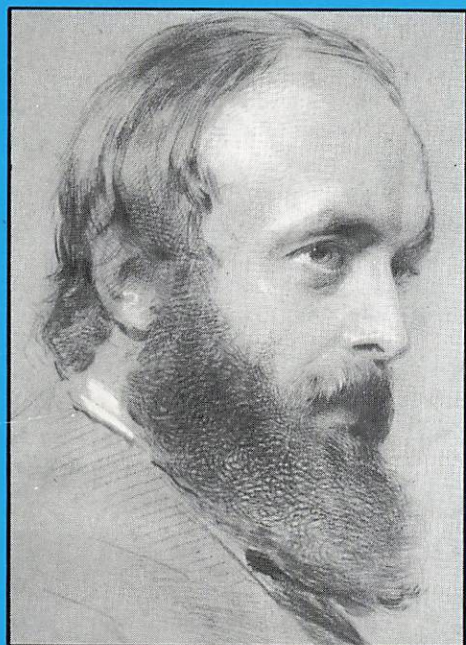


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At Loose in the Gulf
David Pryce-Jones

The Social Charter
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The Time I Met Mao
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The Case of William Shockley
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The Salisbury Review

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The Gulf War raised many questions - not the least being that of the loyalties of those who reported it. As David Pryce-Jones demonstrates, Robert Fisk - the most influential, if not the most intelligent, of our Middle Eastern correspondents - treated his readers to wild predictions, eccentric observations, and judgements calculated to undermine the conviction and morale of the allied armies. In this he was only applying to the Gulf the formulae that he had perfected in the Lebanon: ridiculing Western attempts at self-assertion, relentlessly exposing the weakness and corruption of our allies and sympathisers, and crowning his chosen 'victims' (usually Palestinians) with a martyr's halo. Throughout the crisis such 'experts' as Fisk could be found on the thrones of public opinion, broadcasting their subversive propaganda to the world, and laughingly dismissing all rival opinions as the self-serving fantasies of Western power.

Equally obnoxious was Fred Halliday, the New Leftist professor of 'International Relations' at LSE and former fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam - an institute whose main function seems to have been the propagation of communist ideology. Halliday was the author of a ridiculous book (*Arabia without Sultans*), which attacked the frail monarchies of Arabia at the very moment when they had become the object of Soviet subversion: since then he has been regarded by the Left (and therefore by the media) as a leading expert on the region. It may be that 'International Relations' is a serious academic discipline - though where the borderline is drawn between impartial theory and political prejudice is anybody's guess. But it is surely strange that a professor in this subject should have been consistently wrong about his field of study, and yet honoured by the media with the mantle of scientific authority. Equally remarkable were the antics of our old friend, the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, which offered illuminating and deeply pondered judgements of the kind reproduced here in Sophists' Corner.

Such examples lead one to ask what is really happening to British intellectuals, that they should be so detached from the surrounding reality, and so little able to consider it with the critical impartiality that is the principal benefit of an educated outlook. As Michael Dan-

ikas shows, in considering the case of William Shockley, objective scholarship is of comparatively little benefit in securing an academic reputation, and can always be set at nought by the thought-police. And in those subjects where the writ of science does not run - the humanities, which form the backbone of higher education in the Western world, and the primary induction for our elites into the life of the mind - an attitude of comprehensive subversion, directed not only at the contemporary social order, but at the entire history and culture which produced it, is now little short of orthodoxy. The intellectual is no longer the critic of culture, such at least is the burden of Geoffrey Strickland's argument, but its parasite and enemy. The university is useful to him for the opportunity that it provides, to ensure that the minds of the younger generation are overcome by the same spirit of disaffection that rules in his own. It is a comic paradox, that universities make such belligerent demands on the public purse, when the money that is poured into them is used to ridicule those who provide it.

The same spirit of repudiation that animates the 'deconstructionists' in our academic departments inspires those producers who sanitise and satirise the artistic masterpieces of our culture. As Robert Grant argues, works like Mozart's *Magic Flute* pose a great challenge to the debunkers. For they plead in the midst of moral chaos for the higher nature of humanity, a fact which renders them both embarrassing to the spirit of mockery, and inspiring to those who wish to believe that not everything is meaningless. It becomes imperative to 'disenchant' the masterworks of art to serve them up in dismembered fragments, from which all divinity has fled. When religion has withered first into anthropology, and then into a faithless 'struggle' for earthly liberation, only art retains its sacred purpose. So art must be desacralised, made arbitrary and indistinct, lest the seeds of human dignity should once again be sown through it.

Not that the religious instinct can ever be abolished: always it will re-emerge, as the story of 'deep ecology', told here by Anna Bramwell, illustrates. Perhaps, however, it is time to reflect on the steps that brought us to such follies, to study how we might retrace them.

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Conservative Journals: *JUNGE FREIHEIT*

What does conservatism mean in modern Germany? The question does not concern only us, who view this over-rich and conscience-stricken nation from outside; it also concerns the Germans themselves, as they come to terms with their post-war history and study how to heal the wounds inflicted on them by their own romantic philosophers. Even in England, where a 'Conservative Party' wins the majority of elections, it is not usually wise to reveal that one is a conservative. In Germany the very word is suspect, and those who dare to describe themselves by means of it are in for a hard time among their intellectual colleagues.

For all that, the occasional journal of conservative opinion emerges in Germany, and young people are beginning to describe themselves in the once forbidden terms. *Junge Freiheit*, now in its sixth year of publication, is the voice of the new generation of conservatives, which has set itself the task of both commenting on the divided world of modern Germany, and re-defining the conservative response to it. Wide-ranging, seriously intellectual, and with a strong interest in culture, *Junge Freiheit* sees Germany not merely as a part of Europe, but as a true and committed member of the Western alliance, with a responsibility towards the future of our continent that is incompatible with habitual self-indul-

gence. The issue from March of this year contains a scathing attack by Jutta Winckler, on the 'Biedermeier' politics of the German (and French) New Right, with its sentimental yearning for a 'third way' that will be neither international socialism, nor international capitalism, but wholly specific to the *Bildungsidee* of Europe. Other articles emphasise the need for Germany not merely to enjoy her freedoms, but to make real sacrifices in defence of them, and a certain shame-faced disappointment with Kohl's recent behaviour towards the allies in the Gulf War can be read between the lines.

The journal pursues no party line, and encourages debate on all social and cultural matters which are relevant to the definition of a serious anti-socialist politics. In so far as the journal offers any firm definition of conservatism, it is in terms of Arnold Gehlen's view of man, as a creature of insufficiency, a *Mangelwesen*. If Germans are to discover that there is more to conservatism than that, it will be partly because journals like *Junge Freiheit* permit the matter to be discussed after decades of silence.

Junge Freiheit is published monthly, annual subscription 36 DM, from Postfach 147, 7801 Stegen/Freiburg.

The Disenchanted Flute

Robert Grant

Much of what follows was first provoked by Jonathan Miller's 1983 Scottish Opera production of *The Magic Flute*, which has subsequently enjoyed three revivals, including a prolonged London run in 1986. Nevertheless, productions of Mozart's great work nowadays come so thick and fast that no sooner has one's view of it stabilised, than one is obliged to revise or extend it to accommodate, or more usually denounce, some new 'angle' on offer.

One reason why *The Magic Flute* lends itself to so many different interpretations - if we think that 'interpretations' rather than mere performances are called for - is simply that, at least on the surface, it is a work of genuine, and deliberate, ambiguity. Another is that Schikaneder's libretto - greatly admired, incidentally, by Goethe, who wrote a sequel to it - is so familiar that it can survive, and therefore invites, a great deal of directorial abuse. More especially, Mozart's miraculous score, alternating between catchy Viennese vaudeville and the most awesome, soul-transfixing sublimities, can keep almost any production afloat. I say 'almost', because recently the American director Peter Sellars - it was his notorious 1990 Glyndebourne production, on tour in Glasgow - succeeded in driving me out at half-time; not, to be sure, in rage (forewarned, I had installed myself in a cheap seat), but simply because there seemed no particular point in staying.

I shall return to Mr Sellars, Dr Miller, and their respective 'angles' in due course. But the general objection to all such so-called 'concept productions' is worth stating at the outset. Art, so Hegel asserted, is 'the sensuous embodiment of the Idea'. The universe is the one great Thought of the one great Mind, thought and mind are identical, and it is only through art and other self-objectifications that the universal Mind rises into full self-consciousness. But we need not share, or even wholly understand, Hegel's tortuous metaphysics to see that a work of art is actually more complete, more fully real, than the unformed, embryonic ideas and impulses which have (supposedly) sought expression in it.

It follows that to interpret a work of art by reference to the 'concepts' from which it allegedly derives, let alone any extraneous ones, must be fundamentally mistaken. For, in its detailed concrete embodiment, the form which the artist has given it, the work has already achieved its maximum identity, articulation or expressiveness. So far from clarifying or expanding its meaning, the 'concept production' actually narrows and obscures it. Even when not forcing the work to voice his own opinions (the worst kind of 'concept production'), the director reduces it to meanings necessarily more abstract and hypothetical, and hence less determinable, than those it bears on its surface.

'Concept productions' are the artistic equivalent of ideological politics, and are often 'political' themselves. In the end the appeal of the 'concept', in both life and

art, lies in the fact that, to a certain disposition, abstractions are more comforting, because more easily grasped, than concrete experience.¹ The treasure-house of experience is accessible only to wisdom and humility. It is not to be unlocked by some simple piece of ideological ironmongery. For some, however, that counts for nothing compared with the feel of the key in one's pocket.

But surely, it will be said, *The Magic Flute* deals precisely in 'concepts' of this kind, and on its surface, too. What else, for example, are the Reason, Wisdom and Nature to which Sarastro's three temples are dedicated? *The Magic Flute*, we may reply, is one of the few works of its period that can actually breathe life into such apparently desiccated Enlightenment abstractions. The reason is that they were never dead in the first place. In *The Magic Flute* at least, they are not abstractions, but distillates; certainly from the life imagined in the work, and very probably from the 'real' world also. Here we understand, as we do in Goethe or Jane Austen, how those things might govern our own lives, and why it would be good if they did. Like Shakespeare's *Tempest*, which it somewhat resembles,² *The Magic Flute* movingly celebrates nobility, rationality and self-command as the true ends of human life and the highest happiness for either sex.

Contrary perhaps to appearances, *The Magic Flute* is by no means 'sexist'.³ If the vengeful Queen of the Night represents the supposedly 'feminine' vice of ungoverned passion, she has her masculine counterpart in the lustful Moor Monostatos, her natural, and eventual, ally (Goethe, by the way, married them off). Pamina, the Queen's daughter, but in love with the virtuous Tamino, is admitted as an equal to Sarastro's enlightened brotherhood (despite some of the brothers' grumblings about women), while Papageno, the well-meaning but unheroic and monotonously earthbound representative of the 'common man', is excluded.

Papageno (it may be added for those unfamiliar with the opera) is the Queen's bird-catcher, ordered by the Queen, despite his vigorously-expressed reluctance, to accompany Tamino on his mission. This mission is to 'rescue' Pamina from the supposed wicked tyrant Sarastro, to whose care, as it turns out, Pamina's late father has committed her, and who has accordingly abducted her from her mother. Papagena, as her name indicates, is Papageno's female opposite number, given him to wife by Sarastro. Their goal in life is the mass-production of endless miniature versions of themselves in cosy domestic bliss. *The Magic Flute* is obviously inegalitarian, in that it emphasises degrees of moral worth, and sees power as most properly to be bestowed on the higher. Nevertheless, as befits a work of wisdom and humanity, it awards consolation prizes to the morally less gifted, so that each may be happy in his own way.

In all of this there are obvious Platonic echoes. Yet *The Magic Flute* is not rigidly authoritarian in the manner

usually imputed to the Republic. It stresses the importance of authority primarily as being a necessary prelude to the subject's autonomy, and as something ideally to be exercised only in a spirit of love and humane concern. In short, what we have is a fable about education; specifically, moral education. For all its pantomime vivacity, *The Magic Flute* is at bottom deeply serious, what one might call a *Bildungsoper*. The goal of such an education is the harmonious development, virtue and rational freedom of the recipient, his or her Aristotelian *eudaimonia*.⁴ That is our inner *telos*, the destiny implanted in us by Nature, a goal which it is both our duty and our fulfilment, through our social institutions and relationships, to realise. Thus, at least in its ideal form, authority, like society, is merely another name for Nature.

The idea of moral (or as the French would say, sentimental) education is central to all Mozart's mature operas, which include three to libretti by Lorenzo da Ponte. In those, more explicitly even than in *The Magic Flute*, relations between the sexes, and our erotic constitution, are the focus of the educational endeavour. The da Ponte operas lack any central, all-wise Sarastro-figure to direct things. But they too are Aristotelian in outlook, even though, in *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan Tutte*, the *telos* is not made explicit. Nevertheless, in those two works as in all the others, the erotic ideal is that attributed by a Victorian critic to Jane Austen, viz. 'intelligent love'.⁵ It is disclosed, not directly, but through its manifest contraries: the heartless promiscuity of Don Giovanni; the self-indulgent romantic idealism of the sisters in *Così* (compare Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*); the mercenary realism of Despina (excusable, however, as the natural survival-morality of the servant class); and the worldly cynicism of Don Alfonso.⁶

None of these, no matter how lyrically expressed in the music, is really love, and in the last instance (though it concerns love) obviously not. On the other hand, Donna Elvira's magnanimous, hopeless loyalty to her seducer, though it is love, can hardly be called 'intelligent'. Nor, surely, can the ordinary, unideal peasant loves of Masetto and Zerlina (who after all very nearly succumbs to Don Giovanni, and at her own wedding feast too). As for Donna Anna and her fiancé, their devotion (which on one reading stems primarily from their shared, high-falutin' devotion to the proprieties) is surely too callow, moralistic and untried to serve as any sort of ideal. (It is still less suitable if we imagine that she is using it to conceal Don Giovanni's attempt to seduce her, and particularly if, as some think, his attempt is supposed to have been successful).

The *Marriage of Figaro*, however, is a different matter. All the major characters, in the end, come out the better for their ordeals (the 'ordeal' is a constant Mozartian device, whether or not, as in the *Flute*, it forms part of an actual ritual). Consequently the erotic *telos* is more visible. Unlike Zerlina and Masetto, Figaro and Susanna are intelligent, capable and aware, and neither clownish nor impressed by rank. Their master, the philandering Count, regards his servants' novel claim to be treated as individuals and moral equals simply as arrogance (though the arrogance is, of course, his). Their unpretentious 'normal' love survives both his lascivious schemings and the confusions and jealousies spawned by their counter-

intrigue, which they have undertaken in alliance with the Countess, and partly out of sympathy for her. The Countess is bourgeois by upbringing, but her simple, stoical yearning for her unfeeling aristocratic husband's affection is vindicated not only by its intrinsic nobility (she shows none of Elvira's intermittent, if excusable, vengefulness), but also by its sheer power of endurance and by its reward, the recovery of his love. The Count, because he has not abandoned all shame, proves to be a morally-educable Don Giovanni. His honour overpowers the arrogance with which it is otherwise naturally entwined, and compels him, when his designs are exposed, publicly to humble himself before his wronged wife and movingly to seek her forgiveness.

With the sole exception of Don Giovanni (who is a special case),⁷ love in Mozart is always potentially educable. The reason is that, unlike for Freud (who saw things the other way round), the higher love is implicit in, and thus acknowledged by, the lower. The lower consequently aims at, or (in the Goethean phrase) is 'drawn upwards' towards, the higher, to whatever level it proves capable of sustaining. It is, so to speak, justified by the overall *telos*, even though it may never attain it. It would be (literally) preposterous to see, say, Papageno's love as a 'sublimation' of Monostatos' lust for Pamina, and Tamino's love as a further 'sublimation' of Papageno's. That way, everything reduces to lust. As Monostatos himself is aware, the truth is that even his lust contains the seeds of a mature love. Lust and love, as in Wagner's *Ring*, are not radical Platonic opposites, but points on a single ascending scale; one, however, calibrated from the top, not the bottom.

Perhaps the most compelling illustration of this principle is Cherubino, the page-boy in *Figaro*. Kierkegaard called Cherubino a youthful Don Giovanni. It would be truer to say that Don Giovanni is a coarser, more calculating Cherubino grown yet more so with age: one who has failed to mature, yet who is too old any longer to plead innocence. Actually, and amusing though it also is, Cherubino's frenzied infatuation with every woman in the cast, even at a pinch (he says) the decidedly seasoned Marcellina ('*ogni donna mi fa palpitar*'), is a tender and exquisite thing which cannot fail to move anyone who has ever been in love. For love is what Cherubino's passion is, even if it has not yet learnt fully to individualise its object. One cannot doubt his eventual ability to achieve that *ne plus ultra* of the exotic life.⁸

All Mozart's later stage works, but particularly his last, *The Magic Flute*, testify to the complexity of human things. *The Magic Flute* transforms the popular Viennese *Zauberoper* (magic opera) from a simple fairy-tale entertainment into genuine, proto-Symbolist music-drama. (It stands to it roughly as Hamlet stands to Elizabethan revenge-tragedy: it uses the conventional materials, but diverts them to different, or even contrary, ends). No enlightened thinking, not even of the kind commended in the opera itself, could reduce it to a play of mere 'concepts'. The work is full of superficially puzzling inconsistencies. One of the most notorious is that the magic flute itself, Papageno's magic bells, and the Three Boys, though employed in the good Sarastro's cause, were originally gifts of the Queen of the Night. (The flute was actually made by Pamina's father). Several

critics, among them Brigid Brophy, have adduced this as evidence of a last-minute change of plot. Such a mid-stream volte-face, if it were believable, would indeed make nonsense of the work as we have it, and fully justify Tolstoy's and others' strictures.⁹

But we need not appeal to Hegel's 'cunning of Reason' (which can be used to resolve any paradox whatever) to dismiss all such suppositions as groundless. One might just as well ask why the villainous Monostatos is found in Sarastro's service. In fact, Monostatos' servitude, like Caliban's to Prospero, seems doubly justified: it is useful in itself, and also holds his more dangerous propensities in check. It also suggests that even Sarastro's wisdom cannot be wholly pure or effortless, for it depends upon his continuously mastering the residual Monostatos-element in himself and putting it to use in the form (if this is not too Freudian) of his justified anger against Monostatos and the Queen. And in fact Monostatos, the slave-master, is a kind of parody-Sarastro, though one who rules, as he perceives himself to be ruled (and as Sarastro is compelled to rule him), solely by fear, where Sarastro's rule over his more 'rational' subjects is based on love (and hence consent).

Per contra, it seems similarly intelligible that some of the Queen's instruments - of which, after all, Tamino was originally one - should prove apt for higher purposes. She represents, no doubt, unregenerate 'natural' humanity, the animal endowment which we share with the giant snake from which Tamino has to be rescued, with the wild beasts tamed by the flute, and with the lions yoked to Sarastro's chariot; but this 'natural' endowment, as I have already suggested, contains within itself the means and the principle of its own redemptive transformation, even in Monostatos' case.

The Queen herself, however, appears to be uniquely incorrigible. She exploits her daughter's instinctive filial attachment by trying emotionally to blackmail her into murdering Sarastro, subsequently promising her to her assailant Monostatos (as she has earlier done to Tamino) in return for his assistance. Pamina's mother-love, though, does conform to the overall pattern, since, though finally abandoned as too good for its object, it is recognisably the prototype of her attachment to Tamino, Sarastro, humankind, and the ways of wisdom generally. The insight is thoroughly Burkean and Hegelian; which is only to say, Aristotelian all over again.

As for the flute, the bells, and the Three Boys, in a purely historical perspective they are no more than stock *Zauberoper* devices, used to effect apparently arbitrary *deus ex machina* escapes from this or that narrative impasse. In the context of *The Magic Flute*, however, they are more plausibly to be seen as a recognition of the sheer incalculability of human affairs, or, if you prefer, of the role played in them by providence.

Here one might well invoke the 'cunning of Reason', which (to speak fancifully) can turn even the *Zauberoper* to its own purposes. *The Magic Flute* is the fountainhead of the whole subsequent central tradition of German opera. In it, as in *Der Freischütz*, *Tristan* or *Hansel und Gretel*, magic signifies less a means of manipulating Nature to our advantage, than Nature's ultimate refusal to be so manipulated, its propensity in the end to redouble our selfish designs upon our own heads, to

reward our constancy and trust, and generally, through its secret workings in the very depths of human choice, to liberate or to bind us as we deserve, or even as we have unconsciously willed that our lives and fates shall turn out. This popular 'magic' dimension becomes a symbol of how our destinies are each mysteriously interwoven with the others, in a manner and by an agency which, except through such symbols, we cannot hope to understand. The real magic is Nature itself, and our part in the never-ending drama it enacts.¹⁰ (The same principle, recast in explicitly religious idiom, can be seen in *Parzival*, where, much as the Queen's superstitious 'darkness' is finally put to flight by the 'sunlit' forces of enlightenment, Klingsor's unholy instrumental magic is annihilated in the all-encompassing miracle of the Christian dispensation).

Hence the necessity of art, if such things are really the case, and its interest if not. Hence also the folly, in such matters, of attempting to replace it by some totally inadequate 'concept'. The consequence of so doing (as also the cause) is that rationalising 'disenchantment of the world' which Schiller was the first to remark, which Weber subsequently identified as the essence of the modern condition, and which only art (or religion, if we can bring ourselves to believe in it) can nowadays successfully avert or reverse.

Let us now return to Mr Sellars' *Magic Flute*. The location was not a legendary Ancient Egypt, but his native California. Tamino, a denim-clad drifter, appeared amid an asphalt jungle of interweaving Los Angeles freeways, a near-enough equivalent, in some ways, to the rocky wilderness specified in the text. Mr Sellars had him rolling around in some kind of agonising, doubtless drug-related, trance. The giant snake pursuing him, therefore, presumably existed only in his head, since it was nowhere to be seen, unless the Spaghetti Junction-like surroundings had somehow suggested it.

There being no snake, the Three Ladies obviously required no silver javelins with which to kill it. As in the original, they were veiled, but merely in a token sense, sporting as they did little broad-mesh nets beneath their smart plum-coloured toques, which matched their smart plum-coloured twinsets, shoes and stockings. I could not decide whether they signified female Middle America on its way to church, or some camp whorehouse parody of the same. No doubt, since their sex appeal is dramatically important, Mr Sellars (and here, perhaps, even the authors) would say that I had got precisely the point.

With Papageno's entrance, the scene changed in a twinkling to a Californian beach, that was (I suppose) suggesting the hedonistic, unexamined life he is supposed to typify. (The life which, unlike Papageno's creators, Plato said was not worth living). The Queen of the Night (the scene, bewilderingly, now being a filling station, doubtless indicative of transition) wore the same outfit as her Ladies, only appropriately enough in royal blue. I fancy she carried a prayer book. Pamina's portrait (with which Tamino falls in love at first sight) appeared on a suddenly materialised portable TV set.

I suppose if your suburban daughter has been abducted by some hippy patriarchal guru it makes sense to approach someone roughly from that class of humanity

for help in finding her, as Mr Sellars' Queen did. Sarastro turned out to be just such a personage.

He inhabited what looked like the basement of a multi-storey car park, and mysteriously wore some sort of gilded phylactery, displaced Wotanesque eye-patch, or possibly miniature radar nacelle, on his forehead. His disciples (some of them saffron-clad) suggested the Hari Krishna movement, or followers of the infamous Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh; in the intervals of roughing Pamina up a bit, Sarastro appeared to rule them, too, with a rod of iron. And so on. I myself had begun to drop out earlier, when my prediction that the Three Boys could only appear on skateboards was less than miraculously fulfilled. I did not stay for the second act; someone told me later that Papagena, when she appears to Papageno disguised as an ugly old woman, entered in the near-statutory wheelchair.

Its narrative details are absolutely crucial to an understanding of *The Magic Flute*. Most are divulged through the spoken dialogue (which, incidentally, makes the *Flute* technically not an opera but a *Singspiel*, or as we would say, a musical). Indeed, it is hard to see how they could otherwise be got across with the requisite force, speed and clarity. However, during his first act, Mr Sellars dispensed entirely with dialogue. Instead, and as befits the rule of the 'concept', imprecise and often crudely debunking summaries of the action were thrown up from time to time on an electronic bulletin board at the foot of the stage. I do not see how anyone unfamiliar with *The Magic Flute* could have had the faintest idea of what was going on, either in Mozart's version or in Mr Sellars' paraphrase.

Mr Sellars' 'concept' certainly made a kind of internal dramatic sense. If, for whatever reason, you insist on setting the opera in modern California, your equivalents for the original characters and locations must be both an atrociously bad fit with what Mozart and Schikaneder intended, and something like what Mr Sellars actually offered. The simplest solution to this problem, I submit, is not to set *The Magic Flute* in modern California at all. (Although California is more plausible than the usual 'alternative' *mise en scène*: a nuclear submarine, say, a nudist colony, a concentration camp, on the moon). As things were, the overall effect of Mr Sellars' settings, and of the characterisations they necessarily entailed, was to inoculate everything in the original with a rootless, typically Modernist (or rather post-Modernist) irony, at once vaguely jokey and vaguely nihilistic, so that not merely the Queen of the Night, but Sarastro too, and their respective camps, seemed equally disreputable.

But how far, it may be asked, are we obliged to observe the author's intentions when producing a dramatic work (or indeed when reading or viewing a non-dramatic work, where the element of performance is absent?) Some learned ink, and an infinitely greater amount of pretentious drivel, have been lavished upon this topic. Suffice it to say here that, although both a work of art and a work of nature may have aesthetic properties, the difference between them is the recognisable, explicit presence in a work of art (as its name implies) of human intention. (Thus post-structuralists and others who deny the reality, or relevance, of intention obliterate the fundamental distinction between art and nature).

Of course, it is very hard to pin down exactly what artistic intention is. A work of art is not a declarative or indicative utterance, but fictional. It is not meant to be 'true', at least not in the normal, referential sense. Its illocutionary structure is not of the kind 'S', where S is a propositional statement, but something more like this: 'Imagine that S'. In the latter case there is no presumption whatever that S is either true or possible, and no literal or 'serious' attempt to persuade the audience that it is. Nevertheless, 'Imagine that S' is a perfectly genuine utterance; someone chose to utter it, and decided also that S should be constituted thus and not otherwise, should exhibit these features rather than those. He counted, moreover, on his audience's recognising that he was trying to do something, and what it was. Of course, he may have misjudged his audience, he may have miscalculated his means, his whole project may have been incoherent, and his audience in any case are in no way obliged to endorse what they imagine him either to have wished to do or actually to have done. They are, however, obliged to acknowledge that his intention exists, and to ascertain to the best of their abilities what it is.

Once we have identified the so-called 'author's meaning', however, our understanding of a work of art is far from exhausted. The work has other, perfectly real, but unintended, meanings. Some will be internal, consisting of visible features to which the author himself may have attached no special significance, or might even, when they are pointed out, deny having intended, but which are nevertheless there. In fact, were it not for their being substantially unintended, we might almost include them under 'author's meaning', since the only 'author's meaning' which can concern us is the one perceptible in the work, and the work, as I have said earlier, already represents its notional underlying 'idea' in the highest possible degree of articulation. No recourse to the author's independent testimony as to what he supposed he 'meant' (should any be available) can ever be more authoritative, interpretatively speaking, than the work itself, though it may of course be a valuable adjunct to interpretation.

Other meanings will be external, consisting of which-ever among the work's observable relations to other events and utterances are not (so to speak) self-conscious, built into it, or simply taken for granted, and which the author consequently could not have intended. To take an extreme example, the aforementioned resemblance of *The Magic Flute* to its successors obviously could not have been 'intended' by its authors, but it is a real fact about the opera and (I hope) throws genuine light on it, being part of both its objective and its wider significance.

The anti-intentionalist New Critics were right thus far, that a work of art is a public object, over which the author has no absolute proprietary rights and no monopoly of interpretation. But none of this affects the fact that there is an 'author's meaning', that it is a real, central part of his work, and if that, if we discount it, we in effect denature his utterance and substitute for it some convenient fiction of our own. Why we are obliged to determine what the author meant, or (on the evidence of the work) thought he meant, is in the end simply this:

that if we do not, we shall be talking not about the work as it is, but about something else.

Modernism characteristically treats all utterances, fictional and non-fictional alike, as though they were, precisely, something else: as passive, quasi-natural products, symptoms or indices of some determining process wholly external to, and exclusive of, the intentions of their supposed 'authors'. Generally speaking we call such approaches reductionist. On such a reckoning a play or a novel, like any other human expression (a simple statement, say, or a whole philosophy of life), may be simply an epiphenomenon of economic relations and forces, of the author's supposed genetic inheritance, or of his 'unconscious' psycho-biography. I do not say that all such explanations must be absolutely false, though most are (and many, in their insistently de-personalising approach, clearly reflect the totalitarian current in Twentieth Century thought). What I do say is that even when otherwise plausible, as (so to speak) secondary explanations, if they persist in regarding utterances as no more than 'products' external to the utterer's intention (or in regarding his intention as somehow not 'really' his, i.e. as external to himself), they have nothing important to tell us. Quite simply, they have mistaken their object. An explanation which begins by discounting or 'bracketing out' the self-understanding, where it exists, of the thing explained is no explanation at all, since such a self-understanding (or 'author's meaning') is part of its intrinsic nature. Explanation cannot even begin until it is known what is being explained, and that is precisely what an understanding at the primary or spontaneous level establishes, however much such an understanding may (as usually happens) be modified by subsequent explanation.

I have already suggested that Mr Sellars' conception was post-Modernist rather than Modernist proper. The parallel he drew between *The Magic Flute* and modern California was purely decorative; it led nowhere, it illuminated nothing, and its 'point' consisted only of a would-be playful distortion of merely formal similarities into a kind of spurious, mocking identity ('California is full of gurus; Sarastro is a sort of guru; so hey, what say we make Sarastro a Californian guru?' etc., etc). It was, to outward appearances, the well-worn formula of 'relevance', but a 'relevance' stripped of the frenetic, news-reel urgency with which an old-fashioned Marxist director such as Friedrich would have endowed it. (Friedrich it was who, in the final chorus of *Fidelio*, equipped his freed prisoners with PLO headgear and Kalashnikov rifles).

This much, at least, could be said for the Marxist vision: whenever one lived, and particularly now, the times were (as the ancient Chinese curse has it) unfailingly 'interesting'. Everything bristled with significance, or simmered, however distant the imagined catastrophe, with a sense of impending crisis. Life became a heady blend of thriller and soap opera; it possessed the hieroglyphic pregnancy appropriate to what, in Marxist hands, it actually was, a work of fiction. Much of Marxism's imaginative appeal, indeed, lay precisely in its ability to treat life as art and art as life. But even before the collapse of Communism, the coach, in which we were to have sped along the high road of history to its

dimly-glimpsed but festive terminus, had reverted to a pumpkin. 'Relevance' had already become irrelevant, before Mr Sellars woke up to and celebrated the fact. So far was he from finding his own times 'interesting' (except as a pile of oddments for collage) that one suspected he really found nothing of any consequence except himself, his kind, and his ideal audience (the real one booed him vigorously).

So much for post-Modernism. But, alongside it, for the past decade, and (at first) almost entirely inside the academies, another approach has been developing which at first sight seems to be the natural alternative, or even antidote, to 'relevance'. I mean the attempt, familiar from 'authentic' musical performances, and necessarily dependent on scholarship, to restore the work of art to its original context. (The so-called New Historicism - when not simply a revamped Old Marxism - is a variant of this impulse). But this may be less a cure than yet another manifestation of the reductionist disease. For when we say 'restore', do we not often mean 'reduce' all over again? Are we not really saying that a work can now be 'relevant' only to its own time, and as such imaginatively opaque to every other?

Which brings me at last to Jonathan Miller.¹¹ Some of Dr Miller's essays in Mozart have been by no means unattractive or unpersuasive. (He has directed, as I recall, two good *Cosis* and a more than passable *Don Giovanni*). The production of which I speak, however, was a very un-magic *Flute* indeed. It was a veritable festival of disenchantment, worked out with admirable consistency and a desolating, pitiless intelligence. It was not a performance, but an explanation.

Dr Miller saw *The Magic Flute* deliberately from the outside, as a bookish Enlightenment fantasy, a quite literal dream of reason. A young *philosophe* had fallen asleep, exhausted, in a colossal Eighteenth Century library (the latter suggested by Boullée's visionary designs for a *Bibliothèque Nationale*). All the ensuing action, which the library framed throughout, was presented as his dream, in which he became Tamino, and his fellow-scholars Sarastro's initiates.¹²

It is well known that the opera is in part an allegory of the Empress Maria Theresa's battle against Freemasonry - the Egyptian backdrop, the rule of silence, the initiation rituals, the brotherhood, etc., are all recognisably Masonic¹³ - but by explicitly cashing these and other allusions, Dr Miller excluded every wider resonance. Thus Sarastro and his followers were not Egyptian priests, but (as one reviewer pithily put it) 'Zoffany gentlemen', actual Eighteenth Century Masons, complete with insignia; the Queen of the Night and her Ladies became pious Catholic frumps, heavily upholstered in funereal black, with not a spark of the blazingly unscrupulous femininity that first seduces Tamino into the Queen's party. For sheer non-sexiness, however, they were far outclassed by Sarastro's womenfolk, a bunch of earnest rationalist scarecrows in pointedly shapeless, utilitarian garb. Invited to choose between these competing value-systems, any normal Tamino and Pamina would have settled for a Caribbean holiday instead, or just taken the money. (Thus Dr Miller succeeded quite as well as Mr Sellars in flattening out the essential ethical distinctions).

Dr Miller's *Flute* contained Marxisant and Freudian elements, but they were peripheral, plausible as far as they went, and neither crude nor obtrusive. His main achievement was to put the work under historical house arrest, forbidding it, on pain of irrelevance, ever again to make its regular way to our distant modern hearts. His aim was not to transmit or to recreate its meaning, but simply to account for it, by locking it elegantly and immovably into its period context, so that, curiosity once gratified, nothing remained to disturb our Olympian indifference. The overall effect indeed resembled that of an 'authentic' performance, though the approach was entirely different, suggesting rather the methods of Lucien Goldmann improbably translated to the stage. Emotionally speaking, the work could hardly have been made more inaccessible had it been tortured instead (by Friedrich, say) into a shriek of up-to-the-minute 'relevance'.

Explanation is the business of the historian and the critic. Even they can overdo it, and explain things to death, or quite literally away. The director's task is not to explain, but to realise the work at its maximum of transparency, so that we perceive it not as an arbitrary intersection of causes and circumstances, still less as fossil fuel for the never-ending political 'struggle', but as a complex intentional utterance, with its various strands of significance as harmoniously and intelligibly displayed as the work itself permits. (It follows that where a genuine ambiguity exists, whether or not 'intended', the director should as far as possible incorporate it into his production as it stands, and not come down on one side or the other). A crucial explanation which even Dr Miller forebore to provide is why, if *The Magic Flute* is no more than a quaint memorial to bygone ideology, it should still retain its immense power to move us. Could it not be that Mozart and Schikaneder - like Goethe, who so admired them - espoused Freemasonry because for them it embodied certain universal values, and that those values, rather than Freemasonry specifically, are the subject of the opera, and why we still respond to it?

That, at least, seemed to be Ingmar Bergman's message in his 1975 film of *The Magic Flute*, which contained no Masonic references, and none of them overt, beyond those already specified in the libretto. For the most part, and despite Bergman's masterly use of specifically cinematic techniques (cuts, close-ups, etc.), the film depicted a straightforward stage performance, in Swedish,

in a replica of the Eighteenth Century palace theatre at Drottningholm, using what looked like period sets and props. (Though these seemed in no way dated, being, like the work itself, directly continuous with modern pantomime, even to the pull-down song sheets). We saw the stage machinery at work, and the performers coming and going behind the scenes. In the interval Sarastro was seen backstage conning the score of *Parsifal*, while one of Monostatos' slaves read a comic book, a perfect nutshell summary of the opera's dual aspect. The Queen of the Night, meanwhile, was smoking defiantly underneath a no-smoking sign.

So far from producing a Brechtian 'alienation effect', these apparent obstacles to dramatic illusion were raised only in order that the work itself, transcending its immediate historical circumstances and the deliberate provincialities of the performance, should triumphantly bear them all down before it to take us by storm. We saw a lot of the theatre audience. They were young and old, children and adults, male and female, black, white, brown and yellow, some in exotic national dress. Pensive or ecstatic, all were shown as enthralled.

Perhaps, if we had not grown accustomed to stupify ourselves with clever explanations, Bergman could have left the universality of great art to speak for itself. But this is to cavil: Bergman's is not only, I believe, one of the few very great films in existence (and one which, simply *qua* film, will repay almost endless study), but also irresistibly moving and 'right'. Everything, from the comic to the sublime, is unerringly treated at exactly the appropriate level of seriousness, with no sense of strain when switching between modes. Like the original, Bergman's film (unusual in being tied to a text, that is, in being also, or for the most part, a performance), is a work of enormous humanity and intelligence. It is surely the definitive *Magic Flute* for our time or any other.

Which makes Dr Miller, and even more so Mr Sellars, somewhat superfluous. In both the surface ingenuity is the index of a peculiar underlying faithlessness, of a failure of grasp that is also a moral failure. (As Buber would say, to them *The Magic Flute* is not a 'Thou' but an 'It'). Though not one to advertise the fact, Bergman is no less sophisticated than they, and much more accomplished. His *Magic Flute* is a work of true love, and of the intimate understanding which proceeds from it. Mozart and Schikaneder would surely have agreed, had they somehow survived to see it¹⁴.

Notes

1. See Pascal, *Pensées*.

2. A resemblance first noted by E.J. Dent, *Mozart's Operas*, 1913. It appears that Mozart had actually taken sketches for an operatic version of *The Tempest* shortly before his death.

3. Nor, I think, 'racist'. On encountering Monostatos the otherwise complacently unenlightened Papageno, who has never heard of, let alone seen, a black man, affably reflects that since there are black birds, there is no reason why there shouldn't be black men too. Monostatos himself momentarily rises into grace, and gains our sympathy, when (like Shylock) he reflects that he too is flesh and blood, and knows what love is (see main text).

Monostatos' fatal error is to suppose (as many, perhaps most, racists do, though there seem to be none in the opera) that it is his blackness which makes him repulsive rather than his manners, and that he can therefore dispense with them. Sarastro's 'your soul is as black as your face' would be racist only if the word 'necessarily' could plausibly be inserted. But there seems no reason to think that it can.

4. For a rootedly ironical view of this conception of freedom (a view which also seems to me to skate over absolutely crucial distinctions) see Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', V ('The Temple of Sarastro'), in *Four Essays on Liberty*, 1969.

5. Cited by Lionel Trilling, 'Emma and the Legend of Jane

Austen', in his *Beyond Culture*. The 'anonymous' author was in fact Lord Acton's friend and collaborator Richard Simpson, writing in the *North British Review* (Vol.72, pp. 129-52, 1870).

6. Don Alfonso nevertheless has his uses, since it is through his devices that the lovers are finally brought down to earth. A pretty rum kind of earth, however, since each of the men while disguised has wooed and been accepted by his future sister-in-law. No-one, I believe, has ever found the resolution of *Così* satisfactory.

7. The Don's erotic obsession may not be very admirable in itself, but it is pursued with superb, unrepentant integrity. He has a charm and vitality which (as well as being brilliantly realised in the music) owe their authenticity to their being unflinchingly maintained even in the face of death and damnation. Don Giovanni can say, like the 'Refined Man' in Kipling's *Epitaphs of the War*, that 'I have paid the price to live my life on the terms that I willed'.

8. It is worth adding that while da Ponte self-consciously borrowed Cherubino's 'Voi che sapete' from Dante's *Vita Nuova*, he likened his Don Juan story to something out of the *Inferno*. He knew he was dealing with two different things.

9. See Brigid Brophy, *Mozart the Dramatist*, 1964; Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, 1904.

10. cf: Viele Geschicke weben neben dem meinen; Durcheinander spielt sie alle das Dasein; Und mein Teil ist mehr als dieses Lebens Schlanke Flamme oder schmale Leier. (Hofmannsthal, 'Manche freilich ...')

11. Our international readership may find a brief introduction useful. Dr Jonathan Miller, physician, entertainer, and (of late years) serious theatrical director, first came to prominence as a member of the Beyond the Fringe team. This notorious revue, staged by four ex-luminaries of the Oxbridge Undergraduate Stage (the other three being the comedians Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, and the playwright Alan Bennett), signalled the beginning of the 1960s 'satire' boom, and thus of the whole ethos of the 1960s and 1970s. Its chief, not to say sole, source of humour was a monotonous 'irreverence' at the expense of 'Establishment' (sc. established) pieties, e.g. the Church, the Monarchy, the Battle of Britain, etc. The effect was to confer a reputation for wit, penetration, and emancipated intelligence upon the performers, and thus, by implication, upon those who had paid to see them (which presumably

explains the revue's enormous success).

12. Those words, and the whole Jonathan Miller section of this article, were written in 1986, when they formed part of a Radio Three talk. But, however high-handed Dr Miller may be with others' intentions, that my reading of his own is substantially correct has been borne out by the account of this production, and the thinking behind it, which he himself has given in his book *Subsequent Performances* (1988). And that, of course, is a tribute to the clarity and dramatic expressiveness of his conceptions. His talents and accomplishments are real, for all that what he does with them sometimes verges on charlatanism.

13. The source for these details and much else in *The Magic Flute* is a Masonic romance by the Abbé Terrasson, *Sethos*, 1731, (German translation 1778).

14. Bergman has taken a few liberties with the text, but in my view entirely justifiably. First (and to mention only the most important), the Papageno scenes have been pruned and in one instance even transplanted (like Pamina's suicide bid, which was obviously in the wrong place). To these the opera initially owed its great popular success, but many now seem like little more than encores. Morally and dramatically, Papageno remains one of the work's major axes.

Secondly, Bergman dispenses with Pamina's late father, making her Sarastro's daughter directly rather than simply his ward, and the Queen, consequently, Sarastro's estranged wife. There is no hint, however, that the antagonism between Sarastro and the Queen is merely personal; their ideological differences are as real, fundamental and objective as before. One wonders only how the authors failed to spot this obvious opportunity for economy.

Finally, in Bergman's version Sarastro has all along intended that Tamino and Pamina shall not only join the brotherhood, but shall also, by general consent, rule jointly in his place when he retires at the end (at which point the flute is returned to him). There is no suggestion of this in the original, but it makes perfect dramatic sense, and of course assimilates *The Magic Flute* even more closely to *The Tempest*, in which the victorious Prospero abdicates in favour of his daughter and son-in-law, retires from the world, and renounces his magic.

Apart from the re-arrangement of scenes, all the above changes have been effected solely through the spoken dialogue. I doubt if more than 200 words in all are involved.

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imagined rich new fields for hysteria. The Iraqis had struck the *USS Stark* in an unprovoked attack in the Gulf in 1987. The US Navy had little protection against mines, and - pocketa-pocketa - 'Any location west of 50.5 degrees would place American ships in range of Iraq's Mirage fighter bombers and their Exocet missiles'. Two Italian ships off course threatened the US fleet.

Most of his stories were in the give-away mould, for instance on August 20: 'Sami Ahmed Abdullah and Tahir Juma Mohamed were yesterday rejoicing in the sobriquet of 'rightful soldiers of Saddam Hussein', thanks to the US Navy....They were the first Iraqis to brave US gunfire in the Gulf....They proved how seamen can make a mockery of a naval blockade....US naval operations had earned a definite failure mark'. What they proved in fact was how Fisk manages to extrapolate whatever he needs for his temperamental ends from the insignificant actions of insignificant individuals.

It was the same on land. 'He was every mother's son, tall, strong, handsome, enjoying his status as a soldier in a foreign land. He stood on the ramp in an artificial way, rifle in hand, bag over his shoulder, feet apart, an image on a hundred front covers and a thousand war memorials'. Or again, 'truth is not the first casualty in war. Soldiers are. There are enough portents already that this crisis could end in tragedy without confusing the issue'. There were fist-fights in Marine units, he informed us, and infantrymen were chastising their officers for lack of command-and-control procedures. A private soldier asked Fisk if he could borrow a tourist map 'to see where we are'. The 'unhappiness of the Americans' prompted Fisk to advise them to 'train and move at night; clean and maintain engines, generators and weapons constantly, initiate a postal system', and so on.

Granted the mentality which disposed him to blame the West for Arab shortcomings, Fisk devoted numerous reports to the incompatibility as military allies of the West and Arabs. What with their insensitivity and ignorance, the Americans were alienating Arabs, and bound to do so more and more. The armies could not integrate their commands. Press conferences allowed him to create the mood for which he was searching. American spokesmen or organisers were 'sweating....truly awful', while the message for the Saudis was 'watch out'. Right to the end, such conferences reinforced Fisk's anti-Americanism. 'Uninformative and embarrassing' in his words, briefings served to confirm in Arabs their 'suspicion and hatred' of Americans as people intoxicated with their technology and blinded by naivety.

Actually the Egyptian and Syrian leadership was more eager than anyone to draw Saddam's claws by enforcing his departure from Kuwait, by a land campaign if necessary, but Fisk sought to show the opposite with stories about their alleged insincerity. One such story opened typically, 'General Mohamed Bilal says that his primary military mission is to defend Islam's holy places. This is, of course, a terminological inexactitude'. When he asked of Arab armies, 'Will they fight?', the question was merely sarcastic. By September 26, he had convinced himself by these means of 'the catastrophe that may soon befall all the armies of the Gulf'.

Beyond that, one of his articles of faith was that Arabs, as Muslims, could not possibly accept any American

presence on Saudi soil, especially not to wage war against an Arab country. It is part and parcel of his condescending attitude that Arabs must be considered people who cannot think through what exactly their interests are, but confuse politics and religion so irrevocably that they can have only a single and unanimous response to a given situation; in short, they are creatures of frenzy. In a staggering inversion of the facts on the ground, he wrote, 'The greatest threat to Saudi Arabia is not Iraq. It is America'. Proof of this? A Saudi sheikh and Khalid, a Bedu, both doubted that America would really evacuate its troops after the war.

Since Arabs seemed unaccountably reluctant to oblige Fisk by splitting the coalition and breaking the new 'crusaders', he press-ganged the Israelis to bring this about. Under the bald heading 'The Gulf alliance is gunned down', on October 10, he discussed at length the horrible incident which had just occurred in Jerusalem. At the bidding of Saddam, the PLO had attempted to instigate a mass uprising there. Caught by surprise, Israeli police lost order and regained it only by firing into the crowd, killing 19 people. Fisk's predictions arising from this event bore not the least relation to what was to happen. 'At the very moment when those Western armies desperately need to maintain a broad measure of Arab support for their stand against President Saddam, the Israelis have done more damage to this new alliance than all the radical leaders combined...If ever a sword was thrust into a military alliance of East and West, the Israelis wielded that dagger'. President Mubarak could now not contain Egyptian dissatisfaction for much longer, the Syrians would not be contributing armour, the Israelis had allowed Saddam to undermine America.

Let it be conceded that Fisk was sincerely worried by the prospect of Allied casualties; and also that he, like others, was taken in by the Pentagon's brilliant campaign to dampen everyone's expectations. Even so, anyone with a fifteen-year experience of the Middle East ought to have understood that Iraq was a fragmented country ethnically and religiously, and for dreadful years had been in the grip of terror, that its soldiers embodied that fragmentation and feared the terror, and had as a result performed poorly in the Iran war, and now had no intention of engaging the Allies in a hopeless war fought solely for Saddam's aggrandisement. Nor is this hindsight. Hazhir Teimourian of *The Times* was only one among many informed commentators to publish (on December 12) an accurate forecast of the likely course of events under the title 'Arab generals say war against Baghdad could be won on the first day of battle'. The Egyptian chief of staff, Field Marshal Abu Ghazzala, described in a definitive and much-quoted speech how for many years he had co-ordinated Egyptian-Iraqi military endeavours, and from his knowledge he declared that the war would be over in three days. Informed commentators also observed the common Arab-American aims which solidly underpinned the coalition. Fisk's fears were groundless.

Returning from his leave (if such it was) at the beginning of this January, Fisk took up all his themes on a still higher note of hysteria. War was evidently approaching. On January 14, Fisk found the Iraqi anti-tank 'berms' of piled sand to be 'frightening revetments' - the armour

was to cross them without ado - and he observed soldiers wiping tears from their eyes at the prospects ahead. Stormy weather may have granted 'a few extra days of life to the tens of thousands of young men who are likely to die in the coming weeks'. General Disorder rather than General Schwarzkopf, he already thought, was likely to be in command, and now he repeated that 'wars destroy the best-laid plans'. Instead of factual or first-hand reports, speculative anxieties poured out of him. The Iraqis might use gas and biological weapons, the Israelis might expel the Palestinians, Jordan might disappear. He worried deeply about such things as Islamic scholars asking why Muslim armies had been beaten back from Vienna in 1683: 'was it because they lacked faith or because the armies of Christendom possessed better weapons?'

On the day when the UN ultimatum expired, Fisk asked where American confidence sprang from. 'Patriotism? America's characteristic and dangerous trust in technology? Or was it the war-speak of military colleges?' Saddam was speaking in just that vein about America. Fortunately, Fisk reassured himself by finding soldiers 'who suspect the war which now seems inevitable will lead to disaster'. For once hearing a soldier say that the war would end in seventy two hours, Fisk criticised him for 'dangerous euphoria'. To his own satisfaction, he established that Allied air successes were nothing of the kind. 'Pilots have noticed Iraqi planes flying on a non-combat status around them over Iraq', he wrote, whatever this might mean. There were no Iraqi defectors either, he thought, because those 'truly awful' organisers had not produced any for him.

Under the fascinating heading, 'Tanks bogged down in unmapped mud and confusion', Fisk on January 23 depicted 'a logistical nightmare', in which the mass of troops and armour heading for the front-line were unable to find their way. Summoning once more the full military skills he must have gathered as a newspaperman, he explained how convoy discipline was to be restored, secrecy of unit location maintained, and medical standards bettered. Medical staff might be unable to do much about gas attacks, but he could instruct how to suck teeth out of a throat wound. Self-dramatising as usual, he was able once more to donate maps to commanders who were 'hopelessly lost'. Judging from the response in *The Independent* and elsewhere, this story marked the turning-point when readers began to wonder what confidence could be placed in Fisk.

The very next morning, he was reporting how Saudi Tornados had taken off on a sortie, as a result of a decision 'taken personally by King Fahd and applauded privately by President George Bush'. It was heart-warming, naturally, that these two leaders should have interrupted their schedules to confide their personal and private thoughts and deeds to Fisk; perhaps they had been moved by his contribution to the war of those maps, or his alarm at what might be happening west of 50.5 degrees. No less imaginatively, Fisk was still warning that the Arabs were on the side of the Americans only because of three conditions. The war had to be concluded victoriously and swiftly, Iraq had to survive as a strong nation, and the Israelis had to keep out. 'The trouble, of course', as Fisk summarised it with guess-

work erratic even by his own standards, 'is that the first condition can no longer be met; the second is unlikely to be fulfilled and the third could collapse within days'.

Brand-new anxieties were surfacing right up to the liberation of Kuwait. For instance, 'Arab reaction to the relentless bombardment of Iraq could now cause as many fractures in the Arab coalition as if Israel became involved in the war'.

Then it was over, as informed people knew it would be. Just a few hours of the land war, and Fisk was exposed as someone whose obsessive self-dramatising had led him into a gaping and obvious dead-end which was far more uninformatively and embarrassing than anything American press officers might have provided. Just a few hours, and Fisk's preconceptions and analyses and predictions burst like soap bubbles. Once it was over, and he was in Kuwait City, on February 28, he discovered what the Iraqis had actually done there, and hey presto! He sensed 'that something very wicked, at times evil, had visited this city'. Were these by any chance the same Iraqis whom it had been utter madness to think of attacking all this while, the same men who behind their 'frightening revetments' had been about to set the Muslim world marching in righteousness against the West? The priestly purpose remained the same, but just a few hours were enough for the target of the moralising to be reversed.

Did he apologise for his hysteria? Did he ask himself why he had outrageously misled readers of his newspaper and done so much to confuse public opinion? Did he question the total mismatch between what he said would happen and the actual unfolding of events? Did he reflect on the American performance west and even east of 50.5 degrees, and go on to wonder why Arab anti-Americanism was not as he had anticipated? Might he think through his misconceptions about the structure of Arab politics? Oh indeed not. Nothing of that sort. By March 15, back in Beirut, he had settled down to the same old obsessions, reaching a conclusion about the war which was surely the extrapolation to end them all. 'President Bush is now facing the prospect of something not unlike defeat'.

Plenty of reporters *à la* Claud Cockburn have been liars and fantasists, but at least they knew they were, and gloried in it. What other reporter has ever projected his own self-drama as though it were reality? Who else has been unable to distinguish between a priestly purpose and the facts? No precedent for Fisk springs to mind.

The Shabban Robert Foundation

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Here be Dragons: Robert Fisk at Loose in the Gulf

David Pryce-Jones

When Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion of Kuwait on August 2 last year, he was immediately perceived in this country as a monstrous aggressor. Opinion polls revealed a majority - which was to grow - in favour of resisting this dictator's ambitions, by sanctions first, but should these prove inadequate to the task, then by force. Within a time-span measured in months, moreover, Saddam was due to acquire nuclear weapons, thus creating a balance of terror which would have allowed him to have his way in Kuwait and elsewhere if he chose. Mature and steadfast, the public response was all the more impressive in view of the voices maintaining that panic, indifference or surrender would be more appropriate.

As was likely, the Foreign Office pioneered the blind eye, providing information contrary to all reality up to and even beyond August 2, that Saddam was merely 'sabre-rattling' and British people in Iraq and Kuwait need take no precautions. Many hundreds of these people soon found themselves hostages as a result, and some still in hiding were to have the bitter experience of being advised by William Waldegrave, a junior minister at the Foreign Office, to give themselves up to the Iraqis. This pre-emptive cringe surprised even the Iraqis, who had not prepared to receive them. 'Sanctions are the world's only answer to Saddam' was the unforgettable title of an article to that effect in *The Times* of August 3, by that Bourbon of a former diplomat, Sir Anthony Parsons. Plenty of other retired ambassadors and Chatham House squaddies urged that force should not be considered an option for fear of the consequences.

Presumably Denis Healey and Edward Heath had reasons - or at least calculations - known to themselves for the alarm they spread. Both advocated outright appeasement. Had either politician been listened to, Kuwait today would still be in Saddam's hands and Iraq's nuclear capacity that much closer. To serve their purposes, these 'two misguided old missiles', in the *Sunday Telegraph's* phrase, conjured up the purest fancies about world-wide Muslim agitations to come, imminent Turkish or Iranian invasions, the tractability of Saddam and the extension of sanctions indefinitely, the political and economic collapse of the West, unprecedented casualties, in the style of Nostradamus.

As Minister of Defence, Healey in 1968 had taken the decision to withdraw the British presence from the Gulf, probably the worst mistake of post-war British foreign policy, and certainly the most unnecessary. Heath had then won an election on a manifesto which included the firm promise to overturn this decision to withdraw, but no sooner was he Prime Minister than he speeded it up. Both men, then, bear their full share of responsibility for creating the power vacuum in which the Shah of Iran swelled up, and Ayatollah Khomeini, Saddam and local oil-price manipulators. As this vacuum was extending

into a yet wider regional disorder, we were obliged to return to the Gulf in circumstances more difficult and costly than they need have been. It was particularly galling to be given by Healey and Heath more of the prescription which had proved itself so harmful.

Know-nothings and proud-of-it-too, like Auberon Waugh, felt that Arabs have nothing better to do than kill each other, and nobody else need be in the least concerned by that. The Left, especially its CND component, might have been expected to welcome the prevention of a future nuclear war at Saddam's behest, not to mention the promotion of freedom and liberation for tyrannised Arabs. Instead, the Left's emotional anti-Americanism rose in full spate. America was stated to be fighting for oil, for imperialism. This marxoid notion had no substance. Had Kuwait chosen to unite voluntarily with Iraq, or for that matter if any or all Arab oil-producing countries were to merge by choice under a single ruler, then that would be their business, as it is for European countries to set about building a common future by consent. The Church, which by and large is CND in a surplice, provided an alarmist chorus. Fourteen bishops and three theologians, for instance, signed a letter to *The Independent* on December 12 1990, in the hope of avoiding 'this potentially terrible conflict', which could 'make a graveyard of the Middle East' no less.

Even against this background, Robert Fisk, the Middle East correspondent of *The Independent*, stands out for the wild errors of his judgement throughout the Gulf crisis. In everything, in matters great and small, he was plain wrong. His general outlook was typically that of the Left, to be sure, in that to him 'the decisive factor' was oil, and the United Nations enterprise was only American aggression and short-sightedness in disguise. However, a political outlook of that sort does not fully account for Fisk's performance, whereby he was able to present a timely and well-executed Western policy as a mirage of despair and defeat. He lost no chance to mock American and Arab leadership or to cast doubt on the morale of the troops; to know better, in the loftiest assumption of omniscience, than the likes of President Bush, General Schwarzkopf and King Fahd; to belittle American weaponry as something in which faith was 'unwarranted' and even to speak of 'this Disneyland of technology'. Upon complex political and military operations, he placed his own simple spin of doom, by exaggerating mishaps and difficulties, and by inventing all manner of campaigning or ideological dangers where none existed. Not just wrong, Fisk was hysterical.

To judge by letters published in *The Independent*, a number of readers seem to have caught this hysteria. If any soldiers or members of their families paid attention to Fisk, they can only have been distressed and to no purpose at all.

Fisk first came before the public as a reporter for *The Times* covering events in Ireland in the Seventies. Whatever the government then did by way of coaxing out a solution for Ulster, he decried. Evidently he takes it for granted that governments are there for everyone else to be their adversaries. Journalism, to someone of this temperament, has the duty, even the sacred duty, to expose and oppose what can only be bad if not scandalous, with the result that its practitioners are not reporters concerned with news and facts, but rather clerks of high calling and moral purpose, a clerisy, a priesthood.

In Beirut since 1976, for *The Times* and later for *The Independent*, this particular clerk or priest sought to refine his vocation. His experience as a reporter in the Middle East has been resumed in *Pity the Nation*, a book he published in 1990.

In its preface, he has a conceit about the journalist 'at the edge of history' as a man might sit on the lip of a smoking volcano, recording 'as honestly as we can'. Far from following this pontification, on the page Fisk is busy selecting whatever helps to build some case according to his temperamental and moral preconceptions, whether or not the facts fit.

Over the last fifteen years Lebanon has disintegrated from a democracy, albeit imperfect, into a free-for-all whereby its several religious or ethnic communities have withdrawn from such agreed arrangements as existed, each into his own identity. Each seeks to survive at the expense of the others, and all employ the same means of offence and defence. However regrettable it may be, moral distinctions between the communities are vain and irrelevant. This is customary or tribal warfare, and it illustrates the central dilemma of Arab politics today. No political structures or institutional mechanisms exist to permit some form of power-sharing, with pluralism and rights, and in the best case, democracy. To the strong the spoils, as ever, and to the weak dispossession, flight and finally massacre. The Lebanese plight is to be found in reality or in potential in every Arab country, all of them despotisms where one man and his kind hold power at the expense of everyone else.

Unwillingness to address this central dilemma makes *Pity the Nation* tendentious to the point of untruthfulness. Ever the adversary, ever the priest on the trail of wickedness, Fisk ignores the defective structure of Arab politics by laying the blame for everything on foreign intervention, primarily American and Israeli. The pretence that such intervention is the cause of present troubles - rather than yet another effect of them - opens the way to moral hysteria against the West. Fisk never notices how condescending it is to depict Arabs as people without a decisive say in their own affairs, not agents but only passive objects of others. The Victorian imperialist ascribed bad character to the native whom he did not like, and good character to himself. The target is reversed for Fisk, who ascribes bad character to the West because he dislikes it, and good character to the native, but the emotional need to be moralising at other people's expense remains constant.

This is the mind-set which led Fisk so astray in the Gulf crisis. In his reports the tone of delicious gloating over the Western calamity which he anticipated was as unmistakable as it was other-worldly. The priest had talked

himself into a belief that the hour of retribution was at hand.

At this point, something must be said about Fisk's technique. The standard practice in filing a newspaper report is to minimise selectivity and bias. This involves opening with a statement which resumes the event in question, then following up with supporting evidence, including quotations from witnesses or those affected by it. The reader is provided with substantive facts upon which to base an informed opinion of his own.

This will not do for Fisk. Instead, he prefers, if possible in the first sentence of his story, to select some individual, then to append a splashy purple description of him or her, and the circumstances of their encounter, finally extrapolating from that encounter some generalised conclusion. What he has seen and heard has been used to paint his mood. Here is the exact opposite of recording 'as honestly as we can'. More often than not, Fisk's conclusion cannot bear the weight of extrapolation from the individual encounter, and amounts to nothing but a personal statement which may or may not be valid. The net effect is that Fisk habitually places himself not at all on the edge but at the centre of his story, not really reporting on others but on himself.

This is not a style in which the truth can be told. Readers are instead being invited to admire the panache of Fisk's approach, the advantage with which he is able to observe the bit-parts played by those fortunate enough to be converting themselves into his copy, and finally the superior morality which allows him to absolve or to condemn, even as he leaves the scene. How he depicts himself tripping over corpses (his phrase), imagining Israeli jets passing through the windows of his bedroom one foot above his bed (his dream), screaming four-letter words at those alleged to be preventing him carrying through with his calling. Pocketa-pocketa, as Walter Mitty had it. Self-dramatisation like this is a branch of fiction, not journalism.

From the beginning of last August, when he turned up in the Gulf, until early in December when he seems to have taken a break lasting into the new year of 1991, Fisk set about establishing as best he could that a victorious war could not be waged by vulnerable Western troops against the formidable Iraqis. The political and military costs would be unbearable. The West, which he sometimes likened to 'crusaders' or even 'Christendom', had no conception of the revenge Arabs and Muslims would exact. He appealed to history as justification for some highly dubious but *ex cathedra* generalisations. It would be well, he had already jumped to the conclusion by August 9, for 'the West to remember that history in the Middle East rarely rewards the just. It never favours the foreigner....Not once has a military adventure in the Middle East achieved its end. For it is also an irresistible trap....Mr Bush urged his people yesterday to go to church and pray for the young Americans who are on their way to the Gulf. It was a wise precaution'.

Evidence for these pre-conceptions then had to be furnished. The seamen of *HMS York* were duly 'expressing the nonchalance of frightened youth'. The ship itself 'looked a very fragile vessel', and he continued, 'had not its sister ship *Sheffield* been hit by an Exocet missile? Did the Iraqis not have 1,000 Exocets?' Day after day, he

quote, 'to encourage some convergence while respecting national practice'.

What are these 'Fundamental Social Rights of Workers' then?

They fall under twelve separate heads: freedom of movement; employment and remuneration; improvement of living and working conditions; social protection; freedom of association and collective bargaining; vocational training; equal treatment of men and women; information, consultation, and participation of workers; health protection and safety at the work place; protection of children and adolescents; elderly persons; disabled persons.

Under each of these heads, there are spelled out any number of moral objectives and social prescriptions. All of them are destined to be turned in due course into regulations which will control our lives.

Many of them, unsurprisingly, are empty of meaning. They will have as little effect in the real world as most of the ringing declarations produced by United Nations organisations in the past four decades.

Others, however, are clear, specific, and - if not practical in any genuine sense - certainly implementable, given the rapidly increasing powers of the 'European entity'. They will cause grave damage here in Britain and in the other eleven nations of the community. Let us examine three of them.

A minimum wage

Item 5 in the Charter reads: 'All employment shall be fairly remunerated'. This pious exhortation is backed by a number of instrumental measures designed to implement it. In particular 5(1) states that: 'Workers shall be assured of an equitable wage, i.e. a wage sufficient to enable them to have a decent standard of living'.

The Charter thus commits all the nations of Western Europe to a minimum wage - a concept alien to British thinking, and calculated, wherever it is practised, to distort the labour market, reduce economic dynamism, and damage the interests of lower paid employees, the unemployed, young people, and immigrant workers. A minimum wage will do the economy of Europe enormous damage.

If this measure, which has naturally been welcomed by the Left, were not enough, the Charter adds to it further socialist impositions on the effective operation of the labour market. First it imposes equivalence in the conditions of work of part-time employees. This will inevitably ensure a substantial increase in the level of unemployment. While pretending to protect the most exposed elements of the labour force, in fact it ensures that the big battalions of unionised, organised labour are insulated from competition by employees who are willing to accept more realistic conditions in return for work opportunities. The measure will discourage employers, small companies in particular, from expansion, and inhibit innovative new businesses.

The Charter further requires harmonisation of conditions of work and social protection across all twelve EEC countries. This measure is calculated, despite whatever may be claimed about the need for an 'even playing field' across Europe, to block development in Spain, Portugal, and Greece, and to monopolise wealth for

Germany and France, where labour costs would otherwise be substantially higher. It will inhibit any further radical reforms such as have been enacted in Britain during the last decade to reduce labour costs and to encourage self-reliance.

Workers' control

Paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Charter require development along what it prissily calls 'appropriate lines' of 'information, consultation, and participation of workers'.

Despite some hedging about 'taking account of the practices in force in the various Member States', there can be no doubt - as the vigorous support of socialist parties and trade unions for this aspect of the Charter demonstrates - that this is intended as an opening for the installation of worker directors, trade union vetoes, and corporatist liaison between the so-called 'Social Partners' at every level, from the individual plant, through local and national, to trans-European bureaucratic sclerosis.

Nothing could be better calculated to throttle enterprise, or to prevent the development of new companies capable of competing with the USA and Japan than this exercise in Nineteenth Century socialism. The worst working conditions in the world, and the most oppressive subjugation of workers by management in modern history have been produced in the conditions of 'actually existing socialism', where just such regimes of spurious workers' control have operated since 1917. Worse even than legalised oppression, statutory workers' control of industry will produce in modern Europe, just as reliably as it has done in the Soviet Union, disincentives to effort, economic inefficiency, and poverty on a disastrous scale.

Collectivist welfare

Wherever it can even half plausibly manage it, the Charter sneaks across from regulating spheres of life which are more or less directly related to the economy, to laying down the law on general welfare and social policy issues.

There are examples relating to elderly people - yet another imperious demand for 'a decent standard of living', to the disabled, to women, to young people, and to education.

In every case the formula is to specify required minimum standards. In every case the formulation in the Charter lays the obligation to ensure welfare provision on the state, and nowhere suggests that any alternative to control and provision *by the state* is envisaged.

This is the carefully disguised thin end of a transparently socialist wedge. Given 'progress' along the general lines supported by the Commission, we should expect within a decade a European Health Service, European Welfare Benefits, a European School Curriculum, and ravaged, derelict Euro-housing projects in every city from Dublin to Athens and from Palermo to Copenhagen.

Even in long-established federal states like the USA, welfare and social policy are thoroughly localised. The Charter is a manifesto for a large-scale, bureaucratic, centralised Welfare State. Damaging even on a modest

national scale to economic efficiency and to moral life, the Welfare State writ-large, a Euro-nanny as it were, would ensure the collapse of European civilisation and a crushing economic defeat of Europe by the United States and Japan.

Rights versus freedom

If developments in the Community go forward along current lines, with the Charter allowed an unchallenged vanguard role, we shall find ourselves before long entrapped in a narrow, introverted, bureaucratic web of socialist semi-serfdom. I am confident this desolate European future can be avoided. But it will require an awkward combination of confidence and caution on the

part of European leaders to escape it. Not least, the British people and our leaders will have to be persuasive spokesmen for the truths we have re-discovered here in Britain these last ten years or so, truths which, each and every one of them, are subverted by the Community Charter. Freedom requires rejection of the Charter, or at the very least radical amendment of its basic objectives and general tenor. As it stands, it should perhaps be called not the 'Charter of Fundamental Social Rights for Workers', but rather - in view of its inclination to corral us all in the bureaucratic embrace of state employment and state regulation - the 'Charter of Fundamental Rights of Social Workers'. Perish the thought.

The Time I Met Mao

Oscar Kambona

In 1965, the Chinese Government invited President Nyerere on a State visit to China, the first by a Third World leader. I was Foreign Minister of Tanzania at the time, and the World Bank, the United States, Western Europe and the Soviet Union had all refused to finance a railway from the port of Mtwara to Songea where there were large iron and coal deposits. We were hoping that the Chinese, out of rivalry with the Russians, might give us a loan, but by then Nyerere had changed the route of the proposed railway. He wanted it to run from Dar es Salaam to Zambia, first to transport arms for the coming liberation of South Africa, and second to avoid the railway passing through my home area, for which I would have been given political credit.

We arrived in Peking in the afternoon. On the way, Nyerere, who was nervous, asked whether I had taken Holy Communion. I enquired why he asked. 'Because we may not come back alive', he replied.

The whole Chinese leadership, except Mao, was there to greet us, Liu Shiao Chi, Lin Piao, Deng Xiao Ping and Chou En Lai. As we came down the steps from the plane, all of them held up Mao's little red book. I could see that Chou En Lai felt rather foolish.

Nyerere, Chou and Deng drove together from the airport to the city in an open car. A million people had been organised to line the route. They did not form a crowd: rather, they were in a militarised display. It was obvious to me that their enthusiasm was not spontaneous. Nyerere, however, waved happily to them, and clasped his hands above his head. Afterwards, he told me that his arms ached from so much waving.

We arrived at the State Guest House. Nyerere had completely lost his nervousness. He started to tell me how great a man Mao was. He said that besides business connected with the proposed loan, he wanted to go to a commune and also to discuss methods of State Security.

Before we met Mao, we were taken to a commune - the same commune to which all foreigners were taken. Whenever we asked the chairman of the commune a question, he looked first to a man beside him who must have been a security officer. I asked the chairman whether

he had any savings. He said very few. I asked how long it would take him to save enough for a bicycle.

'Fifteen years', he said. The security man intervened to tell us it was time to go elsewhere.

We visited a hospital. We witnessed an operation in which surgeons were trying to re-unite a broken bone. Nyerere asked them whether they were satisfied that the operation had been a success. They said they were. Nyerere asked them how they could tell. 'Because we read Mao's little red book before the operation', they replied.

When we returned to Tanzania, Nyerere used this case endlessly as an example of what people could achieve if they followed a leader.

We had a meeting with Liu Shao Chi, Chou En Lai and the Head of Security. The latter told us how to build up a system of ten house cells, each with a leader who reported to a senior in the security apparatus. Immediately on his return from China, Nyerere began to carry out these instructions. Those who resisted were detained without trial. Nyerere distributed ready-signed forms for regional commissioners to fill in names of people to be so detained. A friend of mine said that the prisons were the only nationalised industries that worked. There were thousands of detainees. The Chinese also sent advisers to the police and prison officers to teach them how to torture and set up clandestine prisons.

Towards the end of our visit, we were taken to the People's Great Hall, where Chou asked Nyerere and me to follow him. We swept along a corridor and a series of grand double doors opened as we approached them, as if by magic. We finally saw Mao. He was seated on a platform two feet high, in a magnificent chair with carved golden dragon arms. He stood up and shook hands with Nyerere and me. He asked us to sit on either side of him, slightly below him.

Mao turned to Nyerere and asked him whether as a Catholic, he believed that when he, Mao, died, God would take him to heaven. I can't remember what Nyerere answered. After a few jokes, Mao said that China was going to play a big part in the liberation struggle of

Southern Africa by granting the loan to build the railway that would transport the necessary arms. He then bade us farewell and left the room. Chou told us that Mao never used the same route twice in the palace.

On the way back to Tanzania, Nyerere talked about how development had been possible in China only because of one leader. He said that ministerial portraits in the ministries in Tanzania were confusing the loyalties of the civil servants, and henceforth only his picture should appear there. It was then that he also abjured ties and changed into Mao costume. He returned a convert to the one-party state. The Chinese told him that farmers were the most conservative members of society, and that he must uproot them from the land if he were to build socialism successfully. He wanted me to be minister for rural development; in other words, he wanted me to take charge of destroying our rural society. I resigned, leaving Nyerere to do his own dirty work, and to inflict on his people the sufferings which Mao had inflicted on the Chinese.

In the late 1960s, therefore, having already nationalised the 'commanding heights' of Tanzania's industrial sector, Julius Nyerere (then President of Tanzania and chairman of the single ruling party, TANU) launched an attack upon the peasant economy. Like Stalin, he regarded the peasants as conservative and an obstacle to economic development; they were the 'Kulaks' of Tanzania and, following the Soviet example, Nyerere removed them from their land and grouped them in communes called 'Ujamaa Villages'. From 1971 onwards, with the assistance of the police, the militia and the armed forces, the peasants were forcibly transferred to the new villages, without consultation and without compensation for the loss of their houses, farms and coconut trees. Their longstanding attachment to traditional areas was brutally disregarded.

These events did not escape criticism from members of the National Assembly, though the Assembly's scope for action was limited to vocal protest in the face of Nyerere's authoritarian rule and hold over all organs of party and government. Notably, M.P. Chogga, whose constituency included a thriving farming and grain-producing area of Tanzania, courageously campaigned for a more democratic society, for the abolition of one-party dictatorship and for the introduction of independent political parties as a step towards political pluralism. The means suggested was the amendment of those articles of the constitution of Tanzania that legitimised one-party rule. Nyerere, whose compliant nominated members of the National Assembly outnumbered the elected members, was able to vote down such amendments. Unable to accept that Chogga voiced the discontent of many less articulate and less determined than himself, Nyerere blamed his usual 'whipping-boy', the exiled Oscar Kambona, for fomenting such opposition to his policies and said that Kambona was unrepresentative of the people of Tanzania. Presumably, Nyerere would also blame Kambona (and not the enraged peasants who were the victims of forced collectivisation) for the assassination of the Regional Commissioner at Iringa when that official carried out the communalisation policies in the area assigned to him.

Nyerere consolidated his personal dominance by seeing

that the sole political party, now called Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), had constitutionally authorised power over the organs of government and the National Assembly. He then removed from the National Assembly all those likely to be troublesome to him and abolished the democratically elected municipal, town and district councils, along with the co-operative movements such as the Victoria Federation (cotton) and Kilimanjaro Native Coffee Union. In their place he introduced CCM 'ten house cells' on the Chinese model, and party secretaries were appointed as district and regional commissioners. State purchasing agencies were established, which reached down even to the level of the village butchers. These agencies were so manifestly inefficient and corrupt that the peasants expressed their contempt by a boycott of their goods. Ideologically influenced by the Chinese Communist Party, Nyerere then proceeded to nationalise the thriving white-owned farms in Arusha and West Kilimanjaro, with a ten year delay in the payment of compensation to the farmers who owned them. The farms were then turned into communes and given to the urban unemployed who were completely without agricultural skills and experience.

The Scandinavian countries, eager to replace British influence in East Africa, had supported Nyerere's policies with finance and personnel, not realising the inherent faults that soon led to corruption, falling agricultural output and massive foreign debts. The World Bank and other international donors then imposed 'conditional funding', the conditions including a democratisation of the Tanzanian political system. The President was constitutionally limited under the amended constitution to two five-year terms of office and Nyerere resigned from the presidency in 1985, retaining, however, the chairmanship of the ruling party, CCM, and still wielding effective supreme power. He saw to it that in 1990, when he resigned from the party chairmanship, his protégé, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, succeeded him in that office. Mwinyi was the sole candidate in the presidential elections and the carefully planned transfer of power was completed.

With changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with the overthrow and execution of his friend, Nicolai Ceausescu, with democratic resurgence in South America and Tanzania's immediate neighbours, Zambia and Kenya - with all this incontrovertible evidence that history does not obey the laws of Chairman Mao, even Nyerere has eventually realised that Tanzania could not long remain the lonely champion of one-party rule. He therefore initiated a national debate on the desirability of a multi-party system in the country. This move prompted the Tanzania Democratic Front, an alliance of six exiled political groups, to send a petition to Nyerere and Mwinyi in June 1990 declaring that they supported a return to a democratic multi-party system. In furtherance of that end, they argued, the constitutional monopoly of the CCM should be removed by the amendment of Article 3 and Article 77 of the constitution of Tanzania; and the presidential term of Mwinyi should be extended until July 1991, so that sufficient time would be given to all political parties to organise, register and prepare themselves for nationwide, open and free general elections during 1991.

The TDF petition was ignored by the Tanzanian au-

thorities. The Front therefore took the opportunity of addressing Nyerere through an open letter to him during his visit to London in 1990, restating the same declarations and asking him to show evidence of the sincerity of his call for multi-party politics in Tanzania. There was no response to this second approach. However, within Tanzania, there is evidence of increasing support for the aims of the Tanzania Democratic Front and for pluralist democracy. James Mapalada, leader of the human rights movement and others who were detained and dismissed from their employment for not casting their vote in October 1990, have serious doubts concerning Nyerere's professed conversion to democratic government and politics. Nevertheless, they know now that Nyerere's days in power are numbered.

The Tanzania Democratic Front is now preparing to send a representative delegation to see President Mwinyi in Dar es Salaam: they will be accompanied by distinguished international observers to monitor their talks with the President. The Front will also approach the

Commonwealth Secretariat in due course, for their assistance in appointing observers to be present during the first democratic multi-party elections in Tanzania during its thirty years of independent nationhood.

It remains to be seen whether genuine political pluralism will develop peacefully in Tanzania. Exiles like myself were not allowed to attend an inaugural seminar for the establishment of a multi-party system in April this year. At the time of writing this conference has been postponed by the authorities. We are setting up an educational trust to assist in the development of a democratic political system (see page 14) and hope that this will operate in a similar way to those set up in Eastern European countries in the last decade which played such a crucial role in overthrowing the one-party states there. Many Europeans will say that African countries will never be ready for democracy. However something must be attempted; the alternatives have impoverished many countries in the continent, resulting in a standard of living far below that of colonial times.

Hyperactivism

Paul Helm

Various analyses of the overthrow of Mrs Thatcher will be offered. But it is not likely that her fall will be ascribed to her inactivity. Her will-power and work-rate are already legendary, as is her confidence that the Conservative Party would not, under her leadership, 'run out of ideas'.

But perhaps it is the very relentlessness of her activity that will prove to have been her undoing. Mrs Thatcher's departure, and the current weakness of the administration of her successor, are not due to the effects of the Poll Tax, nor to disaffection with the Health Service or the schools. Nor is it because the Party has 'run out of ideas'. Defeat at the next General Election would, if it occurred, be the consequence of successive Conservative Governments being afflicted with a deeply unconservative malady, political hyperactivism. In these circumstances public disaffection with the consequences of particular policies would not be a cause of electoral defeat but rather the symptoms and the effects of this pathological condition.

As has been frequently stated in the pages of this journal, conservative philosophy, if it may be called that, is not a set of abstract ideas or prescriptions but a mood or tendency. As the conservative sees it, society is not a jungle ripe for replacement by a plantation but a complex web or organism of interconnecting and balancing interests and traditions. For the conservative, government, big central government that is, is essentially permissive in its character. It exists to maintain a framework of security from external threat, just law and sound money within which the liberties of individuals and of multifarious intermediate institutions may be promoted, or at least may be allowed to flourish. For the conservative 'less government' is not a euphemism for different government. It means just that.

Any Conservative government coming into power will

inherit abuses in the law or in the economy with which it must deal. So it was that the first government of Mrs Thatcher inherited acute problems in the economic field, as the bankruptcy of Keynesianism was revealed, and as government had come to intrude into every corner of economy and society. It also had to deal with the legally privileged status of trades unions, for example. It was both necessary and right that these abuses were rectified and a pity that a more thorough job was not done on them. In tackling such abuses head-on Mrs Thatcher's governments may properly be called 'radical' and may also be said to have 'won the battle of ideas' (as success in these fields is sometimes complacently expressed).

But why did it not stop there? Why did the Conservative governments not use all their energies and resolve to ensure that the battles won were consolidated, and exercise eternal vigilance against the growth of fresh encroachments and ills? A consistently conservative government addresses the abuses that it finds by minimally modifying those institutions or policies which in its judgment gave rise to them and then by policing the territory. These modifications may be profound, as in Mrs Thatcher's reversal of the economic policies and sympathies of previous decades; or they may be targeted and specific, as in the repeal of legislation granting privileges to trades unions, or privatisation. Profound or detailed, they are nevertheless minimal in that the instinct behind them is to leave as much in place as it is possible to do.

There are at least two reasons behind this conservative instinct. One is that in the conservative view society is, for the most part, self-regulating, conferring profound benefits, even life itself, through the exercise of the rule of law, the maintenance of a sound economy and the opportunity to exercise personal freedoms and respon-

sibilities which such a framework affords. When abuses in government are identified, such as those in British society of the 1970s already mentioned, they are to be handled in such a way as to leave as much of the rest of society to regulate itself. Otherwise, if it is snipped and pruned to excess, the tree of state will shrivel.

For the conservative, successful politics is only a necessary condition for living, never sufficient. Politics is not life; it enables life to be lived. What an earlier writer on this topic, Kenneth Minogue, referred to as an 'excessive and futile obsession with systems of rules to the detriment of the substance of living', ('On Hyperactivism in Modern British Politics' in *Conservative Essays* ed., Maurice Cowling, 1978, p. 119) is based upon a deeply unconservative instinct. If the thought is that the greater the number of rules the fewer the abuses it may even be shown to be incoherent. For rules are necessarily general and society is necessarily particular. If such rules relieve some distresses they necessarily inflame others. There is no path to perfection, and relief is not always to be sought down the welded track of legislation and regulation.

The second reason is the difficulty of predicting the consequences of human decisions, and particularly the consequences of the large-scale decisions of governments. It is because of this uncertainty, and the fear that the organism may develop disequilibrium, that the conservative places great store on certainty and predictability in human affairs even when these are gained at the expense of 'greater efficiency'.

But the trick of leaving as much intact as possible has not been performed successfully by the conservative governments of the last decade. More importantly, it has not been attempted.

While in earlier eras of English history the rule of the saints was advocated, we now witness the rule of the accountants being promoted. For Conservative governments seem increasingly to have adopted a dogmatic principle which might be expressed as 'Every aspect of society which is not controlled by markets must be rooted out, or modified by the introduction of markets'. And so in areas of society which were financed by block grant or by fees, and in which the controlling principles were not company profitability or direct competition through price - the Health Service, state education, the Legal Profession, local government - aspects of the market, or surrogates for the market, are being introduced. And institutions with their own traditions, loyalties and professionalism, the law and medicine, for example, are being transformed into 'service industries' in which aggregates of individual producers and consumers come together on the basis of supply and demand as measured by price and cost alone.

The consequence of such dogmatism is wholesale de-professionalisation of these areas, and increasing uncertainty about the provision of services. Profitability is taking the place of the inculcation and maintenance of professional standards and a spirit of public service. The result is considerable disruption in those areas and in the lives of those many millions affected by them, with little obvious gain.

Given the emphasis that he places on personal responsibility and initiative it would be difficult for a conserva-

tive to dispute that competition is a good thing. But the hyperactive Thatcher governments have worked on the principle that the only viable or worthwhile competition is that between individuals via the market; hence the emphasis on the individual's ability and responsibility to pay, and on the personal consequences of financial decisions, on freedom of entry and exit in markets, and on competition through price.

Granted that competition is a good thing, indeed a fundamental thing if society is not to atrophy through sloth, the recent conservative dogma neglects the fact that there are various forms of competition: competition in argument, for example, or in physical prowess, or in the excellence of providing a professional service, or in the acquisition of information. In order for there to be competition of any kind there must be both scarcity and desire, and then, besides these, the necessary resources to support the activity. But it does not follow that because financial resources are necessary in order for competition to take place that the competition is *for* the resources. This, it is suggested, is the flaw underlying the dogma that the only form of competition is economic competition between individuals or firms.

But the dogma that the conservative governments since 1979, first under Mrs Thatcher and now under Mr Major, have swallowed is threatening to swallow them, in more senses than one. All the energies of government are being poured into its maw, as is seen by the ceaseless and uniform imposition of market and quasi-market disciplines. And because the insistent and insatiable demands of the dogma lead to hasty and ill-thought-out legislation more befitting Socialist than Conservative governments, electoral defeat beckons, despite a change in leadership. It beckons because of the uncertainty that the government's second thoughts and third thoughts breed, and the doubt that these changes cast on its competence.

I shall offer evidence of this hyperactivity from two diverse areas; the introduction of the Community Charge, and the Government's treatment of the Universities.

The story behind the Community Charge is by now well-known, and there is no need to rehearse it here. But the course that this particular fiasco has run illustrates well the way in which the government has deviated from a truly conservative approach.

There were real problems of inequity and unaccountability in the old domestic and business rating system. But it was a time-honoured system, and had a rationale, and insofar as any matter that affects local government finances can be understood, the rating system was readily understood. A conservative approach would have been to identify the abuses in the system as accurately as possible and to propose modifications to meet them, with appropriate phasing, at the same time resisting opposition jibes that such measures were only 'tinkering'.

But this approach was rejected because it was held that such tinkering, not going to the heart of the matter, would be ineffective. They would further blur the principle of personal accountability, and an opportunity to introduce features of the market into local government finance would have been lost. But why elevate this dogma into all-importance at the expense of another

conservative value, household solidarity? And how could personal accountability be made convincing in an area of precepting, cross-subsidisation, safety-nets, capping, and the like? More acutely, how could individuals who before paid no rates as individuals be convinced that the sudden and arbitrary imposition of a tax was fair? What conservative principles are exemplified by the case of the housewife with no income suddenly finding herself personally responsible for a bill of several hundreds?

No matter, despite all these flaws of principle, the decision was taken to legislate for the Community Charge. There appears to have been little attempt to calculate the practical consequences of such legislation. Yet the practical consequences are readily seen; one immediate consequence is the swollen bureaucracies of local authorities legally responsible for administering the Charge; (the cost of collecting the Charge is estimated at 4 per cent of the yield, more than twice the cost of collecting domestic rates). There is, in addition, the need to trace the movements of people in order to ensure that they pay the Charge, a need that must inevitably lead to the issuing of personal identity cards. How else is a register of people and their whereabouts to be kept, and kept up to date?

As if to support this, the Audit Commission has recently called for the introduction of an effective network of local authority information exchange so that dates of birth, descriptions of property and forwarding addresses could be disclosed by one council to another. 'Clearly such a change would have implications for civil liberties which go well beyond the Community Charge, and careful thought would have to be given to devising appropriate safeguards', (The Audit Commission, *The Administration of the Community Charge: Some Longer Term Considerations*). It is hard to know what to be more astonished at, the fact that these consequences are the product of conservative political management, or the fact that they were not foreseen.

And what of the panic measures devised in Whitehall once the noise of the public outcry reached the government? A hasty decision is made to cap the Charge, a policy at odds with the principles of individual accountability and local authority accountability that were held to lie at the philosophical heart of the tax. Further changes, under Mr Heseltine's direction, are being considered, perhaps to 'band' the Charge into various income-related rates, or to fund education centrally, or even to abolish the Charge. Such hastily-devised policies make changes to the old rating system now seem like child's play. Not only that, they raise questions about the government's overall competence. Is not the last condition worse than the first?

Why have these difficulties arisen? Because a dogma, the dogma that the market is everywhere paramount, has been driven into the heart of an arrangement of some delicacy and fine balance which was frayed at the edges and needed attention. That dogma is central and vital in many areas of society; in personal expenditure, for example, and in accountability before the law. Had local government finance a different history, no doubt the dogma of the market could have been made the governing principle of local finance. But given its actual history it did not require the powers of a seer to predict

the mess that the government is now in; an unnecessary mess, one of its own making, the result of dogmatic hyperactivism, the inability to leave well alone.

Another reason lying behind these difficulties is that Conservative governments have been converted to the myth of governmental omnicompetence, despite occasional protestations to the contrary. As Minogue put it, the hyperactivist climate 'has led conservatives to become fascinated by the possibilities of executive power and to yield to the mischievous tendency to dress up conservative assumptions as forms of liberalism.' (p.123)

For all the talk of 'confrontation', both front benches are united in their reliance upon this myth. By it, their confrontations are made intelligible and often ridiculous. Is there discontent? It is answered not by inviting men and women to think and live their own ways out of it, but by speedily-drafted legislation, using the language and ideas of a Think Tank or Policy Group. When was it a conservative principle that ills are cured by statutory fiat?

The case of the universities further illustrates the dogmatic drive of the Government. For almost a decade the universities have been subjected to a series of Government 'initiatives' designed to make them more 'efficient'. They have been required to change their structures to reflect the line-management ethos of manufacturing industry, with Vice Chancellors assuming the role of chief executives. The University Grants Committee (UGC), a buffer between the universities and government, has been replaced by the Universities' Funding Council (UFC) dominated by industrialists; tenure has been abolished, and Commissioners appointed as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act are currently imposing an ill-thought-out uniform Model Statute covering the terms of employment of academic staff in almost fifty universities and colleges previously regarded as having a measure of autonomy.

The method of student recruitment is undergoing radical changes, with universities being required to bid competitively for students; the maintenance grant for students is being eroded, and loans introduced from this year. At a time of severe financial retrenchment the Government, through the Training Agency, is nevertheless managing to provide many millions to encourage universities to teach courses that will fit students for the world of business and industry, with all the connotations of national 'manpower planning' that this carries with it.

No doubt universities ought to be efficiently managed. The money allocated to them should be well spent, and the proper administrative and accounting procedures should exist to ensure that this happens. And at a time of general financial stringency the universities ought not to avoid their share of any cuts in government expenditure. But the measures sketched above go far beyond that. They assume that universities as autonomous centres of research and teaching, dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, no matter what the consequences, are a thing of the past. Universities are to provide manpower for the manning of the markets, and are themselves to be subject to the market or are to be compelled to create market surrogates, as in the competitive bidding for students.

The idea of intellectual competition, whether through

The Social Charter: rights and wrongs

David Marsland

The European Community Social Charter is a socialist initiative arising out of socialist doctrines. We should resist it, not just as an intolerable imposition on us here in Britain of unwanted and rejected policies - though certainly we should do at least this, but also as the latest instance of socialists' long-term struggle to install their mischievous ideas world-wide.

Even in anticipation of an analysis of the Charter's deficiencies, to which I will turn, more than sufficient circumstantial evidence of its unacceptability is provided by the character of its British supporters. Any social policy initiative which wins the concerted backing of the Labour Party, mainline Trade Unionists, and the extreme left in the labour movement is likely *ipso facto* to be seriously flawed.

The European lobby is now fronted not by industry, the City, and the Civil Service, but by the Labour Party, the TUC, and the extreme left. When the Soviet President and union leaders as far to the left as Mr Gill - who abandoned the Communist Party of Great Britain because it was too right wing - are joining hands to bless European union and the Charter, we should be cautious indeed.

Latterday Chartists

Negotiated carefully, the economic dimensions of European integration can, for the most part, be beneficial to Britain (Marsland, 'Freedom and Progress in Europe', *Modern Management*, Vol 4, No 3, 1990). The so-called 'social dimension' should, by contrast, be resisted *in toto*. The Charter would restore, entrench, and strengthen the bureaucratic socialism which Mrs Thatcher, backed in the task three times by the British people, has fought to expunge.

It would tie the hands of dynamic management by imposing bureaucratic consultative procedures. It would enormously increase the power of the most old-fashioned forms of trade unionism. It would destroy the labour market, just as it is being at long last freed-up, by installing a minimum wage. It would restore the dead hand of corporatism, and prevent managers at all levels from managing, by requiring worker directors and entrenching tripartite decision-making across the board. It would fossilise the worst elements of the Welfare State just as improved standards of living are making it redundant.

All this would inhibit enterprise, strangle the market, and cripple capitalism - which of course is precisely its appeal to the Left.

When Brian Sedgemoor - characterised even by *The Independent* (June 16, 1990) as a 'Labour left-winger' - can call Mr Delors 'the greatest living European', people of all political persuasions who recognise the necessity of liberal economic institutions in free societies should

pinch themselves and reflect seriously.

The current President of the European Commission, like several of the Commissioners, is an old-fashioned bureaucratic socialist. Britain's duty is to resist his blandishments and his bullying, and to strive energetically to persuade political leaders and voters in continental Europe that prosperity, progress, and liberty presuppose economic freedom. We should campaign hard to defend and extend freedom in Western Europe.

Elsewhere in Europe, communism has - inevitably yet at the same time miraculously - collapsed. The peoples of Eastern and Central Europe have found for themselves an opportunity to establish (or re-establish) open societies and liberal cultures. With luck and good sense, the whole of Europe could be free and prosperous within the foreseeable future.

However, this providential opportunity could be squandered unless the nations of the EEC recognise and acknowledge the causes of communism's demise. It has been occasioned by the failure of socialism. Centralised planning has delivered bankruptcy. Bureaucratic control has produced chaos. Socially engineered equality has destroyed incentives and effort. Political interference has prevented the development of free markets.

If the EEC were to allow centralised planning, bureaucratic control, spurious equality, and political interference with the market in by the back door provided by the Charter, the whole of Europe would gradually subside into socialist obsolescence. Britain might be glad to be an independent offshore island once again, joined by trans-oceanic links, however long, to the remaining Free World.

A Napoleonic Code

I turn next to consider the intent and spirit of the Charter. It would appear to have been drawn up by a team of unreconstructed 'Bonachartists'.

The Napoleonic Code was a complete and comprehensive codification of the civil law undertaken in a few short years when, and I quote, 'More formidable legislation was completed than in any comparable period in French history' (*Macmillan Encyclopedia*, 1981). In the naive words of the same modern acolyte of the Corsican tyrant, words which might properly serve as the Charter's epigraph - 'Order and regularity were established in every branch of government'. The Charter is a new Napoleonic Code.

'The Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights for Workers', to give it its full and fatuously pretentious title, was adopted by the European Council - Britain alone, as in 1940, excepted - in December 1989. The Community's official documentation (CC-AD-90-006-EN-C, May 1990) characterises the purposes of the Charter as follows:

The signatories intend the Charter to be at once a solemn statement of progress already made in the social field and a preparation for new advances - so that the same importance may be given to the social dimension of the Community as to its economic aspects, in the construction of the large market of 1992.

They take for granted the absurd notion that, as in the outmoded Left concepts of 'progressive forces' and 'progressive development', the character of social progress is self-evident. Either that, or their presumption is that the meaning of progress is somehow uncontroversially negotiable - and this despite the fundamental contradictions between the social policies of British Thatcherism and Greek Pasok socialism, for example, or between German localism and French centralism. The direction of the bold 'new advances' envisaged can be imagined easily enough even without inspecting the Charter itself - more rights, so-called, more regulation, and more state control.

They also take for granted - what has nowhere yet been coherently argued - that economic development in Europe requires for its success harmonisation and equalisation of social policies. This is a disingenuous pretence adopted by bureaucrats and socialists intent on installing a particular set of preordained social policies regardless of whether they help economic development.

The document continues in the cloying spirit of remaindered socialism:

In the preamble to the Charter, the Heads of State or Government also underline the priority which they attach to job creation, the importance of the social consensus as a factor in economic development and their rejection of all forms of discrimination or exclusion.

Job creation, social consensus, and socially engineered equality all in one sentence! A triumph, one might say, in an alternative trio of concepts, of wish-fulfilment over realism, of socialist aspirations over democratic practicalities, and of anxious trade union insecurity over the enterprising ethos of capitalist confidence.

The signatories also declare, in a passage which reads like a pastiche of Community double-talk:

that, far from justifying any regression from the very diverse situations prevailing in the 12 member countries, the Charter demands a series of initiatives to develop workers' rights: responsibility for these initiatives will sometimes lie with the social partners, sometimes with the Member States and sometimes with the Community itself.

In other words, fear not, there is to be no levelling down in the standards of social progress, so-called, achieved to date even in the most ambitiously progressive - i.e. welfarist, collectivist, and statist - of EEC nations. On the contrary the Charter demands (i.e. it commands, it insists upon, it refuses to be satisfied with less than) a whole series of initiatives to extend and entrench 'workers' rights'. With any luck we might expect the menu of paper rights offered to the workers of modern Europe to rival or even to trump the longest list of such spurious rights ever constructed - in Stalin's 1935 Constitution. More rights - less freedom QED.

Moreover, the Charter allocates further powers to the egregious corporatism of the legendary 'Social Partners', and to reserve significant but unspecified real power over social policy to the Commission itself.

The power-structure suggested here is not dissimilar to Mr Gorbachev's plans for the Baltic nations - local details can be settled by the Lithuanians, more important matters will be decided by cosy arrangements between the Communist Party and the army, and everything that really matters will be fixed in Moscow.

The thrust and spirit of the Charter, as document, ideology and social movement (of which the Charter is merely a formalised expression) has six main flaws:

It is a perfect example of bureaucratic formalism. That is to say, it presumes that improvements in human affairs can be achieved by establishing and enforcing general regulations. This is both profoundly un-British and thoroughly erroneous.

It speaks against localism and variety, and in support of centralism and homogeneity. As such, it re-inforces one of the most dangerous tendencies in modernism which leads directly away from freedom and democracy and towards socialist autocracy.

It is so suffused with collectivist welfarism that it cannot even conceive that different approaches in social policy - approaches allowing more scope to individualism, self-reliance and enterprise - could count as constituting social policy at all (Marsland, *Against the Welfare State*, Claridge Press, 1991).

Its concept of rights is unambiguously in the tradition of the French Revolution, Marxism, and modern socialism. It thus allows nothing to the alternative Anglo-Saxon philosophy of rights, which is more modest and realistic, and sceptical in principle about the trustworthiness of the State as a guarantor of ambitious positive rights. And of course the State which Anglo-Saxon individualism counsels us to beware of is a national state. How much greater is the need for caution in the face of a recently invented and artificially constructed supranational state-organisation, completely lacking in the practical wisdom provided by history and tradition.

It shares with modern socialist parties the glib presumption that the economy is there to be managed, and that its operations can be easily and safely manipulated in the interest of social objectives. Socialist governments in France, in Spain, in Australasia and elsewhere have been thoroughly disabused of this naivety. Why should Brussels be allowed to cling to it with any plausibility?

Lastly, underlying all these errors, the Charter wins such little credibility as it has from its appeal to a concept of equality which turns out to be entirely spurious. Like Mr Kinnock, it would prefer us all to be poor if only we could be equal, rather than that all should be richer at the cost of some being richer still.

The Fifty Commandments

The Commission has drawn up an action programme of fifty proposals, the Fifty Commandments, just for the parts of the Charter which are to be implemented at Community level by 1992. They consist both of binding measures within the Commission's existing powers and, on top of this, of non-binding measures on issues within the competence of Member States designed, and I

examination, competition for jobs, or the pursuit of research excellence as measured by peer review, is being replaced by competition as measured solely by cost and price, by the measures of the 'performance indicators' that universities are now required to provide about themselves. Academic success is no longer to be judged solely in terms of scholarship and research and effective teaching, but in terms of numbers and cheapness of students and the gaining of commercial research contracts. Not because the universities have freely decided to follow this path, but because the government has decreed it.

As with the case of local government, the pursuit of the dogma of the market is inexorably leading to greater centralisation and uniformity and government interference: and this from governments which are ostensibly committed to fostering the strength of intermediate institutions, Burke's 'little platoons'.

But let us suppose that at least one of the many reforms of the university system may be sensible. How is the government to discover whether or not this is so? How is it to determine whether, for example, student loans militate against aspiring students from poor homes? Is there to be a pilot scheme, or a trial period? There is no sign of either. And the sheer welter of changes, one following hard on the heels of the other (behaviour so characteristic of the hyperactive), makes it impossible ever to form a reasoned assessment of the merit of any single change. Instead of housing laboratories and conducting experiments, universities have themselves become crazy laboratories in which experiments are being continuously conducted but no experimental results ever emerge.

And what of the losses, the opportunity costs which have to be met in digesting and accommodating continuous changes? The net effect of these changes is that the work of universities is disrupted by uncertainty and unpredictability. Loyalty to universities and colleges is weakened. No doubt, although universities require stability to do their work well, they should expect to change when the world around them is changing. But there is no reason why a conservative government should encourage continuous change, and change so ill-prepared that, through the measures themselves, and through the stress and anxiety that they breed, it threatens the very autonomy of distinguished institutions which lie at the heart of the culture of the nation and the inculcation of professional standards in which universities have historically played a vital part.

It may be objected that to adopt the stance outlined above, instead of that of the hyperactive, would have been to 'consolidate'. But is it such a bad thing for a conservative to consolidate after a period of upheaval? For consolidation is not drift or retreat, but the retaining of what has been gained and attempting to ensure that, as far as possible, backsliding does not take place. The cost of consolidation is eternal vigilance.

In the eyes of many the undogmatic character of conservatism is a weakness. To the intellectual, conservatism appears as untheoretical and lacking in rigour. To others, it looks like a lack of principle. But what may appear as a weakness is also a source of strength. It frees government from the shackles of the *a priori*, from being

bound to do what a set of abstract and seemingly rational principles dictates. It enables a government to be minimalist in its approach to change, to maximise certainty and predictability among the people, to facilitate personal expression and inventiveness, to avoid large scale social engineering projects.

Where the successive Conservative governments which have held office since 1979 have gone wrong, and continue to go wrong, is in encouraging the dogma of the market to encroach in areas where, since standards are not set in terms of price and cost, it cannot succeed in bringing increased efficiency. What is objectionable about the market is not that it encourages greed and selfishness, as is widely claimed by moralists of various hues. For the market may, under certain circumstances, curb these vices; and in any case selfishness is not exactly absent from the ranks of the *nomenklatura*. What is objectionable is that when the market becomes a dogma it exalts a necessary condition into a sufficient condition. It is necessary for wealth creation that there be free economic competition in markets, and wealth creation is itself necessary for much else. But it does not follow that the only way in which institutions should acquire the money to carry out their activities is through entering the markets or through aping them. The basic, and possibly politically fatal, mistake of those conservatives who currently hold office is not to realise this.

Sophist's Corner

What is becoming clear is that we face a war over many months, probably extending into the summer and autumn. With all the other indications of Iraqi military resilience, this is revealing the extent to which the coalition forces have seriously under-estimated Iraqi capabilities, and that is making the allies' conduct of the war problematic. We are left with the daunting conclusion that the coalition is achieving the impossible: digging itself into quicksand. Having been confident of early victory, it is instead faced with very difficult choices against a formidable opponent. We will be lucky indeed if the war is over within six months.

**Paul Rogers, senior lecturer in peace studies,
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Daily Telegraph,
1 March 1991**

Ecofreaks

Anna Bramwell

One of the most intriguing developments in Green circles is the growth of the Green saboteur. This phenomenon has appeared in the USA, under the aegis of Earth First! Germany has the so-called *autonomes*, and Italy has a Green saboteur movement.

Direct action groups are a predictable consequence of a religious ideology, and 'deep ecology' is such an ideology. It forms the radical edge of the Green movement, and the most consistently anti-humanist trend within it.

Deep ecology was first formulated by Arne Naess in 1972. It is apocalyptic, anti-political and anti-reform, adopting principles of biological equality, and emphasising humanity as a participant in Nature rather than as Nature's steward. From this springs its anti-humanism. The deep ecology vision is of man as a blot on the face of the earth, an exterminatory virus; in short, a disaster.

From this stance, several forms of action flow. The assumption that Nature is benevolent and harmonious leads to the belief that it is possible to solve conflicts without harm to any species, simply by giving up extravagant ways of living, and adopting a more sensitive approach. When explored, however, this innocuous picture turns out to mean living at a Third World level: not the affluent Third World, either, but that of the American Indians in the Nineteenth Century, or the Amazonian Indians now. Since the broad masses, in either hemisphere, are unlikely to want to do this without coercion, and population reduction by one means or another is crucial for reducing resource consumption to an acceptable level, the conundrum for the deep ecologist is how to use pacific means to make people change, and how far violent means are justified.

Those deep ecologists who believe in the inevitable destruction of the existing eco-system feel that man has only himself to blame, and that the earth can and will shrug him off and take care of herself. They, the saved, know that the survival of Nature is more important than that of humanity. Others believe that persuasion and education can be carried out in time. Where both disagree with reform ecologists is in their rejection of political parties and institutional change.

An important preliminary to understanding deep ecology is to see what kinds of minds its ethic has attracted. Interestingly, many converts to Greenness since the mid-1970s are not mystics, Theosophists, or the Hindu masters beloved of Thoreau and Emerson. Indeed, they frequently began by deploring mysticism and occultism and the abandonment of a belief in science, and were only later converted to a resource-egalitarian, doomsday ecogism. Examples of this category include Peter Medawar, Carl Sagan and Isaac Azimov. All three are (or were) distinguished scientists. The role of science in ecological thinking generally is significant, for in order to be persuaded of the legitimacy of direct action, anyone other than a thug has to be absolutely sure that

they are right in their beliefs; and the moral justification of direct action to deep ecologists lies in this certainty.

But where does the moral backing to deep ecology lie? Not in human values, since for Greens these are subjective, sapiens-centred and fraudulent. The justification for the deep ecologists' programme of action lies outside the human value-system. In this, deep ecogism has the power of religion, which claims an other worldly revelation. But ecogism does not reject the world. On the contrary, it celebrates it. So the values have to lie in the world, in Nature itself. Deep ecologists have to believe that they can leap over these inherent human flaws and latch onto Nature's way of being, fit into the harmony of the universe. Despite the humility of the ecologist's stance before Nature, he is one who has access to special knowledge, he becomes part of the elite.

The second justification for direct action lies in the belief that deep ecology is backed by a scientific assessment of what is going on. In view of the deep ecologist's attacks on science, this may seem a strange statement. Yet for a long time ecologists and environmentalists have been scientists. Indeed, the essence of ecogism was that it was propagated by a small section of the trained intelligentsia. Not just because the first political ecologists were ecologists, plant scientists, geographers and geologists, but because it takes a rational and trained mind to possess the absolute credulity, the lack of emotional balance and common sense, that characterises the fully fledged Green thinker.

This may sound a bizarre statement. The common-sense view of science and the scientific method is that it is the province of reason, of hypotheses neatly made, evidence produced, argument proven or disproven. And yet, Newton believed in alchemy and Rosicrucianism; the scientific efflorescence of the Renaissance was connected with the cosmologies of neo-Platonism, not the rational discourse of Aristotle; the world of magnetic fields fired scientific thought for a few decades, and still underlies the work of Rudolph Steiner. Astrologers believe in them too: astronomers are just beginning to return to them. It takes a creative mind to invent quantum physics, to believe in relativity, and it takes a fairly credulous mind to take these wonders on faith.

Another characteristic of the scientific mind is a certain arrogance. Once successful in one field, you tend to believe that you can solve problems in others. Scientific education and achievement in one field is not, however, a Consumer Warranty of clear thinking or right judgment in another.

In order to produce the full flower of political ecogism, the deep sort, you must have some scientific background. If you are unfortunate enough to be a philosopher instead, you will give your work a pseudo-scientific gloss, using terms drawn from theoretical biology, or cybernetics, graphs, models, and so forth.

The certificate of scientific origin is crucial to the effectiveness of the ecological argument.

One response to this analysis may be to argue that Green thinking is not necessarily accurate at all, or clear, or scientific, but is unthinkingly apocalyptic, exaggerates figures and uses them selectively. In short, Green argument does not conform to the rational model outlined above. One can point to the doomsday prophecies of the 1960s and 1970s, which have not, to put it mildly, been fulfilled, although they were issued by respectable professors at universities or research institutions. Nevertheless, Green argument does depend to a surprising degree on 'scientific' facts. It depends on the economist's calculations, the climatologist's assertion, and is now being taught in schools as an absolute truth (as in *The Rain Forest Teaching Pack*). Although New Age ecologists who genuinely support a primitive and ascientific new religion do exist, they are rare.

But what about the consideration that there are *real* environmental problems, that pollution and other catastrophes loom over us so horrifyingly that the methodology by which we become aware of them is irrelevant? There is no space in this article to discuss the reality or otherwise of the multitude of ecological disasters, but it is not necessary to do so in order to suggest convincingly that ecologism and real disasters have little connection. Single issues are dealt with anyway, in the normal course of political lobbying. They will probably be dealt with piecemeal, and probably not globally, but such a procedure at least defuses the possibility that drastic and global steps will be taken that turn out in later years to be the wrong ones. The ecological 'package deal', by contrast, is not a response to real problems at all.

To explain what I mean, take the greenhouse effect. One might say that the ozone layer put Greens on the map. Since other disasters have not yet materialised, the discovery of holes in the ozone layer came just in time, and the greenhouse effect, while still in the realms of prediction, has galvanised governments into action. But that is the point: it has galvanised them. If there had never been an ecological movement, and evidence had emerged to suggest that the greenhouse effect existed, and that some countries might be worse off for it, then those who thought that they would be affected by it in a bad way would be lobbying to have something done about it. They might have problems getting instant action from the rest of the world. The burghers of Holland, facing a higher sea level, might well be attacked as selfish by those who were delighted at the prospect of a warm, dry Britain, with vineyards growing in Yorkshire; while those who prefer oaks to conifers could return to a Sweden their ancestors left over a thousand years ago. Nonetheless, there would be protests and there would be action. The protests would not be tinged with righteous hysteria, as now, and we would be much clearer as to what exactly was happening, or predicted to happen. Politics would have to be very inflexible and unresponsive, the future sufferers very passive, for the issue not to be taken up at all. For ecologists to argue that a possible greenhouse catastrophe is a vindication of their cause is therefore unreasonable. This argument holds good whether or not one points to the numerous and contradictory climatic disasters that have been forecast for

thirty years.

To explain further why the ecological movement does not depend on 'real' problems, here are two examples which show that ecologism can arise regardless of such events. In the Nineteenth Century, ecological arguments similar to today's were put forward. An anti-Western ethic identified civilisation with exterminatory and evil impulses, preferred matriarchy over patriarchy, preached anti-anthropocentrism, thought an experience of the wilderness was essential to a viable society, talked in organicist metaphors, and above all believed that resources were finite, and must be shared and rationed. That sense of doom, of apocalypse, and of guilt, so strong in today's political ecologism, was just as strong then. But it would be hard to argue that environmental problems sparked off this ideology, or that there was any sign of resources running out.

Naturally, all resources are finite. But thinkers who harp upon a possible future danger to our use of resources, offering an indefinite future chronology, and an indefinite causation, are not being very helpful. Nor am I picking on particularly second-rate or dotty thinkers in looking at these early ecologists (fuller details of whom can be found in my book, *Ecology in the 20th Century, A History*). Establishment people are as prone to dottiness as anyone else. To rise in the Establishment you do not take an exam that guarantees you against ever having any dotty ideas: you simply take an exam that ensures you have the same dotty ideas as your peers.

The second example is that of Eastern Europe today. Everyone knows by now that pollution in the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union is appalling, and they probably know that environmental protest was a major factor in pulling down the existing Communist regimes. Yet the ethic of political ecologism can be found in only one Eastern European country today, Bulgaria, where the rhetoric of technophobia, the talk of cultural domination and a return to spiritual roots resembles the deep ecologism of Western Europe. Bulgaria, however, is the country with the fewest environmental problems in the East, the lowest levels of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide pollution, the least industrialisation. In seriously affected countries such as Czechoslovakia and Poland, the urgency was real, and the answers are practical: better, more advanced technology, costing of resources, a legal framework, cleaner energy, water purification plants. This practical approach to environmental problems cannot be described as ecological or Green thinking. So we are left with the paradox that the self-assuredness of deep ecologists, their moral justification, the certainty of their cause that impels them towards direct and violent action, is based on a belief in the scientific validation of their positions, a certainty that true and right reason, a dash of holism, a soupcon of vision, will turn bad science, positivist and analytical, into good. And no doubt scientists in their turn find in ecological causes a way to fill the void created by the rigours and boredom of that discipline. I find it significant that recent issues of the *New Scientist* show a scientific community gone Green.

Just as the attitude of the ecologist to science is contradictory, so his approach to the state is ambiguous. To make civil disobedience work, certain preconditions are

necessary. They include, obviously, a loss of faith in normal political processes, and a belief that processes are irrelevant compared to ends: but more importantly they assume that dialogue with the state is possible, that certain moral assumptions about fair play and sincerity will prevail. Civil disobedience assumes that the state will not use the power which is available to it. But sometimes the state does so. Gandhi's tactics worked with the British in India, but failed when the Indians took over their own government. Hunger strikers were pardoned by Tsarist Russia, murdered after 1917. Nonetheless, the ecologists' belief in effective civil disobedience implies a certain trust in the state, trust and resentment, an attitude that mirrors that of the child to his father. It implies immaturity, and the surety that the child will eventually be able to take over from the discarded father.

Writers on ecological ethics have avoided the question of conflict. They presume the possibility of a conflictless world, based on a benevolent Nature. Deep ecologists, unlike reformers, think of the 'inclusive wellbeing of all living beings'. Plenty of ecologists who do not accept the whole 'deep' package, do instinctively accept the Aldo Leopold principle, that you should live in such a way as to respect and maintain the integrity of the existing eco-unit. This means respecting all its components - at least, Leopold does not give us any idea how conflicting claims should be weighed up. Ecologists do not always see why there should be conflicting claims at all, assuming that the answer is to confine the effects of human intrusion to some clearly establishable and obvious minimum, while refusing to specify what those minima are.

The picture here is muddled, because of course man is a part of the eco-system in any case, and was put there by Mother Nature, not Society. But the essential point is that an eco-system is not an optimum and unchanging unit, as the proponents of the 'climax' theory believed. It alters: the balance of species within it changes, and it does so without human intervention. Furthermore, an eco-system runs on a constant transfer of energy from species to species, which is performed by consumption. Animals eat animals. Animals eat grass. The food chain means the utilisation of one species by another for survival. What holds back the growth of one species over another is shortage of food. When we interfere with this delicate balance, the problem is to determine at what stage we stop, and how we weigh the relative interests of the species we interfere with, not just against ourselves, but against each other. The doctrine of animal rights was made famous by Peter Singer, who declared that he was unaffected by the charms of the animals concerned. Spiders had rights if dogs did. Apart from its impracticality, the desire to give animals rights is regrettably tied up with the respect and affection we have for some animals, and mammals tend to receive more of this human value than do fish, insects and bacteria. The deep ecologist belief in full biological equality has recently been tempered by the appearance of a subtly argued programme for mammalian rights.

There are shades here of 'Needs Further Research', that stock finish to a paper funded by the ESRC. After so many years of thinking, one is surely entitled to a clear ruling about conflicting man-animal claims, or quantified suggestions about exactly how much we can use of

any resource. And when it comes to the claim that wild life should be respected over domesticated life, we are entitled, I think, to something stronger than a holding operation while we look for the sparking plug.

One reason for the failure to produce concrete recommendations is that the very values that make people wish to respect the rights of mammals and trees operate against real egalitarianism. Love, precisely because it arises from differentiation, and also from the differentiation between subject and object, is hierarchical. So elephants and pandas seem to us to have more rights than spiders, and spiders more rights than bacteria. The belief in stewardship that motivates many ecologists is paternalist, and suggests that human values and human survival have a dominant role to play, even if such values should be changed to include love and respect for nature.

But a deeper reason lies behind this failure. Andrew Dobson in a recent book referred to a strange reluctance of ecologists to communicate solutions, especially in terms of means. What they like to do is to indicate that the problems are being considered, even if solutions have not yet been found. It is as if they prefer an open-ended process of consideration to a final set of principles. The charitable interpretation is that this is due to their democratic and discursive habit of mind. Ideas are offered for consideration by co-operative and like-minded peers. Clearly, this process is seen as important to deep ecologists. The language used in describing the evolution of a final set of principles is significant in this context. Deep ecologists meditate, evolve strategies, study conflicts, invent terms, offer initiatives, provide guidelines and initiate principles.

But there is another reason for the emphasis on open-ended discussion. When utopian socialists talk about decentralisation, democracy at local level, and so on, we should take it to be a code for rule either by the Derek Hattons of this world, or by a kind of glorious and continuous street party. In any case, it is safely outside the realm of reality. We know that the 'people' involved here are the people who run state-aided opera houses in Nicaragua, not the 'people' who go short of grain because the train-drivers are on strike. The means of the deep ecologist suffer from the same kind of vagueness, because the murky details of costing the Basic Minimum Wage, or of making public transport actually usable, are beneath his interest. The ends are clear enough: a clean, purified earth, a controlled and minimised human population. But in deciding how to attain them, the ecologist prefers to evolve strategies and ardently to put forth proposals, the dilemmas themselves being actually insoluble.

In the course of explaining how his ideal society is to evolve, the populariser of deep ecology, Devall, tells us to 'think like a mountain', and 'sing like a river', become 'one with the earth'. That way, you can avoid the painful conflicts and choices. Because man is cruel, but never Nature. But how is this conflict-free oneness arrived at? Suppose that by meditating you acquire the characteristics of mountains, rivers and the earth. Why should we suppose that these characteristics are bound to be benevolent? Benevolence is not known to natural phenomena; it is a human characteristic, and exists only where

there is choice, and the idea of good and evil. The belief that you can rise above cruelty and kindness is in fact rather troubling. Not only is Nature not benevolent, but in the long term neither are her effects. Volcanoes violently alter local climates. Comets wipe out all life on earth. Oxygen breathing life exists as the result of the extermination of our predecessors. The uncaring river flows: it knows not time nor change, it is and it is not. Can humanity become like this? Should humanity become like this? It would be a very different species from the one we know now, and the obvious Green response - 'and a good thing too' - is, I think, at best childlike, at worst deeply childish.

Devall and others would deny that human beings give Nature its meaning from outside. But the argument for a non-human-centred world which has yet been most extensively developed, the Gaia hypothesis, that gives the earth its own vast life-span, its own survival instincts, does not suggest that humanity should rely on nature.

I find it hard to close my eyes to one quality in this image of the wise guru, meditating on the mountain, in superhuman control of himself, the guru so admired by deep ecologists in the USA because of his contact with the higher powers, his capacities.

This man is master of the universe. Indeed, there is a further passage in Devall's book which talks of the deep ecologist as warrior, and lovingly describes the techniques of Aikido. 'A warrior trained in Aikido advances and controls the center'.

Although Devall describes his eco-warrior as having tender and intuitive qualities, the image is that of the superman, in touch with the currents of the universe, and able to bend them to his will. Devall goes on: 'By becoming empty, fully empty, Buddhist teachers say, we become full of possibilities'. *Possibilities?* To do what? Am I alone in finding something unattractively instrumental about this language?

Most ecologists argue for *stasis*, and against uncontrolled change. Above all, mobility is an agent for instability, and should be minimised. Man must be rooted to the earth, and the capitalist idea of worker mobility opposes this ideal. The dislike of uncertainty and change is understandable, (even though it conflicts with the Green demand for free movement of peoples, and especially for Third World refugees to the First World). There is a link between people and place, locality and continuity. But how is one to turn this into practical politics? Ban labour mobility? Discourage it? One answer is to make 'the local community the natural starting point for political deliberation'. But how does that help?

First, there has to be a homogeneous community, agreed on its basic values and aims, which will tie its participants by subtle and non-coercive bonds. If such a community is not already in existence, then what? Well, given your viable etc. local community, it decides democratically how it is to survive, without sustained material growth, without losing members or gaining them. But suppose the community decides otherwise? Ecologists do not clarify this problem. Ineradicable disagreement does not enter their model of community.

This may seem incredible. After all, ecologists say that we are in the state we are in because certain human drives have got out of hand. Why do they believe that

such disruptive patterns will not emerge on the micro level? One answer is their deep-seated belief in the appeal of community - *Gesellschaft*. Once offered such charms, who would abandon them? Unfortunately ecological philosophers form a self-selected group, frequently emanating from the university intelligentsia, and linked in a global village of believers. Since the hostile Other does not enter these villages, they are able to forget its presence, and carry on believing that education into their values will overcome the rogue element in humanity.

In their surprisingly brief and local time-scale, ecologists talk of the need to put community before profit. This usually means subsidising some village formed to exploit the earth's resources in the most polluting way possible (nobody suggests subsidising Silicon Valley) while preserving the deserted landscape of previously industrial areas such as the Cornish moors. But how would the model work? Would someone who wanted to move from the Highland eco-zone to the Chilterns bio-region have to ask another's permission? Who would police the comings and goings of these local communities, and control the policies?

The conclusion is inescapable: deep ecologists are holiday ecologists. They are vacationing in nature, and yearning for Community, before returning to their protected lives as children of the state, a state all-powerful, but badgerable like a busy father reading the paper, a state which finally, like an aged parent, becomes disposable.

This interpretation is strengthened by another example: in the blindness to environmental problems in Communist states we track the old utopian socialist ideal; based on the rejection of the wise and paternal, the cruel state, the father-figure. Without nurse, all is possible.

These criticisms may seem harsh, like kicking a helpless and lovable animal, which is how many people see Greens. Much of the ecological argument has somehow crept into the public awareness and lodged there. Clearly it meets a psychological need. And I like trees as much as anyone else, and never would cut them down, and even live deep in the countryside, as far away as I can get from big cities and industrialisation. And maybe it is true that reform environmentalism would never be sufficient to force us to put natural beauty before our own needs, although it is sufficient to prevent man-made disasters.

Yet when analysed, the ecological claim to moral truth seems thin, the comprehensive world-view tatter at close quarters than we are entitled to expect.

Ecologists should try to live as they preach. Deep ecologists certainly believe this. But although it is certainly hard to be a Paleolithic hunter-gatherer all by yourself, there should be some kind of link between saying and doing. Do ecologists absolutely have to travel everywhere by aeroplane? No, they could go by boat. They could walk, not drive. But they do not. This is not just a cheap crack at Gucci Greens. The point is that the reason they do not do as they say is important: it is because they feel their time and energy has a cost, that it is a value which they are prepared to exchange against their other values. Perhaps deep ecologists should meditate on this point.

And the most famous guru of all, E. F. Schumacher, author of the best-selling *Small is Beautiful*, was an economist working from 1950 to 1970 in a country, Britain, whose coal industry was nationalised, protected, and subsidised. British coal, the old Nineteenth Century foundation of her fortunes, is deep mined, expensive as well as difficult and dangerous to bring up, and extremely destructive of the countryside around it. It is also highly polluting coal, with the highest concentration of sulphur of any hard coal in Europe. There was never any reason why Britain should not have closed down this industry and bought cheaper, non-polluting coal from Australia, Poland or South Africa. Of course, international trade is bad according to ecologists, but sometimes one principle - that trade is a bad thing - has to give

way to another, that to pollute Europe with acid rain and cause some 15,000 deaths a year, and in the process emit more radioactivity than any nuclear power station yet built outside Chernobyl is a non-green way to behave.

Of course, there were political reasons for keeping the British coal industry alive. And self-sufficiency was important to a socialist post-war Britain, which rationed its import currency as well as its bread. There were human reasons too. Still, it would have been cheaper - much, much cheaper - to abandon the coal mines and pay off that generation of miners in 1950 than to run Britain's energy programme as it was run.

And so the decision was taken. And the economic adviser to the British National Coal Board between 1950 and 1970? E.F.Schumacher.

The Case of William Shockley

Michael G. Danikas

William Shockley died during the summer of 1989. He was 79 years old. He was an outstanding physicist and the co-inventor of the transistor. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics in 1956, with J. Bardeen and W.H. Brattain, for his invention. The fruits of his research activities resulted in more than fifty US patents. He was for years Alexander M. Poniatoff professor of Engineering Sciences in the Electrical Engineering Department of Stanford University, in California. He also served in many capacities in US Government and he won among others, the National Academy of Science Comstock Award and the American Physical Society Buckley Prize. He was an immensely gifted man¹ who will be remembered not only for his path-breaking contributions to physics, but also for his 'controversial' involvement in genetic research.

Shockley published several papers on the subject of IQ and heredity. His ideas were thought to be 'unconventional'. He was accused of racialism by a fair number of people, including academics, students and journalists. 'Racialism' and 'racialist' are terms used far too easily nowadays and readers of the *Salisbury Review* know only too well that these terms are employed far too liberally in describing thoughts and attitudes which have nothing to do with true racial discrimination. Was Shockley a racialist? Was he really trying to prove white Aryan supremacy?

Shockley became actively concerned with the subject of IQ through specific observations. It was actually the blinding in 1963 of a San Francisco delicatessen proprietor by a teenager with an IQ of about 60, one of the 17 illegitimate children of a woman with an IQ of 55, which prompted him to examine questions related to dysgenic trends in the US population as well as in those related to IQ.² He voiced his concerns in an interview with the weekly magazine *US News and World Report*³.

In subsequent publications, Shockley researched the white-Negro IQ differences because of the pressing

social problems posed by black unemployment, and because the racial problem was (and still is) potentially explosive.⁴ In all his writings, no racist statement can be found, or statements which could have justified the later abuses by the 'enlightened' portion of the student population. Shockley suggested that intelligence is largely (by about 80 per cent) determined by the genes and to a much lower extent by the environment (about 20 per cent). He also found evidence that the IQ of the white US population was higher by about one standard deviation (approximately 15 points) than that of the black population.⁵ Nobody can claim that his findings were racist. They were the results of careful research (it has to be noted that Shockley was also a brilliant statistician). His articles were published not in any racist second class newspaper or magazine but in refereed journals, internationally known among the experts.

His findings did not support a theory of a 'white Aryan supremacy'. Far from it. He presented evidence that '...American orientals are about six times more successful than the national average on a per capita basis in achieving the distinction of election to the National Academy of Sciences....Jewish Nobel Prize winners in science occur about ten times more often than expected on the basis of the population as a whole'.⁶

In spite of these very clear statements, Shockley seemed to have offended the US black community and the liberal-Left establishment. His 'crime' was to suggest that the IQ deficit of the Negro population was due not to environmental factors but to hereditary origin and therefore irremediable by practical improvements in the environment. He was quick to point out that all he was doing was to make some suggestions. He repeatedly wrote that more work had to be done. He called his findings and conclusions simply 'opinions' rather than proofs. He never insisted that he possessed the truth on these matters. He once remarked, after having tried to urge his fellow members of the National Academy of

Sciences to direct research funds to heredity-environment issues: 'If environment is the main cause (of the Negro IQ deficit), the present uncertainty will inhibit our overcoming unreasonable prejudice. If genetics is the main cause, the uncertainty will cloud public discussions and the search for solutions. Furthermore, vast expenditures in our well-intentioned war on poverty may accomplish not a solution but instead create a larger problem - a situation comparable to that of providing economic aid to underdeveloped countries and at the same time disregarding the population explosion'.

For these views Shockley became rather unpopular with the black community and with a considerable portion of the student population. In the turbulent atmosphere of the late Sixties, he was shouted down at public lectures and had his university lectures cancelled. In particular, a symposium at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute of about 500 scientists and humanists was cancelled because Shockley was scheduled to deliver a paper asking for an objective diagnosis of the genetic deterioration theory.⁷

Shockley was a great physicist and statistician. Some of his critics claimed that since he was not a qualified geneticist, his writings did not have any particular scientific value and as such they should be ignored. To this, one may respond that it is quite often the nonspecialists who break new ground in a particular research field. Heinrich Schliemann was not an archeologist but a banker; Michael Ventris was not an expert on ancient languages but an architect. Shockley's papers appeared in first-class scientific reviews. His articles became constant references in the discussions that ensued. Moreover, it was an eminent geneticist, H. Bentley Glass, distinguished professor at the State University in Stony Brook, who, speaking at a meeting called by the campus Committee Against Racism, said that 'it would be ridiculous to assert (Shockley) doesn't know anything about genetics - this paper⁸ is a serious contribution to genetics'.⁹

Was it wise for Shockley to air his opinions on such sensitive matters, and even more, to suggest that this difference might have had a genetic cause? Was he prudent to suggest more research on these subjects, when popular sentiment dictates that no racial differences in mental ability exist, and that differences in capability appearing between the races are due to environmental factors only? Moreover, to what extent is a free democratic society obliged to create opportunities for expression of such 'repugnant' ideas?

In view of the white-Negro IQ discrepancy, Shockley was right to pose such uncomfortable questions. If Shockley were right, would it not be unfair to society as a whole and to the black community in particular to pretend that the problems do not exist and to continue not to take the appropriate measures for their remedy? At the time it was easier to ridicule or to intimidate Shockley than to discuss the whole range of questions in a calm and scientific way. A free democratic society (if it is truly democratic and not obeying the will of some hot-headed minorities) has the obligation to discuss even 'repugnant' ideas. Should a 'repugnant' theory be wrong, so much the better. In this case we do not have to worry about it. Should it bring to the surface some additional

information, some hard facts of life, then we may use this for the benefit of society as a whole. An attitude contrary to this, a thought-blocking attitude as Shockley called it,¹⁰ could be damaging not only to science, but also to progress and to the whole of mankind. After all, society has the obligation to extend a respectable forum to people like Shockley, in the interests of free dialogue and truly independent academic research.¹¹

The case of William Shockley raises an important question: in what sort of democracy do we believe? Shockley's case shows very clearly that when someone tries to say something different from the established views (or the accepted dogma), he is looked upon with suspicion (if not dislike or even hatred). The initially organised general indifference and silence is transformed with time to ridicule and intimidation. But does true democracy defend itself with threats? Or does democracy mean simply conformity with the widely accepted views? Does true democracy consider a crime the deviation from the 'conventional' wisdom? If so, democracy strongly resembles the way the totalitarian regimes think and act. And if ridicule, intimidation and contempt is the fate of such people as Shockley, how can we refrain from drawing parallels between his case and the Lysenko affair in Stalinist Russia, where the blinding dogma proved to be stronger than unhindered scientific research?

To be sure, Shockley's mistreatment did not end with his death. Shortly after his death, the well known and highly respected magazine *Nature* published an article on him.¹² The article, written by one H. Kallikak (in all probability a pseudonym) devoted only a small part of its space to Shockley's great achievements in physics and the rest to an attack on his IQ work. The article gave a grossly distorted view of Shockley's ideas in this field of research, trying to portray him as a somewhat lonely figure, unrelated to the complex realities of social anthropology and genetics, a loner who unnecessarily insulted black Americans. And yet Shockley's conclusions on the predominance of hereditary factors influencing IQ were shared by a number of authorities in the fields of genetics and psychology, such as A. Jensen, H. Eysenck, R. Herrnstein and R. Lynn.¹³

Many of Shockley's opponents tried hard to portray him as a racist. Their concept of racialism was peculiarly ill-defined. Others argued that his work could be used by extreme right-wing elements to support their case. There is no doubt that this is a particularly dangerous way of thinking. Whole research programmes could be banned for the fear that their results might be used to support the aims of some marginal groups. Indeed Shockley can be identified as a racist only in the sense that his research could be exploited by extremists of the Right. If this redefinition of racialism is allowed, then the revolutionaries are also reactionaries because their activities provide support for reactionary circles.¹⁴ A very spurious logic indeed. Despite all the problems he faced, Shockley pursued his work, dismissing any ideological preconceptions (or 'unsearch dogmatism' as he liked to say) because when and where these dominate, science and research are doomed to failure. He preferred to go against the tide, preserving thus his integrity as a scientist. He preferred to go on with his 'repugnant' research,

since for him it was a matter of conscience: 'To be a heretic against the ideological preconceptions is the only course I find possible for a scientist of conscience'.¹⁵ It is a sentence epitomising the attitude of the man; it is also advice, the supreme advice, to all scientists.

Notes

1. S. Thomas, 'William Shockley' in *Men of Space*, vol.4, pp. 170-205, 1962.
2. W. Shockley, 'Genetics and the future of man', *Nobel Conference*, pp. 65-105, 1965; and 'Human-quality problems and research taboos', *New Concepts and Directions in Education*, pp. 67-99, 1969.
3. W. Shockley, 'Is quality of US population declining?', *US News & World Report*, 22 November 1965.
4. W. Shockley, 'A "try-simplest cases" approach to the heredity-poverty-crime problem', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 57, no. 6, pp. 1767-1774, June 1967.
5. W. Shockley, 'Negro IQ deficit: Failure of a "malicious coincidence" model warrants new research proposals', *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 227-248, June 1971; 'Models, mathematics, and the moral obligation to diagnose the origin of Negro IQ deficit', *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 369-377, October 1971; 'Dysgenics, genetics, raceology: a challenge to the intellectual responsibility of educators', *Phi Delta Kappan*, pp. 297-307, January 1972.
6. On the subject of the intelligence of the orientals, the reader may refer to a very detailed study by R. Lynn, 'The intelligence of the Mongoloid: a psychometric, evolutionary and neurological theory', *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 813-844, 1987.
7. V. Royster, 'Thinking things over', *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 May 1968, p. 16.
8. Professor Bentley Glass was referring to Shockley's article 'Deviations from Hardy-Weinberg frequencies caused by assortative mating in hybrid populations', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 70, no. 3, March 1973.
9. *Newsday*, 26 February 1974, 'Professor reclaims his name'.
10. W. Shockley, *Research Report: Research on American Lysenkoism in the National Academy of Sciences*, 25 August 1972, pp. 1-350. 1/1-1-350. 1/91.
11. See also, A.R. Hibbs, 'Inquisition, repression and ridicule', *Engineering and Science*, pp. 4-6 and 28-29, December 1974-January 1975.
12. *Nature*, vol. 341, p. 190, 1989.
13. A. Jensen in a letter to *Nature*, vol. 344, p. 284, 22 March 1990 pointed out that a majority of experts in the relevant fields express very similar opinions to those of Shockley and he referred to a recent large scale survey by M. Snyderman and S.L. Rothman, *The IQ controversy: The Media and Public Policy*, Transactions Books, 1988.
14. See also, M. Scriven, 'The values of the academy (moral issues for American Education and educational research arising from the Jensen case)', *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 40, pp. 541-549, 1970.
15. W. Shockley, 'American Lysenkoism in the National Academy of Sciences - A Response to Dr. Handler's Letter of May 15, 1972', *Congressional Record*, 7 September 1972, pp. E7766-E7767.

International Essay Competition

HENRY JAMES AND JOSEPH CONRAD

Commencing in 1992 the James & Conrad Foundation, supported academically by the Joseph Conrad Society of the UK and the Henry James Society of the US, is to fund annually the awarding of three prizes for original essays on James, on Conrad, and on the two writers together. Entries are invited from students, graduates and independent scholars.

Material and method may be chosen without constraint: historical, biographical, humanist, theoretic, etc. The winning essays will be favourably considered for publication in *The Conradian* and/or *The Henry James Review*; publication of essays as a body of work, including both winning entries and commended, is perceived as a desired part of the Foundation's programme.

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In Defence of the Humanities

Geoffrey Strickland

The ethos of Mrs Thatcher's government, we were told repeatedly, was Philistine and its demands on the universities narrowly utilitarian. It wished to promote only those studies, principally in the sciences, which would make our commerce more competitive. Would that this at least had been true! Subjects which might have such a pay-off, such as Physics, Engineering and Modern Languages, have fared much worse, on the whole, over the past ten years than English, Linguistics or Media Studies. Successive Secretaries of State have done nothing to check or reverse the machinery which, since the Robbins Report of 1963, has guaranteed that individual disciplines will prosper or decline in response not to the 'needs of the nation' (see Robbins, paragraph 133) but to school leavers' 'demand for places'. In the artificial market in which it has become normal to refer to the tax-funded student as a 'consumer', two kinds of discipline have prospered: vocational studies, such as Law or Accountancy, and studies which, the question of their interest and merits apart, can be thought of as leading to a university degree with the least possible mental inconvenience. This is not to disparage those who, consciously or otherwise, choose this second course. In the age of what Milton Friedman has called, 'credentialism', a university degree of any kind is indispensable in a number of careers, particularly in the public sector, and during the past three decades, including the years of Mrs Thatcher's government, those subjects have prospered least which are neither vocational nor 'soft options'. Among the departments that have closed down are the Department of Russian at Reading, the Department of Physics at Leicester, one third of the nation's departments of Philosophy and one third of our Departments of Classics. Among the established chairs that have vanished with them is the chair of Greek at Aberdeen, established in the Sixteenth Century.

Any overt threat to the Humanities has come from within the universities themselves and has been couched in terms which, though coming from the political Left, reflect the artificial market ethos to which the universities have been obliged to conform. Jeremy Bentham's claim that 'quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry' is not one to which any Conservative or Labour minister would publicly wish to subscribe or which there is any reason to believe that any Secretary of State for Education has ever wanted privately to endorse. It is in fact an English don, Terry Eagleton, one of the most influential writers on the study of Literature today, who has argued that 'departments of literature as we know them' should cease to exist and that the canon of classics that the term 'literature' presupposes should be seen for what it is: a way of imposing certain values which are those of the dominant social class, whose ethos is predominantly male. There is, of course, no reason, he concedes, why Proust or *King Lear* should not feature in courses of "discourse theory" or "cultural studies" or

whatever...' but no reason either why these should not include also television programmes for children or popular romances such as those published by Mills and Boon. All of these 'shape forms of consciousness or unconsciousness, which are closely related to the maintenance or transformation of our existing system of power' and are thus 'closely related to what it means to be a person.'¹ Similar arguments have been put forward by Barbara Herrnstein Smith of Duke University who claims, in terms even more strikingly reminiscent of Benthamite utilitarianism, that the value to an individual of a work of literature depends ultimately on 'the dynamics of an economic system, specifically the personal economy constituted by the subject's needs, interests and resources...' including the extent to which he or she happens to participate in a predominantly literary culture. Discussing the many 'who are not, or are not yet, or choose not to be among the orthodox educated population of the West,' she suggests that 'other verbal artifacts and other objects and events have performed for them the various functions that Homer, Dante and Shakespeare perform for us...'² There are, in other words, substitutes for Homer, Dante and Shakespeare.

At a time when there is so much uncertainty among those engaged in the academic study of literature as to the purpose of their allegedly common pursuit, it is possible for these views to be argued boldly and to command widespread respect, if not assent. When there is so little common purpose, even those who have no wish to follow in the direction in which the two authors I have quoted are leading may find they can welcome their forthrightness; at least to the extent that it obliges us to say where we should be going instead. Both are arguing against the belief that a common culture can transcend not only individual interests but also those of race, social class and gender. Professor Herrnstein Smith refers specifically to the inappropriateness, as she sees it, of criteria drawn from white Anglo-American literature when discussing the work of a poet who is both American and black. What she advocates is the equivalent in a literary study of some form of ethical pluralism; and in this she differs from Dr Eagleton, who remains committed to one particular set of cultural, aesthetic and political values and looks to the schools and universities for their promotion. What Eagleton proposes is a revival of the arts of rhetoric, as taught in the schools of antiquity and the Renaissance but taking advantage of the developments of linguistic and critical theory of recent years. 'Rhetoric', he points out, 'wanted to find out the most effective ways of pleading, persuading and debating...', in order to achieve legal or religious ends. 'Similarly, there must be a reason why we should consider it worthwhile to develop a form of study which would look at the various sign-systems and signifying practices in our own society, all the way from *Moby Dick* to the Muppet Show...' It is here that he makes it clear that he speaks as a socialist

and a feminist and distinguishes his own attitude to literature from that of the 'liberal humanist' by arguing that while, like the latter, he wishes to 'discuss literature in ways which will deepen, enrich and extend our lives', he himself can only conclude that 'such deepening and enriching entails the transformation of a society divided by class and gender...'³ As it happens, work on these lines is already in progress and there are schools in which the programme for making what he calls a 'better person' by this means is being carried out with a singlemindedness reminiscent of the early seventies and the days of enthusiasm in the West for the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

How the ancient arts of rhetoric are to be revived is not specified; though similar suggestions have often been made in recent years, inspired partly by the belief that the theory of literature, in its structuralist and post-structuralist phases has evolved its own 'high tech' methods of analysis, which open up the secrets of literary and other texts more effectively and efficiently than ever in the past. (I take the phrase 'high tech' from the inaugural lecture in 1987 of Marion Butler, the King Edward VII Professor of English at Cambridge). However, anyone familiar with the techniques in question will presumably know already that the results of this kind of analysis are no more certain (and since the word analysis is being used, no less predictable) than those employed by academics and students in the days of Richards and Empson. It is scientists, as Barthes has pointed out, who make 'discoveries' and there is no such thing in the human as distinct from the physical sciences (with the exception, he might have added, of the use of statistical evidence) as a 'method' to which one can attribute a 'result'.⁴ Modern literary theory, for all the occasional interest of its speculations concerning communication in general, has added nothing to our stock of actual knowledge nor anything to the repertoire of rhetorical devices inherited from antiquity and still used by politicians.

It is not what Dr Eagleton claims for what he calls rhetoric but what he sees as its purpose which has to be taken seriously; especially, in so far as he can cite, if he wishes, the most respectable precedents for regarding the study of Humanities or their equivalent as useful from the point of view of society in a historically specific form. There is probably no time at which the education of the young has not conformed to what were seen as the immediate or ultimate requirements of the social order and in which its purpose, in the study of what we call literature and history in particular, has not been correspondingly ethical. In the *Protagoras* Socrates puts the question directly to Protagoras the Sophist:

'I take you to be describing the art of politics, and promising to make men good citizens'. 'That', said he, 'is exactly what I profess to do'.

Socrates questions the ability of any teacher to do just that, but ends the dialogue by arguing that knowledge, which is the only thing that can be taught, is indistinguishable from moral goodness and virtue. Similar assumptions underlie the educational reforms of the Renaissance, Nineteenth century Prussian ideals of *das wissenschaftliche Leben* and the introduction of the study of English literature, largely as a result of the highly effective advocacy of Matthew Arnold, in British schools

and universities. Conformity with the social order has not, however, implied invariably or necessarily in the past aversion to social change;⁵ and the often cited example of the highly educated Germans who, we are told, served as guards in the extermination camps is insufficient to demonstrate the failure of Humanism to live up to its original promise. However, the polemic against Humanism derives its plausibility from what may seem to be the self-evident falsity of its claims both to study and to address itself to our common humanity and in doing so, to transcend the particular interests of gender, class or race. It is the very notion of a common humanity, we are supposed to agree, which has been discredited.

Much of the theoretical discussion in departments of Letters or the Humanities during the past thirty years, throughout the Western world, has consisted of a radical questioning - sometimes on the part of those far from radical in their politics - of the possibility of understanding anything corresponding to the notion of human nature as such and hence of any form of study to which the word humane could be applied which was not presumptuous or deluded. The death of Man, following the death of God, has been attributed to the collective influence of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Ferdinand de Saussure, but it is possible to rehearse this version of the anti-humanist argument in a number of far more plausible ways. In her *Patterns of Culture*, for example, of 1934, the poetess and anthropologist Ruth Benedict, reporting on her fieldwork among primitive communities, pointed out the remarkable differences between isolated groups and the error of approaching them with preconceived ideas of basic human instincts and needs. Sartre, too, while describing himself as a 'Humanist' rejected the notion of a homogeneous and predictable human nature, in so far as this seemed to him incompatible with human freedom; that is, with the inescapable consequence of being alive and hence compelled to create, transcend and then re-create anew one's individual 'essence', which is never given but chosen. 'On ne naît pas femme, on le devient...' are the opening words of Simone de Beauvoir's *Deuxième sexe*, from which stems that version of militant feminism which rejects 'essentialist' notions of gender.

More recently, the polemic against Humanism has been influenced also by the developments in the study of language; and in particular, the concerted rejection of what is said to be the traditional view of the way in which language functions: namely, through the conveying of thoughts (which may themselves owe nothing to language in their origin) within a medium which is virtually transparent and which, except in cases of incompetence, historical accident or deception, allows these thoughts to be shared in their original form. The reaction against this view has led to an examination of the ways in which language itself (Saussure's *langue*, as distinct from individual *parole*), rather than the people who use it, is the source of meaning. In the work of Derrida, even the notion of meaningful utterance is questioned and examined as if it were a necessary superstition, one

without which life could not continue; but a superstition none the less, which can only be defended on metaphysical grounds: those of the 'metaphysics of presence', which posit a real, though it is in fact a spectral, thought and reality behind every written or spoken sign.⁶ Derrida's work, which is, as he acknowledges, indebted to that of Heidegger, conveys, like Heidegger's, a radical scepticism with regard to what can be known of the thought of others and especially of those who are remote in time. The near-impossibility of understanding one 'episteme' - that is to say, one particular frame of linguistic and hence of logical and ethical reference - from within another has been argued also in the much acclaimed writings of Foucault, who claimed that the notion of a common human nature was an invention of the Eighteenth Century enlightenment and was now destined to disappear.

That there is a distinctive Eighteenth Century conception of human nature and one that has survived into our own time is, of course, difficult to deny. It is to be found in the optimistic humanism, the belief in a universal predisposition to justice or benevolence common to thinkers as different as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and Kant. It survives in an unselfcritical form in many modern versions of libertarian doctrine, including those with which Foucault made common cause. The effectiveness of the criticisms to which the normative view of human nature has been subjected can be explained not only by their variety and consequent seeming power, but also the fact that they are all too often difficult if not impossible to refute; so much so that the would-be champion of Humanism may feel that the appeal to human nature as a guide to the explanation or regulation of all forms of thought and behaviour is utterly misconceived from the start. If so, the self-professed Humanist may feel that the term Humanist itself has little usefulness except as a party label and that there is little point, in any case, in preserving a terminology used originally to refer not to all or anything human but merely to distinguish between 'human' and 'divine' studies. The older term 'liberal arts', which, in Greece and Rome, referred to the education appropriate to free men, it might be felt, has a similar redundancy in an age in which slavery is supposed not to exist. However, my own argument here in favour of the continuing currency of both of these terms, both 'Liberal' and 'Humanist', is that though the context in which they are used today is very different from that of Antiquity or the Renaissance, the notions of freedom and human nature are no nearer to being universally and properly understood than in the past and are no less in need of public vindication. It is tempting, for example, following the collapse of Marxist totalitarianism, to assume that totalitarianism as such has vanished from the face of the earth. The same error was committed by intellectuals in the West after the collapse of Nazism. To argue in favour of a 'Liberal' education is both to defend a certain conception of freedom and to draw attention to the problems inherent in both its definition and application. (How, for example, does one tolerate the intolerant?) The modern *studia humanitatis* no longer have a rival in dogmatic theology; and it is a damaging misconception of both the Humanities and the Natural Sciences to regard these last

two forms of study as anything other than mutually complementary. The case for Liberal Humanism, in the closing decade of the century, is a response to those within the university who wish to see all that passes under its name superseded; and when the challenge is unequivocal, the case can be made in correspondingly simple terms.

The notion of a common humanity whose nature can at least partially be known and to which it is necessary in certain circumstances to appeal is intrinsic to the Humanities or at least the most obvious justification for their continuing to be so named. The case for both the Humanities and the humanity they presuppose can, however, be made in many different ways. One argument, which has been little used and which takes as its premise a truism, is that members of all human societies we know of are capable of learning new languages and, when learning at an early enough age, acquire the skills of a native speaker. There is no known impediment, corresponding to gender or ethnic origin to the development of conceptual understanding. The theory, associated with the names of Whorf and Sapir, that the scope and limitations of our perceptions and thought are determined by the particular natural languages we use may well be justified in innumerable instances. The semantic field in Esquimo languages designating different shades of whiteness and crystalline texture, one is commonly reminded, defies translation into the languages of temperate zones. This does not prevent Esquimos from learning other people's languages or other people, even if this may involve also acquiring other Esquimo skills, from eventually learning their language as well. A related theory tells us that thinking itself is inconceivable without language of some kind in which the thinking can take shape. This again may be granted without it ceasing to be the case that if thought is dependent on language, the meaningful use of language is dependent on thought: thought which includes the recognition of certain possibilities and values. This again is no obstacle to the learning of languages. Allowing for differences of aptitude and opportunity and occasional cerebral deficiencies, none of which again owe anything to race or gender, it would seem that there are no known limitations on the ability of human beings to acquire new languages or go on perfecting their own. Biologically, human beings are distinguished by their adaptability; that is, by their highly developed awareness of possibility.

The reason for which the learning of languages, including one's own, means learning to recognise what it is possible not only to perceive and understand but to value as well, is that the way we make sense of what we read or hear depends on how seriously, casually, literally or ironically we feel it is meant to be taken. The simple phrase 'Help, I'm drowning!' can be understood differently, according to whether we think it is a genuine cry for help or shouted in jest by someone playing the fool. Understanding, moreover, is not a matter of miraculously becoming the person one understands; though the theory of understanding in the Human Sciences

associated with the name of Dilthey, has been sometimes taken as meaning precisely that. Understanding, thus conceived, is something no speaker or writer could intend. If a drowning person calls for help, it is because he hopes that he will be rescued, not that those who hear him will undergo the illusion that they are drowning as well. Even the desperate cry: 'If you could only feel as I do!' is an appeal for no more or less than understanding. It is possible to understand perfectly what someone else is saying and precisely because one is not that person. It is only philosophers, critics and teachers of literature who sometimes seem to think that understanding is perfect to the extent that it resembles metamorphosis.

Perfect, that is perfectly faithful understanding is possible. Complete understanding is not; at least, literally speaking and in so far as it implies that a complete coinciding of states of mind has taken place and that nothing else remains to be discovered or said. Derrida's scepticism with regard to meaningful communication is justified, if at all, in so far as it is an inability to believe such an improbable story about the way language works; and he has every right to claim that differing accounts of the significance of what is written or said, each showing the inadequacy, i.e. incompleteness, of those that precede it are endlessly possible. This is why in criticism, there is no such thing as the final word. It does not follow from this, as Derrida's writings encourage us to believe, that perfect understanding of the written and spoken word is impossible or that there is no such thing as a faithful or unfaithful reading. Nor is it true that all readings of a historical document or literary text, as long as they are faithful, are equally informative or helpful. What they are faithful to, however, is language, what the speaker or writer did not invent - we say that people speak or write in English or German - and to the use of language with a particular purpose and intention. Our success in understanding that intention is one of which we could never be infallibly sure. We sometimes misunderstand even those we know most intimately. Yet the success of human beings in conveying what they wish to say, including what they wish to say with the utmost urgency and precision, is so well borne out by the record of our practical co-operation that to doubt whether such a skill is possible is like doubting whether there is any reality corresponding to the words causality or probability. Popper has distinguished between what he calls 'weak' scepticism, 'which is pessimistic with respect to the possibility of knowledge', and 'dynamic scepticism', an attitude of 'hopeful critical inquiry';⁸ and he sees the latter as characteristic of experimental science. In so far as the scepticism of the Humanist is dynamic also, it is because Humanism, like experimental science, is a necessarily self-questioning and self-correcting pursuit of objective truth.

The objective truth with which the Humanist has been traditionally concerned is historical: what it is true to say that people have done, thought, said and written in a remote as well as a recent past. History, we have been told, is 'idiographic'; its subject is the unique and individual; whereas Natural Science is 'nomothetic', a progressive discovery of what is invariably true and predictable.⁹ A great deal more needs to be said about the different ways in which the two proceed, especially at a

time when, because of the extraordinary success and prestige of the Natural Sciences, literary and historical scholars often like to pretend they are the same. They are not and there is no reality corresponding to Professor Marion Butler's alleged 'high tech' analysis. There is nothing, that is, in the reading of literary and historical texts corresponding to the demonstrably reliable elaboration of knowledge without which the scientist could not make new discoveries. Our knowledge of the spoken and written word and of what others have said about them has to be reappraised in order to be understood at all; as does any previous discovery about the way in which language, including literary convention works. All understanding in the Humanities is critical in so far as it is understanding at all. By contrast, the theoretical justification in the Natural Sciences for the application of a particular technique can usually be taken as read. The reliability of an electron microscope and of the experiments that confirm the accuracy of its readings are no longer in question when it has itself become an experimental tool. It is true that any scientist can perform any experiment, if he knows how, or make any observation that has contributed to a branch of specialised scientific enquiry. However, it is unlikely that any practically minded person would ever dream of reliving the history of science in this way. The scientist has every right to point out that his task is the making of history.

This does not make knowledge in the Humanities of language in use (Saussure's 'parole') any less objective; by which I mean any less liable to be conveyed or contradicted in statements that are false or true. Differing and incompatible readings of Shakespeare's 73rd sonnet differ both as to what Shakespeare wrote and what the sonnet says: whether, for example, the poignant ambiguity of 'Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang...' was - that is to say, is - intended or not. We normally refer to the poem in both the past and present tenses and recognise in so doing that the truth about what Shakespeare intended is timeless, in the purely trivial sense in which all statements about what people do and say, in so far as they are true will always have been true unconditionally. If it is true that the historical Brutus stabbed Caesar, no subsequent eventuality can retrospectively erase the act. And if it is true that Shakespeare's Mark Antony speaks with deadly irony of the honour of Brutus in his funeral oration, this too will always have been true; whatever ingenious actors or directors try to make of the speech. It is, of course, true as well that plays exist only in performance, including the imagined performance during a solitary reading of the text. And there is nothing wrong as such with an ingeniously unfaithful production or adaptation of a play. Shakespeare himself was probably good at it. But it is pointless to pretend that there is or was no such thing as the original play; whether the meaning of the play is elusive and relatively inaccessible or, as in Mark Antony's funeral oration, unmistakable.

In order to defend the Humanist epistemology against its modern sceptical critics, it is clearly necessary to deny that there is any difference, from the point of view of this particular debate, between literary texts and other kinds of historical document. Thus it is quite possible for plays like *Julius Caesar* to serve as useful primary sources for

the historian of Jacobean England. The truth conditions which need to be satisfied by claims about the meaning of either are the same. The critical examination of inscriptions, wills and diplomatic correspondence requires very different kinds of verification from that of novels, plays or poems, but in the case of all critical examination of texts, the object of study is simultaneously language, including what may be highly formalised or cryptic, and the writer's or writers' intention at a specific moment or moments in time; since many texts are written over a period of time and revised, sometimes by different hands. The critical examination of texts in this way has not always, of course, conformed with these assumptions. It belongs, with the *studia humanitatis* themselves, to the post-Renaissance phase of Western culture. Rabelais, in the Prologue to *Gargantua*, encourages his readers to look for a hidden meaning in his book and then teases them by reminding them of the Dominican Thomas Walleys or Frère Lubin, who had claimed with a disregard for chronology or intention, characteristic of his age, to find allegorical allusions to the New Testament in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Our own critical tradition has its origin in the discovery and editing of Latin and Greek manuscripts by Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Humanists; including pre-eminently Erasmus, whose paraphrases and commentaries on the Greek New Testament were intended to rescue the Scriptures from the often irrelevant and anachronistic interpretations to which they had been subjected by the schoolmen of the universities and to make it possible to read them with the utmost fidelity to historical context and to the actual intention of the Evangelists.¹⁰ Those modern academic sceptics who, following Heidegger and Derrida, deny the possibility of understanding either context or intention are perfectly consistent in claiming that what they are repudiating is Humanism itself. They are denying or questioning to the point of denial the human aptitude for understanding and learning new languages.

Objections to Humanism, as I have so far defined it, are not always Philistine in intention even if they are in effect and are sometimes made in the name of scholarship. It is, for example, obviously true that there could have been little resemblance between the culture and religion of First Century Galilee and those of the Europe of Erasmus and that there is even less resemblance with those of the Europe of today. The traditional Humanist approach to ancient texts, it has been claimed, overlooks the difficulty or impossibility of translating from one historical and social context, with its conceptual framework, into the language of another. There are genuine difficulties of translation which may not have occurred to Erasmus and which derive, among other things, from the non-equivalence of semantic fields: the absence, for example, of anything, in the English language corresponding to the shades of whiteness differentiated in Esquimo languages or, according to Biblical scholars, to the connotations of the New Testament, which we translate inadequately as 'spirit'. Failure to translate, however, is different from failure to understand. If our modern understanding of New Testament Greek were

merely the result of our construing the original instantaneously and hence reading the Greek, as if it were in coded English, the problems of translation would never have occurred to us. True linguistic scepticism is an awareness that one can never be sure beyond question that one has understood correctly; but the only reasonable grounds for doubting that one has understood are what now appears to be a new and improved understanding or the belief that one can see where one has actually gone wrong. To feel confident that, unless evidence to the contrary is produced, one has genuinely understood what one reads or hears is in no way incompatible with the readiness to question anything. There is a world of difference between a real objection to what we believe to be true, such as an alternative reading, and the merely hypothetical objection that a real objection may be found. This is the point of Popper's 'dynamic scepticism', which is a means to, and not a denial of, the possibility of learning.

Such scepticism, moreover, is called for not merely when we read ancient texts like the New Testament but in all our assumed understanding of others, including those who share our language and culture today, what Foucault calls our own 'episteme'. It would, after all, by Foucault's own criteria, if as he claims, we were the prisoners of our own language and culture, require of us superhuman powers even to know where one 'episteme' ended and another began. If understanding required a complete sharing of the experience of those we understand - which on a moment's reflection we can see that it could not - it would be possible to understand the language of other cultures only to the extent that their way of life resembled our own; and it is clearly true that in so far as understanding does presuppose some common terms of reference and hence some minimal shared experience, we are often more likely to understand easily or accurately the utterances and texts of our own culture than those of a culture which is remote in time. Often, but by no means invariably. It would seem that the shared experience we need in order to understand what is being said is indeed minimal in proportion to what we learn by understanding. One need only consider the response to devoted teaching of those born without sight or hearing. In so far as they are dogmatic, the arguments against Humanism are a denial of the quickness to seize new possibilities or in other words, the adaptability and imagination which are characteristic of our species.

This is also true of the polemic against the content and rationale of courses of literature, as they have been taught in schools and universities in the United Kingdom and the United States throughout the past hundred years. The principal charge against these is that they presuppose the values and common interests of a predominantly male middle class white Anglo-Saxon élite. The point, as made by Dr Eagleton and Professor Herrnstein Smith, is not that this is due to any bias or selectivity that could have been avoided, but that these and other forms of cultural study will inevitably be biased or selective in some way; and that the Liberal Humanist is mistaken in trying to persuade himself that things could possibly be otherwise. It is on this same assumption that so-called Black Studies and Women's Studies, including

those available at Professor Herrnstein Smith's own Duke University, have for many years now been taught. What the arguments for the new kind of syllabus appear, however, to overlook is the range of human experience embraced in a course which includes Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Wordsworth's *Prelude*, *Mansfield Park* and Joyce's *Ulysses*. Nor do they take into account the seemingly universal demand for release from the bounds of the familiar which story tellers and dramatists in prose and verse have always been called upon to satisfy. Supermarkets are not the subject of the romances mass-produced for sale in supermarkets. The possible subject-matter of science fiction is diminished with every practical advance in technology, such as manned landings on the moon. The demand for such release is satisfied by fiction and drama of not only the lowest but the highest quality; and it was by dint of the most strenuous ingenuity that, in *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert succeeded in making the mundane reality of a Norman village seem interesting.

The so-called 'canon' of literary classics has created itself. Were it not for what generations of theatre goers and readers have found to be the expressive power of those who feature now on the academic syllabus, there would be no point in studying literature, except as an adjunct to social history (which it is danger of becoming) or in order to learn how to distinguish between metonymy and synecdoche. Not to have studied *Phèdre* is to have missed the opportunity of realising in a single instant - and this is for most of us the only way - the potentialities of the French language. It is as if the student of music had been deprived of the opportunity of hearing Haydn's *Creation*. Our using such touchstones and terms of recommendation is justified not merely by our personal taste, as conditioned by the way of life we have been brought up to share, as Professor Herrnstein-Smith has argued, but by the nature of language itself. It is, in a variety of ways, demonstrably true that words are normally used to convey different kinds and degrees of seriousness; as distinct from solemnity or even sincerity, which is a different matter. The question of whether that kind and degree of seriousness is intrinsic to the meaning is a question of objective truth. Either it is there, in the ways to which the reader or listener responds, or it is not. The seriousness may take the form of the most exhilarating comic artistry; and artistry in literature, as in ballet or the cinema, lies in making the circumstances apparent to which a gesture or utterance owes its force. All authentic art has the characteristic of form, by which I mean context, both overt and implied. (This is what I take Mikhail Bakhtine to have meant by the 'dialogistic principle'). The parts or the individual moments are mutually illuminating. A tall man lunging slightly forward and thrusting one leg backwards in the air might seem odd because inexplicable. In *Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot*, where it can easily be missed at the end of a shot and away from the centre of the frame, it is Monsieur Hulot's perfectly reasonable explanation of how he has just been catapulted into a harbour by the tow-rope of his car. In Racine's *Phèdre*, the consciously virtuous Hippolytus is killed, as in Euripides, when he emulates his father and tries to rid the world of yet another monster; whereas Phaedra, who yearns for Hip-

polytus, is unable to live with the monster in herself:

Venge-toi, punis-moi d'un odieux amour.
Digne fils du héros qui t'a donné le jour,
Délivre l'univers d'un monstre qui t'irrite.
La veuve de Thésée ose aimer Hippolyte!
Crois-moi, ce monstre affreux ne doit point
t'échapper...¹¹

Matthew Arnold repeatedly insisted that the purpose of culture was to make available to the world 'the best that has been thought and said in the world'. Most of this, he would presumably have agreed, is lost beyond retrieval and includes thoughts whose significance could only be grasped in any case if we knew the circumstances in which they had been uttered. What we call great literature remains accessible, irrespective of who we are.

The anti-Humanist allocation of so-called cultural studies along the lines of class, race and gender divides humanity and within the community threatens the assumption of common citizenship. With the rise of popular religious fundamentalism and an increasingly militant ethnic separatism in the United Kingdom and the United States, it is more than ever necessary to point out the advantages of sharing not only a common humanity but, within this, a common *imperium*, with its language and common culture, as distinct from the warring tribalism that precedes and follows the rise of empires. The separatism that is at present fashionable in the universities is Utopian and reminiscent of the literary Utopias of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which the exemplary community enjoyed the advantages of natural frontiers. The Renaissance and Enlightenment knew perfectly well, however, that Utopia was to be found literally nowhere on earth; whereas the realities of separatism are more likely in the future to resemble those of Lebanon, Azerbaijan or Sri Lanka. It is also no less Utopian to pretend that a work of literature can be appreciated in isolation from its cultural and historic context, however lucid its form in the sense I have suggested; and that context includes other works of literature, those from which it derives and to which it owes its existence, whether we call this a matter of intertextuality or tradition. The horizons of tradition are those perceived by the major creative writers themselves, even and perhaps especially the great modernist writers, such as T.S. Eliot and Joyce, who reject what they see as a sentimental nationalism but who are just as consciously compelled to give renewed expression to a sense of native origins. Literatures belong to their language and lose much - in the case of poetic nuance or native wit often everything - even in the best possible translations. This is why the schools and universities have been right in the past (though the policy is now being abandoned) to treat the study of language and literature as the same. I know of no better exercise in practical semantics than identifying what has been lost, either inadvertently or inevitably, in a translation into English of a passage from Flaubert or Racine.

The distinctive function of the university is the promotion of the historical sense and it is in this that the Humanities and the study of social and political history serve an evident common end. Less obvious, it might be

said, is the rôle of Philosophy, Mathematics and the Natural Sciences in a university thus conceived. By the historical sense, I mean not only a sense of the past, however. F.R. Leavis, in his reply to C.P. Snow's lecture on 'The Two Cultures', talks of the 'need to maintain the full life in the present - and life is growth - of our transmitted culture'. The growth is the constant rediscovery of the past in the light of its hitherto unsuspected relevance to the problems and needs of the present, a rediscovery which can, as in the work of T.S. Eliot and Paul Valéry, take the form of original achievement.

However, the most indisputable creative achievements of our time have been in Mathematics and the Natural Sciences. And in the actual process of mathematical and scientific discovery, it might be objected, there is no place for the historical sense at all. The only work it is necessary to understand here is that of immediate precursors in the field and then only in so far as it can be developed or corrected. This is no doubt true, in so far as the mathematician and scientist are interested in the work of their predecessors not as historical documents or as works of literature but because of what it seems to overlook, including its hitherto unsuspected implications: as in the application of Descartes' co-ordinate geometry to the measurement of ellipses and plotting of planetary motion. It remains no less true that the sense of history is an awareness of the continuing development of ideas as well as the reality they have assumed in the lives of individuals and communities. These two aspects of human history are mutually complementary and frequently difficult to tell apart; thought what distinguishes different disciplines or even different aspects of the same discipline within the university is whether the difference between the two is regarded as crucial or not. As E.D. Hirsch has suggested, Kant may have been right to claim in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that he understood certain things in Plato better than Plato himself.¹² In doing so, however, he was speaking not as a historian but a philosopher. For the student of literature and of political or social history, the difference between what was said and what could be inferred from what was said but also could not have been intended is all-important; as it is for all those involved in criminal or civil proceedings. The difference is of no concern in the process of scientific discovery.

What unites the members of the academic community is an informed understanding of both the immediate present and the past. The historical sense which they share is both a participation in the thought of groups and individuals (including those which humanity cannot afford to lose) and in the actual evolution of the species. This is not to say, of course, that any genetic adaptation is in question; for the advances we have made in adapting to our environment or adapting our environment to us are liable at any time to be reversed or forgotten; especially when, as at the present, the process of adaptation is so rapid and specialised. Before so much of the Amazonian forest had been destroyed, a young American anthropologist recorded the derision of his Indian hosts, when he was unable to mend his biro pen. The evolution of which we seem capable, through our own endeavours, is not of any particular inherited skill or of any innate mental capacity but, through scientific

and mathematical discovery in particular, of what it is possible to know. Such discoveries are by definition conscious. Hence my attributing not only to those in the Humanities, but to their colleagues in Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, a sense of history. A scientific discovery is an awareness of what has changed in the universe, in so far as the universe can now be seen in a different way. What unites the Natural Scientist, the Mathematician and the Humanist is their common participation in what Whitehead described as 'the proper task of the university'; namely 'the creation of the future, so far as rational thought and civilised modes of appreciation can affect the issue.'¹³

Notes

1. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983, page 210.
2. Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, 'Value' in *Canons*, edited by R. von Hallberg, University of Chicago Press, 1983, pages 15-16 and 35.
3. *op. cit.*, page 10.
4. Roland Barthes, *Le Bruissement de la langue*, Paris, Seuil, 1984, page 355.
5. One exception, among others, is that of the followers of Erasmus in Sixteenth Century Cambridge, where Erasmus' writings were prescribed for study after they had been placed on the Index in Catholic Europe, and where the Erasmian precepts of the *vita activa* were followed, it would seem, punctiliously. For the influence of these specifically Humanist ideals on social and family life, see Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan social order*, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
6. For perhaps the most complete exposition of this view, see Derrida's essay on Heidegger, 'Ousia et Grammé: note sur une note de *Sein und Zeit*' in *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1972; (English translation, *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago University Press, 1984).
7. Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith, London, Tavistock, 1974, page 208.
8. Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, 1972, pages 99-101.
9. The terminology is that of Wilhelm Windelband's lecture of 1884 on 'History and Natural Science'. Its arguments are discussed by R.G. Collingwood in *The Idea of History*, Oxford University Press, 1946, Part IV, 2, ii.
10. See Erasmus, *Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam* and Louis Bouyer's summary in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Cambridge, 1969, volume 2, page 502.
11. 'Avenge thyself, punish me for an odious love. Worthy son of the hero who gave thee the light of day, rid the universe of a monster who enrages you. The widow of Theseus dares to love Hippolytus! Believe me, this ghastly monster must not be allowed to escape from you ...'
12. E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, Yale University Press, 1967, pages 19-23.
13. Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1938, page 233.

Editorial

Who are the Arabs, that we should always refer to a single entity? What is it in their history that lends to them a collective personality, and causes even the most sensible of writers to refer to an 'Arab' identity, an 'Arab-Israeli' conflict, and an unsolved 'Arab' question which explains the turmoil of the Middle East? Dr Hiskett, in his review of Samir al-Khalil, provides an answer: namely, Islam, the religion that arose in Arab lands, and which made of the Arabic language a vehicle of persuasion, an instrument of government, and a voice of high culture equal in power and geographical extent to the languages of Greece and Rome.

The problem with this answer is that Islam is no longer co-extensive with the Arabic language. Its greatest triumphs were associated not with Arabic but with Turkish and Arabic-speakers probably form a minority among Muslims today. Furthermore, many Arabs (half the Lebanese, for example, and a quarter of the Egyptians, not to speak of sizeable minorities elsewhere in the Middle East) are Christians. Of course there is 'Pan-Arabism', the social and political movement that arose during the last century in reaction to Ottoman rule, and which acquired its vindictive tone with the success of Zionism. But has this ideology proved to be any more a source of unity than the Pan-Slavism which briefly tempted the nations of Eastern Europe, and which gave its own peculiar filip to the rage of the Bolsheviks? There are also specific movements, like the Ba'ath, which make the fact of being an Arab into the focal point of their revolutionary programme. But the Ba'ath is a secular movement; its founder, Michel 'Aflaq (to whom Dr Hiskett refers) was not a Muslim but a Syrian Christian; and its organising principles and social goals come close to those of the Leninists, from whom the Ba'ath party learned its criminal techniques.

Of course, the *idea* of an Arab identity, and of a unified Arab cause, has been enormously influential in the modern world. But, like Pan-Slavism, it is a fantasy, a creation of the urban mind, a sentimental dream of the rootless and the disenfranchised, an attempt on the part of people whose faith is declining to find a secular substitute - a creed that will restore their sense of community without incurring the moral cost of membership. The Palestinians made this creed their own: which is scarcely surprising, once they had become 'strangers and sojourners' in the land which was theirs. And their self-appointed leaders have repeatedly described the Palestinian cause as *the* cause of the Arabs, the sacred heart of Arab identity, and the legacy in the modern world of all that the Arabs have ever held dear.

Most Arabs do indeed regard the Palestinians as having a cause, and a just one. But the prosecution of that cause, far from creating the 'pan-Arab' unity which is invoked to further it, has been the greatest single cause of Arab fragmentation. The Palestinians are now hated by the Lebanese and the Kuwaitis, despised by the Syrians and the Egyptians, and welcomed nowhere in

the Middle East more warmly than in the territories occupied by Israel - unless it be in Jordan (whose army nevertheless massacred them in their thousands during the notorious 'black September'). Nor are the Palestinians primarily Muslims. Many of the most violently pan-Arabist among them - the terrorist Georges Habache, for instance - are of Christian origin, representing the once privileged community of the Greek Orthodox Church which, along with the Sunni Muslims, lost most with the collapse of Ottoman control and the extinction of the *millet* system. And while the majority will claim to be Sunni Muslims (it being a legacy of Ottoman government that everyone in the Middle East must belong to some confession or other) many of them are as secularised as the Jews and as off-hand in matters of religion as the English.

Islam has re-emerged as a political force in the Middle East largely on account of the Shi'ites, whose faith makes so little room for the distinction between religion and politics as to subject the entire sphere of civil life to the command of the ayatollahs. But the centre of Shi'ism is Iran, and the Iranians are not Arabs. Indeed, they are regarded with suspicion by their Arab neighbours in Iraq, in Kuwait, in the Emirates and in Oman - and rightly so, given the intolerance and fanaticism of the sect to which they subscribe. If this is our paradigm of Islamic politics, therefore, we should be clear that it has nothing intrinsically to do with pan-Arabism, and is as obnoxious to the majority of Arabs as it is to us.

Nor should we disregard the fact that there have been real attempts by Arab peoples to create the distinction (which Islam implicitly denies) between the realm of politics and the realm of faith: the Lebanese and the Egyptians (thanks in part to Christian influence) have repeatedly succeeded in setting the various confessions within the framework of a common system of secular law, and if the one real example of Arab unity in the modern world - the confessional state of Lebanon - is no longer viable, this is the result of pan-Arabist aspirations, enshrined first in the destabilising riot of the Palestinians who came to Lebanon in the early seventies, and secondly in the Ba'ath party of Syria, which now occupies the entire country apart from Israel's 'security zone'.

Nor, finally, should we disregard the existence of Muslim countries with constitutional and even democratic forms of government, and which have no reason whatsoever to identify either their politics or their religion with the cause of the 'Arabs': countries like Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia, which are as bewildered as we are by the hysterical to-ing and fro-ing of sentiment in the Fertile Crescent.

The fact is that we have been conned into believing in the existence of the 'Arabs' as a political entity; we have been conned into identifying this fictitious entity with Islam; and we have been conned into thinking that Muslims form a coherent and unified force in the modern world, with a common cause and a common interest in

pursuing it. We have been conned, too, into thinking that those who now speak in the Prophet's name have some peculiar title to do so, and represent the just demands of an ancient culture and a violated birthright. The claims of every self-appointed Islamic leader are disputed by another of his kind, and the constant invocations of 'holy war' by Muslim clergymen, in order to unleash destruction of which Muslims themselves are invariably the victims, can only be viewed from outside with derision. For all that the mullahs of today seem to care, the patient work of Islamic theology and jurisprudence might never have occurred. There is not a school of classical jurisprudence that would countenance the

condemnation to death of a Muslim without trial. Yet millions of ignorant people enthusiastically endorse the verdict against Salman Rushdie as though it had come from the mouth of the Prophet himself. There is no authority in the Koran, the Sunna or the Hadith, still less in the law books, for the habit of hostage-taking in times of peace; yet no mullah has raised his voice against the crimes of the Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad.

And when a whole section of Middle Eastern opinion is prepared to bless in Islam's name the murder, rape, destruction and desecration of an Islamic people, we ought surely to realise what Islam means to the mass of those who now subscribe to it.

Letters

Sir,

It is scandalous that a return to what is in effect a rates system should be proposed by a Conservative Government. The new basis for levying the charge would appear to be even worse than the old. Who is to determine the 'capital value' of a house - the estate agent who enhances the asking price? Possibly the Insurance Company which absurdly fixes the premium on the 'cost of rebuilding'? There is of course no relationship between the home one lives in and income, or 'ability to pay'. To say that a family should move 'down market' to a house which it can afford to pay the rates upon is inhuman, since it requires people moving into areas the ethos of which will be alien, even repellent, to them. Why should people leave the homes in which are all their memories? Such a tax is also an attack upon heredity, the family and stability. The argument that enforced movement is the operation of the free market is simply false; it is the operation of an unjust tax, chosen because the stable and the rooted, the essential elements of a civilised society, cannot escape it. Can we hope that Conservative elements in Parliament will vigorously oppose this imposition?

Anthony Cooney,
Liverpool.

Sir,

I have just read 'Whither Romania?' by George Ross. I sailed my trimaran 'Outward Leg' down the Danube and through Romania in 1985 (see my *The Improbable Voyage*, Bodley Head, 1987). Fed up with all the bullying and spying I protested publicly before the Constanta Communist Party, and was thrown out of Romania at the muzzles of Kalishnikovs.

In 1991 I was invited back to Constanta as Commodore of Constanta Marina. Imagining, like many others, that the 1989 revolution had been genuine, and that I might help Romania in some way, I accepted. Physically 'disabled' (leg-amputee) myself, as a sideline I help out disabled kids. Last August, near Constanta, I visited a so-called holiday centre for city children. Never have I seen such listlessness. Nowhere, not in Latin America or Africa or Asia (Grim is the name of my atlas), have

I witnessed such a joyless lack of love. The filth, rags and skinniness were bad enough, but those kids were so loveless that everything around them ached. Fighting tears (I'm sixty-seven and rough) I dug out all my Romanian lei and shoved it into the (I can't say matron's) woman guard's hand.

Next day, as Commodore, I was invited to a Romanian Navy Day reception in the Admiral's rose garden. They promised good wine and lots of fireworks. I demanded why they did not stop wasting money, and take their damned destroyers round to the kids' 'home', and shove off for a ride round the bay? I asked why they had not hared off for Istanbul as soon as Ceausescu was dead, and fetched clean needles for the Aids babies and clothes and oranges for the children. Suddenly, in my gut I saw the whole National Salvation Front thing for the sham it was and, in true Royal Navy Lower Deck style, told the Admiral exactly where he should shove his wine and fireworks and his roses too.

Now I have read George Ross I know I was right. I was sensing falsity. In my resignation as Commodore today, I have told them that when they have a Government that is not a KGB pawn, and if they still want me, I will return.

Tristan Jones,
Phuket,
Thailand.

Sir,

In her clear exposition of Don Cupitt's 'Radicals and the Future of the Church' Shirley Lancaster uncovers an Anglican dilemma: should a priest confine himself to the 5-10 per cent minority who attend Sunday worship, or should he consider he has a duty to everyone in his parish, whatever their beliefs? The choice is sometimes expressed in these terms: should one have a Scattered Church with an incumbent in every other parish or a Gathered Church with a priest for every 500 regular church attenders? When I became Rector of Black Torrington in 1941 I ran the Scouts, gave WEA lectures on the novel, and was a corporal in the Home Guard, while my wife ran the WI and the Mothers' Union as well as the Guides, for we thought everyone between Bodmin Moor and Exmoor was a Christian. But when

in 1961 I became Vicar of St Andrew's in Lower Streatham I concentrated on Church activities because I was equally convinced that 90 per cent of the people in South London were agnostics. I thought that we were hampered by too many churches, many of them inadequately heated, and that because of them the clergy were less well paid than were their predecessors before the war. However, I soon found that not many shared my views in the heavily politicised diocesan centre where I fancy Don Cupitt's theology would have been appreciated. For instance we had one of the best choirs in South London and probably the best unit of the Boys' Brigade (which as you know is the parent body of the Boy Scouts, differing from its 'son' in that each unit must be church-based). I do not think anyone in diocesan headquarters knew of either of these bodies, but if they had they would have regarded them as irrelevant to modern issues, ludicrous Victorian survivals. The real task of the Church was to fight Racism with our Rastafarian allies, sleep in a cardboard box under a bridge with a Glasgow drunk or get rid of the Uncaring Mrs Thatcher. They despised the notion of the church as 'a cosy little club', and respected the church as a pressure group for reforming society.

So what then is the solution? I think we should have a minority of radical priests who hire stadiums to welcome Bishop Tutu with his war cries, and organise anti-poll tax marches; but the majority would be of more use to the nation if they left politics to the politicians and spent their resources on helping the pious minority to expand through strict, exclusive clubs and sacred musical societies.

Frank Dossetor
Salisbury,
Wiltshire.

Sir,

In order to redress the balance in the recent reporting of Anglo-American imperialist aggression in the Gulf, I felt it my duty to inform readers of the *Salisbury Review* of the courageous efforts being made on the Home Front by those stouthearted friends of peace and freedom, the Socialist Workers, who, in a grand alliance with the Students' Union and other workers' groups seek to defend the oppressed people of Britain, as well as those of Iraq, against the brutal and cynical militarism unleashed by Bush and Major. In short, I should like to convey to those with little experience of such cabals the reaction of the hard Left to the Gulf War.

I write in a Students' Union bar amidst a hive of activity, most of it seditious. The Allies' response to Iraq's invasion both delighted and animated the rebels, and now they work feverishly on posters and leaflets of the most nauseatingly mendacious character. The usual stream of rabid denunciations has become more obscene of late, and Bush the mass murderer is paraded as a new Herod. Of course, inversion of the truth is exactly what one expects from the hard Left and so perhaps one ought not to be surprised at the silence over Iraq's original sin, or the failure to mention the missile attacks on civilian targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia. Again we see that to the Left

it is not the morality of the deed but the identity of its perpetrator which is the key to making any kind of judgement. The West is evil, Iraq is its enemy; therefore Iraq is our friend. These are perfect credentials and of course, the right credentials can absolve one of all blame.

The London University school of which I am a member of staff is currently the victim of an unholy alliance between the Students' Union and the local NALGO branch, which has recently come to be dominated by the hard left. The Allies' attack was marked by an extensive graffiti attack on the school building (as yet unattributable) and has been followed by interminable rallies and now a picket, the aim of which is to close the school. It exhibits the feigned concern and carefully cultivated and mannered outrage we have come to expect from so many students. The reaction of the school authorities has been predictably minimal, despite the fact that school employees publicly participate in demonstrations and sell radical literature on campus, in violation of expected behaviour.

S. D. Sanders
Bethnal Green,
London

Sir,

John Gardner's reply to my letter concerning Burundi and South Africa includes further inaccuracies. My letter in no way sought to deny the existence of an elite Tutsi minority but to dispute Gardner's statement that they migrated to Burundi from Ethiopia in the Seventeenth Century. Linguistic and archaeological evidence shows that the Bantu migrations started from Chad and Cameroon. Their spread was in an easterly and southerly direction and the first migrations reached the Great Lakes in the first half of the first millennium BC, not the Seventeenth Century as Gardner would have us believe.

Gardner attempts to explain his claim concerning the presence of 'hundreds of thousands of corpses' in Lake Tanganyika by saying that the 'likely explanation is that troops drove the bodies there in trucks'. This supposes a logistical operation far beyond the means of the Burundi army. As anyone who knows the region around Ntega and Maranga will testify, the roads there are appalling!

Gardner asks on whose side am I? In answer I would say that I support the people of Burundi who, warts and all, are trying hard to take control of their country's destiny and President Pierre Buyoya who walks a tightrope in trying to bring constructive political and social dialogue to an impoverished Third World country. I would also add that I am on the side of Africa which, within the space of 150 years, has undergone changes that Europe undertook in 1500 years and for too long now has had to cope with Europeans such as John Gardner imposing their views based on limited knowledge and experience to explain events within the continent.

Alistair Danter
Burundi

Reviews

SIMPLE'S MIND

Ray Honeyford

A Dubious Codicil; An autobiography, Michael Wharton, Chatto and Windus, 1991, £15.99, pp. 261.

We have two books in our house to which we constantly return. Both provide regular entertainment, endless reflection and no end of animated conflabs. One is the funniest book ever written about the business of running a school - *The Harpole Report*, by J. L. Carr; the other is *The Diary of a Nobody*, whose Mr Pooter never fails to dispel any lingering clouds of quotidian gloom. We now have a third source of life-long pleasure - Michael Wharton's second volume of autobiography, *A Dubious Codicil*.

The first volume dealt with Mr Wharton's childhood in Yorkshire, his student failure at Oxford (he was too busy writing his first and only novel, *Sheldrake*), his army adventures (he finished up as a lieutenant colonel), and his reckless life in post-war London, where he kept body and soul together by monitoring short stories for the BBC, ghosting other people's books, and acting as press agent for the Football League.

The present story begins in 1957 when our columnar hero, in the grip of an outsize hangover, blundered through the mahogany doors of the old *Daily Telegraph*. This was the start of his first regular job, and of his connection with *The Way of the World* column, which became his obsession. He still writes the Sunday version.

The column became an allegory of life in the West in the second half of the Twentieth Century; its characters attained mythical status. Julian Birdbath, the literary critic; Alderman Foodbotham, the Bradford municipal colossus; Dr Heinz Kiosk, the psychiatric adviser to the White Fish Authority; Mrs Dutt-Pauker, the Hampstead Marxist; Gillian Paste of *Sneer with Mother*; Queen Doreen and a host of others, have done much more than entertain. They have embodied Wharton's withering contempt for that suffocating Lib-Lab consensus which all genuine conservatives have, until very recently, felt powerless to combat. The so-called multicultural society, reckless trade unionism, the 'progressive' school, the pornography lobby, a BBC which has clearly betrayed its founders' high-minded intentions, a United Nations dominated by Third World tyrants, homosexual agitprop, a national church systematically destroying its own doctrinal and liturgical foundations in the name of 'progress' - these have been Wharton's particular targets.

The characters he has encountered in real life have been scarcely less fabulous than those which inhabit his column. Enveloped in the old Fleet Street culture, Wharton and his drinking companions would gather in the King and Keys, or The Falstaff. There were the blue-overalled printers who, before the new dispensation, terrorised management in the knowledge that they could bring Fleet Street to a standstill with a gesture. The

people who, moreover, regarded the journalists with sardonic contempt. There was the saintly Peter Utley, blind and brilliant, and irresistible to nubile young ladies, though entirely innocent of any hint of impropriety. There was the patrician Peregrine Worsthorne, who chose the same targets as *Peter Simple*, but with elegant and cogent prose rather than hilarious satire. There was the deputy editor of the *Telegraph*, Donald McLachlan, scintillating, eccentric and monumentally absent minded. There was 'Zed', the garrulous Jewish literary editor who earned McLachlan's life-long contempt for being unable to bowl overarm when they were both at Rugby. And there was poor, sad Colm Brogan, once famous but now shrinking into obscurity - an outrageous Catholic reactionary with an impenetrable Glaswegian accent, and an unfortunate bibulous appearance. And there is the delightful Claudie Worsthorne, with her French accent, and a 'talent for scandalous embroidery', not to speak of secretary Cynthia, 'demure but dangerous'.

Towering above all of them must surely be the figure of Master Insulter, Philip Weston. This curious specimen was an absolute gentleman when sober, but became a frenzied abuser of others when he 'went critical' in his cups. He was gifted with a voice 'somewhere between a croak and a snarl', and a wit fit to shrivel the most case-hardened. He once reduced Peregrine Worsthorne to tears, told a group of elderly American Daughters of the Revolution to fuck off, and accused the Sally Army man of being a rapist wanted by the police in three counties. When he was banned from The Falstaff, the takings plummeted, and the brewery begged him to return.

The fame of Wharton's column caused him to be invited all over the place to enjoy the company of the high born, the eccentric and the frankly certifiable. There was Professor Max Newman, the eminent mathematician with a passion for marmalade and 'Enochian' logic; and Humphrey Searle, abstract, friendly and devoted to the composition of 'Dodecephonic' music. On one occasion, Searle played to Wharton his *Dream of a Madman*. The result was hilarious, as Wharton, a self-confessed musical illiterate, charged with turning the score, was still three pages behind when the thing was finished, a dislocation which appeared to have no discernible effect on either the composer or his music. There was, too, the saintly psychiatrist who befriended Wharton when he was at his lowest ebb, and who finished up hanging himself from his bannisters. John Braine, the Bradford novelist also appears. It was he who, when conversing with a trendy bishop, praised America. 'I suppose it's all right if you're not black', responded the hapless cleric, to which Braine made the truly existential retort, 'But I'm not black, you silly bugger'.

But what of Michael Wharton? Like so many interesting people, he is a collection of contradictions and surprises. His column can easily give the impression of a straight-laced, highly conventional character. But not a bit of it. He has never been averse to indulging his animal

passions: he has been married three times, and he freely admits to enjoying a jolly good drink. Pragmatic about the political possibilities, he nevertheless has a romantic streak with a strong Celtic resonance - he knows Welsh, and was always attracted to Irish nationalism, until the odious thugs of the IRA wrecked his dreams. (He quotes a penetrating remark by de Valera: 'Without our language we are only half a nation' - a thought those who would force ethnic languages into the public domain should consider). The scourge of the sexually promiscuous in his fictional guise, he nonetheless continued, with remarkable tolerance, to live with his second wife after, it seems, she produced two children by another man. Although he appears as the epitome of bourgeois domesticity in his column, his own family life was for many years decidedly irregular. Moreover, his powerful comic sense sharply contrasts with the periodic melancholy which has cursed him for many years.

A Dubious Codicil is written with great style and elegance; it is all the more persuasive for its restraint. Unlike the salacious scribblers of *Private Eye*, Michael Wharton has never assaulted his opponents with obscenities. He has had to encapsulate his wit in a prose acceptable at the breakfast table. If you want to know how a marvellously gifted, civilised and sensitive man has coped with private vicissitudes and public lunacies, and to be wonderfully entertained and not a little moved as well, then buy this book at once. You will never regret it.

NEVER AGAIN

Helen Szamuely

The Great Terror: a reassessment, Robert Conquest, Hutchinson, 1990, £19.95.

Russian Nationalism: yesterday, today, tomorrow, Stephen Carter, Pinter Publishers, £30.

The Rise and Decline of International Communism, Geoffrey Stern, Edward Elgar, £12.95.

In *Memoirs*, Kingsley Amis tells a revealing story about his close friend Robert Conquest. In 1988 the Soviet monthly, *Neva*, announced that it was about to publish extracts from the first edition of Conquest's *The Great Terror*. Encouraged by this belated acknowledgement, Conquest's American publisher suggested reprinting the book under a different title: 'Well, perhaps 'I Told You So, You Fucking Fools'', said Conquest. Why not? The obscenity is merely a measure of his frustration.

Twenty years earlier, Conquest had presented his carefully researched study of the Stalinist terror. Not surprisingly, it was attacked by the Soviet authorities. But the book was also criticised by many in the West. Public swearing is very much in order. No doubt Conquest is still waiting for apologies from the likes of Jerry Hough and the 'revisionist historian', J. Arch Getty, who pro-

nounced not so long ago that it was not possible that Stalin's terror could have cost quite so many lives. And we are all waiting for apologies from the many who, while not actually denying the truth, were happy to turn the other way, muttering that it could not have been all that bad, and could we please talk about something else now, like the iniquities of the Conservative (any Conservative) government.

In the end the book was called simply *The Great Terror: a reassessment*. This is slightly misleading: there is no reassessment, and no need for one. What Conquest had written in 1968 was true. But a great deal of new information has come to light since then, both in the West and, recently, in the Soviet Union. Some gaps are filled in. The liberal (in the Soviet context) periodicals *Ogonyok* and *Moscow News* have both published a number of first hand accounts of what happened to individual people whose fate could only be guessed at. We know more about the last months and weeks of many of the victims, like the Red Army officers murdered in 1938 and, ironically, considerably more about the end of the chief executioner, Yezhov. The new information has been carefully collected, and Conquest's work is as meticulous as ever, though the words 'last seen', 'last heard of', 'last mentioned' appear with distressing regularity. There is much that we shall probably never know about those terrible years. The people are dead, the documents destroyed (and continue to be destroyed, despite official instructions to the contrary).

What Conquest describes is the systematic destruction of a society which began in 1917 with the Bolshevik coup, and continued throughout the twenties and thirties, reaching a climax in the years 1935-38. Thereafter, the terror abated: the country and its people had been broken. Conquest does not add (he is, at heart, an optimist) that the country remains broken. Stalinism is a festering sore that will take many years to heal, if indeed it ever will.

It is significant that, though there are many witnesses among Russian writers, it took a foreigner to write a coherent, dispassionate history of the period. On the other hand, though many in the West can dismiss or ignore the events described here, Russians cannot afford to do so. Painful efforts are being made to understand and assimilate the Soviet experience by the people of that unfortunate country. Conquest is now accused of being too conservative in his estimates of the number of victims (something that he has always acknowledged), and of not really understanding the depth of the trauma that the purge has created in the Russian people. This, I think, is unfair. All the same, the last chapter of the revised edition shows its author to be over-optimistic about the future of the Soviet Union. I do not mean that Conquest maintains, as do some Gorbachev-groupies in the West, that *perestroika* is merely a transition to a capitalist welfare economy: he simply thinks that once the truth has been spoken, it cannot be unspoken. Maybe so. It can, however, be hidden again.

There is a growing, influential and vociferous group in the Soviet Union that wishes to divert attention from Stalin's crimes. The reasons are not necessarily the desire to keep secret some personal involvement (though some of the leading Russian nationalists had been fairly

contented Stalinists). The disagreement has more to do with guilt. The tentacles of Stalinism spread far and wide, and many people for many reasons are probably guilty of at least passive support. This is hard to accept when many of the guilty ones were themselves also the victims.

This debate about guilt has spilled over into argument over which victims should be remembered and honoured. When the Memorial group proposed to erect a memorial to the victims of Stalinism a number of protests were heard from certain Russian nationalists who maintained that by focusing on Stalinism the group had lost sight of the origins of the system and ignored earlier victims such as the monks and priests of the twenties. Then came the accusations that Memorial was controlled by members (or ex-members) of the Communist party who wanted to concentrate on the purges because it was during the purges that Stalin had wiped out the old Bolsheviks. In other words, Memorial was being accused of returning to the Krushchevite positions of the sixties. The future may well see a reburial of the truth about the great purge, not for communist but for nationalist reasons.

Unfortunately, Stephen Carter's *Russian Nationalism* does not cover this debate, although it seems to me to be more important than the Pamyat group on which he concentrates. Pamyat is an extremist, anti-semitic, fascist organisation that grew out of the Russian nationalist movement. In spite of its character, respectable nationalist thinkers and writers are reluctant to disown the organisation, and it is the only more or less oppositionist group that the authorities have not attempted to silence. The tide may be turning; at least one of its leaders has been tried and sentenced for his virulently anti-semitic pronouncements.

Carter gives a workmanlike analysis of the roots of Russian nationalism, and of its Soviet manifestation. The picture he paints is a little confused, but that is because the reality is confused. The Russian people, their literature, history and culture have all suffered greatly: communism is an enemy of free, organic national development. On the other hand, it is the Russian people that created the system (or did they?) For other nations, Soviet domination has meant Russian domination, a fact Russians resent and accept in equal measure. Added to this is anger at the fact that anti-Russian nationalism is held up as something good whereas Russian nationalism is condemned as obscurantist anti-semitism. The muddle is frightening: it is always the worst aspects of any movement that triumph in chaos. There is little of this discussion in Carter's book.

We are witnessing what we all hope is the beginning of the end of international communism. It is therefore useful to have a sober, detailed history of the movement, now provided by Geoffrey Stern in *The Rise and Decline of International Communism*. He reminds us that it was not so very long ago that communism was regarded by many as a force for good. Indeed, internationalism is still seen as something positive. But internationalism has very little to do with understanding other countries. It is rather a bland, unnatural, oppressive attempt to destroy all that is special in every culture; to build barracks instead of houses.

It is hard for us in the West to see nationalism as the force of the future. Perhaps, as Stern suggests, these things come in phases. There will always be a certain appeal in internationalism, and in communism, for idealists and for the discontented. True nationalism, not the perverted chauvinism of Stalin or the narrow-minded anti-semitic manifestations we have, alas, seen in Russia and Eastern Europe, has the power to topple tyrannies and restore dignity to people.

BLOODBA'ATH

Mervyn Hiskett

Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq, Samir al-Khalil, Hutchinson Radius, London, 1989, pp.310, £18.95.

This book is far from being today's equivalent of 'German soldiers playing bayonet ping-pong with Belgian babies' that I had feared.

Among its surprising contributions is the credit Khalil gives, from time to time, to what he considers to be the Ba'ath's real social achievements. His fascinating account of 'The Status of Women' is a case in point. It is far from wholly hostile and he comes to the unexpected conclusion that:

The Ba'athist measures in this truly personal domain are considerably less radical than the 1956 Tunisian Code for example, or the Shah's family reforms....(p. 91).

Khalil's study of 'A World of Fear', in which he seeks to associate categories of terror with calculated attempts to produce specific psychological states in the Iraqi people, struck me as intellectually interesting but somewhat subjective; and owing something to hindsight. I remain unconvinced that it was that well thought out by the grisly perpetrators.

Among many aspects of the book that deserve discussion, three seem to me of particular interest at the present time: the Kurdish question; the relationship between the invasion of Kuwait and the Palestine problem; and Arab 'Nationalism'.

The 'Kurdish Atrocities' that fuelled so much hostility to Iraq before the Gulf crisis broke, and the renewed massacre of the Kurds that is the grotesque aftermath of the rout of Saddam's army, are reminiscent of the 'Bulgarian Atrocities' that caused Gladstone to thunder against the 'unspeakable Turk' between 1868 and 1894. Then, as now, public opinion seized on the immediate outrages but forgot, or knew nothing of, generations of ethnic hatreds and tribal violence that came before. In the case of Kurds, Arabs and Turks, these extend back at least to the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, when bands of mainly Kurdish *jelali* (condottieri) in revolt against the Ottoman empire - as the Kurds of today are still in revolt against the Ba'athist successors of the Ottomans - ravaged Anatolia and the Fertile Crescent.

They caused the 'Great Flight' of Arab and Turkish peasants from their lands, to take refuge in the fortified towns. Many of these *jelali* were Kurdish nomads of a peculiar ferocity, matched only by that of their vengeful pursuers of the present day.

In this century, as Khalil explains, Kurds were again prominent in the massacre of the largely Christian Assyrians of Iraq in 1933, while as late as 1959 it was Kurdish communists who were butchering Iraqi Turkomans in Kirkuk. None of this excuses the recent Ba'athist atrocities against Kurdish villages, let alone the current civil war against them. But it should warn against instant partisanship in Middle Eastern ethnic conflicts that have their roots in many centuries of violent history. It should also be clear that what Saddam Husayn is now attempting is a 'Final Solution' to a problem that has been vexing the non-Kurdish population of Mesopotamia for generations. Perhaps it is also not without significance that Assyrian Christians are among the Ba'athist elite.

As for the Palestine problem, it must surely be an inflexible mind that can read this book and still subscribe to the view that there was 'no linkage' between that and Saddam's seizure of Kuwait. Although Khalil's account extends only to 1980, he makes it abundantly clear that it is 'imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction' that are the 'unpityable demons' of Ba'athist devil lore. Indeed, had it not been for the setting up of the state of Israel in 1948, Michel 'Aflaq, surely the ideological heir to the notorious Mufti of Jerusalem, arch enemy of Zionism during the Mandatory period in Palestine, might never have founded the Ba'ath in 1949. Or if he had, it would surely have been a very different phenomenon from what it now is. Whether Khalil intends this or not, the background he paints makes it clear that Saddam's rise to power, over a formidable pile of corpses, his attack on Iran and, by implication, his seizure of Kuwait, have all been deliberate steps along the relentless way to acquiring the means for the final, climactic solution to the Palestine problem. These means have been the oil, the sea outlets, the wealth from the oil to buy the armaments and the sentiment of the Arab masses. In this, of course, 'imperialism' and 'Arab reaction' have also been inextricably involved. Thus, to deny linkage seems as absurd as to refuse a connection between the seizure of Czechoslovakia in 1938 and the unfulfilled climax of *Mein Kampf*. It prescind from reality.

Khalil throws much light on that misunderstood and misused hobgoblin of the Middle East, 'Arab Nationalism', alias Pan-Arabism, alias the Ba'ath. To be sure, he points out what we know already - that all attempts to found a United Arab Republic have fallen flat on their faces. More analytically, he remarks of Pan-Arabism that:

Instead of all the complicated and unwholesome specifics concerning people's real problems, apparitions from a glorious past were forged into present needs; and out of this revitalisation, *ihya*, or renaissance, *ba'ath*, a new generation was deemed to emerge in whom would be vested the spirit of Arabism. (p. 245).

But since 'this glorious past' has, since AD 622/AH 1, been exclusively Islamic, it follows that when we speak of 'Arab Nationalism', we are speaking simply of an expres-

sion of Islam that is distinctive only by the emphasis it places on the Arab contribution to Islam.

This becomes clearer still when Khalil quotes Michel 'Aflaq, 'Arabism is a body 'whose spirit is Islam'' (p. 198) and, 'It is the force of Islam that had the new appearance of Pan-Arabism', (p. 211). The essential consanguinity between Islam and the Ba'ath is again made clear on page 91, where Khalil argues that, despite the Ba'ath's modernising and its hideous social engineering, 'ideologically Islamic values were still intact'. Thus those Zionists and others who, for their own reasons, seek to dismiss Arab nationalism as unimportant, or a spent force, are in confusion. They are right to assert that there is no such separate entity as Arab nationalism. They are woefully misled when they fail to understand that what they are in fact dealing with is simply an aspect of militant Islam that is in no way apt to be dismissed.

In the aftermath of the Gulf 'land war', Khalil's comments on the Iraqi Army acquire an almost prophetic appropriateness. How could it ever have been imagined that this disreputable body of politically embroiled officers constantly - and frequently literally - stabbing each other in the back and their dull, reluctant soldiery that has performed so miserably in all the Arab-Israeli wars, and simply turned and fled in earlier engagements with the British, was capable of giving pause to the redoubtable 'Stormin' Norman'? The present reviewer found himself prepared to salute Kharji simply because even that pathetic little show of the red badge seemed so far beyond what one had come to expect of Iraqi troops.

The answer lies in the mesmerising influence of their formidable, though obsolescent, arsenal of cast-off Western weaponry.

But few, except the admirable John Keegan of *The Daily Telegraph*, foresaw - Kharji notwithstanding - that this could never be enough to make this Middle Eastern stage army a match for the highly trained and even better equipped professionals of the Coalition.

What was not foreseen was that this army, even after its ignominious rout, would remain - or be allowed to remain - a match for the hapless Kurds. Moreover, it is obvious that this internal strife does not bring down on Saddam Husayn the same odium among his own people that it earns him in the West. On the contrary, it goes far to obliterate what might otherwise have been the shame of his defeat by the Coalition. This brings home another point upon which Khalil constantly insists - that the Ba'ath, for all its nastiness, is not imposed on an entirely unwilling people. This surely explains why, so far, Bush's sidling Saddam's appeals for overthrow have been so much sand thrown into the wind. For Saddam still fulfils for the Iraqis a real emotional and psychological need. He pursues - so far with considerable success - their ancient blood feud with the Kurds; while their somewhat more recent one with the Israelis may only be temporarily suspended. What other Arab leader could thus have turned defeat into glad victory?

Khalil's main text is preceded by an invaluable 'Chronology'. This sets out with encyclopaedic thoroughness the historical events, from 1918 to 1980, that are relevant to the history of Iraq over this period. For both historians and students this, in itself, makes the book well worth possessing.

DAME EDNA'S FAN

Kenneth Minogue

The Real Barry Humphries, Peter Coleman, Robson Books, £14.95

Peter Coleman's account of the Real Barry Humphries offers itself as some of the raw material needed to explain what Sheridan Morley has called 'the British obsession with Barry Humphries'. Evidence of such an obsession can be found in the fact that whole audiences of British celebrities can be induced to play stooge to Dame Edna. Indeed, they are not merely stooged, they are usually taken down a peg or two as well. No doubt if we look a little more closely at who these people are, the problem dissolves slightly. The genial and hard bitten Denis Healey would 'have a go' at almost anything, while Germaine Greer is a professional celebrity and comes out of the same stable as Humphries himself. Most of the others are in show business of one kind or another, and there's no exposure like show exposure. Still, why should David Steel, even more Lady Steel, lend themselves to this mincing machine of wit?

The answer to this kind of question usually must begin in the idea of complicity, victim and victimiser alike are showing themselves superior to something that is being mocked by the performance. It is usually matter of what Satan does in *Paradise Lost*: 'scoffing in ambiguous words'. What is being mocked may be hypocrisies, turns of phrase, postures, self-decoration in dress, or any other of the manifold ways in which human beings present themselves to themselves, and to the world. This is a point of view in other words in which the human world is nothing but a gigantic imposture. The whole human race is absurd, including especially those who waste their hours attending to the mockeries of Dame Edna, and Humphries pays loving attention to making sure that they too get it in the neck. Reflexive self-destructiveness lies at the heart of these performances. Their target is pretentiousness, and especially the pretentiousness of analysts who try to take up a superior position by swinging from the chandeliers of philosophy. Before continuing, therefore, I had better remark hastily, in the manner of someone holding up a crucifix to ward off the devil, that Humphries is a brilliant music hall artist who has created a world of his own and who erupts gags faster than Vesuvius. Analytical comments must come limping along behind the spirit of the performances themselves. All human beings are indeed absurd creatures, but none more so than those who try to be serious about the funny.

There is, then, no way of discussing the dissection of pretentiousness without being in some degree oneself pretentious. Pretentiousness means taking pleasure in any kind of superiority to other people, because, as Ecclesiastes reminds us, all such pleasures are vain. In practical life, however, we cannot help regarding some superiorities as being better grounded than others. All human life depends on conventions arising from this uneasy belief. Take such conventions away, and what are human beings but superior animals - indeed, possibly not even superior, since they are of all species alone prey

not only to error but also to illusion. The ancient cynics, which word derives from the Greek for dog, were a tribe of philosophers who argued that all manners and morals were forms of human self-delusion. Men were indistinguishable from animals. In following their programme of returning to nature, they despised (rather in the manner of student rebels of the late sixties) all the decent draperies erected by convention around the biological functions of human beings. Privacy they took to be indistinguishable from furtiveness. From this point of view, Sir Les Patterson, aside from the fact that he is dripping with local Australian colour, is merely the human race seen from the perspective of Diogenes the Cynic in his barrel.

Modern versions of cynicism, especially since Freud, have taken the form of emphasising the strains and burdens which the conventions of civilisation impose upon raw human nature. This generates the pressure cooker model of human beings as turbulent ids always on the verge of exploding uncontrollably. Such a model interprets performances which dance along the edges of what convention prescribes as devices by which tensions are released in an audience. It seems rather unlikely that anyone contemplating the slobbering innuendos of Les Patterson experiences anything remotely like catharsis. There is certainly shock effect, but the humour lies in the chasm separating what Les is from what Les thinks he is. Illusion, and especially firmly rooted Australian illusion, is the universal Humphries theme.

But what is it that would make Humphries of any more than local Australian interest? Australia may well be identified with that koala triangle, a huge area in the South Pacific where talent (as Humphries has it) mysteriously disappears without trace, but it is quite recognisably part of the Anglophone world. Its absurdities are part of that world. One of the questions which puzzles Coleman is why Humphries is a vast success in London, but has failed in New York. This is possibly because Australia and its idiosyncracies have long been a significant part of British consciousness, while the American awareness of Australia is perhaps best represented by the sign advertising the film *Gallipoli* in New York: 'A story you'll never forget from a country you've never heard of'. The most likely explanation, in fact, is purely contingent. Few Americans have had the chance to tune in on his wavelength; after all, it took Humphries some time to teach his audiences in Britain and Australia how to respond to him. On this score, however, the contrast between Humphries and Woody Allen is perhaps significant. Allen deals in defensive anxiety, and his appeal is universal; what Humphries deals in is aggressive anxiety. Dame Edna, for example, is an extremely dangerous character. Her world, like that of Miss Piggy, is red in tooth and claw, and never more dangerous than when the claws are being sheathed. By decent liberal convention, we must love all members of the human race equally. Dame Edna contemplates the rest of the world in the grisly verbal embrace of 'dear little tinted folk'. Our attention slides off the actual content of these patronising formulae because we are bewitched by the wit which has pinpointed the suburban evasiveness of the sentiments. And then the evasiveness is likely to be laid on thick: 'I mean that only in the most caring way', Dame

Edna will say after making some outrageous remark.

Humphries is a music hall artist: the performance is the message. It is impossible to extract a doctrine; all one can do is open up some of the things presupposed. It would be remarkable if he had not provoked political comment, and some of the more fascinating pages of Coleman's book report Australians, and especially left-wing Australians, fighting back against what they took to be directed against them. In 1982, Craig McGregor wrote that Humphries was still 'cracking his racist jokes, pillorying pinkos, Abos, unionists and, of course, women'. He went on to describe Humphries as turning 'the full and bilious force of his contempt upon the losers and defenceless in society....Abos, Jews, migrants, unionists, feminists, the great mass of common people'. Hal Colebatch responded by arguing that there was nothing scornful of Aborigines, etc. in Humphries' performances except in the mouths of characters intended to be contemptible, stupid, or repulsively unsympathetic, and this is indeed the point. We laugh at these *monstres sacrées* and whatever cathartic satisfactions they may yield: but we never doubt that they are repulsive. They are to the role model what falsification is to science.

What lies behind these and other less celebrated Humphries inventions? Coleman is understandably wary of the belief that the biographer can get behind the inventions. A real man with real opinions on the issues of the day would be a betrayal of the performer: it would reduce the performances to a message, mere rhetoric. And just as there is no real person 'behind' the Humphries gallery of pseudos, so there is no doctrine and no political line. Interesting as the 'life' is, it has all been absorbed into the world that appears on stage. Coleman shows that there has been dalliance with anarchism, Dadaism, surrealism and other intellectual exotica. He is clear on the fact that no one attuned to intellectual nonsense can fail to make left-wing sentimentality a target, but he rightly refrains from lumbering Dame Edna with any positive message. He has succeeded in writing a book for both fans and philosophers.

PHILOSOPHER KING

Barbara Day

T.G. Masaryk (1850-1937): Vol. 1 Thinker and Politician (ed. by Stanley B. Winters); Vol. 2 Thinker and Critic (ed. by Robert B. Pynsent); Vol. 3 Statesman and Cultural Force (ed. by Harry Hanak) Macmillan, London, 1989

In the winter of 1986, before signs of the cultural thaw had begun to show themselves in Czechoslovakia, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at London University organised a conference to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first President of Czechoslovakia. Preparations for the conference caused more problems

than usual for the organisers: on the one hand, some *émigré* historians were protesting that their colleagues in the 'unofficial' culture in Czechoslovakia had not been invited to give papers; on the other, the Czechoslovak authorities, ungraciously refusing to accept that the organisers had observed this unwritten rule, abruptly banned even their 'official' historians from attending the conference. Only the Masaryk granddaughters, Herberta and Anna, were allowed to travel to London from their home in the Prague Mala Strana - a stone's throw from the Castle from which the communist President, Gustav Husak, still watched over their country.

Tomas Masaryk and his American wife, Charlotte Garrigue, did not live in Prague until September 1882, when he was appointed professor of philosophy at the university (until then, the famous Charles University had been a German-language university only; the law establishing the Czech University was passed in February of that year). Born in the Moravian countryside in 1850, Masaryk suffered an interrupted schooling because of his parents' financial difficulties. He was twenty-two by the time he was able to attend Vienna University, where he studied under a French philosopher of international importance, Franz Brentano (also an influence on Masaryk's fellow-Moravian, Edmund Husserl). Masaryk became increasingly interested in the practical aspects of philosophy, as an instrument of sociological analysis, and it was Brentano who guided him towards the French and English philosophers. However, as Roger Scruton in his contribution 'Masaryk and Kant' (Vol. 1) demonstrates, although Masaryk rejected German idealist philosophy and theories of collectivism - especially as expressed in Marxism, which Masaryk was to reject in *The Social Question* (1898) - the unacknowledged root of his own philosophy nevertheless depended on obedience to Kant's categorical imperative. In formulating his future policies, Masaryk was to place emphasis on a society of individuals, each equally subject to the same moral law, and each possessed of an equal store of rights.

After ten years of study and teaching at Vienna University, the young lecturer arrived in Prague with some misgivings - as Karel Brusak describes in his paper 'Masaryk and Belles-Lettres' (Vol. 2) - considering the city to be provincial in comparison with Vienna and lacking in intellectual society. His first objective was to establish himself as a literary critic, and in 1885 he founded a literary and academic journal: *Athenaeum*. However, as Brusak demonstrates, Masaryk restricted himself as an aesthete by considering only the content of a work and not its form. In consequence, his criticism reads as psychological and sociological description rather than literary analysis. Paul Trenskey in his paper on 'Masaryk and Dostoevsky' (Vol. 3) concludes that Masaryk, with his admiration for rational thinking and didactic argument, was fundamentally unable to appreciate the aesthetic autonomy of works of literature.

By the late eighties Masaryk had moved towards political journalism, and in 1889 he became associated with the political periodical *Cas* (Time). In 1891 he entered the *Reichsrat*, returning to the university three years later. It was during this period that Masaryk developed his ideas on 'humanism', a philosophy which he claimed had evolved from the ideals of the Hussites and the

Czech Brethren; cultural rather than religious, it was related to a man's awareness of himself as part of the (Czech) community. This 'humanitism', he believed, had inspired the nineteenth century National Revival, and it must become the guideline for all future thought and action. The theory, expressed in his book *The Czech Question* (1895), was attacked by many Czech historiographers, notably Josef Pekar, as being ahistorical. The debate, on Pekar's side at least, lasted throughout their lives, and is discussed in these volumes by two contributors: Karel Kucera (Vol.1), on the factual background to the dispute; and Milan Hauner (Vol. 3), who argues that in spite of its brutal solution - the expulsion of German Bohemians and Moravians in 1945 and the imposition of Soviet ideology - the question is still of contemporary significance. Masaryk, fired by the prospect of a political career, continued to write and publish, although he fitted into none of the established political groupings; in 1907 he re-entered the *Reichsrat* as a representative of his own Realist Party.

In her paper, 'The Fallacy of Realism' (Vol. 1), Eva Schmidt-Hartmann notes the popularity of the term 'realism' at the end of the century, and how closely it related to Masaryk's study of philosophy, when he preferred Anglo-American pragmatism to German idealism. In politics, 'realism' related to the formulation of rational objectives in contemporary policy-making. But in fact, Schmidt-Hartmann observes, Masaryk's policies were profoundly unrealistic; they relied on a utopian world-view in which people were swayed by rational argument and not by complex and emotional intuitions. In *The Czech Question*, Masaryk advocated 'unpolitical politics', in which government would be by consensus, reached through 'philosophical criticism and discussion'. By making the 'humanitism' of the Czech nation the guiding principle of his policy, he overlooked the historic mixture of races inhabiting the Czech lands. Masaryk was also unrealistic, Schmidt-Hartmann points out, in his emphasis on the qualities of the individual in politics, and in ignoring the need for a guaranteed protection provided by an institutional structure.

With the outbreak of the First World War, Masaryk's life changed completely. He had originally worked to raise the social and political awareness of the Czechs as a nation *within* the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Now he was committed to resistance against the Hapsburgs. Believing that the Allies would be victorious, he was determined to get plans for an independent Czech state on to the international peace agenda. Over the next four years he travelled tirelessly in America, in Russia - where he negotiated the position of the Czech legionaries - and in Europe. He spent much time in England, where he was appointed lecturer in Slavonic Studies at London University. He was in America when, on October 28 1918, the National Committee in Prague passed a law on the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state, and invited Masaryk to become President.

The twenty years of the First Republic were not, as they have often been painted, a Golden Age. As Petr Pithart (the present Czech Prime Minister) has pointed out, the situation was in a way the reverse of that today; in 1918, there was a well-bonded civil society, but a state apparatus and procedures had to be established; today, there is

a powerful state apparatus which in large part needs to be dismantled, but civil society has long since decayed or been destroyed. Then as now, urgent tasks were undertaken by people with little or no experience; mistakes were made, and many people were disappointed or embittered. Masaryk was a charismatic figure, loved for his apparent simplicity, who believed in reconciliation rather than punishment. Although aware of the dangers threatening from both fascism and communism, and of the problems arising from the existence of national minorities - in particular the Slovaks and Germans - he failed to implement measures to deal with them. When he died in 1937 at the age of eighty-six, he left a burden of unsolved problems for his former Foreign Secretary and successor as President, Eduard Benes.

Masaryk's charisma survived into the 1980s, in spite, or maybe because of, the fact that in the intervening years it had been impossible to make any balanced assessment of Masaryk's achievements. As Professor Stanley Winters describes in the introduction to volume one, no serious work could be published during the Nazi occupation, when records were removed or destroyed and many of those who knew Masaryk died or emigrated. The interlude from 1945-8 was too brief; and communist historians of the 1950s preferred to depict the pre-war Republic as an age of poverty and injustice. Even when attitudes relaxed, many of the archives remained closed and, according to Professor Winters, the Masaryk Personal Archive - assembled between the wars - was neglected and plundered. The only full-scale biographies yet published were written as long ago as before Masaryk's death.

In this way, it turned out that when the dissident movement began to make its voice popularly heard - not so long after the time of this conference - the name of Masaryk was evoked more as a folk memory than as a figure with a political programme. In October 1988, on the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Republic, the crowds in Prague's Old Town Square chanted 'Masaryk, Masaryk!'; but these cries alternated with shouts for Dubcek and Gorbachev: whatever it was the crowd wanted, it was simply not Husak's Communism. Masaryk's name had been conjured twenty years previously, during the reform year of 1968; as Harry Hanak shows in his introduction to the third volume, the old guard among the Party historiologists objected that the use made by the reformers of Masaryk's ideas was a sign of ideological impotence. In the seventies and eighties, Masaryk studies were pursued, but published only in *samizdat* editions. Nowadays, posters and postcards of Masaryk can be bought in every stationery shop, but few people have yet read his works. There is a vague and optimistic hope that whatever it was he stood for will be mediated through the present leaders of Czechoslovakia - in particular, the historian and Czech Prime Minister Petr Pithart and President Vaclav Havel.

Many of the different facets of Tomas Masaryk's career up to 1918 were presented and assessed in the course of the London conference - Masaryk and Herder, the Women's Question, Czech Jewry, the Russian Question, the Hilsner Affair, Czech Socialism, the Germans, the British.....Robert Pynsent, the chief organiser of the conference and editor of the second volume of papers,

claims in his introduction that the aim of the conference was to blow the cobwebs from 'an intellectual and political phenomenon whose traditional portrait is densely cobwebbed with fame'. The hostility of the communist regime towards Masaryk had led to what Pynsent considered to be an equally mindless adulation, which he hoped the conference would help to correct. At the time of the conference, with the Communists still in power, there was in *émigré* circles considerable resentment towards this attitude. However, the new conditions prevailing in Czechoslovakia since 1989, giving the opportunity both for serious research and for popular access to material, have shown the need for a sober assessment of the policies and principles on which the First Republic was founded. If parallels are to be drawn between the approaches to government of President Masaryk and President Havel - a belief that an educated nation will make rational choices, a preference for reconciliation rather than punishment, a desire for government by consensus instead of according to specific policies - then these three volumes represent not only an historical analysis, but also valuable material towards the restoration of independent democratic Czechoslovakia.

OPINIONSMITHS

A. W. Purdue

The Progressive Dilemma, David Marquand, Heinemann, 1991, £20, pp. 248.

In the early nineteen twenties many liberal intellectuals transferred their allegiance to the Labour Party. David Marquand sees them as conferring a great honour upon that party. He is convinced of the enormous importance of the 'radical intelligentsia....the suppliers of ideas, the framers of policy, the makers of ideological claims, without whom Labour could never be more than a glorified pressure group'. If some 'Peter Simple' flight of fancy, an Amalgamated Society of OpinionSmiths and Paradigm-makers, should ever become flesh, then Professor Marquand would surely be its first shop steward.

There are few intellectual positions more undignified than that of a 'Progressive' in the grip of nostalgia. David Marquand is nostalgic for the world of British radicalism before the First World War, a time when the Labour Party remained, like a restless but still moderately compliant teenager, within the family home of a progressive alliance. The coalition of interests and opinions that made up the pre-1914 Liberal Party was, Marquand admits, heterogeneous, even ramshackle, but he sees both it and the wider coalition, including the Labour Party and Irish Home Rulers, which the Liberal government relied upon after 1910, as dynamic and intellectually innovative. A New Liberalism, a social liberalism, which found much common ground with social democracy, led the way towards a reconciliation of the claims of labour and capital and towards a middle way between individualism and the collectivist state.

The thesis owes much to the work of Peter Clarke, who

first made out the case for the vitality of Edwardian Liberalism and its ability to appeal to working-class voters (*Lancashire and the New Liberalism*, 1971) and who has in *Liberals and Social Democrats* (1978) redirected attention to the cerebral activity of Liberal radicals and social democrats in the early Twentieth Century. It is certainly true that the Liberal Party looked 'healthy enough until, in Trevor Wilson's famous phrase, it was run over by a 'rampant omnibus' (the First World War) and that progressive intellectuals were not short of ideas. 'Intellectuals', Marquand argues 'may not command many divisions, but they draw the maps by which divisions march'. The military metaphor is unfortunate given the failure of the radical intelligentsia to develop credible policies concerning the Great War and it may be that Progressivism suffered from a surfeit of map-makers and a shortage of private soldiers. It also seems probable that map-makers like L.T.Hobhouse, J.A.Hobson, J.L.Hammond and Graham Wallas were too much the professional intellectuals, too Mandarin and too distant from the appetites and the loyalties of the mass of the population for their maps to be reliable.

Since those halcyon days, everything has gone wrong. The Liberal Party was all but destroyed by the Great War while the Labour Party emerged from it greatly strengthened. Radical intellectuals had to decide whether to attach themselves to the class-based party of labour or give advice from the sidelines. What should have happened, according to Marquand, is that the Labour Party should have remained part of a broad-based, cross-class coalition on the lines of the American Democratic Party. What should not have happened, but did, was for Conservative or predominantly Conservative governments to have been in power for fifty of the seventy-odd years since the Labour Party became the official Opposition. The Progressive theory of history, heir to the Whig, was not meant to have an unhappy ending!

To what extent can the comparative failure of the Labour Party in its competition with the Conservative Party for the support of the electorate be seen as due to its labourist and class-based nature and its refusal to become a true heir to Edwardian Liberalism? A class-based party has, obviously, a problem in appealing to voters of other classes or to those who don't identify themselves in class terms and, therefore, a Liberal-Labour or Social Democratic Party might have done better in appealing to middle-class voters dissatisfied with the Conservative Party. But what Marquand never faces up to is that the legacy of radical Liberalism, which the Labour Party did take on board with those survivors from the Liberal wreck, those Ponsonbys, Trevelyan and Wedgewoods, was to be an electoral liability. How many working class voters voted Conservative over the years because of a distaste for the quasi-pacifist, unpatriotic and faddist streak Labour inherited from Liberalism's radical wing? Marquand realises that one of the reasons radical intellectuals found membership of the Labour Party an unhappy experience was that they glorified dissent and joined a party 'whose highest value was group loyalty'. He twice quotes Arthur Henderson's aphorism that 'the plural of conscience is conspiracy' without realising how widely shared this opinion was amongst the electorate as a whole. He identifies cor-

rectly the defensive conservatism of the labourist tradition but it is only one strand in the wider conservatism of Twentieth Century British society; those who work with the grain of it can change things, by building on an amalgam of self-interest and tradition, those who ignore or despise it founder. The problem of Progressivism is the absence of a Progressive electorate.

Marquand is reticent about the great achievement of mid-Twentieth Century Progressivism, the elevation of the Beveridge-Keynes consensus on reformed capitalism into the commonsense of the age for some thirty years. He realises that it neglected the supply side of the economy and took the health of British capitalism for granted: it was seen as needing reform but not as needing revitalisation. Here, for once, the Progressive and the labour analysis concurred.

Poor Houyhnhnms, in common harness with a carthorse! This is the fate of the radical intelligentsia, this is the Progressive dilemma. Labour politicians from Bevin to Crosland failed either to realise that their true mission was to be the heir to eternal radical Progressivism or to change the Labour Party into a worthy successor to Edwardian Liberalism. The failure of the SDP-Liberal Alliance makes the myopic old Labour Party, with its Bourbon unions and manic constituency associations, even more essential to hopes of a government of the Left. Can a carrot or two persuade it, in the strange company of a gay rainbow coalition of all those who are disaffected, to welcome a united Europe, the new goal of the conventional intelligentsia? A new progressive coalition must, we are told, 'carry Britain into the mainstream of European history'. That British dissenting radicalism should seek to lose itself within the essentially Catholic corporatism of the European Community, is an odd conclusion. Is this the solution to the Progressive dilemma or yet another Progressive contradiction?

FULL MARKS

David Regan

Fried Snowballs: Communism in Theory and Practice, John Marks, The Claridge Press, 1990, £16.95.

Dr Marks has written a wide-ranging and densely packed book. His purpose is to document thoroughly the impact on mankind of Marxism. He does this by comparing Western open societies in theory and practice with Marxist totalitarian societies, in theory and practice. The result is a devastating cumulative indictment of Marxism. Although the criticisms of open societies are carefully considered, their imperfections only make the appalling record of Marxism even blacker by comparison. The economic degradation, the political tyranny, the subversion of science and education, the destruction of the rule of law, the hypocritical inequalities and the gross violations of human rights are all set out and meticulously referenced.

The book has been a number of years in preparation and reflects an impressive range of reading and re-

search. It will be a rich source book for students of Marxism for years to come. It is valuable too for the subjects fearlessly addressed which have rarely been covered in literature on Marxism. For instance, Dr. Marks analyses the differences and similarities between German National Socialism and Soviet Communism. He also considers the role of Marxist activists in British education, like the late Professor Arnold Kettle of the Open University.

Indeed the most nauseating passages in the book cover the words and deeds of Western apologists for Marxism. Economist Joan Robinson, for example, is quoted as an admirer of Mao Tse Tung's *Little Red Book*: 'When peasants say, by applying the Thought of Mao we can grow bigger cabbages or workers, by that means we can build a heavier press, they are saying something which is perfectly true'. Similarly, George Bernard Shaw, at the height of Stalin's terror, asserted that the Soviet penal system was superior to the British. Perhaps Dr. Marks' next book should be a study of the psychology of Marxists.

Some people might argue that yet another exposure of Marxism is unnecessary. It is true that a great many have already appeared. The title of this book is a quotation taken from one of the most profound critics of Marxism, Professor Leszek Kolakowski. Nevertheless, Dr. Marks' book is most certainly needed. In the first place it is a more comprehensive analysis of the realities of Marxism than any existing study. In the second, even where it restates evidence which is already widely known it is performing a valuable function. Unless people are continually reminded of the grim truth, many will harbour absurdly favourable images of Marxism.

Recently, I was invited to address a school on the subject of British defence policy. My advocacy of NATO was listened to courteously enough but the subsequent questions and comments turned into a discussion of communism. Several of the young people were enraged at my wholly negative assessment of the theory and practice of Communism. One fifteen year old miss maintained that Soviet housing policy was superior to the British because she saw no tramps sleeping in the Metro during a visit to Moscow.

Every school library should have a copy of Marks on Marx.

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VELVET PUTSCH

Marek Matraszek

Czechoslovakia: Too Velvet a Revolution? James de Candole, IEDSS, 1991, pp. 44, £5.00

There has been no shortage of analyses of Eastern Europe's 'revolutions'. But there has been little thought given to the real nature of those revolutions, or to the long-term prospects of their success. The shallow triumphalism of much analysis reflects what has become the standard liberal-Left interpretation: that the revolutions are but the latest stage in the victorious march of humanity towards the rational world order.

James de Candole's monograph concentrates on the struggle for political control within Civic Forum; debate over economic reform; the nationalities crisis in Slovakia; and Czechoslovakia's difficult relationship with the Soviet Union. Although de Candole's work concentrates on events over the last eighteen months, its underlying implications are much broader, pointing to parallels with developments in the rest of Eastern Europe.

The manner in which the transfer of power occurred in November 1989 is still unclear. It seems that manipulation by the Czechoslovak security services, in co-operation with the KGB, aimed at fomenting revolt, exceeded its intended purpose of installing a 'reformed' Communist Party which would act as a guarantee for the Soviet Union that Czechoslovakia would remain in the communist orbit. Yet if this danger of the revolution being hijacked was overcome, a second danger emerged, that of the newly-dominant political elite, many of whom hoped to transform Czechoslovakia into the vanguard force of the new political impulse, that of left-liberalism.

In a manoeuvre which was also attempted in Poland, sections of the opposition of a leftist character set out to eliminate all other political forces. It is to the credit of leaders such as Klaus in Czechoslovakia and Walesa in Poland that by instigating a rupture in the revolutionary core, they were able to destroy the myth of national unity. We should support their attempt to introduce a politics based on the interplay of interests in a democratic framework.

De Candole draws attention to the still strong position of the old Communist Party and its associated *nomenklatura* and secret police network. Czechoslovakia has done more than Poland to combat this danger, through exposing former secret police agents. In both cases, however, the weeding out of former Communists has been hampered by the peculiar vision of the nature of communism espoused by Havel and Mazowiecki, as a moral rather than a political phenomenon in which all citizens are implicated. The consequence of this is that political means to eradicate the counter-revolutionary danger have been rejected in favour of a communal confession of guilt by all. There is a romantic Christian streak in these two leaders which may yet rebound against the future stability of these countries.

A TRAMP ABROAD

Harry Phibbs

Jaunting through Ireland, Roy Kerridge, Michael Joseph, £15.99

Kerridge's writing first came to my attention with a sympathetic piece of his in the *Spectator* on London tramps. I remarked to a friend that Kerridge seemed well informed on the subject. 'Well, he should be, he's a tramp himself', came the sneering retort. Now it is true that Kerridge has a distinctive appearance. Stubbles of hair, winkle-picker shoes, an overcoat with the middle button hanging on a loose thread, the familiar plastic carrier bag. But this attire is useful in putting those he meets at their ease; other writers would receive more guarded comments. Kerridge is assumed to be harmless.

Before giving an account of his own travels in Ireland Kerridge explains his sources of inspiration. One was a novel by David Thomson entitled *Woodbrook*, loosely based on my mother's family, the Kirkwoods, part of the Anglo-Irish community in Roscommon until the late 1940s. Despite including large chunks of pure invention Thomson, who was employed by my family as a tutor, used real names and in public tried to pass off his book as a factual account. This no doubt helped its sales. Kerridge's naivety, which gives his writing such an appealing quality, means that Thomson's is probably not the only tall story from Ireland that he swallows.

Much of the material is inconsequential but then that is when Kerridge is at his best. After eavesdropping on children's conversations he offers verbatim accounts. He manages to make waiting for a coach in the rain into a pacy drama. Each venue for his excursions has its own chapter - Cork, Killarney, Kerry, Wicklow, Cashel, Ross Carbery, Roscrea - but they blur effortlessly into one another. The author is unrestrained with his prejudices - for example 'Ireland seemed plagued by the young, whose self-centredness and self-possession overwhelmed and threatened the old easy-going ways of kindly, outgoing and talkative Ireland'. In fact the go ahead young Irish tend to come to London to make their fortunes, so that the opposite problem arises.

Snatches of dialogue and sectarian songs make for good, light reading. The author is confused by his pro-British sentiments (he undiplomatically asked to be shown the way on his pre-Home Rule map which calls 'County Laois' 'Queen's County') coupled with appreciation for the warmth he experiences from the locals ('I am not a pub person and always enter pubs with trepidation. However, I walked into a smart Roscrea pub, where as usual everyone stopped drinking to stare at me. Whereas in England everyone looks annoyed, and finds it hard to start talking again, in Roscrea I had been swooped on eagerly...'). Kerridge makes a plucky and good natured attempt to reconcile the Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions and concludes that rather than a united Ireland, disintegration is the best way forward with Ireland being split into several separate Kingdoms as it was in ancient times.

In Short

Uncertain Futures: Eastern Europe and Democracy, ed. Peter Volten, Institute for East-West Security Studies, 360 Lexington Avenue, New York 10017.

Contributors to this occasional paper examining the prospects for democracy and security in central and Eastern Europe include Sir Ralf Dahrendorf and Professor George Schoepflin. Both draw attention to the greatest obstacle to the formation of parliamentary democratic institutions in the region today: the domination of the post-revolutionary political order by moralising liberal-Left intellectuals opposed to the re-emergence of an entrepreneurial class with an economic interest in democracy. This elite has so far been unwilling to renounce power in favour of more demotic 'vulgar' politicians (typified by the indefatigable Czech finance minister and leader of the Civic Democratic Party, Vaclav Klaus) capable of appealing to the legitimate material aspirations of the decimated middle classes. It is upon the butchers and bakers, not the playwrights and sociologists, that the establishment of democratic institutions in the region finally depends.

(Jde C)

Conservatism in Danger, Rodney Atkinson, Bow Group, £6.50.

Rodney Atkinson provides a depressing but justified account of the failures of the Thatcher years. The successes were more apparent than real because of the dependence on North Sea oil and speculation in property rather than genuine long term investment. The institutions of socialism built up over many decades have not been affected; indeed the Conservatives have actually increased the power and patronage of the state. The traditional pillars of Conservatism have all been systematically undermined. The Single European Act has surrendered our sovereignty without any real debate; mass immigration, much of it illegal, continues to destroy our national identity and homogeneity. The state continues to reward failure and alienate those with genuine conservative values. Is it conservative to subsidise single mothers? Should a socialist council house owner receive a discount from a conservative government? Is it conservative to spend state money on education and health when many could afford it themselves? Why have so many good teachers left the profession? The booklet is packed with information and useful analysis concluding with a section on the author's recommendations for a retreat from disaster.

(MC)

The Western Intelligentsia on Communism and the Soviet Union, David Heald, Foreword by Norman Stone, 30pp, £2, from Dr. David Heald, 12, Roseacre Close, Canterbury, CT2 7HN.

'You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs', (Walter Duranty). As Winston Churchill might have said, some omelette! This collection of gems from the mouths and pens of our Twentieth Century intelligentsia illustrates the *trahison des clerics* in history. Ordinary people know better than ever not to put their trust in intellectuals. Dr. Heald's mordant and instructive introduction makes this booklet a useful sourcebook for this subject. However there is enormous scope for quotations from the admirers of the new Jerusalems of the post-Stalinist era: Cuba, China, Vietnam, Nicaragua. More please!

(MC)

Oxfam - the abuse of charitable status, Andrew Hubback; *The Charity Commission - Whitehall's Paper Tiger*, International Freedom Foundation, £5 and £10, available from IFF (UK), Suite 500, Chesham House, 150, Regent St., London, W.1.

Andrew Hubback's critical and well-documented report on Britain's wealthiest charity has been fully vindicated by the recent findings of the Charity Commission. Many charity workers, Oxfam's and others, sincerely believe that their work cannot be ultimately effective without political campaigns; however this stance inevitably leads to conflict and the alienation of donors. The paper on the Charity Commission itself makes many sensible recommendations to counter the political abuse of charitable status. The turnover of charities now exceeds £13 billion annually, and as complaints grow, (1,164 in 1981), the report insists that the government must give the public much more redress against abuses and more access to information on how the money is spent. Marc Gordon recommends the creation of an Ombudsman for charities operating in the same way as those for Health and Local Government. I am not sure whether this would be the right solution; anecdotal experience of the effectiveness of the Ombudsman bureaucracy has been extremely patchy. However both these authors are to be congratulated on drawing attention to, and raising the level of public debate about, the charity problem.

(MC)

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