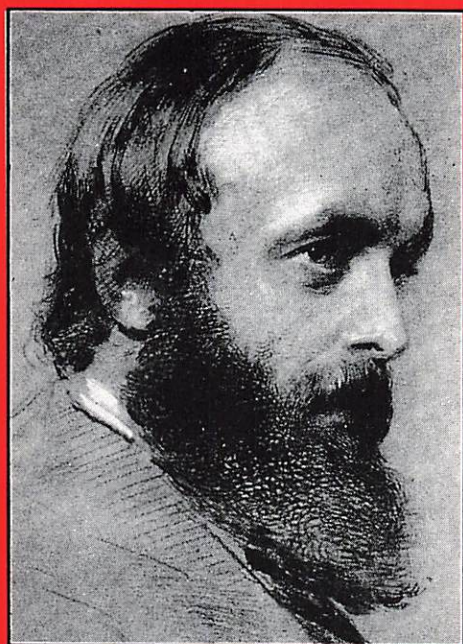


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The Salisbury Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The Third Marquess of Salisbury
1830 - 1903

The New Duty to Kill
Paul Belien

The Destruction of the Family
Patricia Morgan

Solzhenitsyn's Warning
Otto Scott

**The March of Folly in
Switzerland**
Stewart Deuchar

What sort of Women Priests?
Ray Honeyford

**The Curious Case of Frank
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Conservative Journals: *First Things*

Founded four years ago, *First Things* describes itself as a 'monthly journal of religion and public life'. It aims to create an alliance between the Jewish and Christian traditions with which to confront the hedonism and degeneracy of the modern world. To achieve such a goal is impossible without sophisticated thinking, of which the journal contains some striking examples. Many of the writers are Catholics, but the editor (Richard J Neuhaus) makes explicit appeal to 'believing Jews and Christians, agnostics, atheists, the politically liberal and conservative (with all the sub-categories of both), and people with wildly divergent views of the civilization of which we are a part'. (Opening Editorial, March 1990.) Don't be deceived by this: *First Things* is a *conservative* journal, and one with a mission — namely, to find, in the strange context of American intellectual life, the reasons, and especially the religious reasons, for standing against the current.

The journal is already notorious for its defiance of liberal orthodoxy. In a mildly worded but strongly reasoned article from March of this year, a symposium of Jewish and Christian thinkers openly questioned the movement

for 'Gay Liberation' in America, arguing that this fashion is, like every form of radical liberation, destructive of the moral order, blindly pulling down institutions without the faintest idea of what might come in place of them. The authors invoked the lines of Alexander Pope:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

For such an implied judgement on the gay culture, it stands to reason, *First Things* must be severely punished. It is unlikely that anyone without tenure would now dare to write for it. Nevertheless, there is no academic journal in America which is quite so forthright, or quite so prepared to expose members of the liberal establishment for the hypocrites that they are.

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Editor Roger Scruton
Literary Editor Ian Crowther
Managing Editor Merrie Cave

Editorial address and Subscriptions
33, Canonbury Park South,
London, N1 2JW
Tel: 071 226 7791
Fax: 071 354 0383

One of the most striking features of the emerging social order (if order is the word for it) is the re-direction of moral judgement. As Paul Belien shows, the debate over abortion has shifted markedly in recent years; the question is no longer whether it is permissible to kill an unborn child, but the extent of a doctor's duty to do so. In a startling series of cases, we discover that we may now have a legal obligation to kill an innocent human being. Such an obligation makes sense, only because of the moral fervour with which the 'right to choose' has been advocated.

Similarly, we now find that smoking — an act freely engaged in, which need harm no-one but the smoker, and which is the sign of no moral depravity — is regarded as a sin. A campaign is afoot to criminalize smoking and, as Chris Tame points out, a fund of moral indignation can be called upon in support of it. Many millions of British citizens find relief from the pressure of modern life in smoking: yet these people are presented as paragons of depravity, who must be prevented from dying in their preferred manner by the full force of the law. Hand in hand with this indignation against the smoker, we discover, often in the same medically trained consciences, the belief that contraception should be freely available to children, that sex-education, whose purpose is to free the sexual act of all moral inhibitions, should be compulsory, and that the attempt to forbid pornography is an interference with the 'right to free speech'.

When it comes to sex, however, moral inversion finds itself entirely at a loss. Having persuaded itself that the sexual act, freely engaged in, cannot be an object of moral judgement, the liberal conscience finds itself confronted by the evidence that people, encouraged in this direction, realise too late that they are not liberals at all. Shame, anger, humiliation and disgust often fill the retrospective heart: and no measure of consent will serve to cancel them. The correct response to this situation is to recognize that the old morality was after all the right one. But this is not the response of the liberal conscience. Liberal morality abdicates in favour of the law, inventing new and ill-defined offences — harassment, abuse, 'date rape', and so on — which have terrible consequences

for those convicted, but which are so ill-defined that almost anyone can find himself accused of them. It is against this background of intense moral and legal confusion that the mysterious case of Frank Beck — discussed here by Michael Tatham — should be considered. Whether or not Beck was guilty of serious crimes, he was the victim of a profound moral confusion, brought about by the very liberal morality that he had once espoused.

Perhaps the most interesting of the new legal categories, designed to remedy what moral education ought to have prevented, and to poison family life with new suspicions, is that of 'child abuse' — a term which can cover everything from sexual assault to a well-deserved smack. To be accused of child abuse — as Frank Beck was accused — is to be without any clear defence against the child gripped by fantasy, or the social worker spurred on by ideology.

Thus it is that innocent actions become crimes; sins become legal duties; and moral instincts are scoffed at, only to reappear in the guise of unjust and divisive laws. In the same way, Patricia Morgan demonstrates, the normal family, once protected by the law and endorsed by fiscal policy, loses its privileges, becomes a social and economic burden, and an object of mild scorn; while illegitimacy, single-parenthood, and social parasitism are encouraged and rewarded by the state.

Stewart Deuchar gives us yet another example of the process of moral inversion — this time in the field of education. We have already had cause to comment on the rapid decline of the Swiss system of public instruction. But the facts recorded by Deuchar are especially revealing. Once again, the person with a conscience, doing the right thing and for the sake of others' good, is singled out for punishment, lest his example be followed; while self-indulgence, idleness and immorality are promoted as the norm.

These developments are precisely what we must expect if Solzhenitsyn's warning, discussed here by Otto Scott, goes unheeded. And how can the warning be heeded, when the education of the young is in the hands of those against whom the warning was first pronounced?

The New Duty to Kill

Paul Belien explains how the Law helps Abortionists

In the United States doctors have frequently been sentenced for wrongful death, but sometimes also on account of wrongful life. In 1982 the Supreme Court of California in *Turpin v Sortini* condemned a doctor because of the birth of a deaf child. Its parents already had a deaf child. The family doctor had failed to tell them that this deafness was a hereditary defect. When their second child was born, the parents claimed damages from the doctor because, so they stated, they would not have had a second child if they had known of the genetic risks involved. The parents claimed on their own behalf (wrongful birth) and on behalf of the second child (wrongful life). The court condemned the doctor to the payment of damages to the parents as well as to the child. In some states, like South Dakota and Minnesota, wrongful life claims are forbidden by law (as is also the case in Great Britain). There appears to be a trend, however towards judicial recognition of wrongful life — towards condemning people to pay damages to a child because they were found guilty of allowing the child to be born. “The reality of the wrongful life concept is that such a plaintiff both exists and suffers due to the negligence of others. It is neither necessary nor just to retreat into meditation on the mysteries of life”, stated a California Court of Appeal verdict in 1980. (*Curiender v Bio Science Laboratories*.)

The first wrongful life claim in the US dates from 1963, when the Appellate Court of Illinois in the case *Zepeda v Zepeda* turned the claim down. The Supreme Court of New Jersey did the same in *Gleitman v Cosgrove* in 1967. Not only was the wrongful claim turned down, but so was the wrongful birth

claim of the parents. The latter situation changed overnight when in 1973 the Federal Supreme Court in *Roe v Wade* and *Doe v Bolton* granted American women a constitutional right to abortion. Granting a right to somebody implies putting a duty on everybody else, namely not to hinder in exercising this right. Indeed, without a right there can be no transgression. *Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression*, as Paul of Tarsus wrote to the Romans 2,000 years ago.

The Supreme Court decisions of 1973 created a woman's right to an abortion, but also the resulting transgressions of people who through whatever fault or for whatever reason, hinder this abortion. And so, in 1979 the New Jersey Supreme Court in *Berman v Allan* had no other option but to overrule its own *Gleitman v Cosgrove* decision. It agreed with the wrongful birth claim of the parents of a baby that had been damaged when its pregnant mother had rubella (though it rejected the wrongful life claim of the child itself). In similar cases, and also referring to *Roe* and *Doe*, the Supreme Courts of Texas in *Jacobs v Theimer* and of Wisconsin in *Dumer v St Michael's Hospital* issued similar verdicts in 1975. They were followed in 1980 by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in *Speck v Finegold* and in 1981 by the Federal Court of Appeal in Chicago in *Robak v United States*. The latter verdict granted the parents of a rubella child a 900,000 dollars indemnity. Remember that the defendant was guilty, not of having caused the child's handicap, but only of having hindered its abortion, and that the plaintiff would never have had any right to this enormous sum if he had

objected to abortion because of his own moral inhibitions. Since 1973 parents are no longer treated as equals by the US legal system. Under these circumstances one must be really stupid to continue to adhere to the traditional morality which forbids abortion. The more so because this moral position might put one in a position in which someone else's right to an abortion is transgressed and one is condemned to paying heavy indemnity payments. The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) bill voted by the House of Representatives in 1993 makes it a federal crime to attempt to block the doors of abortuaries. The bill, however, is the logical result of *Roe* and *Doe*. Where there is a right, transgression has to be punished, or the right makes no sense whatsoever.

Everywhere abortion was legalised the prosecution of doctors who failed to abort became a common phenomenon. In 1975, almost immediately after abortion was allowed in France, Prof Claude Duval, head of the Department of Gynaecology at the *Hotel Dieu*, a public hospital in Rouen, was brought to court by a patient. Prof Duval had refused to abort the fetus of a 21 year old woman who had asked for the abortion because she already had three children. The doctor had seen this pregnant patient twice before expressing his refusal to abort. According to the French law a gynaecologist has a right to refuse to perform abortions but he is obliged to inform his pregnant patients of his objections during their first visit to him. This Prof Duval had not done. On 9th July 1975 (less than half a year after France's constitutional Court had approved the *Loi Veil*, the French law legalising abortion) Prof Duval had a narrow escape before

the Penal Court in Rouen. The verdict, *Dame Capron c Duval*, acquitted him because Mme Simone Veil, the Minister of Health who had written the abortion law, had forgotten to include a sanction for doctors forgetting to inform patients during their first visit of their objections to abortion. Commenting on the verdict, one of France's leading jurists, Gabriel Roujou de Boubée, pointed out a curious reversal in the legal situation since the abortion law had been voted: "Before, doctors were prosecuted and condemned for having carried out abortions. Today other doctors are brought before the same courts for having refused to terminate pregnancies."

In Italy, Duval's colleague, Dr. Roberto Rabini, was less fortunate. He was condemned to pay damages by a court in Ancona on 9 October 1979, one year after Italy had legalized abortion in May 1978. For reasons of conscience Dr. Rabini had refused to perform an electrocardiogram which he knew was being asked of him in order to ascertain whether anaesthesia was safe for an abortion operation. Judge D'Ambrosio convicted the doctor for "refusal of a professional act", although he accepted in mitigation that the doctor "because of his religious convictions regards abortion as aiming to destroy a human life."

Since 1970 in almost all civilised countries doctors have been brought to court for failing to perform abortions, whether because of moral objections or through default. Not all the legal claims for damages resulting from a feticide which did not take place, concern cases involving handicapped children. In the US and in many other countries mothers have received damages for healthy children. In 1976 *Stills v Gratton*, a Court of Appeal verdict in San Francisco granted indemnities to an unmarried woman because of the birth of her healthy child after a botched abortion. Numerous similar verdicts have been passed in the US since.

In 1985 the Bundesgerichtshof in Germany decided a case of a woman who had chosen to have an abortion because of her poor social and economic situation, one of the four legally accepted grounds for abortion in that

country. The abortion operation was interrupted prematurely by the doctor because he feared that he might perforate the womb and because he was uncertain whether the patient was really pregnant. Apparently the doctor could not find the fetus. Two months later the woman learned that she was indeed pregnant, but by then she had changed her mind and decided to keep her baby. According to the BGH the doctor was obliged to indemnify part of the upkeep of her initially unwanted son, because the abortion she originally desired but did not get, would have been an abortion to which she had a legal right at that time. Through the fault of the doctor this right had been infringed.

A healthy child was involved in *Emeh v Kensington Health Authority*, a verdict in England in 1984. A doctor was condemned to pay for the upbringing of the child because he had carried out an unsuccessful sterilization. The woman involved already had three children. She had her fourth child aborted and after this had had herself sterilized. When she became pregnant, she refused the doctor's offer of an abortion because of the prospect of obtaining damages and the opportunity to stop work. On these grounds the judge of the lower court pronounced that the refusal to an abortion "in the circumstances of this case, was so unreasonable as to eclipse the defendant's wrongdoings." The woman appealed and the doctor was condemned to pay damages by the higher court. "Save in the most exceptional circumstances, I cannot think it right that the court should ever think it unreasonable for a woman to decline to have an abortion, in a case where there is no evidence that there were any medical grounds for terminating the particular pregnancy," said Mr Justice Slade, one of the three appeal judges. According to the judges the undesirability of the baby was evidenced by the fact that she had aborted a previous child and that she had undergone a sterilization. Consequently the doctor had to pay the costs for the damage — a healthy but unwanted child — for which he was not to blame.

However, not all English judges agree with awarding damages for children. Mr Justice Jupp in 1983 in *Udale v Bloomsbury Area Health Authority* deemed that a child can never be considered an injury to its parents. To support this statement he referred to the traditional moral order: "It is highly undesirable that any child should learn that a court has publicly declared his life or his birth a mistake, a disaster even, and that he or she is unwanted or rejected. Such pronouncements would disrupt families and weaken the structure of society". Furthermore: "a plaintiff such as Mrs. Udale would get little or no damages because her love and care for her child and her joy, ultimately at his birth would be set off against and might cancel the inconvenience and financial disadvantages which naturally accompany parenthood. By contrast a plaintiff who nurtures bitterness in her heart and refuses to let her maternal instincts take over would be entitled to large damages. In short, virtue would go unrewarded; unnatural rejection of womanhood and motherhood would be generously compensated. This, in my judgement, cannot be just."

However Mr Justice Jupp was fighting a rearguard battle. The judicial trend, also in England, is to regard children as damage. In 1980 *Scuriga v Powell*, a verdict by the Court of Appeal for England and Wales had granted an unmarried woman a damage payment of only £7,000 for the birth of a healthy child after a botched abortion. Is it bad for the child, as Mr Justice Jupp thinks, to discover later in life that he or she has been a judicially declared £1,000 or £7,000 burden to parents who regret that they did not get a chance to prevent conception or abort him or her when still a fetus?

Thake v Maurice, an English verdict in 1984 dealing with Samantha, an unwanted daughter, goes into this problem. According to the judge, Samantha — if she proves to be smart and not stupid — would be glad with the money awarded to her parents as a compensation for the damage she bestowed on them by being born: "If Samantha is as bright as her father thinks, by the time she comes to con-

sider this judgement (if she ever does) she will, I think, welcome it as a means of having made life somewhat easier for her family. If we understand him correctly, the judge is saying that children who would be devastated when discovering that their parents and society had officially declared them *unwanted* are “not bright”. The more money Samantha’s parents would get, the more a bright child would welcome it. Smart children priced at only £7,000 would not be very happy — for the small amount proves that their parents were not so smart that they could make £100,000 out of their births.

All courts nowadays recognize that if, one way or another, an unwanted pregnancy or birth follows because of the actions or the failure to act of a third party, this constitutes an infringement on the fundamental right of the parents to birth control. The third party, and not the parents is considered responsible for the conception or the birth of the child and has to bear the heavy financial expenses of the child. The third party may consider itself lucky if the courts leave it at that, for, as the Karlsruhe Court stated in one of its verdicts: “there remains for the parents enough grief to be suffered that they cannot lay upon the man who caused them such harm.” Mr Justice Jupp was not wrong in all his remarks. It is important that parents who are confronted with the grief of the birth of unwanted handicapped or healthy offspring nurture bitterness in their hearts, refuse to let parental instincts take over, and never find joy in their children. For the greater their bitterness, their grudges and their lack of traditional morality, the more considerable the damages which the courts will grant.

France is one of the few countries where the courts have been rather reluctant to grant damages for wrongful births. The French *Conseil d’État* stated in its verdict of July 1982 that no indemnities can be paid for the birth of an unwanted child, unless the plaintiff can “prove particularly susceptible circumstances or situations”. However French courts do not have second thoughts about abortion or feel bound, as Mr Justice Jupp did, to uphold tra-

ditional morality or parental instincts. In November 1982 Judge Dachkevitch ordered a public hospital in Paris to execute an abortion operation on the minor, Valerie Le Roux. The mother of seventeen year old Valerie had refused to give her permission for the operation and had asked the pro-life organization *Laissez les Vivre* for help; but Judge Dachkevitch deemed it obvious that Valerie’s situation was precarious because she “declared herself not to have any resources, domicile nor family, since all ties with home had been severed for months”, and because “this young girl is of such immaturity that she never succeeded in using a contraceptive”. The Judge said “that it is not our task to adopt a position of principle, however respectable it may be, but to examine the concrete precarious situation of a minor.”

When high principles or moral values are regularly put aside in the face of actual demands, they cease to be values in the end. The moral domain is shrinking continuously, but it would be wrong to suppose that the moral vacuum remains unfilled. Like every vacuum its emptiness attracts new forces, new moral standards and values

When high principles or moral values are regularly put aside in the face of actual demands, they cease to be values in the end. The moral domain is shrinking continuously, but it would be wrong to suppose that the moral vacuum remains unfilled. Like every

vacuum its emptiness attracts new forces, new moral standards and values. Judge Dachkevitch may think that he does not adopt any position, but one of the most important principles of the new set of values was mentioned and propagated explicitly in his verdict. It is the right to a successful contraceptive: the right to have intercourse without one of its possible natural consequences — the creation of new life. (Whether one considers fetal life to be human or not, it constitutes new life which was not there before.)

This new and absolute right to a successful contraception, although it is not explicitly mentioned as a right in the lawbooks or the Constitution of any country, the judiciary is upholding and propagating all over the world. It is almost considered as a right which transcends the Constitution. The right to abortion and to damages for wrongful birth is a legal consequence of this right.

Thanks to *Roe* and *Doe*, America became one of the countries with the most liberal abortion practice. The US belongs to a minority group of Western countries which formally allow abortion on demand during the first months of pregnancy. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria and Greece are equally generous in permitting feticide during the first months of pregnancy. Most countries have legalized abortion via an indication law stating that abortion is forbidden, except in a number of specifically indicated circumstances. In Germany and Spain unborn life is constitutionally protected. In France the *Loi Veil* begins with granting legal protection to every human being from conception. Afterwards a limited number of indications are given: exceptional circumstances under which abortion is allowed or will not be prosecuted. The German abortion law provides four indications: a medical one (where the mother’s life is in danger), a eugenic one (abnormalities in the child), a criminological one (rape, incest) and a social one (when the pregnant woman is in severe distress: a precarious social position). Most countries provide more or less the same exceptions. The latter one, however is the one which virtually everywhere

opens the door to an abortion practice which boils down to abortion on demand. Dutch researchers Ketting and Van Praag found that in Germany about 75% of the abortions are carried out for social reasons and probably half of the medical indications are wrongfully prescribed. In Great Britain and the Netherlands, the indications are interpreted very broadly. Often the West European abortion laws provide terms during which the woman must reflect about a possible abortion (three days in Germany, 5 days in the Netherlands). This obligatory period of reflection is sometimes combined with an obligation to seek the advice of several doctors and to compare alternatives.

In the US a similar situation was developing in the years before Roe. California became one of the first states to legalize abortion under certain (medical) indications, when in 1967 Governor Ronald Reagan signed California's Therapeutic Abortion Act. A number of states, such as Georgia in 1968, followed suit. In 1970, however, New York State accepted a law providing abortion on demand during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. Meanwhile in Texas and Georgia legal battles were being fought over abortion. In June 1970 a court in Dallas had to give a verdict (*Roe v Wade*) about a 1948 Texas law, which allowed abortion only if undertaken with the purpose of saving the mother's life, while in Georgia in July 1970 a Court in Atlanta had to do the same (*Doe v Bolton*) about Georgia's abortion law. Both cases were brought before the U.S. supreme Court. Finally, in January 1973 the Federal Supreme Court settled the matter by declaring the Texas and Georgia laws (and all other abortion laws in the different states which adopted an indications approach) unconstitutional. According to the Supreme Court a fetus could not be regarded as a "person" in the sense in which this word is used in the fourteenth amendment of the American Constitution. The court pointed out that this Amendment was accepted in 1868. At that time Aristotle's notion that a fetus did not possess a soul before quickening, was still generally

and scientifically accepted. As a consequence the framers of the Amendment could not possibly have intended to grant any of the rights of a "person" to such a fetus.

The irony of the Court's argument is that the Fourteenth Amendment was accepted in 1868, after the American Civil War, to overturn a Supreme Court decision using a similar argument: the infamous *Dred Scott v Sandford*. In this 1857 decision the US supreme Court had ruled that state laws abolishing slavery were unconstitutional, because when the Constitution had been written in 1787 coloured people were generally considered inferior beings and consequently the framers of the Constitution could not possibly have intended to grant them citizens' rights. Therefore, according to the Court, the word "citizen" in the sense of the Constitution could never apply to a black man. What a state law freeing slaves would do, however was violate the property rights — rights which the Constitution *did* guarantee — of the slave owners.

One hundred years after *Dred Scott* the Supreme Court still applied the same logic. Granting the individual state the possibility to protect a fetus by allowing its elimination only under certain indications would be unconstitutional because it would provide inferior beings with certain rights which would violate the privacy rights of women, which the Constitution *did* guarantee. In March 1973, almost immediately after Roe, the Rhode Island legislature reacted by approving a law which stated that "human life and in fact, a person within the language and meaning of the fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States, commences to exist at the instant of conception." But the law was declared void by the Rhode island courts as it is illegal for a state to accept as legal something the Supreme Court in Washington has declared unconstitutional. The logic of Roe has other implications too: the US Supreme Court's ruling that a state may not restrict abortion on demand, because this is a violation of an essential and constitutionally guaranteed principle (such as the right to privacy) is an

implicit but clear denunciation of the many European nations which legalized abortion via indication laws, as nations violating a basic human right.

Everywhere in the Western world courts have accepted that it is an individuals's right not to be a parent. Today they are increasingly being confronted with the notion of parenthood as a right and infertility as a violation of that right. In the *New York Times* of 1 November 1993, Susan Jacoby, a writer on medical ethics and reproductive issues, elaborates on this topic: "I once interviewed a woman who was enraged because her health insurance company, after paying for two unsuccessful attempts at *in vitro* fertilization, had refused to reimburse her for further infertility treatments. They are depriving me of my right to become a mother, and I am going to sue them."

People are entitled to engage in sexual intercourse without consequences and have claimed and gained the right to destroy a fetus. Nowadays they also consider themselves entitled to an embryo even without engaging in intercourse. New medical technologies, such as fertilising an egg with semen in a test tube, cloning identical extra embryos and storing them in the freezer make it possible to give Grandma a new baby. "I am 48 and deeply regret having no children", says Jacoby. "Yet I am perfectly aware that the career oriented decisions made in my 20's and my early 30's are largely responsible for my childless state. Cloning would certainly get someone like me off the hook. If such a procedure had been available back in the seventies, my then husband and I could have stored a number of future identical babies...Now that I'm older and ready to be a parent, I could take my bundles of joy off the freezer shelf. Because I no longer have a uterus, I would have to rent another woman for the pregnancy. And the baby wouldn't have a father because my ex-husband died some years after our divorce. But why worry? I'd have exactly what I want exactly when it suited me."

Let us suppose that Grandma claims such a pregnancy as a privacy right because she did not want children when

she was younger in order not to burden her professional career. Let us suppose that a doctor refuses to implant her womb with a couple of cloned embryos and Grandma brings the doctor to court. What will the Supreme Court in *Grandma v Doctor* say? We only have to apply Supreme Court logic to the matter to know the outcome of the verdict. The rationale will go like this: As a man can become a father when he is 70 years old, forbidding a woman to become a mother at 70, would be a discrimination against women. As *Planned Parenthood v Casey* recognises, women have a right to be able "to control their reproductive lives". This ability does not only imply the constitutionally guaranteed right to have such an embryo implanted by a doctor when one is old. After all, who could be harmed by that? Not the embryos, for embryos cannot be allowed any legal rights since in 1868 and 1787 they did not have any. Granting them some, would violate the privacy rights of Grandma, which is unconstitutional, because the framers of the Constitution and its Amendments *did* recognise grandmothers as persons and citizens.

Jacoby does not believe in the humaneness of a society that allows the rights of some to "run wild". The State and its judicial apparatus will have to guarantee that the duties of others are dragged along equally wild. Where rights run wild for some, totalitarianism and political inhumanity must be near.

In an article in a leading Belgian judicial publication, Prof Robert Kruithof gave an idea of what lies ahead: "It is in the interests of public health that the number of handicapped people remains as small as possible". The German jurist A. Laufs states: "Unwanted fertility and the birth of diseased and crippled life is being fought against by the medical profession by means of its well worn methods of fertility prevention, prenatal diagnosis and pregnancy termination." If one accepts the idea that the State has an "interest" in keeping down the number of handicapped and sick people, soon also those parents who are still willing to accept a child with

Down's syndrome will be forced to have it eliminated or face the prospect of financial penalties. The welfare state will refuse to subsidize any further medical treatment for the handicapped and the parents who want to keep their handicapped children will have to foot the entire bill themselves. In a similar way euthanasia may be forced upon the sick and the elderly. The state will select which citizens it will allow to exist and for which citizens the health care services may or may not intervene.

"Replacing former natural selection in a responsible manner" is an option to which society is increasingly turning. Selection is also a rule of law but it is the law of the jungle: the survival of the fittest. It is a biological and not a judicial or moral criterion, unless one elevates the imperatives of biological nature into judicial and moral criteria. This is exactly what the Nazis did and what Deep Ecology propagates today. Abortion is the first example of the political and judicial acceptance of a growing biological mentality and a way to replace the former Darwinian natural selection by new technological selection criteria. Selection and elimination are the means which nature employs to organize itself. The ethical development of humanity was a process by which man tried to rid himself of the Darwinian laws of survival. Instead of leaving the sick and elderly behind to die, like animals do (and have to do if their species is to survive), humans *care* for their sick and elderly. The biological disadvantage to the human species of this moral behaviour was neutralized by man's inventiveness and ingenuity. Technology and social organization are means which humanity has at its disposal to strengthen its physical existence notwithstanding its inferior condition to many biologically better adapted forms of life.

Until now the law was the set of rules by which humanity *lifted* selection criteria. It was an instrument in our humanization. Today it has become a set of rules introducing new selection criteria pulling us down to the old biological level. To say that the laws of the human world should lift us above our

biological level is not a moral argument but a rational one. We know rationally, that we are *higher* than animals and that therefore we are entitled to live under the rule of a law that is more than the rule of the biological law of selection and elimination. If we are to live according to biological selection criteria, we do not need the laws of the human world with written statutes approved by legislators and verdicts given by judges. This observation is not a moral but a rational one. Every mother can do what she likes with her fetus when the child is unwanted because she is the strongest party. The law of the strongest is what we have if we do not have laws.

A human law should be *just*. It is not required that a law be moral, but that it be *reasonable*. Jurists have known this for centuries but have forgotten it in our age. Because reason is so important for the law, jurists have developed the theory of Natural Law, which is the set of rules to which human laws must conform in order to be just. Natural Law is exactly the opposite of the law of (biological) Nature. It is called Natural Law to indicate that for Man it is not natural to be merely natural. "Natural Law began with that very nature of human beings that creates the possibility of law: namely that human beings are the only beings who can give reasons over matters of right and wrong. That was the understanding of Aristotle and the American Founders", says the American jurist Hadley Arkes. Natural Law is as the English jurist Richard Hooker wrote in 1593, "the law which human nature knoweth itself in reason universally bound unto which also for that cause may be termed most fitly the law of reason". Edmund Burke stated, "We are all born - high as well as low — in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existing law... by which we are all connected in the eternal frame of the universe, and out of which we cannot stir."

Paul Belien is Director of the Centre for the New Europe in Brussels.

The March of Folly

Stewart Deuchar deplures developments in Education in Switzerland

The American historian Barbara Tuchman wrote a book called *The March of Folly* whose theme was that at different times in history people have perversely, indeed quite madly, pursued policies which were obviously leading to disaster. Something similar is happening in the field of education in many countries of the world, including our own. But perhaps the most striking example is provided by Switzerland.

By this time our own experience in Britain should be enough to convince anybody in his right mind that 'progressive' educational methods are a dismal failure. They fail most particularly those they are supposed to help, namely the less academically gifted. According to progressive theory, traditional education favours the academically gifted and reinforces the hegemony of the capitalist ruling class.

The proponents of progressive education imagine that, by downplaying such things as the acquisition of knowledge, rewriting the curriculum in 'child-centred' terms, and reducing to a minimum all possibilities of failure, the less favoured pupils will emerge as self-confident, rounded individuals well able to hold their own. They choose to believe the siren voices of various dreamers who preach that the best and most progressive way to teach children is to leave them to find things out for themselves. What they fail to learn for themselves is not worth learning anyway. Besides, there is a whole raft of 'politically correct' issues, such as 'equal opportunities' and 'the environment' which are far more important than all that idiotic grammar and punctuation. This curriculum has the

added advantage that the teachers do not have to be educated people themselves. They don't have to teach anything, so they don't need to know anything. What matters is that they should have the right opinions.

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It has taken us several decades in Britain realize this agenda does not work. If you do not teach children to read, the less favoured will not learn to read at all, but will find ingenious ways of disguising their incapacity. They will arrive in the secondary schools in huge numbers incapable of continuing their education in any meaningful way. The best they can hope for is 'remedial' classes to teach them what they should have been taught years ago. This plays havoc with the timetable for the rest of the children who by some miracle have learned to read. Failing to teach children to read in the optimal years of four to seven, far from encouraging the less able,

actually disempowers them. Children who can read, can to some extent direct their own learning. Those who can't, can't.

The Swiss, who have possibly the best schools in Europe, seem determined to replay our experience. Ideology, of course, is at the back of it. Marxism may have been a disaster behind the Iron Curtain, but something remarkably like it reigns supreme in the minds of the intelligentsia, especially in Canton Zurich.

As in England, the enthusiasts for progressive education in Switzerland impose their reforms on the schools by virtue of their "Long March Through the Institutions", without bothering to secure any kind of democratic mandate. In this they are greatly helped by the Swiss media, which seems to be almost unanimously in thrall to the left and the drug liberalisation lobby.

However, these reforms are opposed by a remarkable organisation called Verein zur Förderung der Psychologischen Menschenkenntnis (VPM), which is an independent voluntary association of mainly professional people trying to uphold proven values. In daring to oppose the school reforms, the legalisation of drugs and other dubious proposals, VPM has brought down on its head a storm of a ferocity which is truly shocking.

To give an example, a teacher who had worked for some time in a supply role in a certain school earned such a high opinion with the board of governors that he was offered a long term supply position. His achievement was the more remarkable because his wife had been dying of leukaemia. After her death the representatives of the school

board called him in. They had on the table in front of them the issue of the local paper giving the report of the funeral. They told him brusquely that since the list of mourners included a number of people known to belong to VPM they would withdraw the offer of the post.

This degree of inhumanity towards teachers who have any connection with VPM is typical. The number of teachers actually sacked on trumped up charges is probably more than a hundred so far, but there are countless more whose applications have been turned down, presumably on grounds of connection with VPM. Education officials and some politicians of the left have openly expressed the aim of 'cleansing' the whole cantonal education system of VPM teachers, even though this contravenes rights of association enshrined in the Swiss federal constitution.

The only thing that can be held against any of these teachers is that they are connected with VPM, but their real sin, of course, is that they are conscientious teachers who want to teach the children properly. The technique for getting rid of VPM teachers is by now well refined. The first move, in the absence of any serious accusations, is to bring up a number of minor incidents. These are of mind-boggling triviality, but no matter, anything will serve. The teacher is then confronted with these accusations, and at the same time it is hinted that if he or she were to disown VPM, things would be easier in future. The teacher knows that this last is a trap. If he does disown VPM, that will make no difference to the outcome. Naturally, the teacher denies the accusations. This does not prevent an official report being lodged with the School Board itemising the accusations and implying that the teacher has admitted guilt.

At the same time pressure is brought to bear on the teacher in other ways. Trouble is stirred up among the pupils and the colleagues. Hate meetings are held and leaflets are distributed in the streets. The teacher defends himself, but this is taken as further proof of 'obstinacy', 'pugnacity', 'inability to compromise and accept criticism', 'in-

ability to work as a team' and other well-tried accusations. The last straw is to accuse him of being 'remote-controlled' by VPM.

There have been two cases of witch hunts of this kind which became notorious because the outcomes turned on public elections. (Many Swiss teachers hold their jobs by virtue of being publicly re-elected every so often.) One of these teachers was Frau Franziska Freihofer who for ten years had been singled out for special praise not only by parents, school authorities, inspec-

“What should the teacher do who sees clearly that nothing but harm will come to the children, for whose future he feels responsible, from the politically motivated school ‘reforms’?”

tors and pupils, but also by her colleagues, who elected her to represent them on important professional bodies. But when her membership of VPM became known, trouble started. For a full eighteen months she suffered all manner of harassment and deliberate humiliation, during which she continued to carry out her duties with exemplary patience and commitment. For a matter of weeks there was an agent provocateur sitting in her class trying to find something to hold against her. She answered all charges against her quietly but firmly. In the end her opponents, backed by the full weight of the Zurich Directorate of Education and a fortissimo media campaign, won the election. Another VPM teacher at the same school, Frau Clerc was deselected at the same time.

The case of Frau Pampaluchi Kupfer was different, but had the same outcome. Her sin was to state her opinion, in a public gathering completely unconnected with her school, that young people should be honestly told about the dangers of drugs. Her school prin-

icipal told her that he would make things difficult for her if she continued to express her opinion on the dangers of drugs and to oppose drug liberalisation. He himself supports the so-called 'drug prevention strategy', which aims to lead children and young people towards an understanding of the right ways to use drugs, and which does not take a clear stand against drug abuse. She challenged his right to make such threats. His answer was to launch a vicious personal campaign against her. She took him to court. The court case became mysteriously bogged down. The witch hunt reached new heights of hysteria and she lost the election. I will gladly send reports in English of these two cases to anybody interested.

VPM has brought out a book called "Ausgegrenzt" (Excluded) which describes thirty-five such cases. It makes horrifying reading. It is clear that this witch-hunt against members of VPM has created an atmosphere of fear and hatred similar to what used to go on behind the Iron Curtain. Even teachers who have nothing whatever to do with VPM, but who may have reservations about aspects of the proposals for school 'reform', dare not express their objections. They have seen only too clearly what has happened to those who have done so. How has this come about in Switzerland, of all places? It is a hard question to answer.

Does the answer lie in the character of VPM itself? Having ploughed through masses of VPM material as well as articles and books critical of it, I can see that not everybody would necessarily agree with VPM in everything, but this does not account for the intolerance and virulence of its detractors. VPM members are not bigots or fundamentalists. They are ready to discuss any matter on its merits. They are not opposed to everything modern, quite the contrary, but they feel bound to take a critical view of many recent social trends, like drug liberalisation. They uphold individual responsibility.

In all this they could surely be said to be typical of the sort of people who read the *Salisbury Review*. Their remarkable loyalty to VPM, even under extremes of persecution, is based on the

conviction that VPM's principles and policies, thrashed out by highly intelligent people in a number of disciplines, and proved in practice over many years, are basically right. They could only be persuaded to modify their convictions by sound arguments, not by blackmail.

In the words of one of them, "What should the teacher do who sees clearly that nothing but harm will come to the children, for whose future he feels responsible, from the politically motivated school 'reforms'? Should he, for selfish reasons, keep silent?"

This exposes the heart of the whole matter. If the proposed school 'reforms' were motivated by educational considerations, then there would be the possibility of rational discussion, and eventually some kind of compromise. The results would be measurable in terms of generally accepted educational standards.

But the post-modernists behind all these destructive movements reject the generally accepted educational standards. They aim to overturn, not just the school system, but the whole of society. Naturally, there is no common ground between these people and VPM.

Even in political terms, the 'reform' movements are not based on reasoned arguments and well researched data. They are a product of the *Zeitgeist*, the post-modernist mania for destroying existing institutions and values indiscriminately, as an expression of envy and hatred, with no clear idea of what to put in their place.

This nihilistic mood must to some extent explain the anti-VPM campaign in the media. The press evidently at some point came to a collective decision to mount an all-out attack on VPM, using anything, however trivial or improbable, which might do damage. An example of this is a booklet which a kindergarten teacher prepared for her own charges (not for general publication, and without reference to VPM) in which she set out some guidelines for cleanliness, such as that children should wash their hands after playing in sand or going to the toilet. This was preposterously blown up by the media. VPM is alleged to 'terrorise' young children with its 'hysterical

concern with hygiene'. Why should the media be playing this extraordinary game? The answer to this riddle must remain shrouded in mystery. One possible reason is political — the editors are all left-liberals, making no secret of their support for drug liberalisation and school 'reform'. How far they may be influenced by the drug money sloshing about is something nobody can even guess at.

The other puzzling and very worrying aspect of these cases is the readiness of fellow teachers to believe these horror stories about VPM without bothering to check the facts. One week a teacher is a respected and valued member of staff, praised unreservedly by parents, colleagues, inspectors and school authorities, and the next week, after some implausible horror story in the media, the same teacher is treated by nearly all these people — except the parents, who normally manage to retain a measure of sanity — as some kind of sub-human species. Inspectors who have praised the teacher in extravagant terms for years suddenly without a blush see fit to raise a whole string of clearly fabricated criticisms. Blatant lies are an accepted part of the campaign.

One VPM teacher who made a perfectly ordinary comment in a staff meeting was rewarded with, 'What that woman blathers is of no concern here. We want nothing to do with her!' from one of her male colleagues. This drew a hearty round of applause.

In another case, a teacher was dismissed by her School Board. She appealed to higher authority. Since the School Board had nothing whatsoever of which to accuse her (apart from her connection with VPM, which was of course the real reason, but would not have looked very well on an official document), they induced some of her teacher colleagues to write letters to the tribunal alleging that the accused teacher had generated 'an atmosphere of fear in the staff room. We feel we are being watched all the time. Whenever she is on the telephone we are sure that she is reporting on us to her bosses in VPM. There is an intangible air of menace in the staff room, hard to describe, but extremely oppressive'. The

sheer cynicism in all this is almost beyond belief. True, there was an air of menace in the staff room, but it was generated by the Board itself and the teachers who were prepared to play along with it. In this case the tribunal upheld the teacher's appeal, which must have needed a rare degree of courage.

Also, there are many cases where the other teachers have incited the pupils to misbehave in the VPM teachers' classes. One grammar school teacher who had taught a class happily for several months, 'overnight' found that the class had become ungovernable and uninterested in any work. (Anybody who thinks that Swiss schoolchildren are all as good as gold all the time would find 'Ausgegrenzt' something of an eye-opener). When this teacher said, 'What's got into you? Let's talk this over!' They trotted out all the standard accusations against VPM. His teaching was 'rigid, authoritarian, doctrinaire, etc. etc.' straight out of the totally unfounded articles in the press. Clearly, another teacher had put them up to it.

In another distressing case, 'It later came out that one of the other teachers had several times told my class about VPM, which they found immensely amusing.' In yet another case, a teacher who had left her classroom through a French window on an errand, found herself locked out in the rain by her pupils and pleaded in vain with them to let her in. They had been egged on by other teachers.

Of all the mean tricks which one person could play on another, inciting children to misbehave in somebody's class must surely rank among the most despicable. For teachers to do so is almost unbelievable.

I raised this matter of the strange behaviour of the teachers with some Swiss friends, and this is what they said:

Among Swiss teachers there is an atmosphere of fear which deprives them of their right to freedom of opinion, - fear of the autocratic officials who run the education system. The battle lines are clearly and publicly drawn. Out of a sense of concern and responsibility, teachers who take continuation courses with VPM try to hold open discussions

about the school reforms, and to express justified criticisms. In answer, the Directorate of Education of Canton Zurich has launched all-out war against these teachers. Battle rages on various fronts.

In a letter of 11th November 1992 Dr Gilgen, the Director of Education, wrote a completely unlawful letter to all school administrators warning them against VPM teachers. He made it clear that if the recipients did not conform to this guidance they would be considered to be out of line.

In a newspaper interview, this same Director of Education cited VPM as 'the biggest personnel problem in Zurich schools'. Teachers taking VPM continuation courses account for only about ninety of the six thousand teachers in the cantonal schools.

By means of illegally compiled lists of people taking part in VPM courses or meetings, the Directorate of Education, with the help and protection of the media, has initiated a veritable pogrom against VPM members. Locally, school officials are secretly advised on how best to get rid of VPM teachers.

In the Zurich Pestalozzianum, trainee teachers are indoctrinated against VPM and its members. Horror stories are circulated by left wing pressure groups and by the media.

The shameful and cowardly silence of teacher colleagues must be seen against this background. Certainly many of them do not approve of the witch hunts against colleagues whom many have known for a long time, yet it is only in very rare cases that anybody openly protests. The few that do risk abuse. Even somebody who puts carefully worded questions will soon be rendered dumb by accusations of being a VPM member or sympathiser. There are well attested cases of colleagues who only dare say privately that they disapprove of the machinations of the Directorate of Education, but they have to keep quiet as they have families.

The fact that the teacher colleagues keep silent is the result of an unparalleled reign of mental terror, such as one could only expect to find in totalitarian countries.

In view of all this, and the large

number of teachers who have been deprived of their livelihoods, it might be thought surprising that VPM manages to survive at all. If there had been anything in the accusations levelled at VPM, it would surely have succumbed years ago. Its survival is testimony to the essential rightness of its cause.

Besides, all is not gloom and doom; there is the occasional victory for reason and common sense. Recently a kindergarten teacher had worked with complete, indeed 'outstanding', success for many years both in Zurich and in other Cantons, but the Zurich authorities refused to renew her certificate of competence, not because of any criticism of her work with the children, but on account of alleged differences which had supposedly arisen between her and her official superior over interpretation of new Guidelines introduced by the Directorate of Education. She challenged the authorities at every level up to the Zurich Governing Council, where she lost once again. There was only one more chance —

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the Federal Supreme Court.

Her lawyer pleaded that the Guidelines do not have the force of law, and that any disagreement over the Guidelines could not possibly justify what would in effect be dismissal. A kindergarten teacher was rightly expected to do her work competently and nobody disputed that the teacher fulfilled her obligations there. It was no part of the duties of a kindergarten teacher that she should be in unquestioning agreement with everything her superiors might think. To dismiss a teacher on such grounds was to introduce an en-

tirely new and undesirable precedent. If children are to be encouraged to think and decide for themselves, then there has to be room for the teacher, within reason, to do the same, otherwise the aims of education are frustrated.

This argument prevailed. After months of deliberation, the Supreme Court found as below:

Lausanne, 17th August 1994 The Case of (teacher's name) appealing against the Zurich Education Council and the Zurich Governing Council, Concerning Article 4 BV (definitive authorization of a kindergarten teacher). [This article of the Federal Constitution obliges the state and its officials to treat all citizens according to the law. Trs]

Decided:

1. The appeal, so far as it applies, is upheld, and the decision of the Governing Council of Canton Zurich of 5th January 1994 is set aside.
2. No costs to be assigned.
3. Canton Zurich to compensate the appellant in the sum of two thousand francs towards cost of the appeal.
4. This decision to be conveyed in writing to the appellant, the Zurich Governing Council and the Zurich Directorate of Education.

This important decision has been ignored by the media in Zurich, and seems to have had no effect in persuading the Education Ministry to modify its discriminatory activities. On the contrary, things have become worse rather than better. Folly marches on!

This battle is not something we in Britain can ignore. We live in the global village. We have the same problems, at least to some extent, at home. The price of liberty — not to mention sanity, decency, honesty and moderation — is eternal vigilance. The VPM teachers deserve our full support. There is reason to believe that the Swiss authorities are not insensitive to criticism from abroad.

***Stewart Deuchar is Vice
Chairman of the Campaign for
Real Education.***

Solzhenitsyn's Warning

Otto Scott looks at Solzhenitsyn's career on the occasion of his return to Russia

The figure of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn looms among the giants. In centuries to come historians will use Solzhenitsyn as a human yardstick against which others in these times will be measured. These reflections come to mind in part because he has now departed from the United States to his native land, and in anticipation of comments by others.

He arrived in the US twenty years ago. His reception there — especially among politicians, intellectuals and journalists — reflected their prejudices and fears as accurately as so many magic mirrors. He arrived, however, with a great and powerful current of world opinion behind him, aroused by his heroic struggle against a huge and sinister government.

The nature of that struggle is, even now, not widely understood. He was born “in an atmosphere of chaos and suffering” in the midst of the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, which their crimes quickly escalated into a civil war. His young father, 27, had died six months earlier in a hunting accident. His mother, who delivered him on 11 December 1918 at his uncle's fashionable villa in Kislovodsk, had been gently reared in a society the revolution would ruthlessly erase.

Official Outcasts

His boyhood was one of abject poverty relieved only by an extended family whose members shared his expense with his mother. His once-wealthy grandfather, stripped of his estate, left him only a Ukrainian accent. His mother Taissia, 23 when Aleksander was born, worked when she could as a secretary-typist. “As the daughter of a wealthy landowner [although her

inheritance had been confiscated and she was now as penniless as anyone else], she was automatically suspect. The official policy was not to employ such people at all if it could be avoided, or else to assign them to the most menial, poorly paid and insecure positions possible. On one occasion she asked her son to help her bury his father's three medals, lest it be discovered that he had been an officer during the first World War... The category of ‘officer’ would have cut her off irrevocably not only from work but also from the all-important ration card.”

When Taissia managed to land a decent job, someone informed on her background. As a consequence she was dismissed and “her papers were officially marked to fix her lowly status, which meant that she was automatically barred from the large number of well-paid and reserved jobs that had been spawned by the post-revolutionary bureaucracy, together with access to the privileged food and clothing supplies that usually went with them, and was also looked upon with suspicion by employers in the non-reserved sectors... was automatically disqualified from [even] applying for an officially controlled room or flat, which, since 90 percent of the housing sector had been nationalized, excluded her from normal accommodation.”

“Furthermore there was a built-in catch, in that rents in the tiny private sector were incomparably higher... With great difficulty [she] found a rickety, weather-boarded shack in a narrow cul-de-sac [that] consisted of a single large room and scullery, measuring about twelve feet by nine. with

loose boards and a leaky tin roof through which the wind whistled in winter and the water dripped when it rained or snowed. There was no drainage or plumbing. Water had to be fetched from a stand pipe about 150 yards away, and all slops had to be carried out and emptied by hand. The shack was one of about half a dozen surrounding a tumble-down yard. which had rubble heaped in the corners and was crisscrossed by washing lines strung between a handful of stunted trees. Taissia and Solzhenitsyn lived there for twelve years, from 1924 [when he was 6] to 1936 [when he was 18].”

“Taissia worked long hours. At some point her jobs became more regular, but often involved evening conferences, which meant her housework was done very late at night. The laundry had to be boiled at a tiny Primus stove; Solzhenitsyn regularly fell asleep to the sound of his mother scrubbing and splashing at their zinc tub... An internal passport of this period tells the whole story. Gone is the plump, slightly mocking face of the well-to-do young lady with an ostrich feather in her hat. In its place we find the lined and careworn face of an exhausted drudge, the forehead corrugated, the brows knitted, the lips tightly compressed. Her hair (now streaked with grey) badly cut... her entire expression suffused with pain and defeat. In less than ten years she had aged twenty.”

Boyhood & School

Solzhenitsyn's family often discussed the civil war and the fate of its members in his presence. He knew all about family friends who had been arrested or killed, of his uncle Roman's

temporary detention and death sentence and Irina's bold intervention, of the confiscation of his grandfather's estate, the searches and reprisals in Kislovodsk. "Everyone, of course, was anti-Bolshevik in the circle in which I grew up," he said later. "The political, religious and social upbringing I received at home differed tremendously from the surrounding Soviet world. And for that reason I was slow in coming to terms with the Soviet world."

On the one hand they used to tell me everything at home, and on the other hand they used to work on our minds at school. Those were militant times, not like today... And we used to listen with such wide eyes to the exploits of the Reds, wave flags, beat drums, blow trumpets... 'We'll complete the Revolution...' And so this collision between two worlds gave birth to such social tensions within me that it somehow defined the path I was to follow for the rest of my life....

One of the silent lessons was that he had to keep family secrets, or the family would suffer terrible penalties. The ability to keep secrets, however valuable in Russian society, is not one widely respected in the United States. American society traditionally talked a lot — until recent years. Here the differences between family talk and school talk — official talk, so to speak — has only recently loomed in American lives. The pressure upon school children to accept certain social arguments in favour of equality as true despite the evidence of their senses — and to protect conversations at home — is relatively recent. So, for that matter, are the heavy efforts of educators to insist on knowing the intimate secrets of family life for governmental purposes, like the Communist educators.

One early result of the Communist control of all the schools and the abolition of all private education was the deliberate obliteration of history and its absorption, in propaganda form, into a new subject called Social Science. Examinations were also abolished — at first. When that proved impractical shortly after Solzhenitsyn arrived in school, "brigades" were introduced. In this system, 7 to 10 pupils were formed to study together and pass

examinations collectively. This led to "complete idling," Solzhenitsyn said later, "as in American schools today."

Party control in the Soviet system extended into every facet of life and activity. Sports clubs, trade unions, schools, social clubs, cultural groups all became subject to the Party cadre. Solzhenitsyn's family kept him, at first, aloof. "But at the age of 10 he had the cross ripped from his neck by jeering Pioneers and for over a year was held up to ridicule. With his mother an official social outcast, Solzhenitsyn was, as a boy, exposed to students whose parents had an officially superior status. Most of the members of the Young Pioneers and Komsomol movements, at least in Rostov, were Jewish children, whose parents had been systematically discriminated against under the tsarist regime. They were naturally enthusiastic about the new order, but the fact of their hostility to Solzhenitsyn's cross endowed their hostility with a certain ambiguity."

The Young Pioneer

At the age of 12 the pressures of school and a growing independence toward his mother combined to induce Solzhenitsyn to join the Young Pioneers. Shortly afterward, he witnessed "a routine scuffle between two boys in his class, Valeri Nikolsky and Dimitri Shitelman, in the course of which they exchanged insults and Nikolsky called Shitelman a 'Rusky slob.' Solzhenitsyn, sitting nearby, witnessed the scene, but when Shitelman accused Nikolsky of anti-Semitism, Solzhenitsyn refused to support him, on the grounds that everybody has the right to say what he likes."

"After this he, too, was accused of anti-Semitism and arraigned before a special meeting of the Young Pioneers." He was exonerated, but such incidents were not unusual. Solzhenitsyn later described one in *The First Circle*. There seems little reason to doubt that when anti-Semitic, anti-minority and anti-Christian incidents appeared later in the US media that they must have reminded Solzhenitsyn of life in the USSR.

Another lasting impression was iron poverty. Years later when a French

interviewer asked, "What sensations are rekindled in your mind when you think of your childhood?" He replied:

Hardship. I'm afraid the word won't mean much to you for all your experience with the war and the Nazis, especially as it doesn't apply to my childhood alone. Things were no better when I became an adult. *Up to the age of 40* [emphasis added] I knew nothing but a kind of dignified destitution. From the end of 1918, when I was born, until 1941, I didn't know what a house was. We lived in huts which were constantly assailed by the cold. Never enough fuel to keep us warm. No water in the room where we lived - we had to go out and fetch it some distance away. A pair of shoes or a suit of clothes had to last for several years. As for the food, don't mention it. After the starvation of the 1930s, ordinary shortages were a minor evil. In some mysterious way, all these things struck as more or less normal.

The 1930s to which he referred were, of course, the period of the government-ordered famine. At a time when unemployed American workers were being told that everyone in the Soviet Union had a job, free health care and ridiculously low rents, Stalin undertook to suppress peasant resistance by seizing all the food in a vast area for sale abroad, forcing millions into an untimely and agonizing death. "It was an event unique in the annals of Europe, the greatest catastrophe of modern times apart from the Nazi Holocaust, to which it fully bears comparison." Estimates of the Soviet citizens who died vary from the figure of three and a half million submitted to Stalin by the OGPU at the time to an estimate of five to six million computed by a League of Nations report in 1946. An almost equal number were deported to Siberia."

Much of this was, amazingly, hidden from the world at the time. The explanations for this unprecedented silence about an enormous, deliberate, governmentally-ordered tragedy remain, even in retrospect, astonishing. Stalin, when queried by associates (an increasingly rare occurrence) blamed counter-revolutionaries, hoarders, class-enemies and "overzealous" underlings. Others later credited the silence of the world at the time to the total Party control of the press, the

deliberate break with foreign sources of information and official secrecy.

In reality Stalin's manufactured famine was not as well protected from world view as all that: a vast catastrophe cannot, really, be completely hidden. What really occurred was that an unexpected crisis in the West, called The Depression, created a wave of distress among the people and disillusion among the intellectuals.

The Soviet Myth

The USSR, which was largely ignored during the "roaring" Twenties, became a propaganda weapon with which to beat the leaders of the West for allowing their economies seemingly to collapse. Confronted with the paradox of idle factories and millions unable to find jobs, the claim of the Soviets to have eliminated both suddenly took on the allure of a distant Paradise. All the promises of Marxism — equality, health care, jobs for all, secure incomes, new "progressive" education, an end to racism — promises never attained on earth at any time, were accepted as true by a significant number of western artists, writers, educators and even clergymen.

What people *want* to believe, they will. Facts were not allowed to interfere with the credulity of what Paul Hollander later called the *Political Pilgrims*. Their enthusiasm welled in the Thirties, and their praises of the Soviet system in the Thirties contrasted with their criticisms of their own cultures and governments at home. Newspaper correspondents in Moscow faced an interesting dilemma. The soviet censorship not only blue-pencilled all negative facts they reported, it had them deported if they did not learn their lesson quickly. Meanwhile their editors at home, fearful of alienating powerful groups, would not print criticisms of the Soviet Union. As a result, the myth fed upon itself beyond the dreams of even the commissars — and the great Famine went largely unreported except by exiles to whom nobody "of importance" would listen. When the USSR became an ally in World War II, the myth swelled enormously.

With so much complicity in the propaganda, it is no surprise that even today it

is seldom mentioned that virtually all our correspondents stationed in Moscow connived with the commissars to keep their dread secrets. Prominent among these was Walter Duranty, the correspondent of the highly respected *New York Times*, whose dispatches denied that starvation existed anywhere in the Soviet Union. He set the tone, and almost all the rest followed. As a consequence, western correspondents received the privileges of interviews in the Kremlin, spacious apartments, private schools for their children, access to the "foreign" shops with their abundant food, clothing and delicacies, and a generous overseas salary in a land where their money could buy almost anything — or anyone.

The *Political Pilgrims* that Hollander later described did not, of course, see the famine areas: they saw "model" kindergartens and staged tourist areas in and around Moscow. Solzhenitsyn as a boy was in a provincial city and we can only speculate on how many Westerners he saw. But Soviet citizens were incessantly told by *Pravda* and other publications, in school and in other areas, how highly the great ones of the West held the USSR and its great revolutionary accomplishments.

Later, as a member of the Komsomol, the young people's auxiliary of the Party, Solzhenitsyn, by then (at least outwardly) an ardent young Communist, was accepted in the summer of 1939 as an external student at the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History (MIFLI) in Moscow, the top school for humanities in the country. Solzhenitsyn's chosen major was literature. He was 20, already married, and a classic provincial. His expressed belief in Marxist-Leninism had, by the late 1930s, grown anachronistic. In reality, Solzhenitsyn and his closest friends were anti-Stalinists, and dreamed together of a better society. But they did not realize the depth of the precipice that surrounded them.

According to General Volkognov, head of the parliamentary commission on rehabilitation, "from 1929 to 1953... 21.5 million people were repressed. Of these a third were shot, the rest sentenced to imprisonment where

many also died." These figures did not include famine victims and deported ethnic groups.

Young Adulthood

In June 1941 Solzhenitsyn received a degree in physics and mathematics at the University of Rostov, and sat for his second year examinations at MIFLI. Although his degree would have entitled him to more, his intention was to be a provincial schoolmaster, and to write on the side — in secret. He had learned what every real writer learns: that one must slave a long time on one's own to achieve not only fluency, but the courage to tell the world how it looks to you. The second of these attainments is so rare that only the bravest achieve it.

War & Prison

The war intervened on 22 June 1941. Solzhenitsyn managed, eventually, to reach the front lines, became an officer and saw the Soviet army at both its best and its worst, and reached the rank of Captain. On 9th February 1945, in the closing months of the war, he was ordered to report to the office of Brigadier General Travkin. As he later described in *The Gulag Archipelego*, he was arrested there because of comments about Stalin he had exchanged with an old school friend stationed on the First Ukrainian Front. The world knows almost all the rest from his writings.

It knows how he was sentenced to eight years, introduced to the camps, to the humiliations not only universally imposed upon prisoners, but their special varieties in the Soviet Union under Stalin. How he first tried to conform and became a trusty, until his sense of honour rescued him. How he manoeuvred his degree in physics to join Soviet research groups in The First Circle, where he worked on some genuinely interesting scientific projects. After several years his resistance to authoritarianism became evident, and he was transferred to a labour camp where he completed his education as a man. "Ekibastuz was part of a large complex of labour camps based in Dzhzhazgan, in the semiarid steppes of Kazakhstan in South Central Asia — not quite Siberia, but almost."

By then Solzhenitsyn was a veteran Zek (convict). He had learned, in the course of the years, a most valuable lesson: that “surviving at any price was a sure path to collaboration with the authorities, corruption and spiritual death in exchange for material comforts.” In the camp Solzhenitsyn became a brigade (work) leader and revelled in the freedom of speech between men who had lost everything. He also came to see the humbling of his pride as beneficial, and to feel sympathy for others. Then he fell sick.

The diagnosis was cancer. An operation was performed by a prison physician, and took about a half hour under local anaesthetic. He had time, while convalescing in the prison hospital, to reflect upon what he had learned. “as the years go by,” he wrote later, “your heart and your hide grow armour-plated... Your eyes do not light up with joy over good news, or darken with sorrow... The rule of your life is now this: having found, do not rejoice, having lost, do not weep.”

That was stoicism, and it was not enough. What finally moved him in mysterious ways was a visit by Dr. Boris Kornfeld, another prisoner, who came and sat on his bed. Kornfeld had converted from Judaism to Christianity in prison: he told Solzhenitsyn about it. In his theory there was no punishment in life that had not been preceded by a crime. “Superficially it may seem to have nothing to do with what we are really guilty of. But if we examine our lives and think deeply about ourselves, we will always track down the crime for which we are being punished.”

“The following morning Solzhenitsyn was awakened by the sound of hurrying feet and a tramping in the corridor. Kornfeld’s body was being hurried to the operating theatre — during the night his skull had been cracked by a plasterer’s hammer. The operation was unsuccessful; the body was placed in the morgue adjoining the room where Solzhenitsyn slept alone. It was then that Kornfeld’s ominous last words returned to him with new meaning.”

That experience carried Solzhenitsyn to maturity.

What the World Knows

All that followed — Solzhenitsyn’s release “under lifetime exile,” his period as a schoolteacher, his writing, his rise to official favour under Krushchev and his time as a member of the Writer’s Union, his gradual estrangement from the Party and his struggle with the Soviet Government — is well-known. There have been some remarkably skilled and interesting studies made of him since; of his books, plays and poems and the unprecedented way they altered the world’s view of the USSR.

Many have since stepped forward to take — and to receive — credit for the intellectual collapse of the Soviet Union. Some have deserved great honour. One thinks of Robert Conquest and, later, of Paul Hollander, and of people like Abraham Shifrin’s 1980 *The First Guidebook to Prisons and Concentration Camps of the Soviet Union*; of Terence Des Pres, author of *An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* and Nadezhda Mandelstam and her two classic books, *Hope Against Hope* and *Hope Abandoned*, of Czeslaw Milosz and his *Captive Mind* among others. There was also, through the years, a long, pitiable train of refugees and survivors, witnesses of evil who were dismissed out of hand, branded as unreliable for “emotional” reasons by persons still famous among us, still respected, still spared the reminder of their own words; their heartless behaviour.

The great and obvious fact behind the silence of the West is that people on our side of the world and in our country knew of the brutalities of the Soviet régime — and did not care.

The Significance of Solzhenitsyn

It was Solzhenitsyn who cracked the hypocrisy of the world. It was his pen that convinced France that only suicides should embrace the Soviet system. Once the New York “intellectuals” (who were uniquely unmoved) could no longer take their cues from Paris, their voices dwindled into disjointed observations and, finally, silence.

The U.S. media, notorious for its soft coverage of realities in the USSR, rushed to smother Solzhenitsyn’s rev-

elations by political coverage, by distractions in the Middle East, by new troubles, by elections — by noise. But the great Soviet Union lost its global allure. The crimes Solzhenitsyn described by the testimony of witnesses proved more than even our multivoiced media could smother.

Now Solzhenitsyn’s *Red Wheel* is finished. His one immense volume, of which all that has been published are mere sections, is complete. David Remnick described how Solzhenitsyn worked away in his New Hampshire studio these last twenty years attended by his wife, secretary and children in isolation almost as thick as that which surrounded him during his last years in Russia, hated by the Establishment and feared by the government here as he was once in his native land.

Remnick’s account, published improbably by the still deeply socialist *New Yorker* is a brilliant personality piece that tells us much about the surface man and his surroundings; the uncertain reception he will receive in Russia, where his stature diminishes so many others in a society so jealous that it once almost destroyed every superior individual within its borders.

Remnick’s account makes it clear that Solzhenitsyn was, always, only a solitary presence in our midst. One who worked amid us as he once worked alone in a forest, intent upon the task of describing, from inception to finale, the great Red Wheel of the revolution that moved from 1912 to the heights, and to its slow and painful disgrace today. Not fictionally, but from the record, with only names changed to spare the sensibilities of persons related to those described.

Nobody, until this account, seems to have realized what *The Red Wheel* means. From the time of his Harvard Address, when his observations of our weaknesses were voiced, until today, Solzhenitsyn has maintained a silence beyond the Russian Orthodox community. He told us at Harvard that we are following Russia, circa 1905. That the Russian past is our future. The people who preach tolerance and freedom of speech could not bear that message. They could not abide, could not absorb that warning. A man from the future

arrived, and they mistook him for the past.

The media exploded in sarcasm. George Steiner attacked him for being religious — in the name of tolerance. The intellectual reaction was similar to that which greeted Stalin's daughter, whose photograph appeared on the cover of *Esquire* magazine with a painted moustache. The KGB, which had first floated the rumour that Solzhenitsyn is a Jew and then that he is an anti-Semite, managed to convince many of both.

While petty, mean-spirited gibes

rained, Solzhenitsyn toiled. The results exceed Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*. The scope of the Marxist revolution, its cast of characters, its incidents and fallacies — above all its attempt to destroy the entire Christian civilization — is laid completely bare for future centuries to read, to learn — and to beware. Never has so vast an experiment been so completely described from its life.

It is ironic that Solzhenitsyn completed this immortal task at a time when our leaders are promising to end poverty, insecurity, to end health wor-

ries, to ensure gainful employment for all, to abolish inequality and racism, to educate everyone to their full potential and to guarantee prosperity. Where has the world heard this before? In *The Red Wheel*, listen to the lesson imbedded in its account of how Russia was led into the pits of Marxism: "that surviving at any price is a sure path to collaboration with authorities, corruption and spiritual death..."

This article first appeared in the June 1994 edition of Otto Scott's 'Compass'.

Smoked Out

Chris Tame thinks the persecution of smokers has wider implications

The world is now filled with anti-smokers. I am not a smoker, nor would I describe myself as a pro-smoker but I don't care if people smoke or not. What I most definitely am is someone who doesn't care for anti-smoking. Most smokers are also anti-anti-smokers as well, for obvious reasons (although as I shall later explain, not all smokers are this logical). What I want to explain here is why non-smokers should also be anti-anti-smokers. Perhaps I will even persuade some anti-smokers to abandon their anti-social habit.

Don't Give in to Revenge

Not so long ago, the right of smokers to smoke, unmolested either by excessive legal restrictions or by clamours for heavy taxation, was unquestioned. Smokers were simply too numerous for politicians to upset them. Few smokers pretended, either to themselves or to anybody else, that they smoked for any other reason but that they liked it, nor did many smokers feel that they needed to apologise for their habit. That smokers' "rights" might quite soon be something that would be spoken of as needing to be "defended" would have seemed very

far-fetched, both to smokers and to non-smokers. That the world of politics — traditionally an activity practised most secretly and most intensely in those legendary "smoke-filled rooms" — would in a few short years suddenly turn upon smokers and start attacking them would have seemed absurd.

Perhaps smokers allowed an element of political complacency to infect their attitude towards non-smokers, and perhaps some anti-smokers are motivated by revenge. The bitter memory of all those smoke-filled rooms, railway station waiting rooms, doctor's surgeries, and restaurants, that a couple of decades ago might have been a source of genuine torment, are now causing a few of the tormented non-smokers of yesteryear to hit back with all the fury of those only recently released from their torment.

Non-smokers should not feel inclined to give in to revenge. Because the rights of non-smokers may in the past have been insufficiently respected is no excuse for trampling on the rights of smokers now. Two wrongs don't make a right. If non-smokers' rights were slighted in the past, this is not

because smokers were in the past treated too well. The truth is that well-established routines for enabling the rights both of smokers and non-smokers were insufficiently practised. These methods (such as separate areas for both smokers and non-smokers) should perhaps have been used then more, and they should be used now. Smokers should have been kinder to non-smokers, more polite and more sensitive. It is the non-smokers who should now be more tolerant and respectful.

Smokers Now Know the Case Against Smoking

The obvious anti-smoking reply to such an appeal for courtesy is that a smoker should stop for his own good, but smokers have been told this message many times. There is perhaps room for reasonable doubt about just how much people had been told of the allegedly harmful consequences of smoking in about 1925. Legal dispute along such lines rages now. There isn't any reason to think that the average smoker is unaware of the majority view that smoking is harmful to health. Every tobacco advertisement and cigarette packet carry a compulsory health warning, so

those who continue to smoke evidently do so because either they disagree with these warnings and consider the health dangers of smoking to be exaggerated, or else they don't care; they like smoking and are willing to pay whatever turns out to be the price.

I understand the health arguments about smoking, and I don't like smoking at close quarters. I understand the impulse to punish a few of the more disrespectful of such people; but to torment all smokers, just because of the misbehaviour of some smokers in the past and a tiny rump of people who still use it to be anti-social, is to allow the pendulum to swing too far in the other direction.

Why Make a Fuss About Smoking?

There are a thousand things that common decency obliges people to think, a thousand "positions" which good people should in some way "support". Becoming an anti-anti-smoker suggests some degree of active enthusiasm for such organisations as FOREST (the Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco — Britain's principal anti-anti-smoking organisation). Why, in a world of so many woes, should anti-smoking be considered other than at the very bottom? A few fanatics spend their lives harassing smokers, but is it really worth making a fuss, when there are famines in Ethiopia, wars in Yugoslavia, and pestilences in Uganda? What do the difficulties of a few smokers count beside all that?

However, the difficulties of the smokers are not nearly so unrelated to these other, weightier matters than would at first appear. Anti-smoking is actually a small part of a very big battle, between tyranny and freedom, that has raged for decades if not centuries, and rages still.

The Collapse of the Socialisms

Not so long ago those who wanted to tyrannise over others proclaimed this ambition without shame or equivocation. Communists believed in communism and believed that the way to run the world, including and especially the world's economy, was for the world's affairs all to be run from a single office.

This simple re-arrangement would be in the interests of almost the whole of mankind (the exception being only the capitalists, who were responsible for all the world's miseries).

A variant of the same mode of thought was national socialism (Nazism) and fascism, which made the same claim, but confined it to one nation or racial group. The nazis and the fascists, just like the communists, fearlessly proclaimed the superiority of the group over the individual, the collective human mass over the singular human person.

First national socialism, destroyed by the antagonisms it inevitably aroused among other national groups who were denied the supreme racial rank accorded to themselves by the National Socialists, and then communism, destroyed by the hostility of those wise or lucky enough to resist it, and by its own inherent unworkability, collapsed in ruins. Nazism proclaimed its inevitable victory in a mighty racial battle, and lost it. Communism prophesied that it would bring heaven on earth, and brought only a hell, against which, when they saw their chance, those enslaved by it eventually rebelled. Red China alone remains as the last major bastion of communism, but it only retains any moral acceptability by the degree to which it mimics the economics of the capitalist enemy whose destruction was its original purpose and justification.

The family resemblance between the fratricidal collectivisms of communism and fascism is obvious to those opposed to all kinds of collectivism. International socialists in practice had to settle for their own variants of national socialism, but even this obvious truth did not persuade them to admit the similarity between their own beliefs and practices and those of National Socialism itself. Each socialism denounced the individual and glorified the collective. Each socialism demanded sacrifices in the name of the greater "public" good.

After the defeat of National Socialism, the remaining socialists continued to denounce National Socialism as the ultimate evil, but their denunciations enabled them to continue to ig-

nore its actual nature, and to ignore the extent to which post-war socialists continued to accept ideas remarkably similar to those of their hated and supposedly opposite National Socialist enemy. The intellectual foundations of National Socialism were not examined, but simply ignored. Swastikas and Nuremberg rallies were held up as the quintessence of evil, but the ideas of those who staged them were held not to exist. National Socialism was dismissed as a mere "crime", or a descent into irrationality.

After the ignominious collapse of communism anti-socialists were curious to see what would be the reaction of those millions in the West who had supported it. Their first reaction was to deny that they *had* ever supported it. We are "socialists" they said. Communism is nothing to do with that.

So how would these anti-anti-communists behave, when the gigantic evil of communism, which they so ostentatiously didn't support, collapsed? It turned out that these "socialists" did support communism, and were utterly humiliated by its ruin. The one defence of communism that they had constantly allowed to pass through their fastidious lips had been the claim that "for all their faults" the communists "presented a collective and effective challenge to capitalism". When this challenge disintegrated, they were mortified.

Does this mean that "socialism" has ceased to be an important force in the world?

Would that it were so, but it is not.

Themes and Sub-Themes

The mighty main themes of socialism are no longer blared forth by the brass section and the first violins of the socialist orchestra, but the second violins, lesser woodwind, violas and cellos continue to scrub away with lesser themes, derived from the great themes, but no longer accompanied by them. Socialism used to mean asserting the necessity of ruling the world from a single office, constructed over the ruins of capitalism, with a million sub-themes — "community", "caring", "sharing", "production for need not profit", "curbing the anarchy of the market", "equality", "free health care",

“free education”, “progressive taxation” — decorating the grand socialist simplicities.

Now all we have are those sub-themes which are being proclaimed with ever greater intensity, because the people who used to proclaim the central dogmas are out of a job and have had to redeploy themselves.

Kenneth Minogue memorably inquired: “Does socialism mean never having to say you’re sorry?” Perhaps many socialists are sorry (although I see little evidence for this). But many others are not. They have learned nothing from the collapse of communism and have forgotten none of the excuses they offered for having supported it. They just don’t dare say so.

We live in curious times: on the surface socialism is utterly defeated, and discredited, but under the surface, the philosophical decorations and intellectual bells and whistles which were attached to the socialist enterprise remain, and are being rung and blown as vigorously as ever. All that a socialist idea needs is to appear like a normal idea, instead of a socialist one. Hence all the talk of “community”, “fairness”, “responsible regulation”, “progress”, “health”, and above all of “the environment”.

Potential supporters of anti-socialism have to be addressed now in a different language. We can no longer ask them to help us wipe out socialism, because according to the newspapers and the television, that’s already been done.

We now face a prolonged intellectual guerrilla war: we cannot attack the enemy’s intellectual headquarters, because this has already been overrun. To vanquish him, we must identify each fragment of his thought and conquer it individually.

Life, Liberty and Property

This situation explains the rise of “libertarianism”. No longer being able to identify ourselves according to what we are against, we anti-socialists have had to think through just what it is we are for.

We support the dignity and responsibility of the individual, the freedom and the creativity of the individual, the right of the individual to choose and

take his own risks, the benefits of voluntary social co-operation, and the right of all people to choose with whom they will associate. The concept of property is the fundamental basis of the peaceful resolution of social conflict. The secret of social harmony is the social process of division. Peace reigns, and industry and creativity flourish. The best men amongst us win, and teach the rest of us what they were doing so that under their leadership, freely accepted, we all progress.

The Socialists hate the idea that the creative giants of recent history — the “capitalists” — might actually have been on the right track and that the socialist enemies of the giants were the enemies of nothing less than civilisation itself. They are as keen as ever to wreck civilisation (“capitalism”).

We now live in the age of “weasel socialism”, the age of “socialism that dare not speak its name”. The enemies of civilisation attack it not by proudly proclaiming an alternative civilisation of their own (for they no longer have one). They merely gnaw away at the ideas upon which real civilisation rests. Those of us who specialise in defending it against this particular assault must do the best we can.

Actions and Ideas

What have all these grand battles, between socialism and capitalism, between civilisation and its enemies have to do with ... smoking?

Consider the noble idea that a man is the owner of his own self. We own what we are, and we own what we use it to do. Self-ownership is the very foundation of civilisation, for it is the moral foundation of creativity. Without self-ownership, we can’t own what we make with ourselves.

If you are socialist, and it is your earnest desire to attack the idea of self-ownership, you take one of those socialist ideas which masquerades as a normal idea, and you use it to attack the idea of self-ownership, but you don’t attack self-ownership frontally. You attack it by sneaking around the back of it, and saying, for example, that the government ought to dissuade people from smoking.

This is a thoroughly socialist idea. Hitler spent time and trouble trying to

stop Germans smoking. He considered that Germany owned the bodies of the Germans, not each individual German. The “obligation to be healthy” was proclaimed. The idea that you owned yourself was rejected as a “liberal perversion”. Accordingly, if you smoked cigarettes that meant you were damaging communal property. The state was entitled to coerce you for your own good and that of society. Our contemporary anti-smokers go puce when they are reminded of their ideological progenitors. Anti-smoking is accordingly, on non-self-ownership grounds, a typical example of one of those socialist sub-themes.

To persuade people that the government ought to dissuade them from smoking, you show them pictures of diseased lungs and of coughing old age pensioners. Any one who disagrees with “tobacco control” is accused of being in favour of cancer.

Having persuaded people that the government ought to dissuade people from smoking — and better still having persuaded the government that the government ought to dissuade people from smoking — you then close the trap, and having extracted the action you want, you are then able to identify the principle which has to be true if the government has acted correctly, which it obviously thinks it has. In order to believe that it is properly occupied telling people not to smoke, the government must necessarily believe that health is a collective, not merely an individual, matter. It then becomes possible to demand further actions based upon the same principle.

Today smoking. Tomorrow: alcohol, sticky buns, boxing, motor racing, rock climbing, loud music, “unsafe sex”, and car ownership.

The day after tomorrow: having children, buying a house, moving house, eating or drinking anything without a permit.

Is this a paranoid fear? We have a government that although it recognises the folly of “Five Year Plans” in the economy, is now committed to equally unobtainable five year plans — “health targets” — for “The Health of the Nation”. We are told we must all do our bit so that Britain will hold her

own in the international heart attack, cancer, and suicide leagues! We have financial incentives for doctors to compile information about their patients in order to “target” them to change their behaviour. We have actual discrimination in the treatment of smokers (which has led to deaths in some cases) and advocacy that such discrimination should extend to other health sinners. (I have actually been told by the current Deputy Director of ASH that a wheezing old smoker has no right to treatment, and no right to life. Shades of the old Nazi category of “life not worth living”.) We have a Health Minister, Virginia Bottomley, who declares that “It is a mistake to see those who ‘face up to’ the so-called health fascists ... as defenders of liberty ... [F]reedom is restricted on a drip-feed attached to a life support system. It is wrong to let a personal claim to the right to be free embrace ill-health, disease and death, to become a dictatorial assertion that others should suffer as badly through apathy or ignorance” (*The Times*, 22 July 1992). In other words you have no right to be free, and no right to make your own decisions (and reap the benefits or costs), no right to have different tastes than Ms. Bottomley has. If you do, then it is a sign of your false consciousness — you are “ignorant” or “apathetic”. We have a medical establishment (health “educators”, academics, bureaucrats, doctors etc) almost universally committed to a systematic ideology of coercive and authoritarian medicine. If you think I am exaggerating, read one of its central texts and manifestos: *The Nation’s Health: A Strategy for the 1990s, A Report From An Independent Multidisciplinary Committee*, edited by Alwyn Smith and Bobbie Jacobson (King Edward’s Hospital Fund for London/Oxford University Press, 1988). The philosophical and political assumptions and features of traditional collectivism, censorship, and social engineering are displayed quite blatantly.

National Socialism and Communism have been recast in a new mould. “Public Health” and “Preventive Medi-

cine” are the camouflage for a coercive and authoritarian political ideology. These people have already achieved some of the things they want and are dedicated to achieving the rest. Their victory would mean the utter destruction of individual freedom.

“Public” and “Private” Space

You can use smoking to attack the idea of property rights. You can, to take a particularly topical example, make maximum use of the ambiguities in the words “public” and “private”. You can start by restraining (as much as you can), smoking in “public” places. You can follow this up by arguing that “public” means any place that the public visits, like a restaurant, a shop, or even the nation’s living rooms! You can slide into law the proposition that smoking is to be discouraged in those places also, without ever quite explaining that this is what you are doing.

The government fully accepts the idea that property rights are “not absolute”, and must have “limits”. It turns out that you and I may not decide what rules shall apply within the confines of our own “private” property. By the time you have exhausted the possibilities of that act of conceptual pillaging, you can forbid a man to lock the door of his own lavatory. You can certainly decide what, if any, industrial activity is to be allowed, anywhere.

Taking something unpopular, such as smoking now is, and doing something rather popular about it turns out to have deeply unpopular implications, but since the populace has now “accepted” these implications, it is conceptually disarmed.

The Government is committed to the idea that there should be more “smoke-free” areas in “public” (ie private) places, and that “market forces” (ie consumer demand) is “not enough or sufficiently fast acting” to lead to the sort of provision the government wishes to enforce upon “public” (ie private) places. “Voluntary” guidelines have been issued, but, like the traditional Mafia “offer you can’t refuse”, should you have the impertinence to set the rules you want on your property, then government has stated legislation will be passed to ensure the “correct” allo-

cation of no-smoking areas.

Vested Interests

If the government starts to do deeply unpopular things, can’t the politicians close the department down? But once an activity is established, however repulsive, it immediately starts to crank out propaganda in favour of itself. Any politician who denounces that department should be ready with some slick arguments. Most politicians simply go with the flow.

Precisely because smoking has become so unpopular, it is for that reason the ideal “foot in the door” for a whole range of deeply dangerous ideas, which would never have a hope of being accepted if they were simply proclaimed in public and without shame.

Junk Science

During the last hundred or more years, the “science” upon which the collectivist attack upon civilisation has depended has been “economics”. I put “economics” in inverted commas because of course what this attack has really depended upon has been “junk” economics, namely Marxism. Marxist economics has the same relationship to real economics as astrology has to astronomy, or witchcraft to medicine.

This sad episode in intellectual history has now ended. Economics is now universally understood to favour capitalism. The critics of Marxist economics predicted the attempt to practise Marxism would be exactly the disaster that has happened.

The basis of the Marxist version of economics was that most people had no idea about real economics, and therefore couldn’t tell the difference. After a hundred years of ferocious popularising, anti-Marxist economics has now triumphed. People know roughly what real economics is like, but they still do not know what real science is like. The absolutely central topic of “probability theory”, which concerns itself with the vital question of what you may and may not legitimately be said to have “proved” with some experimental “results”, makes about as much sense to the average possessor of a non-scientific university degree as does Sanskrit.

Yet without such fundamental igno-

rance a whole class of media reportage about the “danger” of something which is scarcely dangerous at all would be impossible. People could not be frightened this way if they had any real understanding of science. As it is, whole categories of industrial activity are forbidden from even being attempted, on the grounds that they are “dangerous”, when the danger in question turns out to rival the danger of your being eaten alive in Kettering High Street by a passing polar bear.

What is the scientific meaning of the word “cause”? We are constantly told that smoking “causes” cancer. How many people, as a proportion of the population as a whole, realise that from the strictly scientific point of view, this statement is actually not yet proved, and may in fact never be proved? (The key point is this: merely establishing a “correlation” between something and something else, is a quite different matter from explaining whether the something actually causes the something else, whether it is the other way around, or whether neither is the case.)

The smoking debate is at the very epicentre of the “junk science” issue. It has been a sobering experience to immerse myself in “junk science”. Having seen what lies can be told by being told “scientifically” about smoking and cancer, I have examined the “evidence” for the various environmental catastrophes by which we are allegedly threatened: “health” and “danger” issues like nuclear power stations, the menace of “heterosexual” AIDS, fluoridation — and the increasingly unreliable record of much that passes as conventional wisdom in “orthodox” medicine. (Try reading the history of cancer research and treatment, or the current scholarly warfare over vitamin supplementation, if you want some shocks about the honesty of the medical profession).

The New Language of Lies

A particularly rich field for the student of junk science is the issue of “passive smoking”. The problem that the anti-smokers have is that the “right to smoke” arguments that FOREST has proclaimed over the years have hit

home with the public. So, the public has been told that it is impossible to smoke without jeopardising the “rights” of others by harming their health.

If you do believe that passive smoking is a threat to your health, then you can desist from passive smoking, just as you can desist from the regular kind of smoking. Stay away from smokers, choose non-smoking areas when you dine out or travel.

However, is it true that “passive smoking” really does threaten your health? Most of what passes for “evidence” in this area is fraudulent. Reports, the majority of which have found no evidence for passive smoking’s harmful effects are mysteriously combined by a miraculous process known as “meta-analysis” to show that such evidence does exist.

If there were no real scientists, there would be no point in producing fake science, and no real scientific authority to steal, or fountain of revealed truth to be simulated. However “science” is now the language in which the most important lies are being told.

If you choose to become an anti-anti-smoker, you will be lining up on the side of truth and against lies. This may sound a rather exaggerated claim.

The Anti-Smokers Might Win the Battle But Lose the War

I realise that the mere smoking issue is not a make-or-break issue for Western Civilisation but it is a part of a much larger debate, in which the future of our civilisation most definitely is at stake. This civilisation and its future is most emphatically the concern of all, not just of those who happen to smoke and who have thus been dragged into this particular political fight by an accident of political economy. Those of us who like our civilisation, and want it to continue and to improve, can use the smoking debate to challenge the now hidden agenda of the socialists, and to proclaim our own alternative and superior agenda. We too can push governments into taking the right actions and to refraining from taking other, wrong, actions, and draw our philosophical conclusions from these decisions.

Ironically, we may only succeed in slowing the drift towards a society in which smoking is illegal. In this particular issue, some see eventual defeat as more or less inevitable, the way the political wind in Britain and America is blowing. However, in the course of the debate, we may land so many philosophical punches, that the anti-smokers will wish that they had not exposed themselves on this battlefield, and that they had played their philosophical cards closer to their chest. The costs of victory to the socialist anti-smokers may prove too great and the victory too small.

What might happen is that, indeed, smoking “prohibition” may be imposed. But the debate, and the predictions of the trouble that such prohibition will bring about and the corruption and confusion that will result from it, will cause all those who merely dislike smoking to switch sides. “Sincere” as opposed to politically motivated anti-smokers may come to realise that if they want to stop something not definitely aggressive, the only civilised way is for them to argue for their tastes and seek to bring others to adopt their tastes entirely by peaceful persuasion, and to abandon political and tax intimidation entirely, both on the grounds of expediency and those of morality. That would be a huge setback for the tobacco companies, but not nearly such a defeat for the defenders of civilisation. In a few decades the tobacco industry would be back on its feet, and maybe the same tobacco companies would climb back onto theirs. The anti-anti-smoking battle might be lost, but the war could still be won.

Chris R. Tame is Director of both the Libertarian Alliance and FOREST, and has contributed to a wide range of political books and journals.

What Sort of Women Priests?

Ray Honeyford shows how both women and men fail to understand the real nature of the priesthood

“Wherefore, in order that all doubts may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church’s divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf Lk.22-32), I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women, and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful”.

These words of the Pope have an Old Testament finality rarely to be found in the rhetoric of present day ecclesiastics. They brook no argument and permit no fudging. They have, predictably, raised protests in certain quarters. The Archbishop of Canterbury — having been clearly advised of the Catholic Church’s stance on women priests long before the fateful Synod decision — has complained that the prospects of Christian unity have been undermined. (This is undoubtedly true; but was it not the Church of England which rated female ordination more highly than the possibility of the churches coming together?). Various female intellectuals have contemptuously dismissed the Pope’s statement on the grounds that it emanates from someone who is celibate, Polish, old, and, worst of all, a man. The dissident theologian, Hans Kung, has spoken of the Pope going down “an extremely dangerous road”. The highbrow Catholic journal, *The Tablet*, has published a jesuitical leader, which, whilst insisting upon its loyalty to the Pope, nevertheless gives succour to Catholic non-conformists by arguing that, if the people do not like the Pope’s pronouncement, that may well be evidence that the Holy Spirit does not approve either. (At least I think that is what the journal’s cogitations mean.) The fuss indicates that the Pope

has touched a nerve. He has offended vested interests, and challenged fashionable dogma. Central to his pronouncement is the view that not every occupation in this egalitarian world is sexually inter-changeable. Women may, if they wish, dig coal, pilot aircraft, fight fires, don combat jackets, and arrest criminals. But they may not be priests. This is a terrible shock to the prevailing modernist consensus; though one suspects it will have caused little anxiety to the vast majority of

Women may, if they wish, dig coal, pilot aircraft, fight fires, don combat jackets, and arrest criminals. But they may not be priests

sensible people. The Pope has dared to declare that men and women are not identical in every respect in the expression of their Christian commitment. History has declared otherwise. God chose men, not women, to be priests, and that is that, now and forever. The Pope will have no truck with the standard feminist argument that God’s creation of the priesthood was constrained by antifemale cultural forces current at the time of Christ’s life on earth. To accept that would be to deny a central Christian dogma — that God is omnipotent; and, though He may work in and through contemporary social arrangements, He is not in the same relation to those forces as are mere mortal creatures. After all, if God

were beholden to human cultures and expectations, then He would surely have chosen, not a stable, but a palace for the birth of His Son. However, despite the shrill protests, the Pope is anxious to stress that sexual differences with regard to the priesthood in no way implies an inferior status for women: “The presence and role of women in the life and mission of the Church, although not linked to the ministerial priesthood, remain absolutely necessary and irreplaceable. As the declaration, “Inter Insigniores”, points out, “the Church desires that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their role is of capital importance both for the renewal and humanisation of society and for the rediscovery by believers of the true face of the Church”. All this is obviously true. Some of the greatest of saints have been women. The Virgin Mary has always been revered by the faithful, and her example has inspired countless devout lives. And if we need contemporary evidence that a woman can fulfil a vital role in living out the reality of Christian love, and setting an example of women’s gifts to the world, then we have it in Mother Teresa. The Pope’s objections to women priests are grounded in apostolic tradition, the teaching of the magisterium, and in the respecting of God’s plan for human kind. As such they represent what the vast majority of Roman Catholics — not least female Roman Catholics — think about the issue of women priests. So which women ever wanted to be priests in the Church of England? It is very difficult, of course, to characterise in any precise way such a varied group of people, different in age, in

background, and in experience. However, an attempt was made to explore this question before the Synod decision. The results were published in a book by Catherine Treasure, *Walking on Glass*, published in 1991. Although the author disclaims the notion that her sample of female deacons is statistically representative, she has nevertheless made strenuous efforts to obtain "as broad a spread of opinion and experience as possible". She used questionnaires and interviews in order to find out just how her subjects thought about the whole question of female ordination. The views expressed are very revealing. I can best convey their essence by actual quotations:

"everybody wants to be promoted"
"and it makes me extremely pissed off to have to import a dodderly old bloke".
"I used to cry with rage".

"It's so like the situation since women got the vote". "No longer can white represent black, or men represent women".

"The priesthood.....is just men living out fantasies of their relationship with women".

"I think we need to use the media".
"I'm not interested in unity with a church which does not ordain women".
"This morning I only helped administer communion, so I refused to robe, and I refused to sit in the clergy stalls".
"...if you're beginning to sound like a sociology textbook, it's nice to know".
"I will not say stupid things like "born of a virgin"

"They (women) are also being cheapened and demeaned by the Church's treatment of its women clergy".

"The woman in the pew is the greatest obstacle to the ministry of women in the Church". "We need women to be priests in order to scrap(the priesthood)". "It's not a tiny thing to do with a few women becoming f....ing priests".

What do these words tell us about the mentality of those who have uttered them? In general, they seem to me to indicate an essentially secular view of what is a deeply spiritual vocation, an indebtedness to feminist ways of thinking, and a certain contempt for tradition in the Church. On a deeper level they suggest three specific weaknesses in the case for female ordination. First,

there is a total absence of any understanding of one of the greatest of Christian virtues—humility. Secondly, there is a misunderstanding of the nature of power in a Christian context. Thirdly, these words display a signal failure to distinguish between the concepts of ministry and priesthood. That humility is an essential component of the Christian life and outlook can scarcely be doubted. The archetypal symbol of that is Christ washing the disciples' feet — an act of submission, and; indeed, within the culture of the time, of actual humiliation, as the disciples' embarrassment makes clear. All the great saints and martyrs, all the great doctors of the Church have stressed that the death of self, the humbling of oneself in the sight of God, the acceptance of the belief that we are as nothing

One wonders if those females clamouring for ordination had ever considered the words of Thomas à Kempis, "A man who really knows his own nature sets no value on himself, and takes no pleasure in being praised by men...."

in the presence of the numinous — that this willingness to have a low opinion of oneself arises from the recognition of a true relationship with God, which is one of total dependence. One wonders if those females clamouring for ordination had ever considered the words of Thomas à Kempis, "A man who really knows his own nature sets no value on himself, and takes no pleasure in being praised by men.... The highest and most profitable form of study is to understand one's inmost nature and despise it; real wisdom and perfection lie in having no high opinion of oneself, but in always thinking highly of others". Do the quotations I have given suggest that these women

grasp the meaning of humility in the pursuit of personal redemption, or do they rather, indicate the presence of that grievous blow to the perfectibility of the soul, intellectual pride? As to power, just what does it mean in a Christian, and, more specifically, in a priestly context? To these women it clearly means status acquired by the secular process of promotion; by climbing a ladder each step of which represents an increase in power. In this way lies empowerment and the abolition of that supposed power possessed by men, but denied to women. Power, in short, has the same meaning in the spiritual world as in the secular domain.

The thinking involved is essentially linear, and a function of logic. But that is a total negation of the real meaning of power as understood by the Church since its inception. Power in the Christian context cannot be understood in terms of logic. Power to the genuine Christian is the engagement of the self in a fundamentally paradoxical transaction. The origin of this is the self-denying life of Christ culminating in the crucifixion. There cannot be a more vivid and dramatic instance of the powerlessness of the human person than that of the Son of God nailed to a cross and suffering agonies from which death was a deliverance. This central image of Christian commitment conveys in the most acute and powerful manner this simple, yet overwhelming message: power in the Christian life is the very antithesis of power as understood in the worldly life. It is not the aggrandisement of self which counts as power in the Christian understanding. It is, on the contrary, the abasement and giving of self in the service of love and charity. Therein lies the Christian hope of transforming the world, and of entering the gates of Paradise. Again, Mother Teresa provides the perfect model. Who could have less in the way of status and position than she — a vulnerable woman whose sole purpose in life is the rescuing of the suffering and the despoiled? And yet, out of her powerlessness, she has transformed the life of thousands, and moved the stoniest of hearts. It is impossible to overestimate her influence for good. How well is the lesson she has taught

all who wish to learn been understood by those who have agitated for female ordination?

Ministry overlaps with, but is, in certain key respects, distinct from priesthood. Ministry is to do with serving people's needs, both practical and spiritual. The office of deacon in the Church of England — to which the vast majority of those Deacons women seeking ordination belonged — conferred the power to minister: "Deacons are called to serve the Church of God, and to work with its members in caring for the poor, the needy, the sick, and all who are in trouble. They are to strengthen the faithful, search out the careless and indifferent, and to preach the word of God in the places to which they are licensed." (From the ordinal of the ASB.) Deacons can also conduct baptisms and marriage services. These are not inconsiderable powers and duties. And they are common to both deacons and priests. But they do not reflect the central feature of the priesthood, that is its sacramental nature. Priesthood is a spiritual vocation, a call from God. As an institution or order it is embedded in the history and traditions of the church. The priesthood of the Old Covenant, of Aaron and the service of the Levites, is understood as a prefiguring of the priesthood of the New Covenant, a priesthood which found its fulfilment in the Son of God himself. And the ordained priest, by virtue of his sacred consecration, receives the authority to act in the place of Christ. He represents the Head of the Church, and acts "in the name of the Church when presenting to God the prayer of the Church and, above all, when offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice". (Catholic Catechism, p 347, 1552.) In short, the priesthood is not simply an office which permits the holder to carry out a range of important duties. It is, crucially, a non-worldly, indeed, mysterious, vocation whose sacramental nature and origins in the mists of time cannot be doubted. It is an overwhelmingly spiritual phenomenon whose nature and purpose have nothing to do with the world's notion of personal calling.

However, a reading of *Walking on*

Glass leaves one with a conviction that the women concerned appeared to understand none of this. To them, it seems, the priesthood is a job, deeply serious, of course, but essentially like any other job. Rather than submit humbly to the teachings of the universal catholic church to which the Church of England has always insisted it belongs — they protest their right to overturn 2000 years of Christian belief and prac-

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tice and, implicitly, to accuse the Church, on a vitally important issue, of being wrong since its foundation. They have accused the Church of a patriarchal plot to suppress women and deny them their God-given rights. They have made no bones about their understanding of the priesthood as the ultimate source of masculine dominance. In short, they have approached a profound, sacramental issue with the mentality and vocabulary of aggressive and shallow, secular feminism. And now they have had their way. The consequences can only be known in full with the passage of time. But already we know this: that Christian unity has been dealt a possibly mortal blow; that the Church of England has sent out a message to the whole world that its radical wing, with its determination to preach, not the redeeming power of the gospels, but the essentially political tidings of earthly liberation — that this wing is now in charge;

that any claims for genuine catholicity by the Church of England can, henceforth, be discounted; that the genuinely comprehensive nature of Anglicanism has now been lost with the betrayal of its own High Church; that the claims of the Church of England to being a true, national church, and its status as the established church are bound to be increasingly questioned. All this is already transparent, and deeply depressing. For me, the saddest aspect of this catastrophe lies in the sufferings of those loyal priests of the Church of England who are convinced that the Church into which they were ordained has betrayed them. The pain they are continuing to suffer was poignantly captured in a letter from a clergyman's wife to *The Daily Telegraph* on March 5th this year:

Sir, As the wife of a Church of England priest, I am heartbroken by Mrs Toole Mackson's hurtful and inaccurate comments about the clergy who find the ordination of women unacceptable (letter, March 1). How would she like to watch a much loved husband, and a "real" parson full of faith, prayer, energy, enthusiasm and commitment to be reduced to a depressed, sad and utterly let-down shadow of his former self? Watching as he agonises over his responsibilities to his four parishes and their people, to me and our family. But, more important, coping with his own inner turmoil of new emotions, incredulity at the situation, and sense of bereavement. It is hard and compensation plays little part. It is not he or others in the same situation who have let down the Church, it is those who voted for change: it is they who have put the Church of England at risk.

The Church of England, where they "joyfully made their vows", in Mrs Toole Mackson's words, is no longer the same church, now they are tearfully trying to hold on to those vows. He is neither unfaithful, nor a deserter. He is making a brave stand to hold on, but if he does jump he most certainly will have been pushed.

Ray Honeyford is a freelance writer.

Marriage, Morals and the Law

John Campion describes how the legal system fails to support marriage

Perhaps the main cause of failure still lies in our attitude to love itself — that it is good only so long as it pleases, and that as soon as it drops one degree below the level of self-satisfaction it is somehow improper to attempt to preserve it. This is but a natural expression of that contemporary fallacy — the divine right to personal happiness, the rule of self-love, to be enjoyed without effort, at no matter what cost to others. Whoever gave us this right to be merely happy and what makes us think it so enlightened an idea? In claiming the sanction to withdraw from any relationship the moment our happiness appears less than perfect, we are acting out a delusion which denies all but the most trivial kind of love. Worse still, it makes a paper house of marriage, flimsily built for instant collapse, haunted by rootless children whose sense of incipient desertion already dooms them to an emotional wasteland. Indeed the interpretation of rights that allows the jettisoning of children in furtherance of their parents' right to happiness, not only cancels that happiness but makes more than reasonably certain that the next generation will be denied it too.

Laurie Lee

The radical changes in the patterns of family life occurring since the war are now so well known that our sensitivities have largely been blunted to them. However, two of their characteristics should be emphasised: their large scale and their rapid development. Most have occurred within the last twenty to thirty years, so we are talking about changes well within a single generation. Duncan Dormor of *One plus One* has aptly dubbed these changes the "Relationship Revolution".

Before 1970 fewer than one in twenty

couples lived together before marrying, whereas at present about one in two have lived together before marrying. In 1960 10 percent of marriages ended in divorce, now it is forty percent. The proportion of one parent families doubled between 1976 at 10 percent and 1991 at 19 percent. A most important and dramatic figure, given the motivations and predictions of the 1969 Divorce Reform Act, is that the percentage of births outside marriage has risen from just 5 percent of all births in 1961 to over 30 percent in 1992. Most of this increase has been in the last decade.

The mainstream policy-makers' attitude to these changes tends to be either one of *puzzled helplessness* — pointing to complex and subtle forces "*deep in the fabric of society*" that are beyond our comprehension and control (a view expounded in the Lord Chancellor's proposals on divorce), or one of *Panglossian fatalism* — pointing to changes in society such as a shift from *economic marriage* to *companionate marriage*, to longer lifespans and arguing that the family is not "under threat" but simply "undergoing change" (a view promoted by the National Council for One Parent Families). Demonstrating a truly remarkable feat of intellectual agility, the Law Commission has managed to embrace both of these positions at the same time in its recommendations to the Lord Chancellor on the grounds for divorce in 1988.

These changes are a serious social pathology, generated entirely as an artefact of the legal system. We are witnessing and living through, not a *social* revolution, as some would have it, but a *legal* revolution becoming

increasingly decoupled from the consequences of its actions — which are being justified *post hoc* by reference to an imaginary world. Society is thus rapidly degenerating into a condition of State — administered social anarchy.

When we have a legal system which for thirty years has failed to deliver its objectives or to take note of predictions made of its consequences, we must surely take stock of where matrimonial law is leading us. The law not only has no access to the social knowledge that it would need, but it has lost its grip on the intellectual argument supporting its policy.

Thus, in the face of the intellectual chaos produced by the Law Commission, the Lord Chancellor has decided to wash his hands of the matter and assert that defining when a marriage is over is no responsibility of the law. The law's function is simply to *adjust the living arrangements and financial situations of the parties* following the breakdown of the marriage (defined as when one party decides it to have done so). In the robust belt-and-braces approach of the legal profession this position is justified both in terms of principle (it is no function of the law to decide such matters) as well as pragmatics (the law is unable to deal with subtle and complex moral issues).

Given the extremely serious psychological and economic damage that this euphemistically termed "adjustment" inflicts on one parent, arising from loss of children and home, and given the serious implications that this brings for the children in terms of increased risk to every known ill from loss of self esteem to under-achievement and delinquency, this assertion indicates a

total abdication of social responsibility by the State. It is shocking, not only because it effectively represents the end to legal marriage, but also because this assertion can apparently be made without fear of serious intellectual challenge.

Marriage will effectively cease to exist, because the State will order the lives of its citizens according to principles which pay no respect to marriage as a distinct legal state. Marriage will continue to exist in title, but it will be *no more* than a title to be shuffled on or off after due ceremony; the *substance* of marriage, the matters that give wholesome meaning and purpose to the life of the individual and cohesion and structure to the fabric of society — rightful control over children, residence and ownership of one's home and ownership and control of one's income — will simply be ordered by the State through the courts according to biological models of child rearing and quasi-Marxist models of economic need.

The debate must therefore shift from the grounds for divorce to the nature of legal marriage. This is a matter, not only of social need but also of democratic control. The model of marriage that I have described has been adopted by the courts without any serious public or Parliamentary scrutiny, and has been protected from such scrutiny by a rhetoric of reducing bitterness through dispute and protecting the "weak" (the mother and her children).

The model has been adopted through radical case law development (judged illegal in some quarters) and the evolution of a professional culture facilitated by an incoherently drafted statute, and is based on the abilities, values and sensitivities of the legal profession rather than the needs of society. This model of marriage is not implied by statute and, indeed, it is the mismatch between model and statute that is the prime motivator for reform.

Issues of conduct were removed from custody (now termed "residence") decisions by statutory provision that the child's interests were paramount, coupled with court interpretation that these interests lay with the mother regardless of her conduct. Issues of conduct

were removed from financial provisions by case law decisions and court practice that has directly contradicted statute and that have been judged illegal in some quarters. Occupancy of the home was settled by ouster orders and/or pressure from the husband's own solicitor to quit the home — not on the grounds of the husband's proven violence or other serious misconduct, but on the grounds that, *given that the marriage had broken down*, this was in the best interests of the children.

Because conduct had been removed from all of these decisions, the grounds for divorce became irrelevant and came to act only as a "triggering device" for the courts to act. Legal aid was withheld from litigants wishing to defend divorces, and pressure was put on husbands not to defend on the grounds that the outcome would make no difference to the court's decisions on the substantive matters. Such practices were further encouraged by the advent of the "special procedure" whereby undefended divorces were granted by submission of an affidavit without scrutiny, and by the widespread use of perjured evidence to satisfy the "verbal formulae" contained in statute.

All this was justified on the premise that the marriage had, in any case, *de facto* broken down so that nothing that the husband could do would save it. But this ridiculous logic ignores the fact that the "marriage" has only "broken down" because the consequences of breakdown are so grossly biased against him. Courts treat human beings as amoral individuals, driven like straws in the wind of self-interest. Marriage breakdowns in the real world do not just "happen"; they are the consequence of conscious decisions made with full knowledge of the likely outcomes.

They *should* be, because it is the mutually held understanding of the outcomes of one's actions on those dependent on one which, in human social systems, forms the basis of morality. The pathology of the current system lies in its operating so that the consequences for individuals bear no relation to actual responsibilities. They act directly *against* social cohesion and stability.

The fundamental concept underpinning this whole matter is morality, but from where does it arise, and what should the role of the law be in relation to it? Notions of morality have been expunged from all critical thought by a doctrine of moral relativism propagated by the Law Commission and its tame academic sociologists. Morality to them is an arbitrary and externally imposed set of rules of conduct, no longer appropriate for our secular and pluralistic society.

Consider, however, the real psychological and economic needs of family members. In marriage, wives typically become economically dependent (either completely or partially) on husbands, long term mortgages are taken out and homes built up over many years. Powerful, lifetime emotional commitments to children are undertaken. These are factors not found in other relationships.

These distinct features of marriage reflect, *necessarily*, serious and permanent intentions on the part of the people involved. If they did not, people would not be motivated to work, to build up a home and no person could live happily with their children and plan their futures. In order to enter into marriage, with all that that entails, parties have to hold intentions which accord with the declarations made at the time of getting married — that is serious, and permanent commitments.

More "liberal" elements may argue that these commitments may equally be found in other forms of "partnership" such as cohabitation. They can be and sometimes they are, but the status of cohabitation is essentially *ambiguous*; certainly to the agencies of the State and possibly even to the individuals themselves. The important feature of marriage is that parties, in making their commitment publicly to the State, signal that they are willing for it to expect of them certain undertakings and, in return, expect the State to treat them in some special way.

The law, in divorce, currently treats marriage as no different from or more serious than a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship, so that the State is renegeing on the implied contract made at the time of marriage. Brenda Hoggett

(now Mrs Justice Hale and former Law Commissioner responsible for Family Law) pointed out, in questioning the need for legal marriage, that there is now a serious discrepancy between the declarations made at the time of getting married and the real legal implications of getting married. There is, but this is a reason for bringing the law back into alignment with those declarations, not for abolishing marriage.

Such a process will not be easy. The Lord Chancellor has at least paid lip service to the role of the law in supporting marriages. The Labour Party believes this to be “absurd and wicked”, noting that when a relationship fails it is only natural and instinctive to “seek a new, more fulfilling one”. Of course, it certainly is *instinctive* to seek new relationships when the present one palls. But this is the *very reason why* developed societies have learned to create the social structure of marriage — which is a relationship based on commitments transcending such trivial and transitory phenomena, to provide a secure framework within which children may be raised.

As Daniel Amneus has argued in his book *The Garbage Generation*, it is the creation of this social and economic structure, through its harnessing of female reproductive capacities to the sexual energies, economic productivity and long term motivations of the male, which has enabled such societies to *become* developed. Its destruction in little over thirty years by the legal system is therefore a matter of grave concern.

Fundamentally it is the confusion of an emotional relationship with marriage which is so intellectually destructive here, and the policy makers are forced to sustain this confusion in their argument in order to justify their current policies and practices. We have seen that a marriage cannot be simply a relationship for the reasons of social and economic necessity arising from the rearing of children. We can also see this from considering the consequences of accepting the Labour Party line that preventing an unhappy party from seeking a new, more fulfilling relationship is “absurd and wicked”.

If a party is unhappy in a marriage

then we should be sympathetic and offer help. However we then should ask, by what right does that person remove themselves from unhappiness by rendering the other members of the family unhappy — in fact probably a great deal more unhappy than they were? Furthermore, we should ask by what right does that person recruit the agencies of the State to do so?

The logic employed by the legal profession to justify forcing a husband and father out of his house and away from his children is — “Well, the marriage has broken down — the children have to live somewhere”. But this is no more than a shabby intellectual deceit; all that can be said is that the wife is dissatisfied with her relationship. The children already live somewhere — in a home with a father who loves and cares for them. If the mother wishes to leave — then so be it and the law should have nothing to say on the matter. However, if she wishes to recruit the agencies of the State to break up the family and damage the lives of other family members then she should have to justify it to the agencies of the State. Such justification would form the ground for divorce.

Many feel that divorce is *too easy* and suggest making it *more difficult*. Some suggest making *marriage* more difficult. However it is not that marriage and divorce should be made *more difficult*, it is that they should be made *principled* and those principles should derive from an appreciation of the real psychological and material needs of spouses and their children in families and the proper relation of the State to them.

Ideas of apportioning blame, so strongly rejected by the reformers, are misleading. The *principle* that lay behind the law before the reforms of 1969 was that any party who had, by their behaviour, *de facto* repudiated the marriage should release the other party from their obligations with respect to that party. This accorded with commonsense notions of morality and justice and, more importantly, reflected the nature of the declarations made by the parties at the time of getting married. If we are to have a law of marriage and divorce then it should return to

this principle.

The grounds for divorce logically define the state of *legal marriage* — that is, the relationship that the law is both willing and able to support. The “specific facts” grounds prior to 1969 defined this state as one in which parties were expected to live with each other, remain sexually faithful and behave uncruelly to each other. Note that this said nothing about love or sexual satisfaction. This was deemed to be of no concern to the State and to be up to the parties to sort out for themselves.

These grounds had three important merits: they acknowledged marriage as a distinct legal state, they reflected commonsense morality and, most importantly, they defined the boundaries of legitimate State interference in private lives. The latter feature is the one that seems to be least well understood and is the one that concerns us most. Many individuals are concerned at the crudity of such judgements and the rudimentary nature of marriage implied, but this is to confuse social marriage with legal marriage. The “facts” define the relations that it is *appropriate for the law to get involved in*.

The Lord Chancellor’s view is that the law “cannot make a person continue in a marriage let alone force a person to create a happy and harmonious home.” Of course not, but then this is to misunderstand the proper role of the law in relation to marriage and therefore to provide the wrong criteria by which it should be judged. The proper role of the law is to provide a rough legal framework within which individuals can negotiate their own relationships and which serves to increase the opportunities for harmonious homes. Such a framework no longer exists.

Many fathers are understandably concerned at the bias towards mothers shown in court orders over residence. But the fundamental problem is not that the courts are acting unfairly, it is that they are acting *beyond the bounds of their competence*. Courts should be intervening, not when a “relationship breaks down” but when there is a serious and provable case to answer. If the courts do not have the information on which to

act they should refuse to act. This is how the law acts in all other areas.

Whether they are acting properly or not, the professionals, both in the courts and welfare services, do not understand just how inappropriate it is to enter a home, of which they have no knowledge, and start ordering the future living and financial arrangements of the family members. This is an intrusion on private lives and is more appropriate for a totalitarian State than a liberal democracy.

The legal profession frequently reminds us about the limitations of the legal process and the difficulty of the judgements that Family Division judges have to make. Lord Denning decided that conduct was only relevant to financial settlements when it was *gross and obvious*, presumably reflecting his perceptions of these limitations rather than the principle or justice involved. However the legal profession has overlooked the point that *gross and obvious*, if that reflects the limits of judicial competence, should be the criterion by which legitimate intervention by the courts is judged appropriate. Furthermore, what is deemed *gross and obvious* to the courts will depend, not only on the actual behaviour of the individuals being judged, but also by the investigative resources that the legal system is prepared to devote to the matter.

The position adopted by the Church in their 1966 report "Putting Asunder" is a sound one — a position that has been seriously misrepresented by the Law Commission and other reformers. This was that more resources should be devoted to the divorce process (in recognition of its serious nature both for the individuals and society at large) and there should be an in-depth enquiry into all the circumstances of a breakdown (with a moral base to it). *Failing such a radical change in procedure* the specific facts grounds for divorce should be retained. Both of these positions derive from the same (moral) model of marriage and their differences lie only in the resources devoted to the investigation and therefore what may be termed the degree of *granularity* of the justice administered.

I do not believe that the causes of the

"Relationship Revolution" are due to "subtle and complex forces deep in the fabric of society". The causes of marriage breakdown are due to the catastrophic failure of the intellectual culture supporting social policy, especially in the area of matrimonial law, to respond to the moral pressures placed on it by material changes in post-war society.

I do not believe that the causes of the "Relationship Revolution" are due to "subtle and complex forces deep in the fabric of society"

Three of the most important pressures were rapid economic development, the expansion of educational provisions (especially in further and higher education), and the advent and free availability of effective birth control. The effect of these developments was that what traditionally had gone together by default in the mind of the individual as a marital "package-deal", having children and living together, over a very short period of time became instead fragmented "items" about which separate and explicit decisions could be made and needed to be made.

Thus, just as it became possible to ask questions such as "Why shouldn't I have sex?" or "Why shouldn't we live together?" it became possible to ask questions, such as "Why should I get married?" or "Why shouldn't I get divorced?" The prevailing intellectual culture was unable or unwilling to provide any good answers to these questions leading to the false assumption that no good answers existed. Good answers to these questions *did* exist but they had hitherto been only *implicit* in the cultural norms of society.

The intellectual culture developed a "new morality" under which the cultural norms were deemed arbitrary, oppressive and unnecessary and were

swept aside in an anarchic stampede for "freedom". The new morality failed in its naivety to understand, in a world of material and psychological dependency, that one individual's freedom is another individual's oppression. The psychologist B. F. Skinner described the function of cultural norms: although appearing arbitrary and oppressive to the individual, the norm brings individuals under the control of the *long term* social consequences of their behaviour.

Rather than accepting a law which is merely like an onlooker, reacting to a *given* degenerating state of society, we should be looking for a law which is active in defining, and supporting a *desired* and wholesome state of society.

The present courts, and the people working in them, have proved unable to do this. Since what is fundamental is how people should live their lives and not the legal process, a more radical approach should be considered, whereby a different kind of tribunal, more able to conduct the business required to support real social need, takes over responsibility.

Such a proposal may seem unacceptable at present, but it is only a hundred and thirty seven years since the secular courts became responsible for administering marriage and its dissolution, and their record of success has not been good.

Those in control of matrimonial law and the sociological theories behind it have value systems opposed to a return to a moral basis to divorce, and will firmly resist it. This return to morality is both necessary and inevitable. Humans are essentially moral beings and they cannot live social lives unless they are so. A law which intervenes to influence those lives has only two choices — it either supports marriage and family life or destroys it. Whether society has the ability to control the law will determine which path it takes.

John Campion is Chairman of the Family Law Action Group

The Curious Case of Frank Beck

Michael Tatham examines the Kirkwood Report

On June 2nd, 1994, *The Times* carried a column heading: 'Child abuser Beck dies in prison after heart attack', and went on to remind its readers that Beck had been serving five life sentences — four on counts of indecency against children under 16 and one of rape — and that he had also been sentenced to a further 24 years for other sexual and physical assaults. In all Beck, had been found guilty on 17 charges.

Some eight days later, in what was an entirely chance juxtaposition of similar material, *The Times* ran the headline: 'Cost of place in children's home dwarfs fees for Eton'. The article went on to reveal that troublesome youngsters in local authority homes may cost anything up to £100,000 a year to maintain — that is roughly ten times as much as a boy at Eton. Even more astounding, according to the report by the Audit Commission on which the social services correspondent was commenting, 40% of these expensive young people do not attend school and large numbers of them leave residential care with no qualifications. Andrew Foster, Audit Commission controller, was quoted as remarking that residential care was 'a living contradiction'.

During the first half of 1993 — and also largely by chance — I had become marginally involved in the twilight world of residential care. My interesting — albeit rather unsuccessful — intervention (consisting largely of a study of *The Leicestershire Inquiry 1992: The Report of an Inquiry into aspects of the management of children's homes in Leicestershire between 1973 and 1986* by Andrew Kirkwood QC and usually referred to as *The Kirkwood Report*) made me think that not only is the whole question of child care in a state of expensive and destructive chaos, but that

many of the more recent reforms and changes in practice are only too likely to make matters far worse. Above all, it seemed that a complete and sustained failure to get to grips with the question how good order is to be maintained in residential homes has been grossly unfair, not only to the members of the public who pay the bills and suffer the consequences of delinquent behaviour, but to the residential staff and the children themselves. The situation appears to be one in which everyone involved — from local authority managers to case workers and care assistants — has to bear responsibility for this failure. The most that can be said in mitigation is that given the strength of political and modernist pressures only the most highly qualified and self-confident practitioners could have hoped to offer any prolonged resistance. Those who did resist were precisely those who could most easily be ignored as old-fashioned and under-qualified.

My involvement started in the February of '93 when it seemed to me at least possible that Frank Beck might have become the victim of a serious miscarriage of justice. Lord Longford — to whose kind heart and long experience in such matters I appealed — suggested that as a first step I should try to visit Beck and not only form my own impressions of his character, but also find out whether a visit from him might be welcome. In the months that followed, Lord Longford did, in fact, see Beck on several occasions and sustained his morale in a way that my own critical appraisal of the situation conspicuously failed to do.

I saw Frank Beck at Whitemoor prison in March and in the course of our discussion he raised the topic of the then newly published Kirkwood Report. Beck claimed that, while

Kirkwood had not been trying to do him any favours, he had, nevertheless, opened paths to the fuller documentation which had been denied him at his trial. These new openings to the records would, Beck believed, stand him in good stead at his forthcoming appeal. It might be helpful, he suggested, if I read the full Kirkwood material for myself.

Now that Frank Beck is dead his appeal, clearly, will never be heard. Thus the question whether he was actually guilty of the assortment of charges on which the court found against him in 1991, or whether he was to a greater or lesser extent a scapegoat for the malpractices of others or — as I tend to believe — a victim of his own misguided enthusiasms — will never be established. But what struck me with increasing force as I read Kirkwood was, that whatever the extent of Beck's personal responsibility as a weak individual, the underlying fault was a direct consequence of applying totally mistaken criteria to child care policy. Ironically, in so far as Beck was destroyed by the consequences, he himself had been an enthusiastic exponent of these new approaches. A large measure of his reputation and influence; his work on the lecture circuit; his political clout via the Liberal Democrats and local Labour Party, stemmed from the fact that he was perceived — and rightly so — to be a man at one with his times. I doubt very much whether Beck was ever a conscious fraud. Unlike many practitioners of whatever is fashionable in education or the social sciences, Beck really believed in what he was doing. It was his strength as well as his weakness that he did actually believe in 'regression therapy' and that in being able to identify so largely with his charges he was able to devote

himself to what he saw as their welfare. It was a point which came through in Mr Justice Jowitt's comments in passing sentence: 'It is tempting to think that your great arrogance led you into thinking that you could, in part, excuse yourself because of the good which in other respects, I accept, you sought to do and did'. (1.9)

What also emerged from my reading of Kirkwood was that since Beck had been very well reported for much of his time in Leicestershire — a good opinion dating right back to a reference of 1973 — it seemed likely that those responsible for the Leicester services must also have been guilty of varying degrees of stupidity and neglect. Behind Beck there clearly had to be a complex web of administrative incompetence. Kirkwood himself is quite specific about this point: 'It has not been the task of the Inquiry to evaluate the truth or falsity of the complaints, but to find out what Management officers did about them... The criminal trial of Mr Beck and others attracted wide publicity, but it did not, of course, address questions of managerial responsibility...' (1.33 and 1.34)

As might have been expected the crux of the matter was discipline. And here — hardly coincidentally — the years during which Frank Beck and Leicestershire were attempting to deal with their often extremely difficult children, were those in which informed opinion about what was sensible and right — let alone necessary — underwent a complete change. All forms of corporal punishment came to be seen — not as rational and effective — but as 'physical abuse'. In practice, of course, what this meant was that managers had the unrewarding task of attempting to concoct new guide lines for their employees to follow in their daily routines. Small wonder that a man like Beck, who anyway disapproved of secure units and empathised with his charges (anti-police, anti-authority, anti-cleanliness), but who, nevertheless seemed able to 'contain' the most difficult children, was seen as a god-send. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the *Kirkwood Inquiry* was the quite uncritical assumption that totally absurd policies could ever

have been made to work — but, clearly, to rectify that would have been to point the finger of blame away from errors of human practice to far more fundamental issues.

When I had digested Kirkwood I drew up a list of *Inferences* which I hoped might be of value to Beck's case and sent them to him for comment. In his reply of July 17th he made it clear that my observations fell a long way short of what he had been expecting. In the light of Beck's disapproval I abandoned my material and merely attempted to maintain a correspondence about the progress he was making in other directions and his increasing debt to Lord Longford.

Unlike many practitioners of whatever is fashionable in education or the social sciences, Beck really believed in what he was doing. It was his strength as well as his weakness that he did actually believe in 'regression therapy'

However, now that Frank Beck is dead and my opinions cannot damage his case I think the time has come to see whether there is anything to be learnt from the Kirkwood material. The fact that Beck himself did not approve of my comments which I had written to assist him, is, I hope, some recommendation for their objectivity.

The Man and his Beliefs.

In 1973 Mr Frank Beck, a former Royal Marine sergeant and a single man fresh from Stevenage College of Further Education, where he had obtained the qualification CQSW, was appointed Officer in Charge of a Children's Home in Market Harborough in Leicestershire. He remained in the employment of Leicestershire CC as Officer in Charge of Children's Homes

until his resignation in March 1986. (1.1)

Frank Beck was unusual in the extent to which he made a prolonged effort to equip himself with a rationale to justify and underpin his work. His understanding of the situation and his thinking at the time of his appointment are clearly reflected in his evidence to the Inquiry: 'you didn't need to be an expert. Nowadays, if you said you were going to do therapy you'd expect to have some degree or all sorts of qualifications. In those days the words weren't taken quite so seriously. You would, as long as you weren't forcing things and using medication and medical practices, you were all right. (sic) Nobody had an answer, everyone was trying to do something different'. (9.15) '... and I used things like *Love is Not Enough* — Bruno Bettelheim's book. I mean Ratcliffe Road (the Home in Market Harborough) was almost based on it. I chose a lot out of his work and a lot out of other people's work to try to get the best deal.' (9.16)

Dr Bruno Bettelheim, whose first book clearly had an important influence on Beck's development, died in March of 1990 aged 86. During the Thirties he had for a time been an inmate of both Dachau and Buchenwald. Shortly before the war he emigrated to the United States and subsequently became Director of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School — a residential school and treatment centre for disturbed children attached to Chicago University. At this centre Bettelheim created a warm, supportive environment, which, by treating its patients with total respect, aimed at repairing their damaged psyches. In time the notion that children benefitted from Bettelheim's 'total therapeutic milieu' became a standard tenet of child care practice.

The Changing Background

The period immediately before and during Mr Beck's employment by Leicestershire was one in which traditional ideas were rapidly being discredited and replaced. The new thinking with its origins in extremely questionable sociological, educational, psychological and political theory, led

to a great deal of confusion and demoralisation. Many of the confusions, as, for example, over the use of secure units for serious offenders, still remain unresolved. Administrative officers, residential staff and the young people themselves were all victims of the new and badly thought out policies.

In telling the Inquiry about Frank Beck's original appointment, Miss D M Edwards, Director of Social Services, reminded them of the position as it had been in the early 1970's:

Many staff were, of course, untrained in 1970. Some had been in post (sic) for many years and had old-fashioned ideas which were difficult to change. These were increasingly apparent as the philosophies relating to the care of children became more widely acknowledged and it was recognised that many children became delinquent because they were deprived... Some of the older staff members found it difficult to provide warm, accepting relationships with the children...(8.23)

The main catalyst for rapid change had, no doubt, been the Children's and Young Persons' Act of 1969, which was summarised by Kirkwood as 'a fundamental change in the care and treatment... by breaking down the discrimination in attitude and care towards offenders, and others with behaviour difficulties or social disadvantages'. (2.2 — 2.14)

Here, quite explicitly, delinquency is seen as a symptom of the sort of social deprivation or disadvantage to which Miss Edwards had referred. No distinction is made between offenders and other children with social disadvantages. Indeed, the pernicious use of the term 'discrimination' implies a basic injustice in society's attitude to anti-social behaviour and brings us close to the familiar position in which the role of victim and aggressor is largely reversed.

In a revealing comment which hinted at the early failure of the new policies, Kirkwood notes: 'the increase in numbers of difficult adolescents coming into homes in consequence of the changes... was seen to call for a departure from the 'Uncle and Aunt' style of leadership (ie old fashioned) (2.76) to one that was *controlling but lively and imaginative*' (My italics). One

can only speculate what this typical example of modernist verbiage is actually supposed to mean, or whether its exponents ever saw themselves with the responsibility for the day-to-day running of a Home. It seems highly unlikely. A similar indication that all was not well is found in Kirkwood's observation that the Social Services and local government reorganisation which had dissipated skills and experiences had led to 'huge increases in adolescent problems' (2.76).

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A particular example of the way in which the changes were adversely affecting the running of the Homes is revealed by the Inquiry's comment on the situation at Rosehill in Market Harborough in 1977. 'Mr Lincoln set about altering the style of the home from one of an old-fashioned structured regime to a more liberal and flexible approach (sic)... These changes had an unsettling effect on the children who became increasingly difficult to manage, with a consequent lowering of morale of staff' (17.4).

Further evidence of general confusion and uncertainty of purpose is to be found in several places — an example occurs at 3.54., and at 3.67 we discover: 'Morale of staff was low... Children's homes were seen as a dumping ground for children for whom all else had failed. In July 1986 The Beeches was in a state of chaos — there was confusion within the home as to what they should be doing. The confusion was part of the overall chaos within the home.'

Unfortunately, there is no reason to think that since then the situation has become any better. In discussing the case of Mr Beck in March of last year, *The Times* pointed out in its leader

column that the *Kirkwood Inquiry* had been 'the ninth such investigation since 1985 to identify serious flaws in the system of residential care.' In the summer of the same year a report on the standards of care in the Labour controlled borough of Islington concluded that it was impossible to work the new system: "Senior management is spending all its time trying to make an unworkable system work."

Much of the impetus for the new approaches had, of course, come from the Labour and Liberal parties. The Labour election programme for the 1981 elections had emphasised children's rights, freedoms and opportunities and urged the abolition of secure units (3.13), and Beck himself and the Labour group were at odds with both the police and the local magistrates about the value of secure accommodation. (3.38) Other instances of political pressure and of rifts between the administration of county services and the local Labour party are to be found at 3.15 — 3.18 and 3.39. (Beck himself was a Liberal Democrat.) Ironically, as Kirkwood records, 'Notwithstanding ideological opposition to secure accommodation, placements out of the county continued to be required'. (3.44)

The extent to which this political and ideological nonsense still damages the fabric of our society is indicated by a report in *The Times* for July of this year from which we learn that a fifteen year, old youth has just started his *first* custodial sentence after being arrested 285 times in 5 years. 'Because of a lack of secure places for young offenders... the boy was jailed for eight months... for stabbing a man in the head with a screwdriver.'

In the same month the paper carried a report of the mother of a teenage gang leader (who, it was alleged, was responsible for one and a half million pounds worth of damage), saying that her son was out of control and should be in a secure unit for his own safety. ***Sanctions and Control***

One of the major problems of running a residential home for difficult/disturbed children has always been the maintenance of good order. Since the traditional and common sense ingre-

dient of physical force has now been disallowed as a form of 'abuse' the situation has, as might have been foreseen, become not only far more difficult to handle, but also thoroughly dishonest. Kirkwood furnishes numerous examples of the constant necessity to fudge and evade the truth. (4.3/4.7/4.13/19b) At a fairly early stage in the reform process this manifested itself in such dishonest directives as — 'physical restraint is acceptable as long as it is seen to be reasonable in all circumstances' and in the extraordinary additional control instructions offered to care assistants that they should employ 'meaningful activity' (4.21). More evidence of the contortions into which these new policies were leading is to be found in the definitions of what is or is not a legitimate slap (24.2) The opening sentence of the same paragraph is completely typical in its bland evasiveness: 'Control should normally be maintained on the basis of good personal and professional relations between staff and children'. In a curious coda to the muddle, Beck himself appears to have thought that the forbidden forms of corporal punishment involved the use of some instrument other than the hand. (24.40 and 24.42)

In essence, of course, all that ultimately mattered from day to day was that the children were 'contained' (27.3) — although preferably by some means that was not too obvious. A *Times* article for May 11th for 1993 shows only too clearly how a situation might get out of hand if containment failed: 'Four teenage girls and two youths hurled pieces of wood and broken glass at police sent to quell a disturbance in a council children's home. Officers were forced to use riot gear, including protective helmets, perspex shields and truncheons, after the teenagers pelted them with missiles from a window in the room where they had barricaded themselves'.

Force might have been disallowed by those who were not in practice having to deal with the problem, but only some sort of physical compulsion was likely to bring about sufficient order and harmony for any other influences such as good personal relationships to be able to operate. One attempt to

square the circle was the notorious 'pindown' system — now also damned as a form of 'abuse'. In the ordinary state sector it has been instructive to see how the abolition of corporal punishment has led not only to a considerable increase in assaults on both teachers and fellow pupils, but has also coincided with a decline in teacher morale and a large increase in the number of children being excluded from school premises. (The idea that schools should be financially penalised for excluding children for reasons of discipline is perhaps one of the stupidest of recent government proposals.)

Just how fraudulent the whole process has become is demonstrated by a report by the Social Services Inspectorate on the Aycliffe Centre in Durham carried in *The Times* for July 24th 1993:

The practical use of force to compel children to comply with the staff's wishes contravenes the 1989 Children's Act... According to the inspectors, the methods depended on applying pain to joints and were derived from those devised for adults in different circumstances. The centre's methods were expressly prohibited by the county council last month, but inspectors said that it had *failed to give clear guidance on alternatives*' (my italics) Hardly surprisingly, we are told that 'despite new laws setting out the rights of children, staff continued to rely on force.

Abuse

Much of the present difficulty is certainly attributable to the frequent and thoroughly pernicious use of the term 'abuse'.

In the modern idiom this word has come to express a more or less open-ended concept wickedness and evil. Examples of this sort of loose and superficial usage abound and are to be found in such an unlikely source as a *Times* leader of March 1993. Commenting on the *Kirkwood Report* *The Times* declared: 'the case of Frank Beck, the Leicestershire care worker who abused 200 children physically and sexually over 13 years'. A similar, but slightly different vagueness, is to be found in the same newspaper's commentary on Frank Beck's death: 'During the trial dozens of witnesses gave

evidence. Many who had been *psychologically* or sexually abused as children spoke from behind screens in the witness box as they described their ordeals at the hands of Beck, who had himself been molested as a 13-year-old. The men and women told of incidents from when they were as young as eight, when they were raped or forced to perform indecent acts with Beck, often dozens of times'. June 2 1994. (My italics)

The *Kirkwood Report* is guilty of precisely the same loose usage. We hear of 'a régime of physical, sexual and *emotional abuse*' (50.4) and that 'Mr Beck's treatment methods (were), the product of untutored and ill-digested study of therapeutic theories...and were *fundamentally abusive*' (my italics) (50.13).

Not only is much of this bandying of words loosely and vaguely associated with 'abuse' totally unsatisfactory as it stands, but, even worse, no thought appears to have been given to such closely connected issues as the dangerous attractions of financial compensation and the well-attested phenomenon of the false memory syndrome. Even if we leave aside all question of deliberate lying or financial benefit — and I doubt whether we should — it is worth noting that in his work on the Orkney case Dr David Reid, a consultant paediatrician, has pointed out that 'it can take only five minutes to persuade a child to say anything that you want'. More recently (July 1994) new research in Sweden carried out by Dr Lena Hellblom Sjogren not only cuts the number of children likely to have been abused to as *low* as between 2 and 7 per 1,000, but — more pertinently in the present context — Dr Sjogren argues that the burden of proof has often become reversed with the accused having to prove innocence, rather than the prosecutor having to prove guilt.

If we look at the way in which the case against Mr Beck first developed it is possible to recognise a number of odd circumstances that are, unfortunately, all too typical of modern practice. Thus we learn that in 1989 a Mrs Outhwaite, who had been in residential care as a teenager at Ratcliffe Road, began to tell her fami-

ly's social worker of her experiences in Mr Beck's charge. Mrs Outhwaite was *encouraged* (my italics) to put her recollections in writing and — according to Kirkwood — her statement was 'a catalogue of physical abuse and humiliation'. Before revealing what this catalogue actually contained it is worth drawing attention to the quite extraordinary statistical outcome. (Italics, as usual are mine.)

Mrs Outhwaite's subsequent statement to the Police marked the start of an investigation in which *almost 600* witnesses were identified and traced, and witness statements were taken from 383 of them. *Almost half* (ie well under 200 of the original 600) of those statements were made by people who had during their earlier years spent time at Children's Homes in Leicestershire or at units attached to them. *Many, but not all*, spoke of mistreatment. What the actual figure for those who finally had some complaint is, we are not told. The large figures that are quoted mean virtually nothing, but play an essential part in contributing to a sense of widespread evil.

Mrs Outhwaite's statement (1.4) is as follows:

I suppose what attracted me to actually going into the Children's Home was the surface show they put on for all visitors. The apparent freedom of the place, children all over sitting on the staff's knee being cuddled and loved a lot. If only I had known what was going on behind the scenes.

The hell started on the day I walked into the place. I had just left home and was naturally upset. I was quiet and tearful. Although I must have been there for a long time it just seemed like minutes later that they got hold of me. Accusing me of chucking out angry feelings, of hating my mother and sisters.

When I tried to explain that I missed my mother they trapped me between their legs and dug their fingers into my ribs and made me scream and cry out with pain. This was called 'a temper tantrum'. They then put me into a wooden play pen. When I tried to get out Anne Daines got in and forcibly restrained me from getting out. (*Are these really Mrs Outhwaite's words one wonders.*) When I finally gave in and stopped fighting I was allowed to get out and was given two chocolate bars for being

'a good girl' and doing things their way. This set the pattern for the next three years. We all got what they called treatment regularly, maybe three or four times a week. We didn't have to do anything. They just pounced on who they fancied. No excuse, just that they thought we were chucking out angry feelings. I would say most of us probably were. I mean we were being forced to use bottles and being fed by a spoon. It was humiliating. We were dressed by staff and bathed by staff, male and female and generally degraded by them. We were angry and hurt.

Whatever else Mrs Outhwaite's account establishes, this type of therapy must always be in danger of blurring

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the line between the personal and the professional. The danger is made clear yet again in both the lengthy contribution to Kirkwood by Mr Peter Wilson (pages 57-50 and Appendix 6) and the account of Mr Beck's relationship with his colleague, Mr Lincoln (pages 97 and 98). Indeed, Mr Wilson's account of what he understands to be the essence of Regression Therapy and its heavy demands on its practitioners indicates that whatever the theoretical merits of the system, in practice it is virtually useless. What irony in the recent suggestion that it may be better to attempt to reinforce a child's capacity for maturing and adapting to the problems of life — in other words the old pre-Sixties approach which has for so long been castigated as old-fashioned and ill-informed.

In the light of Mr Beck's arrest and

trial it is also ironic that it was to a large extent his modern attitude: the generally permissive and 'accepting' style of his management; his approval of Russia and his contempt for the monarchy; his dislike of the police and Church; his reliance on a new pseudo-scientific method — all points that reflect the common assumptions of the progressive world — that also encouraged the type of 'caring' which has led to our present fixation on the whole dubious concept of abuse, and hence, indirectly, to his downfall. (For many of the accusations which surfaced at Beck's trial and for his disapproval of the use of secure units see pages 136, 137, 166, 169, 191 and 296.)

Certainly Beck's approach to his work would always have been beset by the practical difficulty of trying to combine those elements of physical contact and warmth which were seen as a vital part of the therapy, with the obvious need to maintain a minimum of discipline and control (20.8). On the one side there would have been a constant need to protect his staff from violence and to keep the routine of the Home going, and on the other he had somehow to ensure that each youngster had enough physical contact and affection to create a feeling of 'warmth and reassurance'.

All these sometimes contradictory objectives would have been further complicated by the children's own earlier experiences of inadequate family affection and sexual exploitation. Just how far the reality might diverge from the intention — as is so often the way when people attempt to implement well-meaning but mistaken policies — is illustrated by the almost Dickensian outburst attributed to Jenny Lesiakowski on hearing the news of Beck's death: 'I and the other victims suffer 24 hrs a day every day because of what he did to us. The pain never goes away. I'm delighted, elated, overjoyed that he has died.' (*The Times* June 2nd 1944.) What makes this reaction rather more than usually bizarre is the strong possibility that Jenny Lesiakowski was one of the relatively few inmates under Beck's care to achieve a significant position of trust in running a Home. (18.4 and 18.h)

Tentative Conclusions

What is surprising is that despite everything that was badly wrong with it, Mr Beck's system appears to have worked reasonably well. Not only were numbers of very difficult children 'contained' — despite Kirkwood, no mean achievement (page 167) — but there is considerable evidence — more especially in relation to fostering and holidays — that Beck was a good influence on unhappy children. Not only did he take on children that nobody else wanted, but his attitude to his foster sons was always entirely correct. As far as corporal punishment was concerned, Mr Beck was perfectly open in his log book record and clearly believed he was acting properly. (Pages 147, 154, 155, 211, 314 *et al*)

If Mr Beck made a comparatively liberal and misguided modern scheme work better than most people,

it is because he retained physical control of his children and at the same time brought an unusual amount of energy and commitment to his task. How far he was successful can be measured by noting the general failure of the liberal approach and the ever rising problem of serious juvenile crime.

One of the most perceptive comments in the *Kirkwood Report* was made by a Dr Bhate in expressing his doubts about the use of Regression Therapy: 'My judgment was that it was the consistency of care... and the personal interest shown (by the staff) about children's welfare that was making the change.' (11.28)

In conclusion it is worth noting a comment made to Beck by the Director of Social Services: 'you have to care for a child once they leave care for at least the same length of time that they have been in care' and to contrast this utopian aspiration with Beck's own appraisal of his work:

In some senses, I think I let the children down, because I gave them to believe that people really did care, myself included. Yet, it was conditional. But I never said that. Regression had this built-in belief, and I think we really did believe it, that we really did love these children as any parent could possibly love any child. But it was an illusion, because we were not the parents and we were staff... The children would have to face the world without us... I think, in some senses, we were living an illusion ourselves and I don't think we were truly honest with ourselves... (16.2).

(All references, unless otherwise stated, are to the *Kirkwood Report*.)

Michael Tatham is a former English teacher and freelance writer.

Raiding the Nest

Patricia Morgan shows how conservative financial policies help to destroy the family

The family, in Eleanor Rathbone's exemplary phrase, is an end in itself and the means to all the rest. The future of any society lies in the quantity and qualities of the next generation, whose competence and character, including the human resources for economic production, depend upon the circumstances in which it is raised.

The mere intimation of our low birth rate and high level of family disruption, would have been viewed with alarm, even as a crisis, in the past. Now standards are taken from the current disintegrative trends, which we are meant to accommodate just because they are happening. The most reiterated tenet of the present orthodoxy is that the family is undergoing

change which is inscrutable, inevitable and irresistible.

This 'change', we are meant to believe, owes nothing to the wholesale dismantlement of the family's legal and economic foundations, when hostile élites have worked hard to engineer its disestablishment and divestment, and the loss of basic, guiding convictions about the value of family life has left it open to plunder. Instead of buttressing this central institution for support socialisation of the population, there are only 'practical politics' or Kenneth Clarke's 'day to day realities' of expediency and interest group placation. No other basis for policy has become conceivable, as the future is discounted and actions of any common good lost.

Fatalism not only exempts anyone from taking countermeasures in the face of family fragmentation and decline, but allows those who profess to be friends and admirers to engage in ferocious asset stripping.

The massive changes in the labour market have made it difficult to establish and maintain families: the switch away from heavy industry and manufacture to the service economy, the deregularisation of the labour market, the abandonment of full employment policies and the use of unemployment to control inflation, or equal pay and opportunity. As also applies to the housing field, the point is not whether any, or all, of the policies were necessary or justified, but that they have happened without regard for the wel-

fare of families and without any compensatory attempts to moderate their effect or repair the damage. Instead, families have been subjected to increasingly discriminatory taxation and a general withdrawal of provisions.

Over time, the income tax threshold alone has fallen from 101.2 per cent to 34.9 per cent of average male manual earnings for a married man with two small children between 1950 and 1993-4. If we also take family allowances into account, the breakeven point at which a married man with two children paid no net tax was 124.5 per cent in 1950, but 63.7 per cent in 1993-4. For singles, the tax threshold fell from 39.9 per cent to 23.3 per cent; a fourth of the family's.

As, since the mid '80s governments have cut tax rates, while reducing or removing allowances, this has largely amounted to a sharp acceleration in the redistribution of the tax burden from those with family responsibilities to those without. This explains the paradox of increased taxation in a period of reduced tax rates. Family benefitting measures have been cut or removed to fund low tax bands, pay debts and meet other demands on government. They have been regarded as the most dispensable elements in budgets, and it has often not been 'affordable' to uprate them, whatever the surplus in hand.

Looking just at income tax and national insurance (without mortgage or other tax reliefs), most groups saw a reduction in their burden between 1979 and 1993, with the exception of couples with children around average earnings or less. If we then add indirect and local taxes, families' tax burdens have generally increased at all levels, as those of singles have fallen significantly. By 1992/3, a married couple with two children on one main income already paid 37.7 per cent of income in taxes at average earnings, compared to 41.3 per cent for a single person.

One way this situation has come about is through the increasing reliance on national insurance to raise revenue — which incorporates no allowances for dependents. Local authority rates rose fast from the late '70s then, under the poll tax, and now the

council tax, couples now pay more than lone adults.

Child tax allowances and family allowances were replaced by child benefit, as the only way of equalising tax liabilities specifically between those with and without the charge of children. Under continual threat, this benefit has been frozen in value from 1987 to 1990. It then became the turn of the Married Couple's Allowance. This may go to childless couples, but it also goes to every working family (and employed lone parents). Frozen at its 1990-91 level of £1720 (then half the basic single tax allowance), it would have been worth £2,400 in 1993-4. In April 1994, however relief was lowered to the 20 per cent tax rates, from the main 25 per cent or 40 per cent levels. This reduces the cash value to £344 per year, from £430 or £688. In 1995-6 it will be further reduced to a 15 per cent rate of tax, and the cash value will fall to £5 per week.

In future, without the marriage allowance, a family provider will pay tax at the single rate on all income over £66 a week, plus 25 per cent extra local tax because he lives, not just by and for himself, but in conditions of mutual support. The family with one main earner will suffer the most, since the tax allowances it may claim in relation to the two earner couple move from the ratio of 1^o to 2^o (as in 1990-91) to 1 to 2. The one earner family pays the higher rate of tax at half the combined income of the two-earner couple who have access to two lower rate tax bands as well as to two personal allowances.

The 1993 budgets are the culmination of a movement of money away from families. This movement has transferred resources:

1. from those with children to individuals without dependents;
2. from families with one main earner to couples with two full earners;
3. from two-parent families to lone parents;
4. from the younger, child rearing generations to the retired;
5. from childrearing in the home to childminding outside.

From all the tax changes scheduled for 1994-6, one-wage couples with children at average income lose 4.57% of

their income: a two-wage couple with children 4.26%; a two-wage couple with no children 4.04%; a single person 3.54% and a single parent only 2.31%. It means that, in 1994-5, the one main earner at average income loses over £12 a week over the 1993-4 rates, rising to over £16 in the middle income range. Then taxes at average earnings rise by £22 in 1995-6.

The Chancellor has conveniently found that the "married couple's allowance is something of an anomaly, now that married couples are less likely to be financially dependent on each other". Thus, perversely, the existence of childless two-earner couples is a reason to impose the biggest loss on those with children and one main earner, who are already suffering disproportionately from tax-induced poverty, and caught in the unemployment and poverty traps of the means-tested benefit system. Feminists insist that male provision for families should be a thing of the past. Certainly Mr Clarke has met the objective of a persistent campaign on the part of equality activists, to increase the economic squeeze on families, in order to deter men from being providers and to push mothers out to work.

If he has been only too pleased to take up the offer of the marriage allowance, he has also been assured that — since families are not a raucous lobby — they do not matter, and even deserve to carry the cost of unfair treatment. Those who protest the least or remain silent can pay off the budget deficits swollen by unemployment and by the long-term rise in pension and lone parent benefit costs. At the same time, they can fund increased payments to the retired and lone parents and a widening of the 20 per cent tax band, whose beneficiaries are disproportionately those without dependents.

Thus, to assist lone parents, there will be a £40 'earnings disregard' for the child care of those drawing Family Credit, or the means tested benefit for the low paid — exactly what Sue Slipman, director of the National Council for One Parent families demanded. This cashes out at an extra £28 a week. The marriage allowance has never been frozen for the over 65s (who also have

special Age Allowances), and its size has been raised for them alone to compensate for its restriction to the 20 per cent rate. Mortgage tax relief is also retained in full to take out loans to buy annuities. All pensioners are getting compensation for the imposition of VAT on fuel through across the board increases in the state pension — as demanded by the elderly lobby.

This might suggest that it is families who have the big taxable surpluses to spare, with which to replenish the public coffers and pay off shrill sectional interests. Instead, as children's families have become more fragile, their economic circumstances have worsened, despite more maternal employment. All measures of hardship and economic crisis are concentrated among families — mortgage arrears, house repossessions, fuel and water disconnections and serious, multiple debt — two-thirds of which relate to basic commitments.

On any criterion, there is a strong upward movement in family poverty regardless of the business cycle and unemployment — contrasting with the way that the circumstances of children continually improved up to the early '70s. Public assistance (now Income Support), for a married couple with children was almost the same proportion of personal disposable income between 1950 and 1990, but those living below 140% of this level rose from 8% to 30%. The living standards of those *below* the Income Support line have fallen. The proportion of children living at incomes below the national average rose to 75% in 1991, and those below half the average grew from 10% to 31%. Even the percentage of children living below half of the 1979 real income level rose from 10% to 15% as the fortunes of the increasing number of couples with children at the bottom of the income distribution actually fell. Childless couples have done best and saw an income rise of 42% through the '80s — if pensioners (who saw a rise of 48%) are not included.

The media preoccupation with 'lone parent poverty' ignores the preponderance and growth of two parent families among the poorest groups, and the rise

in working poor couples. Couples with children made up 49% of the bottom 10% of the income distribution in 1991 and lone parents only 11%. Had lone parents stayed in, or formed, families, many might have been just as poor, if not poorer.

If the rules of 'responsible' parenthood are that you delay having children until you have a reliable income, an independent household, and can give proper parental care, then fewer people can afford children. Marrying late, delaying births, having no children or just one, are all adaptations to the rising personal costs of childrearing. So too is the way in which mothers return to work sooner after birth and between births, where most of the reasons are financial. People not only have fewer children than ever before, but spend less time with the one(s) they have and less time together. As family resources are restricted, and time is squeezed, investment in children contracts; just when they need to be equipped for an ever more competitive world.

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The future of the nation can be forecast from the fate of families and their condition describes the make-up of a people. With families congregating in the bottom income ranges, the thinning of the middle classes — and severe attrition of the 'respectable' working class — reverses the processes inseparable from the advance and spread of civilised prosperity in Western society. For Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus, the growth of the 'middlin' sort', with their firm sense of belonging and contribution, offered the best expectations of an increase in the happiness and stability of human society. Their domestic well-being,

strong beliefs in the significance of home and family as the source of personal contentment and social stability, and their heavy investment in carefully reared children, showed a high level of prudence, anchored in a secure level of comfort.

Now there is the growth of 'underclasses'. While some may dislike this term, and others may dispute the facts of modern poverty, it is undeniable that a massive pauperization of procreation is occurring. The proportion of families receiving one or more means tested benefit has exploded upwards. The proportion of under fives whose parents receive either Income Support or Family Credit (which makes up the net wages of the low paid), now stands at nearly 40 per cent and approaches 30 per cent for children aged 12 to 15.

Families are faced with an old dilemma, while the ways in which this used to be solved have been dismantled or abandoned. Left to itself, a competitive wage economy discourages family formation and home life. The incentive structure imposes a choice between poverty or relative privation with children, or a better standard of living without them. Variations in living standards owe as much to differences in family responsibilities as to initial income. Here, the need for well-trained and motivated people to pay for and provide future goods and services, preserve the projects of any lifetime, and sustain everyone's social world, conflicts directly with individual incentives which make childrearing economically foolish. Even were vertical redistribution of wealth carried out as drastically as the most extreme socialists have desired, it would make little dent in poverty and inequality, because it bypasses a primary reason for their existence — children.

When the double-income couple is contrasted with the single-income family, it can be seen at once that the decision to have and care for children is a decision to lower one's standard of living to about a third of what it might be. Journalists and politicians speak glibly of families with a gross income of £25,000 being 'rich'. But this income is roughly equivalent, when it

comes to living standards, to the income of a single person with £10,000 or less. When the incomes of various household types are adjusted for dependency, we see that the top income band is occupied by households of two adults with no children, and the next band by singles.

Once, the principle of the taxable surplus, or ability to pay, dictated that taxation should take account not only of the level of income, but also of the numbers dependent upon it. It became part of a whole complex of measures governing employment, housing and the tax-benefit system which protected the security, living standards and status of the family. Tax allowances were a means of apportioning the total burden among tax payers according to their capacity, and were justified by the classic maxim of Adam Smith and Mill; the equality of sacrifice. As all should bear taxation in proportion to their ability to pay, so bachelors had a far greater capacity than men with children, and there was a limit, necessary for a minimum of comfort, below which none should be taxed.

Cutting the tax rate does nothing to lift poorer families out of tax, reduce family poverty or decrease the relative advantages of non-parents but it effectively increases the burden on families when it is paid for by removing families' allowances. Those who imagine otherwise make an expensive mistake, as do those who support the socialist solution of a minimum wage. The discrepancy in outgoings between the single childless person and the main earner for four or more people is immense. Any attempt to recognise family costs by applying the same tax or wage rate to all is extraordinarily wasteful, since it would go to the majority without any children to support, while being inadequate for many of those with families. (People with three or more children, for example, are a minority of a minority.) The most economical way to help families without wrecking economies is by providing allowances for dependents.

However, the tax system has jettisoned 'ability to pay', on grounds that it must be as 'neutral' as possible. Only then, in the Chancellor's words,

is it "fair to everyone, whatever choice they choose to make". When a man spends his money on raising a family, and makes the major investment in the next generation, it is seen as spent to no better or more necessary purpose than when it goes on the single person's conspicuous consumption. Families are one 'private thing' (Virginia Bottomley) among others, where people's ties and obligations have no more privileged position than those between an individual and his motorbike, and childrearing is just one of a multitude of possible expenditure choices made by consumers. Hence, the aim is a complete 'flattening' of the tax structure. A mother's decision "whether to

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stay at home or to go out to work is a personal choice made by each family according to their own circumstances" according to Kenneth Clarke. Like running a yacht, nobody is prevented from exercising this option by anything but their means. Indeed a man supporting others, is just providing himself with personal services, and can be subject to a local consumption tax on the commodities of mutual obligation and family love.

This fiscal judgement of the family, as a form of self-expression with no special communal significance, mirrors the Law Commission's view that there is no reason for the law to support marriage compared to any other 'liv-

ing arrangement'. Ministerial pronouncements suggest a campaign to root out all residual recognition for family responsibilities. It is as though parents were not themselves taxpayers and their children were not going to become taxpayers, and the aim was to protect the resources of the righteously non-philoprogenitive from the undesirable practice of parenthood. As family life is treated as a hobby its status falls. The privations of parents are perceived as their 'fault', a penalty and adverse judgement for having children. The virtuous, in comparison, are those who restrict themselves to their own consumption and accumulation.

Yet why should the state make any calls on children to provide anything whatsoever for anybody but their own parents? Neither should those who rely upon each other for personal services have to pay the heaviest contributions towards local provisions to sustain the independence of those who have foregone, or otherwise lack, mutual support. It is no coincidence that the average size of households declines as the range of welfare services on offer grows.

Families have also been the funders of other people's benefits, as the continued expansion of the welfare state is mainly paid for by the primary welfare institution. Thus, not only does the present compensation for VAT on fuel for pensioners with Income Support come from increases in family taxation, but *all* pensioners have an increase, paid for by hard-pressed families, who have to meet their bills from reduced resources. Age allowances increased in size and numbers in the '80s, while freezes on child benefit paid for increased benefits to poorer pensioners and for the abolition of the pension earnings rule (whereby the state pension was reduced as earnings). As these freezes remorselessly pushed thousands of families onto means tested Family Credit and Income Support, further freezes and removal of other help from families was 'necessary' to pay for all the extra 'needy' and to reimburse claimants for the poll tax. Families pay for their own poor, as well as everyone else's.

Yet, while families have been plun-

dered for tax cuts and the welfare state has little interest in them except as funders of other people's benefits, they have been spitefully represented as the chief liability on the public purse. As resources have been outstripped by demands from the '70s onwards, the easiest course has been to eliminate help for the young, and expand it to other groups, while simultaneously letting families take the blame for public expenditure. Insofar as anything is left of Child Benefit, it is pejoratively referred to as a 'hand-out', or 'pouring millions down the drain' and blamed for the rising social security bill. Being only £5.99bn out of a total budget of £85.5bn in 1993-94, this is less than the money foregone with the old child tax allowance and should not be counted as public expenditure or an 'additional' cost. Last year, a couple with two children paid as much in income tax and national insurance contributions as they received in Child Benefit at gross earnings of only £145 per week — or within the lowest 10% of the male earnings distribution.

If it did not harm families even more, it might be worthwhile to be completely rid of this convenient scapegoat. The realisation might dawn that the expanding costs of the welfare state are, first of all, related to the increase in the entitlements of the over 60s in the context of population ageing. Compared to the pittance for families, 43 per cent of social security expenditure goes on those over pension age, or £36.76bn, and this has grown by nearly a third in ten years. Those over 75 cost the health and community services more than all other age groups put together, and a further £18.37bn of the social security budget goes on the sick and disabled.

As the cost of childrearing is being treated as a purely personal expense, this has to be met from what is left of parental earnings after involuntary exactions have been made to support unrelated older people. Couples must forego children, and mothers leave their babies, in order to provide the expanding living standards of the comfortably retired. The sums involved are enormous and the current pattern of redistribution from childrearing to

'senior citizens' cannot be justified on the basis of need, equity, or investment (expenditure on the elderly is purely consumption expenditure).

This has all been accompanied by the rapid ascendancy of the institution of retirement, as an expanding period of affluent leisure. If tax allowances based on seniority are the only ones we are being left with so, correspondingly, tax relief for private pensions — not children, marriage or housing — is what we provide for and to a staggering degree. At £9bn in 1993-94, it amounts to nearly double the revenue which will be raised by the tax increases in the 1993 budgets. Moreover, £13.6bn has gone on unnecessary bribes offered to encourage people to leave the State Earnings related Pension Scheme. This scheme could have been replaced, with no losers, by the perfectly sensible arrangements suggested in the 1986 review of benefits.

If the unmitigated cost of supporting dependents and the charges made for these, push people below the official poverty line, they are meant to apply for one or more of the expanding array of means-tested reliefs, which restore the spending power of the worse off as families are pulled downwards. There is Family Credit for the working poor, community charge or council tax benefit, and housing benefit to help pay de-controlled rents or the mortgage interest of the unemployed. Unsurprisingly, this is the second explosive area of social security expenditure. Income Support alone is already near the £16.3bn level predicted for 2000 (or £15.8bn for 1994). By 1993, the increased numbers of lone parents accounted for £6.8bn, in income-related benefits. Housing benefit, to meet the cost of unregulated rents for the poorer tenant and mortgage interest costs for the unemployed, is due to climb from its present £8.821m to £12.7bn in a few years time.

When a welfare system based on need mops up the fall-out from a tax and benefit system which has abandoned the ability to pay, there are social consequences. Those who think that 'targeting' benefits on the 'truly needy', or 'genuinely needy', whoever they are, is a cheap way to help the poor

never seem to consider behavioural change or the administrative costs. It is imagined that 'needies' are a finite, limited group, strictly delineated from 'well-off' families, when the range of family incomes is not very wide.

While it has probably never been used on anything like the present scale, the record of means testing is appalling. It erodes the work ethic, honesty, family structure and social norms. More people come to depend directly on the state for their existence in self-perpetuating and expanding impoverishment and family disintegration. Those out of work would lose so much benefit, incur work expenses, and pay so much tax if they went to work, that they are better off not doing so. Those earning low wages are only a few pence in the pound better off when they raise their wages, and lose all their 'passport benefits', from free prescriptions to maternity grants, from dental treatment to payments for school trips and clothing. They are punished when they try to better themselves, or to keep their families together, since means-tested benefits are much more generous to lone parents.

Policies which promote the ruin of the nation's families are recipes for decay. The only consolation is that the perpetrators who have tried to buy their tenure with a fawning regard for sectional interests, combined with ruthless contempt for those who quietly nurse their bruises, may find that this has been poor politics as well as rotten principle. While families may not noisily protest their claims and their outrage, a 'subversive family' influence is at work. Plans to eliminate the marriage allowance and impose higher national insurance on middle incomes (combined with lower tax bands), cost the Labour Party repeated election defeats. The victors who crowned the slow and systematic dispossession of the family by implementing this policy may have torn up the one card they could always deploy to retain power. But the dirty work done, it is unlikely that their successors will make restitution.

Patricia Morgan is a sociologist and writer.

EDITORIAL

The humanities, it is frequently said, are in a state of crisis, since there is no longer any consensus as to what should be taught or how. Some writers welcome this crisis as a sign that we have entered the postmodern stage of our culture, in which everything and nothing is a legitimate object of study. Others propose, in the place of the 'canon' of great books, a large dose of theory — usually Marxist, feminist, or Foucauldian theory, whose effect is to undermine the old curriculum by exposing it as an instrument of bourgeois power.

The 'theoretical' approach is typified by Stephen Greenblatt, one of the leading academics in American literary studies, the flavour of whose thinking can be gauged from the following extract:

In all my texts and documents there were, so far as I could tell, no moments of pure unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact. If there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system then in force.

(Renaissance self-fashioning: from More to Shakespeare, Chicago 1980.)

This kind of sub-Marxian cliché now passes everywhere for literary scholarship, and a phrase like 'the ideological product of the relations of power in a given society' will pass for an expression of thought, even in the highest academic circles. Not only does the writer have no sense of the polluted history of that phrase. Not only does he fail to examine, or even to state, the once interesting theory of which it is the unthinking by-product. He fails to see that a belief which implies that the works of Shakespeare are devoid of human freedom must be false. His very language shows that, wherever he

turns his eye, he is *bound* to discover the thing of which he complains. Whether it be a Shakespeare sonnet or a laundry bill, Greenblatt will refer it to 'the social and ideological system then in force'. His theory is irrefutable, since it is assumed in the description of the only evidence that could conceivably count against it.

Yet it is the Marxian theory of ideology that is triumphant in the humanities. The assumption is all but universal, that works of art and literature are to be understood as ideological by-products of the system of 'power', and that their meaning lies in their stance towards the prevailing 'constructs' of class, gender and identity. The duty of the critic is to explore the ideology of the works he studies, with a view to 'empowering' those who have been excluded from the privileged culture. A department of humanities is not the peaceful, meditative, unworldly place of popular myth, but an arena of political 'struggle', in which the most urgent battles of our century are being fought.

Not surprisingly, therefore, new criteria for admission to the teaching profession are now adopted. A critic who gives 'traditional' readings of the great books, who ignores or retreats from the ideological 'struggle', who fails to question the way in which 'gender', 'sexuality', 'normality', and 'the self' are 'constructed' by the 'hegemonic' culture, shows himself to be on the other side. And since the other side is composed precisely of the unenlightened — those whose eyes have not been opened by the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' — the other side has no right to teach. Furthermore, it is self-evident that traditional culture has actively 'enforced' the exclusion of women, ethnic minorities, and homosexuals from its privileges; 'affirmative action' requires positive steps in the opposite direction. As a result, a woman versed in Marxist feminism may be regarded as a far stronger candidate for a post in the

humanities than any man, regardless of the real level of her intelligence and knowledge.

British universities have, on the whole, been less subject to this new kind of politicisation than universities in America. Nevertheless, the widespread adoption of 'theory' as the focus of literary studies, and the influence of Terry Eagleton, as exponent of the Marxist view of the subject, has ensured that the old disciplines are increasingly taught according to a political agenda, rather than an intellectual framework. The theories that recommend themselves to the new scholars in the humanities are precisely those — the Marxian and the Foucauldian — which imply that everything is political, and which see the autonomy of intellectual life as no more than an ideological ploy. Art and literature are no longer studied as forms of communication, in which we confront and learn from a human being superior to ourselves. They are placed in their 'context', to be studied as the by-products of a social system, and as part of the ideological mask of power. The utility of theory lies in the fact that it places us outside literature, so that we are no longer engaged with its meaning, no longer in communication with it. Theory estranges us from its object, and presents the most heartfelt discourse as something curious and other.

By contrast, the true critic engages with the work of art, responds to its message, and tries to articulate his response by describing its object. His target is not to explain the work of art, still less to explain it away as a by-product of social forces, but to teach us what to feel in response to it. That this activity is quite distinct from theory-building would be obvious, to anyone who had considered what a theory of art and literature could really be. Those things that pass for theories and which are taught as such are remarkable for their explanatory vacuousness. However they are applied, and to whatever

material, the result will be to 'expose' power and oppression, to 'celebrate' the 'struggles' of the downtrodden group, and to scatter over all areas in which judgement might be exercised, a muffling confetti of postmodernist inverted commas.

If the humanities are in a state of crisis, it is partly because so little attention is paid to the forms of knowledge that they are designed to induce. Theories storm across their territory unresisted, precisely because their matter is not theoretical at all. The humanities form part of moral education, and their concern is to impart neither facts nor the explanations of facts, but the knowledge of human feeling. Emotion — and especially social emotion — is the outcome of habit: our feelings are shaped by exercise, and we acquire them through imitation, collusion and rebuff. The education of the emotions therefore requires examples and comparisons: — paradigms on which our sympathies are exercised.

Learning what to feel involves learn-

ing the proper occasions for emotion. When it comes to those higher emotions, such as love, anger and desire, in which we stake our existence as rational beings, this is a far from simple matter. These emotions are full of myth-making; their urgent demand causes us to overlook much that would warn us to avoid them, or to romanticise and falsify their object. Hence we must learn to extend our sympathies only to what is genuine and undecieved among the higher passions. We must learn to recognise their self-indulgent and sentimental versions, learn to distinguish self-dramatizing bombast from self-sacrificing passion. No theory will impart this knowledge: but a principled attention to the individual work of art or literature may do so. This principled attention is what we mean, or ought to mean, by criticism.

If you examine the work of a real critic — such as T S Eliot, F R Leavis or Matthew Arnold — you will see something remarkable: the weighing of individual words and accents, the demonstration of the fine distinction

between the word that rings truly, and the word which is there for effect. In art, human feeling is put to the test: it is drawn out into aesthetic form, and judged accordingly. The right choice of word can mark the distinction between truth and falsehood, and we see, in the experience of art and literature, just why this distinction matters. We come to understand that certain forms of words, certain lines or shapes or harmonies, are 'not of us'. We cannot hear them, speak them, look at them without that peculiar 'yuk' feeling, so strangely similar to the feeling with which we respond to an unwanted advance or a slimy gesture of complicity. Learning this is learning what to feel: for it is learning to discriminate among the public expressions of feeling, and to distinguish the true from the false occasions of sympathy. The humanities will survive, only if they impart this kind of learning: but it is a learning that is essentially resistant to politicisation, and which sees the proliferation of 'theory' as the sign of moral anaesthesia.

Letters

Sir,

Until recently I thought that the reason why some composers write music that sounds so awful (*Modern Art*, SR September 1994) is that they can be sure it has not been written before. Then I escorted a lady to a concert which included the premiere of a modern concerto and my ears were opened.

"It's all atmosphere," she said. "It reminds me of *Macbeth*", Shakespeare's of course not Verdi's.

The shutters dropped from my mind. The composer was not writing to please a concert audience but angling for a job in Hollywood writing incidental music for horror films.

It might be good for music if composition were no longer either taught in colleges or subsidized out of public

funds. Almost certainly music would still get composed but it would come from the heart and its production would not have been a means of keeping some of the intelligentsia out of the dole queues.

Bill Todd
Leeds

Sir,

A recent correspondent to the *Salisbury Review* asked what progress was being made with the "Manifesto for United Kingdom Conservatism" following the first conference "Conservatism in Crisis" which was held at Templeton College, Oxford in June.

The manifesto has grown into a substantial document. It is based on the

six "pillars" of Conservatism: the individual, family, local community, sovereign nation state, rule of law, and market economy — which explains why it is antithetical to the present administration! Many of the policy proposals in the document could not be implemented by the other political parties since they have in so many areas surrendered their (and our) parliamentary rights to legislate.

The number and volume of complaints about this disastrous government has not been matched by the number of alternative policy proposals. Readers of the *Salisbury Review* are invited to submit outline policies — particularly on the NHS, education, scientific research, legal aid and defence — please write to me at the

address below.

It is hoped that at least one follow up conference "Conservatism in Crisis" will be held in due course. Those who wish to be kept informed please let me know.

Rodney E.B. Atkinson
60 Ashbourne Court
Woodside Park Road
London N12 8SB

Sir,

Your assertion (Editorial June 1994) that the assaults of the American Conservative press on Clinton are really an assault on the office he occupies is ludicrous. Do you also believe that the D-Day veterans, standing on the shores of Normandy where fifty years ago they risked their lives for their country, were really jeering the office of the Presidency, not its present draft-dodging occupant. The D-Day veterans understand that power belongs in the service of authority. The left attacks authority so it can seize power free of authority's constraint. That is why Bill Clinton subverts the military morality and the free market, and why he is despised by the American right.

The failure of the American right to urge President Clinton to intervene in the Balkans and other trouble spots is due not to a preoccupation with Clinton bashing, but to a return to isolationist roots, of putting America first. Indeed the American conservative community was badly split over the Gulf war and has been urging the President not to intervene in the Balkans for lack of a clear national interest. Perhaps these conservatives are wrong, blinded by either a parochial view of national interest or just selfish. If so, then *The Salisbury Review* should confront them directly — certainly no journal is better qualified to do so. But please refrain from bemoaning President Clinton's hands being tied. If they are, I'd hate to see what he would do with them free.

Other than that, keep up the good work. There's nothing like you in the U.S.

Charles Lapo
Goleta, CA.

Sir,

Paul Belien and Raymond Tong (*SR* September 1994) both arrive at strangely complacent conclusions which defy their dire analyses.

It is no comfort to be assured by Paul Belien, after his devastating indictment of the Brussels bureaucracy, that "the EC/EU structure is self-defeating" or that "the moderate socialist welfare regimes of the mixed economy in Western Europe..... will implode as completely as the regimes in the East", if meanwhile he is condemning us to decades of oppression followed by a violent revolution to regain our independence. Nor is it any comfort to be assured by Raymond Tong that the separation of Wales and Scotland will facilitate the assertion of English national identity and stable conservative government, if he is condemning us to a fresh explosion of bureaucracy throughout Britain.

The opposition parties, in supporting Home Rule for Wales and Scotland while denying Home Rule for Britain, share one objective which reconciles their inherent contradictions — that is to enlarge the business of politics both domestically and in Europe for the benefit of all the public parasites.

The uncanny physical resemblance between Jacques Delors and Sir Gordon Borrie, chairman of Labour's Commission on Social Justice, is no accident, for they are clones; proliferants of universal state dependency.

Vivian Linacre
Edinburgh

Sir,

David Holbrook is no alarmist when writing against the all pervasive pornoclimatic in which our offspring are reared. Both official condom-sex "education" at school and informal enculturation through TV screen entertainments, gigs and discos, apprentice children to the morality and methods of the whore house and dope den.

In his book, *Sex and Dehumanization*, Holbrook explained his idiosyncratic use of the term "schizoid" in analysing the culture of evil and cited substantial anthropological research

indicating that a complex and rational social order could not survive the abolition of a marital concept that reduced sexual opportunities for potential mothers in their early years.

Put the "clock" back? The Soviet Union, for once, showed in the late 1920's that it can be done. But it is necessary to demand ruthless action against the moguls of commercialized vice whose only standard of conduct is business is business.

Jonh MacNab
Stronsay

Sophist's Corner

There are moments when bad taste is the last refuge of common sense. Let me be in bad taste. Perhaps philosophers *should* strangle their wives. The names of Socrates' wife has passed into the language as that of an ignorant shrew. Philosophy is an unworldly, abstruse, often egomaniacal obsession. The body is an enemy to absolute logic or metaphysical speculation. The thinker inhabits fictions of purity, of reasoned propositions as sharp as white light. Marriage is about roughage, bills, garbage disposal, and noise. There is something vulgar, almost absurd, in the notion of a Mrs Plato or a Mme Descartes, or of Wittgenstein on a honeymoon. Perhaps Louis Althusser was enacting a necessary axiom or logical proof when, on the morning of November 16, 1980, he throttled his wife.

George Steiner

Reviews

A True Story of History

John Morrill

A Short History of England G. K. Chesterton, pp.176. £6.99. (Fisher Press, 1994)

Chesterton wrote this book in 1917, three years into the Great War and five years before his reception into the Roman Catholic Church. The shadow of the former and the pre-echo of the second dominate it. Neither makes it a gloomy book. It is learned; witty, passionate, accessible and written by someone who knows little about history but much about life. I read it on a sunny day and just two clouds scudded across the sky. We do not write History books like this any longer and we have discovered that much knowledge is a dangerous thing. Chesterton had been at art school after all, and had been spared the Germanic gradgrindism of Acton's Cambridge and antiquarian whiggery of Stubbs' Oxford. He followed his instincts and they were healthy ones. The second cloud was the sad recognition that although (or is it because?) Chesterton is a great writer and a greater entertainer, he is ignored by the literary establishment. He had a wonderful way with words and an ability to manipulate the English language to maximum effect in the service of a serious argument. Academics in English departments therefore reject him in order to write yet more books on the neurotic obsessions of D.H. Lawrence.

Chesterton tells the story of England (with glances at the Celtic realms) through a series of allusive vignettes. Each chapter is a set of aphoristic commentaries on one or two key moments or persons. 'The problem of the Plantagenets' centres around the conflict of Henry II and Becket; 'the meaning of merry England' around the rise

of the guilds; 'the rebellion of the rich' around the dissolution of the monasteries. It would be hard in any of these cases to find five facts that would appear in a modern textbook. It would be hard in any modern textbook to find anything like as much keen appreciation of the real issues. Here is a man who can see the wood where there are precious few trees; and a writer who can capture essences in captivating aphorisms: Thus 'feudalism was a tenure and a tenure by military service. Men paid their rent in steel instead of gold'; or 'the recognized value of patriotism is not mere citizenship. The recognized reality of patriotism is for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, in national glory and in national disgrace'; or 'the debate about the Church of England, then and now ... is not a debate about what an institution ought to do, or whether an institution ought to alter, but about what the institution actually is ... The national church was really national, in a sense that was emotionally vivid though intellectually vague.'

His judgements on people and events are just as thrilling: 'One does not know whether to thank the Normans more for appearing or disappearing ... [They] were loyal to a kingdom they had not yet made'; Islam's 'highest motive was a hatred of idols, and in its view the Incarnation was itself an idolatry...[it was] a sort of minority report of the hebraists, something like a Christian heresy'; on Mary Tudor — 'what made all the difference was this: that even in the Catholic reign the

property of the Catholic Church could not be restored. The very fact that Mary was a fanatic and yet this act of justice was beyond the wildest dreams of fanaticism — that is the point ... She could punish heresy, she could not punish sacrilege. She was forced into the false position of killing men who had not gone to church and sparing those who had gone there to steal the church ornaments.'

His thesis is relatively straightforward. The English are classically-conditioned Celts, not German emigrés bringing inherited cultural diseases with them across the Channel; they were a people rescued from the barbarism that filled the vacuum left by a collapsing Empire by the advance of Christendom; theirs was a spirituality plundered from them at the Reformation; above all they were a people whose liberties were self-made painfully and crudely through the high middle ages, which liberties were taken systematically from them by a Hydra-headed aristocracy. Chesterton's bêtes-noires are Teutons, Protestants, peers and Progress. His is a true Tory history, populist, steeped in a politics of regret rather than a politics of false hope, doe-eyed about lost liberty and dry-eyed about modern corruption. I once had a student who argued that the difference between Tories and Country Whigs in the 1730s was that Tories deplored everything that had happened since 1688 while Country Whigs deplored nothing except the next change. Tories were therefore free to develop radical policies that were unconstrained

by commitments to a recent past and a drifting present. This is Chesterton's temperamental position in the 1910s and it is not without its modern exponents.

His invective can be terrifying: here he is on the Hanoverian succession: 'William of Orange was like a gun dragged into the breach of a wall ... George of Hanover was simply something stuffed into a hole in the wall by English aristocrats, who practically admitted that they were simply stopping it with rubbish'. The typical Victorian gentleman, he tells us, did not come over with William the Conqueror but only assisted, 'in a shuffling manner', at the coming over of William of Orange; his glory came not from the Crusades 'but from the Great Pillage of the mid sixteenth century.' He continues: 'the secret is worse [for] not only was such a family founded on stealing, but the family was stealing still ... It is a grim truth that all through the eighteenth century, all through the great Whig speeches about liberty ... one process was steadily going on in the central senate of the nation. Parliament was passing bill after bill for the enclosure, by the great landlords, of such of the common lands as had survived ... It is the prime political irony of our history that the Commons were destroying the commons.' He does not have a good word to say of the Parliament, at least from the time when it

compelled Richard II to betray his promises to the followers of Wat Tyler. Parliamentary government was from then on oligarchic government; and it supplanted the handclasp of benevolent monarchy and burgeoning local self-government. By the 18th century, England was an aristocracy and the very reverse of a democracy, so that 'when republicanism really entered the world, they instantly waged two great wars with it ... America and France revealed the real nature of the English Parliament. Ice may sparkle, but a real spark will show it is only ice. So when the red fire of the Revolution touched the frosty splendours of the Whigs, there was instantly a hissing and a strife; a strife of the flame to melt the ice, of the water to quench the flame.'

The blackest episodes are those in which those in power betray their promises to those they rule: examples abound but I loved two above all: the accounts of the treaty of Limerick of 1691 and of the Great Reform Bill of 1832. Of the treaty of Limerick, by which William of Orange promised complete religious freedom to Irish Catholics if they ended the struggle to retain James II, a promise quickly betrayed, Chesterton writes: 'it was a tragic necessity that the Irish should remember it; but it was far more tragic that the English forgot it. For he who has forgotten his sin is repeating it incessantly for ever.' We

remember that the English had more than one Western Front in 1917. Of 1832 he says: 'the old parliamentary oligarchy abandoned the first lines of trenches because they had by that time constructed a second line of defence. It consisted in the concentration of colossal political funds in the private and irresponsible power of the politicians ... expended on the gerrymandering of the enormously expensive elections.'

This is a work of huge eccentricity and imagination. Both are exemplified in a single sentence. Trying to conjure up the enormity of Henry II submitting to be whipped at the tomb of St Thomas Beckett, Chesterton invites his reader 'to imagine Mr Cecil Rhodes submitting to be horsewhipped by a Boer in St Paul's Cathedral, as an apology for some indefensible death incidental to the Jameson Raid' (or, I suppose he would say nowadays, Lady Thatcher receiving forty strokes from an Argentine admiral). Chesterton's targets in 1917 would all have smarted; by 1994 perhaps the book seems more benign and beaming than he intended. But — unsullied by the animadversions that were later to see him accused of a Christian Fascism and anti-semitism — it is a work that is eccentric, imaginative, startling, and above all brilliantly written and hugely enjoyable. Since no-one writes like this any longer, everyone should read this new version of a classic text.

For Birmingham and Empire

A.W. Purdue

Joseph Chamberlain, Entrepreneur in Politics Peter T. Marsh, Yale University Press, 1994, £30.

The career of Joseph Chamberlain soared over British politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries like some great comet which, as it moved from left to right, dazzled, astonished and divided the politicians and electorate of the day. Chamberlain

was a vital but destructive force who propelled himself largely by his own energy and vision. He had, of course, a terrestrial power base but it was not like that of other British politicians. While others relied on parties, his power was based on a city, perhaps a

region. His deep empathy with Birmingham and the West Midlands provided him with a secure fortress from which he could sally forth on his latest crusade to change the agenda of political life. The words which Baldwin applied to Lloyd George could as well

fit Joseph Chamberlain; he was, "a great dynamic force...a very terrible thing".

A major merit of Peter Marsh's splendid biography of the political outsider who split two parties, the liberals over Home Rule and the Conservatives over Tariff Reform, is the attention he pays to Chamberlain's early career as a manufacturer and a politician in local government. Here were clear and substantial achievements, the making of money and the provision of employment, followed by the realisation of a civic vision which made Birmingham a widely emulated model of successful urban government. The entrepreneur in politics had an enthusiasm for strong government, for intervention and planning, even for municipal socialism. In a sense his later career in national politics was a prolonged attempt to do for Britain and then the Empire what he had done for Birmingham.

Chamberlain, once he had entered national politics, moved from left to right across the conventional political spectrum, beginning on the radical wing of the Liberal Party and ending, after the amalgamation of the Liberal Unionist and Conservative organisations, as almost a Conservative. Yet he was never in his ideas or sympathies a Conservative, but always a radical, who was pragmatic as to the vehicles that could forward his plans and convictions.

Britain in the late nineteenth century faced a combination of problems that were to endure into the twentieth century: a manufacturing economy in relative decline, the demands of a great power and imperial position that threatened to outrun the military and the need to improve the standard of living of the working classes, now the majority of the electorate. The apparent change in Chamberlain's preoccupations from social reform to the consolidation and development of the Empire was in fact a growing conviction that social reform and imperialism went hand in hand; the latter would provide the resources for the former.

It was the fluidity of the political climate of the day that gave Chamberlain the ability to have a major impact on politics without ever enjoying the

leadership of a great political party. Great new issues and ideas, Home Rule, the Empire and the role of the state, cut across traditional party viewpoints. Ireland split the Liberal Party asunder, Liberals were among the most enthusiastic imperialists and the Conservatives could seem more sympathetic to state interventionism and social welfare reforms than Liberals. It was even for a time uncertain whether socialism would inherit the tradition of radical nonconformity or follow Robert Blatchford's model of a soldier's socialism, more in tune with nationalism, beer and popular culture. In such circumstances a man with will and vision could make a difference.

It is likely that, without Gladstone's conversion to home rule for Ireland, Chamberlain would have succeeded to the leadership of the Liberal Party and to a degree refashioned it. The anti-aristocratic champion of the industrial cities was a natural heir to the radicalism of Cobden and Bright and could have hoped to move that tradition away from its *laissez-faire* base along the lines of the Unauthorised Programme. It is true that there was animosity between the old man in a hurry and the equally impatient younger man which made compromise difficult but, once both had developed their policies on the Home Rule question, there was little room for compromise. Chamberlain's feeling that British public opinion would not stomach a parliament in Dublin was to be proved right. After the Liberal divisions had hardened, Chamberlain's position was always anomalous. Within the Liberal Unionist Party, he and his faction contrasted oddly with Hartington and the Whigs, while, though he came to exert enormous influence upon the Unionist alliance and upon its senior partner the Conservative Party, he never had a true political home, unless it was the Tariff Reform League. Yet in the years between 1886 and 1895, when he was out of office, he exerted a great intellectual influence upon Conservative social policy. It was in this period also that he became convinced that in the development and greater cohesion of the Empire lay the key, not only to Britain's future as a great power but

also to the revitalisation of industry and the provision of social reform without excessive taxation. In 1895, when invited to join Salisbury's cabinet, he asked for the Colonial Office.

Chamberlain considered the Empire an "undeveloped estate" and it is tempting to conclude that he had no more success with the development of the entire estate as Colonial Secretary than he had with his own little bit of it when he lost a good part of his fortune in attempting to cultivate sisal in the Bahamas. His broad and romantic vision of the Empire bore little relation to its reality, for imperial federation ran counter to the economic interests of the Dominions with their desire to protect their own industries. Much the same can be said of his world view which envisaged alliances with the United States and Germany; he liked the idea and ignored the difficulties.

But his analysis of Britain's position was substantially correct. The climate for British manufacturing had declined since he made his fortune as a screw manufacturer and Britain's military power was insufficient for her needs. Whereas Salisbury's deep pessimism made him exert all his skill and intelligence to delay decline, Chamberlain was for plunging into a desperate attempt to avert it.

If it was a noble effort, the consequences were unfortunate. Chamberlain must take much of the responsibility for the Boer War, which he thought would strengthen and which in fact weakened his imperial cause. Little came of his plans for imperial federation and his last crusade for tariff reform, designed as the master plan to further his three aims of protecting British industry, uniting the Empire and paying for social reforms, led to the split of the Unionists and a decade of Liberal Rule, which made Home Rule once more a live issue.

And yet Chamberlain was in touch with a deep well of imperial feeling both in Britain and the Dominions and the common imperial patriotism he encouraged proved important in two world wars. The desperate problems his younger son Neville had to face in the nineteen-thirties were fundamentally the same as his father had fore-

seen and to which he had sought to provide solutions. That they had not been solved does not prove Joseph Chamberlain's policies correct, but no one else had come up with convincing alternatives. Neville introduced tariff reform as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1932 and a degree of empire free trade at Ottawa in 1933. Too little, too late, for the father's vision, yet Britain's economic recovery in the 'thirties owed something to both. In foreign policy, Neville had, as prime minister of a much weaker Britain, to deal with the same widespread commitments of imperial defence and the threat of war in Europe.

Peter Marsh's biography is a considerable achievement and gives us a rounded portrait of this fascinating but not too likeable man. Chamberlain

with his monocle, orchid and morning coat was stiff, his considerable emotions always tightly under control. Marsh provides us with a telling picture of his subject playing tennis in morning coat and top hat. His friendships did not survive political disagreements and, as Beatrice Potter, later Beatrice Webb, found out, if he liked women who were intelligent, it was so that they could be better listeners.

He could be brutal and perhaps devious in his methods. He may have known just enough about the Jameson Raid to have been able to take credit had it succeeded or to disavow it, as he did, when it failed. Was he a good friend to Sir Charles Dilke at the time of the Crawford divorce case? Did he encourage Captain O'Shea to divorce his wife, thus bringing about Parnell's

downfall? There is too little evidence to condemn Chamberlain's role in these affairs but too much to exonerate him.

He was however a great patriot; not the sort of patriot who loves an abstract vision of his country but one who genuinely cared for the British people and their future. His patriotism began with a great city and his determination to improve the condition of the working people of Birmingham and rippled outwards to include the Empire. Beyond any other politician he took his vast audiences and the electorate seriously and believed that a mass electorate was worthy of reasoned argument. He succeeded in inspiring many and created a new consciousness of nationhood and Empire. Peter Marsh concludes, "As with the Empire, so with his city, he fostered an unfamiliar level of patriotism."

An Alien Culture

Gerald Russello

The Emerging Atlantic Culture Thomas Molnar, Transaction Publishers, 112 pp, £20.95.

This book examines the phenomenon of cultural transition, and chronicles the emergence of a new cultural force in the West, a *tertium quid* that is neither the historic culture of Europe nor the new "multitude and magnitude" anti-culture of America. While this new "Atlantic" cultural form will be more a child of the New World than the Old, its parentage will barely be recognizable. The cultural landscape of the European continent is being pulled to the Atlantic by the force of this new cultural influence, wreaking changes on the Continent of a magnitude that have not been seen for five hundred years.

This phenomenon is not, Thomas Molnar is at pains to make clear, a genuine example of the traditional cultural interaction that has occurred

between America and the Old World. America, seedbed of the new Atlantic culture, is the active partner but not the reflective one, for it does not consider any interests other than its own. America does not interact with other cultures so much as make them irrelevant to the long march of technology, pluralism, democracy and commercialism that has been triumphant since 1945. The ancient societies of the Continent, on the other hand, have thought too little during the last half-century over the significance of these "brutal and generous, naive and legalistic" aliens who have come among them on the strength of a great victory and who have acted the conquerors — albeit with smiles and bags of money — ever since.

The New World has always repre-

sented for Europeans a country free from the bonds of memory that have chained them to their past. The firestorm of the Second World War convinced Europe that "America," as the embodiment of progress and modernity, was the vision of the future. Did not the New World save the Old from tyranny and destruction, its natural end? An exhausted and demoralized Europe turned to America for guidance, for its societal continuity was broken and the consumerism of America promised fortune to the member of the deracinated *monoclass* (Molnar's term) that quickly assumed places of power. The Cold War only strengthened this impression. In the popular imagination, and to some extent in reality, America was the White Knight protecting civilization from the

Eastern barbarians.

For fifty years Europe slumbered and was comforted by this historical sleight of hand, but now the countries of Europe have begun to wonder at the conquering army in their midst, and are reflecting on the history of the relationship between the two. America, meanwhile, is still content with its belief that history has no further purpose, as it has culminated in America itself — witness the fanfare in the United States caused by Francis Fukuyama's book *The End of History*, whose thesis declares that the only path left to the countries of the world is that of American liberal democracy.

Molnar, an astute observer of events on both sides of the Atlantic, provides a brilliant portrait of the cultural transformation that has occurred in the last half-century and which promises to bring even more sweeping changes in the next half. He has harsh words for what passes for culture in America, contrasting the utilitarian notion of culture, defined as the "shaper of a more democratically and usefully lived life," with the European understanding of culture as the highest expression of a society's intellectual and spiritual creation. Between these two understandings, there is fixed a great gulf.

The Emerging Atlantic Culture, however, is no mere anti-American diatribe. The book is rich in historical understanding, and Molnar carefully explores the convoluted and ambivalent relationship that has existed between America and Europe. A proper recognition and understanding of these

new cultural forces originating from America is essential for Europeans who wish both to accept modernity and yet desire to preserve their own culture apart from the grasp of the emergent Atlantic culture, which is a reversal of the Greco-Roman and Hebrew foundations of Europe.

Molnar notes the significant cultural indicators of our time: the explosion of mass tourism, fuelled in large part by American wealth and example, which reduces authentic cultural sites and tradition to "attractions"; the extreme emphasis placed on classification and organization, eliminating the wilder regions of the human spirit; the imposition of the values of the market place on every area of life; art transformed into an occupation and subset of the entertainment industry. The book contains penetrating discussions of the many connecting threads that constitute a culture, and how each thread, under the immense weight of the new culture, has been influenced. For example, Molnar explores the effect the preservation of endangered species has on the human imagination, truncating the unexplored and therefore mysterious areas and exposing the wild fecundity of the animal world to the sterility of the scientific journal and laboratory.

American dominance, however, is not assured, and Molnar hopes that even now Europe may escape the full consequences of the Atlantic culture. America has become burdened, of late, by her own excesses. Molnar discerns two such weaknesses:

One is that the United States has re-

mained in a sense *alone*, deprived suddenly of its enemy and partner, the Kremlin's empire, which was for four decades an energizing and mobilizing factor in the eyes of American leaders and masses. The second obstacle is the emergence of the other half of Europe with its *sui generis* history and personality, or at any rate with its specific weight eventually capable of distracting western Europe from its American dreams." (Emphasis in original).

The eastern half of Europe, just released from one tyrant, will be (Molnar implies) loath to exchange its freedom for a new master. In addition, the newly-liberated countries have a strong sense of nationality honed by four decades of oppression. They may be able to provide an example to the western nations and be a counterpoint to the pull of America. The United States has internal problems as well; its increasing diversity of population and explosion of interest groups of all kinds, each clamouring for a larger portion of government largesse and separating the populace along ethnic, sexual or racial lines, weakens America's claim of moral superiority and right to world leadership.

The birth of a new culture is always a complex event, and Molnar makes no claims to prescience as to the shape or ultimate destiny of this new "Atlantic culture." His shrewd predictions, as well as his deep understanding of the main currents of American and European culture, justify the peoples of England and Europe examining more closely the future their prodigal child is preparing for them.

Notes on Reviewers

Ian Crowther is our Literary Editor.

Patricia Lança is a writer and former deputy in the Portuguese Parliament.

James McNamara is a freelance writer.

John Morrill is Reader in Early Modern History and Vice Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge. His most recent book is *The Nature of the English Revolution*.

Dennis O'Keeffe is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of North London.

A W Purdue is a Lecturer in History at the Open University.

Gerald Russello is a freelance writer in the United States. His work has appeared in many popular and scholarly journals including the *University Bookman* and *Modern Age*.

England: Noble Estate or Limited Company?

Ian Crowther

The Tory View of Landscape, Nigel Everett, Yale University Press, 1994, £35. **The Undoing of Conservatism**, John Gray, The Social Market Foundation, 1994, £10. **The Principle of Duty**, David Selbourne, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994, £15. **Making Men Moral**, Robert P. George, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, £27.50.

Toryism has its origins in a movement of opposition to the commercialisation first of land, then of social life in general. It is thus one of history's little ironies that the political party which still rejoices in the name 'Tory' should have come to identify itself so unreservedly with the "enterprise culture" or what Mrs Thatcher less prissily dubbed a "society of go-getters". Where present-day Tories bemoan Britain's allegedly anti-industrial or commercial spirit, the original eighteenth-century Tories inveighed against the unloosing of just this spirit, in the name of that older England — "slow, dignified, shaded, and beautiful with the public wandering freely through a variety of landscapes" — which they saw as in danger of extinction at the hands of improving landlords intent upon privatising their estates for the sake of self-enrichment and glorification.

The Tory View of Landscape, so engagingly recapitulated by Nigel Everett in a book whose beauty matches its subject, is really a synecdoche for the Tory view of society as a beneficent hierarchy reposing on those virtues of hospitality, local affection, community, continuity and local concern which are all supposedly bound up with the ownership of land. As Everett writes, "throughout the 18th century, and much of the 19th, arguments about the aesthetics of landscape were almost always arguments about politics... In the Tory view, those who abandoned the landscape to the market were also abandoning the order of civil

society to fragmentation." Toryism was at its most articulate in resisting the idea, put about by the political economists and eagerly embraced by the Whig oligarchy, that by some serendipitous alchemy the base mettle of private interest is transmuted into the gold of public welfare. One result of this doctrine's application through inequitable bills of private enclosure and cruel Game Laws was that England's peasantry and yeomanry, "the basis of a contented and moral society", disappeared far more rapidly and in greater numbers than their European counterparts. Together with the tyrannical appropriation of meadows, public commons, cottages and farmhouses, sometimes extending even to the destruction of entire villages and the displacement of their inhabitants, went the progressive landowner's desire to parade his lofty mansion within a dependent parkland uncluttered by the common, the rustic and the public.

In 'Capability' Brown and his principal successor, Humphrey Repton, the Whig idea of the country house found its supreme exponents. Instead of the "traditional pattern in which the mansion was clearly seen as part of a community, with adjacent village and parish church", there was now to be a clear separation between the polite and the rustic, with the entire landscape ennobled by Grecian temples, grottoes, follies, plantations and artificial lakes, exhibiting the proprietor's taste and the extent of his personal influence. What a critic of Brown's work called this "affectation of false gran-

deur" contrasts with the earlier Tory image of the country house, poetically idealised from Ben Johnson's 'To Penshurst' to Pope's *Moral Essays*, as belonging to the locality rather than the locality belonging to it.

It was to this earlier view of the country estate as an integrated society that Uvedale Price appealed in his anti-Brownian *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794). Price drew upon the 'affecting images' of Goldsmith and of Gainsborough to conjure up a landscape reflecting in the harmony of its parts the "mutual connection and dependence" of all the different ranks and orders of men and the "voluntary ties" by which they are "bound and united to one another."

Picturesque expressions and habits of thought are of course pervasive in the work and imagery of the Tory Romantics, Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge, all of whom developed the conception of the English nation as a 'noble estate'. But how was this image to be sustained and prevented from degenerating into a mere ornamental relic of the past when, by the end of the Napoleonic wars, it was clear that the commercial spirit was well and truly out of the bottle and could not be put back? Coleridge went further than Wordsworth or Southey in facing up to this question. He acknowledged that, in the great mass and in normal circumstances, the supply of goods, and the determination of their prices, were best left to the motives of self-interest operating in a free market. But while Coleridgean Toryism felt obliged to

recognize England's aspiration to be a successful commercial nation, it was opposed to the simple-minded 'radicalism' of those who argued that the complex ends of England and of humanity could all be encompassed within the narrow maxims of political economy. Coleridge's concern is with countervailing, humanizing forces in the community which would check the spread of the commercial spirit and prevent it contaminating the national character to the point where, for example, knowledge of no immediate utility is destined for "plebification", wealth is mistaken for well-being, and private interests presumptuously trumpeted as public goods.

The central problem of Conservatism, to which Coleridge addressed himself, and many nineteenth-century Tories after him, among them Disraeli, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, Richard Castler and John Ruskin, was that if the market were not contained within its proper sphere, there would soon be nothing left to conserve. But the mainstream of modern Conservatism has flowed with the 'tide of history', leaving non-financial and non-utilitarian institutions and values to sink or swim in its wake. Nowhere has the collapse of politics into economics, and of the moral into the material economy, been more evident than in the political party which still dares to dignify itself by the name Conservative. Everett is scathing in his criticism of modern Conservatism, not least for the way it has misappropriated Adam Smith as the unequivocal champion of a commercial society, which he most certainly was not.

Smith does indeed think that the State literally has no business involving itself in strictly economic processes, but this is not merely because the market operates best when left to itself. It is also because, Smith believes, the State's distinct obligation to take what he terms an "extensive view of the general good" is best discharged by its standing aloof from the often corrupting processes of economic improvement. There is certainly no 'natural harmony', in Smith's view, between government and "the clamorous importunity of partial interests" or "the

sneaking arts of underlying tradesmen". Unlike agricultural investment, which is tied to a "precise spot", nomadic capital has no "fixed or necessary residence" and so is free of that loyalty to persons and places which it is nevertheless in the interests of society to nurture.

Modern Conservatism is at its most philistine in its dismissal of our literary culture which it holds responsible for England's low levels of innovation and enterprise. Everett quotes Geoffrey Howe on this subject to damning effect. For Howe the blame for England's insufficiently entrepreneurial spirit lies in the writings of "people like William Blake" (Jane Austen would have served equally well for his purpose, as indeed would countless other major writers). In a similar vein *The Economist* in 1992 ranted on hysterically about our "pre-occupation with the past" and advocated the vigorous "bulldozing away" of everything tainted with tradition and prejudice, including presumably the study of English literature! The net effect of this view of our traditional culture as the enemy of economic growth is the present glut of University places on science and engineering courses, the supply of which now far exceeds demand as the direct result of the government subsidising these courses in a futile attempt to 'buck the market'.

Today, the party which, above all others, should be identified with our national culture, instead is identified merely with 'enterprise culture' (an oxymoron if ever there was one). The business of Britain is business. From which it follows that consumer choice and market freedoms are the pre-eminent values, and as such have universal application. John Gray sees this obsession with the market as a panacea for all our economic and social ills as the principal reason for what he calls *The Undoing of Conservatism*. I don't interpret Gray as saying that market institutions are in themselves inimical to our social wellbeing, only that it is unwise to assume a pre-ordained harmony between the one and the other. It is this liberal assumption which I do think has guided the thought of many contemporary Conservatives, relieving

them of the obligation to think seriously about those aspects of our national life and culture which are not amenable to market solutions.

It would be hard for traditional Conservatives not to agree with Gray's view that market liberal policies reinforce, though they do not cause, the modernist tendency to make "moral judgements into a species of personal preferences, between which reason is powerless to arbitrate." Neither can one deny that modern *anomie* is at least in part a consequence of the incessant change demanded by market processes: "Endless 'downsizing' and 'flattening' of enterprises fosters ubiquitous insecurity and makes loyalty to the company a cruel joke. The celebration of consumer choice, as the only undisputed value in market societies, devalues commitment and stability in personal relationships and encourages the view of marriage and the family as vehicles of self-realisation. The dynamism of market processes dissolves social hierarchies and overturns established expectations. Status is ephemeral, trust frail and contract sovereign." All of which is an argument, Gray insists, not against market forces, but against the centrality in Conservative policy which they have enjoyed in recent years. However, when Gray comes to address how we shall conserve our common life and culture, he shies away from endorsing the traditional values which we might have expected him to have been defending. Gray tells us that "in Britain today, individualism and pluralism are an historic fate." Perhaps so; but then why the concern that market liberalism has been running down "our common stock of cultural traditions"?

Another who deplores "the accelerating process of civic disaggregation" is David Selbourne. But unlike Gray, he does not accept that we are past the civilizational point where a common ethical direction can be found. Selbourne sees in *The Principle of Duty* the basis of a Civic Order which is the very opposite of our present "corrupted liberal order" in which the individual is perceived as the possessor of unqualified rights and the State as the guarantor of them. The libertar-

ian, and sometimes libertine, behaviour of the Whig plutocrats described by Nigel Everett, characterised by its careless disregard for prescriptive rights and customs, has today become an ethic for everyman: all of us now feel we have a right to do what we like with our own, which right is really no more than a claim ('I need', 'I want') to satisfaction and so is everywhere destructive of established rights and duties. Selbourne is surely right in seeing that freedom will have a merely arbitrary or abstract content unless the sense of duty or responsibility which should accompany it is consciously cultivated: in families, schools, communities, companies, professional associations, and finally, in a civic society which conceives of itself as something more than a chance association of moral strangers.

Unfortunately, Selbourne's book is unreadable. The prose is plodding and made more leaden by the author's habit of heaping one abstract formulation upon another, without enlivening them either by example or even by the kind of extended argument which might engage one's intellect; assertion and the incantatory repetition of the same phrases ("dutiless right", "principle of duty", "corrupted liberal order") too often take the place of argument in a

book which is really an inflated pamphlet. This is a great pity, since if a sense of duty is ever to be revived among us 'rights-bearing' moderns, it will have to be buttressed by a far more rigorously defended philosophy than anything Selbourne seems able to comprehend or communicate. In particular, it will not be much use judges in Selbourne's putative Courts of Obligation decking themselves out in the borrowed robes of John Locke and John Stuart Mill. Why in a thesis devoted to reinstating social duties Selbourne should quote so freely from these prophets of individual rights is a mystery. Perhaps he is anxious to conceal, as much from himself as from his readers, the illiberal conclusions to which his book tends. If so, it might explain why his *Principle of Duty* is not more securely founded in what one might still call the central pre-liberal tradition of Western thought.

A most cogent case for the pre-liberal view that the legal prohibition of certain vices is sometimes warranted, for the sake of preserving the moral quality of the cultural environment, has recently been made by Robert P George in his *Making Men Moral*. In a series of chapters George takes issue with such liberal critics of moral legislation as Ronald Dworkin, Jeremy

Walden, David A.J. Richards and Joseph Raz. He also considers Patrick Devlin's celebrated defence of moral laws, criticising and finally rejecting it on the ground that a sound defence of the 'legal enforcement of morals' cannot legitimately prescind from the question of whether the morality being enforced is sound. George does not suppose that laws by themselves can "make men moral". They cannot perform the role of primary moral teacher, which role properly belongs to families, schools and religious institutions. However, "the contribution of law to upholding public morality may be crucial to enabling these institutions to flourish... laws that effectively uphold public morality may contribute significantly to the common good of any community by helping to preserve the moral ecology which will help to shape, for better or worse, the morally self-constituting choices by which people form their character, and in turn affect the milieu in which they *and others* will in future have to make such choices." George's book is exemplary in its lucidly argued defence of positions which are meant long ago to have been dispelled by liberal enlightenment. A conservative disposition, George reminds us, is not merely traditional. It is also rational.

The Monstrous Regiment

Patricia Lança

Who Stole Feminism: How Women have Betrayed Women, Christina Hoff Sommers, Simon & Schuster, 1994

The author, already familiar to *Salisbury Review* readers, is a teacher of philosophy who specializes in ethics. However, her new book is not a philosophical work but a well-documented indictment of new-wave feminism informed throughout by the author's ethical stance in defence of rationality. 'Gender feminism' is the name she gives to new-wave feminism to distinguish it from old-fashioned mainstream or 'equity feminism', which she her-

self advocates and which, she contends, has been hi-jacked by a minority group of militants. The book's provocative title expresses only too well the author's indignation, but after reading this book the reader's may well exceed that of the author. For this is an account of gender feminism's ideological claims; its practice at its own conferences as well as in academic encounters and classroom and campus behaviour; its vast adminis-

trative and political power extending from State governments to Washington itself; and the way it has managed to grasp a large share of funding from both public and private sources.

The sociologists of knowledge have had considerable success in disseminating both moral and epistemological relativism in Western society, but this older kind, for all its tolerance of anti-rationality, prided itself upon a neutral 'non-judgemental' stance, which we

may deplore but at least we find less repugnant than the intense commitment to irrationality adopted by the radical feminists. In a chapter entitled 'New Epistemologies' Sommers describes in terrifying detail how far gender feminists' theories have gone and how influential these have become in American universities and worse, how impermeable their advocates are to reason. Women, they say, as the oppressed sex have an 'epistemic' advantage over men and enjoy privileged 'epistemologies' or 'different ways of knowing'. Male scientists are handicapped: 'a better science would be based on women's domestic experience and practice.' Hence it is up to women, i.e. the gender feminists, 'to reconstruct our cultural and scientific heritage.' This gynocentric critique of knowledge, it is claimed, is as revolutionary as were the theories of Copernicus or Darwin and will transform the knowledge base. (We seem to have heard all this before with other twists from the more extreme sectors of the race lobby and, before these, from self-appointed defenders of the working class.)

How gender feminists set about their task of reconstruction is shown by what they actually do with knowledge. Sommers provides a multitude of examples of unscrupulous distortion of statistics: female deaths from anorexia (naturally, a male-induced disease!); incidence of wife-beating; foetal deformities caused by male violence towards pregnant women; sexual harassment; discrimination in employment and in schools. Well aware of the continuing problems many women face, the author nevertheless felt that figures given in gender feminist publications seemed excessive: on deaths from anorexia, for example, the claim of 150,000 in a year against what turned out to be the true figure of 54. Sommers's scepticism led her to investigate and track down original sources. She provides many examples of blatant manipulation of figures followed, on confrontation, by refusal to retract. This persistence in error shows that in one respect at least the gender feminists are coherent: they do indeed have an alternative epistemology, one

in which existing reality, history and number have no place.

What all of this leads up to, is the building of the 'victim cult'. At a time when virtually every avenue in public life is open to women, the gender feminist militants are attempting to turn the clock back. To judge by their grievances and demands, they would like to see an end to co-education and a return to female segregation in the educational system while in the work-place it would seem that some of the ayatollahs' rules would not come amiss. Unlike the gender feminists leaders themselves, ordinary women and girls are seen as shrinking violets, Victorian misses incapable of protecting themselves from lascivious and violent males.

Part of Sommers' impact certainly comes from her sense of humour, a quality absent from gender feminists' attitudes, but likely to guarantee the reader several laughs a chapter. What is striking, however, is the author's silence on the delicate question of how and why women so demonstrably sick in spirit have attained the positions of influence she describes, and what may be their true motivations.

This is the question that arises in the reader's mind as the ghastly story unfolds, but she leaves it to us to find the answer. If we, old-style feminists, cannot find one, those the gender feminists call the 'white heterosexual establishment' certainly will; and they will undoubtedly get a lot of feminine support. For the attitudes and behaviour of these female activists provide ample confirmation of the male supremacists' direst prophecies; they justify only too graphically all the age-old prejudices regarding women's alleged inferior intellectual capacities, their tendency to irrational behaviour and their proneness to hysteria and infantilism. If the 'monstrous regiment of women' Sommers describes were really representative of the female sex, then the men were right to keep women suppressed and had better undo emancipation if what it leads to is the sort of things denounced in this book, echoes of which are already being heard quite loudly in countries other than the USA. Fortunately, as Sommers makes clear, gender femi-

nists have as much in common with ordinary women and old-fashioned female emancipationists as the Baader-Meinhof gang had with William Wilberforce.

How is it then, that gender feminists have been so successful? Not only have they achieved a great deal of power and influence in America but they have also managed to make the expression 'political correctness' familiar to every educated household in most western countries. So far their real power is largely restricted to the Anglo-Saxon world; that irritating characteristic common to most European languages of possessing grammatical gender presents virtually insuperable obstacles to the PC agenda of refashioning 'phallogocentric language'. However, even on the European continent gender feminism has its followers and here too it would seem that it has similar origins.

Christina Sommers wisely avoids drawing specific attention to the close parallels that exist between the language and stance of the gender feminists and those of the organized homosexual lobby. Both movements are united in condemnation of the 'white heterosexual establishment'; both movements make a key point of distinguishing sex and gender; both movements wish to end 'indoctrination into gender roles' in schools; both movements are adepts of that strictly meaningless term 'homophobia'. At the same time much of gender feminist verbiage, like that of the homosexual lobby, shares part of its stance with 'black consciousness raisers': problems of harassment; 'black pride', (compare 'homosexual pride' or 'women's pride'); positive discrimination in jobs and studies (although while male homosexuals may complain of being discriminated against, we have yet to hear of them claiming positive advantages — gender feminists would say that as males they already enjoy them).

Disbelief in conspiracy theories apart, all these coincidences are, as the Marxists used to say, no accident. The 'gay and lesbian' movement is already a fact and there is clearly on the far Left a link with racial pressure groups, as

may be seen in practice wherever such groups gain power in local government and elsewhere. For as long as three decades or more this, at first, loose alliance has been advocated by many revisionist Marxists. With the dwindling of the proletariat the aim is to bring together all disaffected minorities and use them as the main stick with which to beat and eventually overthrow the establishment. The collapse of 'real socialism' has accelerated this process, having freed society's professional malcontents from the embarrassing burden of association with it. Another accelerating factor, ironic though this may be, is the advent of AIDS. The campaign against the new killer disease (which is far less serious because more easily and simply avoided than many older ailments), instead of being directed at reform of the behaviour that largely leads to it, has been co-opted with a number of objectives in mind. First to make homosexuals seem romantic — 'martyrs of love'; second, to intensify sex education in schools, including instruction in aberrant behaviour; thirdly — and perhaps most effective — to banalize all talk about sexual matters so that taboos

(read social controls) are being effectively broken down even further. To the more gentle-minded, all this may seem to have strayed some way from the problem of gender feminism. They should read Sommers, and they will learn that gender feminists are also concerned with AIDS and that there exists protection in this respect for lesbians too: 'dental dams — condom-like devices for safe lesbian oral sex.' And that instruction about these unlikely artifacts is used in self-styled 'feminist pedagogy' directed at introductory psychology students at Smith University. The dream — or nightmare — of gender feminism is summed up in the words of University of Massachusetts philosopher Ann Ferguson quoted by Sommers:

With the elimination of sex roles, and the disappearance, in an overpopulated world, of any biological need for sex to be associated with procreation, there would be no reason why such a society could not transcend sexual gender. It would no longer matter what biological sex individuals had. Love relationships, and the sexual relationship developing out of them, would be based on the individual meshing together of androgynous human beings.

Before we reach this gender feminist utopia, some distance has still to be run. Meanwhile, as Sommers shows, the gender feminists have gone a long way in penetrating the bureaucracy in the United States, most successfully in many famous universities but also to some extent in government. Taken together with the male homosexual lobby and the race industry the picture is clearly one of a concerted attack on that core institution of society: the family. Liberal-democratic collusion with this project enhances its dangers. On the other hand, there are at least a few hopeful aspects. The fact is that the arrogance and grotesque utterances of the gender feminists and their male allies is likely to be counter-productive. Communists of the old school always detested the extreme Left for their lack of realism and extravagant postures, which were regarded as dangers to the revolution. Now that the former have become extinct, nothing holds back the extreme Left but the stubborn common sense of ordinary people. If this is to function it must be fully informed about the antics of the freaks; and this is where this admirable book will prove so invaluable.

Hell's Manual: The Legacy of Lenin

Dennis O'Keeffe

Russia Under the Bolshevik Régime 1919-24, Richard Pipes, Harvill, 1994.

In this brilliant but also rather one-sided work, Richard Pipes demolishes one of the abiding errors of modern socialist apologetics. He shows that the horrors of Stalinism were not a discontinuous and surprising eruption of wickedness. These evils had an immediate and easily identifiable ancestry: they were the work of Lenin and the hypertrophied edifice of lies, brutality, intolerance and economic mismanagement which he established.

Where the book rather falls down, however, is in what some readers may

see as an unsatisfactory assessment of the contributions made to the Soviet disaster on the one hand by the imposition of Marxism and on the other by certain long-established characteristics of Russian society. The underlying irony is that the very brilliance of Pipes' account of the fatal and determining influence of Lenin on his country's subsequent history rather undermines his argument from the old pathology of Russia.

Marxist casuistry blames the singer, Stalin, but not the materialist song. But

historical materialism is incoherent, and in a strange paradoxical way. It cannot explain how Lenin got his régime in place in an underdeveloped country; but it explains alas all too well how Stalin took it over. The genesis of the Lenin state cannot be explained without reference to historical idealism. Once established, however, this state is indeed a material structure uniquely favourable to objective wickedness. Communism and its Nazi hybrid have been a motor for evil without precedent in history. Nowhere has goodness, whether of

ordinary folk, or of people of genius, been so comprehensively circumscribed by the *non* of power. By a vicious irony, materialism can explain nothing except the material monstrosities generated from the fevered minds of its fanatical prophets.

Pipes' scrupulously researched text leaves the Marxists little room for their continued self-deception. Unless the system were corrupt, how could a person like Stalin seize control as he did? The wickedness of the structure, as long as it endures, and even beyond its long deserved grave, faithfully reflects the evil of its architect.

Pipes shows that there is not a single detail of Stalinism not anticipated in the Lenin years. The police and army terror, the destruction of civil society, the contempt for common decency ("bourgeois morality", as the law haters from Marx to Sartre have called it) the censorship, the murder, the degradation of language, art and culture, the ruination of the economy, the fanatical, blasphemous persecution of religion; all these began as soon as Lenin assumed power. Pipes gives us page after unanswerable page on them all. Large-scale intimidation started on day one and even the resort to the show trial — that grisly characteristic circus of the totalitarian nightmare — came very early.

The monumental human losses associated with Stalin were only an intensified continuation of the already astronomic levels of catastrophe which Lenin visited on his unhappy empire. Between the autumn of 1917 and early 1922, so Pipes maintains, the demographic losses effected by Lenin's policies, in the form of war losses (2 million), epidemics (2 million), emigration (2 million), famine (5 million plus) had reached 12.7 million souls. This is how much the population had fallen between those years. But when the population losses through those births discouraged by the circumstances, are added, the figure climbs to 23 million.

Lenin did not, Pipes allows, murder his friends. Otherwise, there is not a single dimension of Stalinism that does not have some counterpart under Lenin. It is a pity that Pipes' underlying view

of the interaction between Marxism and Russia precludes his tracking the evil back to Marx himself, as other scholars, like Leszek Kolakowski, have done finding Lenin and Stalin devoutly true to the Marxist canons wherever possible. Pipes articulated his view during his famous debate with Solzhenitsyn, in which the latter found more — much more — discontinuity in Communism than Pipes, seeing it as a gangrenous graft onto the body of Russia's natural goodness.

Not everyone will be able to follow Pipes in his relative downgrading of Marxism's tally. He rejects the "Marxism as a virus" metaphor and claims that elsewhere in the West Marxism did not have a comparably malign influence. Yet there are obvious counters to his argument. Albania and Romania were till recently societies solidly locked in despotisms of unmistakably Leninist/Stalinist provenance. While Lenin's unrelenting will was the principal agency for the creation of the subsequently self-propelled monstrosities of the Soviet order, that order and its lookalikes, once established, are always likely to generate the Stalin type of leadership, as has been seen in China, Kampuchea, North Korea, Cuba and many African examples. Even the formerly civilised countries of central Europe, like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, degenerated rapidly when Sovietised, producing such monsters as Rakosi.

So Pipes' divining a Russian core of all this horror does not fully convince. We know that Russia learned from the Mongols its reverence for remorseless central power, exercised over vast distances, by impenetrable and unaccountable bureaucracies. Even so, Tsarism, late or early, was never a fraction as bad as Communism. Tsarism was remote and austere; Sovietism was unfathomably cynical. In Pipes we find, *verbatim*, Lenin's monstrous — and often repellently flippant — contempt for everything which makes human life passably worthwhile. Tsarism was a variably closed and supervised society; Sovietism was a realised totalitarian closure without precedent in the human past.

The late Tsars did not introduce a

rule of law as civilisation understands that exacting notion. But at least one can see its embryonic outline in their last fifty years. The Soviet Union, by contrast, was always an incurable despotism, faithful from first to last to that abolition of law and genuine politics called for by Marx himself. Paul Johnson has called it the "Soviet slave state"; the LSE comparative economist, Peter Wiles, is scarcely milder in designating it as at best a "loose prison". Indeed Pipes' own revelations tell against this "Russian continuity" side of his thesis. It was Communism, not Russia, which was the problem. We are not, therefore, surprised when, contradictorily, Pipes speaks in his final chapter of the ruination Lenin helped to visit on "a great nation".

In this work of destruction, much more than the abolition of real property and a free enterprise economy was involved, though these alone were a sufficient cause of horror. The economic differences between the Tsarist and the Leninist eras were huge. For all its peasant backwardness, late Tsarist Russia was a rapidly developing proto-capitalist dispensation, seemingly on track to become what the country's fabulous resources promise: the world's most powerful economy. Lenin produced a bankrupt system which even under the NEP never got on an even keel. The poisoned ruin and humiliation which Solzhenitsyn sees in Russia today are a straight legacy of Lenin's primitive ideas on economics (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn "The Cult of Novelty" *Salisbury Review*, September 1993).

It was, however, the mental core of civilisation, not its material means, which was fatally spoiled by the experience. We may suppose that under an uninterrupted Tsarism, a genuine civil order might have emerged. Sovietism banished any such outcome. Its many laws were bogus, its essence a virulent antinomianism, from its early promotion of sexual licence to its later, grey, sub-Orwellian prudery. Nor, ironically, do today's enemies of civilisation often get rightly located in terms of their overlap with the Soviet error. The debt owed by fanatical modern critics of the family to the ideas of Engels, for in-

stance, is often not realised. Pipes does not make the connection; but he gives us in a few words in all its childish, ahistorical odiousness, Engels' grotesque analysis of the family, and it sounds just like Laing or Foucault.

Lenin was in truth the practical author of our contemporary manual of hell, inspired in him by the Marxist fantasy and handed down by him to Stalin and his imitators. It will not do to underplay the part which the Marxist classics had in this appalling affair. The moral impact has been worse than the economic. Goodness cannot be finally extirpated; the pain and the horror entailed by the attempt however, are beyond measure. Without Marxism, no Soviet system, no Gulag. Without Commu-

nism, no Nazism and no Holocaust. No one bears greater responsibility for the ruination of our century than does Lenin, with his specifically Marxist inspiration.

Nor does Pipes consider one of the commonest ideas today among intellectuals from the former Communist states, as they survey the havoc which the Marxists have wrought, writers such as Antek Kaminski in Poland, or Kalman Mizsei in Hungary: the thesis that Marxism is really not economics at all but a power theory, and hence for many decades irresistible, to third world despots. Kaminski goes further. Without Marxism as its integument, a Russia following a "normal" trajectory of modernisation could not have main-

tained the empire as long as was possible under the Soviets.

None of these reservations, however, should be allowed to detract from the best sides of this magnificent book. I was not expecting the truly enlightening treatment of the influence of Lenin on the other monsters of our century. Lenin paved the way not only for Stalin but also for Mussolini and Hitler. And Pipes gives us irrefutable references about the admiration that the Fascist and Nazi dictators had for Lenin and the system he inspired. If scholars could now go beyond Pipes and consign the notion that Communism and Nazism are opposites to the historical junkyard where it belongs, that would truly be progress!

Sacred and Profane

James McNamara

Veritas Splendor Encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II. Catholic Truth Society, 1993, £4.50. **Catechism of the Catholic Church** Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, Hardback £25.00, Paperback £12.99.

Anyone interested in how Christianity could survive amidst the shifting dissolutions of post-modernity must consider these two documents issued by the supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church, John Paul II, which address the question both philosophically and theologically. The first has the character of a moral treatise, whilst the second is a great gathering together of all doctrines declared worthy of belief by the magisterium over the centuries, in a new definitive synthesis. Oddly enough, given the intellectual hostility to this pontificate from influential quarters, inside as well as outside its Confession, a defensive note is absent. A great animus against the spirit of the age can be found in mid-Nineteenth century papal documents, when the enemy was modernity itself. These, by contrast, breathe an atmosphere of almost philosophical serenity. We have not heard this voice from Rome since the conclusion of the second Vatican Council in 1965. In fact, although

work on the *Catechism* did not start until 1985, twenty years later, the Pope explicitly cites this council in the full title — Apostolic Constitution FIDEI DEPOSITUM — which thus completes its deliberations at last.

The restoration of confidence marks a distinct upswing in Vatican fortunes, since the intervening years have been filled with a sense of distress, betrayal, even of anguish about the contemporary world, particularly noticeable throughout the long pontificate of Pope Paul VI. The age-old Petrine rock seemed about to be engulfed beneath a flood of new theological foam. But perhaps its re-emergence should not be so surprising. These publications seem to be jointly declaring that Christianity can cope with post-modernity after all.

Whether it can cope with the internationally organised band of ex-priests, dissident theologians, disaffected Catholics, and wavering Bishops, loosely called 'Modernists', and who

practically constituted themselves as an alternative magisterium after the publication of an earlier encyclical by Paul VI, the famous *Humanae Vitae*, condemning artificial methods of contraception, remains in the balance. The internal war still rages. For the modernists, too, believe they can cope with an environmentally unfriendly post-modernity, and have produced just as much paper as the Vatican to prove it. Even before the new Catechism was out in its English language translation this summer they had already rushed out extensive 'Commentaries', dilating upon its inadequacies. In the US they successfully conspired to delay publication by 18 months by cleverly muddying the theological waters. It is as well to keep this context in mind when reading the encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* or, to give the full English title -- *The Splendour of Truth Shines*. For it is now clear that this document was first conceived in the papal mind as a response to, and a

correction of, the sheer variety of moral teachings emanating from thought, dressed in catholic plumage, which was not Catholic at all.

Veritatis Splendor is the most rigorous and mature account of the moral life as this generation is now likely to receive from a Christian source. Contrary to the bad and hasty press reception, a coercive or legalistic spirit is wholly absent. The encyclical is a triptych of meditations on the theme of human freedom, the search for it, and the methods for its discovery. The human being is presented throughout as a truth-bearing creature naturally disposed to seek the good (not just the better, the useful, or the agreeable). The centre panel in this hopeful anthropology of freedom, and the one which will be of most interest to ethical philosophers of all persuasions, is occupied by a theoretical critique of subjectivist and relativist accounts of the moral life, which for all their ingenuity ultimately fail to respect the intimate link between truth, freedom, and morality. They are identified under their technical names as: Intentionalism, Consequentialism, Proportionalism, and Teleologism. The encyclical proposes as an alternative to these a concrete conception of freedom, in which the individual conscience oriented towards the priority of truth finds itself again as right action. Man's search for truth and the desire for the good share the same existential point. So that ultimately it is the splendour of moral truth which shines. The priceless gift of choice is moral only when it is properly aligned to an objective world. To specify such a world John Paul II offers a tradition of Christian teachings drawn largely from patristic and scholastic sources, but not in such a way as to the argument artificially. The Christian conscience is shown as recognising an infinite freedom in the person of Christ, but the appeal throughout is to rationality: the light of reason and the light of faith are not antithetical.

We might ask why the objectivity of moral reasoning is so insisted upon. One of the answers appears to be that both Karol Wojtyła and Joseph

Ratzinger think that post-Marxist Europe is in worse moral health than before. There has never existed an ideology like communism, in which conscience was so completely severed from truth: at least not one so globally organised. The Vatican, which had much to do with the defeat of communism, clearly now believes it has left behind some radical distortions in the moral life of the Western world as well. The outstanding example would be the common idea that conscience is old-fashioned, fear-laden, and guilt-inducing: true freedom soars above its narrow compass. It is thus better to dispense with conscience, like an inflamed appendix, and issue guidelines instead. A useful technical term for this manner of thinking and acting might be non-idealistic nihilism. But in an informal way it is making itself respectable.

Another possible reason for the emphasis on moral objectivity, which perhaps goes deeper, is the democratization not just of political processes but of every type of moral judgement. This extension exalts freedom of conscience over all other values. Initially, it appears in opposition to the mafia-morality mentioned above, for it manifests an idealistic, even Utopian, reverence for truth. But the opposition is more apparent than real. It is not truth to which the democratised conscience turns, but 'truths'; and the only version of these it recognises is that yielded by pure subjectivity. As John Paul observes: "Good and evil are dissolved into right or wrong preferences, judgements about which are handed down from the absolute tribunal of the self". Against this species of nihilism the encyclical affirms that the dignity of man logically requires the existence of an objective moral universe. Otherwise the individual conscience has nothing on which to operate and quickly becomes malformed. Once again human dignity demands a respect for truth. If man chooses to be no longer burdened by this responsibility, to regard his decisions as infallible simply because they are his own, then freedom loses its intrinsic polarity, actions are rendered meaningless, whilst conscience is deprived of the power to discern the

difference between good and evil.

Of course, that is to put the case in extremis. The papal account does not envisage a situation where the yearning to know and find the truth ever completely disappears from the human subject. The more likely danger is that an empty Voluntarism set itself up as the modern consensus, so that little remains to prevent evils from being exalted as the good. That something like this happened under totalitarian regimes in Germany and Russia this century, few would deny. More controversial is the possibility of a non-totalitarian form of the disease becoming established in the democracies. Hence the insistence on 'Objectivity' in this encyclical letter.

It is also the point that *Veritatis Splendor* runs parallel with the *Catechism*: the latter includes as substantive teaching what the former presumes at the level of discursive reason. There are problems here of course for non-believers. If there is a growing moral crisis in the West (and such an observation is not confined to the Vatican City), then for once it posits a dilemma shared in common by both Church and secular States, or indeed by anyone who bears some responsibility for the moral basis of civilisation. Christianity has a special crisis of its own to deal with in this era. In the past thirty years forms of moral relativism have climbed into bed with moral theology. A gaggle of half-believers, those who cried wolf at the encyclical, have been actively undermining the convictions of two millennia. The Catechism is the answer to them. However, a tangential movement of thought in society at large has gained ground since the 1960's: Amorphous Humanism. Now it is everywhere; in the media, in schools and universities, even in seminaries; amongst psychiatrists, behavioural scientists, geneticists, anthropologists, literary critics, and all the other would-be technologists of the human body and soul. As in the days of Augustine, John Paul II calls them undeclared heretics. It still remains for somebody to assess their mundane significance for politics.

In Short

Preventionitis: The Exaggerated Claims of Health Promotion ed James Lefanu The Social Affairs Unit 1994. *The Death of Humane Medicine and the Rise of Coercive Healthism* Petr Skrabanek, The Social Affairs Unit 1994.

Here are two books providing hard evidence for those who wish to attack Big Brother Healthism. Ironically the government's love affair with health prevention has coincided with an attempt to reform the health service in a market-oriented way. Ineffective prevention therefore, ought to be distinguished from programmes which are doing some good lest scarce resources be squandered. However the authors of *Preventionitis* believe that only very limited health gains are possible. If all cancers were prevented or cured the increase in life expectancy for those between 15 and 65 would be only seven months. The authors also demonstrate that health education has not been responsible for the dramatic decline of heart disease and the containment of the AIDS epidemic. Even screening programmes for cervical and breast cancer are bravely challenged.

To "live in fear of death is to fear living". Skrabanek was a refugee from communism and therefore understood better than most the language of totalitarian ideologies and its relationship with the utopian nature of the health promotion movement. His scholarship goes much wider than merely questioning the established orthodoxies, for he uses his extensive knowledge of medical history to analyse the origins of the evils of healthism, first spotted by Ivan Illich. Any system aiming to make men free or healthy ends by enslaving him. This is what Illich

meant by the medicalization of life. Many apposite and poetic quotations as various as Cicero, Samuel Johnson and Montaigne make the book entertaining as well as informative.

M.C.

Memoirs of a Slow Learner, Peter Coleman, Angus & Robertson Aust\$16.95.

Anyone who wants to know what has been going on in intellectual circles in Australia since the war should start with this book. Elegantly written, it compresses the author's own reflections, and the political and cultural events in which he took part or witnessed, into just 166 pages.

Peter Coleman has achieved distinction in several fields: he was a journalist, editor, and State and Federal MP, but is best known in this country as the biographer of Barry Humphries. He has been inspired by the poet James McAuley and the historian Manning Clark. Confronting the problems "contracted by the habit of looking behind the screen of life... and examining conflicting values and ideas of the world," he also gives sometimes hilarious accounts of various episodes in the Cold War struggles, enlivened by witty vignettes of characters like Bertrand Russell and the Red Dean.

M.C.

Poland, The Politics of Restoration Marek Matraszek, IEDSS. £5, 1994.

Because of the heroic resistance of the Polish people to Communism in the eighties, a smooth transition from Communism to democracy was confi-

dently expected; so the victory of the neo-communist parties in the 1993 elections came as a much worse shock than elsewhere in Central Europe. Matraszek sets out the reasons for this debacle: committed political leadership, anti-communist popular sentiment and Western support were not enough. Indeed recent events have demonstrated the West's lack of understanding and mistaken policies towards Poland.

While the electoral system aggravated the Right's fissiparous tendencies, the Left managed to stay united and also understood that the advent of political freedom makes people deeply concerned with their material interests, certainly not with a moral crusade about national unity. The creation of a capitalist system requires a hierarchy of supporters and this did not exist; furthermore the Polish people were not only never told about the necessity for short term sacrifices, but the privatization measures were not sufficiently radical, and were never explained. Matraszek sees the next danger at the 1995 presidential election, when the victory of a left-wing candidate might consolidate the rule of the Left, perhaps permanently.

The E.C. must abandon its restrictive trade and investment terms, which only help to buttress the anti-West and pro-Russian prejudices of leftist politicians. Any financial aid must be tied to an extension of the reform process. Above all the Right must recover its capacity for firm political leadership and devote time to the tedious process of party organization. All these measures should start immediately.

M.C.

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