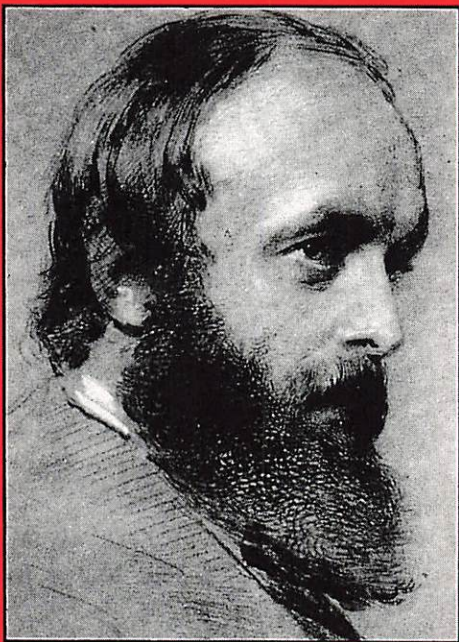


The
Salisbury
Review

Winter 1996
Volume 15 Number 2 £4.00

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The Third Marquess of Salisbury
1830 - 1903

Culture & Decadence

David Pryce-Jones

EMU & Sovereignty

Bernard Connolly

Opinion Polls

Stephen Pimenoff

Bad Poets' Society

Marek Racho

Reconstituting Britain

Vivian Linacre

Education in the Age of

Management

Peter Whitely

Contents

The Death of Sovereignty <i>Bernard Connolly</i>	4	The Dagenham Experiment <i>Peter Bassett</i>	41
Education in the Age of Management <i>Peter Whitely</i>	9	'Integrated Casting' Revisited <i>Ralph Berry</i>	42
Lord Eustace Percy and his Times <i>George Chowdhary-Best</i>	13	Editorial	44
Reconstituting Britain <i>Vivian Linacre</i>	15	Letters	45
Not a Curse — the Internet <i>Peter Watson</i>	20	Book Reviews	47
Election Opinion Polls <i>Stephen Pimenoff</i>	21	Sarah Moyse, Ivan Hewitt, Angela Ellis Jones, David Edelsten, Ray Honeyford, Helen Szamuely	
Irish Nationalism <i>Patrick J Roche</i>	23	In Short	55
Culture and Decadence <i>David Pryce-Jones</i>	26	Notes on Reviewers	40
MI6 — the True Story <i>A D Harvey</i>	32	Subscription details	
Self-inflicted Injuries Sting the Most <i>John Leake</i>	33	Published quarterly in September, December, March and June, volume commencing with September issue.	
The Feltham Boy <i>Roy Kerridge</i>	36	Annual subscription rates: £16, Europe/surface rest of world £18, £24 airmail rest of world; Single issues £4.00, \$7.00, ISSN: 0265-4881	
Bad Poets' Society <i>Marek Racho</i>	37	North American subscription from ISI, 3901 Centerville Road, PO Box 4431, Wilmington, DE 19807-0431, USA. Toll-free 1-800-526-7022.	
		Copyright © The Claridge Press	
		All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or other without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.	
		Printed in the UK by The Warwick Printing Company Ltd.	
		Typesetting by DASH	

Conservative Journal *Zeit-Fragen*

Founded in Zurich by the association called *Mut zur Ethik* ('Courage for Ethical Standards'), *Zeit-Fragen* takes a bold, sensible and conservative stance towards the social degeneration of the German-speaking peoples. On the whole German-speakers have no equivalent of our quality press, with its sceptical conservatism, and its ability to publish thoughts offensive to liberal opinion. Even the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has retreated into bland acceptance of the multicultural society, and of the jargon of equal opportunities. Conservative values now have little public voice in the German world, despite the fact, or rather because of the fact, that they are the values of the majority. The very name adopted by *Mut zur Ethik* is indicative of the dangers to which articulate conservatives are exposed, should they step out of line with egalitarian orthodoxy. Yet those who take part in the movement — teachers, writers, students, doctors, artists, lawyers — have inspired each other to stay firm, and established a vigorous society for mutual support, whose purpose is to facilitate the utterance of the truths, and the adoption of the decencies, which are most at risk in the modern world.

Zeit-Fragen is published every two months, and addresses all matters of an educational, political or

cultural significance. Its principal concern is to uphold a broadly Christian approach to the family, to education, and to social life, in full consciousness of the temptations to which young people are now exposed. However, it is by no means fogeyish or censorious: on the contrary, the most striking feature of the paper, as of the movement which promotes it, is the cheerfulness of those who contribute to it. Lively articles on art and literature, and watchful reporting of fashionable absurdities, alternate with interviews and articles devoted to the question which is of most importance to conservatives in the modern world — namely, what can we still conserve, and how? *Zeit-Fragen's* crusade against the drug-culture of Zurich also takes up many of its pages, and the journal and those who are associated with it have done much to make the Swiss aware of the cancer that is growing in their midst. Edited by Peter Lutz, a young classics teacher in a Zurich grammar school, *Zeit-Fragen* contains a useful review of the German press for 'signs of the times', and gives a welcome insight into the vagaries of German culture in an age when *Kultur* has become a dirty word, and *Zivilisation* hardly more acceptable.

The journal is available price 70DM annually, from Postfach 252, CH 8044, Zurich, Switzerland.

The Salisbury Review

Editor Roger Scruton
Literary Editor Ian Crowther
Managing Editor Merrie Cave

Editorial address and Subscriptions
33, Canonbury Park South,
London, N1 2JW
Tel: 0171 226 7791
Fax: 0171 354 0383

The murder of the London Headmaster, Phillip Lawrence, by a teenage thug, and the subsequent call by the widow, Frances Lawrence, for a moral revival, have stirred the hearts and minds of our nation. Although politicians of every hue have hastened to fall in behind Mrs Lawrence, this is less a sign that they are in tune with national sentiment, than a confession of their collective failure. That it should be left to one of the victims of social decline to make the call to arms against it, is itself a symptom of social decline. Even now we hear nothing from the political class that shows any willingness to address the root causes of the problem. But these causes are staring us in the face, and the face is that of the murderer, the illegitimate child of welfare-scrourging immigrants, brought up on television and gang warfare, without any morality save the law of the jungle, and utterly devoid of compassion for his victim — or indeed for anyone except himself. If politicians wish really to reverse the trend of which this murderer is a fitting symbol, then it is clear what they must do. First, they must tighten controls on immigration, and ensure that those who settle here come not to take but to give. Secondly, they must remove the privileges enjoyed by single mothers, and devise fiscal and social policies which penalize those who reproduce without marrying. Thirdly, they must overturn the liberal legislation which has abolished corporal punishment from schools, and which has left parents and teachers defenceless against the younger generation. Fourthly, they must consider very seriously the need to censor and to restrict the television and the video, and make it possible for the victims of those inspired to crime by the images which glamourize it to claim full compensation from the manufacturers.

None of those things will be done, because the faith is not there which would enable politicians to endure the scorn of the opinionated establishment. A new generation of liberal judges and churchmen will see the opportunity to display their niceness by denouncing the sadists who call for tougher laws. The murder of Mr Lawrence will soon be just one murder among many, smoothed over by theories which make crime less an evil than a social statistic. The problem will be expropriated from the ordinary conscience and handed over to the criminologists, to become another item of merely specialist concern.

Yet the feelings of our liberal élite do not stem from

optimism. On the contrary, they are expressions of despair. There is no God, says the liberal, and therefore we can call on no powers higher than our own. And our own powers are failing. Let us, therefore, cease to bother with the lower orders, and enjoy what we can. A society with a liberal élite is one that has lost the desire to reproduce itself.

This despair can be seen most clearly in the high culture of our civilisation, described here by David Pryce-Jones. There is as much talent as there ever was. But it is talent deployed to negative effect, so as to pour scorn on decencies, and to display the raw material of humanity in all its mortal nothingness. Our art is through and through pornographic — and if liberals oppose censorship it is because they see in this art the mirror of their own despair. They welcome an art that does dirt on humanity and its aspirations, since it seems to tell us what we are, and to make what we are seem insignificant. It is easier to accept the end of things if things are not worth saving. This is the message of Craig Raine, whose demoralised poetry is described by Marek Racho; it is also the message of the new forms of higher education, the aim of which is not to add to our culture, but to detract from it, by undermining its claims to objective knowledge. The latest educational advance — science studies, described in all its absurdity by John Leake — reminds us of the hidden agenda that the word ‘studies’ invariably conceals: the agenda of intellectual subversion.

Much of the blame for educational decline must lie with the educationists — that extraordinary breed of ‘scholars’, whose discipline consists in applying half-baked theories to a matter that can be properly understood only in practice. As Peter Whitely shows, the rot in our educational system cannot be cured by the short-term remedies that appeal to politicians. It has come about because theory has prevailed over practice in an area where practice is sovereign. But this reversal of the true order of things arises from the same cause as our cultural decline: the loss of faith, and the consequent need to hand over everything, even the most important things like education, on which the reproduction of society depends, to the self-appointed experts.

Death of Sovereignty

Bernard Connolly dissects the EMU

I have never favoured a monetary union and have always been in favour of something called "the Common Market". In 1975 I voted "Yes" in the referendum on what we were told was common market membership. It has now become clear that what we thought was a common market is nothing more than a project to create a European federal super-state in which our sovereignty, and our national identity, would be extinguished. I see monetary union not only as a threat to our sovereignty and independence, but also as a threat to the continued existence of the European Community itself. Now one could see that as a good thing or as a bad thing, but it is important to realise that monetary union and the European Community cannot co-exist.

On one of the facades of County Hall is engraved the legend "County Hall — home of London government 1889-1986" ... Will the day come when the engravers get their hands on the bricks outside the Palace of Westminster, and write "The Houses of Parliament — home of British government"? What final date will they choose? Will it be 1972 when the European Communities Act was passed, an Act which established the European Court of Justice as the over-riding court in this country? Or 1986 when a sleeping House of Commons approved the Single European Act? Or will it be 1993 when the Maastricht Treaty was railroaded through the Houses of Parliament? All three of those dates have strong claims to ignominy. 1972 diminished the High Court of Parliament. 1986 extended the principle of qualified majority voting. Both were major breaches in the defences of our national sovereignty, but 1993 was the most damaging date of all. 1972 and 1986 were preparing the ground for

the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993.

The European Communities Act of 1972 established the European Court of Justice, in effect, as the over-riding not just interpreter of law but law-giver in our country. But it is still possible for the European Communities Act to be repealed or to be amended.

The European Communities Act did not remove Parliament's ultimate sovereign right to repeal the Act, and if necessary to abrogate the Treaty. I am not advocating that one should abrogate the Treaty of Rome, as subsequently amended, but would stress

It is possible that in a generation's time, in a decade's time, if we attempted to secede we would be treated with the same coldness by world opinion with which the Southern States of the USA were treated by Britain in the 1860s

that the ability to abrogate the Treaty is an essential element of sovereignty. If we were ever to give up the right to abrogate that Treaty, if Parliament were ever to sign away the right to repeal the European Communities Act, then we would no longer be a sovereign nation.

In the 1790s, for instance, one of the States of the USA could still plausibly have argued for a change in the American constitution, or if it failed to get satisfaction could have seceded from

the Union. By 1861 that was impossible. The attempts of the Southern States to secede from the Union had tragic and bloody results. The point of that historic analogy is to illustrate that we do not necessarily need major institutional changes in order for attitudes towards relative roles at the federal and national state level to alter. There is a process of psychological change through which gradually the rights of the centre, the rights of the federation, the rights of the Union, come to predominate over the rights of the States, and of the nations.

We are still, just, in a position where we can claim that the Treaty on European Union could, if necessary, be abrogated. Again, I am not advocating that we should do that, but we can still claim that we could do it. We can still claim that we can repeal, if necessary, the European Communities Act of 1972. Despite that, within a generation, even within a decade if we stand still and do nothing, we will no longer have that right. The psychology will have changed so that there will have been a change in the legal appreciation of where we are. It is possible that in a generation's time, in a decade's time, if we attempted to secede we would be treated with the same coldness by world opinion with which the Southern States of the USA were treated by Britain in the 1860s or Chechnya has recently been treated by President Clinton. We would be treated as insurgents, as rebels. Today that is not so, but there is a substantial risk that it soon will be.

I want first to explain why the Maastricht Treaty forbids us to act in our own interest, in legal terms, and the origin of this legal prohibition. I shall explain why the whole philosophy of Maastricht implies that national interests don't count any more. The Maastricht philosophy is a sham,

monetary union cannot work, and the failure of monetary union would be used as an excuse for an even more transparent loss of sovereignty. That is part of the programme. I will also explain the roots of Maastricht in German thinking of the mid-nineteenth century and suggest that there has been a common thread in that thinking ever since. Finally I will explain why Maastricht implies not only the destruction of the European Community and of Britain's national interest and sovereignty, but also the destruction of any sovereignty and any political legitimacy in Europe, with dire consequences.

The whole purpose of monetary union is to create a European federal state and to forbid certain non-favoured countries, of which we are very clearly one, to go their own way. In January 1993 the then French Finance Minister, Michel Sapin, declared that Britain did not have the right to try to solve its own economic problems. He was wrong only in being premature. At that point the Maastricht Treaty had not been ratified. Now it has, and it is worth looking at several elements of the Maastricht Treaty in some detail.

Britain is bound to conduct its "economic policies with a view to contributing to the achievements of the broad objectives of the Community". That is Article 102a of the Treaty. The broad objectives of the Community include the creation of a single currency, so we are bound to contribute to that, opt-out or no opt-out. Britain must also "treat its exchange rate policy as a matter of common interest" (Article 109m of the Treaty), and must "take all appropriate measures to ensure fulfilment of the obligations arising out of the Treaty" (Article 5). Further, Britain "must abstain from any measure which could jeopardise the attainment of the objectives of the Treaty" (Article 5). Now it is clear that the fact that Britain has ratified the Treaty, opt-out or no opt-out, is being interpreted by the rest of Europe as prohibiting us from tailoring our own economic and monetary policies to our national interests. The European Union philosophy is that anything that we do for ourselves must be inimical to the others and must

therefore be illegitimate. Now that view is a total misunderstanding of the nature of international monetary relations but I want to stress that the thinking that lies behind Maastricht rejects the benefits of international competition, the role of markets, and buttresses the unaccountable power of Central Bankers and of increasingly unaccountable political institutions whether they be at the European level or, sad to say, at the national level.

The doctrine that we cannot do what is in our own interests is also closely related to the pernicious idea of "subsidiarity" which has a dual birth. Part of it comes from relations between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages and part comes from the social teaching of the late nineteenth-century Papacy in response to the growth of capitalism. As a practising Catholic, I think that part of that teaching was mistaken and am certain that the notion of subsidiarity as it is now applied is pernicious. It implies federalism, but it does not *protect us* from federalism, it *implies* it. What the European Union is now doing is changing itself from an association into a federation. When the Common Market was born (of course the founding fathers always had the idea that it was going to lead on to federation) the governments who signed on the dotted line in 1958 had a rather different idea. They saw the Common Market as a way of simultaneously advancing the national interests of the Member States through co-operation. The Community was an association which mandated the Community institutions to do certain things on behalf of the Member States. What we now see in Europe is not an association any more but a federation. The European Community used to be defined by its Member States, but now they are defined as part of the European Union. That is a tremendous somersault in thinking about what Europe involves. Whereas in the past the Member States mandated Community institutions to do things for them, now the Community institutions delegate a few remaining powers in increasingly restricted areas to the Member States. That is the true meaning of subsidiarity:

that the Member States can, on sufferance, do a few little things but only if they do not interfere with the supposed interests of the Community, or the Union, as a whole, or perhaps more accurately, with the perceived interests of the two countries that run the European Union.

Given this revolution in the idea of the relations of authority and sovereignty in the European Union, our only residual claim to sovereignty is the remaining right to repeal the 1972 Act and to abrogate the Treaty. I am not advocating that we should do that, but the point will soon come when we shall have to decide whether we are going to tolerate any further erosion of sovereignty, and renounce the right to repeal and the right to abrogate, or whether we are actually going to use it. Now that day is not here; but one has to think very carefully about the consequences of the loss of sovereignty which has already been imposed and how we will defend the residual sovereignty that remains. Maastricht was, in a sense, more important than either the European Communities Act or the Single European Act in that it made explicit what had always been implicit in the ideas of the founding fathers of European construction. In the absolutely key area of monetary policy, national interests are in theory of no concern whatsoever. There is going to be a single Central Bank, unaccountable of course, and a single currency, so called (it won't, of course, be the currency of the famous 'outs') and there will be a single monetary policy. If there is a single monetary policy for Emuland, or whatever it gets called, only monetary conditions in Emuland can be of any concern. You cannot divide up a single monetary policy into a policy for France or a policy for Germany, a policy for Austria. The whole point of Maastricht is to install a single monetary policy which can only target monetary conditions in the area as a whole. The problem is that economic circumstances differ in our countries and will continue to do so. They will never be rubbed out simply by respecting the Maastricht convergence criteria, not that anyone is going to respect those criteria. Even if they

were, they would not be sufficient conditions for creating sufficient homogeneity or predictability of economic performance in the various member states of EMU. Now what that means is that there is going to be macro-economic instability. There are going to be boom-bust cycles, and periods of inflation, deflation, over-strong growth, and insufficient growth. On balance, as any economist will tell you, that sort of instability leads to a worsening of economic performance in the medium term. On average it will lead to higher levels of unemployment.

What can make that acceptable to the members of EMU? There would have to be an acceptance that what mattered was neither inflation, nor output, nor unemployment in any of the Member States. The only thing that mattered, was output, inflation, unemployment in Emuland as a whole. Where is this acceptance going to come from? It seems blindingly clear that this acceptance requires in turn the prior existence of a fully fledged political union and the existence of a sense of nation at the European level.

Look at monetary unions that do work, more or less. The best example is the United States. Why does that monetary union work? Why is it that, when the oil price falls and there are unemployment problems in Texas or traditional industries go into decline or there are problems in New England or there are defence cuts and problems in California, the call does not arise for separate currencies for those areas or States of the US? First, there is the possibility, indeed there is the reality, of large scale migration flows within the United States. That is the major shock-absorber. It is absolutely clear from the writings of economists that whenever there is a regional problem in the United States, even though wages react much more rapidly in the States than they do in Europe, even though in the end unemployment does not get affected over the medium term by these shocks, the shock-absorber is migration. Employment in Texas has never recovered to its levels before the fall in the oil price, nor has employment in New England ever recovered. Employment in California will not recover.

Migration, which is politically and socially acceptable, keeps the thing together. Migration is happening within a country, and within a political area that demands people's loyalty, and affections. Americans are Americans first and Idahoans, Iowans, even Texans, only second. Does that state of affairs exist in Europe? Of course it does not. There is not one such country in Europe, even the most enthusiastic of countries, even Luxembourg. I think it is a matter of undisputed fact, that this sense of European nationhood does not exist. What does that mean in terms of the success of monetary union?

The Bundesbank, the German central bank which is a redoubtable institution and one which I admire in many ways, accepts the need for European nationhood. It said so in black and white on a number of occasions, four or five years ago. There have been one or two personnel changes at the Bundesbank since then, but at any rate what it has written was this: that monetary union represented "a sworn confraternity, all for one and one for all". There is no obvious evidence that the Bundesbank has ever behaved in line with "one for all". It has never seen its role as operating for the benefit of the Community as a whole. Why should it ever have done so? But there is a lot of recent evidence that the Bundesbank, and for that matter the German government and the French authorities, are expecting other countries to submerge their national interests in order to advance the interests of the Bundesbank, the German government, and the French authorities.

Notice I have not said "the interests of France" "the interests of Germany" "the interests of the French people" "the interests of the German people", for I believe very strongly that the interests of France and Germany are very badly served by the monetary politicking and power plays that are taking place. Those countries suffer as much and will suffer even more in the future than anyone else; but the perceived interests of the political and bureaucratic élites in those countries require "all for one". They require everyone else to do what they perceive

as being in the interests of the Franco-German élite. That was a clear lesson of the ERM, which is being repeated in the negotiations about 'ins' and 'outs'. (Or 'ins' and 'pre-ins' in the language that the Commission now rather ominously uses. The Commission seems to have decided that the UK opt-out has no force. We cannot be 'outs'. We are only 'pre-ins'.)

One often hears the argument that we are not giving up sovereignty if we give up sterling, and our independent monetary policies. We are pooling sovereignty in just the same way that we pool our foreign exchange reserves. We hand it over to Frankfurt but in return we get a share in the whole lot. That is true of reserves, just about, but it makes no sense whatsoever when applied to sovereignty. Sovereignty cannot be pooled. It is indivisible. It can certainly be destroyed by Europe but it cannot be replaced unless there is a European nation, and, as far as I can see, there is not going to be one. Certainly there is not going to be one created by monetary union. Without a European nation, or so the federalist argument goes, there will not be any sovereignty and there will be no political legitimacy. The destruction of national sovereignty is now an undisguised ambition of the federalists. Karl Lamers, who is Chancellor Kohl's chief adviser on European affairs, went so far as to claim, in an article in *The Times*, that there is already no political legitimacy in Europe and that only European Union can restore legitimacy. I think that these are quite remarkable propositions to put forward. They remind me of language that has been used at various times in the past.

What these propositions do is to reflect the constant refrain of German thinking ever since the early nineteenth century. According to that thinking sovereignty was a function of, and was indeed identical with, state power. The individual German states before 1871 did not possess enough state power to justify sovereignty, or political legitimacy. The only way one could produce sovereign and political legitimacy in Germany was through grouping the states together in a bigger

domain, big enough to provide the economic power to support the state functions that embodied sovereignty. But as soon as German unification was a fact it began to be argued, "Well, look at the world, it is changing. There are all these new countries, South America, Argentina and so on. World trade is flourishing, trade barriers have come down, there are international financial markets, all these things reduce the economic power of the state and, by reducing the economic power of the state, they detract from sovereignty. The only way we can restore sovereignty is to expand the economic domain of Germany through the creation of what became known as Mitteleuropa." The idea was not to expand the political or military domain of Germany, but rather to say that German sovereignty demanded a degree of state economic power that could only be assured by a coming together, a pooling of the sovereignty of Germany, the Low Countries, Scandinavia and parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Third Reich used similar arguments to justify the creation of a greater German economic zone. One has to be very careful; the fact that I mention the Third Reich in no way implies that I am qualifying this strand of thinking as Nazi. But it is an historical constant, a way of thinking about the relations between state power and national sovereignty which is still there. After the War the plans for the establishment of the EEC accepted that constant German thinking, lock, stock and barrel. Even though the intellectual "Founding Fathers" of "the European Construction" were not themselves German, they were imbued with German ideas. There are practically no differences between the Europe of Maastricht and the economic blueprint for Europe laid down in Berlin in 1941.

Now Herr Lamers and people like him argue that the globalization of world markets, international financial markets, free trade, new sources of supply — this time it is the East Asians rather than the South Americans — the rise of multinational companies, all reduce state economic power. The

argument goes, however, that this is not beneficial: it is not only reducing state economic power, it is destroying sovereignty. We have to restore sovereignty by creating a yet bigger economic area in which the bankers, the central bankers, the bureaucrats and the politicians will again be able to make their writ run, stand up to the forces of globalization, and challenge the forces of free markets.

Herr Lamers is saying that sovereignty must be pooled, and that in effect means transferred to a German-led Europe, if it is not to disappear and

***Even though the intellectual
"Founding Fathers"
of "the European
Construction" were
not themselves
German, they were
imbued with German
ideas. There are
practically no
differences between
the Europe of
Maastricht and the
economic blueprint
for Europe laid down
in Berlin in 1941***

if legitimacy is to be restored. Has political legitimacy in the countries of Europe disappeared? He claims it has. What would be the implications? The logical conclusion of that argument is obvious: that we are faced either with anarchy or with dictatorship unless we create a European nation. The idea is to create a European nation without calling it one, because the idea of nation is anathema in Bonn. There is not a European nation, but if Herr Lamers is correct, we are left only with anarchy or dictatorship. What he says is inherent in the Maastricht Treaty, under the European construction. This is undoubtedly a dramatic thing to say but one cannot avoid saying it any

more. Maastricht is destroying both sovereignty and legitimacy. It is not destroying legitimacy because the nations can in principle no longer be the repository of legitimacy; it is destroying legitimacy precisely because it is destroying sovereignty and precisely because it is handing power over to a bureaucratic, unaccountable, institutionalised, Europeanised élite. That, even more than the economic disarray that monetary union can cause, is the danger of Maastricht.

It is only five years ago that everyone accepted without the slightest hesitation that monetary union was going to be for all twelve Community states and for all fifteen when three new countries acceded. It did not take very long for that to be turned on its head. Now anyone who suggests that monetary union is for everyone is treated as being crazy, although five years ago all our leaders were making exactly that crazy suggestion. It is now accepted that there will be 'ins' and there will be 'outs', that monetary union will not include all the member states of the European Union, at least not at the beginning. Now this apparently causes problems for certain of our partners, and in particular it seems to cause problems for France, Belgium, and to some extent for Germany. What these countries fear is that the 'outs' will still have the right to operate monetary policies independently and in their own interests, and the operation of monetary policy will have effects on the exchange rate. The fear — and again I think it is a misplaced fear, there are lots of misplaced fears in this business but they all have resonance, they all matter, they all affect the way people talk and act — the fear is that the currencies of the 'outs' will be weak and will continuously weaken. They will depreciate against the currencies of the core, making life very difficult for it (the core means the 'ins', the hard core). The competitive position of the 'ins' would be damaged by the depreciations of the 'outs'.

First of all, is that true? Secondly, even if it were true, would it justify the imposition of constraints, of a new ERM system, of monitoring and surveillance of budgets and economic

policies on the 'outs'? I think the answer to both questions is no. First of all it is not true, because devaluations only work if they are necessary. One only has to think of the unhappy experiences of Britain in the 1960s and 1970s to see that a deliberate policy of devaluation does not bring you any benefits; all it brings you is additional inflation. By the same token one only has to look at the experience of Britain, of Spain, of Sweden, of Italy and Ireland over the past three or four years to see that, when there is an underlying imbalance in the economy, when there is not sufficient demand to take up available supply, then the exchange rate will inevitably depreciate in real terms. If it does not do it through nominal depreciation, it will do so through a squeezing down of domestic costs and prices until they are lower than competitors' prices. But that process of squeezing down domestic costs and prices inevitably brings with it recession. (One could even talk of depression if one looks at the French attempt to pursue exactly that policy.) It is no good for the economy in recession, or for anyone else. If these inevitable movements are going to take place it is much better that they take place in conditions of continued growth. We are not, the Swedes, the Italians, the Spanish, are not and have not been stealing jobs from our neighbours. What we have been doing is to ensure that the inevitable movements in our competitiveness take place in the least damaging conditions, where there is still some growth in markets for our farmers to benefit from. It is not true that the activities of the 'outs' will be damaging to the 'ins'. Furthermore, there is no presumption that the competitiveness of the 'outs' will need to improve against the 'ins'. If anything, the Euro will be, and will need to be, the weakest major currency in the world. Secondly, even if it were true, who would be to blame? There is a supposed Community interest. How does one decide between the interests of the 'ins' and the interests of the 'outs'? Well, unfortunately, the Maastricht Treaty tells us how we have to decide. We are bound to contribute to the objective of monetary union. We

must not do anything which could jeopardise the achievement of those objectives. Our exchange rate is a matter of common interest and what that means is that our exchange rate must be regulated in the interests of the 'ins'. Monetary union, and a two tier monetary union, is better described as a two class Europe than a two speed Europe. Some people are more important and more equal than others. The interests of the 'ins' count; the interests of the 'outs' don't.

That is enough to show that the idea of the Community interest in this monetary area is a sham, but it is not going to be abandoned by the 'ins'. We will be obliged to run our economic policies in the interests of the 'ins' and so will Spain, Sweden and Italy. They will do what they are told because they want to enter monetary union. They are misguided but they want to do it. Spain and Italy will also do what they are told because they benefit from hand-outs from the Cohesion Fund, the Structural Fund, and others. They have their noses in the trough, but we have not. We, along with the Germans and the Swedes, are the people who are feeding the trough and I hope we do not want to get into EMU. We are in a practical position to say "no", but it is going to be legally and diplomatically very difficult to refuse. The articles of the Treaty that I quoted will be used to say that we are being the bad boys. We are not respecting our obligations. We are being *anti-communautaire*. We cannot avoid the question: in the end, is the game worth the candle?

I voted in favour of something called the Common Market in 1975. Maybe I am a naïve optimist, but I think that the game of trying to persuade our farmers to see sense is worth the candle and that we should not yet throw in the towel. One has to say that there is very little sign that British thinking, British philosophy, and British common sense is having any impact on our partners in the European Community. They have mapped out a path for themselves, first in the 1940s, and they have stuck to it. They will be damned rather than abandon it: economically, politically and socially damned. At some point, we as a nation have to decide

whether we will participate in this economic madness and throw ourselves off the cliff? Are we going to acquiesce in the final renunciation of national sovereignty or not?

There is still one chance left. It is not that of persuading our partners to see reason because they will not. The chance that is left comes in the IGC. We have to seize that chance by putting monetary union back on the agenda. The monetary union philosophy drives the prohibition on our pursuing our national interests and the implication that there must be a European nation. It is what underlies Karl Lamer's insistence that sovereignty and legitimacy have already disappeared. We can insist on monetary union being put back on the agenda. We still have a veto in the IGC and we must be prepared to use that veto to block anything the others want to do, unless they agree to a rethinking of the pernicious Maastricht philosophy. If we do not, we will soon be faced with a choice between either finally renouncing our sovereignty, or restoring our sovereignty by repealing the 1972 European Communities Act and abrogating the Treaty on European Union.

I hope that we do not have to make that choice. But it is probably coming — and we have to be prepared for it. If we want to avoid making that choice we have to take action now. Our Government has to get its head out of the sands and start being philosophical rather than just pragmatic. It must understand the underlying philosophy of Maastricht and it must see its logical implications. The only possible logical implication of that Treaty as it stands, unrevised, is an attempt to create a European nation which will fail and will destroy political legitimacy in Europe, an attempt that really *will* leave us with a choice only between anarchy and dictatorship.

Bernard Connolly is the author of *The Rotten Heart of Europe*. This lecture was given to the British Housewives League in April 1996.

Education in the Age of Management

Peter Whitely identifies the latest incarnation of 'educational theory'

Few people have a good word to say about 'progressive' education these days. If there are still teachers who don't teach games because they instil anti-social competitiveness, don't teach History because it gives a distorted view of the past, don't teach subjects but teach kids, then they have begun to keep quiet about it. Indeed, the educational tide appears to have turned. Now the 'hum and buzz of implication' is about inspections, quality management, league tables, imparting information, whole-class teaching and weeding out weak teachers. It would seem that senile liberal waffle is in retreat, and that a demanding, efficient and sensible regime is beginning to make headway in schools.

Yet anybody who teaches in a school knows this optimism to be misplaced. The fundamental mistake of liberal educational theory (which is well-nigh indistinguishable from a continuing belief in the existence of a subject called 'educational theory') remains largely unquestioned, and it continues to sap and debilitate the educational life of the country.

To understand this mistake we need to think about knowledge. Let's divide it into three kinds: *theoretical* knowledge ($2+2=4$, Water boils at 100°C); *perceptual* knowledge (knowing what Portillo looks like, being able to identify the willow warbler's call); and *practical* knowledge (riding a bike, knowing how to deal with difficult customers.) Theoretical knowledge can obviously be stated in sentences or propositions: one can write out the multiplication tables and draw up a chart of various liquids' boiling points. If an initially ignorant person reads and understands these, then knowledge has been passed on.

The other two kinds of knowledge are quite different. One cannot explain what red looks like to a man born blind, and one cannot attain virtuosity on the bugle simply by understanding a set of instructions for playing it. The only way to acquire visual or practical knowledge is by *looking* or *practising*. If you consider your non-propositional knowledge of what the cello sounds like, or how to knot a tie, then you realise how hopelessly crude anything you might say to put your knowledge into words must be. Theoretical knowledge is not the foundation of, or the precious essence of non-propositional knowledge; it is simply a vague and inessential abstraction from it.

Like cycling, negotiating and defusing anger, teaching is a practical skill, and the egregious error of educationalists is to think it is based on theory. Scientific knowledge rightly enjoys enormous prestige in our culture, but this prestige has drawbacks. One of the worst is that all other forms of knowledge are assimilated to, and judged by the scientific model. This has the following dire effects on schools:

- People know that applied physics rests on discoveries in theoretical physics. They also know that the theoretical physics taught in universities is more glamorous, high-powered and demanding than the physics taught in schools. They therefore assume that educational practice rests on educational theory, and that the theory 'researched' in universities is somehow at a higher level than what goes on in schools every day. Consequently, if research clashes with practice then research must win the field.
- The educationalists' mistake suggests that only what is *statable* is

genuine knowledge. This implies that those who can give, and indeed want to give, a written account of what they do are experts, while those who do not wish to spend time writing out what they do are merely guessing, groping in the dark. In this way educational theory can subvert and undermine the instincts of even experienced teachers. Suddenly they are made to feel they lack something, and subtle practical knowledge which has taken years to acquire is thrown over in favour of the rawest theoretical offerings. Consequently, the way people have always learned (very often the only way they could learn) is jettisoned and replaced by something inoperable.

- Theoretical knowledge progresses: people make new discoveries in maths and physics the whole time. The same, people think, must be true of theory in education. Constant change and 'development' in classroom techniques is therefore a sign of health; a desire to stay with methods that work a sign of complacency. It follows that the teaching techniques of fifty years ago are of the same interest as the physics of fifty years ago, i.e., none.
- On the proper conception of teaching, there are simply teachers and a few other administrators to control the finances and maintain the building. With theory comes the notion of a hierarchy of theoretical knowledge. Suddenly, those who are supposed to know about teaching are not in the classroom doing it, but on extended research leave. Moreover, being in the classroom may be thought to interfere with one's grasp of teaching and theory

(now deemed indistinguishable) because one has fallen behind with the literature, no longer meets the 'leaders' in the field, and so forth. Once theoreticians are in senior positions they promote other theoreticians, and institutions begin to stiffen and rigidify.

- Any attempt to turn a skill into words results in something necessarily prolix and platitudinous, and a glance at any substantial educational document will show that educational theory is more like an exhaustive account of how a bike is ridden than a work of theoretical physics. Because of this, the sheer volume of dreary printed matter begins to clog the system. Hours which could have been spent marking books, preparing lessons, organising trips and so forth are wasted reading and writing reports, records, syllabuses, and discussion documents. Because they are necessarily incomplete, an equal amount of time can be whiled away at meetings debating and amplifying them. Usually these documents sit in a drawer for two years and are then thrown away.
- The important variables in modern education are: the subject, what the teacher is like, what the pupils are like, and what questions they're likely to be asked in exams. As soon as educational theory puts in an appearance, the subject and the teacher's personality begin to slip out of the picture. The educationalist's argument works like this: 'We are not concerned with History but with historical *education*, not with Geography but geographical *education*. In fact, as you can see, education is the subject which underlies all others in schools. It uncovers deep general truths about all human learning, and once these are revealed, then the teacher, his pupils and the specialist subject can simply be slotted into the framework.' At worst, this framework is simply based on falsehoods ('classes are most efficiently taught in small groups'), at best, it is based on crude generalizations about what works for most children, most

teachers and most subjects. Consequently, it interposes itself between you and the particularities of *this* subject, and you and the particularities of *these* pupils. It serves as a distraction and makes you less responsive to both. Form triumphs over content; principles replace personalities.

It would be nice to think that the sea-change in educational attitudes had pushed educational theory quietly to one side. In fact, educationalists who don't teach in schools *need* the fiction that educational knowledge is theoretical, otherwise they face unemployment. Theory has therefore mutated into a form which can flourish and burgeon in the present climate. Once it was soft, liberal and left-wing, now it is demanding, ballsy, right-wing and busy applying to education in the nineties the management culture of the eighties. This form of theory has exactly the same dire consequences for schools that its liberal predecessor had, and in some ways the new incarnation is even more virulent. Firstly, the public schools largely managed to escape the worst excesses of liberal theory. The new mutation, however, is affecting *all* schools because compulsory inspections and exam syllabuses demand it. Secondly, the new incarnation prides itself on being aggressive and coercive, and regards blood on the carpet as a symptom of success.

The parallel consequences of theory's two guises can best be shown with the aid of a detailed example. The eminently benign Historical Association (founded in 1906 to 'bring together people who share an interest in, and love of, the past') has recently published a booklet for secondary schools — *Preparing for Inspection in Secondary History: A Practical Guide* — by Richard Brown. Brown is a zealot on behalf of managerial theory, and like every zealot he needs a revolution in which a clean break can be made with the past. Satisfyingly, the moment when all previous experience became redundant can be given a date: 'It is assumed that the changes facing schools following the Educational Reform Act 1988 are so profound that *traditional approaches to managing*

schools are no longer appropriate and radical alternatives have to be considered. ... The realignment of the education service ... makes [traditional, piecemeal] responses inappropriate and impracticable.' (My italics.) One of the most regrettable features of traditional policies — 'deference to experience over skills and qualities' — is particularly targeted. Clearly the skills and qualities are to be learnt from week-end management courses in Stakis Hotels; any thought that the relevant skills and qualities might only come from years of organizational and teaching experience is obviously inappropriate.

However, we only have to scratch the legal surface to discover the educational research lurking underneath: 'Much of what is argued here', we learn from a note his introduction, 'is grounded in a reading of recent work by John West-Burnham *Managing Quality in Schools*, Longman, 1992; P.A. Duigan and R.J.S. MacPherson *Educative Leadership*, Falmer 1992; Brent Davies and Linda Ellison, *School Development Planning*, Longman, 1992' Interested readers are referred to eleven other titles, and encouraged to dip into some works of management theory which are more fundamental still. These have engagingly mythopoeic and megalomaniac titles like, *The Change Masters*, *A Passion for Excellence*, *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution*, and *When Giants Learn to Dance*. Revolutionaries are conscious that revolutions can end, and that they and their methods might become redundant. Brown preempts this danger by the handy device of postulating the existence of a permanent revolution, a perpetual state of change, which has become a good in its own right irrespective of direction. The introduction announces the good news: 'change is a positive process'; '...continuous change is an inevitable feature of a progressive and successful organisation', and even the curriculum '... is likely to be in a state of flux, perhaps permanently.' Now, no-one doubts that a capacity to improve and respond to new ideas is an *element* of excellence, but the idea that permanent flux and continuous change

of whatever sort is a guarantee of excellence is touchingly bone-headed.

The model which Brown puts forward is that schools are businesses whose job is the 'development and marketing, if necessarily aggressively, of a *quality product*'. Children are the school's 'clients' or 'customers' and it is the duty of the school to respect 'consumer rights' and meet 'customer requirements.' As part of a school, History departments 'will have to see themselves as client-led management structures.' Every school has a 'mission' which is explained in a 'mission statement.' Every department is required to have a 'visionary' action and development plan whose quality policy will be 'driven by the school's mission.' Brown's booklet is largely devoted to telling heads of departments how these plans should be written, and the head of History (a 'line manager') is reminded that a plan for his department is 'a business plan and as such must aim to achieve efficient business practice and cost-effectiveness within a coherent marketing context.'

Brown's particular area of expertise is quality, and it requires an extended quotation to capture the flavour of his thinking here:

Quality is defined by the customer rather than the supplier: it is market-orientated. Quality means meeting stated needs, requirements and standards.

Quality is achieved through continuous improvement. Quality is largely driven by senior and middle-management but is only effective if there is an equal responsibility for all those involved in any process and for the total ethos of the institution. Quality is measurable in terms of 'costs' against 'outcomes.'

Quality pervades human relationships in the work place and teams are the most powerful agent for managing quality.

Quality has to be the criterion for reviewing every decision, every action and every process. If decisions or actions do not result in quality then they are not cost-effective. Quality is about developing and improving student learning. Managing quality in schools is an action-orientated and pro-active approach to developing and maintaining excellence in the learning process....

Quality organisations are obsessed with measurement. Measurement is

used to ensure conformity to standards, to identify the cost of deviation and to monitor the impact of innovations. By improving work processes [the link in the customer-supplier chain] schools can add value to their product and bring it closer to customer requirements and lead to higher quality. [p. 10]

It is difficult to describe what it feels like to read another forty-seven pages of this. Eventually, the extreme abstraction, the buzz-words repeated like mantras, the endless bullet points, lists and three line paragraphs, begin to make the booklet read like an insane rhapsody, empty and messianic, hectoring but vapid. Without the ballast of matter or content it grows more and more excited until it reaches a state of high-pitched ideological ecstasy which is unconnected with the world or anything in it. In this enclosed world of the semi-mesmerised ideologue, one is not altogether surprised by the reappearance of truly 'revolutionary' and 'profound' ideas which make everything traditional outmoded; or of men who are praised for being 'obsessed', who use 'measurement' to 'ensure conformity' and calculate the 'cost of deviation'.

Significantly, when Brown wants to show the cutting edge of managerial theory in action, he does not give an example from the classroom (how could he?) but reconceptualizes the procedures used to send letters to parents:

Take, for example, a letter to parents about a history trip.

The supplier is the teacher planning the trip and is required to supply the school secretary with all the necessary data in legible form. The customer is the parent whose requirements include all the relevant data expressed in a clear format in plenty of time with a clear indication of what action is required.

The process is managed by the secretary who needs time to complete the task, access to a word processor and photocopier, school guide-lines on the format of the letter, procedures for distribution, the time to check the letter with the teacher.

All of these elements are necessary if there is to be a quality product. The implications of not managing the process are substantial:

- time is wasted by teacher and secretary in checking, clarifying correcting,

- re-working the letter would double the cost in terms of time, paper and copying.
- if the letter is sent out incomplete then time would be wasted in answering queries.

The financial cost of reissuing the letter might be £50 (£12 for teacher time, £8 secretarial time, £15 copying x 2) and this is avoidable waste. The direct waste is matched by the frustration, loss of readability, and a poor reputation for efficiency arising from such an incident. [P.11]

This is managerial theory in action. This is what expertise in modern education looks like: it produces the most laughably feeble and laborious drivel, yet is sufficiently self-important and conceited to imagine that only now is education in competent professional hands. A Change Master has cast his stern, benign and all-seeing eye over History teaching and pronounces: a letter to parents should contain all the relevant information in legible form; it will need to be copied; it will need to be distributed to the right people. The most ardent sixties liberal could not hope to invent anything more earnestly platitudinous.

Theory in its managerial mutation is even more adept at choking institutions with redundant paper than its liberal forbear. Like its predecessor, managerial theory believes that all genuine knowledge can and must be stated, but it also believes that every line-manager must be accountable to his clients. Consequently, when the manager is asked what he does, he must be in a position to hand over a large book and say, 'This.' The doctrine of accountability means that a good deal of time is taken up recording or predicting what you do rather than doing it; and instead of teaching or preparing for teaching, you spend time constructing a parallel universe on paper. I find it useful to think of this universe as 'the virtual school.'

The school where I teach (which has about 1,000 pupils) was inspected a couple of years ago by the HMC inspectorate which is generally believed to require much less paperwork than OFSTED. In spite of this, the paperwork — visionary development plans, and so on — cost £200 *to post*. This is

equivalent to eighty hardback volumes which is, a rough calculation suggests, about 12,000 pages. It takes an enormous amount of time to write 12,000 pages, but the time spent writing was merely the tip of an iceberg. The writing and planning had to be preceded by extended meetings considering 'key-issues' (*Should my action plan be resource-driven?*), then draft documents had to be exposed to departmental members for comment and revision, and finally typed, edited, bound and checked — an exercise that took weeks of secretarial effort. The criminal dimensions of this time wasting become clear when you realize that there is *virtually nothing to say* in these documents (since external exam syllabuses and so forth are printed elsewhere) but at least fifty sides had to be produced or you looked unconscientious.

Considerable ingenuity had therefore to be exercised filling space. Biographies of staff were included, run-downs of health and safety regulations, lists of books on shelves, minutes of departmental meetings, and analyses of staff-turnover. Some produced two volumes. The inspectors reported themselves well pleased with the paperwork's scale and content.

The effect of management theory, however, is more debilitating than mere time wasting and the boredom and dissatisfaction it generates. Along with management theory goes a whole way of life: meetings, liaison committees, working parties, week-end courses, appraisal interviews, career development reviews, remits, mandates, proactive stances, INSET days, men with flip-charts and overheads, provisions in place (everything is 'in place' these days), self-assessment, mission statements, trajectories, lines of communication, downsizing, project champions, tiering, suiting, high profile key figures, best practices, liveries, logos, assessment opportunities, response cues, key issues, costs against outcomes, mechanisms to generate agreed criteria, differentiation, skills audits, desirable outcomes, and so on *ad inf.* Perhaps this culture worked well in the cut-throat world of merchant-banking and advertising in the eighties. Perhaps

it worked well for very large business organizations with widely scattered employees. But the sad truth is that it ossifies schools and makes them less efficient.

A History department in even a large school is unlikely to consist of more than six people. It is probable that they will not have offices and will meet everyday in the common room before school starts, at break, at lunchtime, and after school. If they are lucky, they will all share a common enthusiasm for their subject, like working together, and enjoy teaching. Up until five years ago, it was generally thought that one formal meeting a term was quite sufficient to determine fundamental matters like syllabus choice, and that day-to-day matters could be sorted out in the course of normal casual interaction. In my experience, this system — lean, flexible, pragmatic — works extremely well. In the last five years, however, the non-subject of 'managing a department' has been grotesquely inflated into an area of expertise. The old system has been replaced by an absurdly cumbersome set of procedures — all minutes, agendas and working parties — which is infinitely less pliant and efficient than the old one. Somehow, schools have got the idea that ten times the administration for the same output = efficiency. The new procedures are also alienating: there is nothing like impersonal macho management for destroying an atmosphere of amicable co-operation, and for severing the subtle personal bonds which make people work well together.

One of the most retarding ideas of management culture is its enthusiasm for written pre-planning. If you teach a subject like English then it is vital to be responsive to those you're teaching. If a book turns out to be too easy or too difficult then it's wise to change it; if a class's written work is bad in some respect then one responds to and corrects that fault; if they are very keen on a certain kind of writing (ghost stories, for instance) then it's a good idea to capitalize on this interest and lean your book-choice towards the supernatural; if some important event is reported on the news that's relevant to

what you're doing, then it's often wise to drop what you'd planned and base some work around that event. Now, however, some English teachers of my acquaintance are having to plan courses two years ahead for classes they have not yet met. They not only have to say what books they will be studying in the spring term of 1998 but also what essay questions they will be setting. They have no idea how fast the pupils will be able to move, what kind of literature they like, what they can't do, how frequently topics will need to be revised and so on. If you stick to the plan you'll teach very badly, and if you don't stick to the plan you wonder why you had to draw it up in the first place.

The managerial attempt to 'theorise' the craft of teaching, like all previous efforts, reduces the subject taught and the personality of the teacher to utter insignificance. Brown's booklet is characteristic of the kind of paperwork now received by heads of History departments in that it says virtually nothing about History or History teaching. Brown manages to give two examples of real historical events, one of which is mentioned twice. In a book of perhaps 25,000 words historical events occupy less than 60. As for the teacher's personality, I recently heard his central task described as 'generating agreed outputs in the learning centre' [classroom]. These 'outputs' are to be tested against 'outcomes', and Brown waxes eloquent on how the output/outcome ratio is to be tested for efficiency: 'Evaluation is a formal process that must be grounded in agreed evaluation procedures and criteria for determining levels of success . . .', and the line manager must ensure that 'quality assurance mechanisms are in place.' 'Successful achievement of present objectives,' he continues, 'produces clear feed-back that individual activities have definite pay-offs. Precision in objectives adds rigour in evaluation.' He is especially heartened by the 'rigidity' of OFSTED reports on schools: 'The rigid structure of the OFSTED reports is deliberately designed to encourage consistency ...' These phrases capture the impersonal computer-speak of recent educational documents, and

make one wonder how someone with this mind-set would cope with explaining the origins of the Renaissance or the influence of Cardinal Newman. It also makes one wonder what happened to those high-coloured, unorthodox, *human* characters who first captured your interest in classical music all those years ago, or made you think perhaps there was something in Edward Thomas after all ...

Largely because it approves of aggression and ambition, managerial theory is even more adept at creating bogus hierarchies than its liberal counterpart. The ambitious young teacher knows that 'the senior management' will rarely see him teaching, preparing lessons or marking books, but that they will read his paperwork and see him serving on committees. This then is the area in which his conscientiousness can be most usefully telegraphed, and he will always be ready to pick up a mandate to audit cross-curricular SPG-marking, or serve on the work-

ing-party monitoring the impact of self-assessment forms on middle-school performance. The other great advantage of theory over practice is that it takes up more space on the CV. Saying, 'for the last fifteen years I have run a successful drama club' looks unimpressive. It looks much more *central to the curriculum*, much more *proactive* to say, 'between September 1992 and September 1995 I attended seminars entitled: *Modularisation: A Greenfield Opportunity? Benchmarks for Excellence, Ethnicity Now, Towards the Millennium. Managing Change in Quality Organisations ...*' even though the drama club was considerably harder work and had more effect (*i.e. an effect*) on the lives of pupils. The result of all this is that those who inhabit the virtual school get promoted, and those who toil in the real one do not. Once managers reach the top they will naturally appoint more of their own. Thus bad money drives out good, and fifty-seven varie-

ties of spurious expertise begin to smother genuine talent and ability in our schools.

For all its good intentions, managerial theory allows administrative procedures to distract attention from a school's educational point — the teacher teaching his subject to pupils. It renders the administration of schools less flexible and efficient, and wherever it touches on teaching it denatures and calcifies. The new revolution in education can only inspire optimism in those not affected by it; in those who are, it can only inspire rage, gloom, and a profound sense of *déjà-vu*.

Peter Whitely teaches at a northern public school.

Lord Eustace Percy and his Times

George Chowdharay-Best describes his contribution to conservatism

Lord Eustace Percy, who was created Lord Percy of Newcastle in 1953, was born in 1887, the seventh son of the seventh Duke of Northumberland, hence the courtesy title by which he is still chiefly remembered. He spent ten years in the diplomatic service after a brilliant academic success at Oxford, and after election to Parliament in 1920 became in 1924 President of the Board of Education. After the Conservative defeat in 1929 however his political career fell into the doldrums, and after a brief spell as Minister without Portfolio be-

tween 1935 and 1936, when he resigned at the time of the German re-occupation of the Rhineland, he moved into academia, becoming Rector of King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and alternate Vice-Chancellor of Durham University. He died in 1958.

The Heresy of Democracy, published in 1954, was not his first book, but was possibly his most influential. It does not follow from the somewhat sensational nature of the title (which seems even more sensational today than it did in 1954) that Lord Percy was actually against universal adult suffrage. In-

deed in the course of the text he is careful to distance himself from such a position. What he is, rather, concerned to establish is, first, that pure democracies of the French Revolutionary and other similar kinds are not satisfactory forms of government; and, secondly, that such extreme forms stem from a failed attempt of Christianity to, as it were, step into the shoes of the secular state. The message of the book indeed is dualism. Governments must govern with the consent of the governed; but they must lead and not be led. 'Vox populi' is not necessarily 'vox dei';

indeed at the first known enunciation of that proverb, it was dismissed as an error.

Sovereignty resides, not only in the people but in laws and institutions. In a constitutional monarchy indeed, it still in strict theory resides in Queen, Lords and Commons. The 'elective dictatorship' described by Lord Hailsham more recently implies not only that the Commons may have acquired too much power in relation to the other two estates but also that the Prime Minister has usurped, almost Oliver Cromwell-style, the functions of the Monarch. Even the phraseology has changed within a generation. As late as the mid-eighties it was possible for Members of Parliament like Sir John Biggs-Davison to chide journalists for writing about 'Mrs Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer' or Foreign Secretary, pointing out that every Minister of the Crown is the Queen's, not the Prime Minister's, but this is no longer possible: the usage passes unquestioned. Yet it remains true that under the British constitution (and much of it *is* written, despite what many assert) individual Ministers still have personal responsibility for the conduct of our affairs and are responsible ultimately to the Sovereign, not to the Prime Minister. Of course the Prime Minister, as First Lord of the Treasury, has a special responsibility for finance and is Her Majesty's First Minister; but in the wider sphere his power to issue directives to Ministers is limited. Policy is determined by the Cabinet, in which the Prime Minister naturally has a powerful voice; but how powerful it is depends on time and circumstance as well as on personality.

Even in the sphere of finance, it may be noted that Mrs Thatcher could not prevent the pound note being replaced by a coin; and at the height of the second world war, despite the extraordinary powers conferred upon Winston Churchill, he frequently had to argue his case both with the Cabinet and with the Chiefs of Staff. Oliver Cromwell may have been a dictator once; but such people have never lasted for long in England. The Divine Right of Kings has never been popular here, as Percy pointed out in an illuminating pas-

sage: 'As an effective theory of government it died out almost as soon as it was born.' Only in Prussia, where it goes back to Luther, did it have any serious effect. But then 'Germany is the land of exaggerations, which other lands find indigestible'. Continuing, Lord Percy admitted that the doctrine might have 'served to imprint on British representative government the essential dualist idea that, while government is conducted with the people's consent, it does not originate as an act of the people's will. A British Cabinet meeting is still officially 'a meeting of the Queen's confidential servants' and, as such, Ministers are still recognized as having a responsibility for 'the enforcement of law and order and the maintenance of an upright administration' which 'no executive can share with any legislature, however answerable it may be to that legislature for the manner of its discharge.' This concept of the 'authority' of Government was one, Percy argued, which Englishmen have, at length, agreed not to define or explicitly to locate in any single institution, but their recognition of its existence is 'at least symbolically, focussed in the Crown and finds its appropriate expression in the ritual of the sovereign's coronation'.

At the present time we seem to be moving towards a point, even if we have not actually reached it, when the position outlined by Lord Percy has been undermined in various ways. The principal way in which this has occurred is through the increasing power of supranational and international communities, like the European Union (EU). The EU in particular has become a focus of authority wherefrom powers may or may not be devolved under the doctrine of subsidiarity but which, nonetheless, is already a state in being to which even Parliament has to defer. Secondly, the powers of Government over people's lives have enormously increased. 'Most political "rights",' Lord Percy wrote, 'are, in their origin, not claims to be right, but claims to be let alone.' Or, as Roger Scruton put it in *The Times* (13 January 1996) 'Conservatives believe that the functions of society should not be

controlled by the State, but should be left to individual initiative', the privatized society being one in which not merely strictly economic activities but also 'schools, clubs, hospitals and leisure activities are all independent of the State'.

Percy joined the Board of Education in 1923 as Parliamentary Secretary and was its President (minister) from 1924 to 1929. He was therefore well qualified to speak and write about this subject in particular. What worried him most about education, as he wrote in *Some Memories* (1958) was not such things as the Labour Party Conference Resolution at Margate in 1926 calling for an investigation into 'how far, under a workers' administration... a proletarian attitude and outlook on life might be cultivated', but influences from the other side of the Atlantic leading to a theory of education which aimed at 'civilizing children rather than instructing them', and which assumed that the social virtues need not be inculcated but would develop naturally enough if only the child could be brought to school young enough and protected from its home environment. The aim should be a 'happy unfolding' of the child's personality. This theory tended to give an infantile bias to elementary education: 'the child's fundamental appetite for new *knowledge* was not satisfied and his later competitive ambition to *excel* in knowledge was discouraged.' Percy could see this 'infantile bias' spreading upwards into the Teachers' Training Colleges. For this reason he discouraged the building of new colleges by local authorities, preferring to rely on existing colleges setting up links with universities. The causes of the rot in school education which set in in earnest after the Second World War, can thus be seen to lie in theories already fashionable in the 1920s. For 'if the teacher has anything to offer to the young, it is the accumulated knowledge and experience of earlier generations.' But such a policy must be administered with 'generosity'. The opponents of it may be 'progressive'; they may even be extravagant; but... in the name of equality, they are apt to squeeze education within a compass

narrow enough to be easily distributed in equal shares. Their sufficient objection to varieties in education, which may not be suited to all tastes and abilities, is to ask how candidates for such different types of troublesome school are to be selected. *A la carte* meals are more trouble both to cook and to serve; better a uniform pill that all can swallow — and that all can be made to swallow.

In the last forty years, he went on, this policy 'has resulted in cutting off the public services of education, as they have been built up by all the English-speaking peoples, from the whole main cultural tradition of Western Europe, by barring the teaching of any foreign language, ancient or modern, to any child below the age of eleven, or even twelve or thirteen.'

The irony of this seems all the more apparent today as we move ever closer to absorption within the European cultural mainstream, which admittedly is

itself beginning to show signs of becoming detached from its roots.

In 1929 Percy was one of those charged with the setting up of the Conservative Research Department, approved by the Shadow Cabinet on 23 October. Neville Chamberlain took over as its chairman in March 1930 and almost immediately decided to exclude Percy, whom he regarded as 'hopelessly academic', according to John Barnes and Richard Cockett in *Conservative Century* (1994). The difference between the two men, according to Percy, was that Chamberlain 'wanted a group of men who would "devil" for him personally', that is to say work out the application of a policy which would be handed down to them; whereas Percy's idea was more of a think-tank or policy studies institute, 'ranging more at large over the whole field of unsolved problems, and suggesting conclusions out of which a party policy might be constructed'.

Although Percy held office briefly as Minister Without Portfolio between 1935 and 1936, his political career was by then largely over. The fact that his resignation took place at the time of Hitler's march into the Rhineland was partly coincidence; but like Duff Cooper, he did not share Baldwin's assumption that public opinion would not have supported military action against the aggressors and on the morning of the invasion, reminded a League of Nations meeting there was a system of public law in Europe which must, if necessary, be enforced. 'Our failure at this time to react immediately to Hitler's challenge was, I think, the worst of all the errors of British governments in the 'thirties', he wrote in *Some Memories*.

George Chowdharay-Best is on the staff of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Reconstituting Britain

Vivian Linacre gives a reactionary prescription

Edinburgh has somehow contrived "twinning" arrangements with six or seven other cities. Granted that a 'quadruplet' agreement with San Diego would not confer quite the same *cachet*, while a 'sextuplet' agreement with Nice would not sound very nice; but how can each additional sibling enjoy the same unique symbiosis? Perhaps the Scottish capital's renown in the world of medicine has wrought some miracle of urban obstetrics or municipal parthenogenesis? The more serious question remains, however: why does nobody in authority object to these grotesque extravagances?

Naturally, Labour councils' 'twin towns' are never nasty industrial places, but always exotic resorts. Members of a deputation from the unlamented Lo-

thian Regional Council complained of grave offence to their civic dignity, on a sojourn in Salzburg which happened to coincide with some sort of music festival there, because Mr Mozart failed to appear.

Councillors and officials ape their Westminster superiors in love of 'freebies'. They may no longer have funds for home-helps or the free issue of plastic bin-bags, but they have plenty for overseas jaunts and for setting up offices in Brussels to revel in the power and perquisites there. Reciprocally, the EU is establishing delegations (no doubt soon to be elevated to the status of "Consulates") throughout the regions of member-states, in order to squander even more of our money and undermine the integrity of the host-nations. The more severe the 'cut-

backs' and 'under-resourcing' the greater the cost of our elected representatives and public servants. Linacre's First Law states: *The worse the economic conditions the more is spent on administration — and conversely*. So MP's reimpose a public sector wage freeze while voting themselves a 26% increase in salary; pleading that they are merely implementing the recommendation of an independent review body, thereby begging the question as to whether, if they cannot even determine their own remuneration, they are competent to decide anything? Indeed, the two things that MP's are good at are begging questions and for more money. Local government was totally reorganized in the depths of the recession, to give officials and councillors another huge boost in earn-

ings and expenses, just as the previous reorganization had taken place during the '74-'76 slump. Lady Chalker recently visited that once prosperous but now destitute country, Zimbabwe, to discuss with the mad tyrant Robert Mugabe how much more he wants from the British tax-payer, to help finance the celebrations of his latest nuptials. For the above Law applies as much to the African dictatorships, much loved by the Left, as to socialist Britain: the poorer the country the more is spent on its rulers. Likewise, the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food have just built a palatial new head-quarters on a most expensive and extremely sensitive site in the city centre of York to serve the industries which are being impoverished by the Common Agriculture and Fisheries Policies etc *ad nauseam*.

Authorities not only spend more on themselves as the financial situation deteriorates: they also undertake additional functions as their responsibilities diminish. Now that Parliament is merely an outpost of the European Empire, it can no longer exercise real power and has few necessary tasks to perform. Indeed, all its essential functions could be discharged by a few Standing Committees to convert EU Directives into legislation by way of Statutory Instruments. Yet, instead of a contraction in activity to reflect this drastic curtailment of Parliament's role and status, we see a continuing expansion, with backbenchers scrambling for legislative time, lucrative private consultancies and invitations to join "fact-finding missions" and conferences abroad, while demanding research assistants and enlarged office facilities. The Mother of Parliaments has been consigned to a granny annexe, yet is busier and more profligate than when she ruled half the world.

Scotland and Wales afford additional opportunities for parliamentary proliferation in the form of devolution, which of course really means duplication. So they will have local authorities subordinate to a national parliament or assembly which will be subordinate to Westminster which is subordinate to Brussels. These once-proud nations will be the most heavily governed on

earth. The purposes of devolution are to spend even more of our money while expanding the power of the state and creating thousands of jobs for second-rate provincial politicians and their parasites. It is all for the benefit of the Scottish and Welsh liberal (ie Labour) establishments and the media, who have succeeded, by a colossal confidence trick, in presenting their proposals as if the people in both countries were clamouring for them — whereas in fact the electorate are indifferent and apathetic, which is precisely why the confidence trick succeeded. The former Royal High School in Edinburgh, a great classical building, has stood empty for twenty years, having been acquired and converted at vast public expense but without public approval into premises for a Scottish Parliament which did not materialize because of inadequate support from the electorate; yet there has never been any outcry against this monumental folly.

Meanwhile, central government in Scotland continues to expand, despite unitary local authorities, UK centralisation at Westminster and transfer of powers to Brussels. The Scottish Office has just spent £60 million of our money on a new headquarters in Leith, the port of Edinburgh. St Andrew's House, the original 1930's Scottish Office (facing the old Royal High School) is still fully operational and perfectly adequate. Also, New St Andrew's House nearby continues to dominate the city skyline, but stands empty, like so many hulks from the 1960's, riddled with asbestos. There was no question of deciding its future before abandoning it and building its replacement in the Leith docks. So we now have three St Andrew's Houses. The latest could be called ENSAH (Even Newer St Andrew's House) and the next one NOASAH (Newest Of All...) They could eventually be franchised, or sold in flat-pack form for home assembly: then we should all have Home Rule.

Like central government, the scope of local government has already dwindled owing to the centralizing of administration nationally. (Any Scottish parliament, Welsh assembly or Eng-

lish regional authorities would make further heavy encroachments on local government's functions.) Abolition of the old rating system has deprived Town and County Halls of any degree of financial autonomy. The Treasury and Department of the Environment between them exercise complete control. Establishment of central government agencies and quangos and the collapse of council housing has removed most other functions. In the major cities especially, the provision of housing alone was the Town Hall's *raison d'être*: responsible not only for one of the largest departmental budgets but also for ensuring political control through heavily subsidized rents. Water and other essential services, that used to come within the civic purview, have all been hived off. Yet, rather than gracefully retrench, local government has responded by diversifying into new areas such as social work, sex and race relations, "resource centres", shopping development, tourism, "leisure centres" and theme parks, as well as EU promotions So Linacre's Second Law states: *Any public body's activities expand as its essential responsibilities diminish*.

An illustration in miniature is the vogue among upwardly mobile households for fitted kitchens. The wealthier the family the more lavish the kitchen and the less it will be used, because the more the family will eat out in restaurants or bring home ready-made dishes from Marks & Spencer or order meals to be delivered. The most elaborate kitchens are like showrooms, full of gleaming equipment, but only a few coffee-cups sully the dish-washing machine. A real cook, of course, is happy with an old gas stove and a sink. So it is with government at every level: the more it spends on new premises and capital equipment, committees and consultants, the less it has to do.

In order to ensure that government always has ample scope for future growth, any area where people still enjoy the remotest freedom from control at any level is called a "democratic deficit". (Of course, a "democratic excess" is inconceivable.) Hence the agitation for greater powers to be conferred on the European Parliament; hence

the seemingly irresistible demands for identity cards; and overwhelming demands, too, for universal provision of nursery schools, mainly for the benefit of working mothers, particularly single parents, the effect (indeed the purpose) being to undermine what still survives of family life; hence the spawning of "Charters" for Parents, Passengers, Patients, etc., all of which *restrict* the natural liberties and entitlements of the target groups; hence the insatiable movements for "rights" of any and every sector of society — the exercise of "rights", in the absence of corresponding duties, merely meaning the imposition of more regulations. For if one's "rights" are specified, then it is presumed at the outset that some higher authority has the absolute original right to hand down those specific rights — ie, whatever rights an individual enjoys are necessarily subsidiary — and furthermore any and every right which is *not* specified (of which there must be many, otherwise there would be no point in defining which *are* one's rights) are implicitly reserved to that higher authority. So the current vogue for promoting a 'Bill of Rights' is yet more mischief-making; for it would emasculate our unwritten constitution and the liberty of the people by prescribing only those residual and rhetorical 'rights' that are surplus to the authority of the EU, and all the organs of government by reducing a free subject of the Crown to a mere citizen of the state and super-state whose powers the Bill would effectively entrench. A Bill of Rights would indeed tear a huge hole in the fabric of our constitution, which has already been rendered threadbare by MP's who regard themselves as civil servants rather than guardians of the people's sovereignty. Why otherwise should the Courts be called with increasing frequency to encroach on the executive by conducting a 'judicial review' of Ministerial actions? So Linacre's Third Law states:

The institutionalisation of personal rights, like economic subsidy, is invariably counter-productive.

Life today is cluttered and cursed by all sorts of gadgets that are produced for no other reason than that the technology for their production has be-

come available and consequently a market is generated for them. The demand is manufactured in order to justify the supply. Then one is obliged to have them if everybody else does. It is like any of those patent medicines or cosmetics that suddenly appear, heavily advertised, as the magical remedy for some terrible affliction of which one had previously never heard. So it is with the machinery of government: the tax jungle grows ever denser because the computer can cope with it, as well as because the more complex the system the greater the power of the state. Computer and communications technology constantly stimulate the capacity and appetite of government.

Thus, another legislative growth area, which could never have emerged without all the modern business apparatus, is the repression of the professions — ostensibly for the benefit of the public — by means of requirements for 'quality assurance' and 'duty of care' and professional indemnity insurance, all of which actually diminish the public's protection and lower the standards of practitioners who previously had nothing to rely on but their own skill and integrity. The presumption now is that lawyers, architects, etc, are all criminal lunatics and so need masses of paper in order to protect themselves against possible claims by clients and the public, although the measures employed are presented as if it were the clients' and public interests that they are designed to protect. This, of course, is yet another instance of statutory counter-productivity.

An advertising agency was paid a large fee by a local authority for drafting a "School-children's Charter", purely as a public relations exercise. Nobody in the education department was capable of writing it, because of course it had nothing to do with education. Thousands of copies were distributed and promptly thrown away. Incidentally, among all the pupils' [sorry! I must say 'students'] "rights", one which was overlooked was the right to academic teaching. They were all about cultivating self-esteem and becoming fulfilled and useful members of society and condemning discrimination of all kinds (eg, by

implication, between good and bad or ignorant and intelligent); and — most importantly — sex education, because the more of that the more under-age pregnancies and so the more state-dependants.

Charity no longer means love. Now it means a registered source of fundraising. Compassion, too, has been collectivised, like leisure, human rights, sex education, etc. What had always been a spontaneous, disinterested emotion that prompted action to aid the victim is debased into a self-indulgent demonstration of orchestrated sentimentality towards the object of pity. "Counselling" is the latest contrivance among pseudo-vocations that help to keep officialdom happy. It is another substitute for the priesthood, like that classic oxymoron "social work". The difference is that priests are concerned with individuals and act in private, whereas social workers deal with case-loads and counsellors operate in teams. It is not yet a crime to refuse counselling services following bereavement or some disaster, but reticence and stoicism are viewed with growing suspicion. Nor is a householder who leaves doors or windows open yet guilty of an offence, although he may be held liable for inviting burglary; but to keep one's heart and mind locked against violation by trained voyeurs and exhibitionists is increasingly regarded as anti-social. Linacre's Fourth Law states: *The more professional counselling and compassion, the less anyone cares.*

All official bodies' extra-curricular activities are an abuse of power; whether a local authority undertaking a property development on the strength of a planning permission — granted to itself — that would have been refused to a private applicant, or treasonable business by representatives of our government in Brussels. The economic anarchy bred by fifty years of an ever-intensifying culture of welfare and subsidy is certainly one of the reasons why public life now is dominated by the manipulation of power, privilege and patronage. Britain is waist-high in waste; the country is subsiding under the weight of subsidy.

Linacre's Fifth Law states: *National*

economic corruption must produce endemic political corruption. But that explanation does not answer the fundamental question as to why this virulent culture of welfare and subsidy took hold in the first place, nor why it spread so catastrophically. For it is not enough to talk of post-war utopianism and the inevitability of socialism following the great depression of the '30's and five years of total state-control. Britain's malaise today cannot be dismissed merely as the long decline of an exhausted former super-power, aggravated by a shabby bureaucracy which is ill-suited to our unreconstructed institutions. That much is true, of course, but it does not account for our having sunk within these fifty years from one of the most exalted among the civilized nations in the world to the most abject. That is no exaggeration: for where else is any demonstration of patriotism confined to football hooligans or otherwise condemned as right-wing extremism; where else has the unquestioning attitude of "My country, right or wrong!" been replaced by "My country, wrong!" Where else is there such dissatisfaction with our constitution and even greater ignorance of it; and where else is there such lack of resistance — such servility — in face of insidious, hypocritical, surreptitious, all-pervasive state oppression?

For it is not 'state oppression' in the historic sense of arbitrary or brutal rule, which could always be identified and overthrown. What we are suffering from is an unprecedented oppression by and for the benefit of a nebulous 'society' or 'community', ostensibly in our own interests! This is national euthanasia. After all, we have enjoyed political stability throughout these fifty years; we are still nominally a democracy, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and one of the 'G7' leading economic nations. So this collapse of confidence — this sudden failure of the nation's nerve — is clearly self-inflicted. And it cannot yet be incurable, provided the root cause is accurately diagnosed.

The trouble is that our sense of uniqueness as a nation has gone. Not necessarily superiority, one must hasten to add, but exclusivity. Our coun-

try's name is not needed on our postage stamps; it is The Royal Navy, etc. These relics of our conscious distinction are carefully preserved, but the substance and people's awareness of it — and devotion to it — have almost disappeared. That has left a terrible vacuum which bureaucracy and egalitarianism have rushed to fill. Other countries have always had to proclaim and try to improve their identity, for they were and remain in general competition. But we were above all that, and now are left with very little identity or will-power to express. So the EU and immigrant communities are now free to stamp their own identities all over us. We used to absorb and be enriched by immigrants, who were anxious to be integrated; but now they are scornful of our loss of national character; so they are either rootless and a burden on our society or proud to retain their original culture and consequently disruptive of ours.

Likewise, we never needed a written constitution, because our liberties were unquestionable and the common law sacrosanct. So half a century of legislative diarrhoea has all but obliterated the common law, and our judicial system is at the mercy of the European Courts. The House of Lords has had to admit that its jurisdiction, because its supremacy is not entrenched, is inferior to the EU Courts.

Worst of all is the degradation of the monarchy as the personification of the sovereignty of the people. How many children are taught at school that in any country the politicians are either the masters or the servants of the people and that we are exceedingly blessed because the Queen symbolizes the mastery of the people? As the politicians wish to reverse the situation, they have ceased to acknowledge this fundamental truth, pretending that their bending the knee to the monarch is merely a mediaeval ceremony rather than a submission to the will of the people. So the Queen is wrongly thought of as no more than Head of State, as if that meant just head of the government — ie. head of the establishment that *governs* the people — whereas, on the contrary, it is *Her* government since it exists to serve *Her*

on behalf of the people. She does not govern: she rules, in order that the people may govern. All of this, the essence of our constitution, is largely forgotten or ignored. Having been degraded from the paramount role of monarch to a mere functionary as Head of State, the Queen is now being gradually degraded further to the level of a super-civil servant, a few grades above the politicians themselves but doing the same job.

Britain's regeneration, therefore, demands not only immediate withdrawal from the EU but also a cleansing and reaffirmation of our constitution. That means a wholesale purge of oppressive regulations and drastic pruning of numerous branches of government. There is a good argument for abolishing secondary legislation altogether. The 'downsizing' and 'delaying' that industry and commerce have had to undergo these last ten years to make them 'fit and lean' is long overdue for government too, if we are to compete successfully in the world again. It has always been ludicrous that government preaches to the private sector on the need for greater efficiency whilst itself becoming evermore bloated. Both central and local government must be confined to their essential functions. Well-managed companies dispose of non-performing assets and unprofitable subsidiaries in order to concentrate on their core businesses; so must government at every level. But this is much more than economics: for government must also transform its whole ethos, in order to realize that its job is not to run the country but to help the people in every way to run the country and their own lives.

That means re-educating the people. Their natural authority should rest on (i) the common law and constitution, (ii) pride in and devotion to the country, and (iii) competent government, all of which are so gravely undermined. We must restore them fully. One essential measure is the incorporation of a basic course on the constitution in the core curriculum of all schools, to 'O' level standard as a requirement for proceeding to 'A' levels. Is it not incredible that most children leave

school without more than a vague misunderstanding of — and even less concern for — our so-called democratic institutions and their heroic history? Current debates on so-called ‘reforms’ of the monarchy and the House of Lords, Scottish and Welsh devolution and a ‘Bill of Rights’ — not to mention the EU — exhibit an appalling ignorance generally.

The monarchy must be de-democratized. The magic and mystery of the Crown ought to be restored. The Royal family should cut themselves off from the media except on ceremonial occasions. The greater the mystique attaching to the Queen (and her successor) the more the people will love her (and him). This will also make life infinitely more tolerable for the Royal family, and leave the monarch freer to concentrate on the real job of guarding the constitution and hounding ministers whenever necessary.

The tax system must be radically simplified and scaled down in line with the reduction in government generally. It is a social evil that the regime, because of its volume and intricacy

and annually changing provisions, is incomprehensible to most tax-payers. Why should tax consultants thrive? Transforming this jungle into a clear woodland would destroy the habitat of hordes of professional parasites. Why should thousands of poor people receive welfare benefits with one hand and pay tax on some of them with the other? Why should anyone earning less than an average wage pay income tax at all? Why retain ‘National Insurance Contributions’, which have nothing to do with insurance; whose only effects (apart from swelling the bureaucracy and diverting enterprise from productive activity) are to tax employment and conceal the true rate of PAYE? All such reforms (and anyone can suggest many more) are blindingly obvious but, according to everyone in authority, impossible!

This programme is perfectly practicable. MP’s should not oppose it. Cutting down on their work-load will make their lives a lot more comfortable, too. They should be encouraged to have day jobs in order to restrain their ungovernable urge to legislate, to reduce

their desperate dependency on holding their seats and pleasing the party whips and increasing their remuneration, and to make the House more representative of the people. Besides, one open occupation elsewhere would lead to less sinister influences and conflicts of interest than the full-time politicians’ assortment of consultancies and directorships.

So let us prepare for a national renaissance. Have you not often wished that a judge would say to a snivelling defendant or an harassed GP would say to a whining malingerer or a parent to an idle youth: “Why don’t you pull yourself together?”? Well: why don’t we all pull ourselves together? Linacre’s Last Law states: *Politics is the art of the impossible*. (If Rab Butler had not believed the opposite he would have become prime minister!)

Vivian Linacre is sole principal at a surveying and valuation consulting practice in Scotland.

Sophist’s Corner

Each and every one of us at every time in the past, once the whole situation is taken into account, has done the very best we could and deserves neither blame nor reproach. This is true of you.

The past is the past and cannot be changed. You, and everybody you know, did what you thought was best at the time. The future is yours to choose. You can learn from your experience and take whatever action makes sense. You can choose to take actions of courage and integrity.

Hackney No Limits Project

The Hackney No Limits Project is organised by the North Hackney Re-Evaluation Counselling Community. Re-Evaluation Counselling is a non-profit, non-religious organisation based in over 80 countries. We use co-counselling to release our past hurts and reclaim our power, to change ourselves and our world. Our aim is to stop the practice of humans hurting other humans and of harming our world.

(The above Handbill, circulated by the self-styled Hackney No Limits Project, sheds light on the administrative chaos of this London borough.)

Not a Curse

Peter Watson responds to Roger Scruton's Reflections on the Internet

I have used the Internet and associated facilities for nearly five months and believe that when operated wisely, it can provide both a medium for very fast data transmission and a wealth of information, some of which is unavailable by any other means, and may also be considered a weapon against socialism, or as it has become known in these last days, globalism, in whatever guise this evil may appear.

The Internet not only provides informative "web sites" which are updated on a regular basis, but also discussion news groups which cover every topic known to man, from chiliasm to underwater Ugandan nose flute competitions. When first connected I recorded a total of 15,600 groups, from which I had to choose a few of particular interest. The size of the groups may vary from a dozen participants to thousands in each news group, the postings on them being updated daily. I suspect there are now closer to 18,000 news groups, an easily achieved number when one may open a news group at will. In order to avoid a huge waste of time and money, one must first have a general idea of the subject news groups one wishes to subscribe to; otherwise the amount of available, and in many cases utterly superfluous, information will become quite intimidating. I have selected close to twenty news groups which focus on alternative politics and conspiracy. My on-line time has thus decreased from a daily high of four hours or more to some few minutes.

The Internet differs greatly from television in that the former is highly interactive and to a great extent user controlled, whereas the latter merely emits its familiar mind numbing soma

from its cyclopean head. I hold a Biblical view of men and things, so I am acutely aware of abuse of the Internet by a minority of users. However, many good methods exist to help prevent the darkest of human imaginings from being thrust unsolicited into our minds. Firstly, avoid subscribing to offensive news groups and report unsolicited news group postings to your ISP (Independent Service Provider). Secondly, it is best to ignore any really foul posting as the senders of these mis- sives are generally the real flotsam and jetsam of society and even purple replies will gratify their depraved minds [*sic*] which so crave attention of any sort. Thirdly, some ISP's such as Demon, provide a "kill" facility, whereby one may prescribe deletion of items sent by author, title, index etc. which precludes arrival from the message centre of proscribed and unwanted texts. This updating takes place automatically, when the facility is selected, whenever access to the Internet occurs. Lastly, the majority of news group users are thoughtful and do not wish to see the system debased by evil or offensive material. However, there will always be random "bombers" whose messages get through to completely unrelated news groups; but these must be borne as a consequence of using the system. Extremists of both "right" and "left" opinions flourish on the Internet. It is definitely not the place for Laodiceans.

However those who lament the lack of control of material on the Internet should reflect that amongst the most vocal promoters of censorship are the globalists, who rightly perceive that the Internet presents a danger by exposing their plans for a new world order. Here the Internet is the latest

bastion of free speech, where a parallel with the effects of the first printing press may be drawn. That certain groups monitor the Internet is accepted; therefore, when sending anything, it should be viewed as an electronic postcard where all who choose to see it may do so. One way around that is to use encryption such as PGP; but even encryption will not withstand scrutiny by the security services. I believe the Internet has the potential to be to Populist politics what the great awakening was to Christianity, but already the siren calls for control of the Internet in the name of censorship, ostensibly based solely on strong moral grounds, are being made from Washington to Berlin.

If the "Clintonista" régime is ever brought to justice this will partly be due to the effect of the transfer of vast quantities of information provided by British newspaper articles on Whitewater and other Clintonista-related crimes. These have been supplied to American Internet users, who until then had been deprived of any objective reporting on the Clinton sagas due to the fact that the US media is run by the global élites and sets their agenda. They rightly fear their lack of control of this powerful tool. Consider the following recent example of how selective use of the Internet punctured the media's rubber wall. The Bilderberg meeting, held this year between May 29th and June 2nd at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce leadership Centre at King City near Toronto, was so widely reported by a Toronto based Internet user, that the *Toronto Sun* ran the story on its front page. On the Internet, a full list of delegates was provided within a couple of days of the meeting's end. It is interesting to note

the attendance of trade union leader John Monks, for example.

As a counterweight to news controllers such as one-worlder Ted Turner, whose CNN "News" network spews out the musically enhanced, politically correct, socialist doctrines of the "global village" 24 hours a day, the Internet is a Godsend!

Information I have received from net user groups and web sites includes information regarding the CIA's founding and funding of the European Movement during the 1950's, which continued up to the Referendum Campaign of 1975; lists of persons behind the World Federalist Movement and like-minded organisations such as the West London based "Commission On Global Governance". A disturbing document found on one site entitled "CablesplICE: An Aggressive Program to Counter the Disrupter's Movement" dates from March 1993, and calls those who oppose the construction of the New Babel the "Disrupters". I submitted this document to an intelligence analyst for his comment on its authen-

ticity. Whilst he was unable to identify the source, he considered it to be an authentic plan rather than one of the more far-fetched "factional" accounts one finds posted. In it, the means of achieving the destabilisation of moral society, necessary to achieve control, is described in detail and includes infiltration of the Church and judiciary, the provision of bread and circuses in the form of chat shows, where the endless discussion of trivia never draws conclusions, as objective reality is the enemy of this spirit, and the promotion of national lotteries to distract the attention of populations by provision of a "quick fix" answer to their woes. More chilling is the call for random acts of violence to be enacted, in some cases by controlled subjects using automatic weapons, in order to make the public clamour for immediate draconian gun control legislation. In the light of recent events in Scotland and Australia, discussion groups on the subjects of Mena, Oklahoma City, TWA flight 800, and the Olympic Bombing, would seem to be an abso-

lute imperative if we are to break free from media control of information. Wasn't the reaction of the President of the United States to the TWA crash absolutely uncharacteristic? And wasn't it odd that the US media inspected to the last detail the Olympic bombing incident which killed less than half a dozen people, yet they chose almost to ignore the deaths of some 230 on Flight 800.

The Internet exposes the march through the institutions with stark and sometimes chilling clarity. Disinformation appears too, but discerning users can soon learn to separate fact from fiction. Further information regarding accessing the Internet, whether one is a computer owner or not, is available from the author — e-mail Peter@pwwatson.demon.co.uk

Peter W. Watson works for a petro-chemical engineering company.

Election Opinion Polls

Stephen Pimenoff disagrees with banning them

As the general election approaches, there are likely to be louder than ever calls demanding the banning of opinion polls in the run-up to voting. At the very least there is bound to be fresh debate about the role of such polls during the campaign. Do they serve any useful purpose, other than to give the media something to talk and write about?

Apart from questions about their accuracy, which were raised seriously last time around, there is a school which believes polls influence the way people vote, and that therefore they should have no place in our political system. When the election result ac-

cords with the predictions clearly no one has been influenced, but when the two are at odds, as they were five years ago, the matter is not so simple. How many people who planned to vote against the Government in the end voted for them because they feared the prospect of a Labour landslide?

In 1992, despite carrying out a ludicrous number of polls (two or three a day), the pollsters failed at any stage of the campaign to predict the Conservative victory. Again and again, as polling day approached, the five major polling organizations — Gallup, ICM, Mori, NOP and Harris — consistently put Labour ahead by from 0.5 to 5

percentage points. Even on election day only one gave the Tories a lead, and that a narrow one. Yet in the event Labour crashed once more to defeat, confounding one and all, with the possible exception of voters themselves, who, having had their say, merely smiled inscrutably and pottered home to their dahlias and crossword puzzles. The *Sunday Times*, in an editorial, said that "newspapers (including this one) will have to think again about allowing polls to determine their front-page news stories." What went wrong? More, what should be done about it, if anything?

Anguished media commentators

spent months after the election trying to answer the first question. They arrived at several possible explanations. One is that the bloody-minded British public (bloody-minded? British people? surely not), sick of having their privacy invaded up to three times a day by pesky pollsters (the mosquitoes of the political swamp), actually — here I take a deep breath — *lied to the pollsters about their intentions*. Another is that, fed up to the back teeth with Tory mistakes, such as the Poll Tax fiasco, and the lingering effects of the recession, chiefly the slump in the housing market, they resolved to oust the long-serving government, but got cold feet when faced with the very real possibility that there might be a hung parliament or, worse, that their next prime minister might be Neil Kinnock. (That even “exit polls” showed the Tories trailing might have been taken as evidence that voters continued to play tricks on the pollsters to the end.)

Then there were technical explanations. These concerned such matters as sample size and spread, and even the time of day when polls were taken (before 4 p.m. usually, which tended to pick up a disproportionate number of people without day-time jobs, usually Labour supporters). Some believe the Tories were always in the lead, and that sampling methods were at fault.

Others believe there was a “late swing” to the Tories, but this should not be accepted unquestioningly. If even a handful of Tories who don’t normally vote (but knew the contest was going to be close and feared a Labour victory) turned out on election day; or the same number of Labour supporters, confident of victory, did not bother to vote — either of those eventualities, given the close-run nature of the race, would have been enough to ensure Conservative success.

It could well be that trailing in the polls actually helped the Tories to victory: had the polls not consistently shown them heading for a narrow defeat, thus concentrating fear of a Labour government, it is entirely possible that sufficient waverers would not have come forward to support the party.

We shall never know for certain what

influence, if any, opinion polls had on the outcome (there are too many variables involved); but given the importance placed on them by the media it would be hard to maintain they had none. It is this influence which in the past has repeatedly led to calls to have them banned in the run-up to an election, and will almost certainly lead to similar calls this time. How should we treat these calls?

An attempt was made some years ago, by a Labour MP, Raymond Powell, to introduce legislation restricting the publication of polls, and although the attempt failed, it had the support of a considerable number of MPs. Other countries have already taken this step. (In France, opinion polls are banned during the last ten days of an election campaign, although admittedly France has a system of proportional representation which makes it unnecessary for any voter to know how any other is voting).

Some of the criticism of opinion polls is highly persuasive. The former chief rabbi, Lord Jacobovits, has written: “[their] whole philosophy... seems to me morally flawed. Extrapolating what tens of millions are thinking from a tiny sample of 1,000 or maybe 10,000 opinions (even if all answered the pollsters correctly, and even if he sample was ‘fair’ and scientifically representative) affronts human intelligence and negates true freedom of thought. Human minds are reduced to robots subject to calculation and pre-determination — based perhaps on an assumed herd instinct or the irrepressible power of conformity.” He concluded: “It is time the lottery of prognosticating public opinion was abandoned for good, leaving the expression of views to the voters and the testing of opinions to elections.”

On the other side, the best argument in defence of opinion polls is that which stresses personal freedom — of both pollster and voter. If X, the argument runs, wishes to ask A, B and C which party they propose voting for, and to publish their replies, he should, in a free society, be at liberty to do so, and attempts to deprive him of that liberty, however well-intentioned, ought to be resisted on principle. Pro-

ponents of this view point out that if history teaches us anything, it is that small steps towards controlling what information people may have are often followed by larger ones.

Then, voter’s freedom. Central to our democracy is the fact that all adult citizens are not only entitled to vote for the candidate of their choice, but to do so for whatever reasons seem to them important, even if to others those reasons are misguided or trivial. This may be deplored, but is the price we must pay — must insist on paying — for living in a free society. We have a right, it is vigorously maintained, to any information we think relevant; whether that includes the opinions of our fellow-citizens ought to be for us to decide. If we subsequently base our voting intentions partly — or even wholly — on these opinions, it should be no concern of those who do not share our views regarding their importance.

All sound, even worthy sentiments. But more interesting, and important, is the question of whether polls influence the outcome of an election and, if so, whether this is wrong. Evidence suggests they do, and the evidence comes not just from the election of 1992, but from a by-election of the year before, that of Ribbles Valley.

There, although there were rumbles of discontent among the faithful, Tory support stayed firm at 45 per cent (the Liberal Democrats were second with 34, Labour third with 18). Defeat seemed unlikely for the Conservative candidate Nigel Evans, who was reportedly in “ebullient” mood. In the event, he lost to the Liberal Democrat. (He won back the seat at the general election the next year).

Opponents of polling in the run-up to an election claim that had a Conservative victory not been so confidently predicted in the late stages of the campaign two things would have happened. First, Tory voters (a majority in the constituency) would have turned out in greater numbers to support their candidate, thus ensuring his victory. Second, that disgruntled Tory voters, who were confident of their party’s success but voted Liberal Democrat as a protest against the Poll Tax,

would have thought twice had they known their candidate would lose. According to one report, it was with an “overwhelming sense of shock” that the Conservatives awoke the next day “to the realisation that they had thrown away one of Britain’s safest seats... They were dismayed to learn that their stance had allowed the Liberal Democrat to become their MP.”

Although consternation was great among pollsters at the size and comprehensiveness of their error, ordinary people were delighted. The exercise showed that, despite the highly scientific nature of opinion polling — the painstaking sampling, the psychologically prepared questioning, the sophisticated electronic analysis of the data — the unpredictable human element still proved the deciding factor in the election’s outcome. If you like, it was one up for poor irrational humanity, and two fingers for advanced scientific and technological know-how.

Less whimsically, as long as we have a system in which it is sometimes

necessary to vote tactically (i.e. vote for a candidate whose policies are not liked, just to keep out another candidate who is liked even less), voters will have a legitimate interest in knowing how others plan to vote. This may be deplored, but must be accepted as an unavoidable adjunct to the first-past-the-post system. It would have no place under a system of proportional representation (if voters believe their vote will result in some form of representation, they will not throw it away by using it solely as a tactical manoeuvre, nor need they).

Should opinion polls be seen as a threat to the democratic process? Decidedly not — at any rate, not as long as voters take them with the healthy dose of scepticism they merit, while being aware of their unique power to influence voter behaviour, even to the point of determining the outcome of an election. If the events of recent memory have the effect of spreading such an awareness then they will have achieved a great good.

Elections — like races — are exciting events, and opinion polls are part of that excitement. To rob us of their excitement would be to deprive us of a harmless source of fun. And let us have no nonsense about having to protect voters from the malign and misleading influence of opinion polls, for that would be patronising in the extreme. The British public form one of the best informed, most sophisticated and sceptical electorates in the world. They have plenty of experience in interpreting the results of surveys and making what use they will — if any — of the information. More, they are quite capable of cocking a snook at the army of pollsters, pundits, analysts and commentators who crawl out of the woodwork at election time, and presume to tell them how they will be voting. Long may this state continue, for it is largely what gives our political system its flexibility and resilience.

Stephen Pimenoff is a teacher and writer.

Irish Nationalism

Patrick J Roche reflects on the Politics of the Absurd

In *Partition and the Limits of Irish Nationalism*, Clare O’Halloran refers to what she describes as the ‘anachronistic’ and ‘tattered remnants’ of an irredentism that has been central to Irish nationalism since partition. This irredentism is driven by the core nationalist belief that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland. This belief sustains the nationalist imperatives of ‘self-determination’ and ‘territorial integrity’ which entail, for the nationalist mind, that partition is devoid of political legitimacy. The nationalist rejection of partition, as incompatible with the ‘territorial integrity’ required for ‘self-determina-

tion’, is reinforced by the understanding of unionism as a ‘false consciousness’ — that is, a failure of a minority of the Irish nation to accept their real identity. This failure is presented by nationalists as itself the outcome of British policy in Ireland being supportive of unionism.

This nationalist understanding of unionism is central to the notion of consent in current nationalist discourse. The nationalist position is that in principle, unionists as a minority within the Irish nation have no right of veto over the ending of partition and as a minority within the British state have no right of veto over policies directed

to that end. This, however, is combined with a pragmatic acceptance of the need for unionist agreement to Irish unification which was incorporated into the *Downing Street Declaration* of 15 December 1993. But in the nationalist mind there is in fact no contradiction here. The key to a reconciliation of pragmatism with principle is for Britain to end the ‘unionist veto’. The end of the ‘unionist veto’ would — to quote from the 1989 SDLP policy document, *Northern Ireland: A Strategy for Peace* — finally ‘liberate unionists from their unhealthy dependence on Britain which has forced them into.... an uncompromising position’.

The isolation of unionists is here identified with their 'liberation' which is understood to be required to make unionists amenable to the demands of Irish nationalism. But how are unionists to be isolated? Hume and Adams agreed in 1993 that what was crucially required was a British acceptance that the 'people of Ireland' have a collective right of self-determination. This entails the illegitimacy of partition and therefore of a 'British jurisdiction' in Ireland. Major conceded the collective right of self-determination of the 'people of Ireland' in the *Downing Street Declaration* of 15 December 1993. But nationalists also demanded that the *bona fides* of the *Declaration* be established by a British commitment to provide the dynamic for the development of the structures of an all-Ireland administration and this was agreed by Major in the *Frameworks Document* of 22 February 1995. This means that by early 1995 the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, with the subsequent approval of Parliament, had conceded the core requirements of Irish nationalism and had agreed a framework of negotiation entirely inimical to the interests of unionists as citizens of the United Kingdom.

Future historians will write about these events as a shameful episode in contemporary British history. The Major government, in dealing with Irish nationalism, has trampled on the integrity of unionism and has in principle conceded the Union in an attempt to secure and consolidate what was at best a temporary IRA cease-fire. This appeasement was the work of a government ostensibly exercised about British sovereignty in relation to Europe and which presents itself as the champion of the Union in its opposition to devolution for Scotland. The betrayal of Ulster — not yet irretrievable — was obscured by the professional mendacity of government ministers and justified in parliamentary debates and in the media by the mawkish rhetoric of the so-called peace process. It was also made possible by the failure of unionists to undermine the intellectual credibility of Irish nationalism and show that the Major government was not conceding to the

superior force of nationalist argument or the imperatives of the political right but to persuasion that comes from the barrel of a gun.

This unionist failure is inexcusable, because it is quite easy to show that Irish nationalism is devoid of intellectual credibility. The objectives of Irish nationalism lack feasibility at an acceptable level of economic well-being: such is the conclusion advanced by the Cadogan Group publication, *Northern Limits: Boundaries of the Attainable in Northern Ireland Politics*, published in 1992, and in *An Economics Lesson for Irish Nationalists* published by the

This means that by early 1995 the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, with the subsequent approval of Parliament, had conceded the core requirements of Irish nationalism and had agreed a framework of negotiation entirely inimical to the interests of unionists as citizens of the United Kingdom

Ulster Unionist Information Institute in 1995. The economic argument needs to be developed by unionists and made central to a case for the Union; the response to these publications would suggest that the economic case for partition has the great merit of being irrefutable.

At a more basic level of analysis it is easy to show that the nationalist case cannot be sustained. The understanding that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland is constitutive of Irish nationalism and therefore shared by nationalist ideologues from Garret FitzGerald to Gerry Adams. The core ideological commitment of all Irish

nationalists has been summarised by Gerry Adams in *The Politics of Irish Freedom* in the assertion that Ireland is 'historically, culturally and geographically one single unit' (p. 88). The claim that Ireland is geographically a single unit would indeed be difficult to dispute. But the determination of national identity in a manner which would sustain the understanding that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland is highly problematic for Irish nationalists.

There are two approaches to the determination of national identity which may be abstracted from the literature on nationalism. The objectivist approach focuses on criteria such as ethnicity, language and religion. The subjectivist approach stresses national consciousness deriving from a distinct common culture and a shared understanding of the past or collective historical memory. Typically both approaches are combined in nationalist ideology and this is the case with Irish nationalism. But the problem for Irish nationalists is that some of their traditional criteria for national identity are no longer available. But even if they were, they would not establish the belief that there is a single nation in Ireland.

The issue of availability applies particularly to the use of race and religion as criteria of national identity in Irish nationalism. The problem with the traditionally dominant theme of differentiation in terms of race is that it pushes Irish nationalism in the direction of racism. In any case, as ATQ Stewart has rightly argued, in an 'island which was the terminus of so many westward moving waves of population throughout the ages the idea of an unmixed racial group ought to have been laughed out of court at the outset' (*The Narrow Ground*, p. 27). National identification in terms of Catholicism obviously cannot — given the Protestant population — establish the proposition that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland. This religious identification has the unfortunate meaning for nationalists of making plain the sectarianism which lies at the heart of Irish nationalism and which has operationally supported IRA ter-

rorism — as the former IRA activist, Sean O'Callaghan, has recently disclosed in an article entitled 'Murder with the fathers' help' in *The Spectator*, 18 April 1996.

Appeal to language is particularly difficult for Irish nationalists since the logic of this criterion would virtually reduce authentic membership of the Irish nation to the dwindling inhabitants of the Gaeltacht. But this appeal to language has been reinforced by the pervasive view — critically explored by Arthur Green in his contribution to *The Idea of the Union* — that the Irish nation may be differentiated in terms of a distinct and ancient culture which in various ways is understood to have been fractured by partition. This theme of cultural unity is not merely confined to nationalist intellectuals; it is a 'stock' argument used by nationalist politicians — particularly Charles Haughey — against partition.

This notion of a cultural unity extending over many centuries since before St. Patrick to the time of partition is a nationalist myth. Haughey has endorsed it by suggesting that the political partitioning of Ireland 'was and has remained an almost inconceivable eventuality to the vast majority of Irish men and women' (*Spirit of the Nation: The Speeches of Charles J. Haughey*, p.450). This attempt to undermine the legitimacy of partition by appeal to a long-standing cultural unity is a retreat from reality into a fictional past, and exemplifies the self-deception characteristic of Irish nationalism (O'Halloran, op. cit., p.209). This self-deception is required because political, economic and cultural reality in Ireland is not compatible with the core requirements of Irish nationalist ideology.

The fundamental problem for Irish nationalists is that the one nation claim cannot be sustained by appeal to standard 'objective' nationalist criteria. There is, in addition, no 'subjective' basis for this one nation claim, since unionists do not politically identify themselves in terms of membership of an Irish nation; nor indeed is there any distinct Irish culture which could provide the basis for it. This situation is reinforced by the fact that, despite

historical interaction within a small island over many centuries, the inhabitants of Ireland do not share an equal evaluation of the past which is the cement of national solidarity.

Nationalists have been reduced to using a form of geographical determinism, in order to produce a national identity which would embrace all the inhabitants of the island. The idea is that the geographical location of birth determines national identity. This absurd notion indicates the bankruptcy of Irish nationalism; but was, nevertheless, incorporated into the *Downing Street Declaration* — the *Declaration* refers to the 'birthright of everyone born in either jurisdiction in Ireland to be part, as of right, of the

The nationalist position is that in principle, unionists as a minority within the Irish nation have no right of veto over the ending of partition and as a minority within the British state have no right of veto over policies directed to that end

Irish nation'. The ponderous precision and legal tone of this language conveys the impression of substantial statement when in fact the content is simply nonsense. The extent to which nationalist leaders are entrapped within this ideological nonsense is perhaps best exemplified by a statement made by John Bruton at the Fingal Centre for the Unemployed on 30 April 1996. Bruton referred to 'the Irish nation that extends beyond this state' which he understood to include both 'northern nationalists who would seek to secure their identity within an Irish state' and 'unionists who prefer to express their Irishness within a British framework'. What this statement clearly shows is that the attempt to

press unionists into a geographically determined Irish nation results in an understanding of unionism entirely divorced from political reality. The intellectually impoverished appeal to geographical location of birth as the determinant of national identity simply obscures what Professor John A. Murphy has stated with brutal clarity: reference to a single Irish nation is 'tired old 1918 nationalist prattle....there is no such political entity as the Irish people' (*Sunday Independent*, 31 October 1993).

The logic of this conclusion is clear and unavoidable: contrary to the claims of Irish nationalists and the commitment of the United Kingdom government in the *Downing Street Declaration*, there is not a single nation in Ireland with a collective right of self-determination. But this means that unionists need not make themselves subservient to the now mandatory notions of 'equal validity' and 'parity of esteem'. These notions are interpreted by Irish nationalists to mean that unionists should regard themselves as under some sort of unspecified obligation to concede to the nationalist case a validity equal to that of unionism. This is an absurd requirement, for the simple reason that Irish nationalism is actually self-refuting. The criteria used by nationalists to attempt to establish their core claim that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland actually establish the opposite — these criteria indisputably show that the inhabitants of Ireland do not constitute a single nation. Therefore this means that partition cannot be regarded as the denial of a right of self-determination to a single nation on the island of Ireland. Irish nationalism is, therefore, entirely without validity. The culture of violence that it has sustained means that it is devoid of what is required for moral esteem. In any case the realisation of its objective of Irish unity would deprive the inhabitants of the island of an acceptable level of economic well-being for decades — if not indeed permanently.

Patrick Roche is a Lecturer at the University of Ulster.

Culture and Decadence

David Pryce-Jones sees ancient ghosts stir

Born in Vienna, caught in France by the war, I am old enough to remember escaping from the Germans, the sensation of hunger and the shudder of bombs. A soldier myself in due course, I was stationed with the British army near Dusseldorf, in the Rhineland. At the time, shopkeepers in the mighty Königsallee running through that city used to operate from smashed piles of rubble, their stock of goods on a single tray. Today the Königsallee is a consumer's mecca, and as expensive as real estate anywhere. Much was obliterated or looted in the war, but governments and the whole range of developers have since carried the process further. Hardened old Europe, as Henry James called it, could evidently absorb an awful lot of ruin.

The softened new Europe is not without merit. Nobody starves. Bombs drop only in faraway countries of which we know nothing, like Bosnia. Germans have acquired a democratic outlook. Cities sprout steel girders and plate glass as their commercial districts and industrial zones extend along ring-roads and bypasses toward housing estates, urban sprawl, and finally suburbs. The external glow of prosperity is unmistakable. But a cluster of related political concepts, and their social and moral consequences, conspire to reduce that prosperity to an end in itself. Poverty of spirit is the price to be paid. And absence of culture is not synonymous with well-being.

Definitions of culture, according to the century's most famous poet, do not go beyond notes. Yet everyone has a sense of the thing. Popular culture was the sharing of activities and experience with one's fellows, and also the pointer to the questions of higher culture: what was the nature of fulfilment and completion, and how were human

beings to reconcile themselves to this world and the next? Choice and choosing were at the heart of the answer. Worth in an individual was to be judged by the choices he made, and the manner of his choosing. Art had the purpose of showing how choices came to be taken, and how fraught choosing is. Tragedy and comedy elide into one another unforeseeably. Description is the key to the shifts of reality. Differentiated by language, law, and religion, European nation-states had their own particular identities and cultures. But the more closely the artist could show what were the consequences of action, the greater his claim to universality.

The word culture has narrowed its meaning to the point where sentences such as these sound remote. Culture has come to mean some sort of group behaviour or gratification, a special interest rather than the expression of a complete personality — rock culture, football culture. "The culture of barbarity", said someone interviewed on television about Northern Ireland, while someone else advocated "the culture of civility". Or the Archbishop of Canterbury: "One of society's greatest difficulties is the cultural tendency to regard morality as no more than a matter of individual opinion." True no doubt, but he was confusing culture with ethics. Copenhagen, it appears, is this year's cultural capital of the European Union. In practice this turned out to be the staging of a Euro-pride festival, with workshops and exhibitions, and then a parade of thirty thousand homosexuals. The gay culture within the arts and crafts culture, and both within the would-be Euro-culture.

How did higher culture lose its vitality and purpose, coming to rest in the hands of university departments, to be analysed rather than lived? How did popular culture come to be a range of

leisure activities? Matthew Arnold, Julien Benda, Ortega y Gasset, and many more had warned that this might happen; some of them prophetically, others with a touch of neurosis or charlatanry. Things would probably have gone on as before, had it not been for the destructive but historically definitive series of events that led to Nazism and Communism.

For true believers in these comparable ideologies, the individual's fulfilment and completion lay in submission to the collective to which he happened to belong through the unalterable fact of birth into a particular class or race. In human matters down to inessential details, choices were predetermined for him. Traditional culture was incompatible, and Nazis and Communists alike were determined to do away with it. In practice, the universal component of both proved to be standardization through force. Wherever Nazism or Communism held sway, a facsimile of culture was deliberately manufactured, with mass rallies and shows of military strength, gymnastics and folk dancing, and all things mindless. Forbidden to reflect choice, literature and art became aspects of ideology.

The poems of Mayakovsky, the Palaces of Culture and Stalinist wedding-cake architecture, Khatchachurian jingles and firing squad prose in the Sholokhov mode were of a piece with the Haus der Kunst, the sculptures of Arno Breker and the models of Albert Speer, the vapourings of Stefan George and Martin Heidegger, the martial tempo of SS Colonel Herbert von Karajan. But in the other scale of the balance was mass murder as a social good.

In one of his essays, Elie Kedourie tells the story of an unknown inhabitant of Baghdad who over a century ago

recorded in his diary the tyranny of the ruler of his day. To have witnessed such violence, Kedourie wrote, was itself "a kind of bruised and forlorn glory". However brutal that moment, it was nothing compared to the Europe of the dictators. In the manner of that anonymous inhabitant of Baghdad, there were some who bore witness: Primo Levi, Paul Celan, Tadeusz Borowski, Varlam Shalamov, Mikhail Bulgakov, Solzhenitsyn. More than a forlorn glory, theirs was an envoi. As in the parable of Adam and Eve, there is no going back to innocence.

Accidental or personal as it may seem, choice involves moral discrimination between right and wrong. Nazism and Communism simplified every course of action. You resisted or you collaborated. Bystanders and good Samaritans had no role. Collaborating with these ideologies, the majority of European intellectuals surrendered the capacity to choose of their own free will. An élite that so easily lost its moral authority inspires mistrust.

Nowhere has this been so dire as in France. French literature and painting had set standards against which artists everywhere measured themselves. France, birthplace of the rights of man, was unable to stand up to Hitler's Germany. There seems to have been a failure at every level, psychological, physical and political. Jean-Baptiste Duroselle gave his account of the Thirties in France the bald title *La Décadence*. André Gide was perhaps the foremost French writer of the period for he had seen through the Soviet Union and its deceptions. On the day that the German army marched into Paris without a shot fired, he wrote in his diary that events had revealed the country's profound decay. Soon afterwards, he had a gloss: "To come to terms with yesterday's enemy is not cowardice but wisdom; as well as accepting what is inevitable." But Nazi victory was inevitable only if the people chose to let it be so.

When Marshal Pétain and Pierre Laval and their colleagues announced their collaboration with Hitler, unquestionably almost everyone in France was relieved. The record shows how readily French intellectuals accepted

the opportunities and careers opened to them in the France of a military governor, of Otto Abetz, the German ambassador, and Dr Karl Epting of the German Institute. Abetz is credited with the crack that the powerhouses of Europe were the Vatican, the Communist Party, the Prussian general staff and the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. With its chaste white cover and red and black lettering, the *NRF* fell into line along with everyone else. Gerhard Heller, an official of Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, was the censor who placed the swastika stamp of approval on books and plays and journals. His is the autobiography of a man proud to have been accepted at the centre of Parisian intellectual life.

A few like Albert Camus, François Mauriac, and André Malraux actively resisted in their ways. Jean-Paul Sartre was only one among many who claimed to resist but actually presented his work to be stamped with the swastika. Another famous German to spend the war in Paris was the novelist Ernst Jünger, whose diaries describe social life much as it had been prewar. He visited Picasso's studio, where German officers were keen buyers. You and I, Picasso observed one day to Jünger, could resolve the war in twenty-four hours.

Some sort of moral reckoning did occur. Laval was one of seven hundred executed for treason. The *épuration*, or purge, was haphazard and vindictive. As early as 1953, frightened authorities decreed an amnesty. Collaboration is a subject so hedged in with legal restrictions that it cannot be written about with honesty, and therefore festers.

In the Nazi wake came the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, fronted by local Communists or their colleagues or masters who had spent the war in Moscow. The archives have not yet revealed exactly what Stalin's intentions were as he toyed with extending into France and Italy, possibly elsewhere, too, the series of coups that secured Eastern Europe. Party activists in France and Italy, until lately armed partisans and *franc-tireurs*, expected to seize power, and were never to recover from disappointment that they were not permitted to do so.

The slow grind was instead put into motion to convince electorates to vote for the Party. The archives do reveal Moscow's comprehensive purpose and the gigantic sums of money expended on it: tens of millions of dollars in France and Italy, and the placing of thousands of agents of influence, especially in Germany. A British Communist has described how he used to pick up an annual suitcase with a million pounds in cash from the Soviet Embassy. Speeches of Communist deputies in the French National Assembly were drafted for them in Moscow. Those who had ruled France for Hitler had not sunk so low in obeisance.

Pre-war fellow travelling had been a personal affair, a self-deception arising from character, often with misplaced idealism. Post-war collaboration was its extension into a mass movement of opinion. For almost half a century, a pro-Soviet climate bloomed in the face of all evidence about the true face of the Soviet regime. Hardly had the German officers left his studio than Picasso was drawing his "peace" symbols on behalf of the Soviet Union and publicly proclaiming that "one goes to the Communist Party as to a spring of fresh water". Countless lesser men and women shared the agility of his careerism. Any element of idealism was soon lost in venality.

By means of the Moscow subsidies, local Communist Parties built up impressive patronage networks. In addition to their own declared outlets, they controlled or influenced newspapers, radio, and then television channels; they packed committees with power to promote Party writers and artists, set up front organizations, festivals, summer camps, and youth movements; ensured that Marxist courses were taught in schools and universities, and infiltrated even religious bodies. The Soviet future seemed a fact of life.

Alleged to be "bourgeois", cultural and moral standards were attacked unremittingly. Largely worthless writers and artists became household names: natural born commissars like Louis Aragon and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Genet, Althusser, Pasolini and many an Italian film-maker, Renato Guttuso and many a painter, and of

course Bertolt Brecht, whose style of Party propaganda spread from East Berlin to become the prototype of contemporary theatre. Never mind the earlier swastika stamps, Sartre justified the Soviet cause throughout the Cold War; Soviet wrong-doing could not exist, he argued, and if it did then there was a duty to hide it. He went so far as to deny the existence of the Gulag. Vicious controversies engulfed George Orwell, Arthur Koestler, Raymond Aron, Karl Popper, and anyone else who criticized the new climate of opinion as once they had criticized Nazism.

Fortunately the Soviet world folded up without the loss of life and physical damage of the war against Nazism. Reputations have evaporated along with the subsidies. The Sartres and Brechts and their imitators look like creatures of long-spent fashion, the equivalent of flappers in cloche hats. But this time there has been no moral reckoning. To date, only François Furet in his book *Le Passé d'une illusion* has attempted any systematic account of how such a range of intelligent people let themselves be duped into betraying fundamental human values. Conceding that former Communists like himself were wrong all along the line, he nevertheless tries to argue that in the context they could not have acted otherwise — a banal cancellation of his own apologia.

Freed from the external onslaught of collective ideology, it might be supposed, the human being and his fate could again become the cultural preoccupations that they once were, at the centre of literary narrative and artistic representation. But all the while a secondary process of collectivism was undermining any such outcome.

Each country in Europe is now a democracy, and every one of them is also a modern welfare state offering its citizens rights at least to housing, education, and health care, "from cradle to grave". The origins of the welfare state are mixed. Philanthropists sincerely wished to improve the general lot by abolishing long-lasting inequities and injustices. Bismarck believed that this was the way to have better soldiers. Voted into power, the social demo-

cratic wing of Marxism saw it as a vehicle for the slogan "to each according to his needs". But only the Cold War brought about its full realization. In the deeper intentions of those who introduced it, the welfare state would pre-empt revolution in general, and the Soviet Union in particular.

When the British welfare state came into existence, its architect, William Beveridge, wrote to the then prime minister, Clement Attlee. He was proud to survey his handiwork, he declared, but went on to wonder whether he might not have subverted the British character. In theory, people were to have more choices to do with their lives what they wanted and so to fulfill themselves. But were politicians not tampering with the values that gave the individual his worth? Hitherto, people had been obliged to take responsibility for themselves; now the state would shoulder it.

People once used to think long and hard about breaking up their families, having an abortion, bearing children out of wedlock, committing criminal or anti-social acts. Responsibility for oneself entailed the punishment and shame of wrong choices, the recognition and approval of right choices.

By means of the welfare state and its many and various agencies, choices that determine the lives of others have been widely handed to officials and bureaucrats, the panoply of inspectors, social workers, therapists, consultants, managers, and not least politicians exchanging benefits for votes. That part of the population sustained by the welfare state forms the dependency culture, as powerful as it is immobilising. As Beveridge suspected, actions cease to have consequences. Instead of right and wrong choices to be rewarded or punished, there are only cases to be dealt with.

Everywhere, of course, there are intellectuals and artists capable of contributing to the high culture they inherited. Quite unwittingly, the democratic welfare state is the main factor that inhibits such contribution, stifling what it aspires to foster. The array of Beaux Arts, English Heritage, and other preservation lobbies, the Arts Councils and Ministries of Culture,

either take the past out of circulation and place it in pickling jars, or sponsor a uniform present, touristified, or more often than not, "experimental". In Venice, the Assessore per la Cultura spoke for all this kind. "The town is packed with dynamic academics who are reconsidering all the ways in which this deeply traditional city functions" and he went on: "Instead of just consuming—wearing out—the art of the past, we need to add new cultural experiences, we need to use culture as a strategic variable in the reorganization and development of the town."

On May 9, alleged to be Europe Day, the French government staged a thousand musical events. In Britain there are five hundred and fifty festivals, and in June alone there were twenty-three hundred officially sponsored musical events. Government funding on the one hand underwrites low culture, and on the other favours those who can manipulate the bureaucracy into patronizing someone or something they think chic. From both directions, high culture is shut out by institutions, including universities and publishing houses and the media, that otherwise would be supportive.

Comedy treats of manners, but there can be no manners unless they are widely shared and codified. Tragedy treats of choices mistakenly made for genuine reasons. Art that deals with "cases" devalues comedy and tragedy to a point of meaninglessness.

When everything is relative, any one course of action is as valid as another. And a case is merely a lifestyle. Young authors in Britain, Salman Rushdie pointed out, can talk about nothing except contemporary English lifestyles. Is there a European artist or writer born since 1945 for whom universality is an aim? Junking liturgy, bowdlerizing the Bible and prayer book into populist and sometimes ungrammatical lingo, the Catholic and Protestant churches have transformed even religion into an alternative lifestyle. In Germany, "churches have organised rave parties for the young", in the words of a recent article, and have held markets and mounted theatrical productions in them, "including a play with a topless actress and Christ with a gas-mask".

Brutalism, structuralism, deconstruction, post-modernism, minimalism, the Nouveau Roman, the *théâtre sans texte*, magical realism, and the rest of it, testify to the effort to thrash a way out of the predicament by discovering some sort of art as free from the whole business of choice as society itself is. This spreads the disease for which a cure is sought. The novel, the poem, the picture, history, morality itself, degrade into the entertainment business.

I asked one of Germany's leading literary editors about the state of culture there. "It is a disaster," was the answer. Over two-thirds of the books published are translations. This year's best-seller is a feminist fairy tale, *Good Girls Go to Heaven*. In his novel *Exemplary Lives*, a quarter of a century ago, Siegfried Lenz explained that, in view of their past, Germans could no longer decide what were right or wrong choices. Gunter Grass believed that Hitler was not a matter of choice at all, but some kind of spell. German identity is the overwhelming topic. The likes of Hans Magnus Enzensberger or Martin Walser are serious about it; the plays or films of Fassbinder and Herzog and Heiner Müller and Peter Weiss are self-pitying. In half a century there has been no controversy as intense as the *Historikerstreit*. What looked like an argument between historians about the reciprocities between Nazism and Communism, was in fact commentary upon the national effort to forge a post-Hitler identity with which the Germans can live. How deep is the self-searching? Marcel Reich-Ranitski left his native Poland to become an influential literary critic. Lately, his former links with the Polish Communist secret police were exposed. All he could find to say in self-defence was that he owed the Germans no explanation. That was enough to quieten the scandal.

Umberto Eco, Leonardo Sciascia, Italo Calvino, managed to escape the sovietized stranglehold on Italian culture. Over three thousand literary prizes and festivals too numerous to be counted testify to local opportunity. In the window of the leading bookstore in Florence, though, the novels on sale

were by Alison Fell, David Lodge, Patricia Highsmith, José Saramago, Kenzaburo Oe, Michael Crichton, Sten Nadolny, John Fullerton, Peter Mayle, and finally an Italian, Romano Battaglia, with *Alle Porte della Vita*.

In Paris, I was unable to find a single painter or sculptor with an international reputation. Over ten years ago, Milan Kundera confessed to nostalgia for Paris but could not help seeing it as "the disappearing capital of a disappearing world". The current crop of Gallimard novels are by Jean-Denis Bredin, François-Régis Bastide, Daniel Pennac, Alina Reyes, Dominique Rolin, Gilles Coupet, Anna Wiazemsky, Patrick Modiano, and Jean d'Ormesson (whose title, *Presque rien sur presque tout*, seems to sum up the situation).

The June 1996 issue of the *NRF* carries lead articles about two Americans, Jack Kerouac and Jerome Charyn, followed by a section "L'Algérie des Écrivains". The conclusion of an essay about Algerian intellectuals by the well-reputed Muhammad Dib is characteristic (the translation is mine): "Included in a world of signs, figuring themselves as signs in the great concert of signs, they communicate only through signs, not often understandable, and under the influence of the spread, more or less increased, or diminished, of the slightest oscillation." Perhaps applauded in the *hautes écoles*, this is hardly going to scare off the Islamic fundamentalists putting Algeria through fire. Virtually nothing is left of this former powerhouse (or of Otto Abetz's other three, come to that). That same month, *L'Infini*, a rival highbrow journal, had a lengthy essay on Francis Bacon by Philippe Sollers, and then a story by David Bowie, once a pop singer. This concerned the dismemberment of a fourteen-year-old and the translator and editor praised it as "authentically criminal art".

Britain is a still stranger swirl of prank and perversity. A London art-gallery recently removed its roof in order to winch down some sheep whose fleece had been dyed pink. Elsewhere a young actress lay naked in a glass box for a week. For cementing a house, someone else was awarded a prestig-

ious prize. Another bright hope has filled a gallery with thousands of shapes in human form, cut from tin or waste paper, all of them being swept away by dummy cleaners into litter bags.

Excrement is treated as one among other pigments. Helen Chadwick's *Piss Flowers* were cast from stains left where she had urinated on snow. Dinos and Jake Chapman have made a film in which two women fellate the penis-shaped nose of a decapitated mannequin. In a gallery, this same pair exhibit figures of children who are naked and hideously mutant, Siamese twinned randomly, with penis-noses, anus-mouths and vagina-chests. Damien Hirst, a young artist in vogue for sawing a cow in half, delivers himself of profundities in a quality Sunday newspaper: "I like taking my clothes off. I have a lot of friends who are like that, do you know what I mean? Pissing, shitting. Getting our dicks out. I guess we're just like weeping babies underneath." Hirst's cow was exhibited among other British sculptures in Paris, prompting the organizer of this show to reflect, "What strikes me most is this tremendous strength British sculptors have, which is the ability to banish the notion of tastefulness."

Blasted, a play staged at the Royal Court, was summed up by one critic with the words: "Seedy journalist has sex with retarded girl; soldier rapes back, then eats his eyes; and all in a hotel in Leeds during a civil war." This playwright's latest offering is an "improvement" of a classical Greek theme. Hippolytus, as one reviewer put it:

is a terminal depressive who spends his time eating burgers, watching junk television and masturbating into his socks. Phaedra nevertheless gets the hots for this deeply unfanciable representative of Generation X, and administers oral sex. The recipient is so bored that he just carries on eating. Theseus rapes his daughter to enthusiastic cheers. Hippolytus has his penis cut off and grilled on a barbecue.

In remotest rural Wales, where the population is composed of sheep-farmers and has not increased in size since 1300, a theatre company put on *Vagina Dentata*. This play, according to the local newspaper, begins with three women shooting the only male

character, supposedly the writer and director of the play. A spokesman claimed, "It's like Chekhov on speed. It's a post-modern tragedy that plays with itself." Summoned in aid like this, a great writer is also diminished.

All Ways Six Steps is a modern dance that the choreographer Sasha Waltz staged as a part of a festival in London. Its setting is a bedroom. As the Sunday *Times* critic describes, "A Peter Pan creature floats in, so amoral that he tries to flatten Waltz (whom he has just married) between the upturned bed and wall, and, failing that, to squash her into a drawer. Another sinister young man also radically rearranges the furniture, balancing the armchair and dressing tables on the top edge of the walls. None of it makes sense, but then it's not meant to. I'd happily see it again."

Awarded for the first time this year, and worth £30,000, the Orange Prize is restricted to women writers. Its winner, Helen Dunmore, was praised for "a hypnotic story of incest in the English countryside." The Betty Trask prize, hardly less valuable, is for romantic fiction. Graham Lord, one of its judges this year, complained at what he had to read. One novel concerned a drunken young Scottish woman "in which we are treated to a suicide, an orgy, porn videos, masturbation, lots of vomiting and a scene in which our heroine wakes to find that the man she picked up the previous night has defecated on her stomach because she was too drunk to have sex".

Daily life, to be sure, offers examples for such art to imitate. One Paul Scarrott, for example, was reported to have died at the age of forty in a Spanish hospital after a drinking bout. In a single year he had nineteen convictions in court, and been jailed thirteen times for offences at football matches. His specialities were carrying offensive weapons and inciting the crowd to violence. A young man arrested for urinating on the wall of my local police station thought it a full explanation to say to the magistrate, "I did it, that's all." The most popular of the BBC's radio programs has a breakfast show. Its presenter, a young man,

used to have a slot, "I'm in bed with my boyfriend." Lately, he rounded on a guest with the sentence, "Anthea, how about we get together while I kick you in the mouth?"

Many consider that the case for decadence is proven. Some years ago the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre was already warning that Britain stood on the brink of moral illiteracy, so that a concept such as "good" or "just" was becoming inapplicable. In the opinion of Robert Harris, a popular author who is also a leading columnist, Britain "is becoming dumber as well as coarser". The historian and commentator Paul Johnson speaks of the country's proletarianization, whereby the young are dragged down into "the gutter

***Hardly had the
German officers left
his studio than
Picasso was drawing
his "peace" symbols
on behalf of the Soviet
Union and publicly
proclaiming that "one
goes to the
Communist Party as
to a spring of fresh
water."***

Culture", degraded by those who ought to know better. An official report on standards of education states that many seven-year-olds are unable to read; they seem likely to be functionally illiterate adults. Another report finds that nearly half those aged between eleven and fifteen never pick up a book. Students no longer understand an allusion to the Bible or the classics. A high court judge, a woman too, publicly suggested that marriage had outlived its usefulness. Selling in millions, the tabloid newspapers hero-worship assorted drug addicts and hooligans, pop stars and television personalities, sports figures, chefs, models, and designers.

Popular culture displays what Mat-

thew Arnold described as "the plain faults of our animality". He foresaw the anarchy in which "this man and that" can "smash as he likes". In a society apparently indifferent to choice, artistico-smashers are able to express themselves only in a competition of shock. Assertion replaces fulfillment and lifestyle replaces responsibility. That admired tastelessness is the tantrum of the infant against the arrangements of the daycare center.

Neither life nor art can do anything with infantilism. Within living memory, the critic made it his business to build a reef — in an image of Desmond MacCarthy's — that protects the lagoon of literature from the restless sea of nonsense and confusion. Whether out of fear to be unfashionable or from loss of moral authority, critics even come to praise what they hate. That is a novelty.

Here, for instance, is the distinguished chairman of the Arts Council, once a poet, reviewing some new fiction. "I do not wish anyone to be dismembered by a chainsaw, raped, have their head smashed in a football game, to engage in bestiality or to be sodomized by a mad mortuary attendant seconds after their demise" All this, he continues, is here "conducted with such brio, and with so much narrative pace and accuracy of ear that his book is both revolting and exhilarating". The *Times* has another equally routine example. The critic says that while here is "the first novel that made me physically sick, it is also one that held my attention utterly rapt". This fiction about a serial killer of young homosexuals is praised for its colour, texture, wit, intelligence, and so on. A whole lexicon of critic's adjectives — shocking, irreverent, outrageous, relevant, provocative, disturbing, challenging — are the equivalent of mental-health warnings.

Disturbed as they are, bereft of moral authority, in cultural disarray, the populations of Europe are now caught inescapably in yet another collectivizing experiment. Over the last four or five decades, a handful of politicians, the Germans and French to the fore, have been organizing among themselves the formation of a federal struc-

ture, ultimately a single state structure, for all the countries of Europe.

"The United States of Europe" was the title of an article Leon Trotsky wrote for *Pravda* a few years after the 1917 revolution. European countries would unite in a socialist federation, he believed, as a prelude to a world socialist federation. This remained Soviet doctrine.

A construct superimposed by political will, federal Europe is a mimicry of the old Soviet Union in many respects. Those who set up its institutions were also believers in state control and protectionism. Whether at political or financial levels, politicians and their officials are not held accountable.

As also in the old Soviet Union, independent nations of different cultures and languages are to federate on a basis ideologically pre-determined for them. This construct is artificial, an act of pure political will. Naturally people try to defend their historic identity, and the resulting backlash of nationalism, xenophobia, and racism excites the very horrors that federalism is supposed to exclude. Separatist groups everywhere are ready and willing to resort to violence in what is seen as defence of the nation and its culture. Ancient ghosts stir. Federal Europe is reproducing the defect that above all others put paid to the Soviet Union.

Since 1940, the Franco-German relationship has been guilty, not to say sadomasochistic. "In Europe, Germany alone decides" Hitler declared in August 1942; and he further asked of the French, "Can we absorb them with advantage?" In his view, the so-called New Order was to be a federal structure in which France would provide goods and services. In September 1943, with Hitler's consent, Albert Speer and the French Minister of Production Jean Bichelonne set up a planning council as a preliminary toward an economically integrated Europe. Ambassador Otto Abetz was arguing that the French ought to be equal partners. The question, he explained to Bertrand de Jouvenel, is "whether you will proceed of your own free will".

Germans of all sorts, from Nazi intellectuals like Carl Schmitt and Werner Best to Ernst Junger and some

of the 1944 conspirators against Hitler, were writing reports to define the New Order. Among several Nazi think-tanks working to that end was the so-called Society for European Economic Planning, under Werner Daitz, an associate of Alfred Rosenberg. SS General Otto Ohlendorf created the think-tank in the Ministry of Economics that came closest to projecting what could actually occur. Although he was responsible for mass-murder in Russia (and hanged for it after the war), Ohlendorf was an intellectual, a trained economist. He argued that a Nazi economic order would have to reconcile a free market with the state's role as main contractor and purveyor.

***Is there a European
artist or writer born
since 1945 for whom
universality is an
aim?***

Correspondingly, thoughtful French collaborators saw convergence or alliance with Germany as the sole effective way to overcome defeat. *Anthologie de la nouvelle Europe* was an influential book edited by Alfred Fabre-Luce and published in 1942. Force was admirable, he argued in a lengthy introduction, and Nazi aims were sound, though limited as they stood. For the sake of a higher form of European supremacy, France and Germany would have to sacrifice national sovereignty — it was a way of seeming to de-Nazify without actually doing so, merely taking out the racial sting. "Will Germany show itself worthy of the European task?" Fabre-Luce asked. "It is a question of engaging France and Germany in a common enterprise to affirm their solidarity."

As the war ended, he was arrested for the sentiment.

Unification in 1989 seemed like a civilian return to German primacy on the continent. Chancellor Kohl and his aides repeat ever more insistently that Germany must be locked into a federal Europe and tied down, or else

it will revert to its bad old ways. Entrenched by now, the French instinct is to disarm potentially hostile strength by acquiring a share in it. Through the Maastricht treaty, both countries finalized commitment to a common enterprise. The treaty embodies what its French critics openly call "the spirit of Vichy". Where once Hitler and Pétain shook hands, Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterand stood side by side holding hands. German tanks once again drove down the Champs Elysées, though only in a parade. In a final presidential speech, in Berlin, Mitterand praised the bravery of German soldiers in the war, and in a posthumously published book discovered in Prussia the virtues of enlightenment. It is the New Order as envisioned by Ohlendorf and Fabre-Luce. In this perspective, Laval and others executed for treason were simply premature Euro-fanatics.

Europe has a Commissioner of Culture, a middle-ranking Spanish official, as it happens. What passes for European culture is nothing of the kind, but entertainment of a mass nature, consisting of football matches and other sporting events, television co-productions, the Eurovision song contest (in which the recent British entry was called "Ooh Aah Just a Little Bit"), lotteries, and other commercial or marketing promotions. As the legacies of Communism and Nazism work themselves out, a populist and collectivized welfare state of continental proportions looms, in which genuine choice is more and more restricted, culture more and more marginalized. Prosperity is promised in return. In the next few years, people will have to decide whether to consent to these plans of their political masters or reject them. In either case, they are likely to discover how much more ruin there is in Europe.

David Pryce-Jones' latest book is *The War that Never Was*, published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson. This article was first published in the September 1996 issue of the *New Criterion*.

MI6 — the True Story

A D Harvey

At the beginning of the 1920s Whitehall perfected procedures for separating documents originating with the Secret Intelligence Services (aka MI6) from the ordinary departmental files of the Foreign Office. The latter are, subject to the Third Year Rule, open to inspection at the Public Record Office in Kew; the former are in MI6's own top secret archive and are likely to be kept under lock and key for as long as MI6 manages to persuade the Cabinet that National Security depends on not divulging the inside information of the Stanley Baldwin era. But a small number of MI6 documents that got themselves into Foreign Offices files prior to the introduction of filtering arrangements provide a taste of what we are missing.

There is an otherwise unrecorded early speech by Adolf Hitler, a memo by Sidney Reilly, the so-called 'Ace of Spies', on 'The Russian Problem', and a couple of reports on the antics of the Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio during his occupation of Fiume. Even more interesting are a number of files that suggest that MI6's chief concern in preserving the secrecy of its archives is not the military security of the nation, but the job security of MI6 officials.

There is, for example, a complaint dated 24 June 1920 from Britain's minister at Athens that 'the unceasing persecution' of a former embassy employee by British (and French) secret service agents 'is entirely due to personal spite'. In London, Neville Bland, private secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, minuted:

Many other cases of persecution by Intelligence agents have, I am afraid, taken place in Greece; and it is the general rule that they are founded on

such flimsy evidence as to arouse indignation ... Perhaps some general warning against persecution could, even at this late date, be conveyed to the SIS, in order that it may be freed from an inquisitorial tradition.

(FC 371/4681/C798)

In the case of the Secret Intelligence Service's officer in Czechoslovakia, Captain E G P Norman, the problem seems to have been lack of intelligence. His reports suggest that his appointment as Passport Control Officer in Prague deprived the tabloid press of a talented gossip columnist. Of one Czech minister he wrote, 'All his time had been spent in election agitations of the most dubious kind and rowdy journalism... His passion for cards is no longer a secret.' Another Czech politician

got on so well at the Ministry of Food that he preferred a nine-roomed dental workshop in Smichov and a fairly large capital taken from the Ministry to the burdens of a Ministry always on the point of bankruptcy. Kramar [the prime minister] appointed him Food Minister purely for a tactical reason, because he was his personal enemy, and such an unpleasant department could not be given to any one for whom he had a friendly interest.

The Foreign Office was not impressed. Eric Phipps, later ambassador at Berlin, minuted on 21 September 1920,

The Prague reports are particularly misleading and as a rule unduly alarmist, but if we tell the SMI (Director of Military Intelligence, the War Office general nominally responsible for the SIS) what we think of them it will only result in our not receiving them.

At least one other official (whose initials are too hastily scrawled to be legible) agreed with this view, noting: 'I consider these secret political reports are a real danger.' Sir William Tyrrell, a more senior figure in the FO hierarchy, had timely reassurance for his colleagues: 'I hear that the author

of all these reports died last week at Prague, so these reports will cease.' (FO 371/4700/C6698) In fact Captain Norman had killed himself.

The Foreign Office refused to be impressed even by the legendary Sidney Reilly. An internal minute dated 21 June 1927 described him as 'inspired by a violent hatred of the Bolsheviks, which, coupled with a somewhat unscrupulous temperament, made him a rather double-edged tool'. He also, it was claimed, had a tendency 'to exaggerate his own importance and to go about boasting of his subterranean activities'. (FO 371/12605/N3088) Officials note too that he had 'committed bigamy on several occasions' and that 'Whether (he) was a British subject or not it would be impossible to establish.' (FO 371/12756/T7531) They seem to have been relieved that he disappeared while on an unauthorized mission to Russia in 1925 and was never heard from again.

A D Harvey is the author of *Collision of Empires*, Hambledon Press.

*The worst is,
men do not
profit by what
is past; every
generation
betrays the
same
symptoms*

Pierre Bayle

Self-inflicted Injuries Sting the Most

John Leake attacks the myth of cultural studies

The radical Left has long been distinguished by its imperviousness to criticism. In the university and in the media, despite the failings and crimes of progressive politics, the Left continues to get away with claiming moral and intellectual superiority. There are many reasons why progressives have enjoyed such impunity. Their most effective intellectual device for deflecting criticism is the Marxist theory of ideology. According to this theory, everything that bourgeois society says is *true* is really an *ideology* — that is, a picture of the world that is *constructed* by those who hold social and economic power in order to sustain and to further their interests. If you criticize the progressive agenda, you are merely showing your faith in bourgeois ideology. Thus any criticism of the Left that is based on established ideas and beliefs is effortlessly dismissed.

Since Marx died, his doctrine has been applied, transformed, and modified in many ways that he could not have foreseen. A few of its basic tenets — eg, class struggle, ideology, false consciousness — are the backbone of radical feminism, multi-culturalism, and deconstruction (although many of the proponents of these doctrines have never read Marx, and are not aware of their debt to him). A paradox of Marxism is that, although it claims to unmask the mythology of man's social relations, it is itself a mythology (albeit a negative one), and one that has commanded an astonishing amount of obstinate and irrational faith. The latest manifestation of this mythology is the academic field of "science studies," which is a branch of the broader field of "cultural studies". The professors who teach science studies tell their students and write in the academic journals that science — i.e., the sum of

true propositions about the physical world — is also a form of ideology. Science is, they tell us, a "social construct".

Few if any of the proponents of this idea have any scientific training. Deconstructionists, feminists, and multi-culturalists have little taste for the kind of work scientists do. It is therefore not surprising that scientists are irritated by this attack on their profession by persons who know nothing about it. To counter it, two science professors, Paul R Gross and Norman Levitt, recently published *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science*, which carefully demonstrated the silliness of science studies. *Higher Superstition* was a skilful riposte; but because of the small audience for such books, it did little to inform the general public, most importantly the parents of college students and other benefactors of American Universities, of how crazy things have become in certain departments of the academy. Thus it was a triumphant moment for the defenders of science when, this May, the science studies establishment suffered a highly publicized embarrassment from which it is not likely to recover. On the 18th of May, an article appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* about how the editors of a trendy left-wing journal called *Social Text* had, in their latest issue devoted to science studies, unwittingly published a parody of their own work. Although the imposter made his essay as crazy as possible, the editors were unable to recognize lunacy when they saw it.

Social Text is the brainchild of the Marxist professor Stanley Aronowitz, who teaches sociology and cultural studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. It is published by Duke University Press,

one of the trendiest of academic publishers, directed by Stanley Fish, a deconstructionist professor at Duke. Although it lists an "Editorial Collective" on its masthead instead of the more conventional (bourgeois) positions, the "Science Wars" issue (spring/summer 1996) was edited by Andrew Ross, a young Marxist who is director of the American Studies Program at New York University. Prior to his position at NYU, Professor Ross taught English at Princeton University, where he proclaimed his goal of "radicalizing the children of the ruling class." Although he recently announced that he had given up books for television and pop culture, Professor Ross was apparently chosen to edit the "Science Wars" issue on the merit of his book *Strange Weather: Culture, Science and Technology in the Age of Limits*.

The contributors to the "Science Wars" issue are, for the most part, just what one would expect. They include Marxists such as Joel Kovel, the Alger Hiss Professor of Social Studies at Bard College, and feminists such as Ruth Hubbard, whose essay "Gender and Genitals: Constructs of Sex and Gender" encourages physicians and scientists "to remove their binary spectacles and, rather than explore what it means to be 'male' or 'female,' look into what it means to be neither or both, which is what most of us are." Professors Ross and Aronowitz also make their contribution. However, one of the contributors is unusual in two respects: he is a scientist by training and his manuscript was unsolicited. Alan D Sokal, Professor of physics at NYU, presented to the "Editorial Collective" an essay entitled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," in which he makes a

connection between quantum theory and radical politics. The piece, which is fifteen pages long and followed by thirteen pages of notes and ten pages of references, frequently refers to the work of Aronowitz and Ross. Professor Sokal asserts that “it has... become increasingly apparent that physical ‘reality,’ no less than social ‘reality,’ is at bottom a social and linguistic construct” and that “scientific ‘knowledge’ far from being objective, reflects and encodes the dominant ideologies and power relations of the culture that produced it.” It was such a delicious bit of bait; how could Professors Ross and Aronowitz have resisted? Shortly after “Transgressing the Boundaries” was published, Professor Sokal revealed his trick in the May/June issue of *Linguafranca: The Review of Academic Life*. He begins as follows:

For some years I’ve been troubled by an apparent decline in the standards of rigor in certain precincts of the academic humanities. ... So, to test the prevailing intellectual standards, I decided to try a modest... experiment: Would a leading North American journal of cultural studies — whose editorial collective includes such luminaries as Fredric Jameson and Andrew Ross — publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors’ ideological preconceptions?

The answer, unfortunately, is yes.

He then tells of the extraordinary claims he makes in “Transgressing the Boundaries” “without the slightest evidence or argument.” The more amusing ones include the following assertions:

- a) Lacan’s psychoanalytic speculations have been confirmed by recent work in quantum field theory
- b) the axiom of equality in mathematical set theory is somehow analogous to the homonymous concept in feminist politics
- c) quantum gravity has profound implications for progressive politics
- d) a liberationist science cannot be complete without a profound revision of the canon of mathematics.

His tour de force of silliness is:

We can see hints of an “emancipatory mathematics”, in the multidimensional and nonlinear logic of fuzzy systems theory, but this approach is still heavily

marked by its origins in the crisis of late-capitalist production relations.

Professor Sokal concludes his *Linguafranca* essay with an explanation why he chose such an unorthodox method of criticism.

In the end, I resorted to parody for a simple pragmatic reason. The targets of my critique have by now become a self-perpetuating academic subculture that typically ignores (or disdains) reasoned criticism from the outside. In such a situation, a more direct demonstration of the subculture’s intellectual standards was required. But how can one show that the emperor has no clothes? Satire is by far the best weapon; and the blow that can’t be brushed off is the one that’s self-inflicted.

Professor Sokal is certainly right about satire being a more effective (and delightful) method of criticism than earnest argument. But one should beware of praising his satirical ability too much. How hard could it be to satirize something as grotesquely ridiculous as science studies? As he himself points out, “my own article is, if anything, an extremely modest example of this well-established genre”. Indeed, the practitioners of science studies have reached such summits of absurdity in their writing that one can hardly tell the real thing from a satire of it. Which is which of the following two passages?

In opposition to interpretations of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, according to which the problem of measurement of the electron is chiefly epistemological, that is, following Kant’s famous doctrine that knowledge of the real is inevitably mediated by the categories of the mind, Bohm, for example, offers an *ontological* interpretation of quantum theory.

The key point is that this invariance group “acts transitively”: that means that any space-time point, if it exists at all, can be transformed into any other. In this way the infinite-dimensional invariance group erodes the distinction between observer and observed,... and the putative observer becomes fatally de-centered, disconnected from any epistemic link to a space-time point that can no longer be defined by geometry alone.

Alright, so the last lines of the second example give it away. The first is by Aronowitz, the second by Sokal. But as far as pretentiousness and use of jargon goes, the passages are pretty much

the same.

Although cultural studies mostly consists of preposterous nonsense, it is worth trying to understand why it exists in the academy. Why would large numbers of men and women spend so much of their time and money going to school only to immerse themselves in such anti-intellectual rot? With all of the wondrous knowledge that humanity has, with tremendous labour, obtained over the centuries, why would those who have made learning a profession renounce all learning? One finds a clue in the dedication of Andrew Ross’s book *Strange Weather*, which reads “to all of the science teachers I never had. It could only have been written without them.” Such posturing betrays the author’s adolescent thrill in snubbing something with the authority and prestige of science. It is a sort of anti-clerical sentiment mixed with envy. Professor Ross is an example of how the academy has come to be inhabited by persons arrested in adolescence. Such persons are not gratified by the patient and difficult work of scholarship, but instead seek to make a name for themselves by embracing cutting-edge publicity and stunts like deconstruction.

Deconstruction is the perfect endeavour for undisciplined graduate students and professors because it enables them to feel like smart and sophisticated intellectuals without actually having to study anything. A handful of clever sounding concepts and an easily learned lexicon of jargon substitute for the difficult, often tedious work of studying. And by claiming that their field is the most intellectually advanced, deconstructionists smugly assure themselves that the philosophy, literature, and science of the past — with its “ineluctable historicity” — is outmoded, even naive. The need to publish is also satisfied by signing up for deconstruction and cultural studies, where pages of incomprehensible jargon, metaphors, puns, and clever allusions can be substituted for real scholarly work. Such students and professors are like those persons who never learn how to draw, paint or sculpt, but who nevertheless claim to be artists. The prestige of the title “artist” is acquired simply by claiming it, and by having the boldness (or shameless-

ness) to display one's crude excrescences in the galleries and museums. The same is now true of poetry, where one can claim to be a poet without ever having studied verse (an outmoded form of writing that went out with Whitman). Since Andy Warhol, the inspired fraud has become a cultural institution. Instead of tarring and feathering our medicine showmen, we make them into celebrities.

The cultural and intellectual fraud achieves much of his success by adopting an aura of modern sophistication. Because the college-educated in America are terrified of being regarded as simple middle-Americans (from the provincial part of the country), they will give their approval to the latest intellectual and artistic trends. Because of his invariably anti-bourgeois posture, the fraud couldn't exist without the bourgeoisie — that is, its fear of seeming bourgeois.

Of course, the practitioners of cultural studies are not content with just being self-indulgent celebrities. In order to feel really important and to justify themselves in their own eyes, they graft their self-indulgent activities onto a moral cause — i.e., the cause of liberation. In denying the existence of objective truth, they are, they tell us, deconstructing the ideology of the power-holders in society, clearing the way for liberation. (That such an exercise makes their own political agenda meaningless doesn't seem to bother them.)

In their supreme arrogance, the denizens of cultural studies ventured into the realm of physical science — a realm where the student is not free to create reality for himself, but where he must defer to a reality that exists independently. To be sure, our concepts and scientific theories are limited, and we can never know reality in any absolute sense. But a basic premise of science studies — a premise that Professor Sokal enthusiastically endorses in his parody — is that physical reality (not our theories of physical reality, but physical reality itself) is “a social and linguistic construct”. The absurdity of the proposition is apparent to any sane person who has ever stubbed his toe. As Professor Sokal writes in his

Linguafranca essay: “Anyone who believes that the laws of physics are mere social conventions is invited to try transgressing those conventions from the windows of my apartment. (I live on the twenty-first floor.)” Indeed, one wonders what such a person thinks when he gets a polio vaccination or boards an aeroplane.

In trying to make science the object of “cultural studies”, the editors of *Social Text* went too far, leaving the fraudulence of their work vulnerable to exposure. Professor Sokal's hoax demonstrated this fraudulence and idiocy for all to see. In addition to the *New York Times*, magazines such as *Newsweek* and various network news shows reported the story. The editors and the publisher of *Social Text* tried to brush it off, but being caught with their pants down in such a bad way left them with little defence. Stanley Aronowitz accused Professor Sokal of being “ill-read and half-educated”. Andrew Ross insisted that the editors had all along considered the piece “a little hokey” and “sophomoric and/or outdated”. Stanley Fish wrote a long Op-Ed piece in the May 21 *New York Times* in which he charged that Professor Sokal, and not cultural studies, threatened to “undermine . . . intellectual standards.” He did not persuade.

What exactly is threatened by the undermining of intellectual standards in the university? With the secularization of American universities, the people ceased taking professors very seriously. Going to college became more a rite of passage — leaving home, meeting one's future friends and business partners, learning about the opposite sex — than a means of acquiring a serious education. This is not to say that Americans don't care about learning; they love their universities and are very supportive of them. But for the average American, book learning is secondary in importance to having a profitable trade. Professors have their place, but it is confined within the ivy-covered walls of the campus. One of the reasons why Americans don't worry too much about the state of book learning is their naive faith that such learning will always be preserved by their universities. Hence, the wealthy banker or businessman will

say to himself, “I may not have been a great student, but I can rest assured that my university is one of the best, with the best teachers who teach the best books.” Although this may have been true at one time, since the sixties it has ceased to be the case. For many alumni of Yale University it was quite a shock when the *Wall Street Journal* started reporting on the politicized nonsense that has entered the curriculum of their Alma Mater. When Yale had to return a twenty million dollar donation to its alumnus Lee Bass because it couldn't bring itself to organize the western civilization course for which he made the donation, many alumni concluded that if Yale didn't need Bass's twenty million, it certainly didn't need their meagre contributions. The result is that one of America's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher learning is now in a state of decay.

And so the undermining of intellectual standards does not threaten the typical American mind (most Americans, like most of humanity, have always been ignorant and always will be). The real threat is to the existence of the universities themselves. Irresponsible professors are destroying their own institution. Consequently, the really gifted students who care about books are being deprived of good teachers. This could ultimately be disastrous for American civilization. For what happens when a society's brightest minds are not provided with an education? Not only will there be no new teachers to preserve learning, the quality of the press, the judiciary, the clergy, and all other learned professions will be threatened.

What happens when institutional support and regulation of the learned professions is destroyed? One example is the state of affairs in some of the more evangelical protestant churches of America, where anyone who can quote the New Testament can become a minister. The result is that the most shameless and fraudulent showmen have made millions exploiting the naive faith of the masses. Although these evangelical preachers are only interested in money, their mendacious use of religious ideas and imagery to gratify the basic spiritual needs of the people is analogous to

political demagogy. If there are no institutions for the maintenance of learning and the idea of truth, who will oppose a rising demagogue?

There is hope. The *Social Text* fiasco may signal the beginning of the end for the deconstruction establishment, which was already damaged a few years ago

when the Yale deconstructionist Paul de Man was posthumously discovered to have written repeatedly for a Belgian collaborationist journal during the Nazi occupation. And now, with Professor Sokal's trick, perhaps the administrators, trustees, and benefactors of America's Universities will, out of fear of

embarrassment if nothing else, give closer scrutiny to the pernicious nonsense that has up until now passed for scholarship, and conclude that there is no place for it in the university.

John Leake is a graduate student at Boston University.

The Feltham Boy

Roy Kerridge

Despite the horrific nature of the crime, rape is looked on by many teenage boys as a great joke. Even grown men at times say "She was asking for it going out at that time of night/hitch hiking/wearing that dress" and so on.

Young men, unguided by social etiquette, often grow up expecting to have sex as soon as they are physically able to do so. To their intense indignation, young women do not at once comply with their peremptory requests. Fear of being humiliated or "shown up" in front of other boys, together with confused memories of older boys' remarks on girls ("no" means "yes"), often leads schoolboys to attempt rape. Sometimes surrounding boys, growing over-excited, join in the attack. So many boys of every background go through a bestial stage that it is a wonder that so few of them go on to become habitual rapists.

Two years ago, the newspapers were full of articles about an un-named young man of seventeen who had been prematurely released from Feltham Young Offenders' Unit, despite an horrific record of rape and violent crime. He "offended" again, and disappeared into custody, with many a headline.

A few years earlier, I had met the young man in question, then eleven years old and newly arrived in London from Jamaica. As he was my half-cousin, he stayed the night and began to cry in the dark. He missed his mother, despite the fact that she had beaten

him savagely over the years, "in the name of Jesus."

"I'm scared on my own", he confessed, when I went in to comfort him. We eventually slept in the same room. How did this timid chubby young boy grow up to reinforce the popular idea of rape as "a black man's crime"?

Suddenly placed in a London school, he felt unsettled and embarrassed by his inability to read and write. Did he try to win the other boys' respect by becoming a daredevil? Quickly growing up large and strong on a diet of Big Macs, did his strength enable him to overpower girls without quite realising what he was doing? Whatever the case, he may now have reformed, as he has become a "college student" like any other unskilled school leaver today.

Among "rough Jamaicans", jokes about rape are common, and have been enshrined (so to speak) in a series of theatre-staged "folk plays" known as "Boops." A "boops" is a sugar-daddy, and a girl who tricks a strange man into parting with money is said to "boops him up." Apparently, awful scenes go on in "Boops plays", in the audience as well as on stage, and in England as well as in Jamaica. Screaming with laughter, men stand up and shout "Rape her! Rape her!" when the so-called "hero" is alone with a schoolgirl. In Jamaica, schoolgirls are often victims of assaults by elderly men who have spent their lives moving from woman to woman.

When such men grow old, alone and embittered, they turn to schoolgirls who have been strictly brought up to respect and obey grown-ups. White rapists in England are usually a very different type — the Jack the Lad lorry or van driver reared in an atmosphere of obscene camaraderie and "porn videos", well able to bamboozle the police, as he talks their language.

Self-centred thoughtlessness, a typical trait of violent youths, is also a characteristic of a young person who has grown up "in Care", brought up by transient uncaring young "housemothers".

"Begone, dull Care" say I, as such an upbringing seems the ruin of all who suffer it. But not quite all, for one of the most honest, sincere men I know, a child of West Indian immigrants, was brought up in Care. His best friend in the Home was the son of a neighbour of mine. This boy entered the Home as a delightful, good-looking lad, but left it as an amoral, vicious street robber and alleged rapist. Now the bad boy, "burnt out" by Crack, has become a harmless mentally-handicapped tramp, cared for tenderly by the good boy of identical background.

In this new world created by the Young, a world of murder, rape and pillage, can also be heard the soft whisper of Hope.

Roy Kerridge is writing a book examining "Blackademe".

Bad Poets' Society

Marek Racho looks at the work of Craig Raine and John Ashbery

Read the poetry reviews in newspapers and literary magazines of the last few decades and you are certain to notice an interesting trend; the reviews are almost never damning. Has the reviewing profession been overcome by kindness? Hardly — faced with books which offend their socio-political sensibilities reviewers are as ready with their cudgels as ever they were. But today's poetry is treated differently; it is tacitly understood to be fragile and unmarketable, and therefore the reviewer generally shrinks from exercising his critical faculties upon the particular book of verse he is to review.

The famous literary horsewhippings in *Blackwood's* and *The Quarterly* during the nineteenth century may sometimes have been harsh, but at least they demonstrated a healthy scepticism and an unwillingness to put up with the second rate. Edgar Allan Poe's mordant reviews of verse, for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, are still hilarious, even though the poets he harried are now forgotten. For years I have searched for similar reviews of modern verse — in vain. Perhaps such reviews have been written, but they have gone unpublished. Within the reviewer's soul lurks the secret fear of being caught out as a philistine. No one wants to be known as the modern equivalent of the reviewer who savaged Keats or lambasted Wordsworth. However, this understandable reticence has been taken to an absurd and rather sad degree, with the result that an age without poetry is perceived as a Golden Age in the eyes of the thousands of "poets" whose untested trash circulates among the readership of magazines like *Poets and Writers* and *Poetry*.

Literary critics (who often see them-

selves as the muses' priests, defending poetry from the scrutiny of common-sense) are sickening in their pompous condescension, condescension which becomes monstrous when one fully comprehends the effrontery and self-delusion that must occur in the heart of a reviewer who claims to admire lines like the following:

F***** bloody bugger sh***.

his brother is beside himself
because Jimmy won't be banished

This stanza is by Craig Raine, considered by many to be among the best English poets. The book from which it comes was greeted, not long ago, with the sort of acclaim that might herald the appearance of an extraordinary masterpiece. Some even called Mr Raine the most important poet writing in English. Across the Atlantic similar claims have been advanced on behalf of the author of this inspired couplet:

Wallowing in penguins,
she was wallowing in penguins.

This is the work of John Ashbery, so important an American poet that he has been crowned with the only laurel that counts; lots of cash. He has a collection of fellowships and prizes — Pulitzers, Guggenheims, Feltrinellis — that sound like automatic weapons, and literary critics comb through thesauruses to find words adequate to his praise. Of course they are also praising themselves. Only very superior people can understand the mysterious utterances of Mr Ashbery.

Modern poetry, like modern art, has become a swindle, a hyper-inflated South Sea Bubble of pretension and critical hyperbole. No-one dares to burst the bubble. Too many jobs are at stake, too many sinecures, too many bogus reputations. The traders organize competitions and readings, teach creative

writing or English, "workshop" and review each other's work; the investors pay to enter competitions which they haven't a prayer of winning, pay to be taught creative writing, and pay to attend writers' colonies where they pay for the visiting poet's verse. Never has poetry been cultivated so assiduously, and never has there been so little poetry.

Instead there is the "poetry community", an extraordinary pyramid scheme in which would-be poets support their fellows by buying chapbooks, joining various poetry groups, and subscribing to small magazines filled with smaller verse. Whence comes this mob of poets? The answer is simple: our system of education, with the aid of the Arts Council (in America the NEA), has for many years been dedicated to the egalitarian practice of encouraging "artistic" abilities among people who do not possess any. The result is student films, mangy art objects, a modern literature uniform in its relentless mediocrity, and the existence of a vast number of semi-literate dreamers who call themselves "writers." Those among them too lazy or too incompetent to venture prose, produce "poetry."

Most late twentieth century "poetry" consists of triviality recollected with too much emotion, and the majority of the ten thousand poetasters recorded in the Directory of English and American Poets are either affected Madame Verdurins brimming with faked feelings ("Ah, the Andante! As if it weren't the Andante that breaks every bone in my body!") or whining victimologists obsessed with race, sex, and gender whose poems begin "Oppressed by the sexist stare of the tea-kettle." They are esteemed only by other bad poets and by the minority

groups to which they belong.

Very few poets make it beyond the giant self-help group of the "poetry community." Fewer still make a living. Those who do, those who win the big prizes, receive the most lucrative fellowships, and find their books lauded in the major magazines and newspapers, are more cunning and better educated than the mass of poets. Apart from the odd quota award to the ever rising windbag Maya Angelou, the prizes and the success inevitably attend the most pretentious and the most pseudo-intellectual poets.

It would be unkind to analyse the work of all the deluded scribblers found lurking in the pages of the poetry journals. One does not judge infant finger-printing by the standards of Dürer's workshop. However, those modern poets who actually make a living by their work ought certainly to be judged by the highest standards. Is it not surprising then, and even outrageous, that no reviewer has, these twenty years and more, dared to judge bad verse by any established poet with the severity it deserves?

Recently I received the books of poetry from which I quoted above. I read through the books with considerable attentiveness and greater nausea. The reviews I read in disbelief. Not one honest criticism. Not one sincere reaction. The reviewers might have been courtiers rhapsodizing over Louis XIV's wig. A brief interview with the literary editors of several major reviews revealed why — the task of reviewing never goes to any independent writer, but rather to a friend of the poet. Worse still, those young reviewers who do break into the pages of the *TLS* or the *New York Review of Books* do so because of a recommendation from their university tutor — who usually happens to be the poet himself. Of course, such puffery was commonplace in the past, but so was condemnation. Today, anyone who criticises a book of poetry is thought to be attacking poetry itself, and the "community." It is time for the appearance of a dissenting opinion, and therefore, calling in Calliope, Euterpe, and the spirit of Poe to my aid, I proceed.

Craig Raine's latest effort, *History*:

the Home Movie, strikes more idiotic attitudes than a pop video. The attitudinizing begins on the dustjacket: "Lenin in a marinade. Mussolini's West End hit. Haile Selassie in hock to the gas company. Rape. The Russian Revolution. German inflation. Murder. Masturbation (mutual and solo). The astral presence of Conan Doyle..." Somehow we are supposed to be impressed by this; how hip, how cool. A hodgepodge of disparate topics, a vulgar sexual reference, some bizarre images — it could be a Benetton ad. Turning to the list of acknowledgments one finds out why; several sections from the book first appeared in the *New Yorker* and thanks are tendered to her highness Tina Brown. Ah, Vanity Fair. She must have taken especial pride in publishing the section entitled "A Suitcase Full of Sh**."

It is a pity Mr Raine did not choose to call the whole book "A Suitcase Full of Sh*t" because that title gives a neat summation of its contents. The "poetry" is made up of three line stanzas, each line about the length of a *National Enquirer* headline and considerably less inventive. The book purports to tell the story of two families, the Raines and the Pasternaks. It does so by concentrating only on the most putrid and disgusting episodes that Mr Raine's prurient mind could dig up or invent. If I were a member of his family I would never speak to him again. If his wife has not taken their children and fled from his presence, then she must thrive upon insult and betrayal. This *History* is no "home movie," rather it is the sort of sick and arrogant voyeurism indulged in by the clueless idiot who photographs his wife giving birth, or videotapes her having sex:

"Say: use me like a toilet"...

She does it like domestic chores, making them both a cup of tea before the shaving and the sodomy.

(Mr Raine is referring to his grandmother.)

The book begins with a "Pince-nez like the letter g" (goodness, how clever!) and ends with "An ampersand. An ampersand." In 326 wasted pages, each bearing less than 120 words (sometimes as few as 30), Mr Raine manages to drop more names than

Danny Kaye's "Russian Composers" and also makes use of a wilting bouquet of four letter words. Shura, Zhonya, Zhenya, Zina, Leonid, Lenin, Hitler, Jeanie, Jimmy, Buck Watson (who "smears the sperm with the sole of his shoe"), Colin Dunn, Eliot, Yeats, Eugen Steinach, Norman, Mrs Pearson, Natasha Kroll, S J Wu, Haile Selassie et al comport themselves among a welter of ****s, ****s, and ****s. Who most of these people are is not worth the finding out, and reading the book becomes rather like being thrown among a self-consciously "in" crowd at a boring party:

In the dark, David finds
and fondles Mrs Simpson's knee.

Vigilant shuteye for Ernest.

(Across 6 letters, first letter E?) These lines would be slightly more interesting in a crossword puzzle than in a book of verse, but not by much. They are typical of the "Martian" school of poetry which got its name from Mr Raine's earlier collection *A Martian Sends a Postcard Home*. It is very easy to be a "Martian" poet; simply take several hundred crossword puzzle clues and glue them together. Using a word processor one can, after a few hours work, create a prizewinning book. The whole point is not to be easily understood.

Mr Raine has an unpleasant mind, and it shows in his demeanour. The days when poets had beautiful or interesting faces are long gone; Byron was of course, classically handsome, Shelley looked like an angel, and Pope, though unfortunate in body, was blessed with a noble mien. Craig Raine, according to his dustjacket photographs, looks like his poetry.

Catching the come in his hands,
the consistency of starch.

W***** off with it.

Mr Raine's uncle Jimmy is charmingly pictured too:

Jimmy Raine...is absorbed in himself,
pressing his prick
like a spring...

before it jumps like a frog
in his hand

When he is not describing his ancestors' nasty habits, our poet is given to rectal musings:

I hope your arsehole moves
into the middle of your body

Delightful. However, the bard appears
to be unwell:
subject to severe attacks
of irritable bowel syndrome.

Could it be an allergy to wheat? Like a
small child Mr Raine must inform us
of every lavatorial thought:

a syncopated shallow panting
of Merde. De. Te. Merde. De-te.
Merde-de-te.

Merde-de-te-merde-de-te.

One can imagine the hours the poet
spent trying to get those lines just
right. Mr Raine is certainly a connoisseur of faeces:

Suppurative osteomyelitis
leaves the taste
of pig sh** in your mouth

Yum yum. It is a harsh thing to accuse
a poet of plagiarism, but I suspect that
a good number of lavatory walls ought
to look to their copyrights.

To be fair, I must admit that there is
more in Mr Raine's bowels than excrement;
there is also the occasional Vision. Here one:

Spent wing mayflies, hackled zulus
give off their queasy brilliance
on the unkillable earth.

There are apparently sane people, especially at Oxford University, who think this sort of thing very deep. A modern poet's metaphors are bound to be annoying and "mayflies, hackled zulus" has the pansified flavour of children's classroom poems that begin "The sun is a custard pie." What are "hackled zulus?" Is it a misprint for "shackled zulus?" The irony is that it doesn't matter; shackled, hackled, spackled or even Lauren Bacalled, the line is still annoying and trivial. I remember English classes spent dissecting such garbage — mayflies' wings look like the colourful shields of feathered zulu warriors, the flies are queasy because their lives are short etc. In the language that Mr Raine understands best, who the **** cares?

Or, to quote from a real poet:

Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason: man is not a fly.
But Mr Raine obviously thinks he is:
Or should I say, he says,
"the struggle of the fly in marmalade"?

I see. Mr Raine, is your poetry actually
about anything?:

Nothing. Just that joke
about the fat Bavarian
who finds a fly in his soup.

Very honest of you. And literary prizes
and professional boxing matches?

are fixed, like horseflies
feeding on filth

Super. Where do you feel your career
as a poet is heading?

where a bluebottle goes mad
in the light switch
and the light bulb squints.

Oh dear. The poet's eye is certainly in
a fine frenzy rolling, but he has omitted
to notice that, except in bad modern
verse, light bulbs do not squint;
moreover, a bluebottle could no more
be trapped in a light switch than it
could in a sledgehammer. But our bard,
like the Emperor Domitian, must have
his flies:

Even the tough bluebottle,
transmitting morse code,
can be cracked

Perhaps, but your poem certainly can't.
The fragments of Herodas make more
sense. Anyway, what happened then?

Then folded like a frozen fly
But in the middle of the night.

But what!? How do you fold a frozen
fly? Why freeze it anyway?

There is no reason to know.
Whereas boiled flies
provide a source of protein.

I see. Thrifty fellow. But those cooking
techniques must frighten the little
blighters into fits:

Epileptic by the geyser,
a fly, unable, injured
on its trampoline. Poised.

Exactly. And how does Lenin bang the
podium?

Lenin bangs the podium,
like a man in pursuit of a fly.

That man being, in this case, Craig
Raine. Mr Raine is a Fellow of English
at New College Oxford. Our readers
will doubtless be pleased to know that
tutorials at that ancient institution are
in such good hands.

Pausing to brush off the flies buzzing
round Mr Raine's verbal dungheap, I
at once set off to the empyrean heights
of John Ashbery's collection *And the
Stars Were Shining*. Mr Ashbery has
blessed us with many collections of
verse; this is his sixteenth, and he
appears to be able to churn out his
sarcastic profundities with the efficiency
of a dairy maid. This is smooth
stuff indeed, very smooth; at first glance
it appears almost to be actual poetry;
set, well whipped, and with a creamy

texture:

And I and the dream are still only
acquaintances
after all this time, a century, it seems,
from Arkansas. Did the goats get milked
in time
for your hand to graze it? Was the squall
over then?

A closer look shows this stuff to be
random, and it comes from the same
fount as the scrawlings of 1920's surrealists.
It is the automatic writing of a
precious, educated, and rather small
mind. Whatever images the poet uses
are not real, not felt, and, unlike the
more honest surrealists, he is too much
in love with his pretension:

...All ribbons parted
on a veil of musicks, wherein
unwitting orangutans gambled for socks
What preening piffle! With the phrase
"Veil of musicks" Mr Ashbery unveils
who his major poetic influence has
been, and there stands Wallace Stevens,
wearing nothing but frilly camiknickers
and a polka-dotted bow tie; America's
queen of the precious. Like little
girls, Mr Stevens and Mr Ashbery pull
each other's hair and fight over which
of them can be the most nauseating.
"Ooh!" shrieks Stevens, "Tra-la!" gurgles
Ashbery, "You've ripped my velvets!"
complains Stevens, "there's ice-cream
all over my dress!" squeals Ashbery:

Above the forest of the parakeets,
A parakeet of parakeets prevails,
A pip of life amid a mort of tails.

(Stevens)

Wallowing in penguins,
she was wallowing in penguins.
With fiendish cleverness
the foreground closes in.

(Ashbery)

If to serenade almost to man
Is to miss, by that, things as they are,
Say that it is the serenade
Of a man that plays a blue guitar.

(Stevens)

Unless you put it away
he can never play with it again,
the marimba, and you know what that
means.

(Ashbery)

No, as a matter of fact I don't, and I
doubt if Mr Ashbery wants me to.
What small pains he takes with his
poetry involve only the effort to be
misunderstood. Like Wallace Stevens,
Mr Ashbery specializes not just in the
precious, but also in the Mysteriously

Profound:

We are expelled into the dust of our
decisions.

Yes, aren't we. Very deep. But I wonder if Mr Ashbery didn't mean "We are exhaled into the smoke of our intentions"? Or perhaps "We are expanded into the fat of our recriminations"? It doesn't really matter — as long as the line has that authentic ring of precious obscurity, the talmudic scholars of modern verse will lap it up.

And the Stars Were Shining is, praise God, shorter than Mr Raine's *Home Movie*; a mere 100 pages. My favourite page is page 2, attractively blank; the other pages are randomly bestrewn with print; capital letters at the top of a page indicate the presence of a new poem. There are 57 such titles including: "Well, Yes, Actually", "What Do You Call It When", "Just What's There", "Sometimes in Places" and "Title Search." Obviously Mr Ashbery didn't search very hard. The last poem in the book is sliced into XIII sections, and section VII explains Mr Ashbery's problems very nicely:

Rummaging through some old poems
for ideas — surely I must have had some
once?

Poor chap. Perhaps he has added a new prize to his collection of Pulitzers, Feltrinellis and Guggenheims — an Alzheimer.

Prizes and praise for dishonest John. Harold Bloom delights in him. Helen Vendler says that he is "a poet of the moral life." (As she said this in the *New Yorker* one can fully understand her haziness as to the meaning of "moral" and "life".) John Bayley has,

in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, compared Mr Ashbery to Matthew Arnold. Only a moron or an Oxford don could see any connection between the noble Arnold and the piffling Ashbery. Professor Bayley also wonders in the same review what "Ashbery's own trade secret" is. I know that secret, and I will unfold it here. First; Beginning Your Poem. Each poem must begin with either a Strange Declaration:

Acts have been cleaned up. (p. 18)
I must proceed unflustered. (p. 51)
The time is for going out (p. 67)
and across.

or In the Middle of a Sentence:

And the ignorance on your hands is
August (p. 62)
is requested." That's where it began —
(p. 24)
And the bellybuttons all danced around
(p. 6)

Use Colloquial Language:

Leaves say it's OK. (p. 9)
We're very bullish on life. (p. 28)
Heck, put us on the map, while you're
at it. (p. 94)

Then watch a couple of old movies, read Wallace Stevens, the *New York Times* and *Art News*, write twenty or thirty disjointed comments, arrange them at random on the page, and hey presto, a *New Yorker* poem by John Ashbery:

In my original philosophy for the age of
gink
it felt like a harp was being plucked.
How not to respond to these sugges-
tions,
if that's what they are,
like little breezes lifting grass and
leaves,
as a delta of mattering fans out from

a point like a minimal encounter.

"A point like a minimal encounter"? "A delta of mattering"? Why not "a smattering of deltoids" or "a point like an unintended consequence"? No reason. The poet cocks his finger, sips his vinegary white wine, strikes a queer attitude, preens a little, and ultimately says nothing. What is the point of this poetry? There is none. It is written simply to exclude. Those who pretend to "understand" and appreciate its bogus merits do so simply to feel part of an exclusive clique. No one likes to feel excluded, I as little as anyone, but I cannot summon up enough dishonesty to pretend to like this stuff. To hell with it. John Ashbery's "poetry" is meretricious rubbish.

It is extraordinary to think of the huge cash prizes regularly doled out to mincing poetasters like Ashbery. I suspect that these awards are made solely as a way of pretending to ourselves that poetry still exists as an art form. It does not. Real people do not read modern poetry, "poets" do — and English Professors and literary critics and creative writing instructors. Poetry is dead and the corpse occasionally twitches through the galvanic manipulations of the Arts Council, the NEA, and a few snobbish old women with trust funds. It is time to cut off the life support; stop publishing drivel, stop teaching creative writing, and start teaching people how to read.

Marek Racho is a writer living in Manhattan.

Notes on Reviewers

David Edelsten is hunting correspondent of *Country Life*.

Angela Ellis Jones is writing a book about law and public opinion in England in the twentieth century.

Ivan Hewitt is the presenter of *Music Matters* on Radio 3.

Ray Honeyford is a former headmaster and writer.

Sara Moyse was a teacher in China.

Helen Szamuely is a freelance writer on Russian and East European affairs.

The Dagenham Experiment

Peter Bassett asks: is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Ask the man on the Clapham omnibus what the name 'Dagenham' means to him and he will reply 'Ford Motor Works'. One does not automatically associate Dagenham, East London, with daring educational experiments that border on the revolutionary. Yet 'revolutionary' or, more accurately, 'counter-revolutionary', describes most aptly what is happening.

Five years ago the local education committee of Barking and Dagenham received a report from H.M. Inspector of Schools that appalled them with the bluntness of its terms. It said that the teachers regarded the children, because of their background of poor social conditions (poverty, broken homes, etc.), as unteachable and not worth teaching.

Put on their mettle the committee reacted promptly and vigorously. From Switzerland and Germany they discovered the methods by which those countries achieved their commendably successful primary school results. Then they selected one of their schools, the Thomas Arnold Primary School, and proceeded to act on what they had learned.

Under their energetic chairman, Charlie Fairbrass, they abandoned the so-called 'progressive' group seating arrangement for children in their classrooms, an arrangement that had been enshrined in the recommendations of the Plowden Report of 1967 and put into effect in the area in the late 1960s. Instead they seated the children in rows facing the teacher at the front of the class, as had always been the practice until the 1960s.

Lady Plowden and her colleagues believed that in the classroom seating arrangement that had been in use until

then, now referred to as 'whole-class', less able children were at a disadvantage compared with those more able. Her Report recommended that children should instead be seated in small groups (4-8) at individual tables, so that they could help each other in their tasks, with occasional visits from the teacher to help and advise. This recommendation, one of the most important and far-reaching in its effects, was accepted by the government of the day and adopted universally. In hindsight and, we now see, with complete predictability, this rearrangement of classroom seating has had disastrous effects on the ability of teachers to teach and pupils to learn.

The recommendations of the Plowden Committee have been fairly described as 'revolutionary'. In breaking with the officially recommended and established practice of 25 years' standing and still almost universally adhered to, and in abolishing 'progressive' group seating in favour of 'whole-class' seating, Mr Fairbrass and his fellow committee members may be equally fairly described as 'counter-revolutionary'.

A recent BBC documentary programme in the *Panorama* series was entitled 'Hard Lessons From Abroad', and subtitled 'A schools system that doesn't teach children basic skills properly'. British primary school teaching methods were compared with those in use abroad, and comparative figures (for proficiency in mathematics) showed China at the top of the league, with Taiwan a close second. Switzerland and the former USSR also came high up; while, in *eleventh* place, came England, with Scotland and Ireland.

A contributor to the programme, Professor David Reynolds, Newcastle University, has been studying Taiwanese

educational techniques. He said: 'My guess is that these children would probably be something like 18 months or 2 years ahead, at the age of nine: and by the time they left school they would finish up maybe 3 or 4, more likely 4 years ahead.'

All Taiwanese classes are organised on the 'whole-class' model: all children learn the same thing at the same time. Bright children are encouraged to help their slower companions, though not in class time. Professor Reynolds believes that we can learn much from them by judiciously selecting those parts of their system that we are prepared to accept and to incorporate into our own culture.

But he sounds a warning note: we cannot afford to ignore the progress the people of the Pacific rim are making. We live in an increasingly competitive world: if we are ever to stand a chance of competing successfully we must start by improving our primary education.

Mr Fairbrass and his fellow committee members have made a fundamental break with established primary practice, at the importance of which we can only begin to conjecture. The Barking project may herald a national change in teaching methods in all subjects. In their research paper, Hastings and Schwieso describe the advantages of seating school children in rows instead of at individual tables. It now appears that these highly tentative research findings are being overtaken by events. It is a wry comment that the Barking and Dagenham initiative in conducting this experiment is being funded, not from central Government sources but by John Sainsbury's Gatsby Foundation. The Education Secretary, Mrs Gillian Shephard, has met the Barking team, and politicians, including

the Labour Party's Shadow Education Secretary, have raced to see the Borough's Gatsby classes and to praise them.

But the name at the bottom of the page is that of Mr Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools. The Barking initiative strikes at the very heart of the

entire body of dogma built up by the teacher training establishment over the last thirty years. We can readily imagine the wall of intense hostility with which his every move will be greeted in his efforts to emulate Dagenham's example on the national scale. If he should prevail, then, in Mr Churchill's

words, we may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. If not, then we shall continue our descent into the abyss of a new Dark Age. Time is not on our side.

Peter Bassett was Vice-Chairman of the Queen's English Society.

'Integrated Casting' Revisited

Ralph Berry looks at political correctness in the theatre

The current debate on 'integrated casting' misses the crux, which is conventional. Two conventions co-exist uneasily in today's theatre. In one, the audience is to ignore the blackness of black actors: it does not exist. In the other, the production, and ancillary comment, draws attention to the blackness of the actor. The audience is always aware of the 'other' convention, which is rooted in today's society, and cannot always be sure of its appropriate reactions.

The problem is largely confined to classic plays, Wilde and earlier. In contemporary drama the clear convention is that all casting is literal: blacks play blacks, whites play whites. Whatever colour an actor has is the colour of the part. It is only when today's world encroaches upon the past that difficulties emerge.

Each of the conventions has its justification. Richard Eyre's *The Changeling* at the National cast a black as De Flores (this, in a milieu recalling a nineteenth-century South American colonial nation). De Flores became a major-domo bred of slave stock, a casting that brought out the social resentments of the text. Again, Philip Prowse's *The White Devil* at the National cast Josette Simon as Vittoria, making the Corombonas an upstart

family resented by the aristocratic Medicis. In such productions, the black actor is to assimilate and highlight theatrical values that are at least latent in the text. To them can be added the National's *Carousel*, in which 'Mr Snow' was a self-conscious joke. It would be absurd to pretend to ignore it.

There are however other black castings, which are discreet and muted. In the RSC's *Love's Labour's Lost*, one

To cast an actor of reasonable but not outstanding gifts, on the cogent grounds that he is black, undermines the production

of the four young men was black (I cannot even remember whether it was Dumaine or Longaville); no special point was made; the director simply cast a black on analogy with almost any other job or occupation group. But this minor instance — Dumaine/Longaville has no stage relatives — skirts the main problems, which can-

not be willed away. The first is kinship. Many characters have mothers, brothers (etc.) who appear on stage. A black Cordelia engages the mind in tortuous moves. (Did Lear re-marry? I once knew a notable Lear who was convinced that Lear had three wives.) The yoking of white and black actors in stage kinship means that part of the dramatic energy is dissipated in cumbersome explanations, or held as a burden of convention that the audience has to shoulder. Even a non-naturalistic production needs to be rooted in some kind of social reality.

Then, the dynamics of the play may be blocked by a clumsy casting. As John Peters rightly observes, Iago has to be white (however you cast Othello); the play is destroyed otherwise. Again, John Simon, the New York drama critic, cites an American production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which Lysander was cast as a black, the only one of the four young lovers. The audience was puzzled: did Egeus not want his daughter to marry a black?

It is clear that a universalist prescription, cast a black actor for any (classic) part, cannot work. What are the reasonable possibilities? I can see three kinds of answer.

The first is the part that consciously calls for a black. There are at least

three in Shakespeare: Othello, Aaron, and the Prince of Morocco. The two major roles now commonly go to blacks. Next comes the servant/minor functional group. This yields some respectable parts, and the RSC has done well with Oswald in *King Lear* and the Provost in *Measure for Measure*. The third group, much the most interesting, contains those parts into which the perceived characteristics of the actor are assimilated. The actor illustrates a playing value in the text.

I once saw a student *White Devil* with a black Lodovico, who first alerted me to the possibilities. He was splendid, a deathsman who embodied the Revenge spirit of the play. Not dissimilar was Hugh Quarshie's Tybalt in Bogdanov's *Romeo and Juliet*. Though Tybalt is totally integrated into Veronese society in the text, there is an insistent 'outsider' feel to the part. Philip Prowse cast Hester Worsley in *A Woman of No Importance* as a black. This casting accommodates the idea of the young American visitor, who is the outsider offering candid (and unflattering) views on the aristocratic values front and centre. These castings are overt, there to be remarked. But it is possible to play on the cusp of the conventions. I thought Josette Simon's Rosaline in the RSC *Love's Labour's Lost* offered an underplot of relationship with Roger Rees's Berowne: here is a London West Indian, whose romance with a white Cambridge graduate sounds a warning note, 'Don't take me for granted.'

To these instances can be added Cleopatra, who is strictly the fourth Shakespearean part calling for a black actor. As early as line 6, the text of *Antony and Cleopatra* refers to her 'tawny front,' with a clear hint of ethnic distinction. But this hint has not been taken up on stage. To my knowledge, not since Beerbohm's Tree's production of 1906 has this aspect of the part been portrayed. Constance Collier's Cleopatra was dyed 'tawny.' Tree's Antony thus became an imperial consul, Cleopatra the native seductress whose wiles subdued him. The play then became an Anglo-Indian amour out of *Plain Tales From The*

Hills. Since then, Cleopatras on the English stage have been invariably white-skinned. Modern productions play up the straightforwardly psychological aspects of the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra — they are simply people living together, endlessly bickering about the mistress's status as non-wife — and play down suggestions of a cultural or ethnic divide. On the English stage, any such suggestion seems all but tabu.

Michael Neill, however, in his Oxford Shakespeare *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1994), cites the black American Franchelle Stuart Dorn as Cleopatra, at the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Washington D.C., in 1988. This was reasonably well received: 'but it perhaps had more to do with director Michael Kahn's bold decision to stress the African nature of Cleopatra's court by casting black actors in the Egyptian roles than with the quality of Dorn's own performance.' (p. 65) This production sounds like a make-work project for black actors. As such it highlights a subtle but recurring problem.

Doctrinaire politics don't work with Shakespeare. Imagination does.

This is seen most clearly in the casting of Othello. The pressure today is always to cast an Othello who is black to start with, not a white actor who must black up. If successful, this tendency leads to a ghettoisation of the role, a project to make Othello a no-go area for white actors. But this runs the danger of inadequate casting. Othello is an intensely demanding role, one easy to fail in. Look at Anthony Hopkins' inadequate Othello for BBC-TV. Gielgud was held to have failed in the role. To cast an actor of reasonable but not outstanding gifts, on the cogent grounds that he is black, undermines the production. More, Othello is up against Iago, who has to be white. Iago is a gift part. A competent Iago will

simply pick up the play in his hands and walk away with it, leaving a slightly bemused Othello to receive sympathetic applause. This can hardly be the object of black-Othello supporters.

Doctrinaire politics don't work with Shakespeare. Imagination does.

Kenneth Branagh brought off a coup in his film of *Much Ado About Nothing* by casting the black Denzel Washington as Don Pedro. Essentially, Branagh was able to assimilate the qualities of blackness into the part, making Don Pedro an outsider (even with his white half-brother, Keanu Reeves' Don John). When Don Pedro made a veiled offer to Beatrice, it was instantly refused. At the end, the camera showed Don Pedro standing outside the dance, as the revellers swept through the grounds of the Tuscan palace. Denzel Washington's natural authority took easily to the princely qualities of the role; his skin colour gave a dimension of credibility to the understated alienation that is Don Pedro's.

This kind of casting cannot be reduced to a formula. It requires sensitive and discriminating judgment of the actor's qualities, as of the play's, and it must catch at the values of the moment. Take Caliban: there was, I believe, no instance of a black Caliban before 1945, when it created a mild sensation in the USA. Then it became virtually a cliché of casting (making too much of 'this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine'). Nowadays a black actor might well feel that Caliban is not his role. And the director might prefer a Caliban as a symbol of the dispossessed and stateless, or as one with physical deformities, rather than ethnic separation or colonialist history. That approach is rather played out now. The possibilities are all in the text, but there is no substitute for judgment.

Ralph Berry's latest book is *Shakespeare in Performance: Castings and Metamorphoses*.

Editorial

The Labour Party's proposals for the reform of the House of Lords show no understanding of our constitution, or of the advantages which come from its not being written down. Continental constitutions focus on the rights of the citizen, because these have so often been jeopardized by the concentrated power of sovereigns. Under the British constitution power has been dispersed from the very outset — partly because the law is common law, and judges have the final say in how to apply it. Hence the constitution should be seen less as a device for safeguarding the rights of the subject, and more as a device for conferring legitimacy on those in power. Its essential feature is that it confers authority and dignity on the holders of office. That is why the hereditary element is so important — for it emphasizes the long-term view, and the aspect of destiny. Modern democratic constitutions tend to suffer from a deficit of legitimacy. For they create the sense that those in power have no greater title to it than the fact that they have been able to 'manage' the popular vote. Since people have a low opinion, in general, of themselves, they also acquire a low opinion of those whom they vote into office. The result is a disaffection with the political process which in turn leads to a fragmentation of national loyalty.

The House of Lords should be understood in two ways: first as conferring dignity on those who sit in it; secondly, as a revising chamber. Revising chambers which have no extra dignity also have no extra authority — especially if elected. It is very important to the popular understanding of the Lords that it contains people who have been honoured for services to their country, and also the descendants of such people, as

well as people appointed to it for their expertise. These three ways of ascending to the peerage confer the sense that this chamber really has the authority to inspect legislation issuing from the lower house, with the eye of the nation, and with a view to the long-term national interest, rather than the short-term ambitions of elected politicians.

Indeed, the House of Lords is the only institution in which non-politicians can play a part in the legislative process. Increasingly people are distrustful of politicians, who have become a professional interest group, whose primary interest is in sounding off, changing things, and legislating, usually with scant regard to the common good. A country in which the only way to political power is through wanting it is a country in which the quiet voice of the ordinary conscience is seldom heard. In our system, as is evident from Hansard, it is heard constantly in Parliament, by virtue of the fact that people with no political ambitions are nevertheless able to rise to their feet and question the legislative proposals of the lower house. This in turn is made possible by the dignities conferred on the Upper House, which protect those who speak in it, while obliging them to speak seriously and well.

Because peerage is an honour, appointment to the House of Lords gives peers a motive to respect their country and its constitution, and to set personal ambitions and self-interest aside when deliberating about legislation. This motive hardly exists now in the Commons. But it does exist in the Lords, because honour in both senses is still a reality there. This honour reflects the aristocratic world-view, the passing of which is neither to be wished for nor encouraged.

The argument that it is impossible to

justify a hereditary upper house in a democratic age will of course have no appeal to the readers of this *Review*. For it is an argument against monarchy, and in favour of an elected president; it is an argument against the inheritance of property, against any kind of deference towards established things, any kind of reluctance to change things just because public opinion can be prompted to move against them. In other words, it is an argument against the principle of constitution. The US Constitution is also an inheritance, whose authority cannot be set aside by popular vote. To those Americans who ask: 'Why should the wishes and plans of dead white European males be imposed on us, regardless of the people's will?' there is only one coherent answer — namely, go and live elsewhere. Why should we not say the same to those who question our own political settlement? For there will come a point in any argument, where we can only say: that is how it is with us.

The Labour Party's proposals should be seen as issuing from a particular faction of disaffected intellectuals, who have never shown much loyalty to the idea of constitutional government in any case, and who are typically ideologues and meddlers. Moreover, the proposals come at a time when there is no popular demand for constitutional change, and are presented precisely so that the Labour Party, which has no clear policy on the economy, the welfare state, foreign relations, education or anything else of substance, can be seen to have united behind a programme, and to be doing something to change things. The result is that the Party seeks to change that which should remain unaltered, in order to retain that (the welfare state) which ought to be changed.

Letters

Sir

One of the main causes of the erosion of thought in Britain, (Abolition of Thought, SR Vol 15, No1) is the remorseless spread of egalitarianism. Of the various qualities required to undergo a serious course in higher education I would highlight the following: the acquisition of a considerable body of knowledge, self-discipline, hard work (lots of it), innate intellectual ability, motivation and curiosity. Since the number of people possessing this combination of qualities in relation to the general population is small, then the percentage of people suitably qualified for higher education will also tend to be small. Any good system of higher education worth its salt will be élitist, and desirably so.

Clarity of exposition is just one of the many excellent qualities of Professor Scruton's writing. Consequently, one can easily identify those arguments and propositions with which one disagrees. For example, the advice to those of us in higher education is to take refuge in *ketman*. I first encountered this concept in Czeslaw Milosz's *The Captive Mind*. Milosz notes that a great many intellectuals in the People's Democracies were well aware of the contradictions between the word and deed which poisoned their existence. They solved these painful contradictions by becoming actors. In a totalitarian socialist state where a wrong word or gesture could cost an individual his life, then a strategy for personal survival such as this has a certain merit. Sooner or later, however, the strain of acting becomes too much to bear. As Solzhenitsyn repeatedly tells us: 'Thou shalt not live by the lie'.

Ketman has no place in a British university. Those of us who see the fallacies and dangers inherent in political correctness, feminism and equal opportunities have an obligation to speak out (as Professor Scruton repeatedly does). Yes, it can be lonely at

times, and you can be certain that you will pay for it in all kinds of ways. But it is essential that those students, who, as Scruton notes, 'are able to perceive the difference between rubbish and the real thing', are given encouragement. They need it, for the pressure on students to conform to fashionable drivel is enormous.

Frank Ellis
University of Leeds.

Sir

It is untrue that all the Republican leaders in ex-Yugoslavia were Communists. (Letters Summer 1996.) One of them quite clearly was not. Alija Izetbegovic had never been in the Party.

Far too many people believe the Vatican-German-American conspiracy theory. In fact, the break-up of Yugoslavia was the direct consequence of the Serbian government's decision to destroy the 1974 federal constitution and replace it with Greater Serbia. The drive for Greater Serbia was foreshadowed by the Serb Memorandum of 1986 prepared by the Academy of Sciences. It was acknowledged by Vojislav Seselj, Grand Duke of the Chetniks and at one time leader of Serbia's second largest party. Germany did not break with the international consensus on keeping Yugoslavia together until September 1991, that is, after the bombardment of Vukovar had already begun.

I do not regard Lord Carrington as much of a guide in these matters. *Genocide After Emotion*, edited by Stjepan Mestrovic (Routledge, 1996) accuses him of being a business partner of Slobodan Milosevic (p. 43). His plan for a general settlement of Yugoslavia was rejected by Milosevic on October 18th 1991, and by the end of that month, the Montenegrins had been bullied into rejecting it also.

Lord Carrington got nowhere. But for him to blame the Germans and not

the Serbs for the rejection of his settlement is proof of his masochism, bias and lack of logic.

Tom Carter
Somerton, Somerset.

Sir

With great interest I have read Mr Alexander Boot's article in *The Salisbury Review* (Summer 1996) about the alleged links between Christianity and socialist doctrine. Sadly, after reading the article my initial attention turned to irritation, as I came to the conclusion that Mr Boot's whole line of reasoning bears a strong resemblance to the old socialist propaganda that depicts Jesus Christ as a revolutionary. Unfortunately the author seems to be a victim of this evil deception. *Nihil novi!*

First of all, some general remarks. Jesus Christ was not only a Man but also God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only Son of the Almighty. Therefore it is pure nonsense to claim that: "Christ himself never planned to start a new religion..." He did not invent anything new, He revealed what already existed before all the ages. It has been always the sign of the most dangerous heresies to deny the fact that Jesus Christ was God. We Christians believe in Jesus Christ who is God-Man. It must be stressed that it is not sufficient to claim that He was Messiah; the Christian faith as it was expressed by Peter proclaims "Messiah, Son of the living God" (see Matthew 16, 16). Today we face the rebirth of the arian heresy on a world-wide scale — which is a real cause of the religious crisis — and to which Mr Boot seems to have fallen prey. Nowadays it is fashionable to draw comparisons between, say, Buddha, Mahomet, Confucius and Christ. The first three were all moral teachers, but only Christ was and is Saviour, Redeemer. It is not so much His moral teachings that count (in His time one could hear the same

words also from other rabbis) but His redemption on the cross of all mankind's sins and His glorious Resurrection. The latest varieties of this neo-arianism are so-called "liberation theology", and as mentioned by Mr Boot, the music-hall-styled presentation of Christ as "super-star". Typical for all the modernists and neo-arians is to "sell" the picture of Christ as a man who is not sure who He really is, what His mission on earth is to achieve, who is only a human being full of anxieties and uncertainties. Such is the main idea of the blasphemous "Last temptation of Christ" by Martin Scorsese. How easily all these neo-arians "forget" the passage from the Scripture (John 8, 55-57) where Jesus unequivocally says that He was before Abraham was born, that He was the eternal Word that created the world.

It seems that Mr Boot is on the neo-arians' side, not only in the essence but

also as far as the method of argumentation is concerned. The whole article is based on the idea of picking up passages from the Scripture at random and fitting them into a pre-conceived theory. The main mistake made by Mr Boot is to see the whole thing superficially. Of course, horse and table are very much alike, both have four legs, which does not mean that there does indeed exist a substantial resemblance between them!! In short, Mr Boot overlooks the substance and makes use of a biased selection of Scriptural passages to expose the links between socialism and Christianity.

Grzegorz Kucharczyk
Poland

Sir
It is always nice to be quoted, but I fear that in giving me this pleasure, Mr

Demetri Marchessini's memory has faltered.

Here is the actual anecdote, as published in *The Salisbury Review* of September 1992:

When Geoffrey Crowther, Editor of *The Economist*, interviewed me for a job in 1954, he told me that the paper's political stance was 'extreme centre'. I told him that I was an 'extreme anti-communist' but saw no contradiction between the two definitions. He agreed.

I went on to explain that by 'extreme centre' we both meant equally against the two rival extremes of Communism and Fascism. This point is not mentioned by Mr Marchessini, and the impression that emerges is that, perhaps, I am pro-Socialism. I know he is not and I am sure he knows I am not.

Brian Crozier
London

Recent publications of
The Institute for European Defence & Strategic Studies
now distributed by Claridge Press

Patricia Lança *The Good Apprentice Portugal and the European Union*
Robert Thomas *Serbia Still Europe's pariah?*
Ulster after the Ceasefire The report of an independent study group
Andrew Hubback *The Prophets of Doom The Security Threat of Religious Cults*
Daniel Hannan *Towards 1996 Britain in a Multi-Speed Europe*
Roger Scruton *World Studies Education or Indoctrination?*

Each at £5.00 including postage & packing, from Claridge Press, 33 Canonbury Park
South, London N1 2JW

Reviews

Education Through Hunger

Sara Moyse

Grass Soup, Minerva 1995, pb £6.99 and **My Bodhi Tree**, Secker & Warburg 1996, hb £12, Zhang Xianliang.

These two volumes by Zhang Xianliang are based on a diary he kept from 11 July 1960 - 20 December 1961 while in labour reform Camp. It is surprising that any record of these years, however brief, was allowed to survive as a personal memoir of the time. The author had to beg that this document not be destroyed at the time of his rehabilitation in 1979, along with the file on his imprisonment. The notes in the diary are written in the form of lists of daily events. He went in continual fear that if the diary were discovered something he had written might be construed as a criticism of the system.

The books are an expansion of the very brief entries in the diary. The diary forms an aide memoir (excerpts appear at the beginning of each chapter) on the one hand, and an insight on how the authors' thinking was constrained — at least on paper — to an acceptance of the system on the other. In the explanation and expansion of his diary he tries to explain the thinking behind the idea of reform by labour that affected so many people in China throughout the fifties and sixties and to intellectualise his survival and his thinking habits of the time. He marvels at his own ability to survive those years of starvation and examines instances of others who died because they failed to develop survival techniques in their thinking. He remembers other survivors, analyses their thinking and rationalises their ability to survive.

He is concerned with understanding the peculiarly Chinese psyche that created the labour camp which was so

very different from the Russian labour camps for political prisoners. The Chinese intellectuals mostly accepted their need to be reformed through labour. They believed with Mao that thinking had to change so as completely to undermine the old, Confucian society. What the author seems to be saying is that the thought reform practised in China could only work because all the intellectuals were so inculcated with Confucian ideals of obedience to authority. If there had been less subservience to the authority of leadership then the whole system of labour camps could never have existed. The author cites examples of events and characters to show the sort of thought processes that slowly destroyed the more educated prisoners who were prisoners more of their own consciences than of walls. As for guards, there were none. The author escaped at least twice from labour reform camp and returned voluntarily after experiences outside.

The author was more afraid of thinking wrong thoughts than of doing wrong deeds. When another prisoner told him his theory that Mao was deliberately trying to starve the whole population of China into submission, the author was less affected by the idea than the consequences it could have for him after he had listened to such heresy. He was consumed by the worry that he and his interlocutor could be executed if reported, and we don't hear his opinion on the thesis. He implies that the idea is mad, yet at the same time retells the story from Chinese folklore of hunger being the only true

way to achieve subjugation. Maybe Zhang would like to be allowed to believe that Mao had destroyed China's harvests to further his own supremacy?

These were the years of the Great Leap Forward, when Mao initiated disastrous agricultural policies that left the population starving. The estimates of how many people died from hunger in the years between 1958 and 1960 range between thirty and eighty million. These books give a valuable insight into the lives of ordinary people in China and the terror imposed on them by thought control.

Incessant hunger reduced people to food hunting organisms. At one level Zhang had hardly any thoughts at all apart from how to get food. The Grass Soup of the title was the staple diet. A watery mixture with bits of grass in it. Anything else had to be bartered for, bought, stolen, begged or obtained through contacts 'on the outside'. He paints a picture of man's humanity totally eroded by unbelievable hunger — thoughts of friends or relatives were associated only with their food-producing possibilities. No feelings remained over and above the inescapable hunger. The author remembers his letters to his mother as being a shopping list of needs, and how every moment, whether working or not, minds were engaged on a hunt for anything edible. He tells stories of what it is possible to eat, of an engineer eating toads (supposed to be poisonous); and of a suicide after eating food brought by a loved one.

My Bodhi Tree follows on from *Grass*

Soup. The major event at the end of *Grass Soup* is the suicide, and early sections of *My Bodhi Tree* refer back to this occasion. The author also deals with death more generally and the ways people died of hunger. Eventually he could recognise the symptoms of approaching death and went in fear of developing a lack of interest in food as he became convinced that obsession with food and continual hunger pains were the surest sign that he was still among the living.

Zhang Xianliang provides a fascinat-

ing insight into the period from a purely Chinese point of view. Strangely there is no direct criticism of the rulers. In fact it is clear that the prisoners believed that, had the rulers known of their plight, they would have done something about it. It was a long time before all of China recognised that food shortages affected the whole country. Even with hindsight the only person the author appears to criticise is himself. The tone of the books is that of a distant observer. There is no bitterness, though it obviously pains him to make this journey back to

the darkest days of his life.

Zhang spent twenty two years in prisons, labour camps and state farms for writings and poems considered politically incorrect — 'rightist'. These writings read like an expiation of the hardship and sorrow of so many lost years. Since rehabilitation in 1979 he has become an accepted author. He has given himself the task of revealing the truth of the labour reform camps and reminding a generation who may want to forget the horrors of the past.

Post-modern Musicology

Ivan Hewitt

Classical Music and Post-Modernist Knowledge, Lawrence Kramer, University of California Press, 1995, £27.

'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. There, in embryo, we have the post-modernist's cynical and evasive creed. Lawrence Kramer, to do him justice, does stay for an answer — but it's an answer that's bound to seem like jest, if you're used to thinking of truth as something indivisible, universally communicable, and therefore corrigible. Here it is:

[Postmodernism] 'treats claims to knowledge as always also political claims, inescapably affected by and affecting the knower's position in a cultural, social or psychological matrix. For postmodernism reason always serves interests other than truth and *by that means enables itself to serve truth, however imperfectly*'.

The italics are the author's own, but they aptly symbolise the reader's incredulity (well, this reader's at any rate). Truth now is justified, grounded even, in the fact that it belongs to someone, it springs from the world-view of a particular interest-group. One is bound to ask, at this

point, what interests Kramer's own pursuit of truth are serving. But Kramer has given himself a magic shield from this embarrassing question. He can reply that any particular interests he may defer to (for example, his own interest in displaying allegiance to the dominant trend in American academe) are neither here nor there. They are simply the means by which he approaches his *real* interest — namely, the pursuit of truth! By this neat piece of legerdemain Kramer manages to appear trendily postmodern and humanist all at once. But the transparent guile of the move must give one pause.

The next question must be — truth about what? The answer is, the canon of Western musical art-works, for which he has a passionate attachment. This book is a plea for their re-evaluation along post-modernist lines, which, he says, is urgently needed if classical music is not to die.

Now this might seem like another of Kramer's jests. The idea that classical

music, which thanks to the CD and TV commercials is horribly ubiquitous, might need *saving* by post-modernism, is comic. Kramer's other thesis, that classical music has been consistently presented in a false light, as 'pure form', divorced from the world of human meanings and ideology, is more convincing. By treating music in narrowly formalist terms, he argues, we miss the greater part of its significance. Post-modernist musicology aims to 'revivify classical music by demystifying and de-idealizing it; by cancelling the Faustian bargain that lifts the music beyond the contingencies, uncertainties and malfeasances of life at the cost of utter irrelevance.'

To do this Kramer needs to show that the formalists got it all wrong. What he and the other 'new musicologists' want to do is tease out the forces in music that shape the listener's social, sexual and cultural identity. They focus their gaze on those aspects of music the formalists were embarrassed by: its

sensuousness, its burgeoning erotic energy, its 'feminine' irrationality. Thus unmasked, the very works of music that once epitomised bourgeois order might be shown to have a subversive force. Even in a Beethoven quartet, whose severe 'masculine' logic is the perfect image of the unified self, the other lies in wait:

[The coda of Beethoven's quartet Op. 95] 'is an act of unmasterable feminisation. It revalues hysteria, not only as a force of affirmation, a means of getting outside the bounds of reason without breaking them, but also as a means of critique...'

To bolster this extravagant sounding claim, Kramer borrows some ammunition from the opposing camp. He draws attention to a detail of the music revealed by Joseph Kerman, namely, the presence, in this hysterical coda, of the same ascending chromatic figure that pervades the rest of the work. Masculine logic and feminine hysteria are thus intertwined. But where is the real site of this piquant conjunction? Is it genuinely there in Beethoven's coda, or is it more a case of projection, whereby a feature of Kramer's own text is imposed upon a hapless and unresisting piece of music? The parallels are after all very striking. Beethoven's motivic logic stands to his hysterical material exactly as Kerman's sober analysis stands to Kramer's — to call it *hysterical* speculation would be an overstatement. Here, as elsewhere, Kramer's interpretation seems freewheeling, and magically unencumbered by gravity.

The sense of speculation floating free of the notes that provoked it is a constant feature of the book. The process happens in three stages; first Kramer directs us to some detail of a particular piece. He then gives this detail a picturesque interpretation; for example, the *maestoso* section at the end of Mendelssohn's overture *A Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* Kramer says holds 'a connotation... of mercantile adventure, the modern (that is, capitalist) heroism of voyaging for wealth'. But notice how Kramer has already slipped from modest and uncontentious description (mercantile adventure) to a very large and highly contentious

political interpretation. Why should a flavour of mercantile adventure signify a specifically modern form of capitalist enterprise? Why could Mendelssohn not have had Phoenician merchants in mind? But this is only the beginning; now for stage three:

The suggestion is heightened by the deliberate archaism of the epilogue, the atmosphere of which is more suggestive of a Renaissance City-State (easy to idealise) than of a nineteenth-century harbour (impossible to idealise). By appropriating both the heroic-mythic and the heroic-mercantile, and appropriating them with willed naivety, Mendelssohn offers the listener a chance to celebrate the historical power of Enlightenment-style bourgeois idealism...

Kramer has now deftly substituted the metaphor for the notes, upon which he now performs a kind of interpretative pirouette. (An ironic result, this, given that Kramer in his first chapter refers to 'the adjectival, metaphorical style that post-modernism is supposed to eschew'.) He covers his tracks by glancing back to the music, but by now Kramer's view is so thoroughly fogged by his own metaphor that he can't see it. Unless one's own view is similarly fogged, his interpretation of the music is bound to seem fantastical; I certainly can't hear any 'deliberate archaism' in this epilogue. I suppose what Kramer has in mind are the D major trumpet arpeggios, but to me these are no more archaic-sounding than the very similar trumpet fanfares heard at the beginning of the famous wedding-march.

It's significant that Kramer devotes his efforts to music that is in some way or other marginal. None of it is absolutely on the fringes; Kramer doesn't try to defend the citadel of classical music by guarding only the border posts. There are no Balkan symphonies or Mexican tone-poems. Kramer's preferred territory is the debatable ('contestable' as he would say) area between the canon and the fringe. This means on the one hand, marginal or deviant moments by indisputably central figures — such as the coda to Beethoven's Opus 95 — and on the other, major, central works by figures who have a plausible, but disputed claim to centrality. Among the latter group are Mendelssohn and Ives, to

whom Kramer devotes thought-provoking chapters. On Ives he is especially good. He convincingly undermines the received opinion of Ives as a thorough-going radical, showing how a nostalgically conservative agenda underlies much of his music. This is expressed by a movement in Ives's music from an initial near-anarchy, in which many different kinds of music happen simultaneously, to an affirmation, at the close, of order. For example, the Finale of the Second Orchestral Set ends with the triumph of a hymn-tune, which 'wishfully encodes the triumph of old-time, rural, Protestant America over the irreducible diversity of modern urban life.' This seems convincing; but is it an accident that Kramer performs his most convincing interpretations on the most marginal composer in the book?

Added to which is another very large question. Does our response to this encoded message determine our judgement about the music as music? If we disapprove of Ives's social programme as embodied in the music, should we stop listening? Kramer is honest enough to admit his own uncertainty on this point. He says 'the transcendental rhetoric of Ives's hierarchical finales is arguably compelling in its meditative dignity.' But how could it be continue to be compelling, once the ideological programme has been unmasked? Could it be that — just as the old-style formalists used to insist — something in music resists (I used that word deliberately in place of 'transcends') whatever meaning and ideology we find in it?

Kramer would say a firm 'no' to this. There is no essential core of music, forever out of reach and undefined; just an endless series of partial perspective, partial interpretations, entertained by different 'interests.' The trouble is Kramer wants it both ways. He says that this body of music is 'invaluable', and he wants to find good reasons to back up that assertion. But at the same time he espouses a creed which is the philosophical equivalent of *aqua regia* — it dissolves every claim to permanent value. Once the notion of truth-value is allowed to slide away, the idea of respect for evidence is bound to follow the same

away. This is why one is struck, over and over again, by the sense that the music is never allowed to resist the interpretation thrust upon it. The result is that, although the readings he gives of these pieces are often suggestive and interesting, they don't engage us at any deep

level. It's unfortunate, because Kramer's heart is in the right place, and he brings a formidably wide range of reference to bear on his material. He has many shrewd and — odd though this word might seem in this context — humane things to say about this body of music, which he

clearly loves. But in the end, Kramer traduces the very thing he wants to rescue. He has tried to make classical music a fit object for post-modern knowledge; but he has succeeded only in making it a plaything, an unresisting body on which any fantasy may be draped.

Party Tricks

Angela Ellis Jones

We, the Nation. The Conservative Party and the Pursuit of Power, A J Davies: Little, Brown. £20.
The Crisis of Conservatism. The politics, economics and ideology of the British Conservative Party 1880-1914, E H H Green: Routledge h/b £50; p/b £16.99.

As the contemporary Conservative Party blunders from calamity to crisis under the most crassly incompetent (and unConservative — the two are not unconnected) leadership in its history, True Blues might like to divert themselves with these books. Although neither author is a Conservative, each takes the Party seriously, and makes a useful contribution to filling a gap both recognise: the history of the Conservative Party has attracted far less academic interest than that of its rivals. *We, the Nation* asks; how has the Conservative Party managed to form governments for two-thirds of the years of the present century? *The Crisis of Conservatism* covers a shorter period (1880-1914), and seeks to explain how the Party attempted to meet the challenges of modern democratic society.

The extension of the franchise to the working classes in 1867 and 1884 posed a serious problem for the Conservative Party, identified as it had been with the landed aristocracy. What combination of policies was it to come up with to attract the support of new voters without betraying the old? Once it was decided that social reform was an imperative, how was it to be paid for?

These issues came to a head in the

late Victorian and Edwardian years. The solution advocated by many influential voices in the Party was tariff reform. In retrospect tariff reform, with its implication of dearer food, can be seen as electorally suicidal, largely to blame for the Liberal landslide of 1906, and subsequent Conservative electoral defeats in 1910. In *The Crisis of Conservatism* Ewan Green, a Fellow of Magdalen College Oxford, shows how tariff reform was a perfectly coherent solution to the problem faced by the Right in those years.

The main advocate of tariff reform was Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary 1895-1903, for whom it was inextricably connected with Greater Britain, the Empire. The aim of the tariff reformers was to create nothing less than a worldwide Imperial Federation, in which the dominions would be of equal status to the motherland. Each would have preferential access to the markets of the others, while a tariff would be raised against the imports of non-Empire countries. This would have broken with decades of free trade, the system which, many believed, had made Britain Great. The reformers argued that free-trade Britain was putting herself at a disadvantage to

almost all her competitors, who imposed tariffs to protect their nascent industries.

Money levied from tariffs would pay for the measures of social reform that both Liberals and Conservatives recognised to be necessary. While the Liberal/Socialist solution was socially divisive — make the wealthy pay — the Conservative solution was socially integrative — make the foreigner pay. The conflicts of interest between labour and capital that were becoming increasingly apparent could be resolved in this 'economics of political integration': all producers, whether capitalists or workers, would have an identity of interest in being part of a great imperial trading block, which would protect jobs and put the interests of all the peoples of the Empire above those of the foreigner.

Although the work is focused on tariff reform, Green also considers other components in the crisis such as land reform, and reform of the House of Lords, to provide what is the most complete treatment to date of late Victorian and Edwardian Conservatism. The book, which derives from a doctoral thesis, shows overall a very high standard of scholarship, in the context

of which the information that Gerald Balfour, brother of Arthur, was Lord Salisbury's son-in-law, comes as a surprise. My only substantial criticism of the work is that the author could have done more to quantify the projected financial benefits of tariff reform; contemporary sources provide much information, and could have been used more heavily. It is unfortunate that the high hardback price of this work will have deterred many readers; it is to be hoped that the book's reissue in paperback will give it the wider readership it deserves.

We, the Nation, written by a former Librarian of the Marx Memorial Library, is a far more accessible work, which at first sight appears to lack footnotes, although amplifications of points made in the text are to be found at the back of the book. It contains a lot of interesting information on various aspects of the Party over the past hundred years or so which illuminate the subtitle *The Conservative Party and the Pursuit of Power*. What I found most interesting was the treatment of what Davies calls the 'hidden history of the Conservative party' — i.e. the activity of the dirty tricks department, to which he credits much of the Party's successful hold on power during the century.

If Central Office had had its way, Churchill might never have led the country during its darkest and finest

hour. During 1938, Central Office, tired of Churchill's anti-appeasement stance, staffed branches of his Epping constituency with hostile Party members who then brought a motion of no confidence in their MP, which Churchill narrowly survived. It was only the outbreak of war that foiled further attempts to deselect him. The pursuit of power involved money, the sources of which have always been one of the Party's biggest secrets. Some interesting sources of Party funding are revealed for the first time; for example, the Party sought to raise money from the beleaguered Indian rajas who hoped to enlist British power to defeat the growth of local nationalism.

This shadow side of the Party, and its much-vaunted lack of a coherent philosophy the author sees as an inevitable result of the fact that the Party is about little more than the pursuit of power. But if the Party has been outstandingly successful in the twentieth century, might it have had its day? Davies sees many warning bells: the growing fractiousness within the Parliamentary Party; the decline of the Party as a mass organisation; financial problems; increasing inability to halt economic decline; problems of dealing with social 'inequality'. Yet all of these issues are problematic for other parties. More worrying is the decline of public confidence in many British institutions which traditionally buttressed

the Party, and the massive haemorrhage of support of true Conservatives nauseated by the socialism by stealth that has been the hallmark of the 'classless society' Major regime. But above all, there is the problem of Europe. British Conservatism was founded upon a particular conception of English national consciousness; as the nation-state dissolves, where will this leave the Conservative Party?

Although it makes for an interesting read, the work, like all too many books published these days, could have benefitted from better editing. It contains several errors. Most egregiously, one wonders how thoroughly an author who can state that 'The pages of the *Salisbury Review* are virtually a woman-free zone' has done his research!

Nevertheless, the central thesis, that the Conservative Party is essentially about the pursuit of power, rather than attachment to principle, must stand. The events of the past five years alone would make that abundantly clear. But however shamefully the Conservative Party has behaved and continues to behave, readers of this *Review* should take comfort in the fact that there is nevertheless a sound core of Conservative principles, based on attachment to family, private property, and country. At the next election we shall have to decide which party, if any, now best embodies these principles.

'The Entertainer'

David Edelsten

Mr Jorrocks's Thoughts on Hunting and Other Matters, Robert Smith Surtees: R S Surtees Society, £18.60.

"Anne and her father chancing to be alone together, he began to compliment her on her improved looks....'Had she been using anything in particular?... 'Merely Gowland,' he supposed. 'Mrs Clay has been using it

at my recommendation...you see how it has carried away her freckles.'" This deft touch — from *Persuasion* of course — which so cleverly reinforces in a few words, and in almost countless ways, the characterisation of the inef-

fable Sir Walter Elliot, and in particular his ignorance of his younger daughter's weal, is at once typical and atypical Austen. I can recall only one other specific practical reference of the sort, to Daffy's Elixir I think, in the whole

of the mature oeuvre. But it is both typical of Surtees, and a delight, that he introduces us to 'the proprietor of Gowland's Lotion', amongst doubtful bachelor company, at 'a conversazione in a first floor (furnished) in Bidborough Street'. If I may, in a single paragraph, risk a second wild generalization albeit a safer one, I doubt that there is any other reference to Gowland in the civilized Englishman's canon (I can at least adjust the canon to suit, if challenged).

This touching-point of two, so different, circles, illuminates as well as pleases. We read Surtees, at least partly, for his detail, just as we might lose ourselves in a genre painting—"Waistcoat buttons were just so, how interesting!"—or we do not read him at all. His is the sort of social history that anyone who enjoys imagining life as it was, fitting themselves into the picture, wearing the clothes, handling the use-eroded artefacts of then daily life, appreciates.

The title-page of this anthology of Surtees' journalism repays study. It reads

'Thoughts on Hunting and Other Matters by John Smith Surtees and John Jorrocks'—perhaps Jorrocks' thoughts on hunting sold the original works (this is a reprint of a book originally published in 1925), but it is Surtees on 'other matters' that is most likely to appeal to-day. The reader is with Surtees, mostly on the road, at inns, in coaches, racing in Paris, and on a hunting tour in Cheshire, all *in propria persona*, all with engaging reportage. How pleased the author would be to hear a modern reader frequently burst out laughing, as one does at his inventive humour—"I'd sooner be a butcher's daughter's pet lamb than your 'orse", Sir Rasper Smashgate, Colonel Codshead, 'gammonacious', and so on. Not all the humour works: JJ's 'poems', or 'hodes', are worthy of Punch at its worst, but there are not many of them, and surely only a reviewer has to read every single word between the covers of a book?

My favourite piece is called 'London Locomotion: or, the Cab Stand'. The author muses, as ever unsentimentally, about recent changes in modes of pub-

lic transport, and then describes a cab stand that is beneath his window. He details in a way that only he could get away with, the appearance of its six waiting cabmen, not any two of whom 'are dressed in the slightest degree alike'. Here is one who 'looks like a man that has been raked out of an ash heap. His once drab hat is brown and greasy, his dirty half-buttonless witney coat looks as if every species of infection lurked in its woolly surface; he wears no waistcoat, but shows a dirty broad-blue striped sailor's shirt, and his nether man...', well, perhaps we won't follow Surtees below the belt in this antidote to the Christmas card; although you may safely follow him anywhere, knowing that you will be amused, accurately informed, but not disgusted. He is the very best of companions, observant, reticent, well bred, and entertaining.

Clearly printed, bound to blend with if not to match the old red morocco sets of the novels, and delightfully illustrated by G D Armour, this is a book that you will enjoy, and be glad to own.

Can we learn from America's Race Problems?

Ray Honeyford

The End of Racism: Principles for a Multi-Racial Society, Dinesh D'Souza. The Free Press, New York, 1995, \$30

Is this country capable of learning from another nation's failure? Dinesh D'Souza has produced a devastating and well argued critique of America's racial policies and insists, as many in this country have done, that the validity of policies and practices can only be understood by a critical examination of the principles on which they are based. By subjecting basic concepts to exposition and rational analysis we can link

intentions with outcomes. If policies fail, if practices lose support, are the intellectual and moral foundations on which they are based made of quicksand?

The principles on which America's race policies have been based since the Civil Rights Act, 1964, have created a society wracked by racial resentments and conflict. The great principle of colour-blind status based on competi-

tion and individual merit, a principle espoused by Martin Luther King, has been progressively abandoned and replaced by the alien concepts of racial proportional representation, and the educational doctrine of multiculturalism.

Paradoxically, those who have borne the greatest burden from this conceptual distortion are the black people it was supposed to benefit. What has happened

in the ghettos is nothing less than the collapse of civilization itself. Marriage and the normal family have almost disappeared, drug addiction, alcoholism and prostitution are standard features of everyday life, murder and rape are common. Drugs and crime kill more blacks in a single year than have all the lynchings in US history. The liberal philosophy which has been eagerly embraced by the army of racial zealots has, via judicial activism, effectively destroyed the life chances of millions. Liberalism has sought relentlessly to replace merit by positive action, quota systems and lowered standards of admission for blacks in universities. Liberalism has created welfare dependency which generates, not constructive self-help, but despair and criminality.

Unfortunately, we too are well down the American road. We have a powerful race relations lobby, a centralised racial bureaucracy with formidable legal and administrative powers, and a race relations act which undermines some of our greatest liberties. We have all the same interferences in education, employment, housing and welfare one sees in America. The CRE has imposed ethnic monitoring, and other codes of practice which are transgressed at one's peril. Recently it has proposed that the American doctrines of disparate impact and historic disadvantage should be incorporated into British law.

We too, are creating a black underclass in the inner cities. While our Afro-Caribbeans are not in so calamitous a position as their American counterparts, there are signs of the same sort of despair and social pathol-

ogy, particularly among the young.

They too, are not fulfilling their educational potential, lagging behind other minority groups in acquiring vocational skills and becoming involved in crime and far more likely than others to finish up in prison. Just like their American counterparts, some young black males in this country tend to prove their manhood by impregnating as many women as possible and then abandoning them and their children.

Dinesh D'Souza makes some compelling remarks about immigration and multi-culturalism and points out that every country not only has a right but a duty to defend its own borders. If elected governments are not doing that, then they are betraying one of the fundamental roles of the state. At a time when huge movements of population are increasingly evident, the necessity for strict but fair immigration control has never been more urgent. Yet we are publicly financing powerful bodies such as the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit whose stated intention is to see the abolition of all immigration controls. This sort of madness has caused despair among thoughtful Americans; a similar situation is developing here.

D'Souza argues that, while incomers can enrich a country's cultural life, there is a limit to diversity. No coherent society can permit more than a limited number of non-indigenous cultures to flourish within its boundaries. Otherwise the forces holding society together are violated, the majority become threatened and social conflict becomes inevitable. A clear instance of cultural tension is the conflict be-

tween Islam and traditional British culture. No serious Muslim can accept the crucial Western distinction between church and state, the sacred and the secular. The Rushdie fatwa, the so-called Muslim parliament, Muslim riots in Bradford in June this year and the action of 1500 Muslim parents in Kirklees who refuse to allow their children to be exposed to Christianity indicate that we should challenge the multi-culturalists and their philosophy.

D'Souza declares that state interference in race relations does more harm than good. His prescription for success is nothing less than the abolition of all anti-discrimination law at the private level. At the public level rules of open competition and success determined by merit must be reinstated, the philosophy of the original civil rights pioneers.

This book is an important addition to the debate about racial affairs now raging in the States. It is part of a developing literature to which Thomas Sowell, Walter William and Richard Epstein have contributed. There is no similar debate or literature in this country. The whole culture of race relations in this country is in the hands of assorted lobbyists, zealots and state-funded professionals. There is little or no public awareness of what is happening. In the course of giving hundreds of talks and lectures on race relations, I have met just one person who has read the Race Relations Act, 1976. It is time we looked across the Atlantic and learnt the lessons the American experience could teach us.

Well, Who Does Govern Britain?

Helen Szamuely

Saturn's Children, Alan Duncan and Dominic Hobson, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995, £20

Accountable to None, Simon Jenkins, Hamish Hamilton, 1995, £16.99.

Anyone who remains doubtful about the achievements of the Thatcher government should look at page 23 of

Simon Jenkins' *Accountable to None*: "In 1979 many of the great industries of Britain were still in the govern-

ment's hands: cars, shipbuilding, aeroplanes, coal, steel, telecommunications, gas, electricity, trains, airlines,

ports, airports. The government had a stake in the oil business, in banking, hotels, shipping and road haulage." When one adds education, health care and public housing, one can see that to all intents and purposes Britain was a socialist country by twentieth-century definition. By 1991 much had changed, at least in the economic sphere: "When Thatcher left office the ownership of roughly half of this output had been transferred to private shareholders. Six hundred and fifty thousand workers had left the state's employ, 90 per cent of them holding shares in their own companies. In addition, one and a quarter million council tenants had become home-owners." But what neither Thatcher nor, surprisingly, her mentors like Sir Keith Joseph seem to have taken into account was that socialism is not simply an economic system; it is, above all, an ideology, a state of mind, which has changed very little. The great bogey for a number of commentators on the right as well as the left remains the free market, though how our over-taxed, over-regulated economy with 48% of GDP going into public spending can be called free, entrepreneurial or even, at times, capitalist, remains a mystery.

Somehow the British public has accepted that the state can and should provide solutions to various problems that can be solved only by individuals or groups of individuals. The free market, a morally neutral concept, is blamed for moral, social and ethical problems, and private property is frowned upon in a positively Marxist fashion by people who would be horrified to be called socialists. Even moralists on the right, clucking over the disintegration of society, can think of no better remedy than to increase some kind of authority, often suggesting that part of the disintegration can be traced to the privatization of utilities. Why public ownership, another name for the control of economic life by civil servants and, perhaps, politicians, should in any way be conducive to morality remains unexplained. Given the power civil servants, environmental health officers and other employees of quangos have over people's property, given that they can march into

anybody's home or business without a warrant, confiscate documentation or, say, measuring instruments and close a business down on a whim, the various social problems ought not to have arisen. It says something about the level of the debate that a highly respected Oxford don can tut-tut over privatization in a *TLS* review by saying that "it is as if it did not matter who controlled British Rail as long as the trains ran on time." To which one can only reply: what else is British Rail for? The parallel with Mussolini's state is spurious and misleading.

Yet, one cannot deny that something is rotten in the state of Britain and both these books try to address the problem or problems. Simon Jenkins, as befits the great and the good, laments the break-down of public service, though he does not openly criticize privatization, merely (with some justification) the way it was carried out, and of something called "local democracy". As readers of his magisterial articles will know, Mr Jenkins is very keen on "local democracy". He is even campaigning for a single authority for London. There is no real evidence that London needs one. Neither the LCC nor the GLC did much for the people of London. Much of their activity consisted of political shenanigans of the kind Westminster City Council is being castigated for and interfering in people's lives in the name of some form of public order they had defined. Mr Jenkins admits that turn-out for local elections in Britain is notoriously low but fails to draw the obvious conclusion: whether because of the Heath-Walker reforms or for some other more deep-seated reason, local government finds no particular support among the people of this country. That is why the Thatcher reforms were actually quite popular. She seemed to be restoring power to the people, away from the bloated bureaucracies of the Town Hall. The law of unintended consequences that says bureaucrats will always hang on to power ensured that democratic reforms turned into yet more centralization.

Alan Duncan and Dominic Hobson try to go beyond the problems Simon Jenkins grapples with in such detail.

For them the slide into tyranny began just before the First World War, accelerated during the two wars and reached rock bottom in the post-war consensus politics, particularly in the Heath-Wilson era. The problem is the state and its gradual corruption of public life. The state, through taxation, economic control, grants to favoured groups and regulations, has slowly destroyed people's financial independence, social links and moral stature. To back this theory the authors fill *Saturn's Children* with hard to assimilate data. The reader can feel nothing but sorrow at the slowly unfolding tale of destroyed freedom and virtue, both moral and social. Independent professionals have become wage earners, friendly societies have been superseded and destroyed by state welfare, families have been undermined by taxation and the power given to social workers, charities are more interested in huge grants from the state or its subsidiary, the lottery, instead of private donors and so on. The picture is bleak.

So, what is to be done? Neither book provides a satisfactory answer, since the authors know that power once taken, is rarely handed back, and never peacefully. A revolution? It may yet come to that, though one hopes not. Simon Jenkins would like to see a revival of local government and various other forms of public service. Duncan and Hobson go much further. They would like to see a great deal more power given back to individuals. They would want to reduce taxation, revive friendly societies, free business from destructive regulation, take education away from the state and legalize drugs. Their various prescriptions might or might not work but at least they recognize a crucial fact: moral order can be achieved only by individuals acting according to their moral precepts which they choose freely. "Public service" so loved by the great and the good will produce more constraint, more busybody interference and a considerably less moral climate. Would that matter to the likes of Mr Jenkins? Possibly not. One gets the feeling that he thinks the great and the good should decide what is right for us all. The spirit of the seventies is with us yet.

In Short

The Good Apprentice: Portugal and the European Union, Patricia Lança. I.E.D.S.S. £5 inc p&p available from Claridge Press, 33, Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JW.

"Your role is to be the beggars of Europe". Thus did Herr Kohl address some Portuguese politicians. In the European debate insufficient attention has been given to the effects of integration on our partners in the EU. This study provides an authoritative survey of Portugal's progress as well as providing shrewd and detailed insights into its history, politics and economic life.

There is an almost sacred belief that EU membership safeguards Portugal, Spain and Greece for democracy. In Portugal's case this is absurd, for the Portuguese people themselves removed the threat of their country becoming Europe's Cuba. The benefits of EU membership cannot be denied — new roads, dams, and other public works are impressive. However, the revolutionary period established state control over banks and large industries and this unhealthy development has been reinforced by Euro-regulations resulting in a bloated public sector. The massive inflow of EU money has exacerbated a native tendency to corruption and caused unnecessary modernization like the destruction of historic central Lisbon. Small businesses have collapsed and agriculture has suffered with people moving into the towns where job prospects have diminished. Many multi-nationals now operate from Madrid because of the inefficient bureaucracy, thus making Portugal a region of greater Iberia.

During Cavaco Silva's authoritarian premiership these problems were not addressed and public debate was not allowed. The new popular Party (PP) received a respectable vote on an anti-federal platform last year and the author hopes that eventually this party will displace the PSD as a genuine

conservative alternative to the present Socialist government.

MC

The Blind pragmatism of Slovak Eastern Policy: Alexander Duleba, Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Staromestka 6, 811 03 Bratislava.

The Slovak Foreign Policy Association was established to provide a forum for the exchange of information on international issues, a useful function in view of the increasingly non-democratic nature of Meciar's premiership. (v SR June 1996.)

"Slovakia created a model of relations with Russia" said Meciar. This study demonstrates the exact opposite. The political and military agreement signed with Russia in 1993, not long after the declaration of Slovakian independence, is in conflict with Slovakia's declared goal to join the EU and NATO — the author calls it diplomatic schizophrenia. The Czechs, in contrast, in their treaty with Russia in 1992 were successful in neutralising Russian objections to Czech integration into Nato. Slovakia wants to decrease its dependence on Russia in gas and crude and oil supplies but, because of an agreement signed in 1995, Slovakia is committed to getting all its nuclear fuels from Russia during the life of the Slovak nuclear power plants. Reliance on Russian energy sources will therefore be total.

The author insists that methods must be found to overcome Slovakian dependence on Russia. The country must also excise the illusion that it acts as a bridge between the East and West. Trade nowadays does not depend on location. Big companies conduct business directly regardless of geography. He is equally critical of the resurgence of pan-slavist sentiment which could bedevil the establishment of normal

relations with Russia. Much more attention must be paid to the Ukraine. Favouring Russia could bring problems in future Slovakian-Ukrainian relations, particularly in the transit of Russian gas and crude oil.

MC

Guns and Violence: the Debate before Lord Cullen. R A I Munday and J A Stevenson, editors, Piedmont Publishing Ltd, Seychelles House, Brightlingsea, Essex

This sane and scholarly discussion of how the availability of firearms bears upon public safety has already been overtaken by the government's promise to bring in the kind of 'knee-jerk' grand-standing legislation which, as one of the editors points out, 'in due course discredits the law'. This book consists primarily of the submissions by the editors of the quarterly *Handgunner* to Lord Cullen's enquiry into the Dunblane massacre; also printed is the 'evidence' submitted by the Home and Scottish Offices and by the Labour Party. Though the law will presumably have been changed by the time this notice appears, reality will not have been and Munday and Stevenson's book will remain a valuable documentation of the evasions and ignorance of the Home Office, which have contributed so notably to the state of siege in which Britain's law-abiding citizens now live.

Between 1989 and 1996 the number of firearms certificate holders in this country fell by a fifth and the number of crimes involving firearms increased fivefold. No one who reads this book will look forward with confidence to the massive reduction in the number of firearms certificate holders likely to ensue from this year's new regulations.

ADH

The Claridge Press

New Titles:

***C.S. Lewis* Philip Vander Elst**
***Heidegger* David E. Cooper**

Thinkers of Our Time Series:

***Oakeshott* Robert Grant**
***Polanyi* Richard Allen**
***Carl Schmitt* Paul Gottfried**
***Chesterton* Ian Crowther**
***Scheler* Francis Dunlop**
***Santayana* Noël O'Sullivan**

Peter Fuller Memorial Lecture Series:

***Landscape into Sound* David Matthews**
***Subject Matter and Abstraction — in Exile* Robert Natkin**
***Seeing With the Ear* Howard Jacobson**

Other Titles include:

***The KGB Lawsuits* Brian Crozier**
***Understanding Youth* David Marsland**
***The Measure of Man* David J Levy**
***Some to Mecca Turn to Pray* Mervyn Hiskett**
***The Falsification of the Good* Alain Besançon**

Obtainable through your local bookseller, or direct from:
The Claridge Press, 33 Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JW
Tel: 0171 226 7791 Fax: 0171 354 0383

Claridge books are obtainable (retail) in North America from Crisis Magazine, 1511 K St NW, Suite 525,
Washington D.C., 20005. Tel 202-347-7411, Fax 202-347-1128