

The Third Marquess of Salisbury 1830–1903

The Salisbury Review

*A quarterly magazine of
conservative thought*

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Contents

<i>Tradition as a Collective Talent</i>	J.C. Nyiri
<i>Education Beyond Present Desire</i>	Anthony O'Hear
<i>The Gilmore Syndrome</i>	Ray Honeyford
<i>Hume as a Conservative Thinker</i>	Paul Helm
<i>The Politics of Confrontation</i>	David J. Levy
<i>Portrait of Sir Harry</i>	Roy Kerridge
<i>Britain and the Coming of War, 1932–9</i>	Julian Lewis
<i>On Teaching Not To Read</i>	Mona McNee
<i>Central Eastern Europe and the West: A Reappraisal</i>	Edward Rogerson
<i>Sense and Censorship: The Case of The Salisbury Review</i>	Roger Scruton



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conservative thought*

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The Salisbury Review is now published by the Sherwood Press. To mark this turning-point in our fortunes, we have dispensed with our usual editorial, and carry instead an article by the Editor, reflecting on the history and contents of the *Review*, and on the extraordinary attempt that has been made to censor it. We hope that our readers will share our sense that an intellectual journal of conservative outlook is not only permissible in modern Britain, but also necessary, and that they will be prepared to renew their support for us, and to encourage their friends to do likewise.

Over the past two years, *The Salisbury Review* has suffered from certain bureaucratic hitches: late publication, irritating misprints, and even (people tell us) lost subscriptions. We are aware that some of our subscribers have been deterred by this. Henceforth, however, we shall have greater control over our affairs, and we hope that all readers whose subscriptions have been imperfectly honoured will write to us, so that we can do our best to fulfil our obligations towards them, and to renew our tie.

Education remains a central concern to all who hope that civilisation, in the only form that we can inwardly receive it, should continue to survive. But, as Mona McNee argues, education is now threatened at the most basic level – the level of literacy – by the very processes that were intended to improve it. Under the influence of educational theories common sense has given way to wild fantasies, disguised perhaps in erudite language, but no more responsive to evidence and argument than the theories of Ubu Roi. The same nonsense, generated in volume upon volume by those who have neither experience of teaching nor grasp of rational argument, has affected the schools and universities of France: a fact vividly brought home to us by the work of Milles Stal and Thom, whose book is noticed in our section of short reviews. Nevertheless, much as we may be in sympathy with the condemnation of ‘education theory’, and with the judgement which identifies that theory as a largely left-wing preserve, we must recognise the equal danger of the ‘utilitarian’ approach to educational values that is now being advocated by Mrs Thatcher’s government.

As Anthony O’Hear argues, the same ignorant desire for ‘relevance’, the same subordination of education to purposes other than itself, and the same intellectual impoverishment, infect the government’s recent thinking about higher education. It is true that many socialists have desired to re-make society in the classroom, and have proposed equality in the place of culture as the true scholastic aim; but we can hardly recognise an improvement in the desire to govern our educational institutions by the rule of Mr Gradgrind, and to aim in the classroom at the kind of economic progress which comes only by an ‘invisible hand’, and only to those who have not subordinated every intellectual value to the pursuit of it.

In education, as in law, the true sense of what is apt and reasonable emerges only by a humble acceptance of existing achievement. It is this process that conservatives mean by tradition, and, as Christoph Nyiri argues, the concept of tradition, so defined, is indispensable to the understanding of civil society. In Professor Nyiri’s part of the world, traditions are the more esteemed on account of the violence that has been done to them; for that very reason, it is easier to perceive the values of custom, habit and negotiation in Budapest than it is in the great excitement of a turbulent democracy, where politics is too much with us, and authority in a condition of constant generation and decay.

It is to custom and habit that Hume, our conservative thinker, traced the roots of civil order, and it is the neglect of these necessary virtues, and their replacement by a collective adventure in pursuit of a chimera, that has made, of the Soviet Union and its Empire, such an irrational and dangerous power. As David Levy argues, our policy towards such a power is entirely misconceived if we fail to recognise the need for confrontation. At the same time, those very habits of accommodation which are so natural to our own civil order make such a policy hard to conceive and even harder to execute. Perhaps the major political problem which lies before all conservatives is that of generating, out of the very same sceptical temper that leads to the conservative respect for custom and law, an international strategy that will enable custom and law to survive.

Contents

Tradition as a Collective Talent <i>J.C. Nyíri</i>	4
Education Beyond Present Desire <i>Anthony O'Hear</i>	8
The Gilmore Syndrome <i>Ray Honeyford</i>	11
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	14
Hume as a Conservative Thinker <i>Paul Helm</i>	15
The Politics of Confrontation <i>David J. Levy</i>	21
In Search of Central Europe Portrait of Sir Harry <i>Roy Kerridge</i>	28 31
Britain and the Coming of War, 1932-9 <i>Julian Lewis</i>	34
On Teaching Not To Read <i>Mona McNee</i>	40
Central Eastern Europe and the West: A Reappraisal <i>Edward Rogerson</i>	42

Sense and Censorship: The Case of <i>The Salisbury Review</i>	45
<i>Roger Scruton</i>	
LETTERS	47
BOOK REVIEWS	48-63
Geoffrey Partington, David Regan, Shirley Lancaster J. Enoch Powell, David J. Levy, Roger Scruton, David Dale, Simon Gleeson, Brian Micklethwait, Paul Helm, A.W. Purdue, Marko Milivojevic, Nisa Khan	
IN SHORT	64

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The First Hour is edited anonymously from Tokyo, and gathers together testimonies of faith, moral homilies and reflections on the fallen world of secular politics and culture, in a unique blend of mature piety and common sense. The result should cause any Christian believer to cancel his subscription to *The Tablet* or *The Church Times* and transfer it to this infinitely more humble, more intelligent and more inspiring source of lived and living doctrine. The magazine speaks for the recently founded Patristic Society, and remarks that 'our vocation is . . . to the experience and defense of the way of the Fathers.

Having put our confidence in the Holy Spirit, the wind that "blows where it will", we dare not limit nor too closely define this programme. Yet we know that we cannot concentrate on one aspect of our pledge at the expense of the others . . . For what good would be accomplished if we were to fast, pray and worship within our appointed circle, only to pass over in silence what is outside that circle – the atheist seeking to destroy, and the desacraliser to vitiate, the faith once delivered?

Readers who recognise the Christian accent in those words will not be surprised by the moving record of the life of Holy Yastus, who died in 1976 at the Egyptian monastery of St Anthony. Nor will they be surprised by the priestly and penetrating defence of traditional sexual morality by Joseph P. Frary OIW in the current issue (vol. 2 no. 1). Nor will they be anything but relieved by an editorial that speaks out for South Africa, and which shows the unChristian and sanctimonious folly of those who join in the destruction of the only African country south of the equator in which some vestiges of law and freedom yet remain.

The First Hour is available, price \$15 for 6 issues, from Box 1593, Tokyo Central Post Office.

Tradition as a Collective Talent

J. C. Nyíri

My point of departure is this: since practical knowledge encompasses, or serves as a foundation for, much of what we know, and since such knowledge is tacit, non-propositional, indeed inarticulable, channels of communication other than logically argued explicit discourse have obvious functions to fulfil. Traditions represent just such channels. That this initial position immediately leads to a number of questions, is clear; and the most my argument can do is to indicate the rudiments of a strategy for approaching these questions. The first difficulty is of course presented by the notion of practical knowledge itself. Skills are, or embody, such knowledge, but not all skills presuppose a social context. Take cycling, one of Polanyi's favourite examples.¹ Cycling involves a vast amount of tacit knowledge in the sense that the mathematical description of what happens at every moment whilst one adjusts the curvature of one's bicycle's path in proportion to the ratio of one's unbalance over the square of one's speed is of course unknown to the cyclist, and would not help him in his performance even were it known. But I don't see what is, in principle, unarticulable about this knowledge; and I certainly cannot recall anything like a state of apprenticeship when learning to ride my first bicycle. I saw what other people were doing, but I did not learn by imitating them, I learnt by constantly falling, and then sometimes not falling, off the thing. It seems there are technical skills – like cycling – social skills – like counting – and the former do not presuppose a tradition in the immediate sense in which the latter do. Or take the medical diagnosis, another of Polanyi's examples. 'Unless a doctor can recognise certain symptoms', writes Polanyi, 'e.g. the accentuation of the second sound of the pulmonary artery, there is no use in his reading the description of syndromes of which this symptom forms part. He must personally know that symptom and he can learn this only by repeatedly being given cases for auscultation in which the symptom is authoritatively known to be present, side by side with other cases in which it is authoritatively known to be absent, until he has fully realised the difference between them and can demonstrate his knowledge practically to the satisfaction of an expert.'²

It was similar or related observations that made Ludwik Fleck develop, in the early thirties, his traditionalist, pre-Kuhnian theory of science. Explaining the Wassermann reaction, Fleck stresses that the 'reaction occurs according to a fixed scheme, but every laboratory uses its own modified procedure, which is based upon precise quantitative calculations; nevertheless, the experienced eye or the "serological touch"', *das "serologische Fühlen"*, is much

more important than calculation.³ The field of serology, Fleck writes, 'is a little world of its own and therefore can no more be fully described in words than any other field of science.'⁴ It is however a fact that important areas of medical diagnosis to-day are conducted by computer programmes, with respect to which it would seem strange to speak of 'personal knowledge' or 'touch'. Of course these programmes are based on the knowledge of experienced human experts, and you will perhaps be glad to hear that it is quite a problem to unearth that knowledge in software-digestible form. Two leading computer specialists write: 'Human experts have acquired their expertise not only from explicit knowledge found in textbooks and lectures, but also from experience: by doing things again and again, failing, succeeding, wasting time and effort, then learning to save them, getting a feel for a problem, learning when to go by the book and when to break the rules. They therefore build up a repertory of working rules of thumb, or "heuristics", that, combined with book knowledge, make them expert practitioners.'⁵ Heuristic knowledge 'is the knowledge of good practice and good judgment in a field'. It is 'hardest to get at because experts – or anyone else – rarely have the self-awareness to recognise what it is. So it must be mined out of their heads painstakingly, one jewel at a time.'⁶ But now, tacit knowledge as here described does not seem to possess any philosophically interesting characteristics at all, and it is quite disturbing to learn that the *faculty of judgment*, the ability to subsume particular instances under a given rule, or the ability to *apply rules*, can be imparted to a machine without further ado, without extending training, without the full social context that seemed so essential for this kind of acquirement. The infinite regress argument, which lies at the heart of every philosophising about practical knowledge⁷, somehow loses its magic here.

Or take the case of Ryle's 'well-trained sailor boy', who 'can both tie complex knots and discern whether someone else is tying them correctly or incorrectly, deftly or clumsily. But he is probably incapable of the difficult task of describing in words how the knots should be tied.'⁸ Knots are more easily tied than explained, but the boy's presumed inability to do the latter does not seem to carry a philosophical message. He might be unable to explain *anything*. Or a detailed terminology of knots could be developed, helped by which the boy would have no difficulties at all in describing and criticising. Of course the usual way to explain tying knots is through pictures rather than through words. And here one should perhaps say that though knowledge conveyed through

pictures might be non-propositional, it does not therefore necessarily follow that it is non-theoretical.

It might be useful, at this stage, to distinguish between two positions with regard to the issue of practical knowledge. According to the first, this knowledge is a practical abbreviation within the texture, or flow, of knowledge as such; a device of paramount importance perhaps, but not something the discovery of which should basically transform our epistemological convictions. According to the second position, there is a layer, or dimension, of practical knowledge which could in no sense be dissolved into knowing *that*. Or perhaps – and this would be a stronger version of the same position – there is a hard layer of practical knowledge which serves as the bedrock upon which *all* knowledge rests. Or indeed – to formulate a yet stronger version – all theoretical knowledge represents but an articulating, a spelling out, of a knowledge which is, in the last analysis, invariably reducible to practice. Philosophers like Wittgenstein, Oakeshott, or Kuhn, clearly hold some version of the *second* position; but Ryle, too, flatly states that ‘theorising is one practice amongst others’⁹. Now these positions all have their counterparts within the theory of *traditions*. Let us distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* traditions, and say that secondary traditions contain and convey, in an abbreviated or emotionally bolstered form, information which could in principle, though perhaps less conveniently, be communicated also in a purely discursive fashion. The information embedded in primary traditions, on the other hand, cannot be, at least in the given context, separated from the way in which it is handed down. In other words, secondary traditions can be dissolved without essentially impairing that activity whose transmission they serve; primary traditions cannot. The thesis to the effect that there *are* primary traditions, a thesis to which I subscribe, I shall call the *strong traditionalist thesis*, and contrast it with the *weak traditionalist thesis* which denies the existence of primary traditions but recognises the existence, and usefulness, of secondary ones. The position *denying* this usefulness might then properly be called *anti-traditionalist*. I take the hard-core view of practical knowledge to imply, and be implied by, the strong traditionalist thesis. In what follows I will, very briefly, call attention to some of the issues bearing on this thesis; before doing that, however, I would like to touch upon two other, closely related topics.

The first is *rationality*. Reason and tradition are usually conceived of as opposed¹⁰, and even traditionalist arguments are often phrased in such a way as to maintain this opposition. The power of the irrational or the arational are stressed, along with the importance of traditions as creating a dimension of coherence in the non-rational realm, as bringing, through their very irrationality, cohesion into society. It is in this sense that Karl Popper, quite a traditionalist in his way, writes: ‘What we call social life can exist only if we can know, and can have confidence, that there are things and events which must be so and cannot be otherwise. It is here that the part played by tradition in our lives becomes understandable. We should be anxious, terrified, and frustrated, and we

could not live in the social world, did it not contain a considerable amount of order, a great number of regularities to which we can adjust ourselves. The mere existence of these regularities is perhaps more important than their peculiar merits or demerits. They are needed as regularities, and therefore handed on as traditions, whether or not they are in other respects rational or necessary or good or beautiful or what you will. There is a need for tradition in social life.’¹¹ Now if the strong traditionalist thesis holds, this way of formulating the matter is misleading. For this thesis implies that *reason itself* is ultimately *ground in traditions*, or, as Oakeshott eloquently puts it: ‘“Rationality” is the certificate we give to any conduct which can maintain a place in the flow of sympathy, the coherence of activity which composes a way of living.’¹² It will not do to regard rationality, as Feyerabend does, as ‘one tradition among many rather than a standard to which traditions must conform’¹³, since this would still amount to an unjustifiable picking out of some *one* tradition. A formula is needed which will preserve our intuitive grasp of what ‘rational’ amounts to, *without* however introducing any arbitrary criteria. I think Oakeshott comes close to finding such a formula when, after writing that ‘no conduct, no action or series of actions, can be “rational” or “irrational” out of relation to the idiom of activity to which they belong’, he goes on to state that ‘an activity as a whole (science, cooking, historical investigation, politics or poetry) cannot be said either to be “rational” or “irrational” unless we conceive all idioms of activity to be embraced in a single universe of activity.’¹⁴ But the author who, in my opinion, really did point the way, even if for sixty years no one seems to have embarked upon it, was Maurice Halbwachs, with his *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.¹⁵ ‘Reason’, Halbwachs wrote, ‘is actually a striving to raise oneself from a narrower to a broader tradition, into which latter the memories not merely of one class, but those of all groups will fit. [. . .] Reason faces tradition as a broader society faces a narrower one.’ The tradition capable of absorbing a variety of other traditions, or the tradition that emerges as an amalgam of various particular ones, will then possess, or amount to, what might be called *relative rationality*; and of course all rationality is relative.

The second topic I feel should be touched upon in the present context is the relation between traditionalism and the philosophy of mind. It seems to me that the strong traditionalist thesis is simply incompatible with what is usually called mentalism or intellectualism: the view of an autonomous, sovereign mind, of a mind intimately acquainted with, and freely operating upon, its own contents – images, concepts, and the like; a mind for which language, in particular, is a mere instrument of communication, an external vehicle expressing, and indeed guided by, inner thought-processes. Wittgenstein and Ryle are of course well-known critics of this view, but their arguments are seldom taken notice of by traditionalist writers, generally insensitive to the epistemological presuppositions and implications of their position. Two notable exceptions were Edmund Burke and T.S. Eliot, who did indeed realise those implications. In his essay

'Tradition and the Individual Talent' Eliot wrote: 'The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. [...] The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality [...] unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past . . .'¹⁶ And as for Burke, he not only had a theory of traditions, but in fact the rudiments of a theory of meaning to match the former. Examining the 'common notion', according to which words 'affect the mind by raising in its ideas of those things for which custom has appointed them to stand', Burke does 'not find that once in twenty times' any such idea or 'picture' is formed, and indeed when it is, 'there is most commonly a particular effort of the imagination for that purpose.' Burke gives a charming example:

'Suppose we were to read a passage to this effect: "The river Danube rises in a moist and mountainous soil in the heart of Germany, where, winding to and fro, it waters several principalities, until, turning into Austria, and leaving the walls of Vienna, it passes into Hungary; there with a vast flood, augmented by the Save and the Drave, it quits Christendom, and rolling on the barbarous countries which border on Tartary, it enters by many mouths into the Black Sea." In this description many things are mentioned, as mountains, rivers, cities, the sea, &c. But let anybody examine himself, and see whether he has had impressed on his imagination any pictures of a river, mountain, watery soil, Germany, &c. Indeed it is impossible, in the rapidity and quick succession of words in conversation, to have ideas both of the sound of the word, and of the thing represented; [...] nor is it necessary that we should [...] in the ordinary course of conversation we are sufficiently understood without raising any images of the things concerning which we speak.'¹⁷

This is, clearly, a notion of meaning which does not presuppose or suggest mentalist views; it is compatible with the idea of language as an essentially social institution; it is, in particular, compatible with the strong traditionalist thesis.

Returning now to a brief examination of this thesis itself, we have to take into account, first of all, that the term 'tradition' is surrounded by a family of related terms. This family would include terms like 'authority', 'convention', 'custom', 'disposition', 'habit', 'institution', 'mentality', 'mode', 'mores', 'norm', 'paradigm', 'practice', 'prejudice', 'rule', 'style', 'taste', 'technique'. The interconnections within this family are far from unequivocal, the meanings of most of the terms vary and overlap. Clearly, both a survey of connotations and a list of stipulations is called for. To give you a foretaste of the endeavour I have in mind, consider, first, the term 'authority'. According to Halbwachs, it is traditions

which confer authority upon certain roles and persons, whilst Polanyi stresses that only by 'a *previous act of affiliation*', by a 'combined action of authority and trust', will the assimilation of basic traditions become possible at all¹⁸. Wittgenstein writes that one has 'learned an enormous amount and accepted it on human authority'¹⁹, he asks if it is not the case that one 'must recognise certain authorities in order to make judgments at all'²⁰, and seems to suggest a certain parallel between authority and tradition when declaring: 'Tradition is not something a man can learn; not a thread he can pick up when he feels like it; any more than a man can choose his own ancestors.'²¹ Or take the term 'convention'. For Hume and for Burke this notion was related rather than opposed to that of tradition. As Wilkins has put it in his *The Problem of Burke's Political Philosophy*: 'Social conventions such as rules for the acquisition and transmission of property are artificial in the sense of being man-made, but given man's social nature and the mutual dependence of men there is a sense in which they are natural as well. The important thing for understanding both Hume and Burke is their general refusal to equate artificial with arbitrary.'²²

In a rather more modern context, in the domain of the philosophy of science, Fleck, too, strives to show that the element of arbitrariness has no primary role to play in the connotation of the term 'convention'. He speaks of the 'cultural-historical dependence' of the 'alleged epistemological choice – the alleged convention', stressing 'how little such conventions, which from the point of view of logic may seem equally possible, are in fact felt to be of equal value'.²³ And in the domain of the philosophy of art it is e.g. Arnold Hauser who draws a close terminological parallel between convention and tradition.²⁴ Indeed, most modern authors would seem to agree with Halbwachs e.g., for whom convention means *free agreement*: he contrasts the 'purely conventional' with the 'purely traditional'. Or consider, again, the next term on our list, 'custom'. It is a term extremely rich in meanings. Burton Leiser in his book on the subject lists at least nine main ones, ranging from mere habits, through sanctioned regulations, to so-called constitutive rules, rules which, by their very definition, could not be broken.²⁵

Before turning to the notion of tradition proper, let me select one more term from that list of related notions, namely the term 'prejudice'. It was in connection with this term that Burke formulated one of his most often-quoted passages.

'Instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree; and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices . . . Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, (and they seldom fail,) they think it more wise to continue with the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give

action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, skeptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.²⁶

Note Burke's reluctance to 'leave nothing but the naked reason', a reluctance characteristic of the strong traditionalist attitude: but note also the concluding phrase 'just prejudice', with the implication that *not* all prejudices are, as a matter of fact, just ones. And it is of course the idea of the unjust, the *malign* prejudice which constitutes the generally accepted meaning of this term. It is in this sense that Ernst Mach could speak of 'the fetters of inherited prejudice',²⁷ or of the 'terrible power' of what we call – as the American translation puts it – 'prejudgment or prejudice', i.e. 'habitual judgment, applied to a new case without antecedent tests'.²⁸ But even Mach, definitely no traditionalist, concedes that without certain 'fixed habitudes of thought'²⁹ new problems would not become perceivable at all. 'No one could exist intellectually', Mach writes, 'if he had to form judgments on every passing experience, instead of allowing himself to be controlled by the judgments he has already formed. [. . .] On prejudices, that is, on habitual judgments not tested in every case to which they are applied, reposes a goodly portion of the thought and work of the natural

scientist. On prejudices reposes most of the conduct of society. With the sudden disappearance of prejudice society would hopelessly dissolve.'³⁰

Of the notion of tradition, the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides some excellent definitions. Tradition, it says, is the 'action of handing over (something material) to another: delivery, transfer.' It is the delivery, '*esp.* oral delivery, of information or instruction'. It is the 'act of transmitting or handing down or fact of being handed down, from one to another, or from generation to generation; transmission of statements, beliefs, rules, customs, or the like, *esp.* by word of mouth, or by practice without writing.' It is, also, that 'which is thus handed down; a statement, belief, or practice transmitted (*esp.* orally) from generation to generation. [. . .] More vaguely', the *Oxford English Dictionary* goes on to define, a tradition is a 'long established and generally accepted custom, or method of procedure, having almost the force of a law; an immemorial usage.' As you will realise, these explanations, however apt, do not solve our theoretical problems, partly since the explanatory terms they employ – 'handing down', 'rule', 'custom', 'practice', 'law' – themselves stand in need of elucidation, and partly because, as I tried to show in the foregoing, a host of yet other notions would seem to be relevant. What should not be doubted, however, is that traditions – including 'primary traditions' – exist, that they spontaneously renew themselves, and that they contain a precious store of knowledge, wisdom and advice that could be preserved and transmitted in no other way.

Notes

1. *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 49f.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 54f.
3. Ludwik Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*. Chicago, The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 53.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Edward A. Feigenbaum and Pamela McCorduck, *The Fifth Generation*. New York, Signet, 1984, p. 67.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
7. cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A132–134.
8. *The Concept of Mind*, p. 56.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
10. See e.g. the excellent discussion in Samuel Coleman, 'Is There Reason in Tradition?' in Preston King and B.C. Parekh, eds., *Politics and Experience*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, cf. *esp.* pp. 242ff.
11. Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, pp. 130f.
12. *Rationalism in Politics*, p. 109.
13. *Science in a Free Society*, p. 7.
14. *Rationalism in Politics*, p. 102.
15. Paris, 1925.
16. The essay was first published in 1917. Quoted from Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (1920), London, Methuen, 1960, pp. 56–69.
17. Edmund Burke, 'A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful' (1756/57), in Burke, *The Works: Twelve Volumes in Six*, 1887, Vol. I, pp. 246–252.
18. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 207f.
19. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, §161.
20. *Ibid.*, §493.
21. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. by G.H. von Wright, transl. by Peter Winch, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980, p. 76c.
22. Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, *The Problem of Burke's Political Philosophy*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 61.
23. Fleck, *Genesis*, p. 9.
24. Arnold Hauser, *Soziologie der Kunst*. München, Beck, 1974, pp. 29f., 22, 32.
25. Burton M. Leiser, *Custom, Law, and Morality: Conflict and Continuity in Social Behavior*. Garden City, N.Y., Anchor Books, 1969, pp. 7–47.
26. Burke, 'Reflections on the Revolution in France' (1790), in Burke, *The Works: Twelve Volumes in Six*, 1887, Vol. III, pp. 346f.
27. Ernst Mach, *Popular Scientific Lectures* (1894). Fifth Edition, La Salle, Illinois, Open Court, 1943, p. 214.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Education Beyond Present Desire

Anthony O'Hear

Those who like to think of themselves as conservatives ought to be perturbed at what is currently happening in education; thinking about recent official and ministerial pronouncements and directives on education has made me realise the extent to which I am conservative on educational matters, although I would not regard myself as a Conservative politically. The irony is that it is a self-styled Conservative administration which is vigorously pursuing policies in education which are the educational equivalents of the tower blocks and town centre 'developments' of the 1960s. I mean this quite seriously. The pursuit of utility in education is likely to be as destructive of humane sensibility as the pursuit of function in architecture has been to the achievement of that sense of home and of familiar ease in one's surroundings which people have hoped to find in domestic building since the earliest times. Just as modern architects have in effect told the general public that they may not have such a hope, and created wastelands and dereliction almost by intention, as it were, so utilitarian thinking and practice in education seeks to produce a population ready only to fulfil technological functions in society, their minds being left to their own weightless and autonomous choices among the stimuli produced by that technology and by the mass media which spring from it. In other words, education for utility and education for autonomy are not necessarily antithetical. If the utility is that laid down by the forces of production in a society, and the autonomy is freedom to choose among the products of that production, the two may very well be the same. Although those who advocate autonomy as a value in education sometimes think that they are telling their pupils to exercise their own judgement, even on social and political matters, they may in practice be doing no more than instilling in their pupils a belief in the supremacy of individual choice. In that they are not so far from the market freedom advocated by industrialists and advertisers, who also insist on the cumulative merit of individual choice. If their pupils have no background against which to exercise these choices, the upshot is all too likely to be a race of Kierkegaardian 'aesthetic' men who act on immediate impulse, on the stimulations of the moment, a race very well suited to the consumer society. The radicals who wanted Freedom Now in the 1960s are manning the corporations in the 1980s: and this is no contradiction.

Of course, the educational theorists and politicians who want to bring about a respect for 'wealth creation' and to make education 'relevant' to 'the needs of industry' (not that they have any idea what these phrases might

amount to in practice, as those who have listened to them discoursing on these matters will realise) would not see themselves as advocating the same sort of radicalism that swept university campuses in the 1960s. But in one significant respect, and educationally it is the most significant respect of all, campus radicalism of the freedom-now variety and a Josephite utilitarianism in education share a belief in the overweening importance of the present moment and of the stimulations and demands of the present. Everything in education must be made relevant to the present, whether the outcome of the relevance is to reinforce or to replace. But even where one's ostensible aim is to replace, the means is always through studies designed to reinforce and concentrate on one's present sense of grievance with the present. Education, I would say, on the contrary is nothing and its costs in terms of deprivation of liberty unjustified unless it is a discipline enabling its initiates to distance themselves from their present concerns and perceptions. Through education we should enter into those human achievements that have endured and which have provided some distancing of the individual from his own greed and need and from the need and greed of others. The hope of the true educator is that his pupils should resist the lure of the current fashions and ephemera, both in politics and in the market place, and also come to see their lure for what it is.

There is, in fact, something contradictory about the very attempt to centralise and direct educational institutions on the part of the present government, which is ostensibly committed to the theory and practice of Smith's invisible hand. On the invisible hand view, a large scale human institution is so complex that it will never be actually surveyable or controllable by individual minds; individuals as individuals will inevitably be ignorant of its workings and of the effects of their interventions in it. However, to counterbalance the ignorance of individuals, knowledge is disseminated throughout the institution by the way the effects of the countless individual actions in the institution work their way through it, creating new demands and opportunities for individuals. The most famous example of this dialectic of ignorance and knowledge in a large scale institution is, of course, the market economy. Adam Smith's talk of the invisible hand amounts to the claim that the most beneficial way of operating it is to allow the signals sent out spontaneously by consumers and producers to resonate through the system unimpeded, so that labour and capital will be drawn to their most productive uses. What those uses might be is on this view something that no

individual mind could know in advance of the actual working out of the countless demands and desires of the individuals in the system. The invisible hand argument against planning and in favour of the free development of institutions is a quite general epistemological claim, and must apply to an institution such as an education system, just as much as in economics. So there is, as I say, something contradictory about engaging in short-term planning for specific ends in education and advocating the unfettered play of market forces elsewhere. And in education and learning generally, there is something highly plausible and attractive about the invisible hand view. We cannot know in advance which discoveries might be made, which directions a tradition or discipline might take, or what the effects of educational policies might be on the minds of those yet to be introduced to them. In all these areas spontaneous mental development is of the essence. Far better, then, to allow education and educational institutions to develop spontaneously, pluralistically and flexibly, guided both by their own traditions and values, whose virtues and defects are to some degree familiar to us, and by the creativity of scholars, teachers and learners than to attempt in a rationalistic spirit globally to determine educational policies from without, in the hope of attaining goals which are both questionable and uncertain. For, as in all large scale social engineering, reason here comes up against its limits; and the planners and the rest of us will inevitably be faced with the unforeseeable and often unwanted consequences of their plans, as happened in architecture and town planning. (And this last-named disaster was also an educational failure; the generation of architects and planners responsible for the devastations of the 1960s were the products of schools of architecture and planning whose curricula were dominated by rationalistic principles rather than by immersion in traditional forms and orders.)

That we are living in barbaric times hardly needs saying, but it is worth looking briefly at the form the barbarism takes in education. According to the DES document of 1981 on the school curriculum, the basic aim of education is 'to equip young people fully for adult and working life in a world which is changing very rapidly indeed in consequence of new technological developments'; for this it needs to give them 'a better understanding of the economic base of our society' and 'the importance to Britain of the wealth-creating process'. Some will no doubt jibe at the possibly indoctrinatory tone of this last directive. I am far more concerned at the fact that the only reference to the humanities in the whole document is where, tacked on to a core curriculum to consist of English, mathematics, religious and physical education, and a modern language, there is to be 'some study of the humanities to yield lasting benefit'. The dismissiveness and empty-headedness of this reference shows clearly the degree of importance humanities has in the collective mind of the DES, quite consonant with Sir Keith Joseph's desire to rid the curriculum of 'clutter' (ie. anything non-utilitarian) and Lord Young's claim, when head of the Manpowers Ser-

vice Commission, that the world of education should recognise that there is no difference between education and training, and his further advice to young people not to bother with academic education, as represented (however feebly) by 'O' and 'A' levels, and to get on with the technical, computer and business studies employers want (or are said to want). All this is quite in line, too, with the modern cant of industrialists, politicians, and regrettably, educationalists, according to whom education should aim at the acquisition of spurious and factitious 'skills' (such as telephone skills, communication skills, information skills and even, I believe, life skills), rather than initiation into these traditional channels of knowledge and experience which, over the centuries, have enabled people to soften and elevate the brutishness of immediate impulse, just because they take men into activities which respond directly neither to their narrow self-interest nor to extraneous utility. I suspect, further, that the aim of learning a modern foreign language, recommended by the DES, is not to gain entry into another culture, but rather to be able to do business in some other country. A recently installed University Chancellor is on record as believing that the main point of the study of the humanities in the university is just to enable people to discover enough of the ways of foreigners to do this successfully, a remark deserving the equivalent in 1985 of Matthew Arnold's jibe in 1868 that when he studied Greek and Aristotle in Oxford, he had not thought of preparing himself by the study of modern languages to 'fight the battle of life with the waiters in foreign hotels'. The Vice Chancellor of Surrey University, meanwhile, wantonly closed an excellent Philosophy Department at the same time as starting a degree in 'Dance Studies' and increasing an already forty strong department of 'Hotel Catering, and Tourism Management'.

Matthew Arnold's analysis of the England of his time can, with minor amendments, be applied to much that we see around us today: he saw a boorish aristocracy, intent mainly on their 'sports', and largely wedded to the conviction that the main thing about foreigners is that they don't wash; a working class 'more raw . . . less enviable-looking, further removed from civilised and humane life, than the common people almost anywhere'; and a middle-class mindlessly busy in the mechanical pursuit of wealth and personal liberty, though with little enough idea of what to do with either when they got them. Even if the middle classes are no longer so adept in the pursuit of wealth as once they were, it cannot be denied that the pleasures and personal liberties sought by the middle classes of both the *Express* reader type and his radical counterpart are very much those afforded by machinery and gadgets, and the pursuit of personal liberty by both types is little more than that empty search for autonomy for its own sake which, as Arnold says, militates against 'the erection of any very strict standard of excellence'. For how can an autonomous individual on his own possibly add anything of value to the culture of a society, or even say anything of value about it, unless he has already submitted to the discipline involved in learning one or other of the forms of

knowledge or expression valued in that society? No one would expect someone who had not mastered the basic skills of a game to do anything worthwhile in that game: yet traditional English philistinism (as manifested, say, in the *Daily Mail* or *Private Eye*) and the lamentable influence of Dewey and his followers in education combine in unholy alliance to give yet more generations of English schoolchildren the impression that some worthwhile degree of autonomy and creativity in cultural matters, where far more than skill is involved, is within the reach of anyone who picks up a pen or a paint-brush.

The Josephite stress on an education that is relevant to the needs of industry, and the Deweyite notion that a genuine education can somehow arise from the current experience and expressive ability of the child, are wrong in the same way and for the same reason. Both believe that there can be a satisfactory education rooted in and growing from the immediacies of the present, and responsive first and foremost to the stimulations and demands of the present, and that anyone with a hatfull of relevant 'skills' will be equipped to deal with whatever 'problems' come their way. Apart from anything else, questions of human relationships, of political aims, of death and of living one's life are not problems that can be solved, nor, except in the most corrupt and manipulative sense, are there skills to be exercised in these areas. A proper response to a death, or to a dilemma in politics or to a work of art are not things that can be learned like genuine skills, such as bowling an off-break; such things require the understanding and wisdom that comes from seeing things in a wide human context, in their full complexity and interconnectedness. The rituals and forms of traditional ways of life no doubt gave people the means to live through the enigmas of life. Lacking such traditional forms, at least in any substantial, unreflective sense, it is plausible to suppose that an education focusing on history, literature and the arts will provide the best way of developing the sort of understanding and sensitivity to our lives and experience that will enable us to cherish what is higher, more complex, better-ordered and ultimately more fulfilling, and so to reject the seductions offered by the prospects of immediate satisfaction, either material or intellectual. I am not, of course, saying that all art and all history represent what is higher or show man in a non-Hobbesian light; what I am saying is that from a study of history and the arts, one might hope to learn the sort of qualitative discrimination needed to see possibilities and to make judgements and evaluations beyond the narrow exigencies of the present.

My ideas here are hardly original, but they need restating urgently and forcefully. We have witnessed and continue to witness in education at the moment an overwhelming stress on the education relevance of the present. The government, industrialists and the DES appear to want – and in any case are getting – an education system designed to answer to the needs of 'industry'. Their mirror-image, the radical left, appear to want the focus of education to be current social problems, viewed through narrow ideological spectacles. Neither party appears to care about transmitting a genuinely dis-

interested vision of the human world, as a necessary prelude to any worthwhile life or action. I would follow Matthew Arnold in seeing the best hope for a democracy as lying not in the pursuit of self-government for its own sake, but in the imparting to its citizens ideals of high feeling and fine culture. That idea was shared, incidentally, by the Marxist Antonio Gramsci who believed that a working class denied access to the humanistic rationality of the traditional academic approach was only too likely to remain satisfied with inferior cultural standards, and an easy prey to manipulation by ideology and advertising. I do not doubt that this is very much what is happening now, or that the process of cultural decay is accelerated by the present Government's emphasis on utilitarian values in education. Of course, some people will not get their education from the DES, and will continue to attend schools offering a humane education, engaging in that critical-creative conflict with the past and its best works which alone can inform the present with any significance beyond the mind-dulling clichés of the media, and the craving for the commodities of the industrial process. But those privileged educationally will tend also to be those privileged socially, and so the division of the country into two classes and two cultures will be perpetuated. And this is surely unacceptable, not only culturally, but also ethically.

Matthew Arnold wrote in *Culture and Anarchy* of what he called the social idea of culture, whereby education would not 'track down to the level of inferior classes', and the mass of the population would not be fobbed off with an 'intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way (others) think proper for the actual condition of the masses'. The way of culture, by contrast, 'seeks to do away with classes' and to make the best that has been thought and known current and freely available to all, so that – I would add, in the spirit of the invisible hand – they might freely use the ideas thus made available. It seems to me that we are no nearer this social idea now than we were in 1868 when Arnold wrote, and in some ways we may be even further from it, given that the Government and the DES appear to be entirely ruled in educational matters by short-term market considerations. Architectural tower blocks may now be out of fashion, but an education system is now being fashioned to suit an intellectual horizon limited by the demands of industrialists and politicians, aided by plenty of educational theorists and administrators who have no standing in any traditional educational discipline. These demands are for centralised planning in education aimed at short-term utilitarian goals. Consideration of the effects of centralised planning of this sort suggests that the goals are not likely to be achieved in education any more than they were achieved in modern architecture. But a generation of children will certainly be deprived of the cultural benefits of a traditional education according a central place to the humanities and this would be deeply worrying to true conservatives.*

*I would like to thank the Editor for his helpful comments on an earlier draft.

The Gilmore Syndrome

Ray Honeyford

‘There is no such thing as an Englishman’ (Conservative Councillor Peter Gilmore, Chairman, Bradford Educational Services Committee, television interview, 1984).

How could an English Conservative be led to make such a remark? One would, of course, evince far less surprise if the words had issued from a man of the left committed, as he must be, and despite the lessons of history, to the romantic notion of cosmic political solutions. Or, indeed, from the mouth of a contemporary liberal, who regards the concept of the nation as redundant. To each one might with justice attach Canning’s words, ‘A steady patriot of the world alone. The friend of every country but his own.’ But it seems not unreasonable to suppose that an active Conservative in a position of power, and working, presumably, to invest policy with Conservative insights and aspirations might have some grasp of the uniqueness of things English. He might, surely, understand that this country is a unique nation with great achievements in learning, the arts, science, literature, the military arts and diplomacy. He might, too, have some inkling that we have played a leading role in the establishment of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law – and that the English are a people of distinctive character. How, one wonders, could Mr Gilmore have been deflected from the need, experienced by all true Conservatives, to respect, cherish and be properly proud of one’s national origin and identity?

In general there have been several post-war developments which collectively militate against the sentiment that patriotism is a virtue – though George Orwell noted in the 30s the anti-British tendency in certain sections of the ruling classes. The disillusionment with nationalism resulting from the efforts of one nation state, led by a madman, to conquer the world; the emergence of two super-powers of awesome strategic power, which led to the merging of this country’s security with that of other European nations in the NATO alliance; the growth of supranational powers such as UNO and the EEC – particularly the loss of sovereignty implicit in the transfer of powers from Westminster to Brussels and Strasbourg; the loss of Empire and the fashion for post-imperial guilt amongst English intellectuals and at the BBC; the sense of living in a shrinking world consequent upon the revolution in the character and speed of travel and telecommunications; and, more recently, the granting of full British citizenship to large numbers of immigrants whose race, colour, language, and, often, religion, dramatically extended the established, defining characteristics of Englishness. All these have, perhaps, con-

spired to create a climate of feeling and opinion in which even committed Conservatives not only have difficulty in loving their own country, but in grasping that it still exists.

But this speculation provides only a backcloth, or ambience, as it were. And men need specific influences to form distinctive attitudes. What influences were operating on Mr Gilmore when he made his extraordinary statement? It is his geographical location at the time which provides the clue. Gilmore was a leading politician in a city – Bradford – which has committed itself to all the doctrines espoused by that government quango – the Commission for Racial Equality – whose basic function appears to be the replacing of the notion of a distinctive and long-established English culture with some sort of officially sponsored cultural pluralism. Bradford has created a powerful multiculturalist bureaucracy. And it is increasingly committed to using its schools not to effect integration, and to promote amongst all pupils – whatever their race or colour – loyalty to a national ideal, but rather to develop some sort of ‘multicultural identity’. Now this latter idea appears to have no attachment to history, tradition, natural development or actual, common experience – in other words, no attachment to those things which give the concept ‘culture’ real, human meaning. It takes its force rather from a bureaucratic attempt to impose culture from above, an attempt to wipe clean the slate of history and re-invent culture in accordance with official dictat. Such official multiculturalism is not only offensively authoritarian; it is also both impractical and misguided.

Underlying the notion of ‘multiculture’ in the schools is the belief that all cultures now represented in this country should have equal status. This must mean, ultimately, that parents will have the right to insist upon their mother language as the medium of instruction. This is already being urged by powerful voices at the EEC. It is, too, an established practice in parts of the United States – a development which causes many thoughtful Americans growing concern. If this principle is accepted in Britain there will be chaos in the schools. Imagine the situation in Inner London. There, according to a recent survey, there are now 161 parent languages in the school population. In one school there are forty five such languages. In Bradford there are about seventy. And this linguistic diversity is present in many other local education authority areas. Moreover, the phenomenon is growing: in London it grew by eleven per cent in just two years. The costs of implementing this sort of policy would, of course, be astronomic – though none of the

proposals for 'multicultural education' I have seen ever considers them.

But the educational and financial questions are only part of the issue. The multicultural proposals also have social and political implications. If we grant minority cultures parity of coverage in the schools, then we can predict the growth of self-conscious, divisive demands for separate institutional frameworks, such as we see in the Anglo-French conflict in Canada – an ethnic conflict with echoes in Belgium, Latin America, Malaga, Ethiopia, Iraq and many other parts of the world, not least our own Northern Ireland. The demand for separate black sections in the Labour Party is perhaps a symptom of this tendency.

It should be noted that the multicultural philosophy has no popular mandate: the parents of children in school have never been consulted. Moreover it violates the traditional and very successful British approach to cultural diversity: which is to establish a separation of cultural interests in the public and private domains. In institutions financed from the public purse, it has been traditionally assured, a unitary notion of culture – which does not deny variations and richness – must prevail. Minority cultures should be sustained through private initiatives. This principle has enabled Jewish and East European immigrants to flourish – and to sustain their parent cultures. Why is not such a principle right for our most recent influx of immigrants? By seeking to challenge this notion, the multiculturalists are violating not only the wishes of a majority of parents, but also a fundamental sentiment in the English character – the sense of fair play and natural justice.

At least twenty local education authorities have now espoused a multicultural perspective for their schools, and, thanks to the Swann Report, more will follow. Yet in how many council chambers have the sort of fundamental questions I have tried here to raise been discussed? How many of those local councillors charged with administering our education services have even considered the link between what happens in our schools and the concept of social and political unity? Mr Gilmore's failure to gain a purchase on one of the central ideals of the political philosophy to which he is ostensibly committed, is a measure of at least one Council's success in abolishing our sense of national identity. And Bradford is not unique. In an increasing number of areas Gilmore's attitude is not only intellectually fashionable: it is a condition of professional and political success.

If the conflict between integration and separatism results in the success of the latter what are the likely outcomes? Light may be thrown on this question by recent American history. Although there are vast differences between this country and the USA, we are now experiencing many of the problems regarding ethnic minorities that are familiar parts of the American experience. The American sociologist Nathan Glazer has written with great knowledge and insight about the whole question of ethnicity. He postulates three models governing the relations between ethnic groups living in the same society.

Southern: Here society is divided into two segments, black and white. All other groups have to choose which group they belong to, even if they desire neither. Violence governs relations between the groups, and a 'separate but equal' ideology is espoused, if rarely achieved.

Northern: Here there are many groups, differing in wealth, power, occupation and values. But an open society prevails. Over time groups and individuals compete for the goods, achievement and status within a common society. Competition is muted and mediated not through violence, but through effectiveness of organisation and socio-economic and educational achievement.

Western: This is the most recent development. It is an attempt to take account of two key factors – many groups, e.g. Hispanics and Asians do not fit conveniently into the Southern black versus white scenario, and disfavoured groups are disfavoured in varying degrees and have different histories, cultures and legal statuses.¹

The southern model was, in the true sense of the term, racist. It functioned on the assumption of white superiority and through the denial of basic rights to blacks. It produced a society divided both politically and socially; its ideology was enforced officially through the courts, and unofficially through the lynch mob. This pattern of intergroup relations has never existed in this country, though the race relations lobby has been very successful in persuading many influential people and organisations that it is the typical British response to ethnicity. In reality, of course, Britain is an open society: access to the franchise, to the welfare state, to the education service, to the courts and to a free press has no reference to race or colour. There is no attempt to codify relations amongst racial groups along colour lines.

The northern model is a free market phenomenon. It relies on openness and competition to regulate intergroup relations. There is minimal intrusion into questions of race and colour. Political success is achieved via direct participation in the political process. The ballot box rather than the law court is seen as the route to local and national influence. Group interests may cut across racial differences, with issues to do with morality, religion, neighbourhood projects and economic self-interest attracting attention from different ethnic groups.

The western model turns the southern model on its head. Whereas in the southern states the law had been used to enforce segregation and white power, the courts are now increasingly attempting to enforce equality amongst an increasingly diverse population. The law names groups, and thereby confers rights and benefits on individuals specifically owing to group membership. The law also determines who shall not enjoy benefits because he does not belong to the named group. In a multifarious society this inevitably means conflict amongst minority groups as to which is to be designated the most disfavoured, since being 'disfavoured' automatically leads to increased benefits. It also creates a separation mentality, with minority groups increasingly asserting

their unique racial or national identity, and failing to blend into an existing multi-ethnic society. Thanks to the emergence of radical and vociferous minority groups, and their increasing tendency to demand separate legal rights, the tradition of assimilation to a common political ideal achieved by previous inflows of European immigrants is breaking down. The notion that everyone is American regardless of group identity is giving way to factionalism. As I have said above, many thoughtful Americans have expressed their dismay at this threat to social and political cohesion, e.g. Daniel P. Moynihan, Peter L. Berger, Robert Nisbet, Thomas Sowell.

It is this latter, western model to which the race relations lobby in Britain is committed. The instrument of its application in the schools is 'multicultural education', as endorsed by the Swann Committee. As I have said, the original ideal of assimilation of ethnic groups into a common, national allegiance, which gave way to the more diffuse notion of integration, has now developed into the belief that schools should function to maintain separate cultural identities and ideals. A set of mythical notions about access, equality and the virtues of diversity are being stridently urged on the authorities by a government quango, by an increasing number of professional multiculturalists, and by a politicised ethnic minority intelligentsia – Ward, Mullard, Davis, Woodruffe, Klein, Lashley, Sivanandan, Singh. There is also increasing pressure to extend the special financial provisions for ethnic minority children under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966. The NUT is arguing that section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 places an obligation on local authorities to make separate and favoured arrangements for ethnic minority groups. Black politicians such as Prophet and Boateng are insisting that political representation should reflect population distributions, and that the law should codify intergroup relations.

This move towards an ideal of cultural and political separateness is disturbing for three reasons: the speed with which it has developed, the absence of any public debate about the sort of multicultural society Britain ought to be, and the lack of awareness of the outcome for our national identity and social cohesion.

The speed with which the race relations lobby has succeeded in implanting its view in the education service may be judged by comparing the conclusions of the Swann Committee with the following judgement made as recently as 1977:

... education authorities did not see the promotion of minority cultures as appropriate to the education service. Most authorities give priority to assisting minority children to integrate into English ways, and considered the meeting of cultural needs as lying outside the scope of responsibility of the education authority.²

Our failure to debate what national model of intergroup relations we should follow is equally striking. There was concern in the 60s and 70s about the principle of conferring citizenship on people from our former colonies, and about numbers, but there has been no public discussion about the nature of our multicultural cities. It is

this intellectual vacuum which has enabled dubious notions, advanced by those with political and professional interests to flourish unopposed. For example, one may find in the multicultural literature of the Schools Council an effortless, and totally unsupported, movement from assimilation, through integration to 'pluralism'. This extraordinary begging of the most important question shows how professional self interest, rather than informed debate, can carry the day through lack of public and professional discussion. It is enlightening to compare Britain's conversion into a multicultural society, with that other significant questioning of the notion of national sovereignty embodied in our entry into the EEC. The Common Market decision was preceded by fierce and informed public and parliamentary debate; the media took considerable interest; and there was a national referendum.

What of the outcome of 'pluralism' as opposed to assimilation? Again, the American experience is enlightening. In the USA the claim that special public treatment for minorities would issue in equality and 'social justice' has been confounded. Instead the sheer diversity of groups, the problem of determining which groups should court as disfavoured, and which groups particular individuals should belong to, is creating legal and political chaos. Should Hispanics be regarded as black or white in the 'desegregation' of schools? Should the term 'Hispanic' be accepted as valid, when it covers such diverse groups as Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Cubans? How should the Asian groups be regarded – as a homogeneous community or as separate *national* communities: Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Asian Indians, Vietnamese? Who is to count as an American Indian and what determines tribal membership? – a crucial question, the answer to which may confer not only benefit rights but also large sums of money as compensation for land-taking generations ago. These questions are increasingly finding their way into the courts, so that a growing corpus of case law is confirming separation and factionalism.

Though this country is less diverse racially and culturally than America, nevertheless we are increasingly multifarious. Our Asian population contains Indians, Pakistanis, Vietnamese, Filipinos and Chinese – and we are likely to inherit significant numbers from Hong Kong. The West Indian population is by no means homogeneous: there are significant historical and cultural variations according to island of origin. There is a considerable number of Cypriot and Greek children in our schools. And there are, of course, significant East European and Jewish communities. Of great importance for our future cohesion as a nation is the presence now of an increased number of Eastern religions in our inner cities – Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, between which there are serious historic conflicts. There is now in this country immense cultural diversity.

There is little doubt that if the present commitment to 'pluralism' continues, there will be increasing conflict within the minority groups about rights and privileges, an increasing tendency to political separatism, and an

increasing loss of a sense of national identity and social cohesion. There will be more people like Mr Gilmore, who will blithely abolish their national roots, without a thought for the psychological and emotional consequences for the individual and the nation of the sentiments which seem so natural and so enlightened to themselves.

I believe there is an urgent need for a public debate about the kind of multicultural Britain which is in the best interest of harmony and cohesion. We need to argue the need for the principle of assimilation of all into one national identity. We need to respect minority cultures, but insist that they must be preserved and transmitted through private initiative, and not through state subsidies. We need to challenge the very existence of the race relations lobby, and to question the part our institutions are playing in furthering notions of 'pluralism' – particularly the tendency of the BBC to locate and cater for separate 'black' and Asian communities. The myth of multicultural education must be exposed, and the primacy of English culture and language in the state schools re-asserted – religious orthodoxy must be catered for through the principles that govern voluntary and independent schools. We must question the idea that human need is a function of minority group membership, and insist that need is seen as a property, not of the group, but of the unique individuals that compose it. We need to encourage racial minorities to make their own way in the world, and to take advantage of the free and open access they enjoy to institutions which ensure social mobility and personal achievement. We must eschew such aberrations as quota systems, 'anti-racist' agitation and cultural revisionism. Above all we need to make people aware of the dangers of the new race

relations orthodoxies, and the virtues of a society in which the fact of being British takes public precedence over race, creed and colour. Indeed, we must make race and colour irrelevant.

Two quotations will help to make clear my hopes and fears:

... one can still appreciate the virtue of forging a single society out of many stocks, and acknowledge that this process deserves some public guidance. Beyond Northern, Southern and Western patterns, there are still, or should be, ultimate goals. Today the most strongly supported goals seem to be, first, that every group must match every other group in economic resources, occupational status, and political representation; and, second, that every group should be maintained in its distinctiveness, insofar as it is in the public power to do so, through an educational system that supports its language and culture. That is a sure recipe for conflict. Perhaps the much maligned goal of assimilation still has a good deal to teach us about managing our multi-ethnic society.³

The vulnerability of multi-racial and multi-ethnic societies to internal strife and dissolution is painfully obvious from history and from despotism and bloody examples in our own time.⁴

Notes

1. 'Ethnicity – North, South, West' *Commentary*, May 1982.
2. *The Education of Ethnic Minority Children*, Community Relations Commission, London 1977.
3. Nathan Glazer, *ibid.*
4. Thomas Sowell, *Pink and Brown People*, Hoover Press 1979.

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Hume as a Conservative Thinker*

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Every undergraduate philosophy student knows that Hume was 'a sceptic'. He said so himself, and there are arguments of his to prove it. He argued, for example, that none of us has a single good reason for thinking that the future will resemble the past. For all we know to the contrary, the sun will not rise tomorrow. The next piece of bread we eat may poison us. And, linked with this, the events we call causes are not so-called because they ensure or guarantee the events we call effects. Rather, it is the regular arrangement between events of certain kinds which leads us to call events of one kind causes and events of the other kind effects. The link between cause and effect, if it is anywhere, is in us and imputed to the events in question.

For Hume these problems underscore the meagreness of our knowledge, and mark its limits. There is no theoretically satisfactory answer to these problems. How then can we cope? Bread, or something, has to be eaten if we are to survive and we have to make plans for at least some bits of our futures, supposing that we are to have futures. What can justify bread-eating as against arsenic eating, and banking on a sun-rise and not a stellar holocaust?

Hume's answer, in a word, is *habit*. It is the experience of past regularities which leads us, as a matter of psychological fact, to expect new nourishings from bread and new risings from the sun. And so far our expectations have not been disappointed. Our experience has remained stable. Causes do 'produce' effects. Our psychology outruns our logic. We expect what we cannot justify. We (psychologically) must necessarily expect what we cannot (logically) justify.

This is radical enough stuff, in all conscience. The bondings of nature dissolved by the acids of logic. Hume a conservative? But paradoxically perhaps the main elements of Hume's political conservatism have already been disclosed. They are, the emphasis on the *givenness of experience*, the stress laid upon *human habits*, and what I shall call the *inversion thesis*, Hume's view that certain concepts about our experience, which we use to characterise our experience, are not given in experience but are imputed to it. These elements, together with Hume's view of human nature, pretty well yield Hume's political philosophy, not in the sense that they entail it, but by providing a framework which renders his political philosophy a wholly intelligible matter.

First, then, the givenness of experience. If Hume was a sceptic, he was also an empiricist. Facts, the facts of experience, precede theories about experience. It is so, Hume thought, not only in the case of what our senses

tell us, but also in politics. The correct starting point in political theorising, Hume held, lies in the fact of civil government, and not in any theoretical question about how or why civil government is to be justified. The question of justification with which political theorists have been preoccupied is pre-empted in Hume's view because of the immeasurable benefits of *any* civil government over the alternative, which is anarchy. To make this last claim plausible it is necessary to have in mind Hume's unflattering view of human nature, of which more anon. Because the start of any general reflections about the nature of politics must lie in the fact of civil government the speculative tendencies of political theorists are to be regarded as both self-indulgent and dangerous.

We may be inclined to think, *a priori*, that government by a magistrate is an inconvenience and an imposition. But, Hume says:

Order in society, we find, is much better maintained by means of government . . . The love of dominion is so strong in the breast of man, that many not only submit to, but court all the dangers, and fatigues, and cares of government; and men, once raised to that station, though often led astray by private passions, find, in ordinary case, a visible interest in the impartial administration of justice.

But if that much of our experience is certain, much else about our experience is partial:

I am apt, however, to entertain a suspicion, that the world is still too young to fix many general truths in politics which will remain true to the latest posterity. We have not as yet had experience of three thousand years; so that not only the art of reasoning is still imperfect in this science, as in all others, but we even want sufficient materials upon which we can reason.

So it is both the immeasurable benefits to all secured by the fact of civil government, coupled with the complexity and delicacy of human affairs, which ought to curb political theorising. And Hume had two theories in his sights here, the theory of the divine right of kings, and the Lockean theory of a primitive social contract. Indeed one way of viewing Hume's political philosophy, one of his ways of viewing it, is as a mediating position between these two extremes, and in the concrete political context in which Hume carried on his philosophising, as mediating between the Court and Country Parties. And Hume the historian believed that the historical data confirmed the position of Hume the philosopher. Just as neither side, Hume thought, had reason so completely on their

side as they thought (as he showed in his essays 'Of the original contract' and 'Of passive obedience') so neither had history exclusively on their side (as Hume attempted to show in his essay 'Of the Coalition of Parties' and at length in his *History*).

In Hume's view, political consent is a consequence of established (i.e. *de facto*) political authority, continually reinforced as those within its orbit come almost insensibly to experience its benefits, 'the advantages resulting from peace and order'. The notion of an implicit contract entered into between men at the first, in the state of nature, Hume regarded as a wholly fictional idea though one whose influence, at least at the time he wrote the *Treatise*, he regarded as perhaps not wholly pernicious. The further idea of an explicit political contract, and the view that present political allegiance is suspended upon its continuous renewal, Hume scorned on the grounds that it was totally out of accord with the facts. To begin with, the governments in power cannot trace their legitimacy back to some primitive contract to which they were parties.

Almost all the governments, which exist at present or of which there remains any record in history, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both, without any pretence of a fair consent, or voluntary subjection of the people. When an artful and bold man is placed at the head of an army or faction, it is often easy for him, by employing, sometimes violence, sometimes false pretences, to establish his dominion over a people a hundred times more numerous than his partisans . . . By such arts as these, many governments have been established; and this is all the *original contract* which they have to boast of.

And if it is said that

All men are still born equal, and owe allegiance to no prince or government, unless bound by the sanction of a *promise*. And as no man, without some equivalent, would forgo the advantages of his native liberty, and subject himself to the will of another; this promise is always understood to be conditional, and imposes on him no obligation, unless he meets with justice and protection from his sovereign.

But this is plainly false.

Would these reasoners look abroad into the world, they would meet with nothing that, in the least, corresponds to their ideas, or can warrant so refined and philosophical a system . . . Obedience or subjection becomes so familiar, that most men never make any inquiry about its origin or cause, more than about the principle of gravity, resistance, or the most universal laws of nature.

So there was neither an original contract which is of any present political relevance, nor is it accurate to suppose

that men do in fact see themselves as members of a society in a tacitly conditional manner, their allegiance being suspended upon the continued willingness and ability of the magistrate to 'deliver'. Such a view, for Hume, is profoundly unhistorical.

But perhaps though men *do* not suspend their allegiance to the magistrate in this way, they *ought* to? Hume's response to this would be emphatic: if this is meant seriously, it is the high road to chaos.

What, on the other hand, of the theory of divine right? Hume's answer is short. A king is no more or less dependent upon divine providence than a constable. If therefore, this fact establishes the divine right of the king it establishes the divine right of the constable and a 'usurper or even a robber and a pirate'. And insofar as the divine right theory carries with it the doctrine of absolute passive obedience it is necessary to reject this in order 'to defend the rights of injured truth and liberty'. However, Hume does not appeal to such rights in the abstract but as the conflict over them received concrete expression in English history. Charles I and James II mistook

the nature of our constitution, and engrossing the whole legislative power, it became necessary to oppose them with some vehemence; and even to deprive the latter formally of that authority which he had used with such imprudence and indiscretion.

Unlike some conservative thinkers Hume approaches the problems of politics from the point of view of the individual. Civil society is a construct. Not a deliberate construct having one over-riding purpose, nor yet a natural evolution, but an imperceptible 'casual' construct established by the interests of individuals, particularly by the need to safeguard certain of these interests. While an individual can perhaps only properly find fulfilment in civil society, for it is only in such a society that he flourishes as his interests flourish, the individual is nevertheless prior to civil society.

If this is so, what is it that actually keeps individuals together in a society? Hume has two complementary answers to this question. The more general answer, and the one easiest to explain, is *habit*. The less general and more complex answer is: *certain interests*. This second answer is more complex because it involves what was earlier called the *inversion thesis*. First, *habit*.

Just as repeated experience of one kind of event, say bringing the cheese out of the refrigerator, followed by another kind of event, smelling a certain smell, leads us to think that the cheese is the cause of the smell, and leads us to expect the smell the next time the cheese appears, so the experience of men who have come together in 'civil society' to safeguard and foster certain of their interests, leads to the development of habits, customs and expectations. These habits may be thought of as lines of force which hold individuals together despite the opposite force of natural selfishness. Familiarity breeds consent.

Speculating about the historical origins of civil society

Hume writes

The chieftain, who had probably acquired his influence during the continuance of war, ruled more by persuasion than command; and till he could employ force to reduce the refractory and disobedient the society could scarcely be said to have attained a state of civil government. No compact or agreement, it is evident, was expressly formed for general submission; an idea far beyond the comprehension of savages: each exertion of authority in the chieftain must have been particular, and called forth by the present exigencies of the case: the sensible utility resulting from this interposition, made these exertions become daily more frequent; and their frequency gradually produced an habitual, and, if you please to call it so, a voluntary, and therefore precarious, acquiescence in the people.

Such habits or customs develop over time, as Hume stresses in his earlier discussion in the *Treatise*:

Time alone gives solidity to their (viz kings whose power is founded on rebellion) right; and, operating gradually on the minds of men, reconciles them to any authority, and makes it seem just and reasonable. Nothing causes any sentiment to have a greater influence upon us than custom, or turns our imagination more strongly to any object.

In stressing habit as he does Hume does not mean that all habits are constant and uniform across societies, and unchanging over periods of time. Habits of mind, opinions, outlooks, can change quite quickly and can have important political repercussions. It is unreasonable to judge one age by the maxims of another.

Now, there has been a sudden sensible change in the opinions of men within these last fifty years, by the progress of learning and of liberty. Most people, in this island, have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: the clergy have much lost their credit; their doctrines have been ridiculed; and even religion can scarcely support itself in the world. The mere name of king commands little respect; and to talk of a king as God's vicegerent on earth, or to give him any of those magnificent titles, which formerly dazzled mankind, would but excite laughter in every one . . . Had men been in the disposition at the *revolution*, as they are at present, monarchy would have run a great risk of being entirely lost in this island.

But while customs and habits and opinions may change, it does not follow that anyone can predict such changes, or harness them for political purposes. Hume's first question about any radical change would be not whether that change was desirable but whether its effects could be known.

It is a well-known feature of Hume's general philosophy that he allows for the possibility of the occurrence of miracles while at the same time maintaining that there never could be sufficient evidence to establish that a miracle had occurred, not at least for any such miracle to become the foundation of a religion. Such miracles, were they to occur, would be utterly unpredictable and could only be singular, unrepeatable events. The regularities which give rise to our expectations would be interrupted for the occurrence of the miracle and continue once again after it.

Hume holds that there are political equivalents of miracles, convulsions in society, unpredictable, the products of one of Hume's *bêtes noires*, 'enthusiasm', the claim to immediate divine inspiration. It is as if the forces holding certain solid fragments together in a moving liquid were suddenly and unaccountably to destabilise, with unforeseen and unforeseeable results.

Such was the case, according to Hume, when Charles I's unprecedented behaviour led to the Cromwellian 'rule of the saints'. The fanaticism (as Hume saw it) of the Independents, exalted to a higher pitch than that of the Presbyterians

abolished all ecclesiastical government, disdained all creeds and systems, rejected every ceremony, and confounded each rank and order. The soldier, the merchant, the mechanism indulging the fervours of zeal, and guided by the illapses of the spirit, gave up himself to an inward and superior direction, and was consecrated, in a manner, by an immediate intercourse and communication with Heaven.

Some of the sinews of habit were snapped during this convulsion, and thus human affairs became destabilised and unpredictable. (Compare Burke on the French Revolution: 'We behold such disasters in the moral, as we should behold a miracle in the physical order of things'). It was therefore astonishing, for Hume, that 'so reasonable a doctrine' as toleration 'owed its origin, not to reasoning, but to the height of extravagance and enthusiasm'. About this era, and particularly the curbing of the monarchs' arbitrary power Hume elsewhere says

These views, far from being odious, are surely large, and generous, and noble; to their prevalence and success the kingdom owes its liberty; perhaps its learning, its industry, commerce and naval power: by them chiefly the English name is distinguished among the society of nations, and aspires to a rivalry with that of the freest and most illustrious commonwealths of antiquity. But as all these mighty consequences could not reasonably be foreseen at the time when the contest began. . . .

The sting is in the tail of this quotation. The fact that *in retrospect* some political convulsions have produced good results, such as (in England) the curbing of the power of

the king, does not mean that it is ever politically prudent to agitate for more changes. On this occasion the destabilised fragments of society reassembled through the operation of different sets of forces, and the result was much less friction than before the initial disturbance. But how could this be a prescription for further destabilisations? For who can tell what the effects will be when the re-established habits of the people are again convulsed? So the fact that on this one occasion convulsions led to changes for the better does not falsify Hume's philosophy; rather it reinforces his claim that human affairs are unpredictable and must be treated with caution.

This raises the interesting question of whether Hume's conservatism ever would permit the undoing of wrongs, or whether he held to an essentially ratchet-like view of history according to which it is the politicians' task to ameliorate conditions and reconcile interests but never to seek to re-establish eroded liberties.

But how do the habits that bind men together in civil society arise in the first place? According to Hume, they arise because of human interests, or more exactly, because of what men take their interests to be. Interests thus play an important part in setting up society in a way which involves consideration of Hume's *inversion thesis*. Intertwined with this is what is basic to any political philosophy, the philosopher's view of human nature.

We saw earlier that according to Hume causal connections between events in nature are not discovered but imputed on the basis of habits of mind which in turn are the product of past regularities of experience. In similar fashion Hume contends that justice, which he regards as the key to civil society, is not a natural law discovered by reason or by the senses but is 'invented' to safeguard the interests which people regard themselves as having. Human interests are not a function of justice but justice is a function of human interests once they extend beyond the individual himself and his family, and take in other individuals and their families. Men are governed by interest, and such interest is best safeguarded, in society, by an 'inflexible observance of the rules of justice'. But through the influence of imagination and passion men are often guided more by short than long term interests. This 'natural weakness' can only be cured by making it our immediate interest to observe the laws of justice.

As it is impossible to change or correct anything material in our nature, the utmost we can do is to change our circumstances and situation, and render the observance of the laws of justice our nearest interest, and their violation our most remote.

So there is a certain amount of leeway. Although men are governed by their short-term interests, and unchangeably so, nevertheless they may choose what their short-term interests are. Or at least they may choose to place in authority those whose personal short-term interests are satisfied and who therefore may have as their further short-term interests the upholding of justice. Rulers have interests too.

These are the persons whom we call civil magistrates, kings and their ministers, our governors and rulers, who, being indifferent persons to the greatest part of the state, have no interest, or but a remote one, in any act of injustice; and, being satisfied with their present condition, and with their part in society, have an immediate interest in every execution of justice, which is so necessary to the upholding of society.

Here Hume's rather unflattering view of human nature comes into view and more must be said about it in order to make his inversion thesis intelligible and plausible. Hume draws attention to certain basic facts about human nature and the 'human situation', facts which might, considered abstractly, have been otherwise than they are, but which are so basic that human life would be unrecognisable without them. So basic that men often take them for granted and forget them. Among these facts are the incurably selfish character of human nature. 'Each person loves himself better than any other single person, and in his love to others bears the greatest affection to his relations and acquaintances'. The effects of this selfishness are compounded by the fact that there is in man an 'unnatural conjunction of infirmity and necessity'. What Hume means is that

Not only the food which is required for his sustenance flies his search and approach, or at least requires his labour to be produced, but he must be possessed of clothes and lodging to defend against the injuries of the weather; though, to consider him only in himself, he is provided neither with arms, nor force, nor other natural abilities which are in any degree answerable to so many necessities.

Man is naturally selfish, while at the same time he has many needs for survival and little ability to ensure his own survival unaided. What to do? Each person seeks the society of others. Society compensates for these defects, though not in the sense that it dilutes them, sharing equal misery in the manner of a zero-sum game. Rather in society a man's abilities

are still more augmented . . . when every individual person labours apart, and only for himself, his force is too small to execute any considerable work; his labour being employed in supplying all his different necessities he never attains a perfection in any particular art; and as his force and success are not at all times equal, the least failure in either of these particulars must be attended with inevitable ruin and misery. Society provides a remedy for these *three* inconveniences.

The family and informal, co-operative society (of which Hume is speaking in the above quotation) are arrangements made by individuals who know their own interests and wish to maximise and safeguard them. This individualism, besides being rather forced, marks Hume

off from alternative traditions of conservative thinking, some of which lay stress on the family while others hold that a person only gains his full individuality within the context of a society. Hume's account of the arising of society is wholly naturalistic and secular, explicable in terms of the rise, safeguarding and frustration of individual human interests, and not requiring any supernatural or divinely-endorsed model of society. Hume's naturalism here, in fact, creates a difficulty in interpretation, for despite his disavowal of all social contract theories of politics it is not clear what the narrative that Hume constructs is a narrative of. Is it a 'natural history of politics'? Is it a rational reconstruction the behaviour, real or imagined, of primitive societies?

For Hume politics is governed by certain basic facts about human nature and the 'human condition', facts which are empirically discoverable, basic, there for all to see. Society arises to compensate for our infirmities and to safeguard our needs. But 'society' is not for Hume the same as 'civil society'. By means of society human power is augmented and ability increases. But power and ability for what? For, among other things, the creation and acquisition of *property*. The problem is that the property thus acquired through society may be lost through the selfishness of others. 'As the improvement, therefore of these goods (viz 'such possessions as we have acquired by our industry and good fortune') is the chief advantage of society, so the *instability* of their possession, along with their scarcity, is the chief impediment.'

The remedy lies in the establishing of a convention, 'to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry'. Such a remedy – Hume continues to write in his natural historical vein – comes about gradually, not by an explicit promise or convention (such as the social contract of Locke); the very gradualness of its emergence underlines its reliability more than the sudden formalities of an explicit promise would do.

It is only after this convention has come about that 'there arise the ideas of justice and injustice; as also those of *property*, *right* and *obligation*'.

The origin of justice explains that of property. The same artifice gives rise to both. As our first and most natural sentiment of morals is founded on the nature of our passions, and gives the preference to ourselves and friends above strangers, it is impossible there can be naturally any such thing as a fixed right or property, while the opposite passions of men impel them in contrary directions, and are not restrained by any convention or agreement.

So *property*, *right*, *obligation* are concepts which are not natural but artificial, though 'artificial' does not mean the same as 'arbitrary'. Such concepts can only be understood in terms of a continuous tacit convention or understanding between men in society. The recognition of such a convention marks the transition from society to civil society.

And so the idea of a golden age, an idyllic state of nature, is a complete fiction. So complete a fiction is it, that given what we know about human nature and the prevalence of interest, it cannot be supposed that men retained their pre-societal individuality for more than a fraction. 'It is utterly impossible for men to remain any considerable time in that savage condition which precedes society, but that his very first state and situation may justly be esteemed social.'

So (as with causation)

the sense of justice is not founded on reason, or on the discovery of certain connections and relations of ideas, which are eternal, immutable and universally obligatory. It was therefore a concern for our own and the public interest which made us establish the laws of justice; and nothing can be more certain, than that it is not any relation of ideas which gives us this concern, but our impressions and sentiments, without which everything in nature is perfectly indifferent to us, and can never in the least affect us. The sense of justice, therefore, is not founded on our ideas, but on our impressions.

And these impressions arise from 'artifice and human convention', not naturally. Here a little interpretative caution is needed. When Hume denies that the impressions which give rise to justice are natural, he contrasts natural with conventional or artificial. To act naturally in this sense is to act heartily, unrestrainedly, and of course, as Hume has maintained in detail, justice is of the essence of restraint. But such artificial impressions are natural in another sense, in the sense that all men have them. They arise from a nature and a predicament which is common to all men.

So Hume even in his earliest writing the *Treatise* sets his face against any Lockean social contract in which men freely come together to establish society, and insists on the gradual, informal, tacit though certain growth of society. He grounds present political obligations not on a past contract, but on the *de facto* membership of a society. If there is a discernible difference in Hume's thought it is not a difference between an earlier Hume who endorsed the social contract and a later Hume who rejected it but between the Hume of the *Treatise* who was greatly concerned with the natural history of political obligation and the Hume of the *Essays* who was, on balance, concerned with the philosophical defence of his contemporary political situation. It was a change of interest and orientation rather than a change of doctrine.

Hume rejected Lockean social contract doctrine and it is also clear that he rejected Hobbesianism, and clear why this was. For Hobbes the dominant political fact was the fear of death through mutually assured destruction of individuals. Fear of death drives a man to sink his differences with other men and sue for the common protection of Leviathan to whom he gives undivided and entire allegiance. Human *interests* for Hume perhaps as befitted the eighteenth century, were real and powerful enough, but they were multiple, not the single fear of

death, and were concerned less with what a man may lose, his life, than with safeguarding what he has gained and may yet gain, his property.

What sort of conservative was Hume? In a sense, he was a pre-conservative conservative, a conservative setting out his position during an era when the impact of the French Revolution, with its social upheaval based upon optimistic views of human nature, was yet to be felt. It would be anachronistic to read back into Hume positions which have become more self-consciously articulated since Burke. Hume thought of himself as offering an interpretation of English history and politics which proposed the supersession of the division between Whig and Tory, a division based upon abstract theorising (the 'original contract' versus 'passive obedience') by that between Court and Country, a division based upon different though overlapping interests. Hume's fear of parties is of those expressive of abstract principles. And what he feared was that such principles would be pressed to the point of faction. As a historian, Hume was fulsome in his praise for the glorious revolution of 1688 and for its political fruits, particularly the degree of individual liberty that it enshrined and made possible.

It is possible to provide different taxonomies of conservatism, and so what follows is only one of several that are possible. There are, to begin with, *social organism* theories of conservatism, the counterpart to individualist theories of radicalism. On such a view political priority is assigned to a society rather than to any groups of individuals which may comprise the society. At its weakest such a view states that an individual's needs cannot properly be understood, either by himself or by anyone else, except in social terms. Needs and interests are the creation of society. Without such a society a man would be a featherless biped but he would not be a rational animal. At its strongest such a view holds that the social organism is the only political reality. The unit of political currency is not the individual or the group, but the state. On this view a person is literally organic, a function of a wider whole. The state must therefore be fostered and obeyed at all costs, for it is only within the context of the state's power that an individual achieves full rationality, and becomes truly free and truly himself. Such a strong view is characteristic of some forms of idealist and idealist inspired conservatisms, and (as can easily be seen) such a view, coupled with the assumption of 'total politics', can easily be corrupted into totalitarianism.

Hume was not a social organism conservative in this sense. For Hume, as we have seen, the individual is prior to society, and even to the family, to the political value of which Hume seems to attach little importance. Society is a device, a tacitly arrived at contrivance for extending and conserving the powers and opportunities – for example the opportunity to gain and retain property – of individuals. Hume also places emphasis upon the value of individual liberty, and praises the English constitution for making space for the liberty of individuals and groups

to flourish, for religion to be tolerated, and the like.

There are also *divine society* theories of conservatism, which lay stress upon the state as a society brought about by divine providence, and it being the object of political policy as far as possible to retain the lineaments of that society, or (more optimistically) to return to an earlier, purer form of that society (for example as it existed in some alleged 'mediaeval synthesis'). Often coupled with this has been the idea of the king or magistrate as ruling by divine right, and even detailed parallels drawn between the theocratic arrangements of the Old Testament and what is thought of as a desirable arrangement between the king and his subjects. (The earliest controversies over the divine right of kings doctrine in England concerned not the assumption of 'divine right', but what the exact details of the Old Testament arrangements were e.g. the nature of the rights of the people, if any, vis-à-vis the king).

It should also be clear that Hume was not a divine society conservative. He developed a purely secular, naturalistic political philosophy. As befits Hume's ironic agnosticism, God plays no role in his account of the nature of human society or of political obligation. When religion (in the form of superstition and enthusiasm) tends to break up the social fabric or to compromise an undivided political allegiance, Hume deplors it; when (as is the case with the *via media* of the Church of England) religion becomes a force for cohesion, through its ritual, and through its temperate discouragement of enthusiasm and superstition, Hume applauds it. In either case, religion is judged, not by its intrinsic truth or meaning, but by its social consequences. Likewise, Hume's naturalism leaves him with little sympathy for the distinctive characters of nations: the national consciousness is valued or criticised not for any intrinsic significance, but for its ability in some cases to bind, and in some cases to sever, those who share in it.

There are, finally, *human nature* conservatives, which is what Hume was. He was a conservative, because of what he took human nature to be like. Here 'human nature' is to be understood very widely to include not only the moral characteristics of human nature – notably selfishness – but also the basic facts which govern the human condition, the physical weakness, complexity and ignorance of human beings. Hume's politics was, then, the politics of human imperfection. But not only the politics of human imperfection, of the priority of human habit over human planning.

It is important to stress, finally, that Hume's political philosophy was a *philosophy*. It is possible to divide up conservatives in politics another way than the way just proposed. Between those conservatives who have no theory of politics and those who have. Hume was a theorist of politics. Indeed, in context of thought of the English political tradition, he stands out as the theorist of conservatism, one whose well-worked out cautious, empirical, tempered outlook should have an abiding appeal to a British conservative.

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The Politics of Confrontation

David J. Levy

In 1985 Harvard University Press published a book called *Russia: The Roots of Confrontation*. Its author, Robert V. Daniels, aimed to 'elucidate the Russian enigma', and to lay to rest 'the mistaken American view that Soviet behaviour results simply from the application of Marxist revolutionary ideology'. In Daniels' opinion, this notion has led to 'exaggerated perceptions of the Soviet threat and an escalation of the arms race'.

Daniels' view, that what the West confronts in the Soviet ideological state is little more than imperial Russia in new guise, is hardly original. Solzhenitsyn has written that, 'Russia is to the Soviet Union as a man is to the disease afflicting him;' but to many non-Russian observers, and to disenchanted Russians like Alexander Zinoviev as well, it has often seemed that if the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the apparatus of the Communist state is indeed a malign, originally foreign growth upon the body of the Russian nation, it is one well able to use the strength of Russia without destroying it.

Those, like the Poles, who have long felt Russia to be a threat to their national existence, see, almost as a matter of course, the significance of the potent compound of historical continuity and revolutionary transformation summed up in the concept of Soviet Russia. Writers from the captive nations of Central Europe, aware of their affinities with the West, perceive still, as the Polish born Joseph Conrad did seventy years ago in *Under Western Eyes*, the ineradicable otherness of Russia. It is a theme to which they return again and again to reaffirm their identity in the face of the pressure to 'sovietise' themselves and to remind their Western neighbours that they too are Europeans in something more than the geographical sense. Behind this recurrent theme lies not Russophobia – many of these writers are, for instance, loud in their praise for Russian literature – but the need to affirm a European identity threatened, from the East, by pressure to conform to an alien form of life, and, as they see it, increasingly forgotten by the rest of Europe.

Described from without as inhabitants of 'Eastern Europe' – a term whose significance is military and strategic but which represents no historical or cultural reality pre-dating Soviet occupation – Poles, Czechs and Hungarians continue to bear witness to the ideal of a Europe culturally diverse but indivisible as a civilisation. To this Europe, Russia, with her distinct political and religious formation, is a stranger, familiar but apart, whose size and proximity represent nothing less than the threat of national extinction. Classed by strategists as dubiously supportive blocks in the pyramid of Eastern power, the nations of Central Europe know themselves

to be, as Milan Kundera puts it, the eastern outposts of the West.

How complex then is the European dimension of the confrontation which Professor Daniels sets out to explain? And how tempting it must be, when one is distanced by the Atlantic from the Europe which the lines of confrontation divide like a scar, to simplify the picture by accepting the strategically realistic framework of East versus West as representing the sum of political reality? In this scheme of things the American-led West shapes up to the Russian-led East. The confrontation is reduced to one between two power blocs, each fearful of the other and suspecting it of wishing to destroy its social and political system.

In suggesting qualifications to this view I have no wish to deny that it represents the strategic reality in Europe and the world today. What I am suggesting is that the interpretation of confrontation as simply a joust for power and security between the two blocs of East and West, however perceptively one interprets the motivations of the adversary powers, leads to an image of international politics which is incomplete. The strategic perspective cannot bring to light the whole complex political truth of what confrontation with Soviet Russia implies for the nations of Europe, both captive and free. In that portion of Europe which is part of the Western alliance, we confront, at every level but the purely military, not an undifferentiated East power bloc but a complex other, which includes not only our ancient yet always alien neighbour Russia, but the other Europe of the satellite states. The people of these states demand rightly to be recognised as integral though politically estranged elements of the West. To use the terms invented by Charles Maurras but taken up since his day by thinkers of a very different stripe, each of these nation states has a *pays legal* which looks eastward to the power that maintains it in being and, alongside it, more or less muzzled, a *pays réel* which looks to its own past and to the West for the reassurance that it has a future. The West, in the perspective of the *pays réel* of a Central European satellite state, means, primarily, not the United States but the nations of non-Sovietised Europe. Of course, strategically speaking, it is the United States which underwrites the independence of the West European nations, but, at least since the Hungarian uprising in 1956, it has been apparent to all that it is not by military means that the historic identity of the Central European peoples will be supported. That being so, the military predominance of the United States within the Western bloc is of less significance in Central Europe's struggle to

preserve its identity in the shadow of Soviet power, than continuing recognition of that identity by we fellow Europeans of the West. That is why intellectuals from the satellite states tend to be suspicious of the promiscuous use of the blanket term 'Eastern Europe' to refer, not merely to the military reality of the Warsaw Pact, but also to the nations conscripted into its ranks. 'Eastern Europe' blurs the distinction between *pays legal* and *pays réel* in nations whose state apparatus is little more than the agent of a deeply alien, occupying power.

Add to that the complication that Russia today is the powerhouse for ideological forces which are, as Solzhenitsyn avers, more Western than Russian in their origins, and that related currents of thought retain a considerable fascination for elements in Western Europe, and you come up with a view of confrontation which is more complicated but also more illuminating than the simple East versus West model. It is a view which reflects a specifically European perspective on a confrontation in which the future of the European states, captive and free, is a prime stake. For we and our West European neighbours are now, hardly less than the Czechs and the Hungarians, small nations in the scales of world power, potentially more the victims than the makers of our history, fated to confront both the Soviet Russian East and our own possible futures as realised in the People's Democracies of Central Europe. There never will be a People's Republic of California or Maine, but who can be so certain about Denmark or Italy? The near identity of strategic interest between the United States and her West European allies, on which the North Atlantic alliance is premised is far from being universally recognised either in Western Europe or in North America. And, even if it were it would not render irrelevant the geo-political differences between the partners in the Western alliance. It is not alarmist to point out that, from the perspective of America, Paris, Bonn and London are, almost as much as Warsaw and Prague, 'over there'. Potential differences exist between the United States and her allies, which might one day be sufficient to eclipse the identity of interests which the alliance tacitly assumes. How many Americans share Professor Daniels' perception of the Europeans as 'torn between ban-the-bomb sentiments and the attraction of low-budget security offered by American nuclear protection'? (Daniels, *op. cit.*, p. 354) How many see this mixture of selfishness and unreliability as damaging to the prospects of achieving agreement on arms control between the two dominant powers?

I do not offer what I call the European perspective on the politics of confrontation as a replacement for the East/West model but as a supplement. The West, is no more than the East, a homogeneous, indivisible whole. It is held together, not like the Warsaw Pact by the force of its strongest element, but by political will based upon recognition of common interest. The level of strategic thinking is one that assumes not merely the reality of the common interest but the existence of a political will which recognises it and is prepared to uphold it by allied endeavour. That will, which underpins the effectiveness of Western strategy, is, however, not something that we

dare take for granted. It is threatened by the propaganda of the international 'Peace Movement', by widespread misinterpretation of the long term aims of Soviet policy, and by the unwillingness of America's allies to shoulder more of the burden of their own defence. More deeply still, it is imperilled in the nations of Western Europe by a climate of historical and cultural forgetfulness which leads us to react with embarrassed surprise when our imprisoned neighbours appeal to the idea of European civilisation in their claim to be recognised as partners in a community of Europe which is more than the present 'European Community' – a community of related cultures with which they have kept faith and to which they aspire to be restored politically.

T.S. Eliot, writing after the war in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, could still speak of the problem of European culture as essentially a problem of form. Of its content, classical and Christian, he had no doubts. But Eliot was too sanguine. The content for which he sought appropriate institutional form, the Western image of rational man as a being responsible before God, acceptance of the rule of law and rejection of utopian *hubris* – all, incidentally, notions foreign to Russian civilisation – was already dangerously diluted by political ideology and the easy temptation of egocentric materialism. Forty years later matters are no better, and what we in Western Europe now require is nothing less than a 'Notes Toward a Definition of Ourselves'.

It is precisely the elements of that definition of what it means to be free men of the West that are now being provided for us by the exiled, the imprisoned and the perforce pseudonymous writers of the *pays réelles* of Central Europe and perhaps by them alone. Never having been granted the material and political security in which forgetfulness thrives, they experience what it is that Soviet power strives to expunge from their personal and national lives as that which makes them Europeans still. Theirs are now the voices in which the defining ideas of Europe find clearest expression.

The prominent crucifixes which deck the walls of the apartments of Prague intellectuals are not, like their equivalents in Warsaw, explicable as a traditional part of the furnishings of a cultured Czech's life. They are new emblems of assertion, of religious faith certainly, but also of identity with a civilisation in whose formation Christianity has played a central part. The renewal of interest in Judaic studies among the Jewish remnant of Central Europe is not, as the Communists would have it, the result of American financed Zionist propaganda, but an affirmation of a religious heritage in the face of regimes whose ideology, the opium of the *nomenklatura*, is designed to obliterate the mark of transcendence from the face of man. The return to history, the real history of peoples and not the all encompassing myth of perennial class struggle and implacable 'dialectical' laws, is a return to the truth of the human condition which the totalising formulae of Marxist-Leninism seek to rationalise away in a blasphemous fable of worldly redemption.

This is not the peculiar form taken by the culture of 'East European' dissent: it is the testament of Europe

under the trial of alien dominion, the renewal of an authentically European consciousness, proud of its achievements, faithful to its roots, and determined to survive. It challenges the cultural forgetfulness of the comfortable peoples of Western Europe, whose very histories are, at this moment, being re-written as records of shame by home-grown propagandists and worshippers at the shrine of Third World virtues.

Within the Western alliance America has already recovered pride in herself after the debacle in Vietnam: but we in free Europe still flounder in uncertainty as to what should be our identity and purpose. The voices of Central Europe remind us of what is central in Europe as a whole and what is at stake in the politics of confrontation. This, if we will only attend, is the unique power of the apparently powerless. It is a power which, while working at the disembodied level of cultural awareness, is of practical importance to the future of the West. For while the puppet regimes of Central Europe warn us of what we might become, the voices of the *pays réelles* recall what we were and what we must be again if we are to retain the political will on which the strength of the political and military institutions that keep our nations free depends.

It gives me no pleasure to say that, as things stand now, the other Europe is our conscience more surely than we can claim to be her hope. Forgetfulness runs deep, and with it comes not only a denial of the significance of Central Europe's experience but a loss of consciousness of what it is that defines our heritage as a civilisation, and, on a more practical level, an unwillingness to pay the price, in national self assertion as well as finance, that our survival requires.

Strategy does not stand alone. And we in Europe should not be so bemused with the true but partial strategic model of East against West that we ignore the other factors that will determine our future. The strategic reality of the Eastern bloc depends on the readiness of the Soviet Union, to enforce conformity upon her satellites. The Western alliance, so necessary to the preservation of the independence of the states of free Europe, is not like that. Here we must take into account the element of political will in a multitude of independent and spiritually confused nations. That is not something that the strategist can easily take account of even though it is of the greatest importance to his calculations both as to the military means at his disposal and to the geo-political purposes that the strategy of the West exists to serve. Let me be more specific about what this implies.

The business of the strategist is to calculate the balance of forces between the opposed power blocs and to plan for the future accordingly. This means, above all, a calculation of the size and worth of the forces at the disposal of the Soviet Union and the United States respectively. These forces exist to serve political purposes and, specifically in the post-war situation of potential mutual destruction, to deter aggression and underwrite a presumptively stable political intent. In the case of NATO that political intent has, since its beginnings encom-

passed the determination to defend the allied states of free Europe against Soviet aggression. These states are free not only in the sense that they are not subject to Soviet dominion: they are also free to renounce their military alliances and responsibilities and so to put their present liberty at risk.

Where there is independent political intent there is always the possibility of revision. Many members of the British Labour Party, for instance, believe that Britain could withdraw from her responsibilities within NATO and so increase rather than diminish the extent of her national freedom. This, as any Central European could tell them, is an illusion; but some people will never learn this truth until it is too late to act upon it¹. Even short of desertion by one of the European allies, the united strategic purpose of NATO could be put in jeopardy by American frustration at the unwillingness of the European allies to finance a share of defence commensurate with their wealth. This unwillingness has existed for a long time. It is a source of legitimate American complaint, and it is quite inconceivable that the situation will change so long as Western Europe's sense of responsibility for her own survival remains crippled by uncertainty and self-doubt. We presume too much on America's good will and cynically rationalise the extent of our military dependence by referring to the supposed indispensability of United States investment in Europe. However, neither America's wealth nor her patience is inexhaustible. Sooner or later we must bear our share of the burden or face abandonment by an ally on whom we have presumed too long.²

A further threat to our survival in the face of the reality of Soviet power is the existence in all the free European states of vocal minorities prepared to abandon the Western alliance, either because they do not believe that the Soviet Union harbours any aggressive intentions toward them, or because they trust in the efficacy of 'conventional', non-nuclear defence – some are even advocates of Gandhian passive resistance as an answer to Soviet tanks! – or, finally, because terror at the thought of what war between East and West might mean blinds them to the fact that it is precisely the existence of a powerful Western alliance that has prevented the outbreak of European conflict thus far. These factions form a powerful body of opinion working toward the dreamy goal of a neutralised and demilitarised Western Europe – dreamy because like the reality of a dream it would endure only a moment before the rude awakening of a Soviet embrace.

These people are deaf to the arguments of the strategists, which they regard as immoral – even though the political object that underlies strategic consideration has become, in the nuclear age, the prevention of war by the only effective means we know, deterrence.³ Many are ideological simpletons, even though few now are positive admirers of the Soviet system. Characteristically though, many of the *peaceniks* are drawn from the same ideological circles which encourage the denigration of the heritage of Europe and hence contribute in other ways to the corrosion of our will to survive. Their message is not only that the Soviet threat is unreal, but 'What have we got

that's worth defending anyway?' To them the voices of Central Europe may serve as a reminder of what is at issue in a struggle whose necessity they deny. Flattering themselves that they are the 'dissidents' of the West, the equivalent of those brave souls who speak, as Solzhenitsyn puts it, 'from under the rubble', even *peaceniks* can learn from those who know only too well the difference between a free and a captive nation and the inextinguishable value of the European heritage they so frequently denigrate. I do not overestimate the chances of this. Ideological deformation, like cultural forgetfulness, runs deep in too many West European souls. But more than one proponent of unilateral disarmament has returned from Central Europe prepared to think again. I have also witnessed the stirrings of doubt in people wearing CND badges as they have listened to the testament of Central European and Russian exiles. Not much perhaps, but cause for hope.

But all this, it may be said, assumes just what needs to be proved: that the Soviet Union is, by virtue of its commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology, an intrinsically expansive power dedicated to the subversion of all political systems different from its own and to the imposition of the Communist model on every nation to which its power can extend. It assumes that we should take seriously not merely the statements of successive Soviet leaders but the aim of a universal commonwealth of socialist republics implied in the initials USSR. If the once independent Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – each of which was guaranteed its sovereign status by treaties with Moscow – can become constituent republics of the Soviet Union, why not France, Great Britain and even, if the hard facts of geography would only allow it, Canada and the states of the American Union? Is it not pragmatism, of a type that extends to means but not to ideologically determined ultimate goals, rather than respect for the sovereignty of nation states, that leaves the satellite states still nominally independent of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? Are we any different except for our geographical fortune? Is Prague, like Paris and Vienna, not a city of the West?

If Professor Daniels should read this he would, I imagine, regard it as resting upon a European variant of the argument he wishes to refute, namely that 'Soviet behaviour results simply from the application of Marxist revolutionary ideology'. Hence, he would point out, my own 'exaggerated perceptions of the Soviet threat'. Professor Daniels, let us recall, is an American and a historian. In examining his thesis neither fact should be forgotten. As an American he is, no less than the American proponents of the theme of unending ideological warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union whom he opposes, inclined to envisage the politics of confrontation in terms of the single dimension of East versus West. In his view it is the relationship between the two superpowers that is all important. This view, I have suggested, ignores political and cultural factors which are decisive for the strategic picture, as this effects the nations of Europe. As a historian, Daniels is

properly concerned to educate his public in the peculiarities of Russian history. More dubiously his emphasis upon the uniqueness of that history and the extent to which it differs from that of the United States leads him to underrate the ideological factor as a root of confrontation. Of course it is a mistake to interpret the behaviour of the Soviet Union as *simply* the result of the application of Marxist revolutionary ideology. But it is equally fallacious to think that, because the ideology is unbelievable to a Westerner and may not even be believed by those who propound it, it is of minimal importance compared with the reality of Russia's historical experience. To maintain this is to misunderstand not merely the way in which ideology forms, or deforms, the souls of those in whom it has taken root – the dynamics of ideological mutation – but also what it was in Russian society and culture that enabled it to establish itself as it did. Unless these factors are understood it is impossible to understand either the Soviet Union or, to use the sub-title of Daniels' book, 'the roots of confrontation'. It is not enough to point to Russia's bloody internal history, to the troubled tale of her relations with the European powers, or to Lenin's and Trotsky's delusions about the imminence of world revolution in 1918. Still less will it do to interpret the era of Stalin as a time of 'counter-revolution' and a return to traditional Russian nationalism simply because the dictator found it expedient to extirpate the old Bolsheviks and to draw on the deep veins of Russian patriotism and orthodoxy in his desperate effort to defeat Hitler and so save the Soviet state.

History, as Daniels practices it, is important, but it does not provide the tools we need to understand the Soviet ideological state and its fateful significance for the rest of the world. The Soviet Union, viewed from the perspective of a narrowly conceived, political history, looks too much like an old-fashioned imperial power, concerned only with its preservation from internal upheaval and external assault. That is only part of the truth and not the most important part either.

It is characteristic of Daniels' book, as of all attempts to explain ideological confrontation in terms of international misunderstanding, that it wilfully ignores the analyses of the nature of ideological thought provided by philosophers like Eric Voegelin⁴; that it fails to take account of the way in which the Soviet ideological mind was formed, as recounted by Alain Besançon in *The Intellectual Origins of Leninism* (1981); and that it avoids consideration of the multifarious means by which ideology, embodied in a system of power and a way of life, has moulded the substance of Soviet society and still constrains the policy of the state, as depicted by Zinoviev in *The Reality of Communism* (1984).

I mention these three names among others because they are the authors who have impressed me most. I call Daniels' narrowly historical approach wilful because, in his endeavour to discredit exponents of the primacy of the ideological factor, he makes scarcely a gesture toward examining their case. At one point he actually quotes Besançon, but of Besançon's subtle far-reaching argument we hear nothing. Here, for sure, is history, but his-

tory without philosophical discernment or sociological insight. Professor Daniels imagines that his effort to cut our apprehensions of Soviet power down to size is a contribution to international understanding. But there could be no form of international misunderstanding more dangerous to the West than acceptance of his assurance that, though the Soviet Union is no gentle giant, her ideology has become all but irrelevant to her relations with the outside world. If Zinoviev's analysis of the Communist system and its capacity to reproduce itself almost indefinitely has any truth, it is no less mistaken to believe that the rigidity and irrationality of a state founded on a fossilised ideology must lead to its wreck upon the reefs of economic necessity and intellectual or ethnic dissent.

Let me conclude by offering a sketch of the Soviet system as we confront it today. The Soviet Union is, I maintain, an ideological state, distinct in type from Imperial Russia, but, to give history its due, one whose cultural, economic and political past provides a quite stable basis for the menace she now is. The ideological state, as exemplified by the USSR, is a specifically modern phenomenon, and what I offer is only a sketch of its outlines and not a fully formed model. The sketch of the ideological state I offer in explanation of the reality of Soviet power follows Weber in its assumption that the political situation is, at any given point, the sediment of innumerable, previous, unique acts and events. Any such state of affairs can only be comprehended by the creation of coherent, conceptual models of the sort that Weber called 'ideal types'. An ideal type, such as the 'ideological state', cannot capture the full richness of human experience; but it can provide a conceptual, 'ideal', model with which the unique structures and events of the real world can then be compared. The advantage of this approach is that it allows us to perceive both the typical, recurrent patterns of human action in a given historical situation and the ways in which any real social formation displays its uniqueness by diverging from expectations engendered by the model. Thus, by comparing the Soviet Union as it is with the ideal-typical ideological state, we may hope to understand what in it is Communist and ideological, and what Russian and historical. Needless to say, the reality, Soviet Russia, is not so easily dissected, even in theory; and many of its features are important precisely because they are both Russian and Communist, anchored in history *and* functional to the preservation of the ideological state.

Zinoviev in *The Reality of Communism* explains the way in which the fabric of life in modern Russia is formed by its enforced conformity to and inevitable divergence from the model embodied in pure form in the ideology. The ideological state is precisely the state in which the two senses of 'ideal', as abstraction and as aspiration, are confounded. By this I mean that in an ideological state, such as the Soviet Union, the communist 'ideal', which the system aspires and promises to achieve, is, at the same time, an abstract 'idealised' model, developed by the theorists of Marxist-Leninism, of what life would be like if only their imagined 'laws of social and historical

development' and their fanciful notion of the mutability of human nature were true.

In understanding the roots of the Soviet ideological state, it is important to recall that until the end of the 19th century Russia lacked a significant, native philosophical tradition. Her's was a civilisation marked by a tradition of dogmatic conformity, by a deep vein of messianic expectation and by profound resentment against the order of an imperfect world which had imposed on the Russian people more than their fair share of suffering. Into this soil the seed of Marxism fell and flourished. Presenting itself as scientific certainty, it took the place of dogma. Claiming both to predict and to help bring about a qualitative transformation of life for all mankind, it satisfied the messianic urge and promised redemption from suffering.

The teachings of Marx and Engels were received by the Russian intelligentsia, like those of Schelling and of Hegel before them, not as speculative hypotheses, but as certain, because scientifically established truths that both explained the whole of existence and foretold its transformation.

Russian Marxism was from the beginning a dogmatically formulated, pseudo-scientific framework for the explanation of history and society, nature and man. Moreover, it was one that offered those it seduced the exciting if risky promise of an earthly paradise for anyone worthy of surviving the day of revolutionary judgement. How false was the promise and how risky the day of judgement were things that many of the early converts lived to discover.

Western commentators often point out that the Marxian and Leninist conception of science is no longer tenable and that the predictions of the theory have been falsified. Dissidents in Central Europe as well as Russia itself also tend to this view; drawing from it the conclusion that the ideology is not quite unbelievable and that only cynicism, fear and power hunger hold it, and the ideological state it justifies, in place. This may be true but as any anthropologist would point out, just because a world view is untenable by the standards of Western rationality it does not follow that it is not believed.

In considering the question of whether Soviet ideology is actually believed by those who expound it and act in its service, the following points should be borne in mind. In the first place, what an ideology lacks in truth it may compensate for in other ways. Marxist-Leninism endows historical experience with a certain eschatological meaning, and secures itself against refutation by empirical evidence or by logic, by the dual expedient of regarding every awkward fact of life as a passing phase in the historical process, and by defining truth as something to be created in practice. Further, the very possibility of calling a world-view into question may never occur to one whose whole life has been spent in a world publically defined by its assumptions. This is the case for those who wield power in the USSR today. Finally, what a man believes is often crucially influenced by what he has an interest in believing. What is unbelievable to a Western academic or journalist, or to a citizen of one of the captive nations

entrapped by Soviet power, is quite believable by a functionary of the ideological state. None of this proves that the cynics are wrong in dismissing communist ideological fidelity as a fraud, but, I suggest, the case remains unproven; and this, in itself, should temper the prevalent scepticism with which the universalist, revolutionary ambitions enshrined in Soviet ideology are regarded. In addition, for reasons I have discussed elsewhere⁵, the question of whether or not the ideology is genuinely believed is relatively unimportant. This is because an ideological state must continue to act as though it were true or lose its sole claim to legitimacy.

The ideological state is a state that exists in order to bring about ends previously enunciated in ideological writings. Officially the state exists to serve the ideology and not ideology the state. That this is not how things turn out is irrelevant, for the delusion cannot be abandoned without undermining the foundations of authority. In an ideological state the ideas that justify political authority are not idealised reflections of the sort of state which, in fact, it is – as the ideas of autocracy, orthodoxy and nationalism were in the Czars' Russia. Rather they refer to a future state of affairs which the state is nominally committed to bring about. The goals to which ideology commits the state are, typically, unattainable in practice – the utopian quasi-anarchic vision of ultimate communism, or, to use a slightly later example, the spontaneous *volksgemeinschaft* of a single pure race. Such ideas initially appeal to people by offering a secular 'scientific' alternative to religious hopes for another, perfect world; but, once enshrined in a system of power the commitment is expressed in the pursuit of ideological ends that form, for government and subjects alike, the boundary of what can be regarded as an acceptable world-view. Hence both the inflexibility of the ideological state, a function of its commitment to unchangeable if unrealisable goals, and its tendency toward totalitarian control over civil society, a function of its proclaimed right to mobilise the population in the service of these goals and the need to maintain the credibility of the ideology against the threat of independent judgement.

In his day Weber distinguished three ways in which authority is typically justified or legitimised: the traditional, the charismatic and the rational-legal. In the first, authority rests on custom; in the second, on acceptance of the leader's supernatural gifts; in the third, on conformity with law. The authority of the ideological state conforms to none of these types. Its claim to legitimacy rests on its fidelity to ends enshrined in ideological texts and on the 'scientific' assurance that these ends are attainable. This makes the ideological state a distinct type of political system – one whose possibility Weber foresaw but which he did not live to describe.

Let us recall that ideal-types are tools of analysis and not descriptions of real entities. We understand the states of the real world as more or less close approximations to one or other type, or as combinations of features characteristic of two or more. For instance, the United States approximates to the rational-legal type, but, under President Kennedy, there was a charismatic element to

presidential authority which did not exist under his successors, Presidents Johnson and Nixon. If it had it is doubtful if the Watergate affair would have had the effect it did.

Allowing for the divergence between ideal-type and reality, it is remarkable how closely the Soviet Union approximates to the ideological model. In contrast to National-Socialist Germany, the charismatic element is wholly absent. Rational-legal codes exist and these nominally govern the conduct of the state, internally, and, to some extent, internationally, but constitutional provisions and treaty obligations are overridden as a matter of course and are effectively worth no more than the paper they are printed on. Only traditional elements significantly qualify the purity of the Soviet ideological state. Habits of conformity to established power are important in Russia today. They are the specifically Russian, historical, element in Soviet Russia. But they serve only to reinforce the authority of the state without challenging the ideology. The Soviet, ideological, element lies in the power of the Communist Party; more precisely, in the power of the *nomenklatura*, the professional Party men, who fill the offices of state and decide upon the tactics by which the fixed ends of the ideology are best pursued.

Such is my sketch. It remains to suggest a few of its implications. The first is that it is futile to expect any fundamental change in either the internal political structure or the international aims of the Soviet Union. This is not only because ideological states are the most inflexible of systems – regimes of the book *par excellence* – but also because the historical experience of Russia reinforces a form of rule which would be unacceptable elsewhere. That such a form does exist elsewhere, in the states of Central Europe, is a function of military power. That power is quite great enough to impose similar regimes on the free states of Europe; and this goal is consonant both with the ambitions of the ideology and with Russia's historic obsession with security. The prevention of such an outcome depends upon our own military preparedness and, as I have suggested, upon the existence of a political will in Western Europe to pay the price this inevitably entails. The constancy of our political will depends, in turn, on the conviction that we have something worth defending. Failing this, sooner or later, the United States may come to the conclusion that the defence of free Europe is simply not worth the trouble.

'In moments of clairvoyance,' Milan Kundera writes, 'the Czech nation can see the image of its death facing it. Not as a fact, nor as an inevitable future event, but as an entirely concrete possibility.' Though we are some steps away from the Czech situation, is this not also true of we peoples of free Europe? Ideology is a fantasy that corrupts the soul; but the ideological state is a reality, embodied in the immensity of a superpower. Were that power ever to dominate us, who can say how long it would be before there emerged whole generations of men from whom the habits and memories of free life had been expunged? Mutation is a process which can happen

at the cultural as well as the biological level. It took centuries to create the civilisation of Europe and as long to form the Russian soul. We should neither be surprised nor altogether reassured that Central Europe still shows such resilience in the face of Communist rule. Such resilience draws on history and thrives on hope. Forty years is a short time in the process of human formation; and hope for the future depends on the persistence of the memory and ultimate expectation of freedom. For all their faults, the nations of free Europe provide a continu-

ing reminder that things need not be as they are within the sphere of Soviet power. That is what makes our political survival important to communist Central Europe. What Central Europe gives to us is, perhaps, of even greater importance; a testament to the unique values of the civilisation we share and a reminder that it is this civilisation which is at stake in the politics of confrontation. When the voices of Central Europe speak we must attend; for if we fail to hear what they are saying we risk betraying not only them but ourselves as well.

Notes

1. I remember being told once by a Central European lady that she and her friends refused the invitation to meet E.P. Thompson when he visited her city. 'What,' she said, 'could we have to say to a man whose attitude to his country's defence seems to be based upon contempt for our historical experience?' In view of the oft touted links between the Western 'Peace Movement' and some of the elements of the opposition to the regimes in Central Europe the remark, uttered with some fervour, was significant and, in my experience, not untypical.
2. For a typically pithy examination of signs of increasing American impatience with her European allies, see Timothy Garton Ash's article 'Goddamn NATO and Goddamn Tories' in *The Spectator*, 10th August 1985. The same issue contains a no less typical article by Christopher Hitchens 'The Hawks with White Feathers' which oozes just the sort of snide anti-Americanism calculated to exacerbate the problem.
3. See on this, Caroline Cox and Roger Scruton: *Peace Studies: A Critical Survey* (London, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies) 1984, and John Marks: 'Peace Studies' in our *Schools: Propaganda for Defencelessness* (London, Women and Families for Defence), 1984.
4. The works of Voegelin most relevant to this context are, in order of approachability, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, (1968), *The New Science of Politics* (1952), and *From Enlightenment to Revolution* (1975). See also on ideology K. R. Minogue: *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (1985).
5. David J. Levy: 'The Soviet Union and World Order', *The Salisbury Review*, Autumn 1983.



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In Search of Central Europe

The following response to 'Neo Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the Catholic Church', by George Martelli (*Salisbury Review*, vol. 2 no. 4, 1984), comes to us from Czechoslovakia.

Your journal reports in a competent way on the connections between the social and the political. We were therefore surprised and disappointed to find that it has published, as its *first* contribution to the discussion of contemporary Roman Catholicism, the article by Mr Martelli. Faced with this text we find ourselves, as believing Catholics of a somewhat conservative persuasion, tempted to agree with the judgement of the Rev. Barrie Williams (*SR*, vol. 3, no. 2), that Mr Martelli's argument is little better than 'mindless rant'.

Mr Martelli's article expresses a certain mentality, embittered by the ceaseless changes in the modern Church; but it is not possible to take it as representative of a truly Catholic way of thinking. Some of Martelli's ideas could not be reconciled to Catholic theological teaching (for example, the repeated idea of the mass as a miracle); others are in violation of Catholic morality (the constant imputation of exclusively bad motives to Anglican and Catholic reformers). Moreover, the outlook expressed is limited, both as regards the structure of life in the Catholic Church, and as regards the geographical perspective from which this life is seen. (But Mr Martelli is not alone in his tendency to absolutise the experience of Western Europeans – whether or not he represents them truly).

Two questions in particular concern Mr Martelli. First, whether the liturgical changes inspired by the second Vatican Council meant a deviation from the tradition of the Catholic Church; secondly, whether the denial of these changes would be an expression of true conservative thinking. We may add a third, and equally important point: what precisely *is* conservatism in the Church, and what is its relation to conservatism in politics? Our Czechoslovak experience is important to all three of those questions, and it is an experience that decisively differs from the experience recorded by Mr Martelli. The post-conciliar Church in our country is very far from being in decline, the number of conversions increases daily, and the growing sympathy of our younger generation is not to be explained simply by the popularity of the present Pope.

Tradition in the Catholic Church means: *quod ubique*,

quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. The point was expressed by Vincent of Lerino: '*Hoc est enim vere propriaeque catholicum, quos ipsa vis nominis ratioque declarat, quae omnia fere universaliter comprehendit. Sed hoc ita demum fiet, si sequamur universalitatem, antiquitatem, consensionem.*' If it is impossible to choose an arbitrary point as the origin of a national history, so much the less is it possible to choose such a point as the origin of the Roman Church. Even such an event as the Council of Trent cannot be taken as the decisive test of our tradition. The efforts of Gregory VII to unify the liturgical language were already understood as a reform, and belong to a whole line of reforming efforts on the part of German popes, which culminated in the colossal figure of Gregory himself. During almost the whole of the eleventh century, 'the Rhine flowed into the Tiber', and the fundamental changes which thereby resulted laid the foundations for the medieval Church. Moreover, both the reform of Gregory, and the confirmation of a unified language by the Council of Trent, took place at a time when the Latin language was the *lingua franca* of educated Europe, and an inseparable element of contemporary culture.

The territory of our country became a crossroads for several missions, of which the dearest and closest to our nation was that stemming from Byzantium, whereby we acquired both the Holy Scriptures and the Slavonic liturgy. The tradition of the Slavonic liturgy was retained in our country right up to the reform of Gregory VII, and even after the reform efforts could be observed to retain it in places granted a special dispensation (for example, the Benedictine monastery 'At the Slavs' in Prague). The break with the Latin liturgy was therefore for us not so much a break with tradition as a rediscovery of a tradition far older and far nearer to our own vernacular Church.

But there is another reason for the warm acceptance extended in our country to the reforms of Vatican II. During the years preceding the Council many of our Christians were interned in prisons and labour camps. The liturgy held secretly there, and in defiance of the strictest veto, was of necessity separated from all that was then considered necessary to its outward form: a sanctified place, liturgical vestments, and sacred texts.

The communion given in these conditions was nevertheless a true communion with the Most Holy. A former political prisoner described his experience to us in the following words: 'I remember those communions at the time of roll-call, when I felt someone's cautious hand pushing a matchbox into my pocket. I knew that in this matchbox a crumb of roll would be found. And I knew that *sub hac specie* Our Lord was coming to me. What a desire I felt at such moments for the full and beautiful liturgy of the Church!' Another prisoner remembered how Christians tried, during the secret Mass at the camp barracks, to introduce the liturgical texts to their fellow prisoners who came to the Church for the first time in these conditions. They read translations of the texts, and introduced short commentaries of their own. Before the 'Our Father', this prisoner told us, a young university student would say, 'And now, brethren, let us pray the prayer which Our Lord himself taught us.' How mysterious are the ways of Faith, which caused these very words of a young man endeavouring to present the Lord's prayer to people unfamiliar with the Mass, to become, several years later, a part of the Holy Mass itself!

As far as we remember, it was from this milieu of former prisoners that the keenest pioneers of the renewed liturgy were recruited. Mr Martelli should understand that the strivings of these people were motivated neither by opportunism, nor by a fawning upon Protestants, nor by a spirit of playing to the gallery, but by *love*: love for the liturgy, so keenly felt in our country, where West and East meet in spiritual union; love for Ecclesia; love for the young people who were coming to the Church from a milieu deprived of the Latin language and of the ideas of liberal education which had been bequeathed to Christianity from Rome. This love was also a burning desire that in a nation so sorely tried as ours, every knee should bend, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

It was natural, in the conditions of post-Tridentine Europe, that the liturgy should be conducted in a dead language. But learning and literature were already accessible and authorised in the mother tongue. Already in missions the need was felt to address people directly in their natural languages, even through the liturgy, as had been done in the early, pristine Church, when Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene – when the peoples of these many places, along with the Jews, Arabs, Cretans and proselytes who were visiting Rome, heard in their own tongues of the mighty works of God.

In our country next to none of the Church's benefits, besides the liturgy, are legal. The Latin language, moreover, is now quite unknown, having ceased to be obligatory since the school reforms of 1953. In a country where it is difficult to obtain the Bible legally, and where young people may be imprisoned for a year or more for attempting to bring Bibles from abroad, the reading of the Holy Scripture during Mass is never felt as 'intermin-

able'. We hear it with open and eager hearts. And our experience is echoed in the greater part of Europe, in many countries of Africa and Latin America, and is indeed no more than our local form of the situation which prevails in the *Universal Church*. The Holy Mother Church adapts Herself to her situation, and to the situation of her persecuted children, rather than to the snobbery of those pampered by the freedom and abundance of the Western world.

It is strange that the experiences of Christians living, as we live, in a state of persecution, should not have more effect on the theological reflections of the Churches. To us it is incredible to find the ideas of the Western Church so narrowly circumscribed by the provincial experience of material comfort and abundant freedom of choice. Sometimes we feel that our problems are too unfashionable, too *salonunfähig*, to be noticed. One reason for this, we suggest, is the following: Christians in the free world cherish the illusion that a state of persecution helps to preserve traditional values, and are reluctant to listen to reports which suggest the opposite. In fact, however, the dissolution of traditional values is accelerated in our country, and countries like it, by many mechanisms, and in particular by the State's defence of itself against those who are traditionally oriented, and fully anchored.

If the inner sense of the Catholic Church brings it closer to our situation, then we may see in this fact the sign of Divine Providence. To us the new liturgy, along with many other 'new' things in the Church, was nothing less than a return *ad fontes*, a return to a liturgy that is comprehensible to, and in communication with, those who worship through its words. And indeed, it is just this kind of intelligibility – so remote from the 'impressiveness' that enchants Mr Martelli – that was recommended by the Council of Trent (Cap. 8, Sessio 22). Mr Martelli suggests that an unchangeable and unintelligible 'sacrality' should mediate between the faithful and the mysteries of the Mass. But mystery, properly understood, is not a magic cipher, as Mr Martelli would have us believe. For the Catholic Church (which has always repudiated magic) mystery is a sign of inexhaustible meaning, of an intelligibility that is total and all-encompassing.

It is indeed true that ecumenism has played a part in furthering the recent changes in the Church. But for us ecumenism is not a programme so much as a living experience of common distress. Formed by this experience we are naturally suspicious of the kind of journalistic radicalism which, rejoicing in its attacks on those of contrary opinion, flourishes only where there is no real persecution, and no real risk. For, at the same time, it is this habit of total attack, with its constant imputation of bad motives, and its radical ideological denial, that leads, in the end, to the trials, concentration camps and executions that have been, for us, a familiar part of our daily existence.

It has been rightly said that conservatism is not a defence of the *status quo* in the interest of those who are dominant within it, but a concern for principles. And this

concern can lead to understanding only if principles are traced to their historical roots. The reforms of Trent were radical reforms – involving a search for roots – and had to be processed by the Church over a very long period. Every foundation of a religious order presents a moment of permanent renewal of Christian life, and is included in the self-correcting mechanisms which compose the living body of the Church. The greatest figures of the saints, indeed, stand at the origins of the orders' reforms (St Theresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, St Bernard of Clairvaux). One could say of the Church what Burke said of the State, that an institution without the means of change is also without the means of its conservation. And in our Church there are few changes which could not be interpreted as a return to origins. For example, the return to poverty, and to the rule of poverty, is a constant feature of Catholic Christianity: and how many times in the history of the Church has this return been necessary, often in some radical, and even scandalous, form?

Mr Martelli seems to us to lack faith in the living sources from which the Church derives its momentum. A man of faith would surely speak in quite another way. 'In the confusion of today, our first need is for the values that will provide us with a firm support' – so said Cardinal Trochta (a prisoner of Dachau and Mathausen, condemned in 1954 to 25 years in prison) in 1971. 'Total relativism,' he added, 'is simply one side of the coin of soullessness, whose reverse side is the anxious adherence to every outward form. "Only on the old rails", and "Never on the rails" – in their consequences these amount to the same. But, between these two mortal extremes, there is much space for life. I find the greatest contribution of the Second Vatican Council in the fact that it emphasised the need not to narrow this space, either for ourselves, or for others.'

One of the most sympathetic accents of conservative thinking, as we recognize it through your Review, is the accent on *form*. 'Form' does not mean only that which is external: it also denotes the way in which the internal substance of a thing appears, the way in which it communicates itself to us. In social life, as in linguistics, where the root of things is hidden, respect for form cannot have the meaning that it has in the Catholic Church, where form is always linked to explicit and debated motives. The *forma substantialis* of Aquinas encapsulates the tradition of Catholicism: it is that which links us to an enduring substance, that through which this substance is perceived. And it is necessary that the external forms should change, if the substantial form should remain. The substantial form is the principle which makes a thing what it is.

The external, accidental forms are changeable over time. The substantial form, however, is as unchangeable as the substance that is revealed in it. Consider again the crumb in the matchbox. The Gospel speaks of bread and wine which, even in the harshest prison conditions, could not be replaced by, say, potato and water. Even in those conditions, the priest must present his communicants with the bread and the wine: the substantial form of

Christ's incarnation. (Since wine was unavailable, raisins were obtained, and then soaked and fermented.) Without this substantial form the Eucharist would have had to be abandoned. The choice of accidental forms, however, was necessitated by circumstances, and guided by the love of Christ – love for the form by which He gives Himself to us. It was this love which led the prisoners to those accidental forms through which made worship possible, and which now, out of prison, interpret all that we suffered and all that we continue still to suffer.

In *The Meaning of Conservatism*, Roger Scruton points out that there is no universal conservatism, but that conservatism must necessarily vary from place to place and from time to time. All the more will conservatism as a political position differ from conservatism in the Church. There are no ultimate parallels between social life and politics, or between either and religion. Politics creates the space for social life, while religion provides its ground. Politics must serve social life, but religion must transcend it, in the same way as the life of the individual transcends the life of society. Bound to its historical origin and its articles of faith, Christianity will differ from politics; its relation to established forms will always stand corrected by the Holy Scriptures and by the traditions which have sprung from them. Paradoxically, therefore, the Christian religion must adopt a more rational approach to the problems that confront it than those adopted by the conservative politician.

On the other hand, the conservative position of a believing Christian, and that of a politician, have certain common features. As the first and foremost there is the bond to the past, the bond to traditions, and the consequent necessity of choice between competing traditions. As Scruton rightly says, however, even torture ranks among the traditions of European government; but that does not make it right for us to return to it. Likewise, the Church must choose from its past not that which is accidental, but that which is connected with the perennial basis of its faith, like a householder bringing out of his treasure what is new and what is old together.

Today, when Rome has not spoken, and the cause of Lefèbvre is not finished, we have no right to say unambiguously that the partisans of Bishop Lefèbvre do not belong to the Universal Church. At the same time, this half-legal congregation has no right to legislate for the Church as a whole. Have they, after all, shown sufficient love for the Ecclesia for which such sacrifices – in many places of the world, and in Eastern Europe too – were endured? Today, we might say, it is the Vistula that flows into the Tiber. And this must inevitably determine, as every pontificate determines, the forms and the movement of the Church. Most of all, however, it has brought hope and light to the many here who are persecuted for righteousness, and who trust not in the regulation of the liturgy made valid on the 14th July 1570, but in the steadfast and eternal love of God.

Konstantin and Basil,
Czechoslovakia.

Portrait of Sir Harry

Roy Kerridge

Sir Harry Johnston (1858–1927) has been one of my favourite animal painters ever since I was a small boy. Enthralled, I would sit poring over my grandfather's natural history volumes, a bag of buns by my side. 'Marvels of the Universe' the books were called, red-bound with glossy pages. Another hero of mine was Walter A. Weber, who painted similar scenes of animal life for the American National Geographic Magazine. I know little of Weber, who may be still alive, but Sir Harry's adventurous life has been chronicled many times over. He studied at the Royal Academy of Arts, and travelled throughout Africa first as an artist, then as an explorer-naturalist and finally as an imperial administrator.

After exploring and painting the forests of the Congo and the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, Harry Johnston was appointed British Vice-Consul to the Cameroons in 1885, acting consul for the Niger Coast Protectorate (now part of Nigeria) in 1887 and consul for Mozambique a year later. He helped to found the colonies of Nyasaland and Uganda, and ruled each in turn, often taking taxes in the form of wild animals which he tamed, kept in compounds and sketched assiduously. His treatment of Africans improved once he had thrown off the influence of Cecil Rhodes. If he was sometimes high-handed to chiefs, he was also brave. He was a short, squeaky-voiced man, an ex-grammar school boy with nothing military about him. Sir Harry's cheerful, no-nonsense manner endeared him to most Africans, and he ended his days as a Negro-expert, contributing to encyclopaedias and writing and illustrating several books. He is to this day, a world-acknowledged expert on African languages. In practice the Negro's best friend, in print his severest critic, Sir Harry stubbornly clung to the ideas of Darwin. These led him to write of Africans in a way that seems shocking today and should have seemed shocking in the author's time. Ideas of 'racial Darwinism' were current among educated westerners until Hitler discredited them in the late nineteen thirties.

Of the 'Forest Negro' of West Africa, Johnston once wrote: 'It is evidently the next stage in evolution above the Pygmy, but the development of the body is only partial.'

That was Johnston the Darwinian speaking, no doubt seated at a table covered in skulls, as any witch-doctor might. Perhaps the skulls were arranged in a row that led from the chimpanzee to the Australian Aborigine and thence past sundry African and Asian sightless grinning heads toward the white end-product of Evolution, a skull like all the others. Johnston's beliefs may have encompassed many of the follies of his day, but his actions were very different. In Uganda, he took charge of a party of Pygmies who had been kidnapped by German adventurers, for exhibiting at a trade fair. Sir Harry trekked far

into the forest as their protector, and saw them safely home, where their relatives greeted him rapturously. It was on this trip that he learned of the 'forest donkey' or okapi, and his Pygmy friends gave him skins of this rare animal. As for the 'Forest Negro', he rescued many such Nigerians from the tyranny of King Jaja the palm oil buccaneer. There was a discrepancy between many of Johnston's ideas and his actions. Although an agnostic freethinker, he inherited a Christian cast of mind, perhaps from his mother, and worked tirelessly and cheerfully for the betterment of Africans. His gift at languages, also an African trait, earned him the friendship and respect of tribesmen wherever he went.

Johnston was an enthusiastic member of the Royal Geographical Society. His findings on Negro tribes, their languages and customs, on African animal and plant life, and on the geography of the interior, have all found their way safely to Kensington Gore. Here, in the Society library, many of Johnston's African paintings can be studied at leisure. They are not framed, but rolled up and inserted into pipes.

Having previously applied for permission, I called at the Society one day and the pipe-rolls were solemnly produced for my inspection. One by one, Johnston's pictures emerged. Most of them were neat pen and wash drawings of reeds, rivers, strange trees and waterfalls. I would certainly have taken some of them for views of Norfolk if I had not known that they were sketched in Africa. Here and there, a glowing coal in dull embers, a water colour painting would emerge, a vivid scene of hippos, storks and crocodiles in an African river. Such river scenes, crowded with life, were a Johnston speciality. In my estimation he is Britain's foremost crocodile-painter.

Johnston's finest paintings, in my view, are those he did in oils. Most of these are in the private collections of his relatives, although they can also be seen in miniature as plates in various Edwardian encyclopaedias. One of Johnston's first large scale oil paintings hangs on the wall of his kinsman, John Mitchell, who lives in an elegant Georgian Square in Kennington. In its heavy gilt frame, the picture, which shows a Moroccan courtyard with a pool and a harem girl, dominates the wall and room in which it hangs. Flamingos the size of ostriches and tame Arabian gazelles satisfy Sir Harry's zoological leanings. The Arab beauty is supposed to be based on a very English aunt!

Sir Harry Johnston is justly celebrated for having discovered the okapi, the giraffe-like creature of the Congo forests which had hitherto been unknown to the West. Very little credit has been given to Colonel Meinertzhagen for discovering the Giant Forest Hog, a great, black, bristly knobble-faced wild boar, in the same region. Despite his

name, Meinethagen was very much an imperial Englishman. He probably met Sir Harry in Uganda, where he may have been presented with a painting. Colonel M.'s son is still alive and well. He lives in a grand white house at Notting Hill, where he showed me a splendid Johnston scene of water, reeds and vivid crowned cranes. This was the work of the mature Johnston; everything is in scale, with bright African colours.

At Etwall, a small village near Derby, I met Mr and Mrs Henderson, who allowed me to view their collection of Johnston paintings. Jack Henderson is Sir Harry's nephew, and remembers staying at the tiny West Sussex village of Poling, as a boy, in the haunted manor house, Poling Priory, where Sir Harry spent his last years. His famous uncle's collection of exotic waterfowl and peacocks inspired Jack to form a nature reserve around a pond in his garden. Here I admired his shelducks, wigeons and Carolina ducks, and the rare sequoia tree growing nearby. All the Johnston relatives speak fondly of 'Uncle Harry's' way with children. He would blindfold them and lead them around the great, rambling, part medieval monastic house inventing adventures, such as 'roaring giants', as he went – an early form of Dragons and Dungeons. Stories told of Poling Priory range from tales of a crypt where dead monks lay mummified in rows with bushy beards, to an account of a workman who was moving a bed and looked up to see a ghost holding the other end! The present inhabitants of Poling Priory dismiss all such tales as nonsense. Nor have they had the house exorcised, as some of the Johnston family suppose.

The bed at Jack Henderson's house had no ghost to lift it, and just as well, for it had been covered in framed drawings laid end to end like mummified monks for my admiration. The pictures were as horrific as anything seen at haunted Poling Priory. Most of them were sketches of dead and dying Africans, victims of King Jaja. Among patriots of the New Nigeria, particularly those of Jaja's tribe, the Ibos, Johnston's name is a hissing and a cuss-word. Did he not abduct and exile a proud warrior king? Well, yes, he did, but there were mitigating circumstances. Jaja had once been a slave of the King of Bonny. A man of Napoleonic spirit, he ran away and proclaimed himself a king in his own right, attracting loyal supporters by his prowess at arms in inter-village raids. Soon he had seized control of the lucrative palm oil trade. Many West Africans tap palm oil trees as Malaysians do rubber, and sell the oil to market women. The business acumen of market women appears to be the lifeblood of West Africa. Just as modern African rulers are often guided by a virago-like anti-capitalist western woman, so Jaja took advice and comfort from an American negro poetess, Emma Jaja Johnson. Emma had no time for market women.

Under Jaja's ferocious rule, every palm oil tapper and seller had to acknowledge him as King and pay him a due. Anyone who refused would be tortured to death, even if, as often happened, they were elderly women. As a Liberal Imperialist, Johnston seemed as much outraged by this affront to the principle of Free Trade as by

the more heinous crimes of Jaja. As acting consul for the Nigerian district, he felt he should do something. So he sent for and obtained a small gunboat with seventy sailors. Poor Jaja only had a canoe, and though he paddled like fury, Johnston caught up with him in the end and exiled him to Grenada. Some episodes of this story were laid out before me on the Hendersons' bed, sketched in black and white.

Most of the pictures at Etwall were in Johnston's usual brightly-coloured style, often with a dash of purple where less flamboyant men would have used brown. Perhaps the dark purplish brown velvet hide of the timid okapi, Johnston's main claim to fame, inspired the artist. I particularly admired a scene of Kilimanjaro's snows rising from a black forest. Mr Henderson had presented the larger pictures in his collection to his son, who lives at the village of Severn Stoke near Worcester. So I made a pilgrimage to Worcestershire, where the younger Hendersons made me very welcome. There I spent a happy afternoon in a house that seemed a virtual Johnston Art Gallery.

Once, during my search for anyone with Johnston connections, I received a chilling intimation of the seamy side of Empire. An elderly lady informed me that her father had known Johnston in Uganda. She invited me to come over for tea, so that I could have a look at her father's diaries. In 1898, apparently, he had set out from Mombasa with a detachment of the East African Rifles in order to map the interior. He succeeded in marching his African soldiers four hundred miles, acting as bearers, and he had recorded every incident on the way in meticulous handwriting. The ink was now brown with age and the pages never yet perused by scholar or historian. I turned them with awe. I did not like what I read.

'Gun bearer lagged behind – I gave him twenty five lashes . . . Oribi, steinbuck, reedbuck and hartebeest plentiful . . . waited for Johnston, meanwhile had to give cook forty lashes. That will teach him to loot friendly villages . . . Johnston down with fever . . . Christmas dinner, 1899 – plantain and scraggy chicken.'

I don't know what Johnston would have said, but it seemed to me that his friend was rather free with his ox or rhino-hide whip. My scalp pricked in horror.

'Yes, he was *such* a marvellous man', my hostess prattled. 'Do have another cup of tea.'

It was more fun to explore the enchanting Downland villages around Poling, near Arundel in Sussex, and talk to men who had once worked for Sir Harry. Some of Johnston's relatives still live near Poling Priory, and they gave me plenty of addresses to call on. At one cottage, I met a former carpenter and odd-job man, Doug Binsted. He had done a few jobs for Sir Harry, but had never been employed on his staff, as he was quick to tell me.

'What, work for that miserable old bugger?' he cried. 'You had to tip your hat every time you saw him! *And* curtsy to that wife of his, Lady Winifred. She was a grand dame sort of person. Sir Harry was a little gent with a droopy moustache. He used to drive around in a three wheeled donkey cart. He didn't like church, I remember,

but his wife used to drag him there, and he was on the Board of Guardians for East Preston workhouse. That's where they used to put the tramps up. Did you know the Priory was supposed to be haunted? People have heard ghostly organ music there. I don't believe in ghosts, but my late wife used to. One night we was going past the Priory when she saw a white figure rush across the road and disappear under the trees where the monk's burial place is. But I don't believe in none of that.

'There's a lot of history around here, and I once was working on a chimley and I found a roll of old bills dated 1705. All our water used to come from a well when I was a lad. My father was in charge of the well. In them times, everything belonged to the Duke over at Arundel. If the well was dry, the Duke'd send water over in tanks.

'Not many people except me know it, but there's a tunnel from Sir Harry's old house to that big house Peckham's on the other side of the lane. Well, the tale is that I was asked to clear out the old cess-pit and I come across the roof of a tunnel, like, all made of wood. I cut out a big bow shaped piece o' wood from the ceiling, but my guv'nor, Mr Nathanael, swiped it off of me. No nails was in it, all fitted joints. Now under the dining room floor of Peckham's, there was all doors like, and the tunnel seemed to be going to Arundel. I'd long heard of an escape tunnel made from Arundel in the time of Oliver Cromwell, with gold chalices and all church treasures hidden down there. I reckon I stumbled on that self-same tunnel, and no one knows where that gold is now except me, me, I knows where it must be hid'

This was all quite interesting, but Mr Binsted seemed to be somewhat straying from the subject of Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston. So I next called on Mr Attrill, formerly of Poling but now living at Arundel. His father had been Sir Harry's gardener. Mr Attrill senior had served in the Royal Navy, where he saw a man flogged at the mast and salt rubbed in the wounds. At meal times, the ratings had to make do with hard biscuits, which they knocked to get the weevils out. After a fall from the rigging, Attrill senior had to walk with a stick, and so he found himself on shore in Sir Harry's employ. He had to double as gardener and coachman, and when visitors called on the Johnstons, he would have to take care of their carriages and horses until they departed.

'I remember Sir Harry very well', Mr Attrill told me. 'He was a little fellow, rather on the eccentric side. A very clever man, an artist who'd had pictures in the Royal Academy and wrote big books about Africa. Inside the house, there were knives, shields and assegais on the walls, as well as enormous pictures. He'd annoy my father, Sir Harry would, as he never spoke. He'd come out from writing and stick little paper messages in the ground to show what he wanted done in the garden. Miss Hibner was the maid in those days, and Miss Jarrett the cook. You had to touch your cap, and say 'milady' to Lady Winifred. Sir Harry would wear a little smoking hat in the garden, and he put on a cap when he rode a cycle. Whenever gypsies stopped around here, he'd go mad! He was dead nuts against gypsies. I've always found that if you left them alone, they'd leave you alone. One o'

them, old Billy Mitchell, was a very nice fellow. But he'd get them moved on, Sir Harry would, up the Gibbet, the place that feller was hung who robbed the mail coach. His family always said he was innocent, I'm told. Back in Sir Harry's day, Poling was different from now. Samuel Nathanael was the village carpenter and undertaker. Coffins, farm wagons, carts – he made the blessed lot. There was a saw pit for timber here, and one man pulled and the other pushed. Nathanael would make wagon wheels, then take 'em up to Mr Dench the smith for iron tyres or bands . . .'

Mr Attrill led me out to the garden, through a kitchen where home made plum wine and blackberry wine bubbled in their kegs. The garden, a wonderful place, sloped uphill. Mr Attrill had planted poplars and silver birch, he kept bees, and there was a greenhouse full of cacti. One tree was clipped in the shape of a peacock. Mistletoe grew on another tree in such large bunches that Mr Attrill was able to harvest them for the Christmas trade.

'Over there I've planted leeks for the winter, and as well, I do next door's garden, as he's over eighty now.' I thanked Mr Attrill and said goodbye at his front porch, where a necklace of pebbles with holes through them hung on a nail for luck.

All in all, Sir Harry Johnston is the best guide to Sir Harry Johnston, and in his novel 'The Gay-Dombey's' (1919), the character of Eustace Morven is loosely based on that of the author. Sir Harry's novels resemble those of Disraeli, in that politics and politicians play some part in the plots. Real-life characters have walk-on parts, and almost recognisable caricatures flit to and fro. Sir Harry's new career as a novelist began in Poling, when he had left Africa behind with many regrets. His novels are minor ones, despite the sense of mischief shown in his depiction of the lives of the descendants of Dickens characters, his pet theme. Eustace Morven, despite leading a life similar to Sir Harry's, seems rather solemn and humourless when compared with his creator-original.

Most enjoyable of Sir Harry's books, in my opinion, are those in the 'Pioneers of Empire' series. They may be meant for boys, but form interesting and delightful reading for men and women of all ages. The splendid illustrations are not the work of Sir Harry, however. 'Pioneers of India' explains Indian history with unusual clarity, and shows deep respect for the sages and craftsmen of a civilisation older than that of England. 'Pioneers of Tropical America' is full of rattling good yarns, all true, of buccaneers and pioneers and men like Dampier who were a bit of both. In all these books, the animals, birds and plants of other lands are vividly described.

Long out-of-print, the 'Pioneer' series could now be re-issued, with careful editing, for use in schools. Everything Johnston writes about, history, geography and natural history, comes alive under his pen and emerges as an adventure story. These books might even satisfy the advocates of 'multi-cultural education', and would certainly help Indian and West Indian children to feel proud to belong both to their parents' country and to England. The Empire has come home to roost.

Britain and the Coming of War, 1932–9

Julian Lewis

Part One: Appeasing the Voters

On 26th May 1932, whilst ‘millions of well-meaning English people’ were hoping for the success of the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva, Winston Churchill published an article in the *Daily Mail* regretting that there was currently ‘such a horror of war in the great nations who passed through Armageddon that any declaration or public speech against armaments, although it consisted only of platitudes and unrealities, has always been applauded; and any speech or assertion which set forth the blunt truths has been incontinently relegated to the category of “warmongering”.’

In the run-off poll against President Hindenburg on 10th April, Hitler had obtained nearly 40 per cent of the votes cast; yet, less than a fortnight later, the British Prime Minister – Ramsay MacDonald – had arrived in Geneva to urge the European democracies to disarm.

Justified accusations were to be made in later years that some Conservatives with a preference for Fascism against Communism were partly responsible for the pursuit of appeasement. But it is important to note the pacifist/idealist element in its early motivation, after the trauma of World War One. Thus, it was a Liberal Foreign Secretary in the National Government – Sir John Simon – who told the House of Commons that only by reducing the level of arms could the dangers of a future war be averted. His claim that nothing could be worse than a disarmed Germany facing a well-armed France, led Churchill to respond:

I would say to those who would like to see Germany and France on an equal footing in armaments: ‘Do you wish for war?’¹

It was nonsense to expect the French to disarm in the face of a much more populous and potentially more powerful Germany, wrote Churchill returning to this theme in his 26th May article. It was equally futile not to expect Poland, Finland and the Baltic States to try similarly to protect themselves from ‘a ferocious deluge from Russia’ (which all, indeed, had to undergo in 1939).

Churchill had been criticising reliance on disarmament for security for many months before the Nazis came to power, nor was he under the slightest delusion about their nature. As early as 18th October 1930, he had warned a senior staff member at the German Embassy that, whereas Hitler disavowed any aggressive intentions, he (Churchill) was ‘convinced that [Hitler] or his

followers would seize the first available opportunity to resort to armed force’.² The following April, the formation of an Austro-German Customs Union raised the prospect of an eventual *Anschluss*, or political union, between those two countries. If this occurred (as it did in 1938), warned Churchill, the 40 million-strong French would be confronted by a ‘solid German block’ of 70 millions, which would also flank Czechoslovakia on three sides.

Hitler’s aims were clear: renunciation of the Treaty of Versailles, which had imposed major strategic restrictions upon Germany after the end of World War One; a ‘cleansing’ of Jews from German public life; and a programme of rearmament. Such harsh realities failed to fit in with the prevailing anti-militarist climate of elite circles in British public life, in the aftermath of the 1914–18 slaughter. That climate, together with stringent economic conditions, had led to the adoption throughout the 1920s of the so-called ‘Ten Year Rule’ by which the heads of the Armed Services, the Chiefs of Staff, had been required to base their military planning on the assumption that they need not anticipate a major war for ten years from any given date. Towards the end of the decade (1928–30), there also appeared a spate of novels and memoirs on the ‘futility of war’ theme – most notably by Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden and – from the German side (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) – Erich Maria Remarque.

As will be seen, it is far from certain that disenchantment with the wisdom of a strong foreign policy was widespread at the grass-roots of British society. However, it is a basic weakness of democracies, when faced with dictatorships, that their leaders feel constrained by what they *think* public opinion will or will not tolerate. Thus, by the beginning of the 1930s, few members of the ‘intelligentsia’ subscribed to the view that Germany had been mainly responsible for the Great War. Wars were fashionably thought to occur from ‘mistakes’, or the acquisition of ‘great armaments’, or the operations of ‘capitalism’, or the harbouring of ‘grievances’ which could and should be removed. The concept of aggressive megalomania had no place in this impersonal analysis. As A. J. P. Taylor has commented:

These explanations were usually mixed together. Whichever were adopted, it led to much the same conclusion. Since there was nothing to choose between the governments of each country and since war was always a purposeless evil, the duty of those who wanted peace was *to see that their own government*

*behaved peacefully and, in particular, to ensure this by depriving their government of arms.*³

The Ten Year Rule was eventually discarded in 1932, largely as a sop to the military, but in February that year the World Disarmament Conference opened in Geneva:

From this moment, Labour and Liberals alike pressed for disarmament as the main element in British foreign policy and developed their opposition to the government mainly on this issue. [Sir Herbert] Samuel and his Liberals went into formal opposition because of the government's hesitations. Labour denounced the government as apologists for 'the merchants of death' [i.e. the arms manufacturers].⁴

From 1931 to 1935, Labour was led by the much-loved pacifist idealist, George Lansbury, who had been chosen in the aftermath of the Labour Party's 1931 election disaster. This had left it with only 52 parliamentary seats, in opposition to an overwhelming National Government coalition majority. In retrospect, it seems probable that it was largely a reaction against this freak result coupled with the country's continuing economic difficulties which caused several striking defeats for the government at by-elections, the most remarkable being that at East Fulham in October 1933. Yet, this is not how politicians interpreted matters at the time. In the run-up to the East Fulham poll, Lansbury had declared that, if he were a dictator,

I would close every recruiting station, disband the Army, dismantle the Navy, and dismiss the Air Force. I would abolish the whole dreadful equipment of war and say to the world 'Do your worst!' I believe it would do its best.

The successful Labour candidate, John Wilmot, likewise demanded that Britain should 'give a lead to the whole world by initiating immediately a policy of general disarmament', and his overturning of a government majority of 14,500 was interpreted by Conservative leaders as an endorsement of that view. Three years later, Stanley Baldwin – MacDonald's successor as Prime Minister – replied to an attack by Churchill in the following terms:

I put before the whole House [of Commons] my own views with an appalling frankness. You will remember at that time [1932–3] the Disarmament Conference was sitting in Geneva. You will remember that at that time there was probably a stronger pacifist feeling running through this country than at any time since the war. . . . I asked myself what chance was there – when that feeling that was given expression to in Fulham was common throughout the country – what chance was there within the next year or two of that feeling being so changed that the country would give a mandate for rearmament?

Supposing I had gone to the country and said that Germany was rearming, and that we must rearm, does anybody think that this pacific democracy would have rallied to that cry at that moment? I cannot think of anything that would have made the loss of the election from my point of view more certain?⁵

In his memoirs, Churchill was charitably to acknowledge that his old adversary, Baldwin, had not been motivated 'by any ignoble wish to remain in office', but rather 'by the fear that if the Socialists came into power even less would be done than his Government intended'.⁶ It is certainly true that in its manifesto for the 1935 General Election (which took place on 14th November) the Labour Party still declared – nearly three years after Hitler had become Germany's Chancellor – that a Conservative victory would endanger peace as it would entail 'a vast and expensive rearmament programme'; but had it really been necessary for Baldwin to respond with an address to the Quaker-founded Peace Society on 31st October 1935, declaring: 'I give you my word there will be no great armaments', though stressing the need for some improvement in defence? The very large Conservative victory (432 seats, to Labour's 154 and the Liberals' 21) suggests on the contrary that a more courageous stand for rearmament would *not* have made 'the loss of the election from [his] point of view more certain'. The result of the 'Peace Ballot', conducted by the League of Nations Union and revealed on 28th June 1935, had actually shown some 6,750,000 participants *in favour* of using force as a last resort to stop aggression and only some 2,000,000 against – the customary three-to-one majority of resisters *versus* disarmers generally to be found in 20th century Britain. Unfortunately, this finding was overshadowed by the other, 'peace'-oriented questions in the ballot, tendentiously worded to invite overwhelmingly one-sided results. Other events, such as the notorious Oxford Union vote not in any circumstances to fight for 'King and Country' (February 1933) also played a part in convincing the National Government that a firm rearmament policy would be electorally unacceptable. Nevertheless, it is the fundamental duty of any government to recommend those defence policies it judges to be necessary for the security of the country. Often it will receive much stronger public support than it might have expected. As the contemporary Defence Correspondent (now the Editor) of the *Daily Telegraph*, William Deedes, later commented:

There sprang up, just before East Fulham, a small wind, from a quarter not fully accounted for, which ministers allowed to blow them off the prudent course. . . . Baldwin and [Neville] Chamberlain [his successor in 1937] misread the public telegrams. . . .⁷

With the election safely behind them, however, their policy of appeasing the electorate was to be overshadowed by the even more reprehensible one of appeasing the Nazis.

Part Two: Appeasing the Nazis

Many factors contributed to the British policy of seeking to keep the peace by constantly conceding to German 'grievances'. One was fear of Bolshevism (Communism): Stalin's purges in the 1930s coincided with a period of unbridled admiration for Soviet Russia by large sections of the Left of British politics. It was not only the more blinkered sections of the Right, however, which viewed Hitler as a preferable alternative to Stalin. Even when Britain and Germany were actually at war, the philosopher Bertrand Russell could write that he had 'no doubt that the Soviet Government is even worse than Hitler's, and it will be a misfortune if it survives'.⁸ There was no secret about the Soviet Union's ideological aims. Abortive though Communist *coups* had been in Germany and Hungary in the aftermath of World War One, Lenin's Comintern (the Third – or Communist – International) was openly functioning in its attempts to direct a revolutionary world movement. Stalin's split with Trotsky, apart from being a personal contest, had been concerned much more with the priority than with the principle of pursuing the goal of 'world revolution'.

Another factor was the reaction against the horrors of the previous war and against the prospect of another. The prospect of aerial bombardment especially was viewed (wrongly as it turned out) with similar dread to which now applies to nuclear war. Theorists such as the Italian General Douhet had their adherents in the RAF and outside it, who thought that wars might be settled by air power alone. A 'knock-out blow' would be inflicted by a rain of poison gas and high explosive bombs. Typically, an article in the *New Statesman* (30th January 1932) stressed the horrors of gas attack – a 'synthetic earthquake', which 'could only be equalled by one of nature's worst convulsions'. The only safeguard, of course, would lie in 'international measures of disarmament'. Or consider Bertrand Russell again:

London for several days will be one vast raving bedlam, the hospitals will be stormed, traffic will cease, the homeless will shriek for help, the city will be a pandemonium. What of the Government at Westminster? It will be swept away by an avalanche of terror. Then will the enemy dictate its terms. . . .⁹

In an article entitled 'A National Air Force – No Defence', published in 1935, Philip Noel-Baker – doyen of the Labour Party's disarmament campaigners for over 50 years until the 1980s – predicted:

In the next war our only hope of saving London will be to destroy Paris or Berlin before the enemy's attacks begin. And if this is true, can we resist the conclusion that the next war if it comes will obliterate the civilisation in which we live?¹⁰

As early as November 1932, Stanley Baldwin (who often spoke for MacDonald on defence matters) had

declared supinely that 'the bomber will always get through'. His solution was to tell the Cabinet Disarmament Committee in March 1933: 'We must have a convention prohibiting bombing.'¹¹ During this period, as in most stages of British history perhaps since Ethelred the Unready sought to buy off the Danes, there were two competing schools of thought. One held that the danger of war could best be averted by banning the weapons of war and attempting to placate potential opponents. The other maintained that aggressive ambitions had to be deterred or resisted, because they could not be defused. Looking back on the efforts of the League of Nations Disarmament Commission, which he had chaired between the wars, Salvador de Madariaga reflected in 1973 that:

The trouble with disarmament was (and still is) that the problem of war is tackled upside down and at the wrong end. . . . Nations don't distrust each other because they are armed; they are armed because they distrust each other. And therefore to want disarmament before a minimum of common agreement on fundamentals is as absurd as to want people to go undressed in winter.¹²

Churchill, belonging to the second – anti-disarmament – school of thought, completely rejected Baldwin's view. As he said in Parliament on 23rd November 1933:

There was a sense of, what shall I say, fatalism and even perhaps helplessness about it, and I take this opportunity of saying that as far as this island is concerned, the responsibility of Ministers to guarantee the safety of the country from day to day and from hour to hour is direct and inalienable. . . .¹³

To fear of Communism and fear of the costs of war must be added a third factor: the sense of guilt derived from the harsh terms imposed upon the defeated Germans at Versailles in 1919. Just as current Soviet repression of Russian dissidents is blamed on Western 'confrontationist' behaviour by modern apologists on the Left, so could Lord Lothian, a Liberal member of the National Government in 1931–2 and an apologist for the Nazis until 1938, describe Hitler's brutalities in April 1937 as 'largely the reflex of the external persecution to which Germans have been subjected since the war'.¹⁴ In the words of Gilbert and Gott:

A sense of guilt drove the appeasers into a one-sided relationship with Germany, in which Germany was always to be given the benefit of the doubt. Hitler's outbursts were not treated as the ravings of a wicked man: they were the understandable complaints of a man who had been wronged.¹⁵

Hitler knew perfectly well how to play on these fears of war and feelings of guilt. Looking back on the success of his tactics, in a secret speech to representatives of the German press in Munich on 10th November 1938, he

pointed out that:

The prevailing circumstances have obliged me to speak, for a decade or more, of almost nothing but peace. Only, in fact, by continuously declaring the German desire for peace and Germany's peaceful intentions was I able, step by step, to secure freedom for the German people and to provide Germany with the armaments which have, time and time again, always been the essential pre-condition for any further move.¹⁶

From the outset, the appeasers had no valid excuse for doubting the nature of the Nazi régime, but they were determined not to let the facts stand in the way of their theories. Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 30th January 1933. On 6th February he issued a 'Law for the Protection of the German People', enabling him to silence the German press. Within a few days, the Oxford Union had resolved by 275 to 153 votes that it would not 'in any circumstances . . . fight for King and Country'. In a speech on 17th February, Churchill contrasted this with German youth 'burning to suffer and die for their fatherland One can almost feel the curl of contempt upon the lips of the manhood of all these peoples when they read this message sent out by Oxford University in the name of young England.'¹⁷

The first five months of Hitler's Chancellorship were the last – before retirement – of Britain's Ambassador in Berlin since 1928, Sir Horace Rumbold. His penetrating analysis of the new régime spelt out what others in years to come were to choose to ignore. In March 1933 he reported that the Nazis were intimidating the population. On 14th March he described the new government as having brought to the surface 'the worst traits in German character, i.e. a mean spirit of revenge, a tendency to brutality, and a noisy and irresponsible jingoism'. On 28th March he stated that Jews were being 'systematically removed from their posts' in the public services, adding on 5th April that 'large concentration camps were being established in various parts of the country, one near Munich being sufficiently large to hold 5,000 prisoners'. (This was Dachau.)

Rumbold's 26th April despatch – written before his first meeting with Hitler – was circulated to the Cabinet. It stressed that parliamentary rule in Germany had been replaced by brute force; it quoted *Mein Kampf* to show how easy it was to forecast that the evils of the régime would continue indefinitely; and it warned that 'Germany's neighbours have reason to be vigilant', and that attempts to divide Hitler from his fellow-Nazis would be bound to fail.

On 11th May Rumbold restated this last point. Having now met Hitler personally, he concluded 'that Herr Hitler is himself responsible for the anti-Jewish policy . . . it would be a mistake to believe that it is the policy of his wilder men whom he has difficulty in controlling'. The Ambassador knew all too well the tendency of democrats to seek to find aspects of 'liberalism' in their totalitarian opponents, as recognition of their inherent

hostility to democracy was too awful to contemplate: 'The deliberate ruthlessness and brutality which have been practised during the last five months seem both excessive and unnecessary', he reported in his final despatch on 30th June. 'I have the impression that the persons directing the policy of the Hitler Government are not normal. Many of us, indeed, have a feeling that we are living in a country where fantastic hooligans and eccentrics have got the upper hand.'¹⁸

By May 1933, Germany's clandestine rearmament was well-known within the Foreign Office. When a British delegate at Geneva argued that a threat of force by France and Britain would compel Hitler to desist, the strongly anti-German head of the Foreign Office – Sir Robert Vansittart – had his recommendations read in the Cabinet, but 'to no effect'. Vansittart deplored the politicians' tendency to try to divorce German domestic brutality from possible aggression abroad. On 28th August, he wrote that:

From the very outset of the régime I have felt, with all deference to those who with more sweet reasonableness were disposed for at least a little while to wait and see, that there was no doubt whatever about the ultimate intentions of the Nazis. . . . *It is an open secret that anything peaceful said by Hitler is merely for foreign consumption and designed to gain time.*¹⁹

Churchill was even more forthright on the question of sweet reasonableness *versus* direct action: 'If a mad dog makes a dash for my trousers', he warned the German Press Attaché in London, Fritz Hesse, 'I shoot him down before he can bite.'

These attitudes were poles apart from those holding sway in Westminster, but they illustrate two vital facts: first, that sufficient evidence for a sound appreciation of the Nazi menace was available early on for those who wished to see it; and, secondly, that the failure of the government to initiate or support any firm action was mainly due to the character of the individuals in power rather than to any particular cleverness on Hitler's part in deceiving them. He could not have succeeded as he did, had they not been determined to swallow his efforts at deceit. Thus, the veteran disarmer, MacDonald, could look at the same evidence as Vansittart and read the same despatches, yet propose instead a plan for *détente* (another term not unfamiliar to the post-war world). He told the German Ambassador, Leopold von Hoesch, that 'From the very start he had not believed the reports of excesses' by the régime. Hitler should visit England, he suggested, a plan privately dismissed as 'absurd' in Berlin.

In March 1933, Churchill had criticised the announcement that Britain was only fifth in the league-table of air power. His concern was not shared by Lord Londonderry, then the Secretary of State for Air, who pointed out in a speech in Newcastle in late June how the Germans had 'passed through a tribulation which we have never

known. We should receive in no niggardly spirit the offers made to the world by Herr Hitler.' It would be wrong, he felt, to 'refuse to believe in the sincerity of Germany.'²⁰

Right from the outset, therefore, the stage was set for the ensuing tragedy. From 1934 until 1937 the positions of the two schools of thought hardened; but in every threatening cloud that gathered over Germany, Hitler's apologists inside and outside government sought the silver lining. In March 1936, Hitler sent a token military force to reoccupy the Rhineland, demilitarised under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Baldwin, who had taken over from MacDonald as Prime Minister in June 1935, confessed that Britain lacked the strength to make good its guarantees under the 1925 Treaty of Locarno against aggression between Germany, France and Belgium. Too many people could see neither reason against nor portend in Hitler reoccupying 'his own back-yard'. Besides, had he not simultaneously offered to discuss a proposal for '25 years' peace in Europe'? To the influential 'Cliveden set' of appeasers who regularly met at the home of Nancy Astor MP, this offer was much more important: 'Welcome Hitler's declaration whole-heartedly', they cabled the Prime Minister.

Rumbold's successor at the Berlin Embassy, Sir Eric Phipps, soon lost his early illusions about accommodating Hitler, and his First Secretary, Ivone Kirkpatrick, made a practice of showing covert German rearmament at first hand to English visitors. But the appeasers did not want to know. Critics were regarded as people standing in the way of *détente*:

The appeasers wanted to hear that Hitler was reasonable. If their Ambassador would not tell them, they must look elsewhere for confirmation. The Embassy could be ignored.²¹

And so it was until 1937, the year which saw Neville Chamberlain succeed Baldwin in May, having just told Nancy Astor that he intended to be his own Foreign Secretary. He did indeed bypass his Secretary of State, Anthony Eden, until the latter's resignation in 1938. Chamberlain relied instead upon a closed circle – an 'inner Cabinet' consisting of Viscount Halifax, Sir Samuel Hoare, Sir John Simon and himself – and upon a 'grey eminence' in the shape of Sir Horace Wilson, a senior Treasury civil servant seconded to Downing Street.

In April 1937, the disastrous Sir Nevile Henderson took over as Ambassador in Berlin. He soon began saying officially what opinionated visitors to the Nazis (such as Thomas Jones, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, 1916–30) had been saying unofficially to the satisfaction of their hosts for some considerable time. According to a speech by Henderson at a dinner in his honour on 1st June:

far too many people have an erroneous conception of what the National-Socialist régime really stands for. Otherwise they would lay less stress on Nazi dictatorship and much more emphasis on the great

social experiment which is being tried out in this country.²²

Perhaps more typical than such blatant fellow-travelling, was the shocked reaction of the Editor of *The Times* – arch-appeaser Geoffrey Dawson – when his perceptive Berlin correspondent, Norman Ebutt, was expelled by the Nazis. This was despite Dawson's refusal to print many of Ebutt's more embarrassing observations. Instead of Dawson's eyes being opened to the futility of what he had been doing, the expulsion merely caused him to contact his man in Geneva, and to explain: 'I do my utmost, night after night, to keep out of the papers anything which might hurt their [the Germans'] susceptibilities. . . . I shall be more grateful than I can say for any explanation. . . . I have always been convinced that the peace of the world depends upon our getting into reasonable relations with Germany.' In reality, this one-sided approach meant acquiescing in virtually everything the Nazis did, and trying to count one's blessings. As Halifax told Hitler when they met in November 1937, he could see that 'the Chancellor . . . had been able, by preventing the entry of Communism into his own country, to bar its passage further west'.

Meanwhile, despite divisions over the use or non-use of force to fight Fascism in the Spanish Civil War (1936–9), the Labour Party continued on its irresponsible course. Clement Attlee had succeeded Lansbury as leader, after an attack on the latter's extreme pacifism by the union leader Ernest Bevin in 1935. As Taylor notes, however, 'Attlee criticised every demand for arms made by the National Government until after the outbreak of war in 1939.'²³

Yet, with the 1935 election safely behind them, as has been seen, the National Government had no excuse for being further afraid of, or constrained by Labour disarmament agitation. The fact is that the dominant Conservative grouping had no stomach for a confrontation with Hitler. They were determined to press concessions upon him, rather than to risk a fight. By constantly conceding in this way they merely postponed the fight and ensured that it would have to be fought on terms more disadvantageous to themselves in the future.

It was noted above how Churchill had predicted that, apart from breaching the Versailles provisions, an Austro-German *Anschluss* would leave Czechoslovakia exposed and isolated, and under pressure in connection with its sizable German-speaking minority in the Sudetenland. German entry into Vienna came on 13th March 1938. Czechoslovakia was next on Hitler's list, and the Munich Agreement (without Czech participation) to amputate the Sudetenland left the remainder of the country militarily defenceless. It is true that a military case can be made for the use to which Britain put the year's respite conferred by Munich; but the primary motivation of Chamberlain, Halifax, Henderson and the rest, was not that. Against all the odds, they were genuinely banking on Hitler finally having been placated by his seizure of the Sudetenland. Why else was such value placed on the now notorious 'piece of paper'

Chamberlain flourished on his return, pledging Germany and Britain 'never to go to war with one another again'? (30th September 1938.)

Only the First Lord of the Admiralty, Alfred Duff Cooper, resigned in disgust at the dismemberment of a democracy to buy off a dictator. Public opinion at home and in the Dominions – lacking any lead from the government – seemed to favour the Agreement, but certainly stiffened after the Nazi seizure of Prague in March 1939. The Sudetenland – Hitler's last territorial demand in Europe' – had satisfied his appetite for less than six months. Still Chamberlain wished to persist with appeasement, but public reaction to Hitler's betrayal of his Munich pledge required some symbolic firmness. This took the form of a guarantee of the security of Poland – a country even more difficult to assist militarily than Czechoslovakia had been. A Bill for limited conscription passed through Parliament, against the vehement opposition of Labour and the Liberals: 'It is very dangerous to give generals all they want', warned Attlee sententiously as war loomed.²⁴ Between April and August 1939, some effort was made (though with great misgivings) to reach an agreement with the Russians. Not only was this a matter of ideological antipathy, there were also great doubts about Russian military capabilities after the Great Purges. (Only the ferocity of Nazi behaviour in occupied Soviet territory was to ensure the resistance of many who initially welcomed the threat to Stalinism posed by the invasion in June 1941.) Labour and the Left supported the idea of a deal with the Soviet Union. The government dithered in the hope that Hitler might still draw back; but he had other plans. On 23rd August, the Foreign Ministers of Germany and the Soviet Union, von Ribbentrop and Molotov, signed the Nazi-Soviet pact in Moscow. With it went their secret agreement to carve-up Poland, which was duly attacked in the rear by the Soviet army whilst vainly trying to resist Hitler in the West. (Nazi attack, 1st September; Soviet attack, 17th September.)

By this time, Britain was at war (from 3rd September) for the sake of a commitment which she could not get out of – although Chamberlain did his best to do so, even after the attack on Poland. Churchill, who had predicted so much, so accurately, was at last brought back into government (as First Lord of the Admiralty) after his decade in the political wilderness. But it was not to be until after further crises and setbacks that he was to take charge of the military struggle which he had tried in vain to prevent during the long years of appeasement.

Notes

1. W. S. Churchill: House of Commons speech, 13th May 1932.
2. Quoted in M. Gilbert: *Winston S. Churchill, Vol. V, 1922–39*, (London, 1976), p. 407.

3. A. J. P. Taylor: *English History, 1914–1945*, (Oxford, 1965), p. 362.
4. *Ibid.*
5. S. Baldwin: House of Commons speech, 12th November 1936.
6. W. S. Churchill: *The Gathering Storm*, 2nd Edition (London, 1949), p. 195.
7. W. F. Deedes: 'The Real Appeasers Who Came from the Ranks of Politicians', *Daily Telegraph*, 25th February 1983.
8. Quoted in M. Gilbert and R. Gott: *The Appeasers*, (London, 1967), p. 8.
9. B. Russell: *Which Way to Peace?* (London, 1936), quoted in U. Bialer: *The Shadow of the Bomber – The Fear of Air Attack and British Politics*, (London, 1980), p. 47.
10. P. Noel-Baker: 'A National Air Force – No Defence' (1935), quoted in Bialer, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
11. Quoted in Bialer, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
12. Quoted in *The Times*, 2nd April 1983.
13. W. S. Churchill: House of Commons speech, 23rd November 1933.
14. Quoted in Gilbert and Gott, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
16. Quoted in Z. A. B. Zeman: *Nazi Propaganda*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1973), p. 213.
17. Quoted in M. Gilbert: *Winston S. Churchill, Vol. V, 1922–1939*, (London, 1976), p. 456.
18. Gilbert and Gott, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–17.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
20. *The Times*, 26th June 1933.
21. Gilbert and Gott, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
23. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 382.
24. Quoted in Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

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On Teaching not to Read

Mona McNee

Our civilisation is based on literacy. Is reading failure a problem in Britain? Yes. In an ordinary state school, even in an area of disadvantage, where reading is effectively taught, the 100 R.Q. of Young's Group Reading test can be taken as the basic minimum, achieved some years by *all* children, yet in Norfolk 40% are below that level by age 7+ year after year.*

When war ended in 1945, we wanted a new society and were open to new ideas. Educational psychologists took advantage of this. Instead of cautiously feeling their way into a new discipline, they promoted as insight, experience and wisdom what were no more than personal opinions, poorly tested and unproven, but promoted by flattery: 'Enlightened teachers will . . .', 'the wise teacher will . . .' follow the new ideas. The old ways which had served well were mocked: 'By writing so much in such an authoritative style, (the experts) have created the impression among lay people that they had much more knowledge and understanding than is actually the case.'¹ The teaching of reading became a particular interest, and by declaring learning to read very complex they made their theories immune to challenge from past experience or the layman's common sense.

The central disaster has been look-and-say, the idea that children can and should start reading without letters and sounds.

Professor (Sir) Fred Schonell's 1945 book, *The Psychology and Teaching of Reading*² was the student teacher's Bible for decades. He urged:

- i) Start with look-and-say. An initial, restricted sight vocabulary he hailed as one of the greatest modern advances.
- ii) Children who cannot start are not ready.
- iii) Keep the parents out of it; and
- iv) Do not trust a diagnosis of word-blindness (dyslexia). Look-and-say expects children to 'recognise' words from their shape before learning letters/sounds. Can YOU read words from their shape?



Some shapes fit many words: the first shape could be murmur, crease, course, coarse, cavern, etc. The second word (which involves what American 'experts' call 'blocking') could be 'sixpence'; the third 'average'. Your own one-minute test shows that this theory does not work, so we must assume its proponents never tried it for themselves. If word-shapes were better than letters, books and newspapers would be printed in word-shapes. Amazingly, so simple is reading and so wonderful our brain, quite a number of children do work out the way letters work even on look-and-say, and it is their success, apparent instant reading, which has kept look-and-say alive.

Massive failure could not be denied. Instead of admitting error, Myth No. 2 was needed: reading readiness, 'If children cannot start reading on look-and-say, they are not ready,' despite earlier generations having started safely at 4, even 3. Without the reading readiness theory to explain away so much failure, look-and-say could not have survived. The new ideas accepted first on high authority then eventually became regarded as conventional teaching. With ten years between infant class and leaving school, a decade passed without alarm. When dissatisfaction began to arise, the debate was kept to: 'Is one method better than another?' Nobody asked, 'Is the new way harmful?' Someone should have noticed that look-and-say was activating problems for dyslexics – at least 7% of the population, which is 1 boy in 9, 1 girl in 35. But then, Schonell led the way for the dyslexia misunderstandings: Say it is rare, call it something else. Dyslexics need clear, step-by-step, logical teaching, the phonics which is safe for all children. If you consider what is helpful in beginning to read, you will see that look-and-say is really a decision to withhold essential clues at the most crucial time, namely the beginning.

*1. Reading Quotient (R.Q.) is a child's reading age (R.A.) expressed as a percentage of chronological age (C.A.). When R.A. = C.A., R.Q. is 100. If a child age 7.6 (90 months) has a reading age 9 months ahead –8.3, this is 10% more than C.A., so R.Q. would be 110.

Median R.Q. is the R.Q. for the middle child of any group.

Median R.Q. on Young's Group Reading Test, at age 7+, is a quick, thumbnail sketch of a school's attainment. The average when the test was drawn up was set at 100 R.Q. A good First School will have a median R.Q. of 110 up to 116, and parents and school governors should start asking what is the Median R.Q. of their local First School.

2.	Good School	Norfolk 1983	'norm', national figures
R.Q. 110+	73%	33.3%	26.4%
90-109	24%	49.6%	49.4%
75-89	3%	15.2%	19.8%
Below 75	Nil	1.9%	4.4%
Median:	113	103	100

Schonell's four main points were expanded, echoed, re-printed, so that sheer volume of support gave credence to the myths. The idea that we should let children develop rather than teach them reduced even further the chances of those children who actually need teaching; John Holt's *How Children Learn*³ has been issued 14 times since 1967. From about 1970, the influence of Frank Smith⁴ spread. People outside the teaching world need to read these books – parents, school governors, councillors. They need to know what lecturers are encouraging students to believe. If a Frank Smith book in a university library is almost falling to pieces from use, it is because a whole generation of students have read that:

you cannot teach children to read;
phonics just does not work (Smith uses *mishap*, *fathhead*, to discredit teaching the sh, th in ship, think);
readers do not need the alphabet;
guessing using prior knowledge to eliminate unlikely alternatives is the most efficient manner in which to read and learn to read;
letters . . . are learned by seeing them all; they are not learned one at a time;
it is the wisdom and intuition of teachers that must be trusted.

I would not trust my child to a teacher who believed such things – but how many parents know what teachers believe? The 1974 Bullock Report said 97% of schools used look-and-say. In one year, only 3 out of 300 students had borrowed Jeanne Chall's updated book⁵ favouring phonics.

'Up to date' students became teachers, lecturers, professors, writers of textbooks. Public anxiety grew. In response the government has produced Reports: **Dyslexia.** The Tizard Report 1971 said, 'Don't call it dyslexia', so keeping teachers in the dark, and preventing us from knowing how many people are affected.

Literacy. The Bullock Report re-stated the myths (e.g. that there is 'no one way to teach reading') and made no mention of the fact that look-and-say might be harmful for many. Simple 'reading' was turned into the pretentious 'Language for Life'. The Report called for testing, but many schools still do not test. Only one of the whole Commission was dissatisfied – Stuart Froome, who added a Note of Dissent.

Pre-school. The Plowden Report failed to say that children are ready to start learning to read by age 4.

Handicap. The Warnock Report failed to show that the main special need today, outnumbering all other special needs put together, is that of activated dyslexia. We now have a torrent of books on special needs, even 'Screening for special needs', all ignoring dyslexia!

The main watchdogs either handed over responsibility to the experts (councillors being told – and believing – that it is all very complex, and trusting the LEA) or else they themselves – H.M. Inspectors, reading advisers, psychologists – believed the myths.

Every initiative is emasculated. 'Do you teach synthetic or analytical phonics?' – we should teach both. The

D.E.S. set up an Assessment of Performance Unit which *sounds* just what was needed, but the unit decided not to test reading before age 11, four years after children should have learned to read! Blame was placed firmly on home/child/family, and all teachers can now reel off the 'causes' for failure: one-parent family, low I.Q., poor home background, gipsy life.

Likewise, groups set up with a concern for standards (N.C.E.S., Education 2000, U.K. Reading Association) were also taken in by the myths, and fuss about secondary curriculum and examinations kept attention off the infants. Publishers trusted their expert advisers and in the end, by accepting and re-printing the misleading theories, are now destroying their own market, the reading public. It seems as though publishers prefer to publish new ideas, however unlikely. To match this one-sided pressure on students, publishers produce look-and-say reading schemes. Now that Royal Road has lapsed, I know of no reading scheme at present commercially available in Britain which is free of look-and-say. With rare and notable exceptions, therefore, we now have a teaching establishment unanimous from top to bottom in support of falsehood.

An American Federal Commission on Reading has recently completed its report, 'Becoming a Nation of Readers', synthesising 20 years of new research. America's leading reading specialists conclude that there is no good reason why ANY child should fail to read.

The report settles the old debate about reading methods. For decades, most teachers were told not to teach the sounds of letters (phonics) but to have them memorise whole words (the 'look-say' method). The commission says children should begin with phonics, then move as quickly as possible into stories that use their phonetic knowledge.

A second myth that has been dispatched is that children should not be taught to read until . . . ready.

Current research deeply criticises many lavishly packed (schemes) . . . for bland vocabulary . . . and sheer boredom of stories.

For years, parents were advised to leave all reading instruction to teachers, on the grounds that parental efforts . . . would confuse. Research now shows . . . informal instruction at home . . . powerfully contributes to . . . reading achievement in schools.

If parents and teachers adopt the sensible practices recommended by the new reading research, illiteracy and poor reading will become problems of the past.⁶

Warnings against look-and-say have been given repeatedly. Here Daniels and Diack⁷ protested valiantly from 1954, and more recently Dr Joyce Morris⁸ campaigns for phonics. In America, Dr Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read*⁹ was a best-seller for 30 weeks in 1955. Terman and Walcutt wrote their *Reading: Chaos and Cure*¹⁰ in 1958. Jeanne Chall's *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* favoured phonics in 1967, and was updated in 1983. A letter in our *Sunday Times* of 1972 said

look-and-say was a failure (but the research was not published). Still, by 1981 Flesch's 'Why Johnny Still Can't Read'¹¹ was only too sadly true. Kozol's book, 'Illiterate America' (1985)¹² says one third of adult Americans cannot read that book – although he blames this not on teaching but on politicians withholding

funds. As though it were not the provision of taxpayer's money to self-declared experts that had caused the problem in the first place. The fact is that reading failure is one of the most vivid proofs available, of the way in which the 'theory' of teaching – prematurely embarked on, and ideologically imposed – has obliterated the practice.

Notes

1. Tinbergen, N. and E.A., *Autistic Children*, Allen & Unwin 1983
2. Schonell, F., *The Psychology and Teaching of Reading*, Oliver and Boyd, 1945.
3. Holt, J., *How Children Learn*, 1967, Penguin/Pelican.
4. Smith, F., *Understanding Reading*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971, 1978; *Psycholinguistics and Reading*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston 1973; *Comprehension and Learning*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston 1975
Reading, Cambridge University Press 1978.
5. Chall, Jeanne, *Learning to Read: The great debate* 1983
6. Report in the *New York Times*, 3.6.85 of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Report of Federal Commission, U.S.A.)
7. Daniels, J.C. and Diack, H., *Teachers' Book for the Royal Road Readers*, Chatto and Windus 1954 to 1974.
8. Morris, J., *Standards and Progress in Reading*, NFER 1966
9. Flesch, R., *Why Johnny Can't Read*, Harper & Row, 1955
10. Terman & Walcutt, *Reading: Chaos and Cure*, McGraw Hill, 1958
11. Flesch, R., *Why Johnny STILL Can't Read*, Harper & Row, 1981
12. Kozol, J. *Illiterate America*, Doubleday, 1985

Central Eastern Europe and the West: A Reappraisal

Edward Rogerson

The division of Europe, first established with the Yalta Agreement of 1945, forced the countries of Central Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland)¹ into a totalitarian political grouping which sought to isolate them from their common European cultural traditions. Over the past forty years, the seeming permanence of this division has fostered a sense of isolationism throughout Central Eastern Europe which goes far beyond the problems of the adversarial nature of the political alliances which divide the continent. An apparent willingness in the West to accept the separation of Central Eastern Europe from the concept of a unified European civilisation has deepened the isolation and heightened the desperation throughout the region to reassert Europeanism against the universalist claims of Marxist-Leninist materialism. To the victims of Soviet hegemony, this reassertion is central in the attempt to reverse the steady removal of Central Eastern Europe from the political and cultural map of the continent. In such circumstances, the policy of pragmatic neglect which characterises Western European attitudes is seen by many in the region as a bitter disappointment.

To be sure, events in the Soviet satellites have a habit of intruding on the political consciousness of Western Europe when they are least expected: the Hungarian Rising; the Prague Spring; the election of Pope John Paul; the Solidarity Revolution. Always, experts will need to be found, experts willing to pose as friends and thoughtful commentators. Radicals and reactionaries alike dust down their atlases, their half-remembered prejudices from Socialist Summer School or wartime experience. It is a time for the media to assemble a conscript army of

trade union pontificators, politicians on the make, radical activists with a dialectic to protect. Suddenly, transient media demands elevate to the status of experts people unable even to pronounce the names of Imre Nagy or Lech Wałęsa, much less to spell them.

Thirty years ago in his Ford Lectures at Oxford, A.J.P. Taylor noted that, while Polish independence was a constant and important factor in Radical agitation against British foreign policy in the nineteenth century, it was always Poland as a weapon against other countries: Prussia or Russia.² This generalisation holds good today, and not only for Poland. For the media pundits, playing to the galleries of their own constituencies and comrades, events in Central Eastern Europe have been used for similar purposes. Hungary was the pretext for an exodus from the pro Moscow, and hence neo imperialist, Western Communist parties; or, for those westerners remaining loyal to Moscow, a further example (along with Suez) of Western Imperialism's deep rooted desire to undermine those countries committed to peace, freedom and national self determination. Czechoslovakia, too, saw the belated recognition by some former Communists in the West of Moscow's undiminished imperialistic designs. Western radicals and progressives were at this time less in evidence in their defence of Moscow; Vietnam was a much more potent anti-American weapon (although, for all I knew, some unreconstructed Western Stalinists might well have believed in Dubcek's bourgeois nationalist tendencies). In neither case was there any concerted attempt to examine the issues from the inside; only a small number of Western commentators (usually academics or emigres) have seemed prepared to look at

the complex internal pressures which came so suddenly to the fore in each country.

Poland is something apart. It has been around longer as a contentious issue in European politics – since the Congress of Vienna of 1815, if not longer. Equally, memories of tank-charging cavalry and heel-clicking Polish airmen linger affectionately in some older minds. For the radical progressives, erroneous images of pre-war, Pilsudski-ite Poland, anti-semitic, priest-ridden, 'clerical-fascist' (a patent oxymoron) emerge to colour their interpretations of each new manifestation of Polish unrest.³

The election of Pope John Paul, and the rise of Solidarity, realised all the worst fears of these critics. For radicals and liberals, the sight of Polish workers kneeling before crosses and crowding into churches for weekly mass was an anachronistic embarrassment. For the well heeled reactionary, or the exiled aristocrat, the rise of a working class movement clashed violently with a received view of Trade Unionism as the Original Sin of our materialistic century. With the suppression of the independent unions came a perceptible sigh of relief and the usual, ritual denunciations of foreign interference (Soviet or American) in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. Those prepared to understand the Polish crisis as something unique to that country were overwhelmed by media imperatives which sought analysis based upon concepts of conflict. A unique and complex social revolution was thus compressed and condensed to make it fit the constructs of Western political polemic.

Such a simplification has its advantages. By seeing Central Eastern Europe's periodic crises as simple challenges to the post war status quo, to the Soviet domination of the region, Western politicians and commentators avoid any need to analyse their own attitudes and values. It enables them to hide behind vague analyses of the 'wider issues', couched usually in terms of moral relativism (the judiciously named 'asymmetry of indulgence') or moral absolutism: political point scoring which helps no one – particularly the people of Central Eastern Europe. If the countries of the region can neither be altogether ignored, nor excluded (geographically) from Europe, their status in Western eyes has advanced little since Chamberlain's famous dismissal of a 'far off country' in September 1938.

As a result of the post war division of the European continent into two adversarial camps, these far off countries have effectively been excluded from Europe.⁴ The essentially episodic nature of Western Europe's engagement with the other half of the continent, and Western reluctance to countenance any sustained disturbance of the post war status quo, has reinforced this exclusion. It seems to have become widely accepted that Western Europe's own freedom is contingent upon the continuing subjugation of Central Eastern Europe to Soviet hegemony and, to that end, Western reactions to disturbances in the status quo have become increasingly muted. If the price of continued Western freedom is the exclusion of the Central Eastern European nations from the common European cultural experience, then future

disturbances throughout the Soviet empire will become increasingly unfathomable to Western observers.

In effect, the point has been reached where the West is largely ignorant of the cultural traditions of its Eastern neighbours. This has not always been the case; while Central Eastern Europe has always been largely neglected in studies of European civilisation, there has at least been some recognition in the past of the region's Europeanism. Over the course of the current century, however, the frontiers of the East-West divide have crept closer to home. For the Romans, the East was above all Persia, Mesopotamia, Armenia; for the Roman Empire's distant successor states, the East has moved northwards and westwards, to Soviet Russia and its satellites. In recent years, it is almost as though the oriental mysteries of Catholic Central Eastern Europe, with its baroque churches and Romantic artistic and literary traditions, its love of Shakespeare and Dante and symphonic orchestral music, have become somehow more culturally distant than the essentially alien worlds of India and the Far East.

The Soviet Union has, of course, excluded itself. Despite its claim to be the spiritual inheritor of a materialistic creed born in Germany and nurtured in the British Library, the Soviet Union draws its material and spiritual strength from the long standing traditions of Russian isolationism and quasi-oriental despotism. By exporting this creed to its Central Eastern European satrapies, it has attempted to impose this isolation upon countries essentially hostile to Russian traditions. The continuing struggle throughout the Soviet sphere of influence is a manifestation of the attempt to maintain European cultural traditions against this concerted assault. The intellectual revolution which accompanied Solidarity is the latest and most far reaching event in a process of struggle which began in Hungary in 1956.

Western Europe's effective exclusion of Central Eastern Europe from the common culture of the continent is dangerous for Western policy and a continuing disaster for the victims of Soviet hegemony. This is not merely a plea for more Shakespeare or Verdi, important though cultural experiences can be in reinforcing Europeanism as a living ideal. Nevertheless, by voluntarily restricting the scope of its engagement with Central Eastern Europe, the West diminishes its ability to react effectively to crises in the European balance of power, and virtually nullifies any opportunity of anticipating events. Adam Michnik gives a notable example in his most recent article.⁵ He notes that, for most Western observers, Solidarity emerged *ex nihilo* in the summer of 1980, and was destroyed without trace on 13 December 1981. In fact, as Michnik points out, the Solidarity crisis was several years in the making: the fifteen months of legal existence represented simply the universalisation of these longer term trends. Equally, it has not (despite General Jaruzelski and Robert Maxwell) disappeared without trace; there is a permanent legacy in the re-emergence and continuing (though precarious) survival of democratic social traditions which were thought to have been destroyed in the forty years of People's Democracy in Poland.

By failing to appreciate the wider implications of the Solidarity crisis, as it has failed to do throughout Central Eastern Europe's periodic crises since 1945, the West voluntarily restricted its ability to influence the course of events. It may be an exaggeration to claim that martial law relieved the West of the need to take difficult moral decisions on the nature of People's Poland, and its position in the Soviet bloc – though there are times when I doubt whether it is such an exaggeration, after all. Nevertheless, the pragmatic immobility shown by the West amounts, in Polish eyes, to much the same thing.

The problem with such a pragmatic approach is the encouragement it gives to charges of moral relativism. This is, of course, a contentious area of debate. In purely practical terms, there are many regimes more inhuman than those which have the dubious privilege of misdirecting the socio political structures of Central Eastern Europe. Some of these regimes are nominally Marxist, others simply a collection of unpleasant military psychopaths: to try to differentiate between them is to become pointlessly engaged in a further round of futile semantic point scoring.

For the Soviet Union, Central Eastern Europe is important as the *cordon sanitaire* against the Western imperialists. The intellectual niceties of Western semantics, while doubtless unpleasant to the Soviet leadership, can hold no terrors for them. Their Western critics may well discern the malign hand of Moscow behind every act of repression, every train cancellation in the Soviet empire; but the Soviet Union cannot be dislodged by such sensationalist analysis. The geopolitical realities allow the Soviet Union to maintain its hold on its reluctant satrapies, encouraged by the West's confused response.

For the West still lacks consistency in its approach to the tyranny which confronts it, and to the tyranny's satellite states. Open criticism of the Soviet *raison d'etat*, especially from American leaders, encourages the voicing of 'wiser counsels' by many public figures in Western Europe, reluctant to be seen supporting American policy – even though, in the words of their obligatory *mantra*, they 'hold no brief for the Soviet tyranny'. But, above all, the moral relativists, who see linkages everywhere, conspiracies everywhere. Angola – Chile; Afghanistan – Lebanon; Poland – Nicaragua: a singularly futile game of cards which resolves nothing. Behind this confused babel, Soviet hegemony is maintained over a region whose inhabitants reject its pretensions, who wish to retain their Europeanism.

Underlying the upheavals of the last thirty years is a strong commitment to European unity which has been largely ignored in the West. Those discredited concepts of personal freedom and responsibility, of social justice and intellectual autonomy (the so-called 'negative freedoms' so firmly criticised by Marxists and Socialists everywhere – and not only in Eastern Europe), have been the motive force behind Central Eastern Europe's struggle for political autonomy. Sadly for this struggle, the collectivist ideologies which castigate these 'negative

freedoms' still dominate large areas of political life in the Western European democracies. Western Europe needs to reclaim this cultural heritage for itself if it is to present its Eastern neighbours with an effective intellectual counter-weight to Marxist Leninist materialism. It is a sad turn of events for the West if the dissidents of Central Eastern Europe have become the only true defenders of the freedoms which Western Europe itself is supposed to represent.

Notes

1. I exclude East Germany. At a time when the populations of the two German states seem to be trading places, East Germany's back door membership of the EEC seems to be an established fact
2. A.J.P. Taylor: *The Trouble Makers* (1957; republished by Penguin, 1985)
3. Predictably enough, Lawrence and Wishart have published an interpretation of the Solidarity period which resurrects all the old distortions. (M. Myant: *Poland – a crisis for Socialism*). My admiration is reserved, however, for C. Harman: *Class Struggles in Eastern Europe 1945–1983* (Pluto Press, 1983). This Trotskyist harangue against the old Leftist Infantalist delusion, Eastern European 'State Capitalism', has been depressingly well received by some people who ought to have known better. For the most part, this book's extensive and seemingly authoritative source quotations are (for the Polish chapters; doubtless the same pattern obtains in other chapters) wilful misinterpretations and out of context quotations.
4. Mihály Vajda covers this aspect more fully in an article in the first issue of the *Eastern European Reporter* (Summer, 1985). The present position of Central Eastern Europe on the wrong side of the East–West divide has been a recurrent theme in emigre and underground publications in recent years.
5. Adam Michnik: *List z Kurkowej*, in *Aneks*, 38, 1985. *Aneks* is a Polish language political quarterly, published in the West and available from 61 Dorset Road, London W5 4HX.

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Sense and Censorship

The case of *The Salisbury Review*

Roger Scruton

The Salisbury Review was first published in October 1982. Its circulation is tiny, its availability erratic, and the procedure for subscribing to it a closely guarded secret. Its readers belong to no identifiable class, occupation, or interest, and its writers, famous though many of them are, earn nothing for their contributions apart from the distaste and opprobrium of their colleagues and, when they are not so famous, a serious revision in their chances of promotion. No telephone directory lists the *Review*, and no one is employed by it; even the editor is occupied principally elsewhere, and its correspondence is dealt with by a lady who, despite her venerable age, has far more and far better things to do. Nevertheless, this publication which nobody reads is perhaps more widely known in the United Kingdom than any other intellectual journal, and certainly more widely vilified.

The explanation for this peculiar state of affairs is simple: the *Review* is written for the most part by people within universities and polytechnics who, despite being young, energetic and cultured, are also conservative. No such scandal has occurred in British institutions of higher education since the Dean of Peterhouse declared over the radio that religion is concerned not with socialist politics but with personal salvation. Academics, overhearing Dr Norman's Reith lectures, were unable to believe their ears. Likewise, catching sight in the *Guardian* of this or that misquoted utterance from *The Salisbury Review*, they have begun to distrust their eyes: not, indeed, so far as to seek confirmation by actually reading the offending publication, but just so far as is necessary to declare (as haunted people invariably declare) the impotence of the spectre which disturbs them. In lectures delivered last summer to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the sociologists expressed a 'growing concern' at the appalling phenomenon of the 'New Right', represented by *The Salisbury Review*. But they were able rapidly to reassure themselves that no sociologist of distinction had, 'since his conversion' to this school of thought, produced any worthwhile publication. In other words, *The Salisbury Review* came close to being a threat, but fortunately did not manage it. Nevertheless, at the same spectacular show trial the *Review* was accused of some fairly remarkable crimes – including 'scientific racism' – besides the general charge of academic incompetence (a charge to be expected when one's contributors include F.A. Hayek, C.H. Sisson, Antony Flew, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Václav Havel, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, E.J. Mishan, Mary Lefkowitz, P.T. Bauer, Patrick Reyntiens and W.H.R. Wade).

However, *The Salisbury Review* does exist, and is probably worth reading. It arose from a twofold desire – first, to separate conservatism from the economic liberalism with which it has recently been confounded; secondly, to provide the conservative position with ideas more

seriously defined and more cogently argued than those upon which it has generally depended. Each issue carries an article reviewing some important conservative thinker – Oakeshott, Ruskin, de Maistre, Bradley, Voegelin, etc. – in order to remind our three or four readers that not every serious mind since the French Revolution has been persuaded by the truth of socialism. Another series of articles attempts to define and assess the conservative attitude towards those complex social issues which, because they impinge on politics without being politically decideable, have always proved more interesting to the revolutionary than to the constitutionally-minded conservative: for example, sex, language, death, taste, and culture.

A small space in each issue is devoted to a review of some current conservative journal, usually from another country and often in another language. A larger space is taken up by articles sent to us from the Eastern bloc, on the major themes of conservative thinking as these appear in conditions of dire necessity. (The authors of these articles are usually pseudonymous.) By establishing ourselves in this way, with international links that cross even the most impermeable of modern barriers, and with an eye for the theoretical history and intellectual range of our particular politics, we hope to raise the level of intellectual debate among conservatives, and also to provide a new and effective challenge to the Left.

As already indicated, the challenge has been taken seriously. *The Salisbury Review* is not explicitly banned, so far as we know, from any university precinct. However, there is considerable opposition to its appearance in university and polytechnic libraries – an opposition never encountered by its nearest equivalent on the Left, the *New Left Review*. Even the politics department of my own college refuses to recommend the journal to our librarian, while, in another university, an attempt to obtain the *Review* for the library has been blocked on grounds of 'immorality'. One of our contributors – Ray Honeyford, a headmaster whose articles on multicultural education provoked a storm of protest from the race relations industry – has been subjected to a campaign of intimidation of a kind that is rarely seen in Britain. He has now been forced to retire, on account of articles which, while expressed in a forthright manner, say nothing that is not immediately obvious to an unprejudiced observer. In a natural extension of the campaign against Mr Honeyford, the socialist establishment has used its powers to discredit the *Review* wherever possible. Thus the BBC, in a World Services programme devoted to the 'New Right', told its listeners that, according to *The Salisbury Review*, certain races are genetically 'inferior': an accusation which is distinctly libellous. Another writer for the *Review* – Jonathan Savery – is at this moment the target of the same attack that was directed at

Ray Honeyford. The occasion is again an article dealing with 'multicultural education'; and the article could again cause offence only in those who are determined in advance to be offended.

The opposition has reached a pitch of such hysteria that (according to the *Guardian*) one socialist author – a Mr Abbs, whose educational books were a lucrative source of income to our former publisher – threatened to take his custom elsewhere if publication of the *Review* were not immediately halted. The publisher (Longmans) did indeed and unexpectedly terminate our contract, pleading (as they were entitled to plead) that we were not a profitable venture, and referring to financial difficulties of their own. The rapidity of this decision, coming so soon after the Longman company had itself approached us with their offer to publish the journal, naturally gave rise to some doubt concerning the motive behind it. When the rumours of Mr Abbs's blackmail became public, the *Guardian* carried an amusing letter, in which it was argued that, loathsome though *The Salisbury Review* must certainly be, such coercive methods perhaps ought not to be used in order to silence opinions whose public expression is still legally permissible. Since the opinions of *The Salisbury Review* are not a million miles from those of a party which has twice in succession been voted into government, it is comforting to know that the law still permits their expression. What is permitted by the law, however, is not always permitted in a university or polytechnic, where to be known as one who writes for *The Salisbury Review* is to run a serious risk of ostracism.

The crime of *The Salisbury Review* is twofold: first, to have argued its case at an intellectual level to which conservatives are not entitled; secondly, to have taken seriously the ideas of social continuity, national identity and tradition upon which durable political order depends. Both faults are extremely serious. When academic subjects are founded, and reputations established, on left-wing assumptions, it is immensely provocative to expose those assumptions to intellectual questioning. And when a serious journal lends its support to the idea that Britain ought to be British – in other words, when intellectuals join the rabble in demands which (as every sociologist knows) are by implication 'fascist' – then the world has reached a sorry pass.

The taunting of sociologists, and the defence of British culture, are only small parts of our work. We have also taken an interest in the nature, and the decline, of foreign policy. Ignorance of the Soviet Union, nauseous waves of post-colonial guilt, the loss of confidence in the value and legitimacy of power – all these have provided a climate of opinion favourable to isolationism. In consequence there is a need to reassess the world situation in the light of our diminished possibilities, to awaken to the tragedies of Africa and the Middle East, to study the threat to Europe – also to take heart in our strengths and achievements and to be prepared to defend them. We have argued strongly against appeasement and against the over-willingness to concede advantages to powers which have no inherent ability to compromise. We have

also attempted to publish serious articles from Africa, exploring the important question of how this vast and vulnerable continent may yet be secured against Soviet expansion.

The mistaken idea that conservatism means the extension of the free market into every area of human endeavour, has provided the modern socialist with his principal remaining argument – namely, that the conservative is even more destructive of institutions than he is. We have tried to qualify and to subdue the simple-minded evangelism of the marketeers, and to remind our readers that there are more important things at stake than economic achievement. We have shown a continuous concern for the 'social question', as it now presents itself, arguing not against the welfare state as such, but against its corruption by interest groups and radical conspiracies. We have raised (to our cost, but perhaps to the nation's gain) the questions of immigration and national identity, and argued for a new effort to integrate the Asian and West Indian communities into a social and political order that is recognisably British. (This is the 'racist' component of our philosophy.) We have also taken sides in a variety of modern controversies – ranging from those over the liturgy and the secular enthusiasms of the established church, to that concerning the authenticity of musical performance.

Our book review section tries to cover significant publications in the fields of culture and politics, treating, with a respect that is so far unreciprocated, the main arguments and ideas issuing from the intellectual left. One question of considerable concern to us has been that of history – history in general, and the history of our own nation in particular. It has become increasingly apparent that the intellectual ascendancy of the Left has been associated with, and partly based on, a 'radicalised' view of history. This radical history – with its sentimentalisation of the underdog, its single-minded rooting after 'class oppression', and its attempt to portray all constitutional achievements as either nugatory or else victories for a (largely imaginary) 'working class' – has had a vast and pernicious influence. We have attempted to expose the element of myth in the socialist version of history, and to redescribe the past in a way that is both true to the facts, and also congenial (as the facts, on the whole, are congenial) to a broadly conservative vision of European society.

It will be many years before the truth about the past can percolate into the brains of journalists. Nevertheless, this contest over history is the most important that intellectual conservatism faces – and it is one that it has yet to engage in with the energy required. If *The Salisbury Review* has a purpose besides that of drawing the venom of the socialist establishment and so making the world safe for publications of a fainter persuasion, it is that of rewriting the conservative agenda, so that the full extent of the confrontation can be perceived. Our work is only just beginning, and although we may not survive for long, we shall go down with guns blazing, leaving an infamous reputation behind us.

LETTERS

Sir: 'Slaves cannot breathe in England.' Can the English breathe in slavery? I understand that the government is considering legislation that could enable the police, who are less fussy about search-warrants nowadays apparently, to enter premises to confiscate 'racially undesirable' material possessed by the owner. It is just not good enough to say that such powers are meant to clear the muck off the shelves of the National Front HQ in Croydon. They constitute a danger *ipso facto* to civil liberties.

The unwanted multi-colonial 'society', it seems, cannot be enforced without ever-increasing oppressive legislation; and I suppose that later or sooner, on the Irish model, the NCWP régimes will be granted 'consultative' powers within what was – for the English – our own 'native land' in relatively recent memory. *Salisbury Review* in samizdat, passed around like the betting slips of old?

The dissidents, meanwhile, must be hounded – so much for the supposedly all-pervasive 'racist institutions'! (Rather like some KGB leader saying that what the USSR needs is a more powerful state.) Lord Hailsham and Lord Denning obliged to retract. Mobs beset the educational institutions of Ray Honeyford, one of your ablest contributors, and of Jack Fuller, Principal of Waltham Forest College, who dared use the word 'invasion' in a *Times* letter, while writers for the *Centre for Policy Studies* tut-tut at tactlessness and the vicious opponents of two honest men escape punishment for blatant illegalities. Constructive alternatives to the demolition of an ancient and cohesive nation from John Casey, Harvey Proctor or Professor Bush encounter shocked silence or hostile misrepresentation.

There are indeed other things in life, and more important things in death, than 'ethnic' problems, but maybe the time has come to leave the latitudinarians with their bowls on Plymouth Hoe and do at least some drumming up the Channel of civic courage together with that courageous and duty-conscious Bradford headmaster. Your more intellectual readership may be reminded of the second part of a familiar quotation from Edmund Burke: 'When bad men combine, the good must associate; *else they will fall, one by one*, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.'

Saul Hyde
Kimstone House
Whaddon
Glos.

Sir: Mr Kerridge's article in the October issue was sent to me for my comments, as the sender was truly amazed by its contents. Indeed so was I – I found it patronising, misleading and in many instances untrue. You have used your imagination to our detriment. Here are just a few of your 'mistakes'.

Kirkwall's high street is not the one and only shopping street. Hoy is not treeless. Hatston shanty' town was demolished many years ago and is a clean, well planned industrial estate. You write as though it still existed. You pick one cairn to describe in a most condescending manner, totally ignoring the vast choice of beautifully kept and fascinating monuments that people come from all over the world to see each year.

Kirkwall is absolutely not a dry area nor ever has been a temperance town, nor is it in any way different to Stromness in its hotel bars or pubs.

If a Shetlander heard you say they talk Gaelic up there, you would be in sore trouble. Their language or dialect is far more akin to their Scandinavian ancestors than the relatively recent incoming Scots, as is the Orcadian dialect, as Orcadians recognize with pride.

Your description of the Orcadians gazing upward in admiration of the Soldiers is so patronising and insulting that I can hardly believe your impudence.

Peace's buses have never had Peace Brothers on the side, they don't exist – it is J.D. Peace & Co. and 'Travel with Peace' not 'in'.

You are entitled to your views on Scottish music, but have not apparently ever heard Orkney fiddle music or our excellent folk singers.

The Italian chapel is on a tiny, very flat island connected by barriers and not on the moorland hill you choose to place it upon. It was not Orkney fishermen who sank their boats to stop the submarines, but the Ministry of War using the Royal Navy and iron ships.

Need I go on?

I can hardly believe that anyone could portray these beautiful, ancient islands and their islanders as being so backward, quaint, dirty and stupid. You have done us no service and your picture of Orkney is mostly a figment of your imagination.

K. Terry Mainland (Mrs)

Kirkland
Rousay
Orkney KW17 2PU

Sir: . . . Mr Kerridge should look at the vandalism and crime which are not far from his own back door before he makes these most rude and insulting remarks about what we think is one of the most peaceful and friendly parts of Britain.

S. McLeish
Benlea
Stenness
Stromness
Orkney, KW16 3NA

Roy Kerridge replies:

Any discrepancies in my article are due to two facts.

1. I palmed off on poor Mr Scruton an article that I had written in 1975. At that time Kirkwall boasted an excellent shanty town. I am sorry to hear that it has now been replaced by a soulless council estate.

2. Whenever I required an explanation of anything I saw, I turned to the Orcadian nearest to me. Perhaps some Orcadians know even less about their islands than I do!

If I may add a third fact, it is that I enjoyed my visit to Orkney very much indeed, and tried to give that impression.

Roy Kerridge
48 Earlsmead Road,
Kensal Green,
London NW10

BOOK REVIEWS

SPORTING CHANCES

Geoffrey Partington

Black Sportsmen, E. Cashmore, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, £6.95, pp. 242 (071-00-905-44)

Cashmore sets out to discover, as Garth Crooks, the England footballer, puts it in his foreword, 'Why are so many black kids currently entering sport and why are so many succeeding?' The response of the Race Relations Industry to the first question has been that black children have been discriminated against in school and so have turned to sport as a compensation, perhaps as the only avenue to success. Some of Cashmore's sportsmen endorse this view. Boxer Maurice Hope's coach said, 'If he wasn't a successful boxer, Mo would probably have been doing ten years for something or other now. Around here, there are two things for a working class kid to do, steal or box.'

Boxer Cornelius Boza-Edwards had a tougher youth than Maurice Hope, let alone than Daley Thompson, but he warns against self-pity and exaggerated denunciations of British racism. He states, 'I've been beaten up in Uganda and seen people shot. Then the wife died and for nine months I used to go to hospital every day after training. No way was it smooth for me. I was going to kill myself, but I survived. Now, if I can take that shit, why can't I take a few punches? You're creating something. So I'd say it to all the black guys in the street, if they can take all the shit, they can do something with themselves.'

Many black sportsmen draw attention to lack of parental interest and to the generally weak family structures within Britain's West Indian sub-culture to explain their lack of success in school, Garth Crooks claims that 'for West Indian parents, children are to be seen but not heard. They don't want to listen to what the kid has to say about the classroom.' He says of the restrictive West Indian Family and the permissive English school, 'the two things are like oil and water, they do not mix'.

Mrs S. Best, a West Indian mother of five who resides in Tottenham explained (*The Times* 1981) the failure of West Indian children in schools as follows. 'First, lack of discipline all over the place; at an early age they are taught in school that parents are too strict; they had Victorian upbringing . . . parents do not understand them. The biggest culprits are the welfare officers who . . . can't wait to take black kids from their homes to put them with aunties and uncles, where they are allowed to run riot in most cases . . . so parents fail to do their duty for fear of their children being taken away from them. So the young darlings play up and blackmail parents.'

Heavyweight boxer Roy Tabi relates, 'As far as I'm

concerned, my old man died when I was 12 (when his father left home). I hate the bastard.' Others, although less full of hatred, criticise their own parents for neglecting them while white parents gave immense support to their children in their sporting activities. Birmingham City footballer Carlos Francis says of his parents, 'They've never even seen me play. They gave me no encouragement at all. Even now, they don't take an active interest.' Sprinter Mickey Morris relates, 'My parents used to ignore me when I used to go home and tell them I'd won a race. I'd be so proud and they'd just say, 'Oh yeah, so what?' Cashmore is forced to admit the 'outstanding feature of black parents' relationship with their children's sport is that it does not exist. Black families offer virtually no encouragement. The overall picture is of the first generation (of West Indian immigrants) harbouring little interest in sports, apart from horse racing.'

Asian families in Britain are more closely knit than either black or white. In 1980, as many as 40 per cent of West Indian school children had only one parent at home, as compared with 20 per cent of indigenous and only 4 per cent of Asian children. The weak structure of the West Indian family is sufficient reason for lower school achievement without offending Ockham by adding white prejudice or systematic racism.

Why, despite their disadvantages, alleged or real, do so many black sportsmen reach the top? Blacks give both physiological and psychological explanations. Mitch Daley, a black football club manager, adopts a genetic physiological analysis. 'Take the white player: he's very rigid, upright, stiff. Now the black man, he's different: he likes to step on the ball, control it, express himself with it. He has natural flair which gives him the ability to do anything with the ball he wants to.' Coventry City footballer, Garry Thompson claims, 'I think blacks are the most athletically gifted race. We may not be the cleverest, but we're athletically gifted.' Justin Fashanu who has played soccer in Australia says, 'I think blacks were designed to use their speed and agility. I'd never do a thing that didn't come easily to me . . . Blacks start off with an added advantage of being able to move. So you've got a good start over whites.' Associated with this physiological claim is a hypothesis from evolutionary genetics. The American sports writer Martin Kane popularised the idea that during slavery 'only the strongest survived' among the blacks. Calvin Hill, late of Dallas Cowboys, said of the slaves, 'Well, black athletes are their descendants. They are the offspring of those who were physically tough enough to survive.'

Cashmore resists these modes of explanation. Indeed when they are expressed by a white, such as the athlete Tony Zaidman, Cashmore claims that any genetic argument 'reeks of a vile and dangerous racism', and believes

that 'the non-existence of a pure gene pool' renders false any general claims about differing levels of potentiality among various human groups. Cashmore also rejects the psychological argument that, as boxer Maurice Hope puts it, 'Knowing that you're black makes you try even harder.' Garry Thompson states, 'I went up to some guys and asked to play football, and they just shut me out. One of the older group called me a nigger . . . That's when I felt different.'

Several black sportsmen seek to link initial disadvantage with ultimate success. Footballer Danny Thomas alleges, 'It's the same as the rest of society. If there are two people of equal ability, the white man will usually be given the opportunity.' Another footballer Danny Lawrence reflects, 'If you're black, you have to try twice as hard, be twice as good.' In his work on American sport, Harry Edwards (1973) has argued similarly that 'black domination of sports' is helped by 'eliminating less skilled black athletes from participation'. James Michener (1976) goes further and maintains that in the United States the black has to be so much better than his white competitor that he is almost forced to be a superstar. Jack Olsen (1968) holds that, 'The Negro athlete has to be what Muhammad Ali once called himself - Superspade!' Even if it is true, however, that black sportsmen have to demonstrate a greater degree of proficiency than their white counterparts in order to make equivalent progress, this would hardly serve to explain black dominance in several sports. Indeed the thesis implies that the more disadvantaged a group is, the better it will succeed in areas where it can compete in anything like equal terms. This variation of the 'fortunate fall' of man is far from being universally replicated.

Another possible explanation for the significant presence of blacks in so many sports is that their teachers propel them in this direction if they display any notable talent at all. Footballer Vince Hilaire states, 'I was pushed into certain sports at school, like athletics. The teachers naturally thought, because you're black, you must have some sort of athletic ability in you, but I didn't even want to do athletics at all.' Boxer Herol Graham, born in Nottingham of Jamaican parents, reminisces, 'In boxing I was encouraged by a lot of school teachers. Every time I boxed, they'd say, "Good fight, very good, keep it up". We used to have a showcase at school with just my boxing trophies in it.'

Many are grateful to their old teachers. Kenny Mower recalls, 'There was a teacher, Mr Richardson, and he encouraged me in all the sports I did, really. He pushed me along more than anybody. Now, I'm a pro footballer, I'm grateful to him for pushing me so hard.'

Others like sprinter Phil Brown are much more critical of their former teachers for leading them to devote so much time and effort to sport. Brown bemoans, 'It's a case of what I know now . . . If I had my life over again, I'd see the mistakes coming up and I'd correct them.' Woman athlete Jackie Jackson recalls being thrown out of the sixth-form for 'wasting my time', because the physical education teacher has strengthened her commitment to athletics. Herol Graham and runner Winston

Martin both accuse former physical education teachers of virtually coercing them into neglecting their academic work in favour of sport. Sprinter Lincoln Asquith even asserts, 'I was used by school teachers 'cause I was good at sport. They used me.' Vince Hilaire and footballer Sydney Grant, born in Jamaica but educated in Leeds, accuse teachers of having stereotypes about blacks being 'winners in sport, but not in education'. Cashmore is fair in his judgement. He agrees that 'It would be misleading to profile school teachers as only seeking to maximise their own prestige by cultivating exaggerated interests in sport among black school kids and jeopardising their chances academically.' He recognises that 'Black kids contribute to their own general lack of success by manifesting little desire to learn conventional subjects.' He appreciates too that 'Whereas a white youth may have visions of becoming a successful sportsman, his parents may have enough hold over him to deflect him and set him on a course for a "straight job", often this is not the case with blacks.' Again family structure is critical. Many Indian and Pakistani as well as white parents are likely to encourage sport but even more to discourage neglect of school work. Many black children receive no parental encouragement in sport, but no dissuasion from its one-sided pursuit if they are gifted athletically. For myself I wish that at least the same proportion of science, maths and history teachers urged their wares on black children as enthusiastically as do physical education staffs.

The relationship between sport and academic achievement is, of course, fraught with controversy. As early as 1934, E. Davis and J. Cooper (1934) concluded from a review of 41 studies that the school performance of non-sportsmen was consistently better all other things being equal than that of sportsmen, a judgement widely disseminated by James S. Coleman's *Adolescent Society* (1961). Studies by Emile Bend (1968) and by Walter Schafer and J.M. Armer (1968) both advanced the opposite hypothesis that, as Schafer and Armer put it, not only does participation in sports generally seem to have little or no effect on a student's scholarship, but it seems to actually help certain students academically - especially those students from the poor and disadvantaged groups that usually have most trouble in school. Cashmore gives at least qualified support to the more optimistic view, 'sport is an area for learning not only technical or event-related skills, but also social skills: how to suspend judgements on others, to dovetail one's own interest with others, to combine one's own weakness with others' strengths and vice-versa overall to mix.'

The classroom control of immigrant children, especially of blacks, has become a critical question in Britain, which teachers rarely air in public. Many teachers are fearful of accusations of racism if they take energetic action to restrain misbehaviour by black children. Charges of racism are very frequent and potent, despite their almost total lack of foundation. Ealing Education Committee set up 'sanctuaries' or 'sin bins' with an especially favourable pupil-teacher ratio to help contain violent children who simply could not be controlled by their teachers in ordinary classroom situations, but these were closed

down after the high black visibility in the sanctuaries was denounced as clear evidence of teacher racism.

The more ideologically committed teachers have been greatly influenced in their training courses or in subsequent reading by two related doctrines. The first is the purported establishment by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1965) of the potency of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Apparently, if teachers held consistently high expectations of their pupils, scholastic performance would soar, whereas low expectation would lead to lower rates of achievement. There is indeed much truth in asserting a relationship between teacher expectation and pupil achievement, but many radical teachers of West Indians derived from Rosenthal and Jacobson (1981, 1982) what I have described in the past as the 'Good boy, Leroy!' syndrome. This syndrome consists in awarding praise for effort and achievement even when these are absent and in permitting wild behaviour on the grounds that this is natural to all children, but particularly to blacks, who will be discouraged by criticism or persistent demands upon them.

Cashmore notes that 'stories of hitting teachers back after provocation abound' and he shows an extreme credulousness in this respect that a spell in multi-racial classrooms might have reduced.

He also reports too, however, the complaints of those blacks who resented lack of discipline. Athlete Chris Egege said of his school in Bradford, where his family moved from Birmingham, 'You can get on and learn something up here; the teachers were too soft in Birmingham.' Cashmore indeed in the end endorses Maureen Stone's sensible view that 'whilst not decrying all attempts at curriculum innovation and creativity, the need for schools to retain a commitment to the mastery of basic intellectual skills and competencies by all children has been expressed'.

Our Australian educators would do well to share Cashmore's scepticism about 'programs of multi-racial education which stress the more expressive components of education for black youth, dialect classes, black drama, dance and music groups'. Michael Rutter's (1979) research finding that 'Children tended to make better progress both behaviourally and academically in schools which placed an appropriate emphasis on academic matters', applies universally, irrespective of colour. Indeed the greater the objective disadvantages under which a child labours, the more that child can truly say, 'If you love me, teach me!'

Cashmore has some of the attributes of Paul Hollander's 'political pilgrims', he contrasts the split in the Western world which ensures that the main emphasis in educational achievement rests on cognitive or intellectual pursuits with the 'situation in the Soviet Union where the central unity of the human being pervades all levels of opportunity' and where sport is 'directed toward the all-round development of the human individual'. Cashmore also refers with exaggerated respect to Bernard Coard, who blamed the 'over-representation' of Caribbean children in ESN (Educationally Sub-normal) schools in Britain on teacher racism and biased tests, before he

gained notoriety for leading a coup against his former comrade, the President of Grenada, who was shot on his instructions.

At least though he is critical of Paul Hoch's description of sport as a mere instrument of capitalist domination designed to slough off energies and divert them into meaningless channels, and he is unwilling merely to reverse stereotypes, as so many others have done. He notes as a paradox that generally black athletes are highly individualistic (indeed he brands as narcissistic their tendency 'to be preoccupied with themselves rather than others'), yet that their self-esteem requires continuous support from the praise of 'significant others'.

Overall then Cashmore's treatment of a range of questions which face teachers, especially physical educators, in many countries, although it can be challenged at various points, is serious, fair and significant. He does not superimpose his own questions on those he has interviewed and in a field in which so many closed minds and *idées fixes* abound, he combines a pleasing openness of enquiry with a genuine concern for the best interests of black youth. It is written in a spirit which is unfortunately too rare in the race-relation industry of either Great Britain or Australia.

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TOOLS OF OUR TRADE

David Regan

Les Outils De La Liberté, Jean-Marie Benoist, Editions Robert Laffont, Paris, 1985, price 85F.

Jean-Marie Benoist has given us an important exposition of the philosophical origins, essential characteristics and manifest superiority of conservative liberalism as a political ideology. Note that the position defended is *conservative* liberalism (rather than just liberalism). Professor Benoist exposes the absurdities of the excessive

voluntarism preached by some latter day liberals, which would reduce the state to a market place. At the same time it is conservative *liberalism* (rather than just conservatism). Professor Benoist argues with power and conviction that it is on the great liberal tradition of Western political thought that the free polity – *la cité libre* – is to be constructed. Only a liberal political framework will protect man from the fascist oppression of the weak by the strong and from the corruptions, failures and tyrannies of socialism. Professor Benoist shows how all three main socialist traditions – the organisational socialism of Saint-Simon, the anarchic socialism of Fourier and the ‘scientific’ socialism of Marx – are inconsistent with individual liberty and human dignity.

French political philosophers and theorists – Montesquieu, Constant, Tocqueville – have made as significant a contribution to the development of liberalism as their British and American counterparts – Locke and Mill, Madison and Sumner. Nevertheless neither political nor economic liberalism has ever attained the intellectual pre-eminence in France that it has in Britain and the USA. In the latter two countries it was of course the dominant creed for much of the nineteenth century. Moreover while liberalism was increasingly challenged in this century, and in Britain at least temporarily displaced by the insidious delusions of collectivism, the last few decades have witnessed a vigorous ideological counter-offensive in both Britain and the USA. In France the strong *étatiste* tradition has always made the intelligentsia uneasy about political or economic *laissez-faire*. As Professor Benoist acknowledges, the Lockean view of the state as mere trustee is not robust enough for a Frenchman. Belief in an effective state may seem hard to reconcile with strong attachment to liberal values. Yet the marriage of these two traditions has generated in recent years in France a powerful school of political philosophy marked by a kind of intellectual hybrid vigour – *obligation du libéralisme, nécessité du conservatisme*. The writings of Jean-François Revel, Christian Jelen, Guy Sorman, Jean-Marie Benoist and others form a corpus of works on conservative liberalism which no other nation can currently match. The book under review is perhaps the most important product yet of the school.

Professor Benoist begins by noting that the political left is finished – *la gauche est révolue*. Of course there are many politicians, some alas in power, still determined to pursue collectivist policies – from the grim, totalitarian socialism of a Gorbachev or a Castro, to the dangerous interventionism of a Mitterrand or a Papandreou. Nevertheless the left is dead in the sense that it is intellectually bankrupt and marked by a catastrophic record of political failure in both East and West. Left-wing ideas and policies are widely known to be either irrelevant or even inimical to the creation of a free polity.

Yet paradoxically the left has succeeded in instilling certain incapacitating myths in the Western democracies, and especially in France. Professor Benoist mentions four in particular:

– the myth that formal liberties and the rule of law are unimportant;

– the myth that the triumph of Marxist revolutionary movements can benefit the Third world;

– the myth that the Soviet Union and its sister régimes are basically decent and should not be criticised too harshly for infringements of human rights and other failings;

– the myth that revolution is an exciting spiritual transformation for a people; – a myth that is tantamount to idolatrous, revolutionary religiosity.

The internalisation of such myths in the West has imposed a self-inflicted blindness and mendacity upon public understanding and interpretation of political developments. Many on the right, as well as many on the left, have cravenly accepted these myths. The result is an incapacity in the West to protect and enhance the free polity. The bulk of Benoist’s book is devoted to clarifying the vision of this polity.

The free polity is based on a different kind of revolution, a neo-Copernican one, which restores the centrality of civil society (in the Hegelian sense) and insists that the state revolves around it – not vice versa. The state has a vital rôle, but only as *l’état garant* and not as *l’état guérant*. The managerial state undermines civil society and with it the freedom and dignity of man. The free polity promotes both economic and political liberty; but it is political liberty that is the superior value. The economic reductionism of extreme liberals is an ironic counterpart to the economic reductionism of Marxists. Thus *cette révolution neo-copernicienne pourrait s’énoncer ainsi: primat de la société civile sur l’État, comme constitutive de la cité; primat de la culture au sein de la société civile sur l’échange marchand.*

The sinews of the free polity are provided by the rule of law and its legitimacy by the idea of social contract. The polity without law is a Gulag, and without participative consent it is not a polity. For Professor Benoist the two are closely linked – the realism of Montesquieu and the idealism of Rousseau. Indeed the latter point introduces a particularly interesting passage of the book, an impassioned defence of Rousseau. Professor Benoist forcefully argues that Rousseau, far from being the father of totalitarianism, is in fact an indispensable contributor to liberal ideology. There have of course always been these alternate views of Rousseau. For Professor Benoist, Locke’s social contract is too cold and legalistic, whereas Rousseau’s, even though based upon law as mediator and guarantor, creates the organic relationships of a real polity. I am not entirely persuaded by Professor Benoist here; if Rousseau has been misjudged he is surely himself to blame, for the undisciplined ambiguities and ellipsis of his writings. Nevertheless it is true that consent must lie at the heart of the free polity. For such a polity is a deliberate, not a natural, creation. For Benoist, only liberal democratic processes and principles can continually reproduce the consent expressed in the notion of a social contract.

The framework of the rule of law is equally indispensable. Marxists have long denigrated this framework as producing only the *libertés abstraites et formelles du passé* compared to their own *libertés concrètes et réelles de l’avenir*.

Professor Benoist is trenchant in dismissing the terrible Promethean fantasies of Marxists, and in reasserting the importance of the separation of powers, of the protection of private property and of the negative legal principle (prescribing what is not to be done rather than what must be done) derived from Montesquieu and Hayek. These various aspects of the rule of law are heterogeneous; overlapping, even sometimes conflicting; *mais c'est peut-être cette imperfection même qui constituera, dans son caractère pluriel et inunifiable, la chance du maintien de la société civile, à l'encontre de toute tentative unificatrice opérée par l'État centralisateur et monogluant.* The values promoted in the free polity are thus those of law, liberty, pluralism, individual self-fulfilment but also social interaction and community.

The Western democracies, can be moved in the direction of *la cité libre* only by revolutionising the relationship between state and civil society. Such a move is beset with obstacles and perils – the confused and apathetic Western public opinion, the threat of military conquest from the totalitarian East, and the socialist-inspired relentless growth of the state in the West. *Cette révolution néo-copernicienne du rapport entre la société civile et la puissance publique échappe au socialisme qui, parce qu'il n'est pas respectueux ou qu'il est simplement ignorant de la vie économique et de la sphère du droit privé, résout les conflits par la fuite en avant du domaine étatique, qui s'accroît fatalement.*

Professor Benoist's vision is of *la cité dont tous les hommes sont princes*. It is a noble yet realisable vision. It is distressing and tragic that it is shared by so few people, especially so few young people, in the West. That they should prefer to revel in destructive cynicism about their own situation, in sentimental absurdities about the Third World, in perverse religiosity about revolution and in Promethean fantasies about the Marxist transformation of man, is a social failure of appalling significance. Through his courage, his commitment and his scholarship Professor Benoist has shown us what must be done to lead them back from fantasy to truth.

DRUDGERY DIVINE

Shirley Lancaster

A Holy Tradition of Working: Passages from the Writings of Eric Gill, edited by Brian Keeble, Golgonooza Press, 1983, £8.95 (0-903880-30-X)

Eric Gill is perhaps better known for his sculpture of 'Prospero and Ariel' on Broadcasting House, or the 'Stations of the Cross' in Westminster Cathedral, than for his ideas on the moral and aesthetic dimension of such work – and with good reason. Expounding on anything from aesthetics to custard powder, Gill could be as quirky and dogmatic in his writing as he was in his dress. (He detested modern clothes and insisted on wearing a smock, which he described as the 'Christian norm'.)

However, Brian Keeble has skilfully strained off the lumps and served up the essential Gill. Here are the writings of a modern prophet; one who belongs to an English tradition stretching back through Morris, Ruskin and Carlyle to William Blake. Writing at the dawn of industrial society, Blake was quick to foresee the danger of the machine age: 'we would endure a profound hurt', he wrote, 'in serving systems and not being able to find our own deep centres'. If Blake was the prophetic voice of a pre-industrial society, Gill is his 'post-industrial' equivalent. Improved working conditions have not compensated for the squeezing out of individual responsibility and self-expression from modern methods of production, while new technology is demanding a re-evaluation of the very nature and role of work. Both de-humanising work and state-sponsored leisure were anathema to Gill, who, believing that work is the 'sacred' and leisure the 'secular' activity in our lives, sought to understand and to remedy a social predicament which he perceived as wholly new.

Gill believed that God's command to Adam that he must work in order to live was not man's burden, but his release. Work is the means by which man not only provides for his material needs, but also fulfils himself in co-operation with his creator. When human labour is dedicated to making 'the things upon which, during the countless centuries of human history, men and women have expended all their care and skill and pride – the arts of agriculture and the farm, the arts of the kitchen, clothes, furniture, pottery and metal, the whole business of building from cottages to cathedrals' – then is labour both honourable and holy.

Hence, the promise that machines would liberate the workman and set him on the road to 'higher things' such as Art and Culture was a nonsense. Beauty, artistry and pleasure in our work should not be added, like a rich sauce, to an unappetising meal of drudgery. They are the basic ingredients in satisfying labour. The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist in making well what needs making.

Gill prefaced his discussion of work with the question: 'What is the meaning and end of man's life?' Not surprisingly, therefore, his conclusions were radical. He believed that our first duty is to love and glorify God, which requires not only faith, but works, in which the love of God is made visible. And works cannot be 'good' unless they are our own: 'It is inconceivable that a man should hire another man to love God for him.' The modern factory system, in which a man watches machinery perform with superhuman speed and efficiency the job which should be his, is therefore 'unChristian', in depriving the workman of direct responsibility for his work.

Gill was not in favour of an indiscriminate rejection of machines. He was against their indiscriminate acceptance. The question is whether the use of this or that machine is compatible with good workmanship; with the dignity and responsibility of the workman; with the real benefit of the consumer: in short, with our happiness and salvation. The return to a 'personal' society, in which

work does not divorce 'the useful from the lovable, the necessary from the delightful', calls for a 'holy poverty'. By pursuing efficiency, expediency and material comfort as supreme values we fail to keep our real needs and ends in sight.

In one sense, of course, Gill's strictures sound hopelessly idealistic. Surely it is naive to talk of the necessity of good workmanship in an age of built-in obsolescence and mass production? Surely it is too idealistic to see the majority of people, who do not possess Gill's creative gifts, nor his independence of mind, as potential artists in their work? And is it not something of an anachronism to equate work with worship in our secular world?

The micro-chip revolution is bringing dramatic changes, and challenging the root dichotomy of industrial society – that between work and leisure. Whether it will encourage a move in Gill's favoured direction has yet to be seen. Nevertheless, if we are to understand and profit from the new possibilities, we should be prepared to listen to Gill, who reminds us that to ignore human beings and their capacity for enjoyable and worthwhile work is to exchange the end for the means, and so to destroy work and leisure together. For what strikes home again and again in this collection, is that it is not so much what we get *from* working, as what we do *by* working, that counts.

ULSTER CATHOLICS

J. Enoch Powell

The Cross of St Patrick, The Catholic Unionist Tradition in Ireland, edited by Sir John Biggs-Davison and George Chowdharay-Best, The Kensal Press, 1985, 487 pp. £14.95, (0-946041-26-1)

It is a curious accumulation of often fascinating detail which that faithful champion of Ulster and the Union, Sir John Biggs-Davison MP, has piled up with the assistance of that most indefatigable of correspondents, Mr George Chowdharay-Best. The result resembles a large forest of which the reader often fails to recognise the identity and outlines because of the trees. However, the material does demonstrate voluminously a fact of which only those who do not care or wish to know it are unaware – namely, that in Ulster Protestant and Catholic do not mean and never have meant pro-Union and anti-Union respectively.

If that were not a fact, the province would not have returned to this present parliament from constituencies of the same size, impartially demarcated on the same principles, as in Great Britain, 15 members for and only 2 against the Union, a proportion which has been pretty consistent since the Union was first openly challenged and endangered a hundred years ago. The seats count is confirmed and explained by polls, which over the last fifteen years have consistently shown nearly half the Roman Catholics in Ulster answering that not just 'direct rule' but 'full integration' into the United Kingdom is the

only acceptable option available – something I can confirm from my personal knowledge of a constituency which without Roman Catholic votes I would not have the honour to represent in Parliament.

It is a reality which demonstrates the truth of Mr Utley's observation that integration is the 'only practical method' of unequivocally recognising the right of the people of Ulster to remain within the United Kingdom; and it throws into cruel relief the grotesque folly of successive British governments, including the present one, which have closed their eyes to that course and endeavoured, or pretended to endeavour, to find instead a *via media* that cannot exist between being and not being part of the United Kingdom.

There is another indispensable fact which the book exhaustively proves. That is the fundamental alteration which what is called 'the Irish question' underwent at the great divide of 1918–22.

At the 'khaki' election of December 1918 the island of Ireland elected 79 nationalist and 26 unionist Members. All but three of each group were from what are now respectively the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. By a clearcut decisive plebiscite, which might have delighted (though I daresay it did not) Woodrow Wilson, the South had seceded from the United Kingdom, though tragically that plain verdict was not then, and still is not now, accepted *ex animo* by the British state.

Before 1918–22 the study of 'Catholic unionism' is that of Roman Catholics in a part of the realm where their church was the majority religion. Since 1922 it is, almost without exception, the study of Roman Catholics in a part of the United Kingdom where their church is a minority religion and which Britain has been resolutely determined to treat as constitutionally separate. That separation placed in an artificial and baleful context both the political and the religious differences among the inhabitants of Ulster, an effect intensified and protracted by the irredentist will of the new Irish state to acquire, by force or diplomacy, the adjacent portion of the nation out of which it had voted itself. Ulster devolution (to mis-describe the intention of the 1920 constitution) placed a premium upon self-labelling of unionist and anti-unionist as 'Protestant' and 'Catholic'.

All this has rendered study of pre-1918 Ireland a misleading guide to understanding modern Ulster in relation to the United Kingdom, though the study, if correctly understood, has its own fascination and value. The chunks of history which Sir John and Mr Chowdharay-Best have assembled illuminate – often from new angles – some major themes, such as the political history of the Roman church in Ireland or the role of the Henrician reformation in the evolution of the British nation – even the question whether the British nation is really the English nation camouflaged. I offer a few specimens, which I found particularly delightful.

Frederick Lucas, founder of *The Tablet*, writing against repeal in 1841 observed: 'In the supreme legislature of the empire the Catholic church would be shorn of nine-tenths of its strength. We cry loudly for union; union not to the injury of Ireland but to the common benefit of us

all; a union among the votaries of a common faith, that our enemies may not triumph over us; a union for the benefit of Ireland, unless Irishmen care anything for the thousands or rather millions of their fellow countrymen who are peopling England and Scotland and every distant corner of the empire . . . united, the Catholics are one-third of the empire; separated, what are we?

The Roman Catholic Michael Morris, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland in 1887, was reported to have said of the Irish question 'the difficulty lies in a slow-witted race trying to govern a quick-witted one, and I declare to God there is not one of them, who, after he has been in Ireland three days, would not undertake to show me up my own backstairs.' To a Scottish MP he observed: 'If an Irishman was sent over, by accident, to be Chief Secretary, the official would not fall into the mistake of trying to reconcile the irreconcilable.'

In 1893 a Mr E. O'Ryan of Larne Harbour was quoted to the effect that 'we, loyal Catholics, could never submit to Mr Gladstone's ticket-of-leave men placed in power over us in this country, and rather than submit to them, we are prepared for the worst and ready, if need be, to die with the words "No surrender" on our lips.'

In 1912 when unionist meetings were held throughout Southern Ireland Lord Midleton wrote to *The Times*: 'Ulster holds the field; but the unionists outside Ulster have rallied as they have never done before, and at all their meetings Catholics of substance and repute have risked obloquy and ignored threats to show their alarm at the prospect of being governed by nationalists, even though they be co-religionists.'

Under all that Irish history a line was drawn, firmly and finally, in 1918-22; it belongs to a buried past.

SOCIOLOGY WITHOUT TEARS

David J. Levy

Thinking about Social Thinking: The Philosophy of the Social Sciences, Antony Flew, Basil Blackwell, 1985, £17.50 hardback, (0-631-14189-8), £5.50 pbk, (0-631-14191-X)

Understanding Social Science, Roger Trigg, Basil Blackwell, 1985, £5.95 pbk (0-631-14161-8)

The conservative sociologist is an object of curiosity and suspicion, not only to fellow sociologists but also to fellow conservatives. But it cannot be emphasised enough that while most sociologists today are on the Left, sociology itself is not. Not only are there many sociologists who hold conservative political views, several of whom have contributed to *The Salisbury Review*, but, as Robert Nisbet in particular has shown in *The Sociological Tradition*, the roots of sociology as it developed in the 19th century are sunk deeply in the themes and concerns of the early conservative opponents of the French Revolution. Peter Berger, another American sociologist who now calls

himself a conservative, has pointed out that even the characteristic sociological emphasis upon the contingent social and historical origins of institutions, formerly taken for granted as part of the necessary order of things, can have conservative as well as radical implications. While the radical uses the sociological insight into the human origin of institutions to show that they are subject to alteration, the conservative employs the same discovery to emphasise their fragility and the need to sustain those one values by allegiance and service. Sociology is no more intrinsically conservative a discipline than it is intrinsically radical; but, if one is to judge by the classic writings of the great late 19th century sociologists, Durkheim, Weber and Pareto, the positions established in their work are more at home in the conservative's repertoire of arguments than in the radical's.

If this is not reflected in British sociology today it is, I believe, for two main reasons. The first is that sociology in Britain developed, not so much as a theoretical inquiry into the bases of social order, but as an adjunct to the Fabian project of achieving socialism through administrative reform. The expansion in the subject, which occurred in the 1960s and early 70s, brought into the field a large number of people of similar age and background, products of the new universities and the welfare state, who took the desirability of socialism for granted and attributed its frustrations and their's to the failure to pursue socialist projects to their logical conclusions. This was the generation which succumbed to New Left radicalism in the 60s and which, though somewhat disenchanted, still dominates the teaching of social science in this country.

The second reason for the predominant leftism of current sociology is a more complex one. Because sociological studies concentrate the student's mind upon the contingent social, economic and cultural factors that contribute to the formation of the human condition, social scientists, as a general rule, find it difficult to make due allowance for any factor in social reality that transcends the particularities of time and place. More specifically, they tend to dissolve the concept of human nature, whether conceived as a biological or a metaphysical constant, into a multiplicity of historically contingent influences. This explains the elective affinity between the Marxist view of man as a radically self-transforming being and the narrowly sociological focus of contemporary social science. Belief in the constancy of human nature is central to conservative political thought, and is also, I maintain, amply attested by the biological, archaeological and anthropological evidence. But such a belief disappears from a pan-sociological view which purports to explain all human reality in terms of what is specifically social and subject to change. The result of respecting neither the limits of human nature nor those of sociological competence is the unholy morass of moral relativism and more or less revolutionary politics which characterises the present social scientific scene.

Seeing all too clearly the relativity of everything except their own ideological preferences, radical sociologists seek to overthrow fundamental facts of human life in the

fond imagination that they are merely changing society for the better. What is the distinction between the sexes but a matter of socially defined gender roles? What are patterns of political authority but power relationships benefitting one class at the expense of others? What are moral codes except ways of maintaining a particular order of restraint and subjugation? What is religion but the 'opiate of the people' or, at best, a means of assuring social cohesion? These are the sort of questions they ask; and the range of factors they take into account in answering them makes it certain that the reply is always 'Nothing'.

Roger Trigg's new book, conceived as an 'introductory textbook for all those interested in the nature of society,' represents a far-reaching challenge to present social scientific orthodoxy. Lucidly and without condescension Trigg guides the reader through the tangled webs of philosophical and social scientific dispute. His philosophical realism, defended in his 1980 book *Reality at Risk*, provides the basis for a view of social science which succeeds in restoring the crucial concept of human nature to its central place in our understanding of social reality. Trigg has already written a perceptive volume on the virtues and limitations of the work of E.O. Wilson and his fellow 'sociobiologists', and here he takes account of their findings while discounting their claims to derive cultural from genetically formed patterns of behaviour. Trigg develops a conception of the social sciences as disciplines distinct in type and limited in scope. These sciences, he argues, are able to contribute to our knowledge of man and his world insofar as they confine their attention to their proper object, and insofar as they employ the interpretive procedures appropriate to the understanding of human action.

Like many contemporary philosophers, Trigg rejects the positivist view that the social sciences can and should model their methods on those of the natural sciences. Indeed, as he points out, the model of science to which positivists appeal has become untenable even in the sciences of nature. This too is a familiar theme; but this book is distinguished from the run of anti-positivist manifestoes by the fact that Trigg does not allow the abandonment of devotion to a supposedly omniscient scientific method to undermine his commitment to the notions of objective truth, and objective existence.

Trigg succeeds in showing the incoherence of arguments, whether derived from Marx or from Wittgenstein, which seem to lead to moral and epistemological relativism. This is particularly valuable in a book accessible to the first year student in both style and price: for once the relativist bug has struck it is all but impossible to cleanse it from the mental system. Even the demonstration that relativism is self-refuting can be answered by the claim, false but to the relativist undemonstrably so, that the canons of logic are themselves mere conventions and matters of opinion. Trigg avoids jargon and his use of philosophical terminology is illuminated by the provision of a glossary of the terms employed. In under-

taking this book, Dr Trigg set himself an important and difficult task. I cannot imagine how anyone could have done it better.

Antony Flew's *Thinking about Social Thinking* is also a valuable contribution to the restoration of clear-headedness in the social sciences; and there is much common ground between the positions maintained in the two books. But, while Trigg writes coolly, Professor Flew's book is clearly the work of an impassioned controversialist driven to exasperation by the nonsense of so much that passes for the latest in social scientific wisdom. Almost everything that Flew dismisses as 'preposterous', 'scandalous', or 'plain wrong' fully deserves the treatment it gets. As any reader of his previous books would expect, Flew is particularly good at identifying bias in the selection of evidence and at detecting gaps between the premises of arguments and their purported conclusions. At the same time I cannot help feeling that his assault on academic clap-trap could have profited from the adoption of a less frenetic and exasperated tone. One does not have to compromise with the ideological prejudices of the time in order to recognise that they are more likely to be undermined by a patient and systematic siege than by a succession of spirited frontal assaults.

BAFFLED RADICAL

Roger Scruton

The Case of the Baffled Radical, Essays & Interviews, Harold Rosenberg, 284 pp. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986 \$25, (226-726-92-4)

Harold Rosenberg's neat, self-confident judgements of contemporary art were widely respected. He had the gift, not only for spotting talents, but also for finding words that would sustain a public interest in them. At the same time he stood aloof from the world of dealers and impresarios, whose fraudulent protégés he would happily ridicule whenever they threatened to displace his own chosen favourites – Gorky, de Kooning, Barnett Newman – from the centre of the stage. Rosenberg therefore provided the art-world of the sixties with its touchstones, and also with a necessary core of seriousness and relevance. Without Rosenberg this market might have blown up at any moment: a whole section of the economy, as vital to America as was the building of pyramids to Egypt, would then have collapsed ignominiously.

The present volume consists of articles and interviews from every period of an active career. It does not have the verve of those celebrated collections – *The Tradition of the New*, and *The Anxious Object* – whose titles herald the wealth of illuminating paradox contained in them. Nevertheless, it includes one first-rate essay – an introduction to a book of Avedon's photographic portraits, in which Rosenberg discusses the aesthetic poten-

tial of photography, and the differences between photography and painting. 'The art of painting', he argues, 'is a generator of distance, both between the painting and the spectator and between the painting and its subject. In contrast, the photograph leads the mind into the actual world – if it is of a nude, it will make one think of women, not art.' Thus, with clipped, sudden phrases, Rosenberg alights on a profound critical perception. The transparency of a photograph, which seems at first sight to make portraiture so easy, in fact makes it hard. In photography almost everything that matters lies outside the artist's control: to assert control over the final image he must daub it like a painter, and so destroy the photograph. Rosenberg does not quite draw that conclusion, which would lead him to show less respect towards Avedon than is compatible with the task of introducing him. But he makes an impressive attempt to remind us of the labour, the discipline and the detachment of the true art of portraiture.

Many of the essays have a political content, and in an extended discussion of F.R. Leavis, Rosenberg makes it clear that criticism, or at least Leavis's criticism, is as much a political as an aesthetic enterprise. *Scrutiny*, the journal which Leavis edited, is castigated because 'it had set itself against Progress, democracy, and political liberalism, and . . . had occupied a sector in the battle line of anti-modernism established by *L'Action Française*, the New Humanism, the classicism-royalism-Catholicism formula of T.S. Eliot, the literary agrarianism of the Old South, and the cultural Fascism of Ezra Pound'. The diatribe is uncharacteristic, which is just as well, since it contains some pretty gross fabrications. Pound, for example, may have been hoodwinked by the Duce, but is 'cultural Fascism' the correct description of the invocations of courtly love, the melancholy testimonies to the grief of exile, and the jeremiads against 'usurocracy' which form so much of the poet's work?

Rosenberg is adamant that he is not reactionary like Leavis, but impeccably (or at least only slightly peccably) liberal. And in a sense he is right. He does indeed reprimand American liberals of the thirties for so fervently excusing the Soviet Union – 'as extreme a case of misapplied generosity as any recorded in human history'. But he has nothing to say about the 'misapplied generosity' that later exonerated the Viet-Cong and the Khmer Rouge, and which now finds its object in SWAPO, the ANC and the Sandinistas. For Rosenberg was, on the whole, fairly tolerant towards movements which paid lip-service to democratic values, and which were prepared to prove their sincerity by allying themselves with the Soviet Union. If that's what makes a liberal, then Rosenberg was certainly a liberal.

However, he gives his own definition. Liberalism, he writes, is 'an expression of generous feelings, particular towards the poor, the badly treated and dependent people'. American conservatism, in contrast, is 'merely a series of rationalisations for holding onto what one has'. And 'since its kernel is personal hoarding, as a point of view it is a joke'. Such remarks betray an extraordinary ignorance of the common people of America, who are

motivated in their conservative sentiments as much by charity and religion as by desire for wealth. By 'generous feelings' Rosenberg means the disposition to spend other people's money on schemes for which one assumes no liability, and by 'hoarding' he means prudence – the necessary virtue without which charitable intentions are neither generous nor sincere.

Elsewhere Rosen draws the political agenda more broadly, so as to cover law, liberty and constitution as well as wealth. In writing about Watergate he half recognises that justice could not, in the circumstances, be done to President Nixon, who had already been tried and convicted by the press. Reading people like Rosenberg one realises that Mr Nixon's crime was not so much his offence against the constitutional delicacy which liberals had so suddenly and miraculously discovered in themselves, as his desire to hold on to office at a time when all decent journalists recognised America's need for a liberal President.

Discussing the Nuremberg trials, Rosenberg again shows his sense that justice is hard to come by when the victim has been publicly vilified before being legally condemned. In this case Rosenberg is motivated by real and justifiable passion. It is interesting, therefore, that the resulting view of crime and punishment has a strongly conservative flavour. Punishment, he reminds us, is an objective recognition of the individual's responsibility for his evil actions, and its purpose is not reform or deterrence but retribution. Punishment gives form to the natural desire for revenge, and at the same time assuages and replaces it. Forgiveness is the prerogative of the victim; the judge who usurps this privilege adds to the victim's humiliation and compounds the moral burden of the crime. Such a view of punishment – applied, not to Nuremberg but to the normal course of justice – would evoke a storm of protest from the liberal establishment, and if Rosenberg gets away with it in this case, it is because he is writing of Nazis, and writing as a Jew.

Nor is this the only place at which Rosenberg is trapped by his conservative instincts, even if it is the place where he is most evidently 'mugged by reality'. In a series of interviews, he repeatedly expresses his doubts about the modern world, about the media, about technological progress, and about the anti-elitism of Washington politics. At times he sounds like a polite and good-natured Leavis (if that were possible). It would not be right to say that Rosenberg is *consistent* in this reactionary posture. But he is a good enough democrat in the matter of his own emotions to let each of them raise its voice: and the majority turn out to be profoundly sceptical of human progress.

Nor does Rosenberg take much comfort from modern art, which he describes as a 'form of anxiety', and whose effect on politics, he argues, can never be direct. (If you aim for a direct impact, what you produce is not art but propaganda.) He believes that artistic values are as vulnerable as all other values to 'the crushing power of cash', and he is suspicious of government subsidies as a means for the maintenance of artistic creation. To have seen the pure gold of art forged into monetary value

awoke him, in the end, to an old Wagnerian perception. The man at the forge was the modernist critic, who showed that whatever is painted can also be sold. And as Rosenberg acknowledges, that critic was Rosenberg.

DIMINISHING RETURNS

David Dale

Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980, Charles Murray, Basic Books, New York, 1984, 323 pp \$23.95 (0-465-04231-7)

In 1962 Michael Harrington, a leftist political commentator, wrote a best-selling book whose pilgrimic title – ‘The Other America’ – precisely signalled the new mood of the American liberal intelligentsia. Harrington’s claim was that poverty in the United States had reached epidemic proportions affecting, in his estimate, the lives of some fifty million Americans. The accuracy of that figure is now, as indeed it was then, secondary; rather more significant, both for subsequent social policy and thus for the poor themselves, was the bold explanation Harrington and his followers put forward for this disturbing discovery. That explanation – ‘structural poverty’ – was to become the Pavlovian plaint to be heard from fashionable liberals for the following decade and a half and the spurious legitimisation for decisions, taken by administration after administration, to increase public expenditure on welfare on a massive and unprecedented scale.

In Britain ‘structural poverty’ (or, more usually, ‘structural inequality’) has long been the conceptual camouflage used by puritanical Fabians to disguise their obsession with relieving the rich of their wealth. In America the voguish acceptance of the term and the social change it brought about was strikingly abrupt. As Charles Murray tells us, ‘In only three years, from 1964 to 1967 . . . social policy went from the dream of ending the dole to the institution of permanent income transfers that embraced not only the recipients of the dole but large new segments of the American population. It went from the ideal of a colourblind society to the installation of legalised discrimination. They were polar changes that were barely recognised as such while they were happening.’

It is Murray’s meticulously researched thesis that the huge increase in federal spending between 1965 and 1980 on the ‘working-aged poor’, underwritten (indeed, necessitated) by the new ‘structural poverty’ orthodoxy, was an unmitigated failure even on its own terms. But worse still, by eclipsing the traditional moral distinction between deserving and undeserving, the new creed created powerful economic incentives for the perpetuation of poverty, the erosion of family life and the turn to crime. Murray’s case against the extravagances of modern state welfare is, of course, not a new one. In Britain the Institute of Economic Affairs has been putting across similar arguments for many years. Nor are the terms in which he has chosen to argue it as forceful as those

employed elsewhere. Hayek’s demolition of ‘social justice’, for example, seems to me to be rather more philosophically compelling than the sort of economic rationalism with which Murray tends to explain all human action. But Murray’s field is social research rather than social philosophy (he is currently Senior Research Fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research) and it is in his impressive and readable presentation of empirical data that the strength of the book resides. In chapters on poverty, the family, employment, wages and occupations, education and crime he scrutinises the financial costs of the ‘War on Poverty’ years and reveals their debilitating social consequences for American society.

Consider, for example, his statistics on poverty: when Lyndon Johnson left office in 1968 13% of the American population was officially defined as poor. Over the following twelve years government expenditure on welfare quadrupled. Yet by 1980 that percentage remained at 13%. Again, take the education of racial minorities: prior to 1965 black children, through their own unaided effort, were rapidly narrowing the gap between black and white school achievement. Fifteen years, 60 billion dollars and the imposition of ‘positive discrimination’ programmes later that gap ‘was so great that it threatened to defeat any other attempts to narrow the economic differences separating blacks from whites’.

In his concluding chapter Murray outlines three areas of social reform. Given that his proposals are derived from the desire, shared by Mrs Thatcher, to reassert the values of individual effort and personal responsibility, it is worth speculating on their application to the British welfare system. His first proposal concerns race and advocates the abolition of every existing policy which ‘requires, recommends or awards differential treatment according to race’. One might assume that such a policy, in a British context, would include the ending of ‘multi-cultural education’, the withdrawal of public funds from the race relations industry and an assault on the tenacity of ‘positive discrimination’. The enthusiastic support of the British people can be guaranteed.

The second proposal, too, would be balm to those concerned parents for whom comprehensive education, in inner London for example, has reduced the odds on their children achieving even minimal ‘O’ level standards to one in seven. Murray advocates, as Mrs Thatcher did in 1979, an education system based on a voucher system. The cabinet’s subsequent decision to abandon that commitment will be condemned by those same parents as grossly irresponsible.

Rather more contentious is Murray’s third suggestion: ‘That programme consists of scrapping the entire federal welfare and income-support structure for working-aged persons. . . . It would leave (them) with no recourse whatsoever except the job market, family members, friends and public or private locally funded services.’ This sort of radical individualism will doubtless receive the enthusiastic support of the libertarian right but for conservatives, traditionally ambiguous about the politics of

welfare, such proposals are less easily absorbed. Paternalistic care of the genuinely needy might be thought to be as much a legitimate responsibility of the modern state as defence or the maintenance of a sound currency. It seems to me that the values of welfare and the ethics of individual responsibility are not as incompatible as Murray's third proposal would have us believe. The political task is to ensure that neither corrupts the other, a quite manageable proposition as Mrs Hermione Parker has so admirably demonstrated in her recent pamphlet, 'Action on Welfare' (Social Affairs Unit).

Written with a general audience in mind (the book contains a lengthy appendix of technical data as well as copious notes for the specialist), *Losing Ground* is an accurate rejoinder to those who claim that 'the system is to blame', a suggestion which, when translated into social policy, turns out to mean only that 'the system must pay'.

NO SAINT FRANCIS

Simon Gleeson

St Francis of Assisi: A Model for Human Liberation, Fr Leonardo Boff, S.C.M. Press, 1985 (Brazil 1981), 178 pp. £6.95 (334-02007-7)

For those who have not been following the current dispute in the Roman Catholic Church over 'Liberation Theology' this book will be incomprehensible. The bone of contention is as to whether the encouragement of violent revolution can legitimately be said to be among the duties of a Parish Priest; Rome meekly suggesting that it might not, Fr Boff and his friends loudly asserting that it is. However since Fr Boff is eager to prove himself to be the possessor of true orthodoxy, he is here attempting to recruit the notable of the past to his banner. This process has a long if not distinguished history, and is rendered possible largely by the ease with which opinions can be ascribed to the dead which they are in no position to dispute. The object of this book is to prove that St Francis was engaged in the same sort of work as Fr Boff.

This alarming notion must imply that Francis was, amongst other improbable things, a Marxist, for the whole of the book is sodden with Marxism. Fr Boff enthusiastically embraces the theory of the class-struggle, going so far as to identify the coming of the Kingdom of God on this earth with the inevitable victory of the proletariat. He is in no doubt that the Lord is with him, and indeed he must have some unusual sources, since he is able definitively to tell us that the current organisation of affairs on earth 'does not please God' and that 'the poor are the chosen ones of God' (a grave disappointment to the righteous).

He starts by trying to show that the Church has a spiritual duty to fight with the poor. His argument has two strands – firstly that poverty prevents the poor from being fully spiritual, and secondly that poverty is a sin of injustice. However, in both points he is at odds with his

church and with common sense. Since events are organised by the Almighty, albeit not as Fr Boff personally would like them to be, it follows, according to Fr Boff, that if He has placed some of His creatures in positions where they cannot become virtuous because of their restricted spiritual development, then these creatures have been predestined to damnation. This thesis is not supportable to the orthodox Catholic mind, for which therefore the said disability is apparent but not real. The second argument is equally unorthodox. It is true that deliberately induced inequality may be sinful. However the function of the Church is to recall the sinner to the paths of the righteous, not to prevent him from sinning in the first place – and especially not when the restriction being suggested is by civil action (*Summa Theologica* 2:2, Q96, Art. 2).

Having made the attempt to associate the Church with the poor, Fr Boff now brings in St Francis. St Francis, he claims, was a man who deliberately sought the company of the poor so as to experience solidarity with them in its fullest sense. He gave his life to being a representative of the poor, and went out of his way to preach to them. There is only one major flaw in this picture, and that is that it isn't true. It rests on one significant error and a lot of wishful thinking, and is sadly bereft of any sort of reference.

Fr Boff is quite right that the chief characteristic of Francis's life is his poverty, but wrong in almost everything he says about it. For the one thing Francis never was was an advocate of the poor. Through all his writings or the acknowledgedly reliable sources he never says anything at all about the poor as a body, and certainly there is nothing but spiritual concern for the rich. Francis's poverty is a sacrifice of enormous proportions undertaken entirely as an exercise in self-denial. It also serves as a convenient method of allowing the soul to come closer to God by liberating it from the cares of physical possessions, but he realises throughout his life that this method is a privilege which others must support. If Francis is to pray, others must be rich enough to be able to provide for him. As he says in his letter to Leo, the proper form of life is 'to please our Lord here and to follow in his footsteps in poverty'. Poverty is seen as a means, not an end, and certainly not a means of solidarity with anyone other than God. Once this misunderstanding is sorted out we see that there is in fact nothing connecting St Francis and Fr Boff, and that Fr Boff's Marxist fantasies about the coming of Christ as a sort of celestial Fidel Castro are a long way from anything which St Francis had ever thought of or said.

As to the scholastic method of the book, a fair sample may be gained from the sub-section on St Clare. Fr Boff is trying to prove intimacy (not in the legal sense) between Francis and Clare – a contention which, since it runs counter to modern thinking on the subject, one would expect to be particularly well substantiated. He quotes three episodes. Two of them are untraceable, since they occur in none of the recognised sources and are ascribed in the notes to books published in 1970 and 1973. The third, from the 'Fioretti', is universally believed by his-

torians to be a pious fraud.

On the whole, then, this is a profoundly unsatisfactory book. Considered as a serious historical work it is a disaster, and considered as a polemic it is transparently unconvincing. As an effort to prove the author's orthodoxy it will be positively counterproductive, adding its few ounces to the demand that the Vatican do something at last about the whole sorry mess of Liberation Theology.

PATHETIC FALLACIES

Brian Micklethwait

The Book of The Fallacy, Madsen Pirie, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, 189pp, £7.95 (0-7102-0521-X)

Madsen Pirie is the leading spirit of the Adam Smith Institute, which is the source of most of the pro free market lobbying now going on in Britain, and almost all of it that is effective. He is one of the most interesting persons (and the most powerful) with whom I am acquainted. Because of his numerous colour supplementish hobbies and affectations, media appearances, and general grip upon the superficials of life, Pirie is dismissed by many as an intellectual lightweight. But his present prowess as a free market lobbyist follows years of systematic thought about that bandwagon called history, and about how this can be jumped upon and steered. His serious writings on these subjects are fascinating. He is the Beatrice Webb of our time. When he starts privatising the USSR and its possessions he will become one of the most powerful people in the world.

But in my opinion *The Book of The Fallacy* is not Pirie at his best. It is a list of alleged fallacies (alleged because many of the 'fallacies' are mere communicational foul-ups) each with two or three pages of explication and comment. The book also has cartoons, and its publication just before last Christmas seemed timely. So were we expected to memorise the lists of fallacies and to be able to write short notes about each of them, or merely to enjoy them along with the other Christmas stocking games? *The Book of The Fallacy* contains so many examples of the trickery it ostensibly exposes that one can only assume that this was deliberate. So is a reviewer expected to analyse and tabulate all this, just as Pirie lists all the original fallacies?

Perhaps in order to confuse things, which it does, Pirie lists his fallacies in alphabetical order by the titles he bestows upon them. Amphipoly. Contradictory premises. Emotional appeals. Ignoratum, argumentum ad. Non-anticipation. Post hoc ergo propter hoc. Some of these titles made sense to me, many not. I seem to remember one that deals with the use of pompous technical or pseudo-technical language on the borderlines of clarity to bully people into submission, so that they don't dare admit that they think you're being silly.

For me, this book is neither serious enough to be serious, nor funny enough to be funny. It is too wordy and clever-clever to be useful either as a compendium of bad argument, or as a stimulant of conversation.

It is a pity that Pirie's illustrations of fallacies in action are largely invented, or else too well known to be interesting. For the pure fun of it, I've also been reading a recently published book called *Glad To Be Grey* by Peter Freedman, which is about how people should feel free to be dull, instead of all trying to be clever and trendy like Madsen Pirie. Freedman's examples of dullness aren't only invented. He reports on the real dullness of real people, including the dullness of seemingly fascinating people like Alfred Lord Tennyson and Lawrence Olivier. You get real quotations. Clearly Freedman studied dullness for years before he realised there was a book in it. Then when he did realise this, he added a lot more work to the work he'd already done. The result is very funny, and often very profound. (When Oswald Mosley was asked why he spent so much time with Mussolini, he said it was because Mussolini was the 'most interesting man in Europe'. This is a book with steel under its grey woolly gloves.) Pirie's book should have had the likes of Bertrand Russell, Einstein, Neil Kinnock and Sir Keith Joseph being fallacious, not just Pirie pretending to be. Pirie invents various bits of 'peace' movement silliness to illustrate some of his fallacies. These should have been authentically supplied by E.P. Thompson or Bruce Kent.

Glad To Be Grey also benefits from having a central message (dullness is okay) which can be summarised in one line and which has never before been backed up with one of these funny/serious books. Other such messages are: that people rise to their level of incompetence, and that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. Such slogans both sell these books and give them a focus. What is Pirie's central message? That fallacies are a bad thing? That fallacies are useful for winning arguments? (He subtitles his book 'A training manual for intellectual subversives'.) Neither proposition is both new and true enough to deserve a book.

I prefer the Adam Smith Institute's Omega Reports, now available in one huge combined volume. These are not about how clever and amusing Madsen Pirie is, but about how to cut the British government down to size.

CHRISTIAN ACCOMMODATIONS

Paul Helm

Being Saved, Peter Mullen, S.C.M. Press, 1985, 142 pp. £5.50 (334-01894-3)

This is an attempt to show that 'something like' the traditional language of Christian theology is a limning of the outlines of the human spirit, equivalent to other limnings, Mr Mullen thinks, found particularly in the

analytical psychology of Jung, but also in other places. 'The outward events of the story of Jesus have inward, psychological and spiritual significance for us. We may not work miracles, be crucified and rise again from the dead, but these events are pictures of the inner truth about the life of everyman. The effects on us are the same whether we use the old biblical language or any other, but perhaps the terminology of analytical psychology is more helpful in an age which can make little sense of the strident super-naturalism of the first-century documents. But this is just one more way of telling the same story.' These equivalences are explored with considerable thoroughness and ingenuity. On the author's view of the success of this attempt hangs the viability of finding a middle way between literal-minded fundamentalism and the banalities of theological liberalism.

Such a view has a number of interesting consequences. One is that it is a *proposal*. Previous adherents of Christianity must have got it wrong. That which has sustained and nurtured the hope of millions, in life and death, did so on a mistaken understanding. They hoped in a divine Saviour, but in fact 'his story is our story too'. Another consequence is that despite an appeal to the language of Christianity that language has to be drastically reinterpreted. Yet another consequence is a kind of relativism, as far as the retained language of Christianity is concerned. For it is but one valid language among many equally valid characterisations of spiritual verities.

So there is a curious blend. On the one hand, a basic humanism, an anthropocentrism, refracted in some cases through what Immanuel Kant called 'ecclesiastical faiths', in other cases through atheistic ideologies. 'So the Marxist talks about "alienation" and the existentialist invents the phrase "inauthentic existence" where the Bible speaks of "sin".' On the other hand the human nature in question is not perfectible but deeply flawed and darkened. This combination of respect for the traditional language of Christian piety, a lack of optimism and the detaching of theology from faith evokes Carlyle or, say, Mark Rutherford.

There is a naive innocence about those who, like Mullen, wish in the same breath to rest content with the idea that Christianity is fundamental to our culture and who at the same time propose to reinterpret it. For it is only as unreconstructed that Christianity has helped to form the culture. Yet another wholesale reinterpretation of it, after all these years, serves only as a further charge to blow Christianity and the culture even farther apart.

It is another piece of romance to suppose that because our culture has been partly the creation of Christianity we cannot break out of the cocoon and ask whether or not Christianity is true. For Christianity itself fosters objectivity, encourages the unbiased examination of data, indeed bids us examine ourselves. The current unpopularity of the idea that there are objective standards of enquiry, the politicisation of intellectual and empirical research, is sure evidence of the waning cultural influence of Christianity.

The author of *Being Saved*, a Yorkshire vicar, would

have been better advised, in my view, to look beyond the raucous tones of the fundamentalists and the bland optimism of the liberal theologians, both of which he understandably finds repellent, to the traditional theology of his church, as it has been expressed in the Articles and in Cranmer's liturgy.

TORY DEMOCRACY

A.W. Purdue

The Tories and the People 1880-1935, Martin Pugh Blackwell, 1985, pp. 272, £17.50 (0631-138-064)

It is a standing affront to 'Progressive' interpretations of modern British history that the successive extensions of the franchise in the direction of universal suffrage since 1867 have formed the context for the increased electoral success of the Conservative Party. Historians of the left have tended either to ignore what is to them an uncomfortable paradox or to mutter darkly about 'false consciousness'. Yet popular Conservatism has been little better served by Conservative historians, who have tended to be interested in high politics and have been chary of investigating the basis of the party's electoral support. Popular Conservatism has remained an understudied phenomenon and Martin Pugh's book fills a considerable gap in our understanding of the development of modern politics.

The Tories and the People describes the ways in which the Conservative Party in the late nineteenth century was successful in adapting its appeal and shaping its organisation to the circumstances of a mass electorate. Central to this success was the Primrose League, which was the largest and most widely spread political organisation of its time. The League's aims were a few general principles – support for the Empire, the Monarchy, Religion and the Estates of the Realm – and it did not concern itself with the details of party policy. Indeed, it was not technically part of the Conservative Party, eschewing any binding commitment to it until the twentieth century. Nevertheless, its Grand Masters were until 1912 always the leaders of the party and its Chancellors were Conservative grandees, while the League never actively worked for anyone who was not a Conservative.

The Primrose League was the subject of much derision in its heyday for its flummery, its ersatz medieval trappings and invented traditions: it was organised in habitations and its hierarchy of members ranged from mere Associates to Knights Companions, Knights Harbingers, Dames, Knights Imperial, Ladies of the Grand Council and, at the summit, the Grand Master. It was alleged not to be a serious political organisation because so much of its energy was devoted to social occasions, to garden par-

ties, concerts, dances and magic lantern shows. For these same reasons it has been dismissed too easily by historians. It was, as Martin Pugh demonstrates, highly effective both in maintaining support for the Conservative Party between elections and in getting out the Conservative vote at elections.

What opponents took to be the League's weaknesses were in fact the sources of its strength. The broad principles that it stood for enabled it to attract a wide membership, many of whom were uninterested in the details of party policy, to avoid schisms and to ride over or ignore setbacks to Conservative fortunes. Primrose flummery tapped the vein of romantic medievalism that flowed richly through Victorian thought and, as Martin Pugh comments, 'represented a significant element in the League's appeal; for the League's strength as a Conservative organisation lay in its refusal to apologise for being traditional'. The social calendar and the variety of entertainment that the League offered its members allowed it to interlace politics with social activities and to enroll those (the vast majority of the population at any time) for whom politics was simply part of life rather than its essence. The Primrose League's role lay in 'extending the reach of the official party to tap the latent, unarticulated conservatism in the country'.

Martin Pugh's book will not endear him to radical feminists. He pays tribute to the influence of women in politics long before female enfranchisement but makes it clear that it was the Dames of the Primrose League rather than Liberal or ILP women who were the more potent force in late nineteenth century politics. In terms of female membership figures the League dwarfed all women's organisations and the Dames proved themselves to be effective canvassers at election times. As the importance of political hostesses declined, many upper-class women found in the Primrose League an outlet for their political interests and enthusiasms. More confident and less restricted than middle-class women, the titled ladies who dominated the League refused to assign to the female membership a subservient and supportive role. The League was far more successful in mobilising women than its Liberal or Labour rivals and provided a better opportunity for men and women to work together than any other political organisation. The League did not take a stand on the issue of votes for women and it included both suffragists and anti-suffragists among its membership, but it seems certain that by undermining assumptions about the political ignorance and inertia of women it assisted the cause of women's enfranchisement in both the Conservative Party and society in general. Frances, Duchess of Marlborough, Theresa, Lady Londonderry and Margaret, Countess of Jersey emerge as new heroines of the entry of women into politics.

The Tories and the People is a stimulating and important book which will make many a monograph and textbook on modern British political history look incomplete and lop-sided. Its most important conclusion is that the Primrose League was an example of the politics of social integration, 'a systematic attempt to make political loyalty an integral part of the lives of a large number of

people rather than the private language of an elite'. That it was the Conservative Party which was so successful in this endeavour has until now been largely ignored by historians, who have lavished such attention on socialist organisations with minute memberships. The League claimed a membership of over half a million in 1887 and over a million in the eighteen-nineties; Martin Pugh argues that, although we must allow for an element of inflation, these figures were not grossly misleading. It is, the author suggests, 'a sobering thought that the total paid membership of the ILP in 1900 has been put at 6,000, a figure equivalent to the paid membership of the Primrose League in Bolton at that time!'

The Primrose League waned rapidly after 1918. It appeared somewhat antiquated in methods and style and women could now join the Women's Unionist Association. But the League bequeathed much of value to the modern Conservative Party, not least the lesson that the interweaving of politics and social life is the key to a large membership. The politics of social integration has been more successfully pursued by the Conservative Party than by any of its rivals to the left. Few political enthusiasts can not have been frustrated at some time by the priorities and proclivities of Conservative and Young Conservative Associations, with their emphasis on fund raising and social occasions. Yet this inheritance from the Primrose League, at whose gatherings political speakers were often sandwiched 'between a nigger song and a conjuror', has stood the Conservative Party in good stead.

TITO'S TYRANNY

Marko Milivojević

Tito's Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia and the West, 1939–1984, Nora Beloff, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1985. Hardback, pp. 287, £12.95. (0-575-03668-0)

Ever since Stalin expelled Tito from the Soviet bloc in 1948 it has been regarded as axiomatic among Western policymakers that Yugoslavia should receive generous and unconditional political and economic support. Realpolitik, it was said, necessitated this Western support in order to keep Yugoslavia 'independent' of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it was claimed that Tito's regime was relatively 'liberal' in comparison to the regimes of the Soviet bloc, and that it had successfully resolved Yugoslavia's ethnic/national, economic, political and social problems. For Western policymakers, confronted with the 'bad' communism of the Soviet Union and

China in the post-war era, Tito's regime in Yugoslavia was 'good' communism.

Nearly forty years of such absurd and nauseating propaganda has led to a curious situation. Western governments continue to provide massive economic and political support to a communist regime that is as bad as any of the regimes in the Soviet bloc; that is persistently working against Western interests through the so-called non-aligned movement; that holds the democratic values of the West in total contempt; and that has always been allied with the 'progressive' part of humanity, led by the Soviet Union, which constantly strives to destroy the West and all that the West stands for. Western support for Yugoslavia is a prime example of that old adage: The Gods strike blind those they would destroy.

A useful first step on the long road to the restoration of Western policymaker's sight and reason, as regards the current Yugoslav regime, has been made in this important book by Nora Beloff. The book is well researched, beautifully written and bound to prove controversial. Written more in sorrow than in anger, the book questions every major Western assumption about Yugoslavia and proves each of those assumptions to be entirely false.

Each of the book's seven chapters skilfully and convincingly demolishes a particular Western assumption, or myth as Nora Beloff calls them. The first, that Tito was a great Yugoslav patriot, is diametrically opposed to what Tito was actually doing in the inter-war years: striving to destroy the Yugoslav state as it was then constituted on the orders of the Comintern, whose faithful agent he was. So faithful a Stalinist, in fact, was Tito that he survived Stalin's Great Terror of the 1930s.

The second myth, that Tito was the great liberator of Yugoslavia from 1941 to 1945, is the most controversial. Nora Beloff rightly argues that Tito was first and foremost fighting a civil war for absolute power, and that the struggle against the Axis occupiers of Yugoslavia was entirely peripheral. Tito's partisans were never more than a minor nuisance for the Axis powers, and Yugoslavia was in fact liberated (if that is the right word) by the Red Army in 1944. That is the official Soviet position on the matter. It seems ironic that Western powers should have given credence to Tito's alleged role as a great warlord during the last war. In terms of Yugoslavia's civil war, however, Tito's partisans were effective in destroying their domestic political rivals, most notably the Chetniks led by Mihailović.

The third myth, that Tito was a faithful ally of the Western democracies in the battle against the Axis powers, is the most incredible of the lot. Tito, a dedicated communist and supporter of the Soviet Union, hated, distrusted and despised the Western democracies. His strength as a political operator during the last war, however, was that he was able to trick his allies, and Churchill in particular, into thinking that he was the only true anti-Axis patriot in Yugoslavia; that only he was waging a significant military struggle against the Axis powers; and that Mihailović was a collaborator, traitor and criminal. The trick paid off. Western aid to Tito from

1943 onwards, coupled with the serious mistakes made by Mihailović's Chetniks, enabled Tito to win the civil war by late 1944.

The fourth myth, that Stalin's break with Tito in 1948 led to a complete change in Yugoslavia's communist system, is the hardest one to understand. Yugoslavia was and is a communist dictatorship, tolerating no deviation from orthodox Marxist-Leninist dogmas. As regards state repression, the Yugoslav regime has always been as bad as the worst regimes of the Soviet bloc. Though different tactics have been used in Yugoslavia since 1948, the end has been the same as in the Soviet bloc: the maintenance and perpetuation of a communist dictatorship. Only in the West have those tactical differences with the Soviet Union been mistaken for really fundamental changes in Yugoslavia's political system. No such changes have ever taken place.

The fifth myth, that Yugoslavia is a non-aligned country, is the most significant, since Western policy towards Yugoslavia since 1948 has been based on it. Nora Beloff rightly argues that Yugoslavia has been non-aligned against the West. On the desirability and alleged historical inevitability of the global triumph of communism, Yugoslavia has always been at one with the Soviet Union. It has only differed with the Soviet Union over tactical questions, not on the fundamental strategic objective. Instead of allying itself too overtly with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia decided to play a leading role in the creation and expansion of the so-called non-aligned movement, which has always been anti-Western in orientation, and which has consequently indirectly and covertly aided the expansion of Soviet power and influence in the Third World.

The sixth myth, that Tito's Yugoslavia has solved the ethnic/national problem, is the most laughable of the lot. Nobody in Yugoslavia – not even the communists – really believe this, although the regime pretends in public that no real problem exists. Indeed, the problem that has plagued Yugoslavia ever since its creation after the First World War has got even worse since the communist takeover in 1945. The troubles in Croatia in 1971 and Kosovo in 1981 are evidence of that failure to deal with this old problem.

The seventh myth, that Tito's so-called self-management system has created a healthy economy, is now just a sick joke. Ostensibly something between capitalism and communism, self-management in fact is a mixture of the worst elements of both, and has created economic chaos in Yugoslavia over the last few years. A foreign debt of 20 billion dollars, 80% inflation, 20% unemployment, low living standards and incredibly incompetent macro-economic management is evidence of the monumental communist failure in economic matters.

After reading Nora Beloff it is hard to believe that such absurd myths, totally divorced from reality as they are, could have lasted so long as they have in the minds of Western policymakers. Let us hope that Miss Beloff's book will help to shatter those myths, so ardently believed by Western policymakers for so long. However, it would be unrealistic to hope that Western policy

towards Yugoslavia will radically change in the short-term. No one book, however good, will change decades of blindness, ignorance and stupidity.

Despite extensive Western support, the current Yugoslav system is slowly falling apart at the seams. No amount of Western support will end the economic chaos, political incompetence and social discord currently afflicting Yugoslavia, although it will probably put off the final day of reckoning in that country for a number of years. Growing numbers of Yugoslavs want an alternative to the communist-created chaos they now have to endure. The West should be aiding those aspirations for a democratic alternative in Yugoslavia, not propping up a moribund, politically and morally objectionable, and ultimately unviable regime.

Although this book is good and very necessary, I must end on a slightly sour note. Most of what Nora Beloff writes is not news to Yugoslav emigrés in the West or to those sections of Western opinion which have never believed that Tito's Yugoslavia was more liberal, or more worthy of Western support than the regimes of the Soviet bloc.

Where was Nora Beloff before it was fashionable to rubbish Tito's record? As a journalist of the *Observer* newspaper for some thirty years she was a member of the Tito fan club in the UK. Then, it seems, she had no doubts about this so-called great man and the regime he dominated until his death in 1980. Her conversion, in the form of this book, is most welcome, but it would not be too cynical to suggest that her motives in writing it at this particular time are open to doubt. Opportunism is a dirty word, but it is the one that comes to mind. It is no coincidence that the book appears at a time when the system Tito created is disintegrating; when large numbers of Yugoslavs are questioning and rejecting that system; and when these changes in Yugoslavia are making Western assumptions about that system not only absurd but absolutely irrelevant.

A TRAMP AT HOME

Nisa Khan

Bizarre Britain, A Calendar of Eccentricity, Roy Kerridge, Basil Blackwell, 1985, pp 256, £12.50, (0631-137-416)

I must begin by declaring a personal interest. Beautiful postcards from the most remote parts of Britain have been arriving at my home regularly during the past two years. They all begin in the same style, 'This is Roy Kerridge here . . .'. Every square centimetre of each card is minutely covered with lively accounts of his wanderings and moving descriptions of life in those parts of Britain the writer has chosen to record. Travelling light, with the merest necessities in a plastic bag, Roy Kerridge

investigates the fetes, junketings and curious customs still observed in the towns, villages and countryside of Britain, and it is these accounts – one hundred and eighty, one for every two days of the year – which are the subject of his new book.

But *Bizarre Britain* contains more than a mere catalogue of these events. Kerridge's purpose, as revealed in his introduction, is to show that ancient customs and folklore continue to influence the behaviour and attitude of ordinary people today, be they townfolk, villagers, farmers, romanes or even scooter riding 'mods'. His presentation is alluring, personal and receptive to impressions:

Brooding deeply on the folk-lore of an alien people does not turn you into one of those people. It simply changes you in unpredictable ways. This is what happened to the youngsters who first listened to rock and roll, itself a hybrid of Negro blues and hillbilly music. Instead of becoming Negroes or hillbillies – a delightful prospect – they became Teddy Boys, Hippies, Mods and Rockers.

Kerridge discovers in present-day Britain, not the history we all learnt at school – Kings and Queens, battles and beheadings, rebellions and revolutions – but a quite different aspect of British life, more bizarre now than then, but bearing the traces of another and deeper kind of history.

Though the reader may find this book somewhat strange, it is no more so than the author himself. Born of Communist parents, his mother divorced his father and latter married a black man. His half-sisters are 'coloured' and Kerridge himself, known as 'an expert on West Indians in Britain', seems to have inherited some of his mother's remarkable characteristics. From the many people he made friends with, Kerridge has learnt much, and we recall in reading him the works of George Borrow (whom he mentions) and also of other writers – William Cobbett, Hilaire Belloc and J.B. Priestley – whose influence is more subterranean. Like his literary predecessors, Kerridge is intensely aware of landscapes and skies, of wild life and farm animals, and more especially of people, whom he sees in their social and physical context with a naturalist's eye for detail.

The reader must be patient with the composition of the book – the rapid dashes from place to place are due not only to its compilation from previous articles, but also to the mercurial character of Kerridge himself. But practice will be rewarded, and the book is one not only to keep and re-read, but also to offer as a gift, to anyone who values eccentricity, whether in authors, or in those whom they describe.

ERRATUM

In the January issue of *The Salisbury Review* we erroneously referred to Lord Bauer as a Jew. He is a Christian of Jewish ethnic origin.

IN SHORT

L'École des Barbares, Isabel Stal & Françoise Thom, Paris, Julliard, 126 pp, 60 F. (2-260-00410-5)

Whatever causes we may assign to the destruction of the British education system, we should be careful to consider the parallel example of France. French teachers are well paid and, on the whole, respectfully treated; their curriculum and examinations have evolved during a century and a half of careful thought, with the Napoleonic purpose always to mind, and the spirits of finesse and geometry competing for ascendancy. And yet, as Mlles Stal and Thom eloquently show, the system is now in ruins, given over to leftist posturing, inane pseudo-subjects, and expressionist games. Examinations are despised as 'elitist', reading and writing are inculcated in accordance with theories that might have been devised by Bouvard and Pécuchet, and which ensure an ever-increasing population of dyslexics; serious disciplines are downgraded; the 'social sciences' (which are both unscientific and anti-social) take precedence over physics, chemistry and biology; foreign languages are steadily declining, while national literature and history are neglected in favour of third worldist attitudinising.

The authors write with relish and finesse, directing much of their polemic at those people who, possessing little education themselves, have set themselves up as 'experts' in education. One major cause of the present disaster, they argue, is the rise of 'education' (*pedagogie*) as an academic discipline. Like every false science, the authors argue, education theory has a 'totalitarian dynamic'. Being in competition with true knowledge, it must endeavour to annex and incorporate the results of rival disciplines, even if it must destroy them in doing so. The educationalist is therefore the dedicated enemy of education.

It would be comforting to think that the only reason why this book will have no influence upon our own educational theorists is that it is written in a foreign language.

(R.S.)

Antipolitics, an Essay, George Konrád, translated by Richard E. Allen, London, Quartet Books, 1984, £8.95, pp. 244, (0-7043-2472-5)

Those who harbour the belief that Eastern European dissidents – whose hearts and minds have been tried in the fire of the Great Socialist Experiment – will automatically understand the realities of the modern world, and scorn the fantasies that entice their Western colleagues, should pay careful attention to the rubbish produced by the post-war generation of Hungarians. Whether living in the West, like Agnes Heller, or enjoying, like György Konrád, the extraordinary privileges of the 'official dissident' in Budapest, the Hungarian dissenter has retained a remarkable capacity for self-deception, and a naivety that seems impermeable to all the assaults of political science.

In this essay, Konrád expounds an Eastern version of the 'convergence' thesis, arguing for the equal and opposite evil of the Soviet and American empires, and for the need for a 'popular movement' in Europe, dedicated to the destruction of the two 'power elites' that have caused the present crisis. Indifferent to, or ignorant of, the real differences between totalitarian and democratic government, unmoved by the idea of law, and with an understanding of sovereignty and alliance that has hardly advanced beyond the first perception of a jealous infant, Konrád treats his reader to what must be the most one-dimensional vision of Yalta yet to have emerged from those lands which have suffered its effect. By ignoring the fundamental distinctions between representation and dictatorship, and between influence and control, Konrád assumes NATO to involve the very same loss of sovereignty as is involved in the Warsaw Pact. His belief in the power of spontaneous social movements against Soviet tanks makes this book the most extraordinary monument to the folly of the intellectuals yet to have issued from the world which the intellectuals made.

(R.S.)

David Regan: *It Costs a Bomb, the Local Government Anti-Nuclear Campaign, Peace Through Nato*, 29 pp, £1.50. (0 9510994 0 X)

If you were ever disposed to think of the 'nuclear free zone' as an absurd and ineffective gimmick, of no more lasting political significance than the Festival of Britain or the London Marathon, then you should read the frightening analysis contained in this booklet. Not only does the idea provide local authorities with an excuse for unilateralist propaganda; it also provides the opportunity for large-scale disloyalty and rebellion under the guise of 'local government'. Civil defence is being undermined on an unprecedented scale – precisely at the moment when the Soviet Union is preparing its own population to fight and survive a modern war (including a war involving nuclear weapons). Rate payers' money is being squandered on 'peace officers', 'peace education', and 'public awareness campaigns'. The total cost of this operation during the five years that have elapsed since it first began amounts (at a conservative estimate) to ten million pounds. So argues Professor Regan, who adds that, while this may seem like a small sum if we are worrying about the waste of public funds, it is a very large sum indeed when judged by the standards of publicity campaigns concerning defence. More importantly, it represents a new kind of taxation, raised in defiance of constitutional procedures, in order to establish an independent and disloyal foreign policy contrary to that of our elected government. If the government does not act to prevent this, then is it not time that conservative local authorities raised a similar taxation, donating the result to bodies such as Peace through Nato, which are attempting to counteract the most unscrupulous propaganda campaign that our country has recently suffered?

(R.S.)

NICARAGUA: An Inside Look

WHO ARE THE SANDINISTAS? How did they come to power? How are they reshaping Nicaraguan life? What positions have Christians taken toward the revolution, and where have these positions led?

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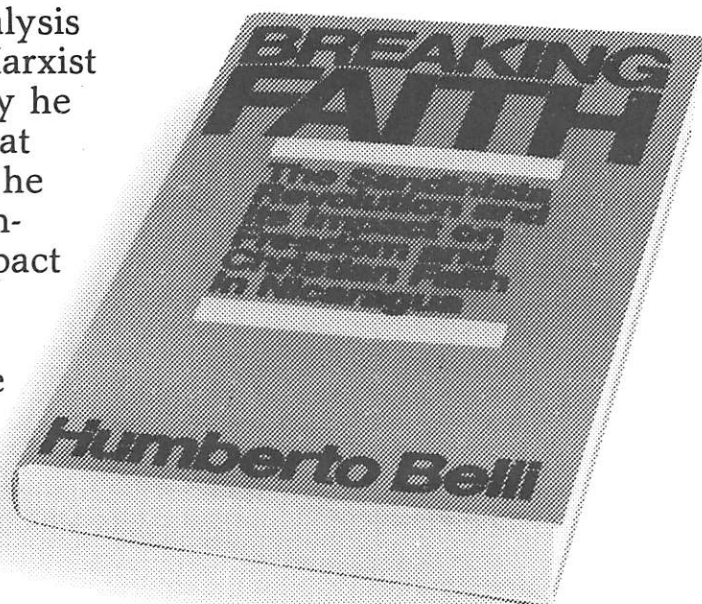
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