveals its psychological need for a monarchy but also bows to the nation which is the source of its heritage.

Yet, in addition to this phenomenon of unconscious monarchism, there is also a conscious sort. Avowed American monarchists comprise a small élite; they are more or less serious, more or less alienated, sometimes British loyalists by descent or by sentiment, more often champions of all dynasties, though with a legitimist bias – Jacobites, *blancs d'Espagne*, Carlists. Apparent strangers in their own land, it is a bit difficult for them to find something to do on the Fourth of July, that principal feast of the American civil religion; obligingly, however, many American orchestras, ensconced in their outdoor summer havens, will play 'Wellington's Victory' or the '1812 Overture' on that day, hoping to make sufficient noise to exorcise evil spirits – a more intelligible superstition than the superstition of democracy. Few besides the American monarchist will be conscious of the composers' intent to celebrate the triumph of monarchy.

The manifestations of America's founding myth irritate but do not intimidate its indigenous royalists; its contradictions emotionally repatriate them. The constitution which virtually froze the eighteenth-century British system in the form of an elective monarchy (which faces a quandrennial crisis of dynastic extinction) reverberates with echoes of its original that belie the symbolism of the capital's neoclassical architecture; as when Richard Nixon excused himself from the charge of obstruction of justice on the grounds that 'the sovereign is above the law.'

Unless he is just an overly sentimental student of history (and there *is* an urge to follow an antique drum – the Young Pretender's, for example), the American monarchist is an alienated man. Now there are several kinds of alienation, and when they are rated against the standard of magnanimity, some are rather grand, some inconsequential, others pathological. The political faiths

of modernity comprise no small part of the absurdity of contemporary life as the monarchist perceives it; existential monarchism could indeed be the consequence of Christian existentialism. There is the Czarism of the once-radical Dostoevsky to consider, also the non-resistance doctrine of the Non-Jurors in the face of an anti-Anglican king, and, in the realm of an ecclesiastical monarchy, the ultramontane infallibilism of the ultraroyalist Joseph de Maistre, whose Pope had made peace with the regicide republic. The spiritually circumscribed 'mathematical' mind of the Enlightenment liberal cannot accept such contradictions. Indeed, the American monarchists who are in the best position to be taken seriously are deeply Christian, and by force of will they have made sense of life as they found it without moving one inch geographically. *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

It is indeed 'great-souled' to be repelled by the assumptions of democracy and liberalism. Many Americans do not accept Jefferson's proposition on equality; they perceive that majority rule is only a means of evading personal responsibility; they know that human nature does not progress. Monarchism becomes an effective vehicle of protest on all fronts because the monarch is the ultimate unequal, as well as the defender of artificial aristocracy and the arbiter of natural aristocracy, while still the protector of the rights of the commons; because the divine right of kings means the divine responsibility of kings; and because if monarchy is a barbaric anachronism it is man himself who is the anachronistic barbarian, ignorant and rebellious, whose fallen nature requires the staff of leadership. A cult of aristocracy which looks only to the law and to aristocratic virtue to prevent injustice and restrain class warfare is the unrealistic and self-serving illusion of Whigs, whether English or American. (A revived Whiggism, however, is usually the best available form of conservatism in America.)

A cult of aristocracy that did not appeal to law and virtue would be indistinguishable from a cult of monarchy that did not; of course, there have been Nietzschean monarchists, who saw the king as *Übermensch* or as the instrument of an *Übermensch*: Maurras, d'Annunzio, Mussolini. Here one enters a veritable morass of morbid emotions: alienation from one's time and place, leading to utopian nostalgia, and alienation from classes and races, leading to the desire for revenge. In his novel *Le vergini delle rocce*, d'Annunzio (from whom Mussolini stole the trappings and symbolism of Fascism) championed the often vilified Bourbons of Naples as representatives of a

lost age of 'sovereign ideality,' using them as a stick with which to beat the impotent parliamentary democracy of Italy. It would be impossible to take Maurras seriously – the nationalist demagogue whose theory of history revolves around his anti-semitism, the defender of the Church who speaks of purging Christianity of its 'Hebraic element,' the panegyrist of the *ancien régime* who advocates the regicide House of Orléans. Excommunicated by his Church and repudiated by his prince, at once a positivist and a late Romantic vitalist hard-pressed to dissociate himself from Nietzscheism, Maurras was not at all a spokesman for traditional monarchism. How can one take a political thinker seriously, or respect his intellectual integrity, if he cites Maurras as an authority? Yet that most famous of American monarchists, whose true home was not on this earth, T. S. Eliot, was a persistent Maurrassian, firmly convinced that 'if anything, in another generation or so, is to preserve us from a sentimental Anglo-Fascism, it will be some system of ideas which will have gained much from the study of Maurras.'

Eliot's teacher at Harvard, Irving Babbitt (1865–1933), may have been the greatest American conservative thinker of this century; his profoundly religious philosophy of 'Humanism' glorified the will as a moral force and challenged modern man to accept or reject the ethical task of self-limitation, which is the essence of self-direction or self-definition. Living in a largely self-created hell of spiritual ataxia, as his poetry attests, Eliot sought self-definition on easier terms in a demagogic cult of power: his tripartite pose as classicist, royalist, and Anglo-Catholic was his version of a Maurrassian formula, *classique, catholique, monarchique*. Babbitt knew the French intellectual scene intimately; yet the vaunted 'classicism' of the *Action Française* did not interest this arch-classicist in the least. When his most important pupil had gone completely astray, Babbitt was heard grumbling privately at Harvard about the 'sell-out.' But this may not have been only a sign of hurt feelings over the betrayal of his 'movement' or a comment on religious conversion as an easy escape route. Babbitt had talked of 'the affinity of the jellyfish for the rock.' I submit that Babbitt knew the personality of his pupil very well and perceived something of that personality's struggle with its own weakness; that Babbitt may have reserved the right to judge the quality of Eliot's conversion in the light of his allegiance to Maurras; and that Babbitt's disappointment may finally have been over Eliot's shirking the burden of intellectual, and hence spiritual, integrity – regret over the loss of a soul through complacency in its own weakness.

I once spoke with a European-born Maurrassian. The conversation became an intellectual thimble-rig; or, to pursue Babbitt's metaphor, as I probed to find the tether that held this intellectual invertebrate to his rock, every tentacle that I tested with a question turned immediately to a loose, limp, wispy rag of a limb, utterly dissociated from the ground where I had supposed it to be attached. At once a thousand arms invisibly reclaimed their ever-varying hold on the shapeless bladder's only source of security. I could see that a hydrozoan has no system of

thought, only an affinity, an *attraction* which fixes him in the vicinity of a political idea, or, in view of all I have said about alienation, a *repulsion*.¹

The alienation of Eliot belongs to the realm of what Eric Voegelin would call pneumopathology. A bourgeois intellectual in rebellion against the bourgeoisie, himself playing the eternal bourgeois game of self-invention, Eliot thought that, culturally speaking, to be an American is not to exist; in truth, to be the endlessly mutable, Protean bourgeois is not to exist. The *déraciné* Eliot became a cultural climber. If the possibility had really been open to him, he would have chosen to be French; nevertheless, his schizoid (n.b., not schizophrenic) personality, threatened by encounters with other people (especially Americans, with their affectation of familiarity?), flew for cover behind a façade of rigid formality and utter dispassion, and the poet may have found an obvious haven among the restrained and reserved English. To use a metaphor out of *The Waste Land*, solipsism, demophobia, and fear of indeterminacy were the keys to Eliot's prison. That they should culminate in vicarious power-worship through the study of Maurras inclines one to apply to such a character the adjective *effeminate*, with all the force of the classical use. If there is actually a direct relation between the character of an Eliot and that of a Maurras, perhaps it was perceived by Plato, who knew that the soul of a slave and the soul of a tyrant are very nearly the same article.

Yet Eliot is the only American-born Maurrassian I have encountered; and, no matter what unwholesome motives lay behind his great declaration of 1927 for classicism, royalism, and Anglo-Catholicism, stolid men have taken it for what it outwardly is, the necessarily total defiance of a society 'worm-eaten with liberalism,' and a last stand of literary dandyism, the tradition of intransigence and colourful gesture.² No matter what their real force or importance within the context of his own work, Eliot's three little words have inspired later Americans to make the same stand, with more conviction and more credibility, if only because they stayed in America. However alienated they may be, traditional monarchical theory, with its ideals of justice tempered by mercy, of due process of law, and of responsibility before God, has channelled their frustration into constructive thinking and has psychically repatriated them in reality. I regard them as among those proverbial mad geniuses who are saner than common men.

Because he faces an ideological challenge from the outset, the American monarchist becomes an ideologue – a conservative, but a systematic one. Having no monarchy of his own to conserve, he makes himself into an invaluable critic of his countrymen's illusions, since he can think the unthinkable about democracy. Monarchy is an international institution, and he becomes its international advocate; yet duty turns his attention first to his own country's government, whose foreign policy in this century merits his contempt for the pontifical presumption with which it uncrowned so many crowned heads of Europe in the course of two world wars. Seeking a cause, he weighs the merits of each position in every dynastic dispute, and usually ends up choosing the side of

the cause well lost; for, as an ideologue, it is uniquely obvious to him why the rules of primogeniture and of the exclusion of regicidal and usurping lines should be obeyed.

Among those Americans with the grace to dissent from America's Whig tradition (that of the relativistic politics of consensus), some do not have the confidence and tenacity to resist the absolutist impulse. Though there is a valid argument for ultramontane Roman Catholicism when it is free of ulterior motives, these Americans, adopting ultramontanism, display the fanaticism of the convert, and seem driven to take the proposition beyond its ultimate conclusion – if such were possible. They are indeed bewitched by what Nietzsche called 'the magic of the extreme.' In keeping with that penchant for seeking vicarious involvement in dynastic disputes and becoming 'more royalist than the king,' some of these persons turned themselves into Spanish Carlists and looked as if they hoped to win the Spanish Civil War a second time in America.

Brent Bozell was William F. Buckley's colleague and conservative co-conspirator in schooldays at Yale; he married Buckley's sister, collaborated in the founding of *National Review*, and wrote some of the best speeches ever given by Republican politicians. His close friend, Frederick Wilhelmsen, who taught political theory at the University of Dallas and was important in the circle of 'intellectual conservatives,' was a Thomist and a dogmatist wholly intolerant of the classical scepticism of such conservative theorists as Strauss and Voegelin. As the cultural decadence of the late 1960's engulfed the land, Bozell and Wilhelmsen found the libertarian aspect of *National Review* intolerable, and established a counter-journal, *Triumph*, and an organisation, the Society for the Christian Commonwealth. Classes in counter-revolutionary ideology were given each summer at the Escorial by Wilhelmsen, who involved himself with the *Requeté* and with the 'Regent of Carlism,' HRH Don Francisco Javier of Bourbon-Parma.

The *Triumph* party's answer to the radical 'Students for a Democratic Society' was the 'Sons of Thunder,' a band of collegians who wore red berets and demonstrated against abortion by kneeling to say the Rosary in public places. One Saturday in 1970, Bozell, Wilhelmsen, the 'Sons' and other supporters, carrying placards, papal flags, and processional crosses borrowed from churches, rallied outside a Washington, D.C. abortion mill, hoping to 'negotiate' a one-day 'moratorium' on infanticide as a step towards decency; the police, frightened by their cries of 'Viva Christo Rey!', clubbed and arrested them. The gesture appeared futile – but what is a tiny minority to do in the face of utter indifference to a wholesale practice which it believes to be a deliberate abomination before the Deity and which, it also believes, is destined to bring His wrath upon the nation? Notwithstanding that, *National Review* would have none of this preaching foolishness to the gentiles, and called the movement 'Quixotic,' 'exotic,' and 'parodic'. One professor wrote, 'You will not mend [our society] by dressing up in the rags of Spanish romantic politics and attempting to force a juncture of

religion and civil order.'

Triumph stopped publishing in the mid-seventies; in the meantime, however, it had provided a forum for American experimentation with the ideals of monarchy, and may very well have patterned itself after Rob Lyle and Roy Campbell's *The Catacomb*, which championed another dubious Carlist claimant whose line is now extinct. But there was an hour of glory before the end. In 1975, with the death of Franco impending, the Spanish Carlists were on the rise, though the son and heir of the aged Francisco Javier, Carlos Hugo, was sympathetic to communism. Therefore Wilhelmsen chose Carlos Hugo's younger brother, Sixto Enríque, for his candidate; then he and Bozell flew to France to smuggle this prince over the border illegally for a Carlist rally in Northern Spain. In recognition of his pains, the old pretender, Francisco Javier, made the professor a *Caballero de la Gran Cruz de la Legitimidad Proscrita*.

This is a chapter in the history of American conservatism that the conservatives would have us forget. Today, Bozell is in seclusion, and Wilhelmsen maintains ties with some Carlist groups in South America, though little is heard from him in this country. Yet, even though years have passed since the year of adventure, Wilhelmsen confesses, 'Carlism has been a way of life and a conclusion to the syllogism of my existence.'

By contrast with the affair of the 'Sons,' Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, who has a completely formed ideology and in his writings cites de Maistre, Bonald, and Donoso Cortés along with Aquinas, circumspectly directs a youth-centered counter-revolutionary organisation active in fifteen countries known as 'Tradition, Family, and Property.' The princes of the Imperial House of Brazil are supporters of his; and though the TFP does not take a monarchist stance *per se*, it notes more than respectfully that St. Thomas considered monarchy the ideal form of government. In the U.S., the TFP distributes its literature and dons the red beret from time to time in public manifestations. The site of its U.S. headquarters is a great Hudson Valley manor lined with ornamental halberds and swords and portraits of Charlemagne and the Condé along with those of Dr. de Oliveira and of miraculous statues of the Blessed Virgin.

There have been other appearances of monarchism in America. At Yale, the 'Party of the Right' in the collegiate Political Union holds an annual memorial service for King Charles the Martyr. The Order of the Cincinnati, composed of descendants of General Washington's officers, has Louis XVI for its patron. The Constantian Society is an indigenous body of international monarchists, and collaborated with the Monarchist League of Canada and the Order of Russian Imperial Union in holding a 'study conference on monarchy' in 1983 at Durham, New Hampshire in time for the two-thousandth anniversary of the founding of the Roman Empire and the sixty-fifth of the assassination of Czar Nicholas II; it was a publicity coup both in the American press and behind the Iron Curtain, where the Voice of America, Radio Canada, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe provided extensive coverage (leading to a satirical attack in the Soviet

magazine *Crocodile*). The conference elicited a memorable outpouring of royalist fervor, and it will be repeated on Victoria Day 1984 at Toronto, Canada. The nation's art museums offer clandestine monarchist activity of a less serious sort; for example, in my native city of Detroit, it was possible for patrons of the arts to attend banquets in the same season honouring the reigning queen of Holland and the *de jure* king of the Two Sicilies. On an even less serious note, some kilted Scotsmen in America have precipitously pledged their allegiance to a Jacobite pretender claiming to be a descendant of the Cardinal Duke of York by a secret marriage; it is all too reminiscent of the 'Sobieski Stuart' affair of the nineteenth century.

A fellow countryman of mine who studied at a British university became president of his local chapter of the Monarchist League, and thereby hangs a moral. In comparison with their American counterparts, the British

in general make rather poor monarchists – and this criticism may be applied all the way to the top. Their insular attitude is reflected in the official policy of according no recognition to foreign titles of any sort: a horror story circulates about a Bourbon prince who wrote to Buckingham Palace for an audience and received a reply addressed to 'Bourbon, Esq.' . . . The British are implicated along with the Americans in the fall of nine European thrones in the course of the world wars; in their place are three proto-socialist regimes and eight communist dictatorships. If the Free World could redeem Eastern Europe from its communist slavemasters, it would be an act of historical penance. But it will take an act of will simply for most people to ask themselves what monarchy is and why it should exist, and then to begin the crusade by conserving the rôle of monarchy in those nations that still have it.

Notes

1. This is the Maurrassian's strategy: he denies the assumptions one would necessarily infer from his statements (because these assumptions would discredit him) but draws from the credulous reader a mystical affirmation of all the consequences of these assumptions. Thus the nature of reality is transformed through the magic of Romantic ideology.

For an example of this shifting strategy see *Defence of the West* by Maurras' associate Henri Massis (1928) with preface by G. K. Chesterton (!).

2. The nineteenth-century dandy was a counter-revolutionary terrorist whose intimidating aestheticist pose was a symbolic means of asserting the aristocratic principle.

Education for Art and Design

Patrick Reyntiens

Education is the meeting of persons: nothing more than that. Education does not *consist in* the meeting of persons; nor is it the meeting of persons, appropriately qualified, to effect the transfer of certain types of specialist knowledge. No. 'Education', simply, 'is the meeting of persons'.

One could go on from that definition, and ask why there are so many half-persons, frustrated persons, ego trip persons and no-persons-at-all among the teaching echelons of the educational system of England? The answer to that question is that those I have described so unflatteringly simply do not know or believe this profound truth: – 'Education is the meeting of persons'. Apprehended as such, education becomes not so much an activity as a state, a state of 'being'.

Those who cannot understand the depth of the phrase 'the meeting of persons' or to whom the phrase is meaningless, are themselves yet on the plane of 'having'. Those who *do* understand the phrase are themselves the embodiment of their understanding, and are already on the plane of 'being'.

I do not wish to extend the terms of this paper too broadly, but I would suggest, by way of explanation, that the plane of 'having' is that of the acquisitive society, of the cash nexus (as it has been called) and of greed: if life is conducted on that plane, then it leads ultimately to misunderstanding and dissatisfaction. For 'having' is the plane of scission and of confusion of identity. 'Having', the possessive urge, the acquisitive urge, is at the root of

society and its ills, and this fundamental malaise, if unrecognised and left to persist untreated, will lead, I believe, to the total destruction of education as it should be known – as it has ever been known in the past.

I should like to suggest to you a critique of the mode both of teaching, and of being taught, which may well strike you as bizarre. I think we can all agree from our common observation that during the last forty years in Great Britain the principle of skepsis has become a major concomitant in the acquisition of knowledge; one could almost claim that skepticism has become the single motive force in large sections of secondary education. From an historical point of view, skepsis, like the poor, has been always with us; especially in the world of education. We find it in ancient Rome, in the schools of thirteenth century Paris, Oxford and Cologne – perhaps above all in the polished education systems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In our time, however, the principle of skepsis, perhaps all unknowingly and inadvertently, has been substituted for the principle of belief. The basic mental attitude bound into the process of education during the last forty years has switched decisively from certainty to doubt. This idea may strike many people as incongruous and bizarre. But by way of partial justification of my point of view, I would ask you to consider whether it is not possible, or in the event more than likely, that phenomena we can all recognise have contributed to the situation. I refer to the

gradual dissolution of our national identity dating from 1944–50; the concomitant disappearance from the schools of generally and publicly held religious conviction; the growth of aberrant forms of scientific method and their application and use in disciplines where it was not anticipated that they should penetrate; the persistence of the educational fantasies of Jean Jacques Rousseau; the ascendancy of the ideas of Marx, Feuerbach, Comte and Hegel (particularly in the form of perfervid left-wing politics among school-teachers). Is it possible that all these factors have *not* contributed to the process of educational dilapidation? And if they have, can we really be surprised at the triumph of the skeptical principle?

I should emphasise that when I use the term ‘belief’, I signify neither religious conviction, nor dogma. Owing to the fission of our culture, ‘belief’ is a word that has tended to be almost exclusively attached to, and monopolised by, institutes of religion. I emphatically do not use the word ‘belief’ to connote either historical religious dogma or received orthodoxy as such, easily as I could; to do so would be to destroy the whole point of this paper.

Given the prevailing atmosphere of skepticism, the equation of ‘belief’ with ‘certainty’ is bound to risk appearing ludicrous to the majority of the teaching profession. We have all been trained in the scientific principle whether we like it or not, whether we recognise the fact or not. We suck it in as dust in the air. And from the point of view of science, belief contrasts with certainty. Only established *facts*, confirmed by proven hypotheses, constitute certainty; seen from that all-pervasive point of view, belief is the realm of the unproven, the unknown territory lying beyond established fact. Belief lies in the order of apperception, and, to the ordinary scientific mind, is synonymous with the ‘subjective guess’ or (as the Scots term it) ‘canny jelousement’. As such it is generally placed within brackets.

To this generally held point of view I must oppose as radically different a one as it is possible to hold; and I do this primarily as an artist – and only after that as a teacher. To the creator (and all art and design is concerned, even obliquely and contingently, with creation) belief is synonymous with certainty. Far from being a subjective addendum, an indulgence or a luxury, the act of belief is the foundation stone of all creation. Moreover it is natural to man to believe, and to form a mental structure, uniquely suited to the individual, and based on belief. I do not think that skepsis is a natural mode for the human mind, nor do I believe that it has ever been so. The ‘belief’ I am describing is, in the end, a highly personal quality: I am tempted to call it a virtue. The certainty inherent in a firm personal belief is the only mainspring and motivation for art and, more obviously, the only source of creative energy in any human being. Belief in this sense is never a commodity, nor can it be treated as such. A fortiori, belief is not the property of a community, but a particular possession of the individual soul.

Let us turn now to the question of the school curriculum, specifically of the secondary or comprehensive curriculum. Use your imagination; imagine a grain of skepticism being inserted between the professing of a fact and the acceptance

of that fact by the school child; or again, imagine the proffering of a fact as a mere opinion, and therefore open to doubt; or yet again, imagine the confusion arising from the persistent dressing-up of opinions *as* facts. And further imagine this act of inserting skepticism, either consciously or unconsciously, by the teacher’s precept, example or attitude, repeated many thousands of times within the period of adolescence. During this period, I contend, the ‘habit of belief’ should remain essentially unshaken and inviolate. For without that habit, the connections between concepts, ideas and subjects, which are necessary for future development, and which form the ground-base for the superstructure of higher education, will never be acquired. Without the habit of belief, education builds hopelessly on shifting sands. In speaking of adolescence, I mean, to be more precise, the age from 11½ – 16, which is the most formative period of a child’s life, and possibly the most important one for the stable foundation of a personality that will stand the test of future pressures. I suggest that the frontier of skepticism, together with its concomitance of an analytical frame of mind, has (whether by public policy, or individual intent) been advanced by some five to seven years. The skeptical frontier now stands at twelve rather than at eighteen; and it seems to have been moved precisely in the course of the last forty years, the years since the war, during which pupils have been taught to expect the ‘Radical Future’. This expectation, judged from the point of view of the scientific skepticism which promotes it, is a ludicrous fantasy. It is an inversion of the ‘belief’ upon which personal existence is founded; a blind, Dionysian urge, translated into the language of social hope. That which begins in skepticism thus ends in irrational commitment; that which cherishes the individual freedom, ends by a Gadarene submergence in the collective will. How contradictory it all is, and how absurd; yet it has all happened, and in our own lifetime.

There is another point, a considerably lesser one, which should not need emphasising here. All hope, all approbation, all prizes, all the bright future in education are continually conceded to those ‘intelligent’ children, who have the capability, if not the facility, to absorb abstract knowledge (or, to be more accurate, information). The single recognised achievement in education is the accumulation of factual knowledge, considered without reference to the child’s ‘interiority’. The intelligence which succeeds may rest on nothing more secure than a photographic memory: a physical, rather than a moral, attribute. If we ask ourselves which children would fit most easily into the system of education that is now almost universal, then the answer must be those children whose abilities are primarily ratiocinative, those whose personality is dominated (according to scientific folklore) by the left-hand side of the brain. These are the children for whom every parent has been encouraged to hope, and whom the world is waiting to load with honours and rewards. These are the children who will be best suited to the pressures of the acquisitive society, and who will be the victors in life’s contest. But one hesitates to enquire how many of them are endowed with insight, vision, or

imagination; with warmth, compassion or sympathy.

On the other hand, there are children whose whole sensibility seems to be expressive – if we may refer to the same piece of scientific lore – of the right-hand side of the brain. They are neither linear, nor ratiocinative, nor inductive. They fail hopelessly in the enterprise of accumulating facts. But they have breadth, feeling, and intuition. Precisely because they are unfit to gather endless information, they may succeed in acquiring a core of belief, which will provide the basis of creative thinking and artistic activity.

Schools, however, are generally biased towards the ratiocinative; perhaps they have to be. The ratiocinative is the foundation of order – although a very particular kind of order – and is readily tested by examinations. The examination system itself is nothing but the ethos of work, prematurely imposed upon the teenage mind. Ratiocinative schooling, being systematic, tends to foster efficiency, and spreads, in accordance with a Benthamite calculus, measurable quantities of benefit to all who seek its aid.

This truncated system of education (which I am anxious not to caricature) succeeds, if I am not mistaken, in boring some eighty-five per cent of its recipients. One should be able to offer alternatives, and I realise that I am not original in the one that I am about to suggest. From Rudolf Steiner to the present-day advocates of specialist education, people have recognised the problems, and have made proposals, sometimes naively, sometimes blindly, but with a sense of the direction in which we need to proceed, and which I shall try to follow now.

The ‘whole man’ is the product of an educational system that puts equal emphasis on the ratiocinative and the intuitive – on the activities of both sides of the brain. Curricula and school procedures are mainly external things, and will not alone serve to bring psychic unity. The condition for a reciprocal interaction of our sundered faculties, and the consequent growth of an integral human being in interior freedom is, I suggest, the return from *skepsis* to belief, as the first aim of education.

Belief is the basis for creation. For creation depends upon conviction, integrity, joy – in short, upon the power to affirm. This is not to deny that the creative process involves pain and suffering. But it is, in Hegel’s language, an essentially ‘cheerful’ suffering. Creativity is therefore incompatible with a pathological disposition. The product of the balanced schooling which I should like to recommend, would exhibit a developed stability. Such a stability would exploit qualities already potential in the nature of the pupil, and not imposed by subsequent circumstances. Only such an *inner* stability can provide the basis upon which belief may be founded, and from which creativity may subsequently grow. It is essential to provide this stability at the time when the pupil can best use it – the moment of entry into further and higher education. This, in a very simplified version, is the idea behind Rudolf Steiner’s theory and practice of education, an education which is *synthetic* rather than analytic, integral rather than fissive. Such ideas are, however, far from the reality of present day Great Britain. Our

procrustean system ensures that, *precisely* at the point of entry into courses of Art and Design, those students whose nature inclines them to these subjects are in a state of revolt, whether conscious or not, against the education which they have so far received. They are in revolt, I believe, because those faculties which should have been emphasised and developed as much as the ratiocinative, and without which no personal affirmation is truly possible, have been neglected and underdeveloped. Thus students come to us unbalanced, and without adequate reserves of spiritual energy and stability. The question of ‘*skepsis* versus belief’ lies so deep as to be hidden from all but the most percipient of them; about five per cent have an inkling as to their true condition. For the fundamental truth about themselves is too personal to take its place in the items of information which they have hitherto been asked to absorb.

I am talking of something about which I know and of which I have had experience. The crisis of creativity that afflicts all art students, of every intake, in their second year, is certainly not a crisis of technique, or method, or procedure. It is not even a crisis of talent. It is above all a crisis of vision, of identity and of ‘belief’: in short, a crisis of *being*. In the second year, students find themselves overcome by *skepsis* concerning their work and themselves; to survive this crisis they must be prepared to take great risks with their ‘being’. This is commonly known as allowing them to follow their own devices, or ‘to do their own thing’. But students are woefully under-armed for this elemental battle. They are victims of the spiritual enervation introduced by the average secondary school education, and, one might dare to add, of the cultural deprivation of an average home background. A good proportion of students are not able to overcome this crisis by their own resources. In the struggle they are always most helped by those of their teachers who have been through the same crisis, and who are able to translate their experience into an act of *true and total education*. Such an act is by no means a purveyance of facts and opinions; it is rather an act of sharing, in which one individual reveals the personal core of belief that sustains him, and encourages the other to find a similar core in himself. In other words, it is a ‘meeting of persons’; this is the sole true educational act that I mentioned in my first paragraphs. And incidentally I have found almost without exception that part-time staff in Art Colleges fulfil this vital educational role better than the full-time staff. This is not an invariable rule; there are notable, and noble, exceptions. But taken as a whole it does virtually amount to a rule. And the reason is not hard to find. The part-time teacher brings to his work a creativity and belief that are nurtured independently, and which are not constantly subject to erosion by the day to day demand for educational *skepsis*. He – more than any professional provider of information – offers what the student needs: testimony of his own existence, and of the value of ‘being’, in a world too much dedicated to ‘having’ – whether it be the having of material possessions, or the having of material facts. It is he, rather than his full-time colleague, who is able to show the student the path back from *skepsis* to belief.

The Politics of Restoration

Ian Crowther

It would not surprise me if the title of this article were to set all sorts of alarm bells ringing in the minds of respectable conservatives. Talk of restoration no doubt has an alarmist ring to it, at least to anyone accustomed to the regular chimes of Newton's world clock, or attuned to the time device set in motion more recently by Hegel's World Spirit. The phrase 'you can't put the clock back', emits a ring of unassailable truth at this late hour in our civilisation's day, and effectively checks even a wistful glance backwards. But if it is really the case that nothing can be rescued from the wreckage of traditional life, one may still agree with James Fitzjames Stephen: 'The waters are out and no human force can turn them back, but I do not see why as we go with the stream we need sing Hallelujah to the river god.' Perhaps it is foolishness on my part to ignore the advice immediately preceding those words not to 'expend much thought or trouble on trying to save . . . the old ways of living.' Perhaps I am less impressed by the irresistible force of change than I should be. I readily grant that before discussing the need for a politics of restoration, there is a prior obligation on one to establish the fact of degradation. Alas, in the space here available, this task can hardly be essayed in a way which would satisfy either complacent conservatives or Panglossian optimists. However, I am fortified by the thought that, in the main, *Salisbury Review* readers are likely to lend a sympathetic ear to the notion that twentieth century man does not necessarily live in the best of all possible worlds.

The difficulty of gaining a hearing for the restorationist case has not been made any easier in England by the election of Mrs Thatcher to a second term of office and the presence in the House of Commons of a huge Conservative majority. In these circumstances, it might appear absurdly quixotic to suggest that the influence of conservative ideas has so far diminished that nothing short of restoration will suffice to save them from extinction. But while it is palpably true that *political* conservatism is enjoying something of a revival, there is no comparable blooming of cultural conservatism. The 'long march of the Left through the institutions,' which was proclaimed as a revolutionary goal in the sixties, has been pursued ever since with great effect. Churches, schools, universities, law-making bodies: all retain in various degrees their ancient forms and appearances; but they have, so to speak, been hollowed out and furnished with a new ideological core which is quite alien to their original character.

However, conservatives are very good at 'keeping up appearances'. Because none of our institutions has been

outwardly destroyed or frontally assaulted, few conservatives have been 'alarmed into reflection', in the way that Burke was, by the storming of some new bastille. Yet the Left sees every enduring institution as a bastille in which the human spirit is incarcerated. Hence in education self-expression must be allowed to triumph over standards of excellence, in religion idiosyncratic gestures towards modernity must take precedence over liturgical forms, in law psychiatric justice must have the last word over concepts of individual responsibility. It is apparent that the Left's field of activity extends far beyond the boundaries of party politics, into 'consciousness raising' at all levels of the nation's life. Evidently the Left understands better than most conservatives that a rightist regime may co-exist for long periods of time with an adversary culture, until such time as the regime loses its legitimacy and is ripe for destruction. Long before the *ancien régime* of Louis XVI was overthrown in fact, it had been overthrown in theory by the *philosophes*. Throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century the appearance of absolutism belied the reality of a flourishing *république des lettres* which formed the mind of the day. Since that time the number of those dedicated to the destruction of traditional institutions has increased enormously, and so too has their ability, through the mass media, to reach a vast audience with their message of social emancipation. The inability of conservatives to exert a like influence upon the cultural climate must be ascribed in part to the disproportionate importance which they attribute to political power.

The disproportion would be less if Conservatives in power were willing to use government to cultivate and protect the national mores. But instead they appear to want to delegate the function of allocating values entirely to the marketplace. Some conservatives have even gone so far as to persuade themselves that a free market is itself the vehicle of all values. This is reminiscent of the Marxist belief that the superstructure of ideal relations is determined by the infrastructure of economic relations. In any case, it is naive to trust in commerce to embrace conservative ideas. Commerce is notoriously adept at disseminating for its own purposes whatever ideas or images of man are currently in vogue. 'Radical chic' perfectly describes the phenomenon.

It is not simply the conservative's preoccupation with economic issues which leaves his opponents free to colour the public mind on so many other matters. It is also the nature of that preoccupation which renders precarious the conservative position in the contemporary world. Modern economics grew out of the modern understanding of man

as a creature inexorably driven by his desire for comfortable self-preservation. It follows that, if man is basically a bundle of elemental wants and desires, society must address itself principally to questions concerning the material relief of man's estate, ensuring only that individuals do not harm one another physically in the pursuit of their private and separate interests. In this modern view, men are distinguished from animals, not by virtue of possessing more elevated ends, but simply more efficient means. About our ends we emote, only about our means do we reason. If man's reason is essentially a calculating or instrumental faculty, there is nothing implausible in the idea that instruments of calculation, namely computers, will replace man in all of his essentially human tasks. The modern worship of technique and the accompanying belief that if something can be done, it should be done, leaves little room for conservative reservations regarding progress's beneficent effects. All one can *reasonably* argue about is the method, not the end sought by the method. If the technology exists to create supermen in test tubes, then the presumption is that this would be a desirable thing.

When society is so single-mindedly organised around economic goals, the political sphere ceases to take its bearings (as it did during classical antiquity and the Middle Ages) by what is highest in man, but instead acts largely as the focal point of material interests. As for the distinctively political tasks which still have to be done, of the kind which cannot be reduced to the immediate economic preferences of individuals, liberal democratic governments have difficulty tackling them. Had the nation's long-term social and political interests been seriously considered, the mass immigration of foreigners into our midst would never have been allowed to take place. But in England and throughout Western Europe the international mobility of labour in answer to the presumed needs of production has proceeded in utter disregard of the damage done to the social fabric of the host nation. There was simply no authoritative organ to take account of anything except the economic benefits which mass immigration was supposed to bring in its wake; once upon a time, before the collapse of politics into economics, that organ would have been the state. National defence, which properly springs out of a concern to protect and, if necessary, make sacrifices for one's country, is also given diminished consideration in a society where the duties of citizenship have shrunk to the payment of taxes and the casting of votes. The modern citizen is forced back upon himself, upon what is his own: rather as the ancient Greek was when he returned from the *agora* to the household. As Hannah Arendt pointed out, there is no equivalent of the *agora* in our society; the servile concerns of the Greek household have expanded to occupy our entire political space.

Under modern conditions, all institutions, from the political down, tend to lose their non-economic reasons for being. They become merely functional and self-serving in scope. By contrast, in most civilisations known to man institutions have demonstrated what Arnold Gehlen has called their overdetermination: which is to say they have

provided visible means of expression and support for man's highest and noblest aspirations. In the medieval guild or *mystery*, for example, production was suffused with piety and play. Economic activity itself is adversely affected by the disappearance from it of all purposes other than those which serve individual consumer wants. Production becomes a necessary evil to the person who has been conditioned by a consumer oriented society to seek maximum satisfaction with minimum effort. It is the old problem of a people so softened by economic ease that they are unable to make the strenuous efforts required to earn that ease. Inflation is the result.

Now it is of course true that, in recent years, a counter-revolution of sorts has occurred in the area of conservative economics. In so far as the state is divested of its direct involvement in the big corporations, it is possible to envisage it being free once again to address the larger questions of politics, and to see politics itself as architectonic: as exerting a real shaping influence on the national mind and character. Such a politics would not be afraid to subordinate on occasions economic interests to the permanent interests of the nation, since it would not automatically assume that the two are always compatible. In so far as the disciplines of the market are restored, people may once again come to appreciate the relationship between effort and reward. But the rhetoric of hard work, self-discipline, thrift and responsibility will eventually need some stronger support than the worker's fear of unemployment or the capitalist's of bankruptcy. The lowering of expectations and inflation is not hard to achieve in a recession. However, the permanent restoration of those 'Victorian' virtues which conservatives prize will depend upon whether economic ends can be joined to a community of moral purpose.

Restorationist language, even when buttressed by a hard-headed economic rationale, does not come easily to conservatives. After all, the restorationist, no less than the revolutionary in this respect, is opposed to the *status quo* in the name of principles which transcend it. The conservative, on the other hand, is apt to feel that an enquiry into the principles of an institution established by time is as likely to end in its destruction as its restoration. He is emotionally drawn to this position by his attachment to the concrete, which attachment does not dispose him to abstract from embodied things their original essences. Unfortunately, though, a proper respect for what exists and has developed slowly over time does not of itself equip a person to judge the damage which the processes of time may have wrought. Unless one believes that there is some inherent virtue in adjusting to whatever happens to evolve, one must sometimes be prepared to ask whether an institution is evolving in accordance with its animating principles, or departing from them in directions which might give cause for concern. At the time of writing, Enoch Powell has expressed concern at the use which has seemingly been made of the monarchy to give voice to 'third world' sensibilities, notably on the occasion of the Queen's Christmas broadcast. Many conservatives evidently found Powell's remarks unsettling, and unacceptably radical, as in a sense they were. Powell was

questioning something, namely the Queen's role as Head of The Commonwealth, which has become established by convention and precedent. He was reverting to a national idea of monarchy which events have threatened to overtake. But by his intervention, events may have lost some of their coercive power. Principles can occasionally modify or reverse current trends, instead of merely obliging them. I take it that Powell is as anxious as any conservative not to disturb what time has sanctified, but he is also aware that time does not invariably promote the best cause, whatever Whigs might assert to the contrary.

If conservatives are often helpless in the face of what one of their number was pleased to call 'the winds of change', it is because of their failure to make the history of their time answerable to perennial principles of political and social order. This failure originates in something rather more profound than a temperamental distaste for the abstract. It can also be traced to a doctrine which, though once serviceable to the conservative cause, is far less so now. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, and in reaction against the bloodless abstractions of the Enlightenment, there emerged an early type of historicism which celebrated the warmth and particularity of traditional life. It especially worshipped society's organic nature and its laws of growth; interference with either in the name of reason it considered a blasphemy. Hence, at its inception in the modern world reflective conservatism was born with a distrust of reason and a trust in History. But in his anxiety to avoid rationalist or 'unhistorical' attitudes, the conservative may prescind from all question of what constitutes the good life for man. He may then come to accept, without fully realising its unconservative implications, the kind of historicism which is more typical of our age, and which teaches that man is entirely the product of his history. In this view, there can be no room for eternal truths or a timeless human nature, in the light of which entities a society may be judged either to be progressing or regressing. It is a symptom of the eclipse of these categories that 'regression' as a concept has virtually dropped out of our political vocabulary. By placing his faith so unreservedly in historical time (albeit the slow processes of time, with precedent piled upon precedent) the conservative in an era of rapid change is left with no appeal against the cruel verdicts which time passes upon his cherished beliefs and ways of life.

This will not greatly disturb the conservative who dignifies his adjustment to changing circumstances in Burkean or historicist language, but who in reality is nothing more than a pragmatist. The position is quite different for someone of a genuinely conservative disposition who nevertheless labours under the illusion that the essence of conservatism is exhausted by historicism. Such a person, while reconciled to himself in a stable period, is normally at odds with himself in a time of vertiginous change. One side of his nature is impressed by the sheer factuality and historical inevitability of modern forms of life, while the other is repelled by the turn history has now taken. He feels betrayed by History, in which he once trusted, as in Providence, to deliver him from his enemies. On the plane of practical life, such a conservative

is similarly self-divided. He recognises better than his opponents the imperative to uphold social order, against modern sophists certainly, but even conceivably against a modern Socrates, so strong in his reluctance to expose to critical scrutiny the theoretical foundations upon which the modern state (and indeed any state) rests. At the same time he is not blind to the fact that such order as exists is less and less of his making. Yet as a votary of History he cannot without self-contradiction alter the course which history is taking, even supposing he went behind History's back in search of the conceptual tools with which to question her judgments. Thus what in the conservative as countryman was a proper resignation to fate, in the conservative as modern urban man has become a resignation to indefinite, indiscriminate change. Today's conservative can co-operate with history, but he cannot quarrel with it.

'Rhodesia must be surrendered to Robert Mugabe because his terrorist forces are the most powerful there.' 'Eastern Europe must be recognised as a Communist 'sphere of influence' since otherwise the Soviet Union may be tempted by its sense of insecurity into war.' 'Britain is a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural society and the sooner we recognise this in every department of our national life the better.' When such opinions are stamped with the imprimatur of historical fact, conservatives usually find it impossible to resist them. The least philosophical of men, they have been so compromised by a philosophy as to find themselves, at a critical moment, saddled with a doctrine which serves their enemies' purposes better than their own. The conservative needs urgently to be recalled, if you like by the restorationist, to his historic duty to transcend, if not history, then the version of it which he has unwisely allowed historicism to foist on him. This need not entail embracing the abstract rationalism against which the early historicists inveighed. But it will mean restoring a sense that God stands above the historical process and is not its immanent accomplice.

Someone in awe of History will naturally tend to view whatever has triumphed in history as having prescriptive force. In the conservative, this tendency will be reinforced by his inbred respect for rules and conventions. He will then feel obliged to deploy such conventional modes of discourse as have become *de rigueur* in polite society, irrespective of whether these are natural carriers of conservative sentiments. This explains why the conservative frequently finds himself defending his convictions in terms and with justifications which, since they are, as befits the age, largely positivist and utilitarian do not lend themselves easily to the case he wishes to put. Forced on to a rhetorical ground not of his choosing, the conservative will declare, for example, that capital punishment should be restored because of its allegedly superior deterrent effect. Thus whether or not a person is to hang for a crime is made to depend, not on the enormity of the offence he has committed against the moral order, but on the extent to which others will be deterred by the manner of his punishment. Such reasoning ties justice to contingent circumstances and removes it from the realm of principle. By arguing in this modern fashion, conservatives – no less

than their opponents – are helping to bury the classical idea of justice which it ought to be their business to keep alive.

Education is likewise reduced in significance when conservatives, in a quite proper desire to stave off the egalitarian assault on excellence, talk of schools and universities as the suppliers of 'resources' for the future, as though their chief purpose were to guarantee the perpetual provisioning of the trough from which the democratic sow feeds. Conservatives have even been known to resort to Gradgrind arguments in defence of the monarchy: with the aid of cost-benefit analysis they have purported to show that the country profits more by having it than not. From these examples, we can see that the conservative is severely hampered in his defence of traditional things by the dominance of modes of thinking and communicating which have established themselves in opposition to all things traditional. Every such example is in fact a concealed tribute to the grip which liberal culture exercises, even upon the minds of those who should be least in thrall to it.

The fundamental premise of the liberal state, that no values should be allowed to sully its laws, has been assimilated into conservative arguments in a way which is fatal to them. Moreover, the liberal's neutralism towards values has received powerful support in our age from positivist political science. This science, by rigidly separating facts from values, is loftily permissive towards all values, except those claiming like itself the status of facts. It is really a continuation of liberalism by other means. It wants to achieve, as liberalism has always wanted to achieve, the transcendence of cultural and religious differences among men. It wants, further, to immunise society against all those norms which have come down to us from our classical, Hebraic and Christian past. To this end, modern political science has promoted a flat, dispassionate language purged of all emotion and presumed always to refer to (and to defer to) the facts as they present themselves to our sensory organs. This language, which is favoured, for example, by sex educationalists, behavioural psychologists and market researchers, is supposedly made up of words and sentences which are readily translatable into the atomic facts and impressions from which they are derived. Hence it is not referential in any higher sense: it recognises only the brute existent, and the 'plain fact' that the highest is wholly conditioned by the lowest. It is implicitly egalitarian, since it puts all desires on an equal footing. In such a language, Shakespeare's 'ladder to all high designs' is a nonsensical concept, as indeed are all metaphors of a hierarchical nature. Conservatives cannot use this language without subverting what they are trying to convey in it. Its inbuilt tendency to disintegrate experience into empirically verifiable fragments means that it is incapable of serving (or conserving) an integrated vision of life. It renders unintelligible all those ordinating ideas which bind the members of a society together: the idea of the nation, of the British way of life, of a social code incorporating common duties and allegiances. This new nominalism can offer no resistance

to, indeed it is the chosen vehicle of, those cultural iconoclasts who are intent upon demolishing all formal structures and unities.

Conservatives who wish to expose the inadequacies of positivist political science might begin by challenging its pretence at objectivity. The equation of the facts (which are said to 'speak for themselves') with objective truth has its origin of course in the physical sciences. Scientific rationalists pulverised language to facilitate their work of breaking down nature into parts small enough to be manipulated and fabricated anew. Efficient causes alone are admitted as possessing objective existence. But no final or formal causes can be discerned in the external world's mechanism. Finality and formality return only when the scientist himself, in a kind of microcosmic re-enactment of the Creation, has imposed order on his fragmented material. Chaos becomes cosmos through man's subjective creations: his projects and products. Social and political scientists proceed in an analogous fashion. Like the physical scientist, whose prestige in our culture he covets, the political scientist admits only what is directly measurable and quantifiable in man's behaviour: the efficient causes, in other words. But then having amassed his factual data, about teenage sexual behaviour, the incidence of abortions, drug use among non-working housewives, or whatever, he is free to take any attitude towards the facts he likes. This is because attitudes, unlike facts, are not subject to rational assessment. In this way, rationalism licenses irrationalism, one species of which is relativism.

Not that the positivist regards his own beliefs as having a value relative only to himself. On the contrary, he likes to think that his attitudes are objective, because arrived at only after a long immersion in the facts, while patronising everyone else's as subjective and conditioned by emotion or prejudice. This is why, as we have seen, some conservatives are so anxious to demonstrate that their beliefs are solidly based on verifiable data. If they find this intolerable, because of the straitjacket which a positivist vocabulary imposes on much of what they would like to say, they may in desperation simply defend their beliefs on the grounds that they are 'sincerely held' and personally compelling.

Conservatives may thus be driven to adopt a relativist stance. Under the sceptical gaze of the secular state they can cultivate their own gardens of unorthodoxy. There, they may propagate (without being forced to do so in a pseudo-scientific jargon) such eccentric values as they privately cherish, regarding, for example, the humanity of the foetus, the indissolubility of marriage, the relevance of religion to education. But if conservatives do agree to abide by the rules of the liberal game and to forgo even the attempt to enshrine their values in law, they will effectively concede their enemies' point: that their values are merely personal, sincerely held no doubt, but no more objective than a gourmet's taste for smoked salmon or a gentleman's for blondes. No personal belief can be considered moral if it is merely personal. It must be seen as having, potentially at least, universal application: as being right for others as well as ourselves. This is why

Étienne Gilson counselled his students not to talk of 'values' but of 'goods', which it is in our common human nature to seek to realise.

Conservatives should not be intimidated by the accusation that they wish to impose an orthodoxy, whereas their opponents are innocent of any such intention. The fact is, every society, almost by definition, possesses an orthodoxy: a tissue of shared habits, beliefs and taboos which men living together tacitly acknowledge as binding on them. The question, always begged by liberals, is not whether a society will have a public orthodoxy or not. It is, simply, which orthodoxy? If contemporary liberals and positivists have their way, it will be one which finally excludes from society – or at best, banishes to the periphery – all those qualitative human characteristics which cannot be perceived by the behaviourist and the functionalist.

We may agree that a Benthamite society softens many of the acerbities which plague the peace of less commercially minded and more ideologically inclined societies. If, to paraphrase Marx, the point is not to philosophise about the world but to grow rich in it, then perhaps the citizen may freely dispose of the moral capital inherited from his ancestors, and settle down to a low-key existence of material contentment. That, at any rate, would seem to describe the condition in which modern Western man finds himself. His moral capital having dwindled almost to disappearing point, he must try to rejoice in the purely liberal society which remains. Man's moral sense will not be satisfied, however, if it is demoted to the same level as his sense of taste or smell. Nor, when everything of a moral nature is declared subjective, will everyone be content only to point out the oxymoronic character of such a declaration. Some, schooled in the idea that moral beliefs cannot be defended with good reasons, will resort to *force majeure* as the means of promoting them. Liberals have long been enamoured by the Darwinian conceit that, left to itself, society will evolve naturally and the 'fittest' ideas will survive. From this sanctification of social strife, it is but a short step, first, to the Marxist vision of class conflict, and then to nihilism and terrorism. Such outbursts of irrationality will in turn strengthen the hand of the social engineer, for whom mechanical conformity is the essence of political order.

A reader chancing upon this article might be forgiven for imagining that its author was intent upon marshalling a counter-revolutionary cadre of activists with the aim of restoring by force what it cannot restore by argument. But what I have in mind, as I hope will have become clear by now, is a restoration in the realm of the mind and the spirit. It is necessary, for example, to recover the idea of an immutable human nature. And we know that such an idea is true. For, if it were not so, we would hardly recognise, let alone comprehend, the all too human characters who speak to us from the pages of Aeschylus, Dante or Shakespeare. 'What a piece of work is a man . . .' and yet how much of him, in a forgetful time, we have hidden from our view.

Now to admit that there does exist a fixed human nature does not entail for conservatives a corresponding admission that this human nature's only constant is a desire for self-preservation. On the contrary, literature and mythology, religion and classical philosophy all converge to teach us that human nature is characterised by a desire for what has been called 'the fullness of being': man is the uniquely privileged being who finds in his own nature and in the natural processes around him an inbuilt dynamic towards perfection. The Good is simply what 'is' when what 'is' has fulfilled the potentiality proper to its nature; it is emphatically not a subjective value judgment. From this perspective, man is not merely a self-interested being moved to enter and to form societies solely for the ends of mutual protection and material prosperity. If these were his only ends, then, as Aristotle said, societies joined by trade agreements would not in fact be distinct: 'the Etruscans and the Carthaginians would be in the position of belonging to a single state; and the same would be true of all peoples who have commercial treaties with one another.'

Liberals are indeed surprised by the seeming incapacity of men to bury their differences in commercial agreements. And it is no wonder they are surprised, since their image of man as essentially *Homo Oeconomicus* renders inexplicable the higher levels of man's nature, except in terms of the lower. But, to quote Aristotle again, 'it is the peculiarity of man, in comparison with the rest of the animal world, that he alone possesses a perception of good and evil, of the just and unjust, and of other similar qualities; and it is association in these things which makes a family and a polis.' Man's language is laden with moral judgments, shared symbolic meanings, common intentions, none of which can be eliminated from man's polity, since they articulate the life human beings construct together in political association. From liberalism's impoverished view of human nature it at least followed that the law should punish mutual violence, protect individual property and uphold the sanctity of contracts. But what if man has still higher ends, which can only be realised in community and in fellowship with others? Then it surely follows that society through its laws must recognise and seek to create conditions which are hospitable to these ends too. Whereas liberalism has looked to the community only to form characters, conservatism has looked to it also to form character.

The conservative view draws its inspiration from the classical, that man cannot live well except in a community which acknowledges his moral nature. This is a view which still survives in some of our laws and institutions. But as more and more traditional landmarks – guides to men's behaviour – are ploughed up, the conservative finds himself with a shrinking ground on which to stand firm. Soon he may have no alternative but to yield to the spreading aridity and anomie of contemporary life, or to attempt (despite the uphill nature of the task) to regain some of the ground he has lost. To choose the latter course, is to be a restorationist.

The Diary of Lord John Manners

1874

Saturday Febr. 21st.

New Cabinet sworn in at Windsor: much cheered by the people at the Termini.

Febr. 25th. First Cabinet: all present. Disraeli opened with the bad news just received from Cape Coast. Hardy, Hunt & Carnarvon reported it was believed at their respective offices. Hunt said Admiralty had ordered ship from Liverpool to help in bringing back the sick, and wounded. D then called attention to Income Tax, & Local Taxation, and asked what Cabinet thought of abolition or reduction of former? Northcote gave a guarded statement of his views, leaning to a diminution this year with total abolition next. He estimated surplus at end of this financial year at £500,000 and at end of next at £5,000,000: but pointed to Ashantei War as possible disturbing element. Derby advocated diminution of Income Tax & half the tea Duty. Salisbury did not approve the latter. Hunt was for giving million & half to local taxation & dealing with licenses. Malmesbury was strong for local taxation. I spoke against dealing with indirect taxation at all this year pointing out Excise duties such as Malt had superior claims to Custom Duties, like Tea. . . .

March 21st. Small Committee appointed. Salisbury, Northcote & Cross to advise with Railway Commissioners as to terms on which Railway Passenger Duty might be abolished. Then Budget opened at length by Northcote. Estimated Surplus £5,400,000! His proposals were – to adjourn general consideration of Local Taxation till next year – but to double present Police subsidy = £600,000: to take off 1d of Income Tax = £1,500,000 this year, & £1,800,000 next – to raise total exemption from £100 to £150 a year & to allow £150 deduction from all Incomes below £500 = £230,000 this year, rather more next = thus leaving Surplus at £3,000,000. He then argued against Sugar Duties, & proposed their repeal = £2,000,000. Then proposed repeal of Horse duty £480,000, leaving surplus of £520,000 to meet Railway scheme if adopted. Derby approved. I dissented from repeal of Sugar Duties, and urged that Budget should be really & not nominally provisional. Salisbury, Carnarvon & Hunt disliked repeal of Sugar Duties, & latter at some length made counter proposals – but in the long run Cabinet seemed to approve general outline, I recording again my dissent from it.

25th. Another Budget Cabinet. Northcote explained that figures given at last meeting were too favourable, and that it would not be possible to repeal Sugar Duties, diminish Income Tax & give relief in the other ways proposed. He therefore suggested that Income Tax should be left untouched. This met with general disapprobation, even Derby remonstrating. Hunt proposed to take 2d off Tea

Duties which would enable 1d to come off Income Tax & the other reliefs to be granted. This met with general support, and I thought the Sugar Duties were saved: but on meeting on

March 28th. Northcote informed us that both Excise & Customs authorities had informed him that growth of revenue was so extraordinary that surplus would be not £5,300,000 but £5,800,000 and that consequently he reverted to his original proposals. I said all I could in favour of retaining Sugar Duties, showing from figures obtained from Goulburn that actual receipts from Customs were now not more than £20,000,000. Hunt and Malmesbury still advocated tea, but Cross & the rest fell away, and Disraeli decided that the main features of Northcote's Budget were accepted. . . .

March 15th. [Note: presumably April] Northcote opened with revised Budget including £480,000 for Lunatics, and £190,000 for Government Rates leaving, as real Surplus, £540,000. He also proposed with £500,000 interest, received from Public Works Loans to create £7,000,000 terminable Annuities to expire in 1885. The expenditure was still given as £72,000,000. Upon this Hunt pointed out that he should probably want some £200,000 more, on which Disraeli and Derby remonstrated. I said the treasury had without consulting me cut my Telegraph vote down from £40,000 to £10,000, & that of course I could not be bound by that. The Budget however was sanctioned, & Carnarvon then opened a Colonial wallet. Annexation of Fiji Island was first considered, nothing definite however being known, nothing definite was decided. . . .

1880

Soon after the last entry [June 27th 1874] an opinion was expressed by the Prime Minister that records of what occurred in Cabinet should not be made by its members. I consequently gave up the practice. At the end of April we resigned Office, and I now jot down one or two particulars affecting myself. I opposed the Easter Dissolution – though I did not foresee its fatal result. After our resignation was resolved on I called on Beaconsfield, who at once informed me of his intention to offer me the G.C.B., and to make Cochrane a Peer: he then suggested my asking for a Pension. This after some consideration I did. On April 20th. James Daly met me at the Paddington Station on my way to Windsor to receive the Bath with the news that the Pension was granted: so that on that day I felt my long political career was in all probability closed – and closed in a manner at least commensurate with its deserts. In addition to the Pension of £1200 a year, and the G.C.B. there came the same evening a letter from the Queen couched in the most kind and gratifying terms accompanying the last Volume of the Prince's Life.

Here therefore I pause: 40 years, save one, of political life

are brought to a close with honours and pecuniary rewards, and I have been permitted to see many objects which as a very young man I had set before me, obtained, and to some slight extent through my own exertions. Laus Deo –

Letter from Colonel Lindsay on behalf of the Queen & my answer. June 1884.

Strictly Confidential June 15 – 1884
Balmoral Castle

My dear Lord John

I write to you, to convey a wish of the Queen – and that is that you will tell me for her private information what is your opinion as to the state of the political horizon at the present moment, what is likely to happen, what is in contemplation, as far as the Conservative party is concerned. What would be the probable tone and temper of the Country in the event of a dissolution – what the probable result, and when is it likely to take place, and what is most likely to hasten it, and so on.

The Queen wishes for knowledge which she hopes to obtain from you, through me. The fact is, she feels so cut off as it were from confidential information on these matters, now that those upon whom she formally relied are passed and gone – and she feels that you could give her your opinion, as an old and experienced Conservative Statesman.

You see she wants an insight into forthcoming events, which would at all events relieve an anxiety which she naturally feels and she would like to know your opinion upon the situation, and be put in possession of what she cannot obtain except thro' an old friend like yourself.

If you will send me, therefore, a letter which I can read to the Queen, (but addressed to me as if I had asked you from myself) she would be so much obliged.

In short she wants a little forewarning, so as to be fortified to a Certain extent when the Crisis arrives.

Your communication will of course be received by the Queen in the Strictest Confidence. I hope I have explained myself. If you will send me your plain and unrestricted view of the Condition of things, as soon as possible, I shall be obliged – so that the Queen may have the opportunity, and advantage of knowing what you think, before the end of this week.

You might add anything more that you think the Queen would be glad to know in reference to the future of the Conservative Party.

In am in the Strictest Confidence
sincerely yours

C. H. Lindsay

Confidential 3, Cambridge Gate
June 17th. 1884

My dear Colonel Lindsay

You ask me to give you a forecast of coming political events, and my opinion of the probable result of an early appeal to the country.

I will do my best to comply with your request, but ignorant as I am of the exact nature of the communication to be made to Parliament on Monday next on the subject of Egypt my answer must be to a great extent hypothetical.

First then on the assumption that the statement to be made on Monday is satisfactory, if not to the Conservative party, at any rate to the large majority of the House of Commons.

In that case, satisfied with their majority, the Government would I presume, press forward their measures, and the House of Lords would towards the middle of July have to deal with the Second reading of the Franchise bill. If the Peers act in accordance with the all but unanimous wish of their friends in the Lower House they will decline to read the Bill a second time on account of its being unaccompanied by a scheme of Redistribution. Should the Bill be thus thrown out, the next move would of course be with the government and it would be useless for me to speculate on the course they may decide to take, under these circumstances.

In the event however of Mr Gladstones asking and obtaining the Queens permission to dissolve you may like to hear what I anticipate would be the probable result of a dissolution on such an issue.

The object of the radicals would no doubt be to make the election turn on the cry of 'Reform and down with the House of Lords'. Now, I should not fear that cry at all, if it was met courageously as I hope it would be met.

The existing Constituencies have shown no inclination towards a revolutionary policy, and the honest discharge of its duty by one Estate of the Realm would not in my opinion, render it unpopular with them. I think therefore that the general and genuine opinion of the country would be obtained through a Dissolution under such conditions, and that the bye elections during the last two or three years may be taken as a fair index of the leaning of the public mind. Leaving Ireland out of the Calculation the bye elections have resulted in a Conservative gain of 12 seats in England and Scotland. There are two important County seats now vacant. S. Hants and Mid Surrey, and, as both are contested they will throw a considerable light on the political bias of that class of constituencies.

So far I have written on the assumption that the Government emerge triumphantly out of the Anglo-French Egyptian embroglio. Let me now say a word or two on the opposite assumption. Should the House of Commons refuse to sanction the new proposals, I apprehend an immediate Dissolution must take place, whether the Government remains in office or resigns. In that case the feeling of the country would be, undoubtedly, favourable to the Conservative party, and apart again from Ireland, we might reasonably expect a majority in the new Parliament. But even under the present franchise Ireland will prove a very great difficulty in the way of a

Conservative Government. It is not, I think, too much to say that under the proposed franchise with such a scheme of Redistribution as Mr Gladstone shadowed forth neither a Conservative nor any Constitutional Government would be possible except by sufferance of Mr Parnell, and his successors. Hitherto, I have never taken a gloomy view of national politics, but I confess I do so now.

If the House of Lords quail and fail now, I see no point of future resistance. In my opinion they ought to have made their stand against the Irish Arrears Act. If they yield now the future Constitution of the country will be Sovereign and a democratic House of Commons, swayed by some one clever orator, who in his turn will be swayed by 80 or 90 Irish irreconcilables.

It is impossible to contemplate without apprehension and deep sympathy the position of the Sovereign under such a Polity. Under it none of the safeguards which exist in the United States would be found, and the Sovereign would be left with the chance product of something approaching to Manhood Franchise. To my mind the only prospect of safety lies in the exercise of that not common quality – courage – and we have a remarkable and encouraging proof of what that can effect in the history of what happened exactly 100 years ago.

The House of Lords had then the courage to throw out the India bill under circumstances curiously analogous to those of the present moment, and were sustained in that action by the constituencies when appealed to.

To sum up; should Mr Gladstone's statement on Monday be satisfactory to his party, I apprehend that a political crisis will be produced by the rejection of the Franchise Bill by the House of Lords next month. Should it lead to a Ministerial defeat a Dissolution would be imminent the result of which might be fairly expected to be favourable to the Conservative party.

I fear I have omitted some points on which you would like information and have included others I might properly have omitted.

Any further questions you like to ask I will gladly do my best to answer. Under Sir W. Jenner's advice I had arranged to go to Newbury at the end of this week but the critical state of affairs has induced me to postpone my journey for the present.

Believe me to be,

Yours very sincerely

John Manners

Colonel Lindsay's reply to foregoing.

Balmoral Castle

June 19 1884

Dear Lord John

Many thanks for yr. elaborate and intelligible reply: it was read by HM with great interest, who quite comprehends now the condition of affairs,

which though an anxious one is nevertheless hopeful – which is as much as to say, there is life in the old hound yet –

Such a document will be a Great Comfort to – and no wonder.

You answered to the helm beautifully.

believe me

Sincerely yours

C. H. Lindsay

June 14th. 1885. I resume these jottings under very remarkable circumstances. On the 8th. an Amendment to the 2nd reading of the Budget bill drawn – partly by Hicks Beach, partly by myself was carried by a majority of 12, and on the 9th. Mr Gladstone & his colleagues resigned. That afternoon Northcote and 4 or 5 of our front bench held a hasty consultation in his room at the House, and came to the conclusion that we could not shrink from the task of forming a Government, if called upon by the Queen.

On Thursday 11th Salisbury lunched with us, and had a long and confidential conversation with me. In the event of the Queen's asking him to form a Government he said he should stipulate that he should be Foreign Secretary as well as Prime Minister, proposing that Northcote should be First Lords and lead the Commons, Cross to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gibson Home Secretary, R. Churchill Indian, Beach Colonial Secretary, Carnarvon Lord Lieutenant. He then, after discussing minor men & appointments asked me to consider whether in dealing with Irish problem that country could be divided for local & private bill purposes into its 4 Provinces, with a central Court of Appeal. He had up to then had no communication with the Queen, but that evening he was summoned to Balmoral.

The next day I walked with Northcote across the Parks from the House to his daughter in law's, and discussed the position freely with him. He appeared content, or rather resigned to Salisbury's supremacy, but suggested, what had escaped me with respect to the cardinal feature of the proposed arrangement that the rule laid down by the Queen in the Palmerston-Russell dispute that the Foreign Secretary should submit all important Dispatches to the Prime Minister would be nullified by it, & that if he as leader of the H. of Commons was to be answerable for the Foreign policy in that house the despatches must be submitted to him: he also dissented from the idea of making Cross Chancellor of the Exchequer, preferring Stanley for that post.

On Monday the 15th. I was summoned to Arlington Street, where assembled nearly all our old colleagues, except Stanley (in Lancashire) but not Randolph Churchill. Salisbury put to each in turn the question accept or refuse office. We all said accept except Beach who to my astonishment gave a variety of reasons for refusing, and suggested that Salisbury had not sufficiently urged on the Queen the necessity of forcing Gladstone to reconsider his resignation. Salisbury produced telegram which the Queen had sent, at his instance, to Gladstone with that object, and G's telegram in reply. The latter

asserted that Salisbury had announced his readiness to accept, and insinuated that the Queen was bound to retain his services. Though we felt that Gladstone had mistated the case we all, except Beach, admitted he could not be forced back, and Salisbury ended discussion by declaring that in honour he could not abandon the Queen, and that if he had to do so owing to the desertion of his colleagues he should abandon public life. The explanation of R. Churchill's absence was that he declined to take office with several of our former colleagues, and insisted on a reconstruction after his own ideals. This was felt to be preposterous.

Shortly afterwards in the House the 4th party broke loose and denounced as unconstitutional the conduct of the H. of Lords in inserting Registration acceleration clauses in the Redistribution Bill. The Government & Northcote, having explained that this had been done on Salisbury's suggestion, Beach supported Wolff and Churchill, and divided with them for the adjournment. Gibson then informed me that Churchill was absolutely impracticable, and was determined to prevent the formation of any Government except one of his own. He urged me to see Salisbury at once and advise him to send for Churchill & Beach early in the morning, and to make them come to a definite conclusion. This I did, and on returning to the House at 8 o'clock found Northcote almost alone on the bench. He confided to me that very possibly it was the last time he should occupy it, as he was asked to take a Peerage and an office in order that Beach might lead the Commons.

On the 16th. it appeared that my visit to Arlington St. had succeeded for on calling there this morning at Salisbury's request he told me Randolph had accepted the India Office with no other stipulation than that Gorst should be Judge Advocate. He requested me to see Northcote, and to break to him his wish that the Peerage arrangement should be made with the Colonies as his Office. This unpleasant task I performed as well as I could, and nothing could be more admirable, or amiable than Northcote's reception of my message. Having informed Salisbury of my success I heard no more of Cabinet making that day; but on going to Arlington Street on

Wednesday June 17th. where the full Cabinet (except Giffard, Ld. Chancellor) were assembled I soon learned that fresh troubles were in store for us. After we had all agreed that Salisbury should inform the Queen of our acceptance conditional on Gladstone promising to help us in obtaining priority for Supply & Ways & Means our business being at an end I patted Beach on the shoulder & expressed my satisfaction at his leadership. To my amazement he said nothing was settled, that Northcote was dissatisfied, that he, Beach, felt he ought not to be first Lord & that he was willing to take any other small office, or even none at all.

As we were breaking up Northcote asked me to read some letters he wished to show me, which I read in the library. The first was from him to Salisbury expressing his disinclination to accept the Colonies, or any office except that of First Lord: the 2nd. from Salisbury reminded him

that the first suggestion of a Peerage came from himself, and that he earnestly desired to do nothing which should hurt his feelings, &c. The 3rd. was a long reply from Northcote insisting that he would appear to be sacrificed to R. Churchill & H. Beach, and that after their conduct & vote on Monday night he could not consent to occupy a post inferior to theirs: that he did not object to be second in the Government, but that the slight proposed to be put upon him was too great to be borne, & that he had rather take a Peerage & retire from official life. I pointed out to him that the arrangement to which he objected had no reference to R. Churchill, and that we all would regard his defection as well nigh fatal. He seemed quite broken down, and miserable. When he left I scribbled a line to Salisbury, & suggested the interference of the Queen for I perceived in what Northcote said a certain feeling that She had not behaved kindly or confidentially towards him. Salisbury saw me at once, & we discussed the dilemma. If Northcote is now made First Lord there is no great place for Beach without dispossessing some important man. I urged him to press the Queen to see Northcote, and subsequently charged Henry to tell Salisbury that if the Post Master's place would ease his difficulties to regard it at his disposal.

My suggestion was adopted: on the 18th. the Queen wrote a charming letter to Northcote offering him an Earldom, and Salisbury proposed to him to take the First Lordship of the Treasury with which offers N was as he told me, more than content; so that when we met on the 19th we were united & cheerful. A fresh difficulty however then appeared in the shape of Gladstone's answer to our demand, which he declined to comply with, adding however that he thought he could convince S of the reasonableness of his view. We decided unanimously that we could not go on with G's vague assurances, and agreed that S should at once inform the Queen of Giffard's & Gibson's opinion that if the Redistribution bill passed into law she would be deprived of the power of dissolution. Yesterday the 19th. further communications of an unsatisfactory character passed between the 2 Prime Ministers; but in Gladstone's was a statement that he thought he could convince Salisbury of the reasonableness of his view. This appeared to me to mean business, and this view was subsequently strengthened by a remark to Northcote at the House by G to the effect that he thought a personal interview between himself and Salisbury would bring about a satisfactory result. G spoke in the House with good temper & fairness.

At Salisbury's interview with the Queen in discussing the division of business between the Prime Minister & the First Lord she asked with whom would rest the advice as to Ecclesiastical appointments. Salisbury replied he presumed with the Prime Minister. The Queen hinted that she was not likely to be pleased with his nominations; upon which he said 'oh, then Ma'am, give them to Northcote': but rejoined the Queen 'I probably shan't be better pleased with his' –

Saturday June 20th. Understanding from Henry that we should not be wanted this afternoon I went with Janetta to the Concert by the Blind at the new Battersea Park

Palace: coming away we were met by a servant with a summons to Arlington Street: driving straight thither I arrived as the Council was breaking up. It had been held to consider Gladstone's reply which was vague, but as I thought not unsatisfactory. Salisbury went down to Hatfield afterwards, and on entering Willis' rooms for Hogg's annual Metropolitan Board dinner a couple of hours later I was saluted by the news that all was over, and the late Government back again in office. I made a debonair speech in returning thanks for H. of Commons in order to mark my disbelief in such rumours, & on going to Lady Borthwick's party afterwards (where the same story was told and credited) adopted the same line. The situation however is becoming ludicrous.

June 22nd. Last night the opposite note was brought to me in bed.

Hatfield House,
Hatfield,
Herts.
June 21 85

Private

My dear John Manners

If you happen to be able to look in on me between 12 and 2 Monday, I should like to show you a letter. It is not a regular meeting – but concerns our business of yesterday.

Ever yours truly
Salisbury

On going this morning to Arlington Street I found Beach with Lord S: presently Richmond & Cranbrook joined us. The object of the meeting was to read & discuss a letter from the Queen in answer to S's communication of Saturday. In it H. M's begged us not to desert her, pointed out that Gladstone's language was susceptible of a more favourable interpretation, and offered to express in a letter to be made public that she attached that meaning to his letter. Upon this I asked if any answer had been received from G to our last communication. Upon which S pulled it out of his pocket & read it. Virtually it quite justified the Queen's view, & Beach who had hitherto declared himself opposed to proceeding further in spite of the Queen's letter yielded & admitted that if G permitted the purport of it to be made public we might undertake the task. Sir H. Ponsonby who called at that moment went off to ask G, & returned with his permission to treat his letter as part of the correspondence. In it was a remarkable statement as to the mala fides of Russia in the Afghan business. The Rubicon is therefore passed, & we are virtually in Office.

June 25th. All the new Cabinet assembled in Arlington Street for the purpose of formally ratifying the decision of the previous day, and yesterday we went down to Windsor to kiss hands. It was a hot Midsummer's day, and the view over the Terrace garden into the Park beyond, where Haymaking was in progress through the open windows was exquisite and refreshing. After we had all been sworn we kissed hands for our respective offices, some of us, myself among them, singly. I shall never forget the Queen's face as she met me & came forward to receive my homage; it was radiant with pleasure, and full of

sympathy. The Prince of Wales was the only witness.

Under what circumstance are we proposing to introduce a Reform Bill?

Early in the year we laid before Parliament a measure the distinctive feature of which, uniformity of franchise, and the principle that the vote should be given for the locality in which the qualification lies, caused the retirement of Mayo, Henley and Walpole. It was against these features that the Resolution of Lord John Russell and the speech of Lord Palmerston were also directed.

In consequence of the success of Lord John's resolution Parliament was dissolved in order to test not the opinion of the country on Reform, but it's confidence in the Government generally. It is natural and proper therefore that the new Parliament should express it's confidence or no confidence in the Government.

Under these circumstances at home, and with a War of gigantic proportions, threatening as we were told by Lord Malmesbury yesterday to envelope all Europe, we are to decide whether we should introduce a Reform Bill into the House of Commons in the middle of June, or not. The main, indeed the only reason assigned in favour of that course is that if we do not introduce such a measure Lord John Russell will either do so, or move a vote of censure on us – The object and result of either course being identical they may be considered together –

It is proposed then in reality to introduce a Reform Bill not for it's own sake, nor because we approve of it's provisions, or hope to pass it, but as a means for check-mating Lord John. But is this a right, or wise course to take? Can we avow it to our supporters, the great majority of whom I believe will require explanations to be given for the unexpected and unnecessary (as they will think) introduction of a Reform Bill this summer –

But it is urged that in no other way can Lord John's assault be resisted. My answer is that if he has, and we have not the confidence of the House, he will readily find some other crucial test, and that if we have, and he has not the confidence of the House, we shall defeat him on that ground of attack as easily as on any other; for this reason that the battle will be not on Reform, but on Confidence in the Government.

Whether he proceed by vote of censure, or bill our answer is the same: we adhere to the necessity of Reform; we intend to introduce a Bill at the commencement of next Session; the state of domestic and foreign affairs rendering it inexpedient, if not impossible for us to introduce one now with the hope of passing it into law this year; if therefore you have confidence in us reject this vote, or this bill as the case may be, and enable us to put the national defences on a safe and satisfactory footing.

If the House support us in that course we should then have time to prepare a well considered measure, which our recent discussions have convinced me we cannot hope now to produce.

If on the other hand the House supports Lord John it is clear to me that it would do so on any other pretext, and it is better to be destroyed by our opponents, than by attempting to propitiate them to alienate any considerable section of our friends.

Teacher and Social Worker – an inevitable conflict

Ray Honeyford

The teacher and the social worker often clash. Why? Basically, I suspect, because they espouse conflicting theories of the nature of man. The teacher is optimistic; the social worker expects the worst. Typically, the teacher makes demands. He expects the best in work and behaviour; sets standards to which the child is expected to progress; is sceptical of excuses. He respects the child's right to be wrong. If he did not, he would feel the child had been reduced to the level of moral automaton. He encourages aspiration, nurtures proper ambition, rewards effort. Above all he seeks to transmit the necessity to pursue excellence. The social worker is a professional provider of excuses. He dispenses alibis to the lazy, the loutish and the confused. He consistently mistakes sentimentality for sentiment; indulgence for concern. Whereas the teacher insists the child is to be seen as an individual with mind and will, the social worker perceives only a victim of circumstance. The teacher invests the child with personal attributes such as character, personality, imagination; and daily watches him shape and mould the world to his own, individual blue-print. The social worker, product of the generalisations of sociology, employs abstractions to explain behaviour: class, disadvantage, racism, alienation are all grist to the social worker's determinist mill. The child exists only as the product of huge impersonal forces. The child *can* progress, but not yet. The iniquities of history must first be expunged; only when we have delivered the social, rationalist nirvana will we produce the child who is good.

Nowhere are these opposing perspectives more clearly seen than in the field of social class. The agent of state welfare invariably condemns the school for being 'middle class'; for reflecting the values of the articulate, the responsible, the ambitious. The artisan's son is thereby alienated. The school must replace high culture with the curriculum of the proletariat – bingo, perhaps, the football pools and earnest study of the tabloids. The realities of inner-city high rise living must be brought into the timetable. Lenin's words 'Morality must be subordinate to the class struggle' become a guiding principle. There must be stories of broken marriages, unmarried mothers, hire purchase debts and eviction; of big brother in prison and sister eloped with a black man. And all must be transmitted in appropriate language – the argot of the gutter. There must be 'understanding' for thugs and discipline eschewed as a class-ridden irrelevance. The teacher knows better. He knows from direct experience, that no one despises such destructive claptrap more than the aspiring working class parent – who, quite correctly, perceives the instrumental power of submission to the

work ethic. Discipline, properly understood, is a recurring theme in the vocabulary of all caring parents – of all who possess the simple natural desire to do their best for their offspring. Far from rejecting discipline, the wise parent grasps its indissoluble links with real learning. This has nothing to do with class. It is through discipline, i.e. the regular submission to study and practice, that the real mastery which is true freedom is attained. This is a truth as effectively grasped by the humble, unlettered craftsman through the ages as by the cultured and privileged. It is a truth about life.

It is true of course, that in modern times the middle classes have had a clearer grasp of this than the industrial working class. But the answer is not, as so many social workers appear to think, to despise the possessors of wisdom. Better, surely, to spread the word around. The working classes do not need either patronage or alibis. They need, and deserve, constructive criticism for taking far too long to support their children in achieving the school's humane goals. They also need guidance to change their ways. And that is one way that social workers could really help. A kick in the parental pants would do far more good for little Johnny than condemning the school for expecting the best of him. I have seen far too many able working class children fail because of their irresponsible parents' failure to cooperate with the school. Such parents have frequently been indulged, if not positively encouraged, by the family's resident social worker, who, by shifting the burden of guilt from its real location, provides the feckless and the supine with the sickening contemporary mythology of self-justification. Such an approach compounds the error by providing a spurious defence for irresponsibility. In fact, such parents are much more likely to respond to the public disapproval of enlightened neighbours than to the alibis provided by social workers.

The tragedy of post war state schooling, of course, is the rise of the teacher with the values, outlook and vocabulary of the social worker. He, the left-wing radical teacher, has, without doubt, been the covert enemy of the child he professes to care for; the enemy of self-help for the working-class child.

But such a teacher not only betrays children, he betrays his own profession, which makes at least some pretence to being a qualified body of people. A very high proportion of so-called social workers are not qualified at all, and many who appear to be incompetent. According to recent research by the 'professor of social work' at East Anglia University, Martin Davies, a significant proportion of social work students passed as competent by their teachers are, in reality, failed candidates. Moreover, the

same source reveals that 59 per cent of trainees believe a higher proportion should be failed, and 46 per cent agreed that they knew someone in their year who was generally regarded as incompetent; and 71 per cent of non-graduates accepted that a certificate had been awarded to incompetent practitioners. And yet such second-raters are not only passed out by British Universities; they have, over the past three decades, had considerable influence in the state education system.

Is it any wonder that so many genuine, committed teachers react with either revulsion or derision at the very

mention of social workers?

The malign influence of the ideology of social work on education was well stated many years ago by that great and perceptive commentator, Jacques Barzun, when he said 'The notion of helping a child has in the United States displaced that of teaching him. Anyone who tries to preserve the distinction is obviously unhelpful, and is at once known for a declared enemy of youth. The truth is that even apart from its hostility to Intellect, systematic coddling is as dangerous as it is impertinent.' To 'United States' it is now necessary to add 'Great Britain'.

Thinkers of the Left: Louis Althusser

Roger Scruton

The left-wing enthusiasm which swept through institutions of learning in the sixties was one of the most efficacious intellectual revolutions in recent history, and commanded a support among those affected by it which has seldom been matched by any revolution in the world of politics. For a blissful decade, academics and students swooned with fantasies of liberation, jettisoning their traditional disciplines, and forging new ties, new institutions, and new orthodoxies out of the raw material of knowledge. This was the age of 'intellectual production', in which the identity of the student, as honorary member of the working class, was established – precisely when the real working class was disappearing from history, and could be guaranteed survival only in this theatrical form.

While every revolution is essentially unquestioning – being a commotion caused when new convictions pour into a vacuum that can no longer be endured – it is rare that a revolution so completely displays the fact. This was a revolution conducted in laboratory conditions, with hardly a step being taken off the campus. For the first time it was possible to observe the 'revolutionary consciousness' from close to, while running no risk of violence other than the violence of words. It was possible, in particular, to observe how quickly and adroitly the left-wing message was encased in dogma, and how energetically the new revolutionaries went about the business of inventing spurious questions, barren controversies, and arcane pedantries, with which to divert all intellectual enquiry away from the fundamental questions that had – from emotional necessity – been begged in their favour. This 'theologising' of left-wing literature was conducted in England through the pages of the *New Left Review*, under the impressive editorship of Perry Anderson, and also through the Review's associated publishing houses, which began to bring out translations of the new continental Marxists: Adorno, Horkheimer, Gramsci, Goldmann, Brus and many others.

One writer in particular stands out among these figures, as testimony to the heroic capacity of the new revolutionaries for virtuous boredom. The young people of the sixties would willingly subject themselves to superhuman doses of gobbledegook, provided only that it served to confirm and deepen their sense that there could

be no alternative to Marxism, and that it was Marxism which dictated the language in which every 'viable alternative' is expressed. The writer in question is Louis Althusser, in whose work there emerges for the first time, the new species of Marxist dogma: a theory, or rather meta-theory, which iterates in mesmerising paragraphs the *form* of a dogma, while contriving meticulously to conceal its content. Such meta-dogma, as one might call it, pretends to a methodological sophistication which places it beyond any criticism from standpoints other than its own.

In examining the writings of Althusser, we shall be exploring one of the most important expressions of revolutionary theology, and a model of the new revolutionary language, in which no question can be posed, and no answer offered, except in terms that are barely intelligible to those who have not renounced their capacity to think outside them. In short, we shall be confronting a kind of mental disease, a version of Wittgenstein's 'bewitchment of the intelligence by means of language'. Lest the reader should doubt the need for this confrontation, it is worth mentioning that Althusser's influence in contemporary Marxist circles is unrivalled, that his mantic writings remain standard university texts in many departments of philosophy and politics, and that even in 1978 he was considered sufficiently important to be the object of a two hundred page polemic by E. P. Thompson (*The Poverty of Theory*). Furthermore, Althusser's writings exemplify, in their own peculiar but richly instructive manner, an evasion which has proved decisive in the creation of left-wing orthodoxy. They neither engage with, nor recognise the existence of, the criticisms of Marxism that have been offered by those outside the Marxist camp, nor do they acknowledge any real tradition of social and political thinking which does not begin, at its earliest, with Hegel, or which does not bear, from its inception, the stamp of the Marxian dogma towards which it tends. About every serious objection to the theory and practice of Marxism, Althusser remains silent. But his silence is eloquent, and repays the effort of interpretation.

Before beginning, it is useful to consider an example of Althusser's silence; that concerning the labour theory of value. Althusser is not alone in believing this to be one of

the major theoretical tenets of *Das Kapital*, and in recognising that its implications for economics, politics, philosophy and history are as far-reaching as the implications of anything in Marx. If it were true, the theory would transform all social, economic and historical knowledge. However, it seems to be false. Already, in contemporary reviews of Marx's great work, the early marginalists were pointing to its defects. To their criticisms were added those of the Austrian school, of von Böhm-Bawerk and von Mises. It seems, for example, that the theory cannot account for scarcity rents, and that it depends crucially upon a reduction of qualitative differences of labour to quantitative differences – a reduction that could be carried out only by abandoning the terms of the theory. And for the past fifty years it has been widely accepted that it is impossible to construct a theory of price (or 'exchange-value') which – like the labour theory – makes no reference to demand as an independent variable. In almost no economics faculty in the West is the labour theory now taught as a defensible explanation of price, and even in the East what is taught in its name is widely recognised to be only the appearance of a theory. There have, of course, been those who have wished to defend the theory. Economists such as Morishima, following the lead of Piero Sraffa in *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* (1960), have tried to resuscitate some of the central tenets of Marxian political economy. Again, however, it has been powerfully argued (by Ian Steedman, *Marx after Sraffa*, 1977), that the valid points of Marxian economics can be used precisely to dismiss the labour theory of value.

Althusser praises the labour theory, and purports to be persuaded by it. What then does he make of all that copious and challenging literature? The answer is, precisely nothing. Since it begins and ends on a note of conclusive refutation, Althusser pretends that this literature does not exist. Instead of addressing it, he prefers to take issue, in impenetrable side-swipes, with his fellow dogmatists – Della Volpe and his school, the Soviet theorist Il'ienkov, and 'numerous scholars in the socialist countries'. (*RC*, p. 77¹). He does not pause to tell us what these writers say, but sets them before us like enigmatic stage props, to be interpreted at will, or in accordance with a drama of which he alone is the central actor. The following is typical:

It is no slander on Rosenthal's work to reckon it partly beside the point here, since it merely paraphrases the immediate language with which Marx designates his object and his theoretical operations, without supposing that Marx's very language might often be open to this question. (*RC*, p. 77).

Which question? You will search the text in vain for an answer. The sentence is merely an airy gesture, pretending to an authority which is beyond its intellectual competence, and in any case unconcerned by the possibilities of disagreement. For the writer who has chosen to discuss only with his friends, such gestures are more like comradely insults thrown across a meeting-hall, than real signals of opposition.

Disagreement, when it comes, takes the form of total hostility, directed towards an unnamed but crudely characterised enemy:

Knowing that *Capital* was under a radical ideological-political edict imposed by bourgeois economists and historians for eighty years, we can imagine the fate reserved for it by academic philosophy! (*RC*, p. 76)

To which the correct response is: nonsense! The close reading of *Capital* by those 'bourgeois' economists is precisely what has led to the refutation of so many of its major tenets. For Althusser, such a truth is unmentionable, and must be kept at bay, silenced by a ritual cursing. The entire pressure of his style is towards the belief that Marx's texts have a sacral character, and can be neither discussed nor understood, except by those who already – by whatever act of faith – accept their main conclusions. How else are we to interpret passages such as the following? –

. . . this study (of *Capital*) . . . is only possible given a constant and double reference: the identification and knowledge of the object of Marxist philosophy at work in *Capital* presupposes the identification and knowledge of the specific difference of the object of *Capital* itself – which in turn presupposes the recourse to Marxist philosophy and demands its development. It is not possible to read *Capital* properly without the help of Marxist philosophy, which must itself be read, and simultaneously, in *Capital* itself. (*RC*, p. 75).

It is difficult to understand the meaning, but not at all difficult to discern the purpose, of a passage such as that. The first sentence enshrouds the reader in darkness. It seems to accuse him of a lack of penetration; at the same time – with its technicalities and its aura of argument – it promises an eventual illumination. The second sentence provides the 'conclusion' which the reader is supposed to receive as 'justified'. In plain English, the conclusion is this: you can understand *Capital* only if you already believe it. That is the criterion of religious faith, which is locked inviolably within the single thought of its own validity – the thought that 'I understand, because I believe'. For the scientific mind, belief is the consequence and not the cause of understanding. But it is precisely the scientific failure of Marxism which necessitates Althusser's enterprise – that of the sacralisation of Marx's texts, and the transformation of their content into revealed dogma.

The stylistic peculiarity of Althusser is indicated in those last two words. For Althusser dogma is 'revealed' by being concealed. It is the act of concealment, within intellectual structures of impenetrable opacity, which guarantees the truth of every revelation. The axioms of Marxist theory appear in Althusser's prose like blinding flashes of total darkness, within clouds of grey on grey. This 'darkness visible' is like a photographic negative, and Althusser intimates that there is a process that will

reverse it, changing dark into light, and nonsense into sense. Read *Capital*, he insists, look on this text, look intently at it, hold it upside down, sideways, high in the air, but don't let your eyes stray from it. Then and only then, will the great reversal occur.

At the same time, it is not the reversal that is required of the believer, but the 'negative revelation' which precedes it, and which effects the sacralisation of Marx's text. The true revelation consists in the *credo quia absurdum* of the devout Althusserian, who sees darkness everywhere and then turns to the Marxian text, in order to convert this darkness into light.

Naturally, none of this would be capable of attracting a serious following, were it not possible to glimpse the shadowy forms of theories and attitudes in the pervading dark. Althusser supports his metadogma, therefore, with what is, in effect, the disembodied form of a Marxian theory. This is presented in *For Marx* (1965), and subsequently 'assumed' – in so far as anything less than everything is assumed – in the work from which I have so far quoted, *Reading Capital* (1968). It is important to understand the nature and purpose of this metatheory, if we are to grasp the importance that Althusser was to assume for the student radicals who studied his texts.

Like many communist intellectuals, Althusser was dismayed at the interpretation which the younger generation of the sixties had begun to place on the early works of Marx – works which had been recently disinterred after a century of neglect. He saw this new interpretation as a threat to orthodoxy, or rather to the meta-orthodoxy which ought to be the assumed stance in all serious Marxist discussion. He was particularly opposed to the re-writing of historical materialism and the theory of value in the terms suggested by the 'Marxist humanism' of the 1844 manuscripts. Since the publication of *Grundrisse*, it has become widely accepted that Marx himself would perhaps have countenanced such a re-writing, and would certainly not have been totally opposed to it. But such a suggestion is intolerable to Althusser, who has in consequence totally removed himself from the literature which suggests it.

In answer to the young humanists, Althusser argued for an 'epistemological break' between two distinct phases of Marx's writing, marked by two separate 'problematics'. These technical expressions – the one taken from Gaston Bachelard, the other from Jacques Martin – should not be taken too seriously. Althusser means that the early Marx, and the later Marx, have separate intellectual concerns, the first being 'ideological', the second 'scientific' (*FM*, p. 32–3). In order that the reader should greet this unsurprising (though contentious) interpretation with due solemnity, Althusser at once conceals it, incorporating the technical terms (which he never explains) within paragraphs of stunning incantatory jargon:

Understanding an ideological argument implies, at the level of ideology itself, simultaneous, conjoint, knowledge of the *ideological field* in which a thought emerges and grows; and the exposure of the internal unity of this thought: *its problematic*. Knowledge of the

ideological field itself presupposes knowledge of the problematics compounded or opposed in it. This interrelation of the particular problematic of the thought of the individual under consideration with the particular problematics of the thoughts belonging to the ideological field allows of a decision as to its author's specific difference, i.e., *whether a new meaning has emerged*. (*FM*, p. 70).

The passage perfectly illustrates the ponderous, suspicion-laden circularity of Althusser's prose, which goes round and round monotonously on its own heels, like a lunatic trapped in an imaginary cage. The content of the passage can be summarised in a few words: to understand an argument is to see its meaning. The endless circle that is built from that tautology has however, a mesmerising quality, which may be mistaken for profundity.

From such unpromising beginnings, Althusser advances towards his 'interpretation' of historical materialism, presented simultaneously as true to Marx's intentions, and true to human history. Like many continental Marxists, who have remained largely insulated from the discoveries of modern logic, Althusser phrases the theory of history in 'dialectical' terms, believing that it represents the true 'inversion' of Hegel's metaphysics, the final and irreversible 'setting of Hegel upon his feet'. Althusser recognises that there is no explicit reliance upon 'dialectics' in the later Marx, but makes up for this by a dark reference to Lenin's notebooks, and by copious praise of Mao Tse Tung's *On Contradiction*. All change, it seems, is the outcome of 'contradictions', which emerge within the various structures of society. These contradictions may appear as 'class struggles', or as intellectual and ideological confrontations. There is no *one* level at which they emerge and exert their transforming force: contradictions appear at every level and in every guise. What then remains of the Marxian thesis, that base determines superstructure – i.e., that transformations in the economic structure of society are the motive force of transformations everywhere?

Two half-baked emendations to Marx's original hypothesis have proved useful in reconciling it with the recalcitrant facts of human history. The first is the suggestion made by Engels, that the economic factor does not determine social development, but merely determines it 'in the last instance'; the second is the theory alluded to by Marx, and proposed formally by Trotsky as the 'law of uneven development'. The first is tantamount to the admission that history is *not* generated by economic change, the phrase 'in the last instance' being no more than an apology for a theory that has never been provided. The second likewise admits the non-conformity of historical processes to the Marxian pattern, and argues that this is because several transitions in economic structure may take place simultaneously. This is little more than a Ptolemaic gesture, an invocation of 'economic epicycles', which may, when discovered, serve to protect the fundamental hypothesis from the evidence which presently seems to refute it.

Both catch phrases – 'in the last instance', and 'uneven

development' – recur persistently in Althusser's meta-theory. According to Althusser, the motor of history is 'structural causation'. The 'principal' or 'general contradiction' (that which is effective 'in the last instance') is the one identified by Marx, and exemplified in the conflict between the forces and relations of production. However, this principal contradiction is inseparable from the total structure of society. The social body contains other contradictions, existing at several distinct levels within the superstructure, and interacting systematically, as they strive to align themselves. A vague suggestion is made that contradictions might be 'passed' from one level to another, like geological faults. Because the various contradictions develop unevenly, it is possible that an economically backward country might present the sudden confluence of contradictions necessary for successful revolution (the case of Russia). Althusser calls this 'fusion of accumulated contradictions' 'over-determination', borrowing a term from Freud. Thus revolution – and indeed any decisive social change – must be seen as the result of many confluent factors, each determining society in the same direction and towards the same total crisis:

... the whole Marxist revolutionary experience shows that, if the general contradiction (. . . between forces of production and relations of production . . .) is sufficient to define the situation when revolution is the 'task of the day', it cannot of its own simple, direct power induce a revolutionary situation, nor *a fortiori* a situation of revolutionary rupture and the triumph of revolution . . . (FM, p. 99)

It is in such passages of comparative lucidity that Althusser betrays his real meaning. At the same time he reveals that his metatheory establishes precisely nothing, and is indeed not a theory at all, so much as a bundle of incantations. If the 'principal contradiction' fails to bring about revolution, but simply makes revolution 'the task of the day', then what *actually* happens is the upshot of human decision. History may proceed in any way, depending upon the aims, strengths and methods of the protagonists. The 'principal contradiction' is not really a contradiction at all (otherwise it *would* cause the anticipated collapse); it is merely a problem with which people – rulers and ruled alike – have to deal.

Such a 'theory' has many features which ought to make it unacceptable to a Marxist. For one thing, it is tantamount to the *denial* of historical materialism (and how many times does one find these so-called amendments to historical materialism which are really, like Gramsci's theory of hegemony, particular ways of denying it?). Historical materialism requires, after all, that the 'principal contradiction' should provide an *explanation* of the contradictions within the 'superstructure'. Otherwise what remains of the distinction between superstructure and base? More importantly however, Althusser's 'interpretation' makes the theory of history irrefutable. The theory becomes compatible with every course of events, and therefore explanatory of none. It is the mere 'form' of a theory, useful for its incidental terms ('contradiction',

'overdetermination', 'revolution'), which serve to focus a particular *attitude* to events, but useless for its predictive power. It simply has no predictive power. But, in another sense, that is precisely why it is so useful. It permits the 'believer' to turn his mind away from the facts of history, save only those which seem to nourish a pre-existing revolutionary fervour. The theory of history has become a theology of history, an 'hypothesis' which, being compatible with every course of events, replaces the 'hypothesis' of which Laplace had no need.

But, lest the drama of accumulated contradictions should appear too metaphysically shallow to attract a congregation, Althusser subjects his metatheory to concealment – to the process of 'negative revelation' described above. He takes the key technicalities, and transforms them into concentrated nodes of dazzling darkness. The following passage illustrates the process at work:

Overdetermination designates the following essential quality of contradiction: the reflection in contradiction itself of its conditions of existence, that is, of its situation in the structure in dominance of the complex whole. This is not a univocal 'situation'. It is not just its situation '*in principle*' (the one it occupies in the hierarchy of instances in relation to the determinant instance: in society, the economy) nor just its situation '*in fact*' (whether, in the phase under consideration, it is dominant or subordinate) but *the relation of this situation in fact to this situation in principle*, that is, the very relation which makes of this situation in fact a '*variation*' of the – '*invariant*' – structure, in dominance, of the totality. (FM, p. 209).

There are, however, critical ideas which are indispensable to the claim to be offering a version of historical materialism. Althusser treats these ideas slightly differently. He 'hardens' them by immersing them in emphatic prose, and crying out, 'let *this* not be doubted'. Here is his treatment of 'in the last instance':

Elsewhere, I have shown that in order to conceive this 'dominance' of a structure over the other structures in the unity of a conjuncture it is necessary to refer to the principle of the determination 'in the last instance' of the non-economic structures by the economic structure; and that this 'determination in the last instance' is an absolute precondition for the necessity and intelligibility of the displacements of the structures in the hierarchy of effectivity, or of the displacement of 'dominance' between the structured levels of the whole; that only this 'determination in the last instance' makes it possible to escape the arbitrary relativism of observable displacements by giving these displacements the necessity of a function. (RC, p. 99)

None of which, of course, goes the slightest way towards telling us what 'in the last instance' really means. We can ascribe to Althusser a perverted form of Wittgenstein's imperative: 'Don't look for the meaning, look for the use!'

And the use is what I have called 'metadogma' – the form of dogma, without specific content.

Religious belief possesses the structure of Pascal's wager, and this is one way by which we recognise it. It postulates an inestimable benefit to the believer, and then, by a piece of deception, persuades him that this benefit is sufficient reason (and not just sufficient motive) to believe. With canny foresight, Althusser follows the lead set by Gramsci, in laying down terms for the revolutionary wager. By believing Althusser, you join the elect: you, the urban intellectual, are joined in 'solidarity' with the oppressed.

It is a well known difficulty for dialectical dogmatics that, taken seriously, it seems to deny the efficacy of intellectual labour, to dismiss it as a mere epiphenomenon, a nebulous offshoot of processes over which it asserts no influence or control. It is of the first importance, therefore, to return 'intellectual labour' to its place among the 'material conditions' of existence, so making it a genuine 'motive force' in history, and distinguishing it from the mere 'ideology' of the bourgeois enemy. To cut a long story short, it is necessary to set up a distinction between 'science' and 'ideology'. For the dialectical dogmatist, the first describes my thought, the second yours. The first is necessarily Marxist (for only Marxism penetrates the veil of ideology), the second is necessarily not. The first belongs to the 'material' conditions of production, and can be called 'theoretical practice'; the second is an offshoot of processes which render it inherently false.

A scrupulous Marxist would wonder how far the idea of 'theoretical practice' is compatible with historical materialism, according to which 'life determines consciousness, not consciousness life' (*The German Ideology*). In fact, by bending the Marxian categories to the task of dignifying the role of the intellectual, we inevitably sever them from their explanatory purpose. But for Althusser this is of no consequence, since the severance has already occurred. The interest of 'theoretical practice' is two-fold. It situates intellectual activity within the process of production (Althusser therefore prefers to speak of 'intellectual production'), so uniting the intellectual with the toiling proletariat. It also provides a precise equivalent of religious faith. As in Pascal's wager, believing becomes a kind of doing, and in this doing lies the moral salvation – the inner identity with the forces of revolution – for which the intellectual craves.

The doctrine of faith begins with deceptive simplicity:

... what do we gain by this 'speculative' investigation that we do not possess already?

One sentence is enough to answer this question: Lenin's 'Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary practice'. Generalising it: theory is essential to practice, to the forms of practice that it helps bring to birth or to grow, as well as to the practice it is the theory of. But the transparency of this sentence is not enough; we must also know its *titles to validity*, so we must pose the question: what are we to understand by *theory*, if it is to be essential to *practice*? (*FM*, p. 166)

That paragraph shows Althusser's thought marking time, in expectation of a new consignment of technicalities. As he recognises, 'the transparency of this sentence is not enough'. The consignment soon arrives, and enables Althusser to darken his terms:

I shall call Theory (with a capital T), general theory, that is, the Theory of practice in general, itself elaborated on the basis of the Theory of existing theoretical practices (of the sciences), which transforms into 'knowledges' (scientific truths) the ideological product of existing 'empirical' practices (the concrete activity of men). This Theory is the materialist *dialectic* which is none other than dialectical materialism. (*FM*, p. 168).

Such passages – received by Althusserians as introducing an important notion of 'theoretical levels' – display the essential vacuity of Althusser's thought. 'This theory is the materialist *dialectic* which is none other than dialectical materialism'. The neophyte, contemplating such utterances, repeats them to himself in a spirit of awe. They have the same vertiginous effect as Stalin's pleonasm, 'The theories of Marx are true because they are correct', which was once so important an incantation in the dark night of communist doubt.² The more tautological the utterance, the more does it seem to conceal, and the more effectively does it induce the state of spiritual readiness which is the prelude to faith. After a few pages of dense circularities, the reader is finally brought – by an accumulation of non-contradictions – to the crisis of belief:

The only Theory able to raise, if not to pose, the essential question of the status of these disciplines, to criticise ideology in all its guises, including the disguises of technical practice as sciences, is the Theory of theoretical practice (as distinct from ideological practice): the materialist dialectic or dialectical materialism, the conception of the Marxist dialectic in its *specificity*. (*FM*, pp. 171–2)

To raise (if not to pose) a better question: what in fact are we being invited to believe? The Althusserian version of dialectical materialism is, as we have seen, no more than the form of a theory, and the emphatic conclusions are no more than metadogmas, devoid of specific content. The curious reader should here turn to *Reading Capital*, where he finds:

... *theoretical practice* is its own criterion, and contains in itself definite protocols with which to *validate* the quality of its product, i.e., the criteria of the scientificity of the products of scientific practice. (*RC*, p. 59).

In other words, even the invocation of theoretical practice does not permit Althusser to descend from the 'meta' level, to the level of 'specificity'. It remains impossible to

explain theoretical practice, except in terms of itself.

In fact, none of the Althusserian structures can be explained in terms which do not seem to beg all conceivable questions in Althusser's favour. When Althusser turns to the text of *Capital*, it is partly in order to give vent to religious awe, but also to extract a phrase or a paragraph, which he encases in metaphysical nonsense, like a drunken mystic commenting on the gospels. In doing this, he claims to be pursuing the 'object' of *Capital* – although it is never certain whether he means this word in the sense of aim, or subject-matter, or content. Once again the major purpose is one of 'negative revelation'; it is a massive attempt to appropriate the meaning of *Capital* by concealing it. The search for the 'object' is an exercise in burial: the object is the six-pence in the Christmas pudding, and Althusser's approach to his reader is to say: eat this pudding, chew this text, and you will find at last what I have concealed.

At the same time, Althusser engages in some fervent expostulations against the enemies of theoretical practice. His totalitarian characterisation of these enemies provides an interesting illustration of what Petr Fidelius has called the 'unity of evil'³. For Althusser, the enemies of theoretical practice are all 'empiricists', characterised by their belief in 'abstraction' (*RC*, p. 35). In consequence, enemies of theoretical practice as disparate as the rationalist Descartes, the absolute idealist Hegel, and the devastating critic of traditional empiricism, Kant, are gathered together in a common grave. All differences between their philosophies are eliminated, and all are condemned as representatives of 'empiricism, whether transcendent (as in Descartes), transcendental (Kant and Husserl) or 'objective' – idealist (Hegel)' (*RC*, p. 184). A philosopher might be so astounded by that display of ignorance, as to forget Althusser's purpose: which is to 'dismiss without discussion all viewpoints other than 'theoretical practice', whose criterion of validity is itself.

How are we to explain Althusser's influence? It is not enough, I believe, to dwell upon the theological contours that he gives to dialectical materialism, or upon the paradisaical reward that he offers to the urban intellectual. It is necessary also to recognise two further factors. First, as good dialectical materialists, we should examine the material conditions of the disciples of Althusser. For the most part these were young radical lecturers in universities and polytechnics, hastily appointed on account of their political sympathies, who had yet to establish their academic credentials. What better way to do this, than to bury their allegiances within inscrutable pedantries? By this simple device, a generation of radical academics was able to present its stunning ignorance as though it were a novel kind of scholarship, and one infinitely more 'relevant', for those who could see it, than all that had previously been taught.

Secondly, and more importantly, it is necessary to recognise the 'tone of voice' in Althusser, which in truth is the only feature of his writings that is wholly transparent. His tone is the self-defensive tone of the paranoiac – the tone of someone who has locked himself within his own discourse, and who can communicate with no-one who does not accept his dictatorial terms. Within Althusser's language, the 'other' does not exist, except as the darkly defined enemy, whose identity can be guessed by the boundaries from which Althusser's thought recoils into itself, undefeated, because untried in combat. Within the inner darkness, however, fierce loyalties impose their law: loyalty to Marx, to Engels, to Lenin, to Mao, to the mythologised 'workers' movement', and above all to the French Communist Party. These loyalties define the real content of the paranoid vision, whose appeal is not intellectual but emotional. The call to theoretical practice is the call to allegiance, the call to arms, in a self-defensive circle of obscurity that remains closed to those who threaten it. The Althusserian process creates the intellectual equivalent of a totalitarian state, in which all is governed by a single orthodoxy, encased in mesmerising slogans, with neither opposition nor diversity. All in this state are united around a common loyalty, and 'hostile elements' have been duly liquidated. Althusser expresses, in his metadogma, the incipient totalitarianism of the revolutionary consciousness. He therefore shows to the new radicals that they are sufficiently redeemed by their left-wing allegiance, to be able to dispense with the need to understand or conciliate their opponents. Their opponents have already been allocated to the 'dustheap of history'; it is only necessary to transport them to it.

It is said that Althusser's murder of his wife, in 1978, was in response to her 'revisionism'. Whatever the truth in this rumour, it has a certain gruesome logic. The tragic outcome of Althusser's pilgrimage into the heart of darkness, seems like the domestic re-creation of the tragedy suffered by the peoples of Russia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Eastern Europe. It is the tragedy that inevitably follows, when paranoid suspicion displaces the natural law of compromise. The paranoid mentality, seeking to preserve at all costs the illusion of its own absolute correctness, turns itself into a superstition, and persecutes as evil-doers, all those who will not accept its pious lies. It invents a language that is literally without meaning, since all meaning constitutes a threat. And it inhabits this language with the absolute vigilance of a tyrant, ceaselessly working to liquidate the poisonous meanings that have seeped into it from the world of 'them'. In Althusser's prose, one finds the literary equivalent of the nightmare world of communism. And the astonishing thing is that, for the revolutionary consciousness, this nightmare has the aspect of a prophetic dream.

Notes

1. All references are to *For Marx*, tr. Ben Brewster, Allen Lane, 1969, (*FM*), and *Reading Capital*, by L. Althusser, with sequel by E. Balibar, tr. Ben Brewster, NLB 1970 (*RC*).
2. On the spiritual significance of Stalin's pleonasm, see Ivan

Volgin, 'The Magic World of Homo Sovieticus', in *Salisbury Review*, no. 4.

3. Petr Fidelius, 'Totalitarian Language', in *Salisbury Review*, no. 6.

Latin America: What can we do?

Francis Lambert

One of the many mistakes of British policy in the last fifty years has been our precipitate abandonment of interest in the world outside Europe. Obviously the old colonial relationships were outdated and became impossible to sustain; in fact a clearer realisation that the independence of India meant the end of the road for a world-wide network of bases would have spared Britain a lot of trouble in minor plague spots like Aden and Cyprus. But did withdrawal from political and military control necessarily mean giving up all interest in the life of the former colonies? Should the Right, in particular, in Britain concentrate on Europe to the exclusion of everywhere else? The dangers of this attitude are now becoming apparent. Socialist imperialism, particularly on the model of the Soviet Union and its Cuban satellite, is rushing to fill the vacuum we have left behind, and, on a more mundane level, we are losing priceless opportunities for influence and trade which could bolster our position far more than costly and pointless attempts to appease 'men of goodwill' at 'the bar of world opinion'. While ex-colonial powers like France and Portugal are trying to maintain their spheres of political and economic influence, the Soviet Union and China are building new ones. It is foolish for Britain to lag behind.

This is particularly true of Latin America. In other parts of the world, Britain has to live down its past as the colonial power, or at least—as in the Arab world—the great manipulator. But with respect to countries like Chile, Brazil, and Peru, Britain was the birthplace of the volunteers who helped to bring the New World into existence. It was subsequently a source of ideas, manufactures, and immigrants. (A bizarre result of this is the number of ultra-left guerrilla leaders with British or Irish surnames). This should not be exaggerated; British trading domination has been resented, and in Argentina, but nowhere else, indirect British influence has produced the sort of paranoid fear and dislike which poisoned our relations with Greece, Egypt, and Iran. But in general our image is as good in Latin America as anywhere in the world.

In the past fifty years, however, we have thrown these advantages away. British diplomacy has too often been characterised by nerveless appeasement masquerading as 'realism' or 'grace under pressure'. British industry has failed to sell; Britain rejected the chance to develop the Brazilian motor industry, while a Volkswagen subsidiary has gone from nothing, in 1948, to control of the mass market. But the chief obstacle has been a lack of willingness to study Latin America seriously and empirically.

There is one exception to this. Ever since the Castro revolution, Latin America has been a happy hunting ground for the British ultra-left. Unhappily, this has not led to any improvement in the quality of knowledge or discussion. The Malraux-reading guerrilla is as silly a stereotype as the tangoing Latin lover; both exist, but neither is remotely typical. The wearers of Sandinista badges use Nicaragua and El Salvador as settings for fantasies of the revolution which they are too prudent (or too feeble) to attempt here. Such fantasies, however, can be dangerous; United States policy in Vietnam (and British policy in Ireland) would have been more effective without the pipedreams of armchair Guevaras who know almost nothing about the situations they sloganise over. Perhaps it is time that all sides understood Latin America better.

It is an old truism that all generalisations about Latin America are untrue – including this one! We should remember that the continent has twenty different republics with the most variegated economies, societies and traditions. Haiti is ninety per cent black, Uruguay ninety per cent white. Bolivia has had a hundred and eighty coups in a hundred and twenty years; Columbia has had the same constitution for a century. Latin America exhibits extremes of backwardness and development wider than the gap between Sweden and Albania. Yet in general, most countries fall into two categories; those in which the social structure collapsed during the War of Independence and those where it survived. The patterns of instability and stability this created have tended to persist to the present day.

The historical reasons for instability are very important; to a large extent, Latin America lacks the institutions which preserve tradition elsewhere in the world. Only Brazil had a monarchy, and it is no coincidence that Brazil has been one of the most stable Latin American countries. There is no titled aristocracy, and although traditional society is dominated by big land-owners, this group has a high turnover in membership. Castes and tribes, which have been such a conservative force in India and Africa, scarcely exist. In such circumstances, paralleled in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, military force becomes a major arbiter in politics.

Latin American armies have been slow to become professional forces, and they have never been officered by the aristocracy. They trace their origin to the ill-organised personal warlords who liberated most of Spanish America, and whose loyalty was exclusively to their leader. For the first fifty years of independence commanders aimed at political power, including 'saving the

nation' from internal threats, rather than external defence. The professionalisation of the larger countries' armed forces, carried out by French, German, and North American training missions, has not eliminated this tendency to get involved in politics; instead it has added another pretext – the resentment felt by young officers at slow promotion in a peacetime army. With all these factors making for instability it is not surprising that political life has been troubled. In countries where the social structure collapsed at independence, stable political traditions failed to develop; parties have been fragmentary and short-lived and political life has been dominated by the *caudillo* – the personalist boss who rises to power by his own efforts, rewards his friends and punishes his enemies, only to be ejected by another figure similar to himself.

Another factor contributing to instability is Latin America's long tradition of violent revolution. Brazil is the only country not to have come into existence after a long and devastating civil war; in all the others, the military created the new state and sees itself as a guardian in the event of trouble. As a result, military force is the key to power, leading to a revolutionary tradition similar to that found in Ireland, Eastern Europe, and the Arab world in the present century.

But the basic reason for instability lies in the fact that Latin America is the continent where the clash between developed and under-developed is most acute. Europe and North America are developed societies, admittedly, with a few patches of underdevelopment; Asia and Africa are underdeveloped, with a few areas of growth. In Latin America most countries contain elements of both. The cities support a mass electorate, the media, political parties, and trade unions, and, as a result, have had a fairly modern political life since the 1930's. The countryside, by contrast, remained under the control of oligarchs, though these were rarely dignified by the stability or social grace of the great Whig families. Laws made for the cities are never enforceable in the countryside; the traditional informal administration of the countryside will not work in the cities. The balance is, of course, moving in favour of the cities, but until recently neither side could obtain full control.

But it must also be remembered that there are powerful forces making for stability. In the first place, disorder has largely been confined to the smallest and least viable states – Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, the small nations of Central America. To assess Latin America by these would be as inaccurate as to judge Europe before the first World War by the Balkans. The great powers, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia and Chile, have strong traditions of orderly development. The Brazilian Empire lasted for seventy years; Chile had substantially the same constitution from 1831 to 1973, with a short interval; Mexico has not had a successful revolution for sixty years. Compared with this, most European countries have been unstable.

This stability came from one thing; the existence of a unified ruling class and its capacity to build a state. In Brazil and Chile this class was the colonial élite which

held together throughout the wars of independence; in Argentina it was the 'Liberal' conquerors of the *caudillo* Rosas; in Mexico it was the national bourgeoisie who emerged victorious from the 1910 Revolution. But whatever their origins, they established a constitutional oligarchy; a government controlled by a 'magic circle' which, nonetheless, united the country, created a stable form of government, and laid the foundations of economic development. The nineteenth century examples of this type of government also showed an aristocratic interest in culture, creating one of the stereotypes of the Latin American abroad – the exquisitely-mannered 'friend of England' with his suits from Savile Row and his books from Paris.

This kind of oligarchy had one advantage: it established an efficient and orderly government. It also had one defect: it provided no way by which new forces and new classes could become part of the oligarchy. Nevertheless, this gradually developed, as new political groups rose, making use of the relative openness of the oligarchic system. To make a horrible pun on Stubbs' account of English constitutionalism, freedom in the gentry republics of Latin America broadened down from president to president. Throughout the continent, 'Liberals', representing forces of decentralisation, alternated with conservatives, as in Brazil and Colombia, or replaced them, as in Chile. By the end of the nineteenth century, Latin America had reached a degree of stability probably unequalled before or since. The *caudillo*-republics had become more respectable, largely through the need for foreign investment and foreign acceptance; the constitutional republics had achieved a considerable degree of political freedom, at least for the élite.

The era of mass politics has to some extent eroded these gains. Constitutional government was fragile enough when political life was largely confined to a small group of landowners and educated men; it is more difficult when the middle and the embryo working classes are also making demands on the system. But the arrival of modern political life has created revolutions in every country in Europe apart from Britain, France, the Benelux and the Scandinavian countries. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany and Italy have been almost as unstable as Latin America, and Shaw's Captain Shotover reminded us that the laws of navigation are not suspended simply because we were born in England. Could the British constitution survive inflation over 100%, street fighting between extreme paramilitary groups, and a collapse of food supplies, as happened in Allende's Chile?

It is thus not surprising that 1930, when the world depression destroyed the economic basis of oligarchic prosperity and brought the new political forces into being, should mark the beginning of a period of instability even for such well established 'big powers' as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. Mexico has been the most successful in solving its problems; its Revolution was over before the *Comintern* was in a position to interfere, and since 1929 it has been ruled by a single party whose leadership is a kind of trade union of ambitious *apparatchiks* and whose ideology combines a theoretical commitment to socialism,

a certain amount of social welfare, and the promotion of a new bureaucratic middle class (Harold Wilson would make an excellent Mexican president). But the Mexican model cannot be exported; a more common pattern is one of alternation between populist civilian governments and collective military juntas.

The word 'populism' has been thoroughly misused in academic circles, but when applied to Latin America it does have a certain validity if defined as an attempt to prevent class conflict by rallying all classes and interests round a common symbol (usually a personality). This type of 'Tory Democracy' has been the usual form of constitutional government in most countries since 1930, it was the foundation of the power of Peron in Argentina, Vargas in Brazil, and many minor figures. It did have the considerable merit of making the transition to modern, urbanised society without revolution, rather in the manner of British governments between 1945 and 1964. But it had similar problems; how were the creation of nationalised industries, the development of a welfare state, even an inadequate one, and the promotion of the economy to be paid for? The answer in too many cases was the printing of money without any real concurrent growth. There was also the problem of increasing demands on the system; in the past it had been difficult enough to satisfy the oligarchy, but now the middle classes, the labour aristocracy, and, increasingly, the unorganised workers and peasants had also to be taken into account. It is therefore not surprising that by the 1960's populist regimes were collapsing in a chaos of inflation and economic mismanagement.

The alternative answer to the problems of Latin America, particularly fashionable in the 1970's, was 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' – dictatorial government by the armed forces acting collectively in conjunction with selected civilian technocrats and often attempting to apply Chicago School policies. Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil have all had regimes of this type. Similar regimes seem to have worked in South Korea and Taiwan, but their success in Latin America has been transitory. The military rulers have been divided by professional and personal jealousies; the Brazilian armed forces have been the only ones to understand the problems of a modern state and to use their technocrats effectively. Monetarist policies have either destroyed the economy, as in Chile, or have been abandoned because they threatened corporate vested interest, as in Argentina and Brazil. The result has been a general collapse of 'bureaucratic authoritarian' systems in the early 1980's. Latin America is moving towards 'democracy' again, as it did in the 1950's; whether it will be more successful now than then remains to be seen.

This brief summary of Latin America's development sounds rather depressing; an endless cycle of repeated failures. But there is some room for hope. We have seen that the élite has gradually brought new groups into the system, notably the middle classes and the skilled workers. There has been relatively little open class conflict, a fact which has led to howls of 'corporatism' and 'false consciousness' among Marxist intellectuals. There

is no independent bourgeoisie to compete with the oligarchy; industry is either owned by foreign companies or (increasingly) nationalised, which means that in both cases it is managed by the élite. The middle classes do not provide an independent force; they are not entrepreneurs but professional men – lawyers, doctors, bureaucrats, engineers, and army officers. By origin they are a mixture of the declining oligarchy, the children of immigrants, and the upwardly mobile middle class. Industrialisation has also divided the lower classes; the 'labour aristocracy', people with full time jobs in modern industry, have tended in crises to support the existing order (the miners turned against Allende), while the marginal urban workers and peasants have hardly entered political life. Argentina in 1955, Brazil in 1964, and Chile in 1973 all showed that in the major countries of Latin America there are more people who have something to lose in a violent revolution than people who have everything to gain.

This leads us to certain conclusions. One is that Communism is, in Walter Rostow's phrase, 'the scavenger of the modernisation process'. Revolutions in Latin America do not occur in societies which are strong, well organised, and developing a mature political life. They occur where countries are small, underdeveloped, and dominated by a single tyrant, as in Nicaragua, or a tiny élite. But this is not much consolation when a revolution brings a Soviet Socialist regime to power; Cuba only became a real menace to the rest of the continent after 1970, when the government embraced the full Soviet system and abandoned ultra-Leftist experiments.

The second conclusion is that Latin America is not in fact particularly unstable; the continent is going through the same birthpangs of modernisation as Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but in a much more intense form and at a far faster rate. But again this will count for nothing if it ends up in the Soviet bloc. Right wing dictatorships are transitory; Soviet tyranny is permanent.

How then do we prevent the sovietisation of Latin America? The United States is the paramount power in the region, and it has achieved a great deal, far more than some British super-sophisticates who combine envy of North America with admiration of Soviet socialism would admit. But there will be serious drawbacks if the defence of Latin America is left to the North Americans alone. Latin Americans resent 'the colossus of the North' simply because it is the nearest great power, and North American indirect rule has been no more successful than similar experiments elsewhere. Britain was not very successful in Egypt or Iraq. Most Latin Americans feel a curious mixture of love and hate for their northern neighbours, which makes relations difficult; there are many cultural clashes; United States policy has tended to swing between the mandarin appeasement of Carter and the toughness of Johnson and Nixon, ending any chance of continuity. North America's intentions towards Latin America have been good; the results of its policies have often been unfortunate.

Under these circumstances Europe might take a larger role in bringing Latin America through the dangers of

development. Most European countries are well regarded in the continent, apart from Britain in Argentina. Latin America is a continent of immigrants, largely from Europe. Europe has always had a strong influence culturally; the time when all good Americans went to Paris when they died is only just over. If the main EEC countries unite politically they can achieve a great deal; it

is unlikely that Spain, Portugal, and Greece would have returned to constitutional government without their backing. Could the same thing be achieved in Latin America? It is, after all, only half a century since Europe was plagued by economic ruin, political instability, and despair. Perhaps Latin America could also achieve a settled order which would realise the talents of her people.

In Search of Central Europe

We continue our Central Europe column with a further article by Petr Fidelius on the totalitarian abuse of language.

On Handling Words

It is an odd thing, as anyone who works with words one way or another will surely have established: language is capable of being an extraordinarily sensitive and delicate instrument, but only if we approach it with proper tact and responsibly; as soon as our approach becomes dominated by carelessness and irresponsibility, it becomes at once a rebellious and unreliable servant which we can be sure will not let pass the slightest opportunity of playing a trick on us and putting us in an embarrassing situation.

But that is only one side of the matter, the more or less humorous side. Carelessness and irresponsibility in handling words also has its serious, not to say tragic side, if we take into consideration that between a careless attitude to language and careless thinking there is a very close connection, and also that all public life, including therefore political life, has to rely on language as an instrument of communication. Unthinking over-use, or indeed abuse of words is a fertile source of the phenomenon which we might describe figuratively as *semantic inflation*. True, it is by no means a new phenomenon; on the contrary, it is an age-old activity, probably as old as human speech itself. And from the purely linguistic point of view it is probably unavoidable up to a point, and not necessarily harmful. It is our view, however, that the concurrence of many specific causes has in our day (by which we mean at least the last fifty years) turned this 'semantic inflation' into a public peril of the first order, even in many cases a mortal peril, literally. A process which under other circumstances might have been an innocent object of interest to a number of linguists has evolved into a matter that is *political* par excellence. From the many causes, let us name at least the most striking, namely the rapid ideologisation of public life and the upsurge of political propaganda, out of which has grown, thanks to the mass media, one of the most efficient instruments of power. More penetrating analysis would reveal the existential background to this state of affairs: man today, much more than man in ages past, lives in a world of words, abstract concepts, general ideas, which are progressively replacing immediate experience, the direct experience of reality. . . .

We may often observe, in intellectual circles, that the

attitude to official propaganda is one of condescending disdain of the kind reserved for the babbling of drunkards or the outpourings of unbalanced graphomaniacs. Intellectuals who have a sense for a particular select brand of absurd humour will even sometimes, on their own initiative, read the leader in *Rudé Pravo* or some political address for the sheer refined amusement of it. Only very rarely, however, do we find anyone taking the phenomenon seriously. Not that it is not good for a laugh. Let us be thankful that our communist propaganda (unlike that of, say, the Protectorate) is conspicuous, among other things, for that comic element for which the name 'unwitting charm' has become established. I would be the very last to hold it against anyone for yielding to peels of merriment over the pages of *Rudé Pravo*. But it must be borne in mind that we owe this pleasanter face of propaganda to the chance fact that it is created by authors who are well below the stylistic average: and in all justice it should also be added that a like effect may be induced in the unprejudiced observer by much samizdat material too. In short, this is not the heart of the matter. But what really is a matter for serious consideration is the fact that most intellectuals do view official propaganda in a light vein – whether through their ostentatious indifference, amused grins or condescending disdain. We are obliged to admit that we take a highly sceptical view of the critical value of this kind of underestimating, frivolous approach. In our eyes this, in itself, is no more a sign of criticism than naive faith is an excuse for being uncritical. We would even make so bold as to assert that between this way of 'being critical' and 'blind' faith there is no substantial difference: from the point of view of the effectiveness of official propaganda it is irrelevant whether someone takes it seriously because he believes it, or whether he does not take it seriously because he does not believe it. This is not important, because in *both* cases the individual is, more or less consciously, sharing with it the most essential factor, namely the conviction that words are a cheap commodity which need not be handled with any greater respect than any other mass-produced goods intended for immediate use, e.g. plastic lemonade-cups: to be used, crumpled up and thrown away.

In the first case this is quite obvious: anyone who waits

on totalitarian propaganda in good faith (as many intellectuals have done in the past) would probably honestly admit that the words do not matter to him, for there are surely more important things which make the world go round, so to speak; what do matter are good intentions, firmness of conviction, belief in victory, unity in action, a proper programme, a noble goal, the objective laws of evolution and goodness knows what else besides; a word here, a word there, what's the bother when it is our Great Cause that is at issue; we have not the time to dither about over 'mere words' in the middle of the unremitting fight with the ideological enemy who is waiting for any sign of weakness, or the slightest wavering on our part; words too undoubtedly have an important mission in our fight, we could not even do battle without them, but they are a treacherous and unreliable element – after all, the opponent can and does use them too, pouring confusion into the minds of our people, whom we are trying so hard to educate and re-educate; in short, let words be the *instrument of our struggle*, but let our *language* be action.

From here our ideas ought to evolve along the lines of the 'mystique of action' – the typical feature of totalitarian movements – as a peculiar reaction to the phenomenon of semantic inflation; but let us proceed to the second attitude to totalitarian propaganda, which we characterised by saying that the individual does not take it seriously because he does not believe it. The first type of intellectual is barely to be encountered in this country; the second, however, can be discerned at almost every step; he is our contemporary. Psychologically speaking, he appears to be the very opposite of the former. He seems to be definitely cured of relying on 'good intentions'; if he does have any kind of firm convictions, he voices them at best discretely and mutedly; if you ask him whether he believes in the victory of a good cause, he will respond after the manner of Pilate: 'What is a good cause?'; he takes an extremely sceptical view of the collective spirit, unity in action, the common programme and suchlike; in the 'objective laws of evolution' he has properly discerned the objective laws of power; but he is totally lacking in any fighting spirit – the mere idea of fighting is linked in his mind with the idea of suicide; if you mention in his company the need for action, he will change the subject to the international situation and start pondering the gerontological problems which are raised in the entourage of the rulers of one sixth of the world. At first sight we have here a realist, as opposed to a dreamer, an 'agnostic' as opposed to a believer. And yet we perceive that, despite the obvious psychological difference, our present sceptic can, with regard to the corruption of language, shake hands with the erstwhile enthusiast. Try to discuss the way official propaganda abuses words: in all likelihood we shall encounter mild surprise in the form of raised eyebrows – well, yes, that's no 'discovery', but what do you expect, they've got the power so they can get away with it; anyway, why worry, nobody believes in propaganda any more; let them lie to their heart's content, you can't stop them, and no one's going to get caught by it anyway . . .

I shall try to demonstrate that this kind of 'critical' attitude is based on two errors, two 'matters-of-course'

which are accepted quite uncritically. In this case both errors stem from an incorrect appraisal of the power factor, the effect of which it tends, on the one hand, to overestimate and, on the other, to underestimate. Partly it is taken as a matter of course that the character of totalitarian propaganda is given by the character of the power which the propaganda serves: if someone has a total monopoly of power, he may indeed be able to afford to insult the public daily by calling a parrot a camel, since there is genuinely no one available to prevent him from doing so. This may well be how it seems at first sight, but if we stay with this first impression we may easily find ourselves involuntarily substituting cause and effect: the outrageous 'falsity' of propaganda is, in reality, not a result of the current conditions of power, but vice versa. Or did this propaganda 'lie' any the less before it became the only official propaganda? (In many respects it may have 'lied' differently, but that is just a matter of tactical flexibility.) And was not the very installation of the present conditions of power facilitated by, among other things, the interesting fact that this barefaced 'lying' had, right to the last moment, not been taken seriously? The contemporary holders of power indeed do not 'lie' because they hold power; they have 'lied' and do 'lie' for quite a different reason: originally in order to gain power, and now in order to retain it. The monopoly of power with which they rule has as its sole consequence that there is no one to compete with them.

However, let us take this a step further: if in this respect the operation of the power factor is often exaggerated, its significance is also no less often underestimated. It is truly remarkable that the very tendency to see things in simple terms, whereby official propaganda is the mere product of conditions of power, often goes hand in hand with a gross underestimation of that propaganda as precisely an instrument of power. What I have in mind here is the 'obvious' idea that official propaganda only works at the level of the content being communicated. If that were really the case the entire situation would be quite simple: propaganda in itself would not present any particularly serious threat, since it operates solely with assertions which every child knows to be false; hence it would be sufficient just to reject the 'false' content to be immune to its effects. Thus the whole problem of its effectiveness would be shifted exclusively to the sphere of morality: it would depend purely and simply on whether or not we accepted something in which we can clearly identify a falsehood, and chiefly on the form by which we vent this recognition in public life. Certainly this moral problem is always present and each of us has to resolve it one way or another; far be it from me to make light of this aspect of the matter: the clearer it seems in theory, the greater the demands it places in day to day life – it is genuinely the touchstone of moral integrity and of one's courage as a citizen.

Yet it has to be emphasised that this by no means exhausts the problem of the effectiveness of official propaganda. If we were exposed merely to its *direct* influence (i.e. at the level of the content communicated), we might be able to make do with the question of whether

or not we are fools, or cowards as the case may be. However this means of power also acts *indirectly*, at the deepest, hidden level where the very bricks and mortar of all utterances are formed; it is here that the greatest danger from propaganda lies, acting as the catalyst of that process of corruption which – let us not be fooled – impinges on the *common* means of expression to which we must all resort in trying to communicate the content of any of our thoughts. There is only one effective defence against this indirect influence of official propaganda: to set ourselves against the corruption of language itself, against the goal-oriented exploitation of semantic inflation. In this we each have to begin with ourselves. However since the goal-oriented exploitation of semantic inflation is not always necessarily deliberate and so morally relevant (unlike, for instance, official propaganda), this act of ‘conversion’ is not primarily a moral revolution: once completed it may well have immediate consequences in the area of morality, but in itself it takes place at a ‘deeper’ level – in the existential sphere.

This is then why we look so sceptically at the attitude of the contemporary ‘sceptic’, who thinks he has dealt adequately with official propaganda by shrugging it off as a passing necessary evil and no cause for getting excited: for even if, filled with a sense of his own superiority, he accompanies the gesture with a scornful grimace, he still remains within the field of force of propaganda. Of course, it is an indirect, hidden and unconscious dependence, but the more treacherous for it; it is the kind of dependence born of complicity. A kind of secret alliance binds him (often without his being at all aware of the fact) to the propaganda which he is mocking, but in the most essential area – that of the treatment of words. For were he to be sincere about it, even our ‘critical’ intellectual would have to confess that he too (like the ‘blind believer’) does not actually care about words: the main things are surely facts, notably the facts of power in the present context; alter the facts of power and the problem of contemporary official propaganda will disappear on its own. We shall probably not be far from the truth if we surmise that our ‘critic’ might also take the opportunity offered to toss in something about freedom of speech (in Czech: freedom of the word). No doubt: with the return of freedom of speech there would be a major change in the position of contemporary official propaganda, but I am afraid that this

would only be in the sense that it would lose its current official monopoly. If we concede that the problem of official propaganda is at heart a problem of language corruption generally, then the change (admittedly an almost utopian change in the light of our present situation) will not appear to represent any very radical solution. The question arises here of what we actually mean by ‘freedom of speech’: is it perhaps not the case that official propaganda itself offers a ridiculous specimen of what truly absolute ‘freedom of speech’ is like, i.e. freedom not bound – with regard to ‘speech’ (i.e. in Czech: the ‘word’) – by any kind of responsibility? ‘Freedom of speech’: this turn of phrase seems to acquire a sense only against the background of a more fundamental turn – the previously mentioned existential ‘conversion’, which in *practical terms* means nothing less than a return to responsibility in the handling of ‘the word’. Such responsibility is however beyond the capability of anyone who treats words as ‘mere words’, or for whom speech is not a sufficiently ‘real’ fact.

If we think about the obvious lack of seriousness with which words are commonly treated today, it may occur to us to ask whether one contributor to the attitude might not also be the fact that we are accustomed to referring continually to language as an ‘instrument of communication’. One more brief remark on this then: I do not think that there is anything bad about this metaphorical expression as such; equally I do not think that it would be appropriate to bring any precipitate charges against modern linguistics in this connection (although it does happen). It strikes me that a responsible approach to language can derive some benefit from our understanding it as a ‘working tool’ *sui generis*. The stumbling block really comes from how we understand tools generally, and what our attitude to them really is. It is sufficient to observe any building site for a moment, or to take a walk in the fields for us to reach the conclusion that it is actually small wonder that the ‘instrument of communication’ is treated with the same degree of love and respect as is accorded to other instruments – from the humble spade to complicated and expensive pieces of machinery. Then we are left with the sorry impression that the metaphor is a kind of survival from times long (not long?) past, when work tools were still handed down from father to son, cherished with a care that is barely conceivable today . . .

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Race, Sex and Class in Inner London

Geoffrey Partington

In 1983 the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) issued five booklets under the title of *Race, Sex and Class*.

110,000 copies of number two alone were printed and sent to every teacher, ancillary worker, school governor and parent-teacher association in the ILEA.

The first booklet, described as a seminar paper, is introduced by Mrs Frances Morrell, the political head of the ILEA, who asserts¹ that the last decade has seen 'a measurable year-on-year improvement in the average performance' of children in the ILEA, 'despite the upheaval and stress of reorganisation consequent on falling rolls'. Rising rolls would also no doubt have been offered as a cause of particular stress and upheaval, but be that as it may, Mrs Morrell offers no evidence that educational standards in the ILEA have risen. Moreover she exhibits such deep suspicion of tests and examinations of all types that it is hard to believe that she attaches significance to any of them. She implies² indeed that tests and examinations actually create rather than reveal individual or group differences. She dismisses (cit. p. 6) IQ tests because they 'depend so much on common knowledge and cultural values', so that 'their suitability for ethnic minorities is also questionable'.

The seminar paper also attacks³ the present examination system as being too concerned with 'who is best' rather than with 'ensuring that as many pupils as possible reach the educational standards required for successful lives in our society', a level left unspecified. Allusion is also made (cit. p. 9) to 'well-documented evidence of the scholarship bias in the days of the eleven plus', although the only evidence suggested is inequality in the rate of scholarship successes in different social groups, the very phenomenon the bias is supposed to explain. If all groups really do achieve equally on average and if only distorted tests suggest otherwise, the remedy would be easy, but then there would be no grounds of differences in outcome on which to erect claims about inequality of educational opportunity. With this trap perhaps in mind Mrs Morrell finally opts for real rather than test-induced differences, although the latter constantly reappear in these documents when other argument is scarce. She expresses concern (cit. p. 5) that 'the relative pattern of attainment between children of different classes and groups remains obstinately untouched by existing strategies'. Furthermore several pages are given over to familiar evidence about group differences, including the finding that as early as the age of seven the proportion of children in social class V with reading problems is more than five times as great as that in social class I. Could it be otherwise than that children in cultivated homes, whose

parents spend much time in talking and reading to them will have on average, although of course not in every case, achieved higher educational attainment than those whose parents do not? Since parental traits are highly correlated with social class, broad group differences will obstinately persist, in the U.S.S.R. between children of the Intelligensia and the rest as well as here. Yet Mrs Morrell attributes these differences to systematic discrimination by our schooling system.

The seminar paper recognises (cit. p. 10) that 'whatever innovations are introduced the pupils most able to benefit will be those coming from the most advantaged backgrounds' and indeed they could only be held back by draconian restrictions and by the complete removal of their right under the 1944 Education Act to be educated in accordance with their aptitude and ability. That, alas, may be the path to equality of outcome which the ILEA has in mind. Mrs Morrell proposes (cit. p. 5) here however only that 'the socially deprived should have proportionally the most support'. How such support can best be given should, of course, concern every educator. What does the ILEA see as the problems and the possible solutions?

First some negatives: culture, family life style and language are all rejected as irrelevant. Hess and Shipman are cited⁴ to show that 'many of the claims of differences in family style that proponents of the cultural deprivation thesis put forward remain unproven' and Tizard to show that language usage cannot be an obstacle to educational achievement. If the ILEA really believes that there is no such thing as cultural deprivation or a restricted range of language usage then much of its combination of low scholastic attainment with high expenditure may be readily explained. A factor held significant is 'living in the inner city', even though the London County Council once had one of the highest rates of educational achievement in the country rather than one of the lowest. The inner city is a good locus for blame, perhaps because it is inanimate and because the ILEA can hardly be held accountable for its effects. Another possible factor mentioned⁵ is that 'pupils of middle class backgrounds receive privileged treatment from teachers'. This slur is said 'to remain unproven, due to a lack of significant classroom observation', but it is still aired in the confidence that the craven spirits who lead the Inner London Teachers' Association will make no protest against their ideological partners in County Hall.

What about schools and deprivation though? Sheila Browne is quoted⁶ that 'the very giving of additional help in withdrawal remedial groups, may ironically, further

handicap pupils by causing them to miss other educational experiences', but ILEA has been most diligent in forcing teachers to adopt the dogmatic mixed-ability grouping which entails the bad results described by Browne and which also exposes the weakest pupils academically to the scorn of their quicker classmates, thus increasing that low self-esteem which the ostensible purpose of the strategy was to reduce. In general the paper offers no constructive advice on how schools might reduce educational backwardness.

Mrs Morrell roundly claims that⁷ all who favour selection in any shape or form are hostile to providing 'a good education for girls and boys together, for blacks and whites together, for children of all social classes together', rather than merely opposed to unmitigated mixed ability teaching. Her attempt to suggest guilt by association leads us to a consideration of the treatment of sex differences in the seminar paper.

The 'problem' about sex differences appears to be that patterns of subject choice are not identical among boys as compared with girls. The boys' pattern of choice is taken to be the right one and the girls are to be led to emulate the boys. Even though ILEA apparently puts great emphasis on the value of language learning, the poor representation of boys in languages and humanities is not seen as a major educational problem, whereas the preponderance of boys in mathematics and physical sciences is seen as a critical defect.

'Under-representation' of girls in maths and science is not seen as an unremarkable outcome of subject choice, but as evidence of systematic discrimination against girls. Genetic differences are dismissed (cit. p. 13) as a possible cause of differentiation, since in Russia 'women play a major part in scientific work and technology'. The real causes lie partly in foolish adults who 'actively discourage girls by the toys they give them' and in 'society' which ubiquitously demands greater conformity from the girls with the result that they are 'less assertive and adventurous in what are seen as "male" areas'.

Schools are held to be the real culprits though. The Australian critic of co-education, Dale Spender, is quoted⁸ for evidence that 'mixed classrooms do not allow girls the opportunity to talk, even when teachers are keen that they should', thus rendering them insufficiently assertive and inclined to take physics. Stamford High School, in Tory Tameside, is cited (cit. p. 15) as having established that girls perform better in separate sets than with boys, although no mention is made of whether the boys did better, worse or the same when by themselves. The paper is obviously sympathetic to the strong anti-coeducation movement among militant feminists, even though ILEA and other Labour LEAs are still busily rooting out their last remaining single sex schools.

No reference is made to the work of Cable,⁹ Wood or others who have shown that the contrast between the average mathematical attainment at sixteen of boys and girls is highly marked in only a limited number of mathematical topics, such as probability, pie chart, scale, orders of magnitude and spatial visualization, whereas there are negligible differences in Venn diagrams, matrix

multiplication and vectors, and in modern maths and algebraic problems generally. Yet it is hard to concede that 'society' can inhibit girls in some areas of mathematics and not in others. In any case no constructive suggestions are offered as to how maths teaching for girls might be improved in our schools.

Definite proposals are readily forthcoming however when it comes to recommending more senior posts for women *qua* women. The ILEA, with its very poor relative record of school achievement after external factors have been allowed for, has apparently¹⁰ 'more women in senior positions than in the country as a whole', but it is then claimed, totally without evidence, that 'the imbalance of the sexes among the senior of mixed schools has depressed girls' performance'. No evidence is provided either that girls suffer from unfair discrimination in any schools in this country.

On ethnic differences the paper wobbles between two incompatible positions: the first is that there are really no significant differences in average educational attainment between ethnic groups, but that apparent differences are created by biased tests and unfair examinations; the second is that there are substantial real differences, which are caused by rampant racism in British society. In two hundred schools studied by Townsend and Brittan,¹¹ West Indian children are said to have had higher staying-on rates than others, but 'relatively few were entered for public examinations', especially for O-level. The implication is that prejudiced teachers held back West Indian pupils from examinations they could have tackled with profit.

Causes of lower than average West Indian educational attainment which are suggested include that they had 'the least desirable areas' available to them to live in, that they 'more often worked shifts and earned lower wages', and that 'they are now faced with higher than average unemployment'. All these disadvantages, it is admitted, were also experienced by Asian families, who have not been held back in the same way educationally and whose school-leavers experience proportionally slightly less unemployment than whites. The report of The Commission for Racial Equality, published in 1982, showed that in inner city areas 59 per cent of young people of Afro-Caribbean origin were unemployed, as compared with 41 per cent of their white peers and 40% of Asian youth.

More pertinent is the point¹² that 45% of the West Indian families in British schools have only one parent, as against 5% of Asian families and 20% of all families; this weakness of family structure would itself explain a large part of low West Indian attainment without any hypothesis of British racism. Furthermore the initial disadvantages of most Asian families were heavier than those of most West Indians in that the former had no or little knowledge of English, although it may well be that many West Indians receive from their teachers 'confusing feedback' about Creole syntax and language usage.

Teachers, it is suggested,¹³ may be to blame by imposing unfair labels on children: 'it is possible that some teachers tend to see Asian pupils as hard working,

conformist and fitting into the school system', whereas 'the stereotyped view of West Indian pupils is, perhaps, of a more boisterous and casual group.' Is it seriously held that teachers 'tend to see' what is not there to be seen, or that 'stereotypes' can arise without considerable evidence of the generalised trait?

The second booklet, on *Multi-Ethnic Education in Schools*, is again introduced by Mrs Morrell, who claims that¹⁴ 'the black communities have opposed ethnic record keeping because it has been used by governments to oppress and humiliate'. Translated this means that some groups are shown by ethnic records to have low visibility in some areas, such as examination successes, but are conspicuous in others, such as appearances in the law courts. Her dilemma is, of course, that claims of unfair discrimination advanced by the Labour Far Left and its Black Power allies require 'ethnic record keeping'. Talk of 'black communities' with the false implication that the majority of West Indians, Pakistanis, Indians or any other ethnic groups in Britain actually give majority support to the Far Left, is common in all these booklets. Mrs Morrell also claims (ibid) that 'black people and other minority groups' have been 'excluded from power to participate in decision making', as though Britain were like South Africa or indeed like other African states in which democratic processes of 'one man, one vote' do not apply.

The second paper starts with some potted 'history': the slave trade is described as 'basically an economic phenomenon that favoured European countries'; no reference is made to Arab slave raids and slave purchases from African enslavers for several centuries before Europeans entered Africa or to the erection of the first West African and Sudanese states on the basis of enslaving their neighbours. The British people are accused (cit. p. 8) of utter racism for centuries: 'racism as an ideology had become institutionalised in British society'; but no reference is made to Wilberforce and the opponents of slavery, or to any of the many movements for racial equality which distinguish British political history. Reference is made to many waves of unforced migration to these shores, but no clues are given as to why migrants should have wanted to come here if bleak racial discrimination was all they could anticipate.

The problem of the poor reading standard of many West Indian children is considered, but the only suggestions offered are the Bullock recommendation (cit. p. 10) that teachers of West Indian children 'should have an understanding of Creole dialect and a positive and sympathetic attitude towards it', and the extension of the School Council project of teaching the most spoken mother tongues, Bengali and Greek being the two beneficiaries to date. The ILEA naturally goes beyond the proposals of the merely reformist Schools Council by (ibid) 'initiating a new policy to develop the scope of mother tongue teaching accepting in principle the right of children to be taught in their own language'. Since, according to Mrs Morrell, 131 languages are spoken in the ILEA area a massive programme of immense cost lies ahead, but what help it will be to the improvement of children's English, on which their life chances in Britain

must most depend, is totally obscure. The unfortunates of the world may now, however, add at the end to their appeal to be admitted here: 'and by the way do not forget that I shall also require to be educated in my mother tongue, have creche facilities and hospital treatment in my mother tongue, and to suffer no disadvantage whatever from my lack of knowledge of the English language'.

Other curricular proposals are that (ibid) 'Geography, Religious Studies, Literature and History should be re-orientated and Black Studies be encouraged' and that emphasis should be on 'the folklore and history of a number of ethnic minorities, with particular reference to the Caribbean'. World History should have as its major themes (cit. p. 11) 'the history of Africa, India, China and the Caribbean', together with the 'history of black settlers in Britain'. The relevance of France, Germany, Russia, the United States, Latin America, Japan, etc. is relegated to insignificance because their numbers are relatively small in the British population.

On internal school organisation the Rampton recommendation is endorsed (cit. p. 12) that LEAs should 'tighten up procedures when pupils are suspended or excluded from school', but for 'tighten up' please read 'slacken', since the whole point is to introduce 'ethnic monitoring' to ensure that not too many pupils of any particular ethnic group are suspended, irrespective of the incidence of violence and the like in the schools. If there are proportionately more pupils suspended from group x than from group y this is taken to be evidence of teacher racism, not of classroom realities.

Massive censorship of books is also proposed (cit. p. 11) along Rampton lines, so that the stocks of school, and for that matter public, libraries, 'represent, in a balanced manner, the range of cultures in British society'. Librarians are to choose 'books which do not contain racial stereotypes, are not narrowly ethnocentric'. Who are the authorities to guide us here? One revered figure is Mr Bernard Coard, who¹⁵ 'revealed as long ago as 1971' that wicked whites deliberately classify black pupils as educationally sub-normal, when they are nothing of the kind. Alas, we are no longer able to call upon his advice, whether on how to eliminate political colleagues or rivals such as Mr Maurice Bishop or on how to eliminate supposed racists or racist books in Britain. Still available, however, for advice on book-burning are Maureen Stone and Chris Mullard, both sociologists of a reductionist character. Stone writes,¹⁶ 'it will be clear then that I see the social structure as operating through schools to reinforce the low status of black pupils'; Mullard, who has the lofty title of 'Director, Race Relations Policy and Practice Unit, University of London Institute of Education' and who has paid many tributes to Bernard Coard's scholarship, asserts¹⁷ that the school 'decides for and on behalf of society the places and positions pupils eventually occupy in society'.

A genuine replacement for Bernard Coard may be found in Mr A. Sivanandon, Director of the Institute of Race Relations, who is quoted with approval¹⁸ to the effect that 'just to learn about people's (sic) cultures, though, is not to learn about the racism of one's own. To

learn about the racism of one's own culture, on the other hand, is to approach other cultures objectively'. As with the adjective 'democratic' in titles such as 'The German Democratic Republic'; institutions such as 'The Institute of Race Relations' and 'The Commission for Racial Equality' seem to embody the very evils which they purport to resist.

Despite a doubtless diligent search, no evidence is advanced in this booklet of unfair educational discrimination against non-white pupils, other than the strong correlation between ethnicity and educational achievement. Indeed the opposite is true; in every LEA in England and Wales non-white children are taught on average in smaller groups and receive greater resources, both human and financial, than do the indigenous.

The new ILEA policy on race¹⁹ 'represents a significant change from the ILEA multi-ethnic policy of 1977'. Following recent changes in the language used by the Commission for Racial Equality, ILEA now uses the term 'black'

'to refer to both Afro-Caribbean and Asian people. The term black emphasises the common experience which both Afro-Caribbean people have of being victims of racism, and their common determination to oppose racism. Other groups, who together with the black communities, are usually referred to as "ethnic minorities" also suffer varying degrees of prejudice and discrimination. These include Chinese, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Turks, Vietnamese, Moroccans. In a similar way, though not always to the same extent, some white ethnic groups, such as Irish and Jews, experience prejudice and discrimination. In using the term "black" in this paper, it is not the Authority's intention to exclude any minority group'.

Possible opinions on race are divided into three categories. Category A, 'a perspective emphasising mainly Assimilation', includes all those committed to integration as well as to assimilation. They are misrepresented as believing that curricula 'should reflect at all times British traditions, history, customs and culture' and that 'black people, before they can possibly learn anything else or be integrated into the mainstream of the education system, need to learn and write correct English'. This perspective is then denounced as racist because *inter alia* 'it is based on, and communicates, a notion of white cultural superiority . . . [black people] are required to ignore or disown their own cultural identity . . . it reflects an inaccurate or inadequate view of Britain's position in a world society'.

Members of Category B, described as 'emphasising mainly Cultural Diversity, are little better. Their errors, illustrated by Schools' Council publications, include 'a belief that a low profile should be maintained in relation to issues of racism and that the most effective way to deal with these issues is to promote cultural diversity'. They neglect in the curriculum 'the economic position of black people in relation to white people . . . discrimination in

employment, housing and education, relations with the police . . . and the issue of racism'. They also mistakenly conceive of 'racism as merely a set of mental prejudices held by a smallish number of unenlightened white people', when the whole system reeks of racism.

The new and lengthy credo is then elaborated which all ILEA staff are to follow. They must understand and denounce 'the central and pervasive influence of racism, accept that 'Britain is a racist society' and that 'racism in the wider society is reflected and reinforced by racism in the education system'. 'Black perspectives' are to inform the new order, 'in which white people listen rather than speak. This is a pre-condition for co-operative work in dismantling discriminatory practices'.

All pupils must understand 'the role of the police and the role of the media' and must 'identify, resist and combat racism'. To succeed in this 'it is necessary to remove those practices and procedures which discriminate against black pupils . . . these include courses, syllabuses, schemes of work, topics, textbooks, materials and methods which ignore or deny the validity of black experience; some of the tests and other criteria, including teachers' expectations . . . (and allocation of pupils) to particular sets, steams, classes or bands'.

In addition all Education Authority staff, not only teachers but 'all non-teaching staff, including administrators, clerical workers, kitchen staff, lunchtime controllers, schoolkeepers and Members of the Education Committee' are to be retrained so as to accept this new perspective. Attempts will be made to dismiss those who do not comply and certainly only those who express their agreement can expect any promotion. The purges ahead of us will probably create sufficient vacancies to facilitate 'the recruitment and promotion of black people at all levels of the educational system', or would do so if black people were willing to lend themselves to such a disgraceful enterprise. The ILEA anticipates at least a little resistance (cit. p. 22): 'it must be acknowledged that this perspective may seem threatening and uncomfortable to many white people. This means that measures to promote racial equality need to be fully explained and thoroughly debated. It does not, however, mean that they should be avoided or de-emphasised, for fear of backlash'.

A further claim (ibid) is made that the ILEA's new policy 'is not linked to any one political party nor to any one part of the political spectrum! This perspective can be, and is, promoted by such supporters of all the main political parties, Conservative, Labour, Liberal, Social Democratic'. It might seem incredible that any reputable Conservatives, Liberals or Social Democrats would support this policy, or more than a tiny and unrepresentative minority of the Labour party either, the clique which lost the 1983 General Election for Labour and forced the Social Democratic succession, yet the Conservative controlled Education Committee of the Royal County of Berkshire has adopted similar definitions and policies. It is a task of the utmost urgency and in the deepest interests of all our people that this monstrous policy should be exposed and utterly rejected. 'Racism', correctly defined as advantaging or disadvantaging individuals for no other

or better reason than the membership of this or that racial group, should indeed be opposed in our schools, but the

policy of the ILEA is itself deeply racist in this strict and accurate sense of the term.

Notes

1. Inner London Education Authority, *Race, Sex and Class: 1. Achievement in Schools*, London: ILEA, 1983, p. 5.
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. Hess, R. D. and Shipman, V. C. (1967) 'Cognitive elements in Maternal Behaviour' in J. P. Hill (ed) '*Minnesota Symposia on Child Psychology*' Vol. 1 Univ. Minn. Press.
5. ILEA (1983) I. p. 9.
6. Browne, S. quoted in A. Hopkins (1978) '*The School Debate*', Penguin.
7. ILEA (1983), I. p. 5.
8. Spender, D. (1978) 'Don't talk, listen!' in *Times Educational Supplement* 3 November.
9. See Wood.
10. ILEA (1983) I. p. 13.
11. Townsend, H. and Brittan, E. (1972) '*Organisation in Multi-racial Schools*' NFER.
12. Kysel, F. Study of pre-school experience. ILEA RS 817/82.
13. ILEA (1983) I. p. 18.
14. Inner London Education Authority, *Race, Sex and Class: 2. Multi-Ethnic Education in Schools*, London: ILEA, 1983, p. 6.
15. Coard, B. (1971) *How the West Indian child is made educationally sub-normal in the British School System*, New Beacon Books.
16. Stone, M. (1981) *The education of the black child in Britain*. Fontana.
17. Mullard, C. (1980) *Racism in Society and Schools: History, Policy and Practice*, Institute of Education, London University. Tributes by Dr Mullard and by Dr Gundara, Coordinator of the Centre for Multicultural Education in the London University Institute of Education may be found in Tierney, J. (ed.), *Race, Migration and Schooling*, London, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982, pp. 114 and 125.
18. Sivanandan, A. (1982), *Roots of racism*, Institute of Race Relations.
19. ILEA (1983) I. p. 19 ff.

Private Ownership and The Countryside

The Duke of Buccleuch

Because our island is so small relative to the number of people who live on it, competition for the countryside is almost inevitable.

We are dangerously over-dependent upon foreign imports of both food and timber – our two biggest items of foreign expenditure. Timber alone, in all its forms, costs us £1m every 3¼ hours and food much more; but the fierce competition between these two primary users of the land is only part of the battle.

Other warring factions with strongly legitimate claims to a share of the land are wildlife conservation, landscape protection and enhancement, public recreation and sport. The competing pressures upon the countryside become stronger every day. There are the economic pressures to produce more food and more timber more efficiently; there is the growing desire of our population, nine-tenths town dwellers, to escape in an age of increasing leisure from the concrete jungle to the peace of the countryside; there are also natural disasters like elm disease which transform the landscape; there is the threat to wildlife from all of these.

At first sight the conflict of interests may appear quite irreconcilable. However, it is more than natural optimism that gives me hope that solutions are possible. For a start, it should be remembered that the conflict is not new, although growing in intensity, and that there are countless examples of where the many rival interests have been, and still are being, harmoniously blended. These good examples cover about a third of the countryside. They consist of what remains of private family estates embodying whole groups of farms, woodlands and villages. Sadly, in one lifetime they have diminished so rapidly in number and size that the countryside they embraced has fallen

from just under 90% of the total to under 40%; and the decline continues.

For centuries these estates created and cared for a beautiful and comprehensively integrated countryside. Now their irreversible fragmentation by politics and taxation makes the problem of well balanced treatment immeasurably harder. Landowners themselves are partly to blame for their own decline, because of their failure to win public sympathy through the proper presentation of the cast-iron case for the continuation of family estates. Although long since replaced by the barons of industry as the main targets of Socialist reformers, their tarnished reputation has wrongly persisted. Starry-eyed conservationists and ecologists from the towns have often supported fragmentation policies with loud cries of 'anachronism', while even many Tory politicians and journalists have regarded landowners at best with suspicion.

Yet, just when it is almost too late, the best defence ever presented for private family estates has come from a most unexpected quarter – from the high-powered Committee of Inquiry set up by the last Labour Government, with Lord Northfield, a former Labour MP, as Chairman, presumably for the purpose of hammering the last nail into the coffin of 'wicked Tory landowners'. Instead of which it did the very reverse. Never before has any country enjoyed so thorough an examination of all aspects of the ownership and occupation of the countryside, or of a report based on such well documented research by a team of men of such practical experience and wisdom. Let their report speak for itself:

'The good private landlord has brought great benefit to farming, countryside and the quality of rural life.

Through a sense of 'stewardship' he has worked actively to create and preserve the beauty of the landscape and has exercised social responsibility for local communities . . . It is often possible to achieve the best integrated use of land where it is owned in relatively large blocks in which agricultural, forestry, sporting and recreational uses can be combined . . . Landlords, particularly if they own sizable estates, may be better placed than owner-occupiers to protect the appearance of the countryside or to organise schemes for its enhancement . . . A further argument in favour of the traditional private landed estate is that it is an entity which is much better managed as a unit by a private owner and his family than split into separate units of owner-occupation and that the country would be poorer without it . . . We recognise that the number of private landlords is falling. We attach importance to the private landlord as the major owner of let land and as, traditionally, of considerable benefit to farming, the countryside and local communities. Most of us believe that the pressures on private landlords should be mitigated so that the rate of decline can be steadied.'

It is remarkable that virtually no publicity has ever been given to these statements. One might wonder whether swallowing fashionable words like 'anachronism' is too uncomfortable an exercise. Of course I understand the anxieties associated with the idea of 'vast accumulations of inherited wealth', a phrase which journalists almost invariably use to link landowners to the public mind; but there are two salient points to remember. Most landowners are simply trustees or stewards during their lifetime of part of the nation's heritage that relies upon policies with a time scale of five or more generations to be successful.

Hardwood crops of oak may take 150 years to reach maturity, and even conifer softwoods require two or three generations of loving care. Secondly, the biggest estates consist mainly of tenanted windswept hills where 100,000 acres can be worth less than 500 acres of prime arable land in East Anglia or the Home Counties, or a handful of acres of urban land, or individual shops, offices and hotels.

As there are fewer than 10 estates, of which Buccleuch Estates is one, of more than 100,000 acres, this should hardly be a matter for much political excitement, especially with several prominent Socialists sitting on more than 500 acres of highest quality farmland. The National Trust is universally acclaimed for its superb work in conserving the National Heritage – and rightly so. Yet most family estates fulfil an identical role, without the taxation benefits the Trust enjoys, and are publicly castigated for their pains! For instance, I am responsible for several of the nation's finest historic houses – Boughton House, Bowhill, Branksome, Caroline Park, Dalkeith Drumlanrig Castle – and six villages containing over 200 listed buildings and churches, not to mention such structures as bridges, dovecotes and farm houses. Their survival, which no one would oppose, depends entirely upon the efficient production of food and timber from

their associated estates. The advocates of Wealth Tax (which incidentally we have already in the form of Capital Gains Tax and Capital Transfer Tax) might note that every extra £1 removed in tax means £1 less for investment in a business that is satisfying public demands at a fraction of the cost to the taxpayer of any alternative method.

It is easy to destroy but hard to replace what has been destroyed with something better. I would challenge anyone to show how the break-up of family estates has been of any local or national benefit whatever. And those who advocate nationalisation as an alternative to family estates might ponder the words of the Northfield Committee, which carry more weight than anything I could say:

'The agricultural objectives of total or partial ownership of land by the State are not clear. We saw no evidence to demonstrate that efficiency would be improved or that the cost of producing food would be reduced.

We firmly believe that the arguments put forward in favour of full nationalisation of agricultural land are academic, take little account of the practicalities of farm and land management and cannot be seen as an attempt to improve the performance of British agriculture. We conclude that there can only be political reasons for such a course of action. On agricultural grounds we reject proposals for general nationalisation of agricultural land.'

It is, however, all very well to make challenges. The public and politicians are entitled to convincing evidence. Unless landowners are willing to provide it, their case will go by default as it might deserve to do. Time is running out. No doubt there is the odd bad landowner as there is the odd mediocrity in every walk of life, but by and large they do an excellent job and must, with the stimulating support of the Northfield Committee, show that this is so. If certain landowners in every county and constituency were to invite MPs, parliamentary candidates, councillors, journalists and others of influence to come on fact-finding visits, preferably individually, with all cards put on the table, there would, I am certain, be a rapid transformation of public attitudes. Simple ignorance is our enemy, and I would enthusiastically recommend 'Estate Open' days – certainly for all school children and, if possible, for adults too, throughout the land.

From several years' practical experience of doing this in three different parts of the country, I know just how rewarding it can be. With this operation multiplied throughout the United Kingdom, I believe that quite soon we will have a generation that can bridge that gap in understanding, between town and country, to the advantage of everyone. Most hostility in the battle for the countryside stems from misunderstandings; and while legislation, such as that embodied in the Wildlife and Countryside Bill, may help in some respects, there can be no substitute for the complete open and frank exposure of exactly what is going on. I firmly believe it is for landowners to take the initiative.

Dissent, the Church and the English Nation

Paul Helm

Any reader of the first issues of *The Salisbury Review* might be forgiven for thinking that the Church of England is the church in England, or that it alone, among the churches of England has been and could still be the bearer of conservative values.¹ The Church of England, we are told, takes the *via media* between Rome and sectarian Protestantism, recognises the Royal Supremacy over the church, and the importance of sweet reasonableness in religion, and it alone has a concern for the wider welfare of the whole community. We are asked to conclude that the Church of England is the English Church, 'the historic church in this land'. In claiming England for Anglicans, Mr Sisson evidently wishes to convey to the readers of the *Review* that the Free Churches in England are on a chosen path of individualistic sectarianism, and today regard the State as Dissenters have always regarded it; as, at best, neutral and secular, at worst demonic. The Puritans, we learn, thought that the state was 'unsanctified' and modern Puritans think the same.

This picture of Protestant Dissent in England is a prevalent one. It is currently held, for example, by an influential writer from a sharply different shade of the political spectrum from Mr Sisson, E. P. Thompson. He claims that English Dissent in the eighteenth century was overtaken and outstripped by the Toryism and centralism of Wesleyan Methodism, yet it retains, to this day, a free intellectual life and the room for experiments in democracy,² experiments which Mr Thompson seems to think are even now being conducted by the chapelgoers who lend support to C.N.D.³

So from one side an impression is given, and then reinforced from another side, that English Dissent is, in its very nature, a politically radical force. It may be worth while spending a little time in correcting this one-sided picture.

It is an unfortunate fact that the effort of correcting this imbalance is made more difficult than it would otherwise be because the present day 'Free Churches', the lineal descendents of 'Old Dissent' (though now encompassing the Methodists as well) have lent plausibility to this picture of themselves as forming a scatter of radical conventicles. In the eyes of their ecclesiastical leaders they are sects, well free of any formal entanglement with the State. The same leaders often given voice to a muted and distrustful radicalism, somewhat uneasily coupled (it must be said) with a vague longing for episcopacy. But the present day political radicalism among Dissenters, such as it is, goes back, largely through the Unitarians and Quakers (with some support from Methodism), to earlier forms of radical protest at the time of the formation of the

Labour Movement, and to still earlier forms (though now without Methodism) at the time of the French Revolution and immediately afterwards. These phases of radical protest were, and are, largely the product of 'free-thinking' Dissenters. But this tradition of radical protest among Dissenters is untypical of Dissent as a whole, and ought not to be confused, as it often is, with the Dissenters' historic protest against discriminatory legislation in worship, employment and education. This was something else, as we shall see.

What, then, is historic Dissent? Dissenters were the creation of the watershed legislation of 1662, the Act of Uniformity, the perpetuation of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 against which the Puritans had protested. This resulted in about two thousand ministers who could not in conscience subscribe to its terms being deprived of their livings, and gave rise to a spate of clandestine meetings which swelled the ranks of the separatist tradition which had continued from the Commonwealth period. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 provided for limited toleration towards the more doctrinally orthodox of such groups; orthodoxy being measured by certain of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England.

Whatever the character and political complexion of Puritanism before 1622 – and it varied from the fanatic Millenarianism of Gerard Winstanley to the staid, conservative Presbyterianism of Richard Baxter – the character first of the restored monarchy and then of the House of Orange unified and focussed the character of Dissent. When attempts at ecclesiastical comprehension failed in the 1660's, Puritanism was outlawed, for a mixture of political and theological reasons, and then, its loyalty to the Protestant Crown of William and Mary being assured, it was domesticated – granted toleration under specific conditions, those conditions giving rise (in the Dissenters' eyes) to a specific set of grievances.

Why was mainstream Puritanism outlawed in 1662 and fashioned into Dissent? Mr Sisson mentions, as Richard Hooker's vision, 'an England in which Church and State live as one, without either yielding to the other any part of its proper authority'.⁴ Prior to 1662 this was the mainstream Puritan view as well, just as it was Knox's and Calvin's. For such theologian-statesmen the question at issue was not whether the State ought to yield some of its authority to the Church, or the Church to the State, but precisely what was the proper balance between the two. It must be emphasised that this issue did not embrace republicanism, or revolution, or 'democracy', but it turned on the following nice *theological* question: Does the State, i.e. the King in or outside Parliament have

(divine) authority to legislate a uniformity of church order and worship, elements of which (it was agreed on all hands) were not positively sanctioned by Scripture? Or ought the State to legislate permissively, regarding such matters as 'things indifferent', thus ensuring comprehension, the continuation of a variety of churchmanship within the Church of England. Or, finally, ought the State to sanction only those forms of church government and order which could be derived from Scripture alone?

These were the debated questions, but the debate was cut short, despite Charles' 1660 promise of 'liberty for tender consciences', by the 1662 legislation, and the St. Bartholemew's Day ejection of those hundreds of ministers who refused in conscience to profess beliefs which they held to be falsely imposed on them by a law which they regarded as unwarranted – 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled "The Book of Common Prayer" . . .', an assent and consent which the Church of England now does not require of itself. The idea that Dissent arose as the only way in which an outlet could be found for spontaneous, vigorous and varied expressions of the Gospel⁵ is at best a romantic mis-reading of the past, while to suppose that Dissent arose as a means for gaining a greater measure of political democracy is plainly false. Hard though it may be for us to grasp the fact, Dissent was the creation of political theology which forced one strand of English Christianity into social exile.

By 1662 the goals of a state-imposed scriptural church government, or of national ecclesiastical comprehension had gone, and gone for good. Yet it is beyond question that the vast majority of those ministers who were ejected in 1662, and the hundreds of illicit conventicles which sprang up then, and whose existence came to be officially recognised as Dissenting meeting-houses a generation later, valued the state connection. It was the nature of the State's supervision of worship, its unacceptable proposals for comprehension, that drove Dissenters into non-conformity, into forming the 'seditious conventicles' suppressed by the 1664 Conventicle Act. By and large their view was that the magistrate's duty was to uphold the moral law, the law of God, within society at large, and to preserve and protect Christian worship. Not for them the thought that the State was to be secular and religiously neutral or democratically levelled. To forget this is to ignore the strong Calvinist element within orthodox Dissent. Even in a pagan state, 'the dominion of infidels' the Dissenters would have recognised, with St. Paul, that 'the powers that be are ordained of God'. Under such conditions there ought, they held, to be obedience to all laws that do not require sin, and such protest against undesirable legislation as the law itself allowed. In this they were as cautious as Edward Norman abjures Christians today to be in identifying the ultimate purposes of God with the shifting values of contemporary society.⁶ And so we find successive generations of Dissenters, under peaceable protest, living with the disabilities of the Test and Corporation Acts until they were repealed in 1828.

Behind this endorsement of apostolic teaching was the

belief that the positive benefits conferred on men and women by their allegiance to a common political authority, even a corrupt one, outweighed the losses that anarchy would bring, and were part of the God-ordained order of things. In suffering with quiet dignity the loss of their livings in 1662, and of many privileges since, the Dissenters bore eloquent testimony both to their respect for Scripture and to the legitimacy of the State as it was. This was further underlined in 1688 when, afforded limited toleration, orthodox Dissenters were recognised *de jure* as an important part of the Protestant establishment, a position which they had always occupied *de facto*. This is remarkable given a situation in which, in Bernard Lord Manning's words, 'their country reserved certain duties, powers, rights, honours and responsibilities for the National Church alone'.⁷ From 1688 onwards the Dissenters may have become skilful in extending the processes of democracy in order to gain redress of their grievances, but they never offered a critique of the basic structure of English society. The 1688 settlement would not be comprehensible if it were supposed that there was less than basic constitutional unity between Dissent and the Church of England. Not even the most ardent Puritan who thought (reasonably enough) that Mary Tudor and Charles II were tyrannical could think the same of William and Mary in 1688. It is not so much the influence of John Locke which explains the attractions of the 1688 settlement to Dissent as its basic Protestantism, its tradition of appeal to natural law filled out by Scripture, and its tradition of resistance to tyranny. Faced with the return of James II what else could Dissenters do than make common cause with the established church in welcoming William and Mary?

The political bearing of this should be clear. Dissent was not primarily a political or social movement of radical dissent, but religious and theological. It was reactive rather than revolutionary. Such political radicals as there were within Dissent after 1688 were, as Donald Davie has plausibly argued, in effect 'entryists'.⁸ No doubt the fact of Dissent had had important social consequences as Dissenters together remembered 'Black Bartholemew', and as they worshipped and were educated together. It would hardly be surprising, in these circumstances, if the enforced Dissent of one generation became the willing and principled separatism of another. Perhaps these cultural and social differences contributed to the growth of a distinct 'structure of feeling'. But even where such growth occurred, as it undoubtedly did in certain regions of England, Dissent carried with it a basic loyalty to the political settlement of 1688 shared by members of the Church of England except the non-Jurors, a loyalty to the monarchy and to the Protestantism of the Church of England (coupled with opposition to those who paid political allegiance to Rome), and to Parliament from whom they hoped for a redress of their grievances. Millenarians apart – and many of those who earlier had spoken of a new Zion had by 1688 come to have slimmed-down expectations – Dissenters could not use the events either of 1662 or 1688 as a precedent for all-or-nothing social change. In working over the years for the repeal of

specific laws 'it was' (as Manning wrote of the Protestant Dissenting Deputies) 'their deepest instinct to distrust the doctrinaire proposal. They had always proceeded against specific practical grievances, and general campaigns were outside their field'.⁹ This is true of Dissent as a whole.

So there is nothing inherent in orthodox Dissent, nothing of principle, to support the view that Dissent does not recognise, every bit as much as Hooker's followers ought to, according to Mr Sisson, the God-given-ness of the State, the magistrate's benign superintendence of religion and of the life of the nation in accordance with the moral law, and a concern for the wider welfare of society, though how such a concern is to be measured is something of a problem. And not only is there nothing essentially radical about historic Dissent but, as Donald Davie has recently shown,¹⁰ to suppose that Dissent was even uniformly Whiggish is to misread history. And this even though Dissenting chapels were often thorns in the side of High Tory vicars, and *vice versa*.

To be critical of Anglican religious hegemony is not a sign of radicalism. But with no prospect of overturning the law of 1662, Dissent came to argue that as trade ought to be free, so ought there to be a laissez-faire in ecclesiastical affairs within the constitutional constraints of 1688. It is only in the 1880's and 1890's, the era of the 'Non-conformist Conscience', that politics and religion were brought together, when it was thought that legislation could improve the moral character of the nation. Here

Dissent lost its way, both politically and theologically, and we are living in its aftermath.

So the Orthodox Dissenter finds much to regret in the present ethos of the Free Churches. Besides the fusing of religion and politics he regrets the deep conceptual shifts marked by the transformation of historic Dissent into today's bloodless 'Free Churches'. Free of the State they may be, but free in what positive sense? Free from history? The original Dissenting congregations did not regard themselves as free from history but as bound, though in different ways, to Scripture, the English nation and even the Church of England. 'Not a few Free Churchmen, like myself . . . have a tender regard for the Church of England, as it now stands as a national institution, while we shrink with some horror from the thought of its being turned into a disestablished, self-governing episcopalian sect.'¹¹ The current emphasis on 'Free' in 'Free Church' loses the basic avowed theological and constitutional outlook which Dissent had with that body from which it dissented. Small wonder if the Free Churches, albeit somewhat unreasonably, are treated as rootless sects.

It is because the orthodox Dissenter recognises and values his own roots and this historic unity of outlook that he will share Mr Sisson's bemusement over the present state of things: the problem of the relationship between church and state in a situation in which the state is politically supreme, coupled with the desire of many within the historic churches of England to press for a state that is still more secularised.

Notes

1. See, as evidence, C. H. Sisson 'Richard Hooker and "Ecclesiastical Polity"' (*Salisbury Review* 2), David Martin, 'Where Stands the Prayer Book Now?' (*Salisbury Review* 2 and 3) and Peter Moore, 'Tradition and Worship' (*Salisbury Review* 4), 'Tradition and doctrine were committed to writing by the early Fathers and handed on through the Reformation to the Anglican Church'.
2. E. P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1968), Ch. 2. In fact Mr Thompson's thesis about the radicalism of Dissent is so qualified as to be virtually unfalsifiable. Only the impression remains.
3. E. P. Thompson, *The Defence of Britain* (London, Merlin, 1983).
4. C. H. Sisson, p. 22.
5. See Ernest Payne, quoted in Christopher Driver, *A Future for the Free Churches?* (London, S. C. M. Press, 1962) p. 22.
6. Edward Norman, *Christianity and The World Order*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979) p. 73.
7. Bernard Lord Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies* (Cambridge, C.U.P., 1952) p. 2.
8. Donald Davie, *Dissentient Voice* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), e.g. p. 65.
9. Bernard Lord Manning, p. 7.
10. Donald Davie, pp. 88, 98-9.
11. Bernard Lord Manning, *Essays in Orthodox Dissent*, (London, Independent Press, 1939) p. 208.

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Shakespeare as a Conservative Thinker

R. A. D. Grant

To conscript the world's greatest dramatist into the conservative cause – it will be said – is impertinence enough. But by what right, in any case, do we assimilate drama to thought, political or other? Are these not two categorically distinct things?

It depends, I think, on what we understand by thought. Some thought is wholly abstract. Mathematics is certainly real, but it is not rooted (alternatively, no longer rooted) in the 'real' world. In mathematics, thought and object are identical. Gastronomy, by contrast, is concrete: here thought is a kind of cognitive nimbus surrounding and directly emanating from its objects, the activities of cooking and eating. It is obviously 'appropriate'. But what, in politics, is the appropriate kind of thinking? What is a political 'object'? Is drama a form of thought, and if so, has it any categorical overlap with politics?

Drama and political thought both stand in some recognisable, if obscure, relation to the 'real' world. Lord Butler once aptly characterised politics as 'the art of the possible'. This civilised formulation finds a tantalising echo in Aristotle's definition of drama as (in so many words) the art of the probable. Perhaps what makes drama plausible is also what makes politics – of Lord Butler's brand – 'possible', namely, a shared recognition as to the nature of human things and a common fidelity to their lived surface. But if so, we are committed no more to a slavish naturalism in drama than to a shallow pragmatism in politics. For in both spheres we typify and generalise; in both, our understanding is grounded (like our consciousness of self) upon a partial transcendence of the immediate. Both, to that extent, are modes of thought, even of abstraction. But in each we also recognise that to transcend all possible circumstance, to transcend circumstantiality itself, is at the same time to take leave of the human.¹

In the understanding of human things, then, there is a natural limit to the degree of abstraction we may relevantly bring to bear. No serious political thought can begin otherwise than in a reasoned account of the experiences of ruling and being ruled, and of the social life or 'culture' of which they are a part. Political 'theory', however, all too often begins elsewhere; usually in some abstract theorem, some 'ghostly paradigm of things', to which the real world is supposed, or must be forced, to conform. There is something intrinsically undramatic, because abstract, about such would-be absolutes as 'social justice' or 'individual freedom'. They cannot stand the test of the concrete. Translated to the stage or the theatre of practice, each must either lose itself in a maze of qualifications and contradictions, or produce not drama,

but melodrama. Of course, a good dramatist may well have no explicit political convictions. But conservatism shares the presupposition of successful drama, that if the social, the human fact has not been grasped in something like its full, concrete extension, then it has not been grasped at all.

Shakespeare shows a highly educated acquaintance with political theory, but – perhaps in consequence – he is not a political theorist. He is, however, an unmatched political observer. And that might well be sufficient. For his imaginative portrayal of political events constitutes a genuine, a decidedly 'appropriate', mode of thinking about politics. In his portraits of private life there is also, and most importantly, a sort of tacit politics. For Shakespeare is essentially an Aristotelian, for whom politics, morals, manners and civil society are mutually reinforcing parts of a single organic whole.² A standpoint in any one of these aspects of the social order thus always implies a simultaneous perspective on the rest.

There are, as suggested above, two main kinds of political thinking in Shakespeare. It will be no more misleading than the alternatives to refer to them as involving a 'public' or 'objective' standpoint on the one hand and a 'private' or 'moral' standpoint on the other. The first is especially characteristic of the Histories – in particular the so-called Second Tetralogy (*Richard II* to *Henry V*) – and one, at the very least, of the Roman plays, *Julius Caesar*. These dramatic documentaries deal with familiar issues such as legitimacy, authority, power, succession and office, but not on the abstract plane. Someone once suggestively observed that in these plays the real protagonist is the nation. Certainly there are no heroes in the usual sense. The official incumbents are generally indifferent or unsympathetic. Shakespeare's favourites and ours lie outside the real mainstream of politics; almost inevitably, since where authority is lacking or contested, political life and those who succeed in it will always be less than attractive. The only really likeable major characters in the tetralogy are Hotspur and Falstaff, both essentially 'private' men. They are the twin poles between whom the 'public' Prince Hal is suspended, and both are defeated, each, as it happens, by him. The madcap, freebooting nobility of the one and the engaging villainy of the other are equally out of place in the sober world of cold-blooded realism that does, and must, carry the day.

The Second Tetralogy depicts the rupture and restoration of social order. It dramatises the process whereby, and the conditions under which, authority is lost and won. But Henry V's authority is different from that lost by Richard. The plays chart a progression from one

sort of legitimacy to another; from a metaphysical, abstract *jus* to a more pragmatic, concrete *lex*; from a feudal to an essentially bourgeois order. Each has its characteristic dramatic ethos.

The Ricardian idiom is a kind of *pourriture noble*. It is at its most fragrant in the unfortunate Mowbray, whose feudal loyalty has been reduced by Richard's shameless exploitation of it to a mere personal ornament. The robust Bolingbroke converses largely in vigorous insults. But Mowbray speaks in the naïve accents of a sad Christian gentleman, overtaken by events he lacks either the will or the capacity to understand. His lines have a ritual, incantatory quality, as though he needed to persuade himself of their truth:

My dear dear lord,
The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation – that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.
A jewel in a ten-times-barred-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honour is my life, both grow in one;
Take honour from me, and my life is done.

But done it already is, since his sovereign engaged him to murder the Duke of Gloucester. Whether or not he has actually done so, either way his honour is compromised.

Even Richard's utterance acquires a certain charm, as his real empire of things gives way to a fantastic empire of words. He speaks in a precious *Jugendstil*, aimlessly spiralling off into euphuistic quips, curlicues and conceits. These frail tendrils, vainly seeking to root themselves in reality, clutch in the end only the shadow of a lonely, abandoned self. There is an effete moral lyricism about it all, whose genuine pathos derives from its saccharine flavour of invincible self-pity. Governed by a refined version of the pleasure-principle, Richard and his satellites take refuge in the omnipotence of thoughts. Theirs is the second childhood of political senility. Right, no doubt, is a gift of God, but it has subsequently to be deserved. Unless animated by a lively patriotism it proves defeasible. For patriotism, even in a usurper, generates its own kind of semi-divine right. To be patriotic is to uphold law, precedent, degree, succession, and that whole hallowed framework of settled expectations which constitutes a national culture. As the Duke of York observes, these things are in fact the ground of hereditary right, and a king who plays ducks and drakes with them gambles also with his title.

The Lancastrian order enacts a gradual re-alignment of the ruler's personal will with the national spirit. This is achieved through his re-assertion of law: a law to which, if he is to embody it convincingly, he must himself be seen to conform. But he must first resuscitate it, and he can only do this effectively by sacrificing, not only the self-will that was Richard's downfall, but also his private personality. It is no wonder that, underneath all the public-relations glamour, Henry V should prove so very charmless. Julius Caesar is a tragic parallel. In order to re-create in his own will the constancy and impartiality of law, he must

conceive himself only in the third person. He erects his name into the title it has subsequently become. His enemies are indisposed to distinguish this noble artifice from ambition. They see through it only to its author, and what they see, by definition, can have little purchase on their affections.

The house of Lancaster were never a very appealing lot. Their patriotism was not always distinguishable from opportunism. Their yeoman bluntness and beef-eating *bonhomie* (Bolingbroke) were intelligibly related to a certain prim narrowness and conventionality (Prince John). John of Gaunt apart, their highest flights of imagination were poetry of the war memorial kind, by which they sought to dignify the realism and expediency on which they really thrived. Masterly in the rhetorical use of *mauvaise foi*, they came honestly to believe their own fabrications. Yet in *Henry V* the Lancastrian ethos is vindicated, not in terms of its moral excellence or aesthetic seemliness, but simply in terms of necessity. Without the order it guarantees, the more civilised values it has temporarily obscured can never again flourish.

Irony, of course, is unremittingly active at the local level. Henry's most stirring exhortations are no sooner delivered than burlesqued or otherwise qualified. Yet in the overall view irony seems to be lacking. What looks at first like an elegant triumph of authorial duplicity is perhaps no such thing. We know of course, that national unity is being secured, on Henry's father's advice, by a flagrantly unjust military adventure. (Pistol and his cronies accordingly enlist, reconciled in the common enterprise of plunder.) Sanctified by pliant clerics under threat of losing their privileges, it is excusable only by the frivolous, snobbish and irresponsible – indeed altogether Ricardian – character of the French nobility. Morally speaking, the French-backed conspiracy, like the Dauphin's tennis-balls, is a godsend; both occur after Henry's decision to go to war.

Yet without national unity – of classes, interests, and regions – there is no end to the misery of civil war. The legitimist cause is long dead;³ tired of hypocrisy, the rebels against Henry IV had latterly sought no further excuse than private grievance. Where national survival is at stake, Shakespeare implies, a radical irony at the expense of the only plausible centre of authority is too much of a luxury. Accordingly, *Henry V* sees Bardolph hanged, Pistol thrashed, and Falstaff dead of a broken heart. A world permanently without an Eastcheap would be a sorry place: 'Banish fat Jack, and banish all the world'.⁴ But an Eastcheap that breaks bounds, and does not know when to keep silence, does not know, either, which side its bread is buttered. It has become worse than tiresome.

I refer primarily to the wonderful scene in *Henry IV Part II* where Pistol arrives to shatter the rural tranquillity of Shallow's orchard with the news of Prince Hal's accession. This scene has an economy, a tact, and a poignant beauty (to say nothing of the Pistol-shot) rivalled only by Chekhov. It is the still point of the turning world, a moment of dramatic stasis on which all else seems to hinge. It is, in fact, an idyll, but an idyll that only gathers force from Shakespeare's truly masterly refusal to

idealise. We have just seen the new king submit himself, against all public expectation, to the paternal guidance of Falstaff's enemy, the admirable Lord Chief Justice. To what end is this grim, grand pledge of an Aristotelian 'government of laws, not men'? For this, says the sequel: that a foolish country justice (himself an important instrument of law), a parvenu squire, may regale his visitors, neighbours and servants with wine, a dish of caraways, and some apples of his own grafting, in a touching and much more than passable display of traditional hospitality.⁵ These, Shakespeare seems to say, are the true arts of peace, no less desirable for being temporarily embodied in a Justice Shallow.

In this artless merriment, punctuated by scraps of old ballads from Justice Silence, all differences are sunk: the differences between youth and age, town and country, master and servant. (So much for the class struggle.) Even Falstaff, forgetting that he has come to rob his host, joins happily in the roster of healths, moved (one fancies) by a mildly envious wonder and regret at an innocence which, for all his generosity of spirit, he himself can never recapture. This, and much greater, is made possible by the laws of England. It is a bourgeois dream, eminently predictable (some would say) of the glover's son who, having made his fortune hawking the same from the public boards, retires to his home town as a freeman of Stratford, there to dabble in local real estate. Its moral furniture, doubtless, is reproduction antique. But do those who would despise it know of anything more comfortable, of anything more admirably tailored to the human moral anatomy as we know it? Is it not because of its genuine antiquity, its enduring appropriateness to the human condition, that it continues to be reproduced?

If we have caught Shakespeare's drift, we cannot doubt the answers. We will see how Falstaff can be said to sign his own death-warrant when, at the end of the orchard scene, tenderly supposing that 'the young King is sick for me', he hastens to London with the lavish invitation, 'Take any man's horses thou wilt – the laws of England are at my commandment.' 'Falstaff', the Arden edition pertinently observes, 'arrogates a power which had been thought matter for deposition when claimed even by the legitimate sovereign.'⁶ The laws are no longer at anyone's arbitrary commandment, not even the king's.

Much has been written about Shakespeare and [the] law. All that needs saying here is that his allegiance to the rule of law is not of the liberal kind. The rule of law is neither an end in itself, nor merely a means (to such weightless desiderata as 'freedom', 'privacy', or 'moral choice'). For Shakespeare, it would seem, as for the conservative, law, civil society and the state form a continuous circle. For it is not merely through, but *in* law and other institutions of state that private life seeks recognition for its deepest moral intuitions. Law otherwise, no matter how fairly administered, is not apprehended as 'just'. (One of the problems, incidentally, of empire.) And it is also through law that the state exacts from private life the active participation and obedience that these values require for their effective defence.

Thus law possesses at once the majesty of state, the

moral immediacy of the private sphere, and the human density of both. Shakespeare's vision is in a different world from those Whiggish fantasies, the clockwork or the night-watchman state. Either might elicit one's theoretical admiration (so might a perpetual-motion machine), but could either excite one's loyalty? No state can run itself: the virtue and loyalty of its citizens and functionaries (see *Measure for Measure*) are indispensable. When the moral impulse fails, anywhere – from the sovereign downwards – the seeds of disorder are sown. Order only re-emerges when power or constituted authority, as may be, realises that force alone is insufficient to secure it against competition.

Though he admires courage and the soldierly virtues, Shakespeare is no defender of the eristic principle. Unlike Nietzsche, or the 'Elizabethan' Machiavelli, or his own contemporaries Marlowe and Chapman, he has a deep distrust of the Renaissance individualist. In the words of his Ulysses, individualism is 'an envious fever Of pale and bloodless emulation'. It finds its excuse in 'moral subjectivism'. But that threatens the common values without which no society can exist. It is also a source of tragic delusion, as Troilus, Edmund and the Macbeths variously discover. For individualism leads to something worse than secular defeat, namely, to the amazed discovery that one does not, in any properly human sense, exist. If one denies the ethical reality of society or other people (or, like Troilus, wilfully invests them with one's own), there remains nothing to illuminate one's own ethical reality but the brief candle of one's isolated, unsupported will.

The opposite of individualism is 'degree.' Substantially F. H. Bradley's idea of 'my station and its duties', it is a subject on which Shakespeare seems, more than once, to break his customary authorial silence. The most striking of these occasions is perhaps Ulysses' famous speech in *Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii. The immediate context is a commanders' conference called to determine why the Trojan War is going so badly. Ulysses' diagnosis (clearly the right one) singles out a general spirit of insubordination fostered by the example of the vain and sulky Achilles. But the speech's local dramatic relevance is soon exhausted, and it takes on an eloquent philosophical life of its own. Degree may well be 'the ladder of all high designs' such as war, or other forms of what Oakeshott (in *On Human Conduct*) has termed 'enterprise association'. But it is also something more. For without it, Ulysses observes,

How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenity and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?

This is more like Oakeshott's 'civil association', being the permanent institutions, from the spontaneous to the formal, of any civilised culture. To the Marxist, of course, these things are means, namely, the masks of power. But for Shakespeare they are clearly ends in themselves,

requiring neither explanation nor justification. Except perhaps this, that the only alternative, in the absence of degree, is 'mere oppugnancy', a Hobbesian state of nature, in which

Force should be right, or rather right and wrong –
Between whose endless jar justice resides –
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite,
And appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up himself.

Shakespeare is as aware as Hobbes that, in the absence of authority, man's life is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. But his conception of authority comprehends the complexities of human allegiance in a way impossible for the political geometrician. Shakespearean man is not primarily concerned to save his own skin. Loyalty is more than prudence, because authority is more than force. If authority is in some sense conditional, its conditionality is not that of contract. And though hierarchy is involved, Shakespeare's *polis* is no Byzantium. To 'know one's place' is quite compatible with rising in the world; it is not necessarily to remain rooted to the social spot. Rather, it is to understand where one is at any given time, and the duties appropriate to that spot. Such duties are like law in this, that they embody the myriad moral intuitions of everyday life, and thence derive their legitimacy. They are not arbitrarily prescribed, but simply given in the human condition as it is here and now. They cannot be maintained without sovereign authority. But nor can it be maintained if it ceases to maintain them.

Degree, in fact, signifies much more than rank; it signifies a whole complex of customary obligations, most of which are common to every social station: duties to youth and age, strangers and kin, the powerful and the weak, to children, spouse and the opposite sex, to the sovereign and his officers. Such things would be worthless (as well as impossible) if observed only under compulsion. So it is the business of authority, diffused throughout the social order, not to indoctrinate, but to educate; to develop and reinforce, not to supplant, humanity's spontaneous promptings towards order. It is for this reason that, in that remarkable political fable *The Tempest*, Prospero finally renounces his 'rough magic': once his various subjects have all received their moral education (a thing possible in this imaginary world), force is thereafter superfluous. In T. H. Green's formula, 'will, not force, is the basis of the state'. (Of course, he does not mean by 'will' what Ulysses means, but precisely the opposite.)

To accept legitimate authority is to be morally educated. There is a circle here, but it is not a vicious circle. For rational assent differs from acceptance under duress, which does not of itself confer legitimacy. To consent is not merely to submit to a 'common power', it is to mingle in the common life, to be understood by one's fellows, to speak the same language. It is to see them, not

as potentially hostile fellow-clients, but as co-participants in culture. It is to exist, because one belongs. Such a conception transcends the liberal or Hobbesian order, which merely guarantees each individual's right to a limited quota of egoism. A man whose egoism has been freely surrendered is freed from the irritable necessity of defining himself through conflict, and freed also for the better performance of his duties. He accepts limitation, because he does not experience it as such. He is neither servile nor blinkered. On the contrary, he will not only act gracefully, he will also cease, unlike the individualist, to perceive the world through a distorting haze of self-interest. Being in touch with reality, he will also be in touch with that universal 'nature', of which the objective moral order is the most vivid and compelling manifestation, and of which civilisation, so far from being the antithesis, is actually the crown.

Here we arrive at Shakespeare's second political perspective. It is, or rather might seem, more oblique than the first, and is found mainly in the Tragedies. Someone may already have invented the word 'metapolitics' to express what is meant. The poet's immediate focus is not statecraft, but the 'politics' of the *oikos*, of the household gods. In the Histories, pending the restoration of law, morality wore something of a provisional aspect. Political order, being prior to effective moral order, logically occupied the foreground.

But in the tragedies this priority is reversed. Archaic settings affirm enduring values, subject to no historical equivocation, in which all political order is grounded. Such values, however, are not simply 'given in nature', in the sense of deriving from outside the human order. For outside that order there is only the chaos and nightmare of the world revealed to us in *Macbeth* and *King Lear*: a world of Hobbesian struggle, of a decapitated nature, red in tooth and claw, which no-one can invoke as witness to his activities without ceasing to be human. The 'nature' which is the true source of our values and of the ends of human existence is a social and political artefact, but none the less 'natural' for that. For it is 'human nature' to create such an order, and in so doing to become aware of itself. It is, in fact, in the human order alone that the wider natural order becomes articulate; is harmonised, realised, and completed.⁸ A legitimate politics stands to the human order in the same relation as the latter stands to the natural order: as its reflective and executive organ, and therefore as an integral part of it. Thus political order itself becomes an aspect of culture and an object of moral obligation as binding as the more specific loyalties it underwrites. A politics which seeks its justification elsewhere than in those loyalties must necessarily and permanently override them. In so doing it loses its only conceivable justification. Such are the various politics of expediency, utility, ideology, power, and revolution. In offering to overleap the immediate human order, they reduce everything to a world of blind impulse where, in *Macbeth*'s words, 'nothing is but what is not'. They are the politics not only of illegitimacy, but also of evil.

One of the hallmarks of evil in Shakespeare is precisely the freedom (celebrated by Mill) from the 'despotism of

custom'. Evil, said Martin Buber, is 'the impulse separated from the being'⁹. Here the 'being' in question is human, and finds its true identity only in the acceptance of customary constraints, values and order. But Iago, Edmund, Goneril, Regan, Cornwall and Lady Macbeth – like many a 'Modern Master' – have 'seen through' such things. They are nothing if not 'rational'. Given their chosen purposes, they allow no traditional scruples to block the shortest and most economical route to them.

Macbeth, nevertheless, is not a problem. The protagonists secretly subscribe to the order they flout. They are destroyed first and foremost by a guilt which, having failed to recognise it for what it is, they have no means of expiating. Their tragedy begins less in the will-to-evil – for even the virtuous Banquo is tempted – than in moral self-ignorance. The worth of the murdered Duncan, and the order he stands for, is contested by no-one, not even themselves. The ultimate triumph of good is almost a foregone conclusion. This is why, despite the attendant horrors, the general effect – appropriately heightened by a faultless economy of means – is positive, even tonic.

King Lear, on the other hand, is very disturbing. Compared with *Macbeth*, its Expressionist, pantomimic quality is more purely dramatic. It seems to communicate below the level of language and hence below the level of what is familiar. It is both more universal and more subversive of traditional certainties. For what it dares to examine is the viability of a new type of man.¹⁰

The new man is represented by the evil quartet, with the odious Oswald bringing up the opportunist rear. (I ignore Edmund's embarrassing deathbed discovery that he is, after all, human.) These people know exactly what they want and how to get it. Its desirability, to them, is so blankly self-evident as to need no justification; indeed, as even to justify a certain perfunctory self-righteousness in its pursuit. Their cruelty and selfishness have no spiritual dimension. Their own ethical reality interests them no more than others'. To them, others exist, as they themselves do to each other, only as tools or as obstacles. They are as incapable of genuine hate as they are of love. The blinding of Gloucester is more like policy than sadism, no sooner executed than dispatched into oblivion with a coarse jest. Compromised by no real vanity, sapped by no self-doubt, their egoism is completely invulnerable. It moves towards its vacuous goal with the easy, disencumbered confidence, at times even the geniality, of the psychopath. Theirs is truly the banality of evil. It is true that they miscarry or (biologically speaking) prove unviable. But from their point of view, egoistic though it is, that no more argues against their being what they are than, from ours, Cordelia's death argues against goodness. Being (as Albany says) 'monsters', they afford ordinary moral condemnation no foothold.

The challenge they represent is intensified by our awareness that much of what they say is perfectly true. It is tunnel vision, but of a pitiless clarity. If ever there was a vain, silly, capricious, irritating old man who wanted to eat his cake and have it, then King Lear is certainly he. Lear probably ought, as Regan says, to be taught a lesson. His right has been alienated by legitimate transfer.

Strictly speaking, it is non-existent: who ever heard of authority without responsibility? Yet Gloucester, another gullible old fool, is party to a foreign invasion undertaken largely in support of it. By the book he is unquestionably the traitor that Regan and Cornwall sincerely believe him to be. He can count himself lucky to be turned out of his own castle alive.

All this is true, yet, in ignoring so much else that is also true and much more important, it is off the point, reductionist, effectively false. It tells us nothing that we really need to know. What is being left out?

That which is left out is, in a sense, gratuitous; something as gratuitous, and as human, as charity, as Kent's unquenchable loyalty, as Cordelia's sublime forgiveness, as Lear's absurd hundred knights. It is unimportant that Lear is or is not what his daughters say he is. What is important is that he is also something stereotypical: a poor old man, cruelly abandoned to the elements by his own flesh and blood. We know this is important, for we see another old man, with our admiration and approval, defy his sovereign Cornwall and risk death to succour his former king and master, who still retains sufficient royalty to exact unquestioning allegiance (even from those he has wronged). The integrity of the state is important. But it is not as important as this, in defence of which Gloucester loses his eyes. The injustices we have seen and are yet to see should not go unpunished, or (what is worse), remain unremarked. Feudal loyalty is a fine thing. But we know that Cornwall's servant is ineffably right to set it aside in defence of Gloucester's remaining eye. Though only an obscure commoner, he speaks and acts with the whole weight of culture behind him, as Shakespeare's commoners frequently do.

All these are specific instances of 'degree'. But they show not that it is liable to self-contradiction, but that, like law, it binds only when its intrinsic moral requirements have been met. These lie within it, as an essential part of its specification, and are sustained, on occasion, by unilateral faith and trust – that is, by piety. Cornwall is disobeyed, as Richard is deposed, because he is not what the ideal characters of sovereign and liege lord prescribe. His servant is not, in fact, disloyal. Unlike his master, he fulfils his duty to the office that his master has vacated. He kills, not his liege lord, but a tyrannical impostor, a mere natural man. Cornwall is a traitor to his office, that is, to the immanent principle in virtue of which his office is valid, and which binds all offices together in a continuous web of legitimacy.

All this merely re-emphasises that the order of degree is self-subsistent. But, it will be asked, what about 'Poor Tom', the 'unaccommodated man', who led Swinburne to offer us 'Shakespeare the Socialist'? Is not our 'common humanity' the thing to which he appeals, and are they not his 'human rights' of which Lear has previously taken 'too little care'? Do these amiable principles not lie outside the order of degree, and are they not the standard by which its specific provisions should be judged?

The answer in all cases is no. For nothing is more human than to believe in those specific provisions. They are immediate moral reality; 'common humanity' is the

abstraction. They are Kent's 'holy cords' which are 'too intrinse t'unloose'.¹¹ Poor Tom himself has a place in the order of degree. It is not his common humanity that solicits relief, but his nakedness, poverty and lunacy. These things constitute his person or office, and entail rights to which even a Bedlam beggar may pretend. Kent is loyal not to Lear's common humanity, but to his specific person and his dispossessed kingship. It is in such loyalties that common humanity resides, and in their failure to grasp such things that Goneril and Regan put themselves beyond the human pale.

Enlightenment will not help us to clarify such matters, since it all but refuses to admit their existence. It is a form of Philistinism, and the opposite of piety. All it seems safe to say is that the moral pieties both underlie and inform the political order. So far as it embodies them, the political

order stands in no greater need of justification than they do, demanding only acceptance. Of course, both moral and political obligations are subject to change and re-interpretation. (They are more likely to change their object than their essence.) But either may properly be amended or adapted only in accordance with their common principle, which is *sui generis* and irreducibly human. This, for all the differences of emphasis and perspective, is also the message of Histories. It is a message which – to return to our starting point – since its truth is fully apprehensible only in particulars, drama is better fitted than any theoretical lucubrations to convey. It is also a conservative message; or if it is not so nowadays, then it ought to be. For conservatism alone, of all the major traditions of political thought, takes its stand on the fundamentals of the Shakespearean vision.

Notes

1. The point goes back substantially to Aristotle. Beckett's later protagonists, lacking any context but memory, are not recognisably human. But it is his achievement precisely to engage us on their behalf. If there were such beings, he implies, we could only feel pity for them. See Roger Scruton on Beckett in *Encounter*, March 1983, and also his 'Beckett and the Cartesian Soul' in *The Aesthetic Understanding*.
2. Pace T. D. Weldon (*States and Morals*) and others, this view has no affinity whatever with totalitarianism. Totalitarianism subsumes the whole under politics, as puritanism would under morals, snobbery under manners, and so on. It is not even a narrowly *political* view, and is more like an observation than a 'theory'.
3. Shakespeare ignores the fact, mentioned in his sources, that the conspiracy against Henry V was Yorkist. See Arden *Henry V*, pp. 37, 44.
4. 'It is surely obvious that to love Falstaff was a liberal education': William Empson on Prince Hal (quoted Arden *Henry IV I*, xlix).
5. An anarchist (say) might see the orchard scene as symbolising an autonomous cultural tradition independent of the political process, as indeed he might Iden's orchard in *Henry VI 2*. But I think he would be wrong, and the complexities are too great to be argued here.
6. Arden *Henry IV 2*, p. 172, quoting Dr Harold Brooks.
7. See my 'Providence, Authority and the Moral Life in *The Tempest*', *Shakespeare Studies*, XVI (forthcoming).
8. Cf. Polixenes on gardening, *Winter's Tale*, IV, iii; 'The art itself is Nature'. Gardening is a frequent political metaphor in Shakespeare; cf. *Richard II*, III, iv.
9. In *I and Thou*. L. C. Knights quotes this phrase somewhere in a Shakespearean context.
10. See Edwin Muir, 'The Politics of *King Lear*', in *Essays on Literature and Society*.
11. Cf. Scruton's 'transcendent bonds' in *The Meaning of Conservatism*, *passim*.

Letters

Sir: I completely agree with your diagnosis of the thought of Rudolph Bahro (*Salisbury Review* no. 5). In particular you are right to point out the extent to which intellectuals in this part of the world have become used to the language of communism, and the extent to which their thought has been corrupted by it. May I add that our own recent movement for what the communists call 'national liberation' has not been free from this defect? Look at the pronouncements of the intellectuals who have been unable to accept that ours was a rebellion against the world which the intellectuals made for us, and against all they stood for, by people who had no language except the language of refusal, and who fatally depended on others to provide their words. It seems to me that, once again, the wrong words were found, and by the wrong people. Our movement is first and foremost Catholic; it is also patriotic and legitimist; it is directed against a conquering power; but it is also directed – even if it does not 'know' this – against the socialist ideas that made conquest so easy.

T. G.
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Poland

Sir: Through editing, or some other cause, some interesting thoughts that were not mine appeared in 'T. S. Eliot as a Conservative Thinker'.

I do not really believe that 'Our political outlook stems always from sources which lie deeper than the surface stream of political activity'. I agree with the condemnation of 'the proliferation of pornography' although I did not mention it. I am not sure that we are tolerant towards violent men.

I do not know Mrs Thatcher well enough to be able to say that her philosophy 'has been slowly creating out of fragments'. Nor do I know Mr Enoch Powell well enough to comment on his 'yearning for authority'. I did not say that Eliot followed 'an eclectic but logical route' to his baptism. It was much more than that.

Finally, I did not say that without the missing vision, 'the Whiggish liberalism of the market is little better than licensed selfishness and anarchy'.

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EDITORIAL

No large scale production can be undertaken without wealth, and what is seen by the labourer as the precious provision of gainful employment, is seen by his employer as a source of profit. This simple truth about the capitalist economy is not a truth about capitalism alone (unless you make it so by definition). It is as true of the 'socialist' economy as of the capitalist. Large-scale production can be undertaken only by the investment of accumulated wealth. The provision of gainful employment therefore requires both accumulation, and the profit which serves to renew it, and to protect it from the risk of decay.

In a 'socialist' economy, however, wealth and profit accrue not to the individual but to the state. Purists sometimes regard this as a reason for describing the economy of actual 'socialist' countries as 'state capitalism'. Such people remain persuaded of the feasibility of a 'genuine socialist economy' – one with neither profit nor accumulation, except to the benefit of 'society as a whole'. Such a view can play no part in our calculations. For this 'society as a whole' is, in reality, nothing but the state – the entity, whatever form it may take, that is charged with 'the administration of things'. Both logic and human nature lead us to suppose that the primary political choice will always be between two alternatives: the view that wealth and profit should vest in the individual (including the corporate individual), and the view that they should vest in the state.

We live at an interesting period, when it is possible for the first time to take stock of those alternatives, to understand them morally, as they are in themselves, and also politically, in terms of their larger consequences. And while they are not exhaustive – nor wholly exclusive – alternatives, they provide the two paradigms, the two 'ideal types' in terms of which all other possible arrangements may be characterised and judged.

It is fair to say that the conservative mind, acquainted with the facts of recent history, and with the arguments of modern economists and philosophers, has been persuaded by the paradigm of private ownership. This is not to say that private ownership has become, or ought to become the single principle of conservative politics – although there are those who call themselves conservative for whom that is so. It is rather that, in this limited, but all-important, area of political existence, it is private ownership of wealth, rather than ownership by the state, that appears to be the more acceptable paradigm – the paradigm from which our political deliberation must depart, towards whatever necessary compromise might be dictated by our wider circumstances.

Wealth is crystallised power, and to control wealth is to exercise power. All power can be used for good or for ill. State ownership does not extinguish the power that it appropriates; it merely vests control of it in the hands of those who can conveniently hide themselves, and who cannot be made answerable for its exercise. Is it likely that

they will be less tempted by evil, and more prompted by good, than the private capitalist? The answer is obvious, and the facts recorded by Solzhenitsyn, Voinovitch, Zinoviev and a dozen others, speak for themselves. Moreover, state ownership has not shown its superiority over private ownership, in alleviating the sufferings of the poor. Its tendency (vividly displayed by the once flourishing but now devastated economy of Czechoslovakia) is to depress the level of production to a workable minimum. In consequence, basic needs are erratically catered for, black markets flourish uncontrollably, and hidden inequities arise from the fact that almost all transactions are clandestine, and beyond adjudication by the law. In such a situation the poorest are put at an irremediable disadvantage. In the pursuit of any scarce resource – which may include food and medical care – they lack the only bargaining power which could secure their claim.

Private ownership of wealth stimulates production. But this is not its only virtue. It also brings the obligations of wealth into the open, so that they are both morally and legally transparent. Who controls what becomes a perceivable, judiciable, and perhaps also notorious fact. The obligations of wealth become public and palpable. So much so that even the rich may recognise them, and reap the rewards of fulfilling them – something which is unheard of among the untaxable, uncharitable, and secretive millionaires of the 'socialist' economy.

However, the governing perception that wealth ought (on these accounts) to be privately owned, has accompanied a strange reluctance to draw the obvious conclusion – that wealth ought not to be taxed. To tax income (whether profit or pay) is to tax the surplus of production. Under a system of income tax, the state gains from all successful production; but it neither oppresses unsuccessful enterprises, nor damages the resources from which new enterprises begin. To tax wealth, in any form – whether it be inheritance, gift, or existing capital – is to transfer private accumulations to the state, so threatening private production. And what could be the motive for that?

The obvious answer is the correct one. The motive of this tax is envy: the desire not that the poor should be benefited, but that the rich should be harmed. We are taught to believe that no individual *ought* to own more than a modest sum. Either the state itself, or the state acting under pressure from the resentful, insists that only a moderate degree of material success should attend any human project. To think outside the norms countenanced by the multitude is *hubris*, and the state, in our time, is the avenger of *hubris*. We should therefore re-name these unjustified and unjustifiable taxes. We should call them, not 'Capital Gains', or 'Capital Transfer' taxes, but *sumptuary laws*, imposed on us by a power that is envious of our small achievements.

BOOK REVIEWS

BADGE OF DIFFERENCE

Richard Cronin

The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse, Stephen Coote (ed.), Price £3.95

Don Juan's mother thinks only one classical poet suitable for children:

Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one
Beginning with *Formosum pastor Corydon*.

Here, we find that horrid one, in Dryden's stately translation, and others more horrid still, all gathered together by someone called – ghastly coincidence – Coote. Antiquity is a rich source. There are poems from the Greek anthology, examples of what Donna Inez calls 'those nauseous epigrams of Martial', and anyone judging from the selection offered here would find it hard to disagree with her opinion that 'Catullus scarcely wrote a decent poem'. This is an example:

The thing is so ridiculous and funny.
Just now I met a young girl fucking his girl,
So I arose, and by the grace of Venus,
Transfixed him then and there with my own stiff
prick!

Humour too robust, surely, for even the most old fashioned public school.

It is puzzling to know what such lines have in common with lines such as these:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.

Both, it seems, are examples of homosexual verse, but, if so, what is homosexual verse?

The editor explains: 'For me, a gay poem is one that either deals explicitly with gay matters or describes an intense and loving relationship between two people of the same gender.' Both poems are 'gay' then; Shakespeare's because it is a love poem addressed to a man, Catullus's because it deals 'explicitly with gay matters', in this case buggery. But it remains unclear what the two poems have in common.

The editor does not answer my question because it seems to him irrelevant. He includes both poems because both are valuable documents in social history. The anthology may be read as 'a history of the different ways in which homosexual people have been seen and have seen themselves'. But the enterprise, writing a history in the

form of a collection of poems, is surely quixotic, like building the Tower of London out of matchsticks.

The introduction is full of revealing self-contradictions. Sassoon, Nichols and Owen are praised for having written love poems 'entirely untroubled by gender'. I take the point, but once taken, it puts in doubt Coote's whole enterprise, for gender is his only principle of selection. If a poet happened to write a poem so evidently 'a love poem first and a gay poem second' that nothing gave away the sex of the beloved we would not find it here. That is why, presumably, there is no room for one of the century's tenderest love poems, Auden's 'Lay your sleeping head, my love'.

Coote cannot decide whether love that does not express itself in some kind of sexual activity is repressed, or just different. Shakespeare and the Renaissance sonneteers should not, he agrees, really be called homosexuals at all, but he includes their poems all the same. When it comes to the 19th century he is far less trustful. *In Memoriam* is classed as one of those poems that sublimate erotic love into friendship:

He is not here, but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly through the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

This is an expression of 'the thinning vein of friendship' that Tennyson was doomed to work. Had he only had the luck to live a century later, he would have been able to express his feelings unstifled, and might have risen to an elegiac note such as this:

and yes – I am miserable
and lost without you.
whole days spent
remaking your face
the sound of your voice
the feel of your shoulder.

The truth is, I believe, that homosexuality does not have a history stretching back to Ancient Greece. I doubt whether it stretches back much more than a hundred years. The word occurs only in the supplement of the O.E.D. The first use cited is by Havelock Ellis in 1897.

The term homosexual is defining rather than descriptive. It is not like saying of someone that he is red haired; it is like saying of him that he is an Englishman or a professional person. It follows that homosexuals could not have existed before it was thought important to define people in terms of their sexual preferences. An 18th century man like Pope is not above ridiculing his enemies on account of their supposed sexual habits just as Pope's enemies ridiculed him as a hunchbacked dwarf, but in both cases it is the kind of ridicule that may attach to any personal oddity. I cannot detect any widespread sense

that the possession of a particular sexual habit has a unique power to define the individual until the later 19th century.

The work of Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis and Freud did not cause this change, but was obviously itself an effect of it. It was in the later 19th century that Swinburne, with the fierce moral outrage characteristic of those who are themselves anxious not to have their private lives too closely looked into denounced his friend Simeon Solomon as 'a thing unmentionable alike by man or woman'. It was not many years later that Queensberry applied to Oscar Wilde that spluttering neologism 'sodomite'. It was then too that something recognisable as homosexual verse began to be written. The lengthy tradition that Coote attaches to these poems serves in the end only to dignify them by acting as a kind of ornate frame. Greek paedophilia, Roman coarseness and Renaissance idealisms have nothing much in common with each other, and nothing much in common either with the modern verse that Coote prints. He protests against Freud's notion that homosexuality is a perverse deviation, but is himself a victim of the Freudian myth that human sexuality exists prior to the social forms within which it is expressed, and that therefore a single mechanism, repression, will serve to explain the full range of human sexual gestures as they have existed through all time.

Homosexual verse proper is of recent origin. Its common, if not defining, characteristic is a sense of exclusion from the rest of society that is at once resented and celebrated. It is resented because it is unjust, and celebrated because it allows entrée into an exclusive circle. Homosexuals become a secret society bound together by a common devotion to 'the love that dare not speak its name', and that enforced silence is at once a torture and a secret pride. As with all groups defined by their difference from the common herd its characteristic range of tones swings wildly between brutishness and sentimentality with very little in between. There are dozens of poems in this anthology stitched together out of phrases like 'urgent lips' and 'sad love stars'. For the brutishness the reader had best look for himself. The miracle is that good poets can still work within such confines. Whitman can transform sentimentality into a prophetic nostalgia for a time of untrammelled sexual innocence, Cavafy can make out of brutishness bleak celebrations of a life spent cruising in sleazy bars.

It might have been expected that homosexuality would not have survived the laws that outlawed it, that what forced homosexuals to band together, and to proclaim their homosexuality as a defining mark of their humanity was a proper indignation at laws that could not be justified clearly enough to warrant the cruelty of their application. But in most Western countries such laws have been repealed, only vestiges so trivial as scarcely to be worth resentment are left behind, and the effect has been to increase rather than diminish the voice of homosexual protest.

One 'poem' in this anthology celebrates a homosexual march held in New York. I say 'poem' because it seems to have been written on the odd Romantic premise that if one feels deeply about something, and then writes about it, what comes out is poetry. It is a revealing poem:

we are a community
we are a society

we are everyone
we are inside you

Homosexuality is presented as a badge of difference, and then, immediately afterwards, as a common human characteristic. The march serves at once to define the homosexual community and to protest against its exclusion. The same could be said of this anthology. The editor both claims for homosexual verse a place within the central tradition of erotic poetry, and demands that it be recognised as distinctive. One reaches the conclusion that the homosexual campaign is unlikely to end, for it is self-sustaining: it works to secure the grievance from which it seeks redress.

Of course homosexuals might claim that they had been forced to draw their wagons into this wearying circle, because they are under attack, attack not so much from the law as from prejudice, and not so much from those who reveal their prejudice in acts of criminal sadism – for we are all threatened by the sadist whether he appear in the guise of football hooligan or queer-basher – but from a prejudice general among heterosexuals, a disposition to find homosexuality either ridiculous or embarrassing. I do not believe this to be a proper ground of protest. Any human oddity is potentially both amusing and embarrassing. The laughter of our friends will be kindly, of our enemies malicious, but to protest against laughter, or indeed blushing, is futile.

I wish that homosexuality would stop. That a sizable proportion of our fellows should think that their sexual preferences crucially define them seems unnecessary and undesirable. Undesirable first because it results in too great an emphasis on the physical gestures with which we figure our love, and too little on the love that we figure. There is a fine desolate poem by Thom Gunn about the fate of a man who had learned all there is to know about the physical exercise of sex, but has never learned how to love:

Thus he reduced the wild unknown
And having used each hour of leisure
To learn by rote the modes of pleasure,
The sensual skills as skills alone,

He knows that nothing, not the most
Cunning or sweet, can hold him still.

We all share 'the wild unknown': we differ only in 'the modes of pleasure'. To concentrate on what divides rather than what unites us is for that man's fate to beckon:

Rigid he sits: brave, terrible,
The will awaits its gradual end.

It is undesirable secondly because it discourages that proper exercise of discrimination on which the value of life depends. A homosexual friend of mine, apologising for his failure to recognise immediately that a homosexual acquaintance of ours was utterly depraved, said to me, 'You see, homosexuals feel that they ought to like each other.' Stephen Coote has contracted the aesthetic equivalent of this disease. Flick on a few pages from Thom Gunn's poem, in which the firmness of the phrasing is the proper mark of the firmness of the thought, and one meets a couplet like this:

some boys open up their shirts
and the beauty almost hurts

There is a powerful poem by Lorca here, *Ode to Walt Whitman*, in which Lorca pays moving tribute to Whitman, and then turns violently to assault all the sleazy nastiness that by claiming kinship with Whitman dirties his vision. It is to Coote's credit that he prints it, and that he shows himself in his introduction to be sympathetic to Lorca's protest. But for all that his book speaks against him. Think of the poems by Catullus and Shakespeare that I began by quoting. It is unnecessary and it is harmful to suggest that a rape, even if it is only a literary make-believe rape, has something importantly in common with love just because the person loved and the person raped are both men.

Finally, it is undesirable because we are not born able to love, we do not love spontaneously. We must learn how to love, and one of the ways that we learn is by reading love poems. There are too many poems here that seem to me to suffer from a lack of moral education. One example will do. Someone picks up a sailor, and takes him to a hotel:

O all night I lay in that boy's arms after the tumbling,
as he slept with an erection, and in the morning did
him again,
for the price of a packet of cigarettes and a hotel room.

Nothing to boast about there, nasty little incident, is one's first thought. But no, by the end of the poem the eyes mist over, the style becomes at once laconic and portentous, the authentic voice of modern sentimentality, and we are invited to consider the thing as a deeply meaningful human experience.

If the net result of this volume is that a group of people come to think that they can learn about loving from poems like this, then Stephen Coote and Penguin together will have done them a great disservice.

THE POWER OF NUMBERS

J. Enoch Powell

Real Wicked, Guy. A View of Black Britain, Roy Kerridge, Basil Blackwell £9.95 pp vi + 210

In 1981 8.4 per cent of live births in the United Kingdom were to mothers born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan. The percentage in Greater London was 22 per cent and in Inner London 27 per cent. Those figures certainly understate the New Commonwealth and Pakistan *ethnic* births, because they do not include births to New Commonwealth and Pakistan mothers who were themselves born in the U.K. – a category obviously rapidly increasing. The corresponding figures for 1983 will no doubt, when they become available early in 1985, prove to be no lower.

Naturally the proportions in any single year do not foreshadow the eventual composition of the whole population. When however they are constant or steadily rising over a long series of years, as these have been, they do constitute, if everything else remains the same, an irrefutable indication of the future outcome.

The outcome will be that one in ten of the population of the U.K. will be New Commonwealth or Pakistan ethnic. But that, being an average, is almost meaningless. The reality is best appreciated in terms of the cities: a third of Inner London, a quarter of Greater London, a third of Birmingham and more than a third of Leicester. That is the future which awaits us, whether we care to look it in the face or not.

If we do not want to do so, we can ignore it for a while longer or we can argue that everything will not remain the same. The range of possibilities, however, is limited. The projection assumes no difference in fertility or mortality between the two populations. There may well prove to be a difference; but I have yet to hear anyone suggest it will be a difference that will make the N.C.W.P. proportions less. Again, there may be a further immigration of New Commonwealth and Pakistan people – under the description of 'acceptance for settlement', it is running at between 30,000 and 40,000 a year – or a further net emigration of the rest of the population – more difficult to identify, that magnitude seems currently to be just under 200,000 a year. But this change, too, would increase, not diminish, the N.C.W.P. proportions.

What is left? Well, inter-marriage perhaps, if on such a scale as to make the distinction between N.C.W.P. and the rest meaningless – or at least radically different in meaning. Or dispersal, if on such a scale that the proportion of one in ten became a description of the normal reality everywhere in the U.K., in Exeter and Newcastle, in Lincolnshire and Cumbria.

I was prompted to these reflections by a book about one element of the N.C.W.P., the Africans and West Indians in London. The writer's mother, an Islington girl of European extraction, married after his birth as her second husband an African with Nigerian and Sierra Leone background. The book consists of his observations and reflections on the scenes to which he thus gained entry.

It is a highly informative book, provided one bears in mind that it deals only with certain areas of England and certain sections of the N.C.W.P. population. There is, for instance, virtually nothing about the Asian elements or the areas where they predominate. But if anyone wants to know what reggae is and how it happened or to learn about Rastafarianism and the Rastas or hear an alternative version of Railton Road to Lord Scarman's, he could do much worse than study Mr Kerridge's chapters, though unfortunately the book has no index.

The author of such a book could not, one supposes, be unaware of the prospective future in numerical terms which I outlined at the beginning of this review. So I looked with curiosity to see what would be his response to that challenge. He is not, at the finish, optimistic: the road of multi-racialism 'will indeed lead to the end of Britain as a nation with an identifiable character'. But it was the last sentence of the book that riveted my attention: 'the best thing about Black Britain is the road out of it, the path to England, to Scotland, Wales or Ireland. May it be a wide path for many feet to follow'. So in the end it is in a vague dream of dispersal that the author, for all his realism, decides to take refuge. Nowhere, so far as I observed, does he seem to acknowledge the dynamic factors of the automatic *proportionate* increase in the N.C.W.P. – the tide of occupation that must continue to rise and spread for at least two generations to come.

It seems however likely that he would object to the

aggregation of dissimilar populations which is involved in the statistics I presented. He protests against the false implications of such terms as 'the blacks', 'the black community', 'the ethnic minority', 'the immigrant community', which treat a statistical total as if it were a homogeneous unit and which would be repudiated indignantly by many of the individuals whose acquaintance we make in his pages. Up to a point, this is true and important; but there is another side. Numbers are power. If power can be procured (as it always can in a democracy) by aggregating and allying elements which in themselves are diverse and even naturally antagonistic, ways will surely be found to aggregate and ally them. But perhaps that is not how Roy Kerridge avoids facing the challenge of ineluctable total numbers. At all events he does not tell us.

DEFENDING THE FAMILY

David Dale

The War Over the Family: Capturing the Middle Ground Brigitte Berger and Peter L. Berger, (Hutchinson, £9.95)

At least since the Enlightenment, the family, as an institution, has found itself a reluctant item on the political agenda of social reformers. But while 'The Family as Problem' has been the persistent theme, the specifically modern interpretation of the problem's nature is radically different from what went before. No longer is it restricted to that view of the family as an outmoded but reformable product of an earlier time; at the extreme, the problem has come to be seen as the very existence of the family itself.

Two strands of thought can be detected underlying this radical reinterpretation. The first springs from the pairing of Marx and Freud (an arranged marriage if ever there was one), while the second is unambiguously feminist. Marxism accuses the family of being a propagator of false bourgeois values determined by their basis in a propertied class whose interests they serve. This rather slim proposition was later fortified, for the sake of those believers who required help with their incipient disbelief, by coupling it with the psychology of Theodor Adorno and Wilhelm Reich, both of whom attempted to attribute the origins of authoritarianism, and ultimately fascism, to the supposed rigidities of familial relationships. More recently, R. D. Laing and Aaron Esterson have found a wide and compliant audience for their view that schizophrenia is the rational response to the 'double binds' alleged to be characteristic of the modern nuclear family.

Feminism, the second strand, goes beyond legitimate protest against those practices which frustrate the ambitions of women in contemporary society; at its most extreme it seeks not only to reinterpret history but also, as the authors of this book observe, to redefine human nature itself. The feminists argue that man and woman, as father and mother, are no longer linked by a complementary moral authority but are in contention. More precisely, woman has to contend with man.

In the face of the anti-family factions as well as the less strident but perhaps more sapping moral imperialism of

enlightened 'experts', Brigitte and Peter Berger's authoritative and carefully researched defence of the institution is timely and welcome.

Unlike conventional studies of the family, whose claims to objectivity lie in their treatment of the family as a ready formed object, the Bergers' defence is informed by an understanding of social existence as a construction: an achievement of the human beings who participate in its process. This essentially interpretative approach to social reality places a significance upon institutions which goes beyond a narrow functionalism. It acknowledges their role as the universal mode of achieving order and stability in an otherwise chaotic and meaningless world. Institutions objectify and enshrine values in a form which both transcends and frames the life of the individual; thus, 'if a man and a woman marry, their marriage is indeed their own construction, yet the institution of marriage was not invented by them, and it determines, at the very least, the parameters of their individual modifications of the pattern'.

It is of the essence of institutions that they represent a compromise; the family rests in precarious balance between the values of individualism and social responsibility, between personal freedom and communal ties, between acquisitiveness and altruism. The threat to the institution arises when any one element of the balance is overstressed to the point where the others come to be regarded as its irreconcilable alternatives. Thus feminism, for example, escalates individualism into 'hyper-individualism' when 'the search for individual identity in isolation from all (institutional) definitions becomes a central concern of life'. Similarly rationality, the other defining theme of the modern family, is distorted into and subsumed beneath the 'hyper-rationality' of scientific quantification. The family becomes the object of 'scientific' assessment by members of what the authors accurately describe as the new 'knowledge class' who hand down manifestos prescribing what is, and proscribing what is not, 'a good home, healthy sexuality, normal childhood, good parenting'.

The ideological battleground and the modern tensions affecting the 'balance' of the family institution are the subject matter of two thirds of the book. The final section spells out its defence. In essence the Bergers argue that the nuclear family not only played a formative role in the emergence of the political order of modern Western democracy but is also a requirement for the preservation of that order. Every political order is grounded in a number of assumptions, ontological as well as normative, about human nature; the assumptions specific to modern Western society permit certain rights and freedoms, the institutionalised expression of which is the symbol democracy. Thus consciousness of what human beings are is prior to their construction of the social arrangements which realise that consciousness. It is the Bergers' thesis that 'the family, and specifically the bourgeois family, is the necessary social context for the emergence of the autonomous individuals who are the empirical foundation of political democracy'. In short, the family produces democrats and democrats produce democracy. The radical nature of this claim is brought into sharper focus when we remember that it is in the name of these same democratic values that attacks on the family are usually mounted.

To talk of the values of democracy involves recognising that democratic societies can only arise against the back-

ground of a particular type of moral community; once the consensual but, nevertheless, fragile moral base is called into question the society will begin to disintegrate. As the Bergers point out, this process is sharpened within democracies because democratic values preclude the degree of coercion characteristic of totalitarian society.

The family, therefore, takes on a significance which transcends its individual members. It is the dangerous error of progressive ideology to suppose that other agencies – the political party, the education system, the gnostic ‘human growth’ sects – can be the locale for the socialisation of the autonomous individuals required to sustain democratic order. At best, these reinforce the values already instilled in the individual through family life; at worst, the enforced equality and pernicious anti-individualism eclipses family values and, as the brief history of the recent commune movement demonstrates, breed a stifling conformity tending towards rigid authoritarianism.

‘The War Over the Family’ provides a philosophically welcome corrective to the steady drip of family-in-decline literature found in social studies journals as well as in the tendentious ideology which parades itself as ‘theory’ or ‘history’. The teasing, but admittedly peripheral, question left unresolved concerns the purpose of the book’s subtitle. Appealing to the ‘middle ground’ will, one is forced to acknowledge, guarantee a wider audience than if the subtitle had been excluded. But the book is none the less a conservative defence of an institution whose place is at the heart of conservative thought.

KNOW THINE ENEMY

John Marks

The Disarmer’s Handbook by Andrew Wilson, Penguin, 1983.

Crisis over Cruise by Philip Webber, Graeme Wilkinson and Barry Rubin, Penguin, 1983.

Protest and Perish by Philip Towle, Iain Elliot and Gerald Frost, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1982.

The Disarmer’s Handbook is written by Andrew Wilson, the former defence correspondent of *The Observer* who joined the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in 1981. It contains sections dealing with many aspects of war – its theory, ethics and history as well as its technology and logistics. Arms control negotiations, alternative defence strategies and peace movements are also covered. By contrast, *Crisis over Cruise*, as its title suggests, has a more restricted focus. Its authors are advisors to CND and to the organisation Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA). From this viewpoint, the book primarily discusses Cruise missiles and the other new weapons which have been deployed in Western Europe following the adoption by NATO in 1979 of its dual track policy of arms control negotiation and updating of weapons. *Protest and Perish* is written from a different viewpoint. It provides both a detailed critique of unilateralism and a resounding defence of NATO’s principles and policies. It also includes a realistic account of the military balance between East and West.

The authors of *Crisis over Cruise* and *The Disarmer’s Handbook* are all professional publicists, well versed in the skills of obtaining information and in presenting it to a wide audience. And both books claim to inform the general public about the essentials of current debates about defence. The intention of *Crisis over Cruise* is to give ‘concise and accurate information . . . to the general public’ and the book is ‘aimed at people with no previous knowledge about nuclear weapons.’ *The Disarmer’s Handbook* is described as ‘a complete guide for everyone concerned with the arms debate.’

Yet despite such wide-ranging claims, these experienced authors give extensive information about levels of armaments but omit any serious account of the nature of the Soviet state – the major potential enemy against whose forces NATO’s armaments are deployed.

Such omissions are so common in books of this type that some may think them unworthy of comment. Yet such wilful myopia shows an inexcusable degree of intellectual and moral dishonesty.

Two examples must suffice. *Crisis over Cruise* gives a critical account of the early American nuclear weapons programme in the 1940’s and 50’s but makes no mention of significant and well documented features of the parallel Soviet programme. These omissions are so blatant that it is well worth using some space in this review to spell out some facts of the kind which are so studiously ignored by CND supporters.

First, the early Soviet nuclear weapons programme was directed by Beria, the head of the NKVD (later the KGB) who was in charge of millions of slave-labourers from the labour camps of the Gulag. Almost all the construction work on this weapons programme was carried out by slave-labourers from these labour camps, many of them living and working under appalling conditions. There was nothing unusual in this – most large construction projects in the Soviet Union including the rocket and space programmes have been built by slave labour. Much of the research work on nuclear power was also done by prisoners – not in labour camps but in special prison research institutes like the one described by Solzhenitsyn in *The First Circle*. These prison research institutes had first been set up in the late 1930’s and they developed rapidly after World War 2. Engineers and scientists, who had been imprisoned during the Great Terror, were collected from many different labour camps in order to work on military projects. They included S. P. Korolev, who designed the first Sputnik, and A. N. Tupolev, the well-known aircraft designer.

Secondly, a tragic nuclear accident took place in the Urals in 1958. Zhores Medvedev has described what happened:

‘For many years nuclear reactor waste had been buried in a deserted area not more than a few dozen miles from the Urals town of Blagoveshensk. The waste was not buried very deep. Nuclear scientists had often warned about the dangers involved in this primitive method of waste disposal, but nobody took their views seriously . . . The large nuclear industry just continued to bury its waste in the same way it had done since the beginning of the atomic race. Suddenly there was an enormous explosion, like a violent volcano. The explosion poured radioactive dust and materials high up into the sky . . . Tens of thousands of people were affected, hundreds dying,

though the real figures have never been made public. The large area, where the accident happened, is still considered dangerous and is closed to the public. A number of biological stations have been built on the edge of this – the largest gamma field in the world – in order to study the radioactive damage done to plants and animals.'

Even more shocking than this accident itself is the fact it has never been mentioned in any Soviet publication. To the rulers of the Soviet Union the worst ever accident in the history of nuclear power is an event, like many others in Soviet 'history', which never 'happened'. And it has even been estimated by a Soviet scientist who worked on the Soviet nuclear weapons programme that the deaths from radiation sickness during this programme exceed the death toll from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The key role played by the KGB, mentioned above, in directing and organising the Soviet nuclear weapons programme emphasises how much it differs from the CIA and other Western intelligence agencies. Yet Andrew Wilson, in his chapter on intelligence services devotes five times as much space to Western agencies as to the KGB and never mentions this or other well-known KGB activities.

Wilson also places great store on 'that branch of peace studies concerned with the dynamics of conflict' which is described as 'the most intellectually exciting' as well as 'the most fundamental form of research needed for our survival.' Yet the book finds no space for that most fundamental and intellectually challenging aspect of East-West relations – serious consideration of our present state of knowledge concerning the nature and functioning of the Soviet state and the implications of that knowledge for Western policy.

This extraordinary omission is reflected in the one-sided treatment given in both books to the rudimentary peace movements in Eastern Europe. Again no serious consideration is given to the enormous asymmetry between the well-organised and increasingly professional peace movement in the West, with its massive media coverage in both West and East, and the sporadic and uncoordinated protests in the East which go largely unreported in the controlled media of the Soviet bloc or of the harassment bestowed on demonstrators there. And there is no discussion of the absence of any effective Soviet public opinion and of how this affects the military balance between East and West.

It would be academically acceptable to discuss the many well-known facts about the totalitarian nature of Soviet society and to differ in assessing their importance for the East-West conflict. But it is a 'trahison des clercs' not to present and discuss these facts, particularly in books written by experts which aim to inform the general public.

Protest and Perish provides a refreshing contrast. Here the very first chapter is devoted to a realistic and well-documented account of Soviet foreign policy which also skilfully brings out the totalitarian and brutal nature of the internal Soviet regime. From this excellent starting point, the authors go on to examine both the moral and the practical arguments for unilateral disarmament and to find them wanting. Throughout they retain a willingness to introduce their readers not just to two sides of an argument but to the multi-faceted nature of international relations in the modern world. In addition they frequently invoke an historical perspective which is a welcome antidote to the urgent emphasis on 'current issues' and on

what is seen as 'relevance' in the other two books. This approach enables *Protest and Perish* to make much the most penetrating and genuinely relevant contribution of these books to the real debate about 'human and national survival in the nuclear age.'

Protest and Perish concludes its chapter 'Unilateralism Past and Present' with a perceptive account of the courageous peace movements in Eastern Europe which CND claims as its own kith and kin. The authors question this assumption and ask:

'Why does the East German peace movement's policy most closely resemble the serious multi-lateralism of NATO officials, while CND's is rather like that of the militarist and totalitarian East German government?'

It is pertinent to ask why movements like CND do not heed the warnings from Russian patriots like Sakharov and Bukovsky who have experienced the oppressive barbarities of the Soviet system at first hand:

'In particular, the leftist intellectuals are urging their governments toward unilateral disarmament. But such disarmament could lead to a disturbance of the international equilibrium – to weakening the Western position vis-a-vis the totalitarian threat – and could induce stepped-up expansion by the socialist nations, especially in the strategically important focal points of the Third World; e.g., the Indian Ocean.'

(Andrei Sakharov, *My Country and the World*, Collins and Harvill Press, 1975, p. 94; written at the height of détente and five years before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.)

'One of the most serious mistakes of the Western peace movement and of its ideologists is the obdurate refusal to understand the nature of the Soviet regime, and the concomitant effort to lift the question of peace out of the context of the broader problem of East-West relations.'

(Vladimir Bukovsky, *The Peace Movement and the Soviet Union*, The Orwell Press, 1982.)

So why is it that the 'intellectuals' of the peace movement fail to inform their readers of the true nature of Soviet-style socialist societies? It cannot be ignorance, because the sources of reliable information have always been plentiful and are now more abundant than ever. Rather, it is a systematic deception, akin to the 'thought control' attempted by the rulers of those states, and also by many in this country who share their Marxist allegiance or who are afraid of being seen as 'enemies of the left'.

For more than a decade, students at the Polytechnic of North London have been subjected to a deluge of posters and literature from every shade of left-wing opinion including both the Eurocommunist and the Stalinist wings of the Communist party and all the 57 different varieties of Trotskyist sect. Yet when I posted leaflets advertising *Protest and Perish* on noticeboards, they were torn down not once but more than two dozen times – and always within the hour. Presumably the facts the book presents and the arguments it uses were anathema to those who would control the minds of the next generation. I can think of no better reason for urging you to read it.

In Short

The brevity of the notices below should not be construed as implying anything about the quality (or otherwise) of the books noticed. It indicates only the impossibility, in a quarterly review, of doing justice to more than a small proportion of the books received. This page is therefore introduced to compensate somewhat for one of the exigencies we labour under. It also enables the literary editor to cover a wider selection of those books which, in his estimation, are especially worth bringing to the notice of *Salisbury Review* readers.

Editor Russell Kirk: *The Portable Conservative Reader*, Penguin, £3.50

What this volume lacks in coherence, it partly makes up for in sheer bulk; but only partly, because its 726 pages do not amount to as much as they might otherwise have done if the volume's editor, Russell Kirk, had not left out some crucially important figures in the history of conservative thought, while including others whose contributions have been at best tangential.

So weighty a volume, bearing the title *Conservative Reader*, could surely have found room for Halifax, Bolingbroke and Hume, even though all three predated a conservatism that went by the name. And then what about de Maistre, Hegel and Maurras? The last three were disqualified, even as candidates for inclusion, by the editor's decision, for reasons of space, to anthologise only English conservatives. Fine, but then why include the archetypal progressive, Macaulay, simply because, as a Whig of the old school, he feared the Democracy of the new? And only on the most elastic of definitions could Bagehot have been allowed into a conservative anthology. As C. H. Sisson has convincingly demonstrated, such conservatism as Bagehot evinced was essentially self-serving: a 'dignified' screen behind which the world's and Bagehot's business could be conducted without interference. If this is an English Conservative Reader, then Macaulay and Bagehot should properly have been elbowed out by the strong Right arms of Richard Oastler or Lord John Manners or the Marquis of Salisbury: all consciously and consistently Conservative figures. Neither will one find here two philosophers, Eric Voegelin and Leo Strauss, whose writings have had a very great influence on twentieth century English conservative thought. However, since the label of conservative is not one either Voegelin or Strauss ever attached to themselves, Kirk felt unable to justify their inclusion.

These reservations about the volume aside, there is still plenty in it to fortify the conservative spirit.

I.C.

Martin Ebon: *The Andropov File* Sidgewick and Jackson, 1983, £9.95

Zhores Medvedev: *Andropov*, Blackwell, 1983, £7.50

Arnold Beichman and Mikhail S. Bernstein: *Andropov: New Challenge to the West*, Stein and Day, 1983, \$16.95

Looking back over his fifteen months of leadership in the USSR it is difficult to understand the fuss with which Yuri Andropov's accession to power was greeted in the West. To assume supreme office in and through such a system is to acquire something less than supreme power. The inertia of the system and the constancy of its long term political ends, which are for ideological reasons unalter-

able, give a single leader relatively little room for manoeuvre. There are no U-turns in Soviet policy, merely deviations in search of easier paths to the end in view. These three books exemplify the extent to which the Andropov phenomenon was a feature not of the unchanging face of an ideologically trapped gerontocracy but of the Western desire to find novelty and even hope where there is none. Though written from different perspectives, the three studies show above all that Andropov was a figure devoid of biographical interest in any ordinary sense. He lived and died a loyal functionary of a system without which he would have been nothing. Without it he would not have existed for history. Alas, without him the system exists just as before.

D.J.L.

Maurice Cranston: *Jean-Jacques, The Early Life and Work of Jean Jacques Rousseau*, Allen Lane, £14.95

Norman Hampson: *Will and Circumstance*, Montesquieu, Rousseau and the French Revolution, Duckworth, £19.50

In the perspectives opened up by these two books, one has again that niggling sense of things falling apart for perfectly adequate reasons; again one is reminded that Kant's celebrated formula for the phase, 'man's abandonment of his self-imposed tutelage' (revolutionary massacres included) heralds the next stage in the intellectual quest: the enthronement of History. Professor Cranston has shaped his biography with scrupulous care; he resolutely avoids any kind of glib psychologising: his chapters are too full for that. Intellectual history has always been susceptible to the spirit of comedy, but the notion that Rousseau's critique of Encyclopaedic Rationalism was the off-hand suggestion of the inscrutable Diderot (so that his poor friend might win the prize with a doubly unorthodox essay) is such a deft piece of undercutting – is it History's or Cranston's? – that it proved too much for the system-builder this reviewer has been trying to become.

System, though, has been thoughtfully imported into Professor Hampson's study of the two *philosophes* who might be regarded as the beginning and the end of the process: Montesquieu and once again Rousseau. It is impossible in this short space to do justice to the intricacies of Hampson's presentation, although the conservative sceptic and the romantic pietist are certainly taken as 'types'. What the book tries to explore is the movement, as puzzling as inevitable, from criticism to enthusiasm – puzzling at least if isolated from its historical context. Thankfully, the author does not so isolate his two thinkers, but attempts rather to reconstitute their horizons by means of the social and political phenomena with which they had to grapple.

K.S.

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