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The Salisbury Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, 1830 -1903

20 YEARS
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Ian Fleming

Friendship

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Roger Scruton

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STATEMENT

THE FOLLOWING APPEARED IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE SALISBURY REVIEW IN SEPTEMBER 1982.

In 1943, at a time when the real threat to the conservative position was only obscurely perceived, the MP for Cambridge University, Sir Kenneth Pickthorn, wrote:

Conservatives are not bound to believe, and they are less likely than others to believe, that every human value can be analysed and that every tenable conviction can be stated in terms of mathematical or verbal logic. But they will be beaten at their opponent's game, and at their own as well, if they do not feel it a duty to get their human values classified as precisely as they can and to give their principles and assumptions all the clarity that may be obtainable. (Sir Kenneth Pickthorn, 'Principles and Prejudices')

It was in recognition of this need for articulate doctrine that the Salisbury Group was founded in 1976, taking its name from the great Prime Minister. The Group has served as a forum for discussion; it has no official ties with the Conservative Party and no specific purpose other than that of giving voice to conservative instincts. Its members are, however, united in the view that there is more to conservatism than economic policy, and that the abiding conservative vision can be given expression in a language suited to our changed and changing world. *The Salisbury Review* is sponsored by the Salisbury Group, but its editors are autonomous, and neither their views nor any other views expressed in its pages should be taken as examples of group opinion. On the contrary, we hope to demonstrate that conservative opinion is varied, fertile and catholic, while exemplifying a unity that socialism has neither achieved without contumely, nor retained without schism.

It is sometimes argued that conservatism is either too vague to be a genuine creed, or too specific to be recommended outside the tradition of British 'Toryism'. However we should remember that the classical elucidation of the Tory position was conducted by Burke, an Irishman and a parliamentary Whig, in response to events beyond our frontiers. Burke was as eager to condemn the heavy-handed uprooting of traditional Indian society by Warren Hastings as to warn against those Enlightenment ideas that had galvanised the French Revolutionaries. Conservatism is not, as such, an international doctrine; it draws, indeed, on attachments that are essentially local and historically determined. Nevertheless, a version of conservatism exists wherever those attachments flourish. Even if it is true that the consciousness of nationhood is the highest form of political consciousness, that is itself a general truth about the human condition, as capable of elucidation in the languages and preconceptions of foreign peoples as in the symbols of English Tory politics. We hope to illustrate that the need for conservative doctrine is as widespread as the civilisation from which it arises, and that the ideas and images of conservatism can be made available in as many ways as there are forms of social existence through which to encounter them.

We hope to carry articles in future issues, devoted to matters such as race, sexuality, death and religion, which, while deeply implicated in the conservative vision of society, are passed over in the prevailing liberal philosophies of the state. It is in the nature of conservatism that politics is not the only matter for discussion. Like classical socialism it maintains an outlook on all those aspects of culture and society that have been thrown into the crucible of change. The fire beneath that crucible is civilisation itself. It is our desire not that it be extinguished, but that it be maintained at the right temperature.

The Salisbury Review

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Most small circulation magazines disappear after half a dozen issues: this month it is exactly twenty years since the publication of the first number of *The Salisbury Review*. The regularity of the magazine's appearance since September 1982 has been the result of the dedication of a very small group of people. Several of the contributors from the early days are still with us – Roger Scruton, Ian Crowther, Robert Grant, Dennis O'Keeffe, David Levy – as are many of our original subscribers: the loyalty of subscribers has of course contributed as much to our survival as the commitment of our contributors. And we have done much more than merely persist and survive – we have, for example, increased our circulation. Whether we have sustained our original impact on public awareness is another matter. In the 1980s *The Salisbury Review*, together with the antics of the Labour Party under Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock, helped give the lie to the old canard that 'the Conservatives are the stupid party', and for that reason we were attacked bitterly in the media. Seen from the vantage point of the deep trench which Iain Duncan Smith and his associates have been digging, it is remarkable how much of the energy and conviction of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Government in the 1980's seems to have derived from one woman, and the attacks on *The Salisbury Review* may be seen in part as arising from a grudging recognition that we represented, in the hinterland beyond Whitehall and Westminster, a separate and independent Toryism that had an autonomous dynamic of its own and a tradition behind it that was larger and older than Thatcherism. Today things are much quieter. The political enervation that is part cause, part effect, of having a man like Tony Blair at No 10 affects all areas of public life, even those quarters that are in opposition to the rest. It is difficult to have a controversy on one's own.

When the present moment is so ideologically bland and intellectually limp, a journal like ours can only look forward and backward. Looking backward, the most solid achievement of *The Salisbury Review* is perhaps the help it gave to encouraging democratic energies in

Eastern Europe in the last dark moments before the dawning of the post-Soviet era: Roger Scruton recalls these times in his piece *In Search of Central Europe*. Brian Crozier is surely justified in reminding us that things have changed since then for the better, but as Vladimir Bukovsky points out in his comparison of the European Union with the old Soviet Union, change may mean simply the transformation of the form of threat rather than the elimination of threat. At home, as Alfred Sherman warns us, *The Salisbury Review* has been essentially 'a voice crying in the wilderness'. At the intellectual level we have tried to maintain some sort of debate, and continue to do so, as in the articles in this issue on Froude and Oakeshott – the latter, incidentally a subscriber to the Review up until his death in 1990 – but at the level of practical politics too much has moved in the opposite direction to the one in which *The Salisbury Review* has been pushing. In his article 'Losing the Peace?' Richard English does not go so far as to say that the settlement – or armed truce? – in Northern Ireland has been a sell-out but it is increasingly evident that it is not just a minority of Ulster Protestants who are beginning to see it in those terms. The European Project has advanced in leaps and bounds, and underlying Peter Goodchild's discussion of what might be done to resist the Euro is the question of whether organized Conservatism's leaders will get their act together sufficiently to make any realistic resistance. Aidan Rankin's piece on 'Anti-Fascism' reminds us not merely of the totalitarianism that is at the root of 'political correctness' but also of how resilient it is, in the face of repeated exposures of its hypocritical opportunism and intellectual nullity, in sustaining itself as perhaps *the* political philosophy of the Blair era.

As for looking forward... All the editors of *The Salisbury Review* can say, is, whatever happens during the coming twenty years, we mean to continue to provide a platform and a forum for conservatives with something to say.

James Bond's Day out at Dieppe

Ian Fleming

Ian Fleming (1908-1964), the creator of 'James Bond' served in Naval Intelligence during the Second World War. During the summer of 1942 he was involved in setting up a special unit to accompany forward troops in action in order to seize and secure enemy documents, secret equipment, cyphers etc., and when this unit was given its baptism of fire in the Dieppe Raid of 19 August 1942 Fleming was permitted to go along as an observer, though with strict orders not to go on shore with the seven Canadian battalions and three British commando units that made up the attacking force. On his return to London, he wrote up his experiences, in classic James Bond style, for the confidential weekly bulletin issued by Naval Intelligence. A few short excerpts from his account are given in Andrew Lycett's biography Ian Fleming (1995), pp 139-141, but the full text is published here for the first time.

(Public Record Office ADM 223/155 – see also DEFE 2/333 for his letter to Wing Commander the Marquis of Casa Maury)

NEWHAVEN-DIEPPE, BY 'SPECIAL BRANCH'

The following are the unofficial notes of one spectator of the Dieppe raid. Times are only approximate and details have not been checked from official records.

We passed through the gate at about 1815 on 18th August and proceeded to Newhaven. On the way out of harbour the *Hunt* played her battle cry on the loud-speaker, and the brave sound of the fanfare echoed across to the troops embarking in special assault craft at the jetties.

The wardroom had to accommodate a large number of visitors who were taking part for one purpose or another. Among them was an American General and a Colonel of the United States Marine Corps, both with that appearance of weather-beaten scepticism that the best United States Army officers have. They had come to watch the behavior of the small detachment of 'Rangers' which had been training in England with the Commandos, and were to take part in the Operation. (Among these 'Rangers' there is said to be an authentic Red Indian called 'Oneskunk,' who is expert in the art of scalping, but uncommunicative on the subject. He is being held as a special surprise for the Germans on some future raid.) During the early hours of the evening some of us were initiated into the art of rolling our own

cigarettes by the American General who used for this purpose a substance resembling a breakfast food, but which, he assured us, was the finest Maryland tobacco. None of us was able to produce more than the mockery of a smoke.

The night passed uneventfully. The weather was fine. Rumours that a sea of force 4 might be encountered in the Channel, were confounded in the event, and the 'Swipers' [minesweepers] took the big fleet of small craft through the enemy minefields as clean as a whistle.

At about 0300 while dozing in an armchair I heard the thud of gunfire against the ship's side, and going on deck saw tracer and something like 4-inch being fired about 20 miles to the northward. The night was warm and still, and the red, green and white tracer in the distance seemed undangerous and even friendly. The battle must have been going on fairly close inshore as some of the tracer appeared to be hitting the cliff face and then zooming off into the air. The battle, which was a chance encounter by our left flanking force and a German patrol engaged on convoy duty, continued intermittently until about 0400. As it turned out the encounter was a vital mishap and a grievous blow to the Operation as a whole, for it reduced by a large percentage the Commando force in assault craft which was to silence the strong defences to the northward of Dieppe.

The fact that their defences, although reduced by the remnant of the Commando force, were never completely silenced, and that certain machine-gun posts in the cliffs to the south of Dieppe also survived, allowed the Germans to enfilade the centre beach and promenade with withering fire and also allowed them, when other targets were absent, to make the life of the destroyers and light craft lying off-shore extremely unpleasant. Towards 0500 the bombers came in and the Dieppe A/A defences turned on a magnificent firework display including some attractive red tracer, probably 2-pounders, which soared up into the sky in strings of five or six red shells.

By this time it was beginning to get light and there were indications of a red sunrise on the horizon. The identity of the assault craft of various types, which had followed us across the Channel, revealed itself more clearly as they slipped by to go into the attack.

Soon, from the six-gun position on the cliff top on the enemy's left flank, salvos of shells started to straddle us, but when their unpleasant sound-effects ceased we

realized that Lord Lovat's Commando had done its job of demolition and there was general relief.

Perhaps two hours later this Commando came alongside to leave its cot cases with us, before proceeding back to England with its mission cleanly accomplished. As they lay alongside in their assault craft the men offered a grim spectacle with their faces daubed with black and poisonous green paint. The troops were wild with delight at their success and their enthusiasm was so infectious that I felt that the Germans could not possibly be standing up to our other waves of attack. Unfortunately these hopes were soon dashed as reports came over from close-communication W/T that strong opposition was being met throughout the central sector, and from that moment onwards (about 0800) no good news came from the beach.

As the sun came up over the horizon a gaggle of wild geese, about 30 strong, came over in V formation at about a thousand feet through the gun bursts which were following the tail of a F.W. 190 [Focke-Wulf FW 190, German fighter], and made off towards the Bay of Biscay.

In the meantime another *Hunt* [i.e. *Hunt* class destroyer] was standing close up to the cliff and whanging away with her 4-inch at a concealed battery (the splashes looked like about 3.5) which was hammering at a T.L.C. [Tank Landing Craft] lying helpless about forty yards off the beach below the cliffs on the enemy's left flank. These cliffs, nearly as high as the cliffs of Dover, were reddish brown and fell vertically to the twenty yards of golden sand which separated them from the sea. Already on this sand we could see scattered heaps of dead who, we rightly feared, were our own men. The *Hunt* finally silenced the battery, though there remained other enemy guns of a smaller calibre in caves in the cliff face.

During this period we had been moving at some 10 knots parallel to and about 700 yards away from the beach making smoke to protect the landing craft as they went in, and the pool of those which had made their getaway after disembarking their troops and vehicles. It had turned out a perfect day and the sun was shining from a blue sky. One could pick up every detail of the scene when the smoke allowed it, but there was little sign of movement on the beach, although heavy firing was continuous inside the town.

DOG FIGHTS BEGIN

Spitfires had been overhead in sheaves since daylight and no German aircraft had showed themselves by about 0900, but then F.W.s and Me.s put in their appearance and some magnificent dog fights developed, accompanied by terrific fire from the invasion fleet, not all of which was of assistance to the R.A.F. Our own pom-poms and Oerlikons had been very active, scoring, we imagined, many hits on any German aircraft which came within range. During the heat of one of these bursts of fire, I was standing by the port Oerlikon wishing that our steel helmets did not give one such a

headache and afforded the same protection as the German, Russian or modern United States types, when I noticed one of the spare gun's crew sitting on a crate of ammunition engrossed in a book. I looked over his shoulder – the title of the book was *A Fortnight's Folly*. The reader's eyes were popping out of his head with excitement as he greedily turned over the pages.

Very soon the German bombers arrived. Personally I had been rather concerned at their absence, fearing that they might be waiting for our withdrawal to put in a huge concentration, and I pictured flight upon flight of Ju.'s and Heinkels smashing the puny, small craft, after hours of firing at shore targets and German fighters had exhausted the A/A ammunition of the escorting vessels.

So it was quite a relief to see three Ju.88's standing out distinctly from a sky full of fighters, and to see their sticks of four 500-lb bombs come sailing slowly down towards us. This particular consignment fell right across the acre of small craft round which we were circling, but after the spray and smoke had subsided, no damage appeared to have been done unless some craft had been blown to pieces without trace, and I do not think they were. They just had time to drop their bombs before the fighters got to them, guided by the bursts of 4-inch shells, and the chases were on. As the naval gunfire died down we could hear the swift stutter of the Spitfires' cannon and everybody held his breath as the enemy made a despairing spring for distant French airfields. One bomber was shot own while still over the sea and crashed to the north of us in a fountain of flame and spray, and the others disappeared into the distance over the cliffs with the fighters tearing after them.

At the end of the day, before we heard the BBC announce the results of the air fighting, I think most of us would have guessed that perhaps thirty Germans had been destroyed for the loss of twenty of our aircraft, for that was about what we had seen shot down or appearing a certain kill. The majority of losses must have occurred far out of our sight in France. [The British claimed 91 German aircraft shot down for the loss of 98: in fact the Germans lost 48 aircraft.]

A quarter of an hour or so later we saw that most heartening sight, a single Ju.88 hit fair and square by 4-inch shell and explode high up in the sky with a great orange flash from which small pieces of black wreckage fluttered down into the sea.

There was an extraordinary medley of sounds during the battle. The volume of the naval 4-inch predominated with their usual whip-lash crack; then there was the continual undertone of machine gun fire with the heavier punctuation of Oerlikon-type guns, the hasty bark of pom-poms, and the soft stutter of fighter cannon far above. Over all one heard the varying hum of the RAF cover, occasionally overshadowed by the deep whine of a Junkers going into a steep dive to let go his bombs. But the noise which I remember best was the deliberate, wooden knock, knock, knock of (I think) German anti-

tank guns. This noise seemed so unhurried and deliberate that it cut through the permanent welter of sound with a disturbing authority. It was the sort of noise one hoped we were making, rather than the enemy.

At about 0930 our fast bombers came on the scene in waves. Flying at medium height or just above the level of the sea, they poured into the Dieppe area, dropping heavy bombs with a short delay action so that they had turned and were skimming back before we heard the terrific crash of the explosions. We prayed that these bombs had done more than demolish some boarding houses and hotels of the Victorian age and that each one had caught an enemy strong point fair and square, but the enemy firing kept on whatever fear there may have been in the hearts of the defenders at the appalling holocaust let loose, and hopes that resistance might be cowed by the terror and weight of our air attack and naval bombardment, never revived again.

All this time gallant R-boats and landing craft had been putting in to the beaches to take off the wounded under the direction of a determined Surgeon-Commander whose cheerfulness and zeal persisted until the following day and was a tonic to all who saw him.

We took many cot cases and walking wounded on board; I talked to some of them. There was not one man who did not show outstanding cheerfulness and courage after what he had been through on the beaches. The danger in which they still stood on board our ship from air and land bombardment meant nothing to them in comparison with what they had already experienced.

I was shown some letters taken by one of these men from a German. He sounded a dull and ordinary fellow from the correspondence he was carrying – a statement of his account with the Darmstaedter Bank in Breslau showing 524 marks and some pfennigs in his favour, a seed catalogue from a firm in Breslau, a receipt from the compulsory State Insurance Office, and two or three of those inane postcards with conventional good wishes which Germans love to receive and send in sheaves.

ORDER FOR WITHDRAWAL

By about 1000 it was clear that the withdrawal due to begin at 1100 must be effected without further delay as the progress necessary to carry out later phases of the original plan could clearly not be achieved. Soon the message came from the Headquarters ship and the pool of empty craft broke up and made slowly for the beaches into the teeth of the enemy's counter fire. At the same time the ban on the use of our 4-inch armament, imposed to safeguard the delicate W/T apparatus which we carried, was removed and all escort vessels opened up on land or air targets to give covering fire to the naked little force of landing craft as it approached the beaches. I saw a large gunboat, whose chief role had

had to be abandoned owing to the way things had developed, pumping 4-inch shells with incredible rapidity and spite into the enemy defences and tearing great chunks of rock off the cliff face protecting enemy gun positions.

Incidentally, this vessel contained the detachment which was my own special concern during the operation. I had been instructed to return to England independently directly a certain mission had been accomplished and when it was clear that the gunboat was not going to be able to carry out her original intentions, the Government exhortation, 'Is Your Journey Really Necessary?' came to my mind, heavily underlined by the shells from the shore batteries which came zipping through our rigging.

At about this time we were hit at the base of the funnel by something like one of the French 75's which the Germans employ in such profusion on coastal defence work. The shell killed one man and wounded four or five others and by an unfortunate chance put out of action the 4-inch remote control. Later I was talking to one of the crew of the starboard Oerlikon about the casualties. He pointed at the dead man who was still lying on deck under a blanket with the back of his head blown off – 'It's a funny thing, you know, sir' he said, 'only this morning that chap was saying he had a pain in his neck, and now he certainly has got a pain, but he can't feel it

any more.' The rest of the gun crew laughed as if it was the best joke they had ever heard. The American General who was standing nearby took me aside later in the day – 'You sure are the most fatalistic people in the world,' he said.

'Well perhaps we are a bit phlegmatic,' I answered, 'but it's probably only a line we shoot when there are distinguished visitors about, in the hopes of giving them a bit of a shock.' The General shook his head a bit sceptically as if he did wish this great truth he had discovered to be taken away from him.

By about 1100 the withdrawal was under way and there were already groups of craft in the distance heading towards England, protected by M.G.B.s [Motor Gun Boats] and Free French Chasseurs. As we rounded up a group of craft about a mile from the shore, to follow them, we saw a stick of bombs leave a Ju.88 and crash across the fo'c'sle of the *Berkeley*. Then the smoke came down over the ship and she was obscured from our eyes until two heavy explosions reverberated and a huge mushroom of yellow and black smoke rose in the still air. We thought she must have sunk with all hands, but it turned out later that the casualties were not so tragic as we had feared. As we headed for England I looked back through a break in the smoke at Dieppe. Two or three houses only stood up on the sea front like teeth in a gaping jaw. There was practically no movement, although heavy firing was still going on. It was scene of utter des-

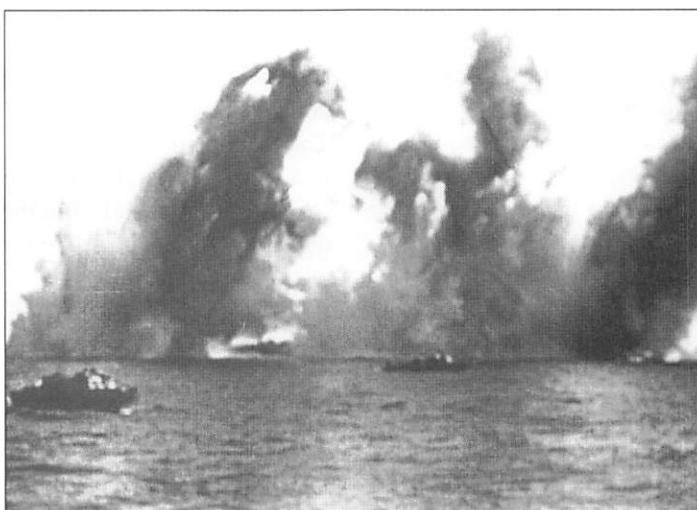
There was not one man who did not show outstanding cheerfulness and courage after what he had been through on the beaches.

olation and destruction which one was glad to leave, though with a heavy heart.

I never saw any civilians on the beaches or who escaped. The French in Dieppe must have had a terrifying time. They were bombed (on an empty stomach) before dawn and subsequently at intervals until mid-day. There must have been bullets flying round each street corner and shells of all sizes whanging into the rickety houses from all points of the compass. I believe some fugitives got down to the beaches, but were mown down before they could embark. One can only hope that they were avenged by a few stout *franc-tireurs* who made use of the confusion to slip a knife or a bullet into some quaking Nazi soldiery.

At all events, there can be few who read this who will know Dieppe again in their lifetime as a pleasure resort with well-kept gardens, tidy hotels and cafes, or who will taste again the delicious 'filets de sole Dieppoise' dispensed by a famous restaurant behind the promenade

(I mean behind 'the outer perimeter of anti-invasion defences'.) The Casino, too (a strong point of the German defence) will be long in rebuilding. When I last saw it (after the *Berkeley* and others had paid off the gambling scores of generations of English holiday-makers) it was a drunken mockery of a building and I confess to an unholy delight



(remembering painful pre-war visits to French tables) at seeing one of these establishments getting the smile wiped off its face.

The Headquarters ship and the large gunboat followed us after an interval, and then came the last gallant light craft which had remained to pick up survivors and take in tow disabled craft or destroy by gunfire those which could not possibly be brought home.

At that moment it seemed a long way back to Newhaven, steaming at five or six knots so that the landing craft proceeding under their own power could keep up. There were worries about E-boat or U-boat attack and an ever-present anxiety that France might disgorge wave upon wave of heavy bombers. We did not realize what immense damage had been done to the G.A.F. [German Air Force] that day by our pilots, nor what an extremely unpromising target our fighter-umbrella made us. This umbrella had been with us faultlessly throughout the day, and also away out in the haze of our flanks, over the German airfields, or up at 20,000 feet where the scribblings of vapour occasionally betrayed the presence of aircraft.

I had kept studiously off the bridge during the heat of the battle so as not to get in the way, but on our way back I went up and talked to the Captain, a young public school entrant in his early 20's who had handled his ship beautifully throughout. He was really Number 1 in the ship, but the Captain (renowned for his political opinions and dash on a motor bicycle) had collided the day before the Operation with some immovable object and been relegated to Haslar [the Royal Navy's hospital at Gosport] to his eternal chagrin.

WINGED WORDS

On the bridge I heard the Wing Commander in charge of Ship-to-Air Communication, talking to his Fighters like a second to his man in the ring, 'There's a Bandit bearing green 75 – he's just above you and you can't see him. Turn right a bit – and a bit more – there, you're on him now!' And off the 'Spit' would go with two or three of his fellows behind him. These quiet 'ring-side' talks had been going on since dawn.

The Wing Commander had stayed on the job for ten hours without faltering. The moment he handed over his ear-phones to his Number 2, and came down to the Captain's cabin for a minute's respite at about 1800, a Ju. dropped a couple of bombs in the middle of the convoy. Almost before the sound of the explosions had died away, he was out of his chair and up on the

bridge, and he never left his post again until nightfall.

Another star performer among so many others on the bridge was the gunnery officer, a young Canadian, who directed his pom-poms like a coach at an American ball game. 'Come below him. Now you're on to him. Stay where you are and give him hell. Good shooting!' And then a pause – and then, 'Well done, after pom-pom but you can open up earlier. Don't forget, the Ju.88 can do about 350 when he's dropped his bombs – allow for that when he's turning away.'

It was about this time (1700) when three Ju's came out of the huge cloud of smoke we had left behind, right on the tail of the convoy. There were Spitfires to right of us and Spitfires to left of us, but none in the vicinity of these three 88's and our fighters seemed an unconscionable time in heeding the urgent advice of the Wing Commander.

On they came in faultless formation, while the gunnery officer exhorted the after pom-pom. Finally they came within range. The red tracer went up at them in a steep curve and seemed below, but almost immediately it got on to the great black target and the starboard plane

broke slowly away just at the moment when we expected twelve 500-lbs bombs to fall slowly down on to the tail of the convoy. It was probable that all three planes were hit or at any rate considerably deterred, for the first and most nervous of the three was immediately followed by the other two just as the Spitfires came screaming down on them. We watched the pursuit far to the south and had the satisfaction of seeing one plunge, flaming, into the sea.

It had occurred to me earlier in the day that with such heavy fighter cover as we possessed, it would have been better if the naval gunners had left the destruction of the enemy to our fighters, since I felt sure that our fire must have deterred, if not damaged, many of our aircraft. But when I put this to the Wing Commander, he said that the bursts of our shells round an enemy plane were a help to the fighters in giving them direction, and certainly in this instance there is no doubt the bombers could have released their bombs before the Spitfires got on to them unless accurate naval fire had deterred them in time.

After this, and with the exception of the attack by a single bomber which caught the Wing Commander in the Captain's cabin, the convoy was not further molested. It was a cheering sight to see Beachy Head. As we drew nearer to the English coast the sea became glassy calm and the sun started to set on a scene which seemed all the more pleasant after what we had witnessed that day. Later, the rain came down and the wind freshened. The operation had been completed, so far as the weather was concerned, with hardly an hour to spare.

At about 1900 we left the convoy to be shepherded into Newhaven by the light escort vessels, and the destroyers and gunboat made good speed for their home port where we finally berthed at about 0030. Shortly after berthing I left the ship with the American General and the Colonel of Marines to find a welcome bed in the best hotel, which we stormed regardless of protest. The *Hunt* must have been glad to be shot of her many guests so that she could mend her scars, of which there were not a few, in peace, remove an unexploded shell from her coal bunkers, and return to her unremitting grind with the East Coast Convoys. She had good cause to be pleased with the part she had played in this memorable foray.

Ashore there was a long and sad queue of ambulances and Red Cross cars stretching almost to the dockyard gates, while under a single arc light the indefatigable Surgeon-Commander put his last energy into the vital job of getting the seriously wounded quickly to the hospital.

It had been a long and nerve-wracking day and it was difficult to add up the pros and cons of what was a bloody, gallant affair. But one thing was clear: intelligence, planning and execution had been nearly faultless. The machinery for producing further raids is there, tried and found good. Dieppe was an essential preliminary for operations ahead. But the fortunes of war (*vide* that damnable mischance on our left flank) must be with us next time.

In Search of Central Europe

Roger Scruton

The *Salisbury Review* began life in 1982, at the time of the post-Afghanistan 'peace offensive' launched by the Soviet Union. The Peace Movement in the West was gathering momentum, and the Labour Party was committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament. I had been travelling in Poland and Czechoslovakia for two years, and had seen enough of the conditions there to recognize that peace was not, in fact, on the Soviet agenda, and that the situation in Europe was far from stable.

Some people of a left-wing persuasion had made contact with dissidents in the Eastern bloc – notably E.P. Thompson, Steven Lukes and others involved in END (the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament). They had made serious efforts to distance themselves from the 'useful idiot' mentality of CND. But they had little or no influence on Labour Party politics and were regarded with suspicion by the dissidents themselves. Meanwhile the Conservative Party toed its usual

establishment line, denouncing the Soviet threat, while doing nothing whatsoever to look for sympathizers East of the Elbe. British conservatism had defined itself, after all, as a 'pragmatic', 'managerial', and 'unideological' outlook, with little or no faith in abstract principles, and a tendency to accept the diplomatic status quo.

Encountering the dissident networks in Eastern Europe, I was struck by the manifest hunger for anti-socialist arguments and ideas. The intellectuals of Central Europe were searching for what Maurice Cowling has called a 'public doctrine': not so much a set of axioms, as a language with which to recuperate the human reality that had been stolen by communist dogma. And because, alone among Western politicians, Thatcher and Reagan had shown a determination not merely to confine communism but, if possible, to destroy it, the dissidents looked to the conservative movement in the West to provide the concepts that they needed.

It seemed to me, too, that British conservatives had much to learn from their would-be allies in communist Europe. (This was twenty years ago, when it was still possible to believe that conservatives were capable of learning things.) I let it be known in the underground networks that we would like to publish regular communications from the catacombs, and that we would strive to find a common language with those in the East who shared our conservative convictions. The result was the regular Column 'In Search of Central Europe', which served as a vehicle for reflection, analysis and comment devoted to the still living culture of those hidden nations.

Many of our writers used pseudonyms. Among them was 'Petr Fidelius', whose path-breaking articles on socialist language (1984) taught me how to understand not merely the gobbledegook issued by the Communist lie-machine, but also the indistinguishable gobbledegook deployed by my university colleagues. 'Konstantin and Basil' gave a moving description of the underground church in the Czech prison system (1985); and 'Ivan Volgin' sent a hair-raising account of homo sovieticus (1983), which seemed to me to be more evocative and penetrating even than those of Zinoviev and Solzhenitsyn, its imagery reminiscent of Bulgakov. Some of our writers wrote anonymously, and even today I am not sure who composed the 'open letter to the veterans of the white army' that was smuggled to us from Moscow in 1987, or the letter from Poland (1984) protesting against Reagan's sanctions.

Well-known dissidents could take the risk of publishing under their real names. Prominent among them were Vaclav Havel, and the Hungarian gadfly Gáspár Tamás. However, when one of our outspoken contributors – Jan Carnogursky, then leader of the underground seminars in Slovakia – was arrested in 1989, the indictment mentioned an article of his in *The Salisbury Review*. The trial could not be concluded before communism's collapse, and Carnogursky's subsequent career as leader of the Christian Democrats, and twice Prime Minister of his country, was probably advanced rather than retarded by his association with our journal.

One of the most interesting results of our attempt to give a voice to the dissident conservatives was their desire to give a voice to us. To my astonishment, a samizdat edition of *The Salisbury Review* began to appear in Prague in 1986. By then I had been expelled from Czechoslovakia, and was regularly followed in Poland. Things were not much better in Britain, where the *Review* might just as well have been a samizdat publication, so great was the venom directed towards those who wrote for it. So the news that the *Review* had achieved, under 'real socialism', an honour accorded, to

my knowledge, to no other Western periodical, was especially gratifying. Copies were smuggled to us and their wafer-thin pages – the final carbon copies from sheaves of ten – had the spiritual quality of illuminated manuscripts. They were testimony to a belief in the written word that had been tried and proved by self-sacrificing labour. This endorsement fully compensated for the scorn with which the *Review* had been greeted in Britain.

In 1987 the Police Museum in Prague – a propaganda institute to which teachers would take their quiet crocodiles of 'young pioneers' – composed a new exhibit devoted to the 'unofficial secret agent'. The central item was a maquette of a youngish man in Western clothes, with spy camera and binoculars. From his open briefcase there spilled – along with Plato and Aristotle – copies of the *Salisbury Review*. This was, I suppose, our greatest triumph: the first time that anybody with influence had conferred on us the status of an equal.

Shortly after the Berlin Wall came down, the Politics Society at Birkbeck College, where I was a professor, called an urgent public meeting to discuss the crisis. Those invited were the communist professor of history, Eric Hobsbawm and Perry Anderson, former editor of the *New Left Review*. I was not invited. Nobody informed the students that the mouthpiece of those who

had led the counter-revolution had been edited within their college. Had this been pointed out to them, they might have wondered why *The Salisbury Review* was not in the college library. Within two years of that event, at which the clapped-out fellow-travellers

had posed for the last time as the real experts on the world beyond the Wall, the political landscape had changed entirely. By then *Salisbury Review* contributors were presidents, prime ministers, ministers, members of national assemblies, deans and chancellors throughout Eastern Europe. And they were learning to keep quiet about the connection.

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Roger Scruton's England: an Elegy is published in paperback by Pimlico.

The Salisbury Review in Central Europe

Miroslav Pospíšil

I've got something new today' my contact said as she handed me my monthly supply of samizdat journals and materials. As usual, I had a week to read them and a week to make twelve copies of everything and pass them on to contacts of my own. I was curious, but I read the new issues of the familiar periodicals and reports first, leaving the new file till the end. When I finally started reading it, the texts made me sit up. What was this? I did not have a clue. But it was so different from everything else that I wanted to read more, at once. I had to wait two months, however, for the next file. It was as electrifying as the first and this time there was a title page. It said 'Selected from *The Salisbury Review*'. It was summer 1986 in Brno, in communist Czechoslovakia.

The Salisbury Review was a revelation. It introduced conservatism and conservative thinkers into our philosophical and political debates in a new way that made conservative themes the most potent inspiration for thought and action in the Czech clandestine circles in the latter half of the 1980's, just before the fall of communism. Its texts exposed the lie of the 'new left' and its thinkers: something we had always known, or at least suspected, but with our lack of data and reliable information would not have been able to demonstrate in such a well-documented way. But I believe that the most important contribution was that the *Review* and its authors gave us the language that we so badly needed to replace the newspeak of the communist ideology machine as well as the newspeak that the détente politicians and the peace movements in the West were using and which, curiously enough, seemed to share the same grammar and idiom with the communists' gobbledegook. We needed an honest and rigorous language to be able to speak about the human condition again. We had almost lost that ability under the two socialist experiments carried out in our part of the world in the past fifty years (German national socialism 1938-45, Soviet international socialism after 1945), but we had also been frustrated in our many attempts to recover the ability from sources in the West. Various individuals and initiatives had been trying to overcome our isolation, to make contacts and to start a dialogue with people on the western side of the Iron Curtain. Some contacts had indeed been made and some exchanges of opinion had taken place, but we could not help feeling that the two sides were speaking different languages. That is why *The Salisbury Review* instantly became such a phenomenon

in Czechoslovakia: yes, at last, what these people were saying made sense to us, because their examination of the human reality was uncompromisingly honest. The findings were not pleasant but the *Review* had the integrity to call a spade a spade. At last, here was someone who was expressing thoughts to which we could relate but for which we had not been able to find an adequate language.

Many people must have felt the same because I suddenly started coming across issues and views from the *Review* not only in the seminars of the 'underground university', with which I myself was involved, but in various other discussions, lectures and meetings organised by various dissident groups of various political colours. Some people identified with the views expressed in the *Review*, others hated them: but all were affected, it was impossible to ignore the intellectual challenge. The *Review* became a direct inspiration for two samizdat journals, the *Støední Evropa* [Central Europe] in Prague and its Moravian sister publication in Brno; conservative groups and think tanks were established, devoted to economics, politics, history. After the Velvet Revolution, the debate intensified, in the open at last, fuelled by the frequent visits made by the *Review's* editor himself, who was at last allowed to travel to Czechoslovakia again. Its themes dominated journalism and policy discussion for some time, making some impact even on the politics in the early days of our new freedom.

Today, twelve years on, the *Støední Evropa* is still as determined as ever to discuss issues that matter; the Brno samizdat publishing venture has become the *Proglas*, a serious monthly for politics, society and culture; and the Civic Institute continues to publish its pamphlets. The seeds sown by the *Review* in the 1980's have grown and produced fruit. At least in some intellectual circles. But in the world of the realpolitik? Well, the two political parties most inspired by the conservative thinking epitomised by the *Review*, although influential in the early 1990's, can now attract 3% of the popular vote at parliamentary elections between them, if they are lucky. The views expressed in the *Støední Evropa*, the *Proglas* or by the think tank, Civic Institute are seldom heard in the mainstream policy debate. We have almost become 'normal', i.e. like the rest of 'EU' Europe, in whose politics rigorous thought and honest language have little place.

Miroslav Pospíšil was Director of the Jan Hus Foundation, 1990-2001

Colonel Sibthorp

Michael Wharton

I oppose the Reform Bill – the whole Bill and every part of the Bill. I say it must go – go to the devil. I believe it will give political power and the electoral franchise to the very dregs of the community. If the Bill does pass, then all I have to say is: God save my country: may God have mercy on it: May God protect it from revolutions, and may He preserve all proper respect for the aristocracy!

Almost any day when the House of Commons was in session between the years 1826 and 1855, he could be heard holding forth in this fashion – Colonel Charles de Laet Waldo Sibthorp, of Canwick Hall, Lincolnshire, member of Parliament for Lincoln, Colonel of the Royal South Lincolnshire Militia. In his day he was one of the best-known people in England. He was certainly one of the most remarkable figures who ever sat in the House of Commons.

According to a contemporary account, he was a short stocky man of military bearing; a wispy, straggling beard and a high stick-up collar combined to conceal his face almost completely. He wore a bottle-green frock coat, wide three-quarter length trousers and wellington boots, and a tall white hat. He wore a great deal of ornate jewellery, and as he spoke made wide sweeping gestures with a huge rectangular gold-mounted quizzing glass. He seemed like a visitor from a past age.

There is nothing about Colonel Sibthorp in the ordinary history books. He is a haunter of footnotes and obscure Victorian diaries. He appears in early Punch cartoons, generally in a ridiculous light. These are his monuments, together with the five hundred odd columns of Hansard in which he spoke his mind on all subjects from the Reform Bill to the shocking condition of hansom cabs. Yet he is a symbolic figure, and for all his absurdity an appealing one.

Here was a conservative of conservatives. He lived at a time when the England he knew, which in essentials had hardly changed for centuries, was changing at last. There must have been a great many people who hated the change as he did, even among the landowners who were greatly enriched by it. But only Sibthorp stood up in Parliament to denounce it with such total vehemence. This supreme adversary of progress came of an old and wealthy family of landowners who had represented

Lincoln in Parliament for generations. He served in the Army in the Peninsular War and succeeded to the family estates in 1822. In 1826 he succeeded to what was virtually the family seat in Parliament and soon became one of the great ‘characters’ of the House. He spoke in a rambling disconnected manner and had the gift of speaking on any subject but always making the same speech. He was fond of violent personal abuse, and when ‘foaming radicals’ were speaking would often crow like a cock and bellow like a bull to put them off.

When he first entered Parliament, it was convulsed by the great controversy over the Reform Bill. We have seen what he thought, spoke. He bravely fought it inch by inch until for all his efforts, it passed in 1832. Soon he had another target for his reactionary hate, the railway mania of the 1830s and 1840s. Many people thought, spoke and dreamed of little else. Engineers and

surveyors were out all over the country with their flags and poles and theodolites; gangs of labourers were at work, blasting tunnels, piling up embankments, bridging rivers and generally altering the face of the country. Sibthorp had much to say:

‘I have always considered all railways public frauds and private robbery by gambling speculators... It is my decided opinion that these nefarious scoundrels will ere long appear before the public in their true light and that all the railway companies will be bankrupt, and that the old and happy mode of travelling on turnpike roads, in chaises, carriages and stages, will be restored.’

The old and happy mode of travelling had gone for ever. But the great railway boom was followed, as Sibthorp had predicted, by a great railway slump, in which thousands of speculators were ruined overnight. In some of his best parliamentary performances, Sibthorp reminded the House: ‘I told you so’. By now he had developed his own special style of speaking, in which pet expressions were dragged in whether appropriate or not. Most of these were of a crusty, country type: ‘one scabbed sheep spoils the flock’, ‘old birds can’t be caught with chaff’; ‘Catch a weasel asleep’ and ‘Roarer is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better’. He was both.

Although he could not know it, Sibthorp was watching the beginnings of the Welfare State. His reactions were violent. When it was proposed to provide public

The England he defended with such passion, part clown, part hero, in the face of such unrelenting ridicule, has almost completely disappeared.

libraries for the working classes in industrial towns (which he called unfeelingly, 'the cholera morbus places'), he said he could not see why they wanted to read – 'I myself always hated reading when at Oxford.' He believed the British Museum was a waste of money and that it would be much better to pull down the National Gallery than complete it. In short, he opposed all forms of government interference. He was outraged at the plan for a land survey.

'The idea of a gang of schoolmasters coming round upon your land and surveying its productive properties is one which I never expected to hear proposed. How can we know that these people may not actually invade a gentleman's cellars and tilt his wine? Certainly we live in very extraordinary times when these dictatorial attempts are made to invade the sacredness of private property'.

In resisting the imposition of that 'odious and delusive mode of taxation – Income Tax,' Sibthorp delivered a memorable message for all time: 'The government who propose this tax call themselves Liberals. Liberals! There never was such a misnomer. Who, I would ask, have been more disposed to cut up the liberties of the people than those who call themselves Liberals, whom I call revolutionaries and levellers, men having no feeling for Church, King, State or People, or anything which has hitherto made England a great nation'.

Sibthorp saw threats to England everywhere, and never tired of denouncing her enemies, real or imaginary. For him the Irish Catholics were 'little better than fiends incarnate'. He lumped all foreigners together as 'odious and hypocritical' and proposed that a heavy tax should be imposed on them when they entered the country. He carried his hatred of foreigners so far that he managed to get the foreigner Prince Albert's allowance reduced. This was his sole parliamentary success, and it enraged Queen Victoria so much that she declared she would never visit Lincoln again while Sibthorp represented it in Parliament.

Everything he hated most was summed up in the Great Exhibition of 1851, symbol of Progress, Industry, Democracy and International Understanding. He attacked it furiously from the time when it was a mere idea to the time when it was realised in the Crystal Palace, 'that obscene and insanitary structure which has been offered as a supreme insult to the people of England, to the delectation of foreigners, who are pouring over to this unfortunate country in their thousands to debauch our daughters and swindle our tradespeople.'

It was all in vain. Perhaps his one-man campaign against the Crystal Palace exhausted him. He had a severe stroke in 1852, and soon after electrifying the House by proposing that he be sent out to the Crimea at the head of the Royal South Lincolnshire Militia, he had another stroke and died in December 1855.

He was buried with his ancestors at Canwick Hall, in the chapel of the long, low house that looks across the valley to the soaring towers of the cathedral. It is council offices now. But even in his day an abhorred railway ran in the valley below, and the mean streets were spreading out from the lower city. In the 150 years since he died, they have gone on spreading and everything he hated has spread with them. The England he defended with such passion, part clown, part hero, in the face of such unrelenting ridicule, has almost completely disappeared.

The Tory party, whose eternal principles he upheld so fiercely, has dwindled to a feeble shadow of itself; it would be a wonderful target for his most impassioned oratory. If he could come to life in our time, gasping with astonishment and indignation, the 'media' would try to seize him as an outrageous reactionary, made to be ridiculed and humiliated over and over, as a TV personality, by liberal thinkers and 'hypocritical' jackanapes on 'prime time' television. I think he would have stood his ground. Holdfast is a good dog.

Michael Wharton is Peter Simple of the Daily Telegraph



The Salisbury Review

a voice crying in the wilderness

Alfred Sherman

The *Salisbury Review* was founded in 1982. It was established as the *porte parole* of a conservative organisation, the Salisbury Group, which did not survive. The term conservative – I use the lower case to distinguish it from the Conservative Party, which is not conservative in our sense of the word – is a matter for interpretation, not at all cut and dried. By 1982, the aim of the *Review*, or any like-minded organisation, could no longer be to conserve or preserve conservatism and what it stood for, but must of necessity have been either to restore or to mourn it. To restore entails enquiry into the causes of its desuetude and conditions for reversal. Moreover, conservatism restored would be conservatism reshaped, involving ideas of what should be rather than what is. Conservatism restored is a construct unlike natural conservatism, which in its day entailed hallowing the status quo because it was the status quo, ‘all that is is right.’ By 1982, very little of that was left. The Labour victory of 1945 had changed not only the face of Britain but also the Conservative Party. It had become Butler’s party in all but name, a variant of socialism. These changes have continued till this day. What could conceivably have been rescued was a subject for conjecture which continues to this day with decreasing hopefulness. In that sense, to be conservative today is to be radical or revolutionary, to reject the status quo, but in favour of what?

The universities were once a home of conservatism. But having been turned into nationalised industries and a form of welfare in which discrimination between quality and mediocrity is outlawed, and quality sacrificed to accessibility, the universities were lost to conservatism. Conservatism entails hierarchy and deference. Conservatism’s hierarchies were independent but interlocking: royalty, the Lords, the bench, the bar, the law society, the world of medicine, banking and business, the armed services, the established church, *inter alia*. Deference has become unfashionable, except for momentary adoration of current idols: entertainers and sportsmen. Otherwise, there is a dearth of models and standards. Many current cultural norms are antinomian or counter-cultural, e.g., the Booker and Turner prizes; defiant demoticism has replaced classicism; we have it on Plato’s authority that art determines social behaviour. Our guardians go along with it.

1982, when the *Review* was founded, was a time of hope, Margaret Thatcher reigned with bold Conservative rhetoric. But decades of disappointment

continued to follow. During the following twenty years our awareness of the rigours, of deception grew *pari passu* with the oppositional stance of the *Review*, which has of necessity become a voice crying in the wilderness. Margaret Thatcher remains a key figure in British politics of the last quarter of the century, subject to continuous reinterpretation. That she towered above our narrow world like a colossus is beyond argument, but what became of it all is as fraught with argument as ever. Perhaps the appearance of Thatcher and the underlying reality are inseparable. Moreover, the Salisbury Group and its *Review* were not Thatcherite *ab initio*.

Many Conservatives thought in terms of authority and the State, and expressed misgivings regarding the commercialisation of society and marketisation of social thought, prioritisation of free enterprise and the market, while others directed our main fire against étatisation, socialism and controls. Some liberals were indeed guilty of overstressing the importance of the economic at the expense of socio-political factors. This dichotomy remains with us today

Though Iain Duncan Smith was elected as a Thatcherite favourite, his rebranding of the Conservatives as the party of the public services (including massive subsidies to rail passengers, a small minority of passengers) and dedicating PM’s questions to the treatment of a patient in E & A, as well as Oliver Letwin’s extravaganzas, raise doubts. Margaret Thatcher was right when she pointed out that the Conservative Party could not be called ‘the party of free enterprise’, though it favoured free enterprise, its roots go much wider, deeper and further back. State ownership and control have undoubtedly spread too far, but this leaves the question of the proper role, function and scope of the State to be worked out by modern conservatives for the 21st century. In the ‘seventies and ‘eighties, Thatcherism and Conservatives generally stressed the creative role of free enterprise and the wasteful role of state intervention. These are both strictly true, but more generally a caricature. The implied slogan ‘private good, public bad’ is as misleading as the socialists’ implied slogan ‘public good, private bad’. For one thing, private and public are not simple antitheses. Public services, including defence, law enforcement, education and administration have always been subject matter of conservatism. Public utilities may be privately, municipally or State owned without affecting their special character. Schools, hospitals and the like can be owned and run by

charities. The profit-motive is an engine of change, not a good *per se*. Most Conservatives welcomed the transfer of control over the bank rate from the Treasury to the Bank of England. But should the rate of interest be fixed by a State institution rather than by borrowers and lenders? Margaret Thatcher once argued that we, the public, do not own the nationalised industries, on the contrary, they own us. Conversely, awareness of the complexity of society and the unknowability of motives and outcomes are part of the conservative ethos, whereas by contrast Thatcherism dealt in certainties, in beliefs rather than ideas.

Classical conservatism was quintessentially and exclusively British. It had nothing in common with European society, institutions and thought, its links were with the Empire and the once-British United States, with its common-law heritage. The idea of the European community, European courts, law and bill of rights was anathema to it. But they now reign. Multi-culturalism has never been debated or legislated, but it holds sway as the unquestioned basis of national policy. Since multi-culturalism precludes Britishness, the whole basis of Conservatism has been nullified without argument, mainly during the last thirty years. Patriotism has been dismissed as xenophobia or racism, conservatism with it. Accusations of racism, that catch-all denunciation, make brave men blanch and throw up their hands.

Measurement and definition of State and non-State is not simple, nor are the criteria stable over time. Institutions controlled by party politicians have a character of their own. GP's and barristers are both self-employed but the one leans towards hospital doctors and the other towards judges. Regardless of the railways' exact status, it matters more if they are run as enterprises or part of the welfare economy than who their nominal owners are. The same holds good for the arms industry, and indeed many other branches of manufacturing industry which seek custom or help from authority. Much of the nominally private sector is dependent on the State in one way or another.

As things are going the English will become a minority in their own motherland, and the country de-christianised.

Only history will tell us whether multiculturalism and the minoritisation of the British nation will continue, or the process will be reversed by exercise of popular will, however painfully. The history of the *Review* has coincided not only with continued alien settlement but also with multiculturalism's continued conquest of the thought ways and its institutionalisation. The Honeyford case is an example. Conservatism has always been inextricably linked with both Englishness and Anglicanism. Multiculturalism, which treats all languages, cultures and nationdoms as equals and Anglocentrism as xenophobia, violates the essence of conservatism. Anglicanism is but a shadow of what it once was, Britain is less wholeheartedly Christian than it was in conservatism's heyday. The Church of England apologises for being Christian and accepts Islam as a legitimate British religion. Would conservatism's rebirth entail re-christianisation? It all comes as a reminder that we are more keenly aware of what we are against than what we are for.

Ideas are shaped by circumstances: in conservatism's heyday the State sector was a few percent of GDP, mainly the armed forces, now it is roughly half. Can the State's dependents seek to curtail it? In the mid-seventies an American politician warned that we might be approaching the point of no return in this regard. If we pass it, where could the conservative counter-revolution emerge from?

As I pen these words, misgivings at some aspects of rethink have emerged from an unlikely source, the Labour Home Secretary. Hostile reactions were immediate and predictable; a sympathetic groundswell would take longer to emerge, if at all. I have just been invited by a nominally prestigious Conservative organisation to address a seminar on the question of national identity and relations with Islam. Are these harbingers, or flashes in the pan? But this brings us back to the question: what makes things happen? Why should some voices crying in the wilderness make things happen, and others fall on stony ground? We do not know. But cry we must. *Sir Alfred Sherman was an adviser to Margaret Thatcher.*

WE RECORD WITH SADNESS AND GRATITUDE
THE DEATHS OF CONTRIBUTORS
DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS:

PETER BAUER, GEORGE CHOWDHARAY BEST, RONALD FLETCHER, F A HAYEK,
MERVYN HISKETT, TRISTAN JONES, RUSSELL KIRK, OSCAR KAMBONA, GEORGE
MARTELLI, CHARLES PICKTHORN, ENOCH POWELL, DAVID REGAN, A L ROWSE,
DIANA SPEARMAN, DAVID STOVE, GORDON WAKEFIELD.

Friendship

P D James

The word 'friendship' is one of the most ubiquitous and imprecisely used in the English Language. We may say casually to a cabdriver, 'I'm waiting for my friend', meaning no more than that we are accompanied by an agreeable fellow traveller first met on holiday; the word 'friend' comes more naturally and is less pretentious than 'acquaintance'. Or we may mean by the word 'friend' someone bound to us by the close ties of love, loyalty, trust and sacrifice, a bond which, unlike modern marriage, is indissoluble except by death and which is rooted in morality as well as in affection. It is this high definition of friendship which Digby Anderson explores in his book *Losing Friends* (Social Affairs Unit). He says modern life is deeply inimical to true friendship which is increasingly being ousted by the imperative demands of family and work. He regrets that our society not only has no public recognition of the importance of friendship, but can't even discuss it articulately without sentimentality.

The names that he mentions in illustrating his views define what he regards as true friendship: Euripides, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Dr Johnson, Coleridge and Cardinal Newman. They would hardly be listed as examples of connubial felicity. This high view of male friendship has for me the odour of senior common rooms in an age where no Oxford or Cambridge don could be married, of writing parties in the Lakes, of walks on the Continent, of long discussions into the night on philosophy, politics or religion. The relationships were essentially exclusive. It is small wonder that they rarely exist in our frenetic age in which romantic love is elevated almost to the point of religion.

But if society makes no public recognition of friendship, is that necessarily a bad thing in a relationship so deeply personal and unique? The State interferes in almost all aspects of our lives. It has a natural interest in marriage since that state is still seen as fundamental to the rearing of children and the continuance of the race. But we can surely be grateful that it doesn't seek to control our friendships. They may indeed come under public scrutiny; the natural wish to help a friend can be seen as cronyism and very close and exclusive friendships have always come under some suspicion. But this remains one aspect of our lives which we ourselves can control.

Some time ago, when researching a new novel, I paid a visit to a morgue. I was told that one of the freezer compartments held the body of a prostitute, long unidentified and now unlikely ever to be. We feel the tragedy

of such a life, such a death, and feel it too when we hear of a funeral where there are no mourners. The reasons are varied. Sometimes the dead person was a natural recluse, neither wanting nor seeking friendship. It is increasingly likely that the very old have outlived friends and family. Occasionally, potential friends and family have been antagonised and all relationships severed. But loneliness is a great burden and most people feel the need of friends, or even of acquaintances with shared interests whom they can think of as friends.

Children need their friends as flowers need the light, and the child without a friend is at risk of psychological damage as well as unhappy. Such children are often friendless because they are different; physically unattractive, too poor or – rather less often – too rich for their peers' liking or, in our modern world, too clever. Some, particularly if they have generous pocket money, will attempt to buy friendship. But friendship cannot be bought, although the illusion of it can and commonly is. Schools should be more aware of the needs of such children but a response more sensitive than lessons in friendship is surely called for.

Digby Anderson doesn't attempt to discuss the difference between men and women when it comes to friendship. Since as a woman I can never know what men say or do or how they act when no woman is present, my knowledge is more intuitive than precise. It seems to me that differences do exist. Men's friendships are often grounded in shared experience: old school, profession, a shared hobby or game, their regiment or an intellectual interest. The qualities they value above others in a friend are courage, loyalty and generosity. They seem reluctant to confess their troubles for fear of losing face. Women don't worry about losing face to a friend; that is what a friend is for. Women confide their emotional problems – difficulties with children or family, problems with their jobs or their health – and receive in return understanding, support and reciprocal confidences.

Friendship between two women is admirably described by Jane Austen in *Emma*, when Emma is visiting the newly married Mrs Weston. 'There was not a creature in the world to whom she spoke with such unreserve... not any one, to whom she related with such conviction of being listened to and understood, of being always interesting and always intelligible, the little affairs, arrangements, perplexities and pleasures of her father and herself... And half an hour's uninterrupted communication of all those little matters on which the daily happiness of private life depends, was one of the

first gratifications of each.' Women's friendship is indeed founded on the communication of little matters on which the daily happiness of private life depends.

Dorothy L. Sayers may have hit on the secret of male friendship in *Gaudy Night* when Lord Peter Wimsey is consulting the Honourable Frederick Arbuthnot. 'Peter had money and Freddy understood money; that must be the common interest and bond of mutual confidence that explained an otherwise inexplicable friendship. She admired the strange nexus of interests that unites the male half of mankind into a close honeycomb of cells, each touching the other on one side only, and yet constituting a tough and closely adhering fabric.'

Perhaps friendship today, whether male or female, is more like this nexus of relationships than the intense exclusive lifelong attachments which Digby Anderson describes. We are more likely to have a circle of friends valued for different qualities. We cannot meet our friends' every need; why expect them to meet ours? The best travelling companion is one who shares lively interests, is good tempered, undemanding and well able to cope without ill humour or panic with the inevitable traumas of modern travel. In choosing a friend to share the house, punctiliousness in cleaning pots and pans after use, leaving the bathroom in a decent state and conscientiousness in paying his or her share of the telephone bill become more important than mutual intellectual interests. The friend we most enjoy dining with may not be the one we want to see on our deathbed.

And while on the subject of deathbeds, Digby Anderson worries that hospitals contact the next of kin but not the patient's friend. But how can they do so unless the patient himself makes it clear on admission that he wishes not only his next of kin, but also his friend to be informed if there is danger? Hospitals cannot lightly admit visitors to a patient *in extremis* merely because they state they are great friends. They might be interfering and unwelcome neighbours or one of those sad souls who dearly love a deathbed. The distress to a close friend at being ignored at times of crisis extends also, of course, to illicit lovers. Queen Alexandra summoned Edward VII's mistress, Alice Keppel, to his deathbed, but this act of generosity is unusual.

Some of Dr Anderson's conclusions I would challenge. Do people on their retirement commonly move to remote places where they will have to rely on making new friends, lightly discarding the friends that they have? In my experience retired people usually return to familiar places, perhaps where they were born or brought up, where they can expect to find friends, or move closer to their children, or find a home in a holiday resort where, through annual visits, they have put down some roots. It is true that those unwise enough to settle in a place totally unfamiliar will find it lonely, particularly when one partner dies. But how often have I heard the words, 'We plan to stay in this area. After all, it's where we have our friends.'? Digby Anderson says

marriage, and particularly modern marriage, is inimical to friendship, and he is right. The affection and liking, apart from sexual desire, which husband and wife feel for each other rarely extends to friends made before marriage. There is often the unvoiced criticism, 'What does he see in her?'. C S Lewis's friends certainly resented his love affair and marriage to Joy Davidman. Time has become the most precious commodity of our frenetic lives. Is it surprising that husband and wife in a true marriage will wish to spend it together? In the first flush of romantic love the need for the other's presence is intense and mutual. Later it may become a matter of habit or obligation. In less happy marriages it can become a burden. No doubt wives and husbands should recognise early in their marriage their partner's need for other deep and important relationships by occasionally agreeing to spend time apart. But with the arrival of children this becomes less possible.

Perhaps the most fundamental difference separating people is that between those with children and those without, and intense extra-marital friendships seldom survive the arrival of a child. The most a friend can hope for is to become a Godfather and be subsumed into the family. The modern child, too, particularly the child of middle-class parents, seems to require a degree of parental concern which some see as dangerous to the child's development into a mature and responsible adult. No generation has ever been so supervised, controlled, exam-tested, physically pampered and indulged. The demands this makes on parents leaves little time for their own interests. And friendship inevitably must take second place in our age where few parents can afford to live in London and parts of the South East unless both work. Professional working mothers are more stressed and overworked than any generation before. For such a woman, returning exhausted from the office on Friday to cope with a weekend without the *au pair*, and faced with the demands of children deprived in the week of her company, the thought that her husband might be free to spend the weekend with a close friend would impose a strain on any marriage.

The obsession of our modern age with money, celebrity and sex imposes strain on more than friendship. Indeed friendship can survive those strains better than other traditional aspects of our lives. We need our friends, and although friendship today may be less exclusive, less all-consuming and less emotionally intense, for most of us a life without the supportive affection and loyalty of our friends would seem barren indeed.

What we feel about a true and valued friend is well expressed by A. E. Housman in *A Shropshire Lad*:

This long and sure-set liking, / This boundless will to please, / Oh, you should live for ever / If there were help in these. / We shall none of us live for ever, but we can hope that our lives will be enriched by our friendship and that those who have been close to us through all the vicissitudes of the years will be with us at the end.

P.D James' novel Death in Holy Orders will be published in paperback by Penguin this month.

Marvellous Misfit

Duncan Fallowell at home with Nirad Chaudhuri

In 1975 I was walking down the high street of Trivandrum in South India, went into one of the many book-and-stationery shops of that very literate town., and bought a local edition of Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*. On the way out my eye was caught by a book whose author was unknown to me – *A Passage to England* by Nirad C. Chaudhuri. Back at the hut I started the second book first and what a surprise it was. Written with sympathetic but alien eyes, the outcome of a five-week visit (Chaudhuri's first trip ever outside India) in the spring of 1955, it presented an astringent, unusual view of my homeland and was a brilliant work of seeing. The book even more clearly conveyed the character of its author: affable, lively, a cultural enthusiast, an intellectual, principled, sometimes dogmatic, with a streak of fastidious eccentricity.

Several years later I found a copy of *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) by the same man in a secondhand bookshop in Salisbury. A few years after that I read it – a much bigger, stranger book, the author's first, in slower time than books are now, sparsely written with a decorum that was both easy-going and ceremonious. It was rich in descriptions of Calcutta and of the Bengal countryside interwoven with provocative interpretations of events. And that dedication, most startling for an Indian: *To the memory of the British Empire in India which conferred subjecthood on us hut withheld citizenship; to which yet every one of us threw out the challenge: 'Civis Britannicus sum' because all that was good and living within us was made, shaped, and quickened by the same British rule.*

Then in 1987 a second, even more massive volume of autobiography was published, going by the title *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* The first volume had taken us from his birth in 1897 in a small Bengali country town, 'the son of a lawyer of the lowest rank' as he puts it, to the wretchedness of academic failure, after brilliant promise, in Calcutta in 1921. The second volume went from that year, via career disasters, penury, the war and Indian independence, to his retirement from All-India Radio in 1952 (retirement was fixed early by the British, at 55, because of the strains of working in India, and the Indians continued this), by which time a lifelong creative block had at last been dislodged.

In his own country *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* was published to enormous acclaim and hostility. What struck me particularly, when volume two came along thirty-six years later, was the fact that

Mr Chaudhuri was alive. Already a survivor from another age in 1951 – and still with us. What's more, he wasn't living in some up-country bungalow in Bengal but in, of all places, North Oxford. The poignant arrow of nostalgia entered me and my imagination was strangely lit.

Nirad Chaudhuri is a liberal, a product of the Bengali humanism which developed in the 19th century and faded the 20th, whose flower was Tagore. He is puritanical, a Hindu born in the Victorian age who came to manhood in Calcutta when it was the greatest city in Asia and the second city of the Empire after London. He exemplifies one of the traditional functions of authorship, the upbraiding of one's contemporaries for having fallen short of some superior state. And now at 92, still in possession of all his faculties and organs, this man – brilliant, chastening, exasperating, apparently inextinguishable – is a conundrum which has to be witnessed.

The house in North Oxford turns out rather to resemble its owner: Edwardian, toylike, but plenty of room within and solidly constructed. Mr Chaudhuri is immediately at the door as though he's been waiting behind it for my knock, a little doll in Bengali clothes with the alertness and elasticity of a child's movement, but unlike a child he is perfectly groomed. He is also overflowing with vivacity and good humour. The effect of this bizarre triumph over time is quite shocking, accustomed as we are to people falling to bits after 50.

He is in full flood from the moment we meet, talking excitedly in a marked Indian accent, and rapidly, with many variations of rhythm and pitch enlivened by hoots of laughter. It isn't easy to interrupt or divert him. For him talk is less like conversation and more like writing, an individual form of expression, at best a clash of wills. The first thing one wants to know is why he is living Oxford.

'Nothing in my life has been planned. Never have I applied for a job in my whole life! No, I've been asked. The family of Professor Max Müller asked me to write a biography of him. I agreed because my interest as a writer is – interaction between Europe and India. He was one of the key figures and his papers are in the Bodleian. Quick visit in 68 – then I came here from Delhi in 1970 to work on the book. I found I could work more comfortably –'

'In this climate?'

'No, more comfortably in Oxford than in London. In this climate of course! That is no question! Nobody could be normal in the Indian climate.'

In 1979 he and his wife were still here. He'd just seen out the third of his books to be written in England,

Hinduism. The biography of Müller was published in 1974 and *Clive of India* in 1975.

'At a conference on Commonwealth literature a director of Chatto & Windus asked my wife what are you going to do now? She said we are going back to India. He asked why? Because we have run through all our money. And he said shall I come to-morrow with a contract? Because Mr Chaudhuri should write the second part of his autobiography. But let me tell you for a moment – all my writings are really about myself. Egoism of the worst kind! All writers – very self-centred, have to be, though some project this on to others. After all a man is nothing if he is not egoistic. So we stayed on and by 1980 decided it would not do to return – in the first place I never kept well in India. Curious that although I was born in the tropics and lived there until my 73rd year, I never got used to the heat. Cold does not trouble me at all. The light here is like a perpetual dawn which I like, but when it's sunny it's wonderful – brightness without glare. And now – my wife is disabled with arthritis and three heart attacks she had. But let me tell you – once you are uprooted you can be at home anywhere.'

They have three sons. One is a professor of economic history at London University, the other two are in India, one in manufacturing, the other in television. There is a grandson in London at Westminster School and a granddaughter in India but, despite his years, no great-grandchildren.

'This is because I married late – 34 – which is very late for a Hindu.' So presumably did his sons.

'To what do you –'

'Wait a minute. Apart from that, I cannot go back to live there because I never eat any Indian food. It doesn't agree with me – especially starch. From 1948, 49, I have survived only on meat, milk products, vegetables, fruit usually in the English style, occasionally in the French or Italian. Our social life is entirely European. In the last 20 years, only two Indian families have come to our house.'

Crikey. I've received more than that.

'To what do you ascribe your longevity?'

I pronounce the word with a hard 'g' and he very gently suggests that this might be incorrect. I think I've always pronounced it with a hard 'g' and must therefore assume that throughout my life and education that is how I've heard it pronounced, even though I'm not from Liverpool. But I've never felt quite certain about it. Liverpoolians of course pronounce every 'g' they come across and they pronounce them hard and loud.

'Longing' would have two hard 'g's in Liverpool. However 'longevity' is a different sort of case and the first thing I do when I get back home is look it up in *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*. He's absolutely right. The proper pronunciation is with a soft 'g' like 'j'. So – to what does he ascribe his longevity?

'I started my first book when I was six months short of 50. I gave myself an expectation of life of two years. I have always been a frail man, and very suffering at that time from heart and other troubles, and I thought – shall I die without leaving anything behind? And writing this first book gave me a kind of new life. Do you know how old I am?'

'Yes. 92 on November 23rd. I did my research. Are you going to have a birthday party?'

'I have not invited anyone but my wife has ordered a cake.'

'Perhaps the photographer could come on your birthday and photograph you cutting the cake. Would you mind?'

'Not at all. Now listen – I still do the gardening myself. And every plant I have planted. Physical exertion must be maintained to the end of life to the extent you can undertake it. In the garden I know the exact limit – after half an hour I leave off digging, rest 15 minutes. You must n-e-v-e-r do anything out of breath. Thirdly, healthy diet. I discovered what to eat but couldn't put it into practice until 1948 because of money problems. Even so I could not undo the harm that was done to my

body since my 15th year – so I say my body is a derelict cottage I am living in. But! I have never met an Englishman even 30 years younger than me who doesn't have a bent back. Never met one. But look at mine. Straight!' He stands to attention facing away from me, his heels together, arms smartly down at his sides, hands flat against his legs, pleased as punch.

'Fourthly, the violent [when he emphasises a word his voice often glissandos up to a warbling falsetto] dislike all Hindus have for any recreation or leisure activity. They like to talk but they talk only shop. But I said no! And from 1945 decided I'll never work after lunch –'

'Very wise. What time do you get up?'

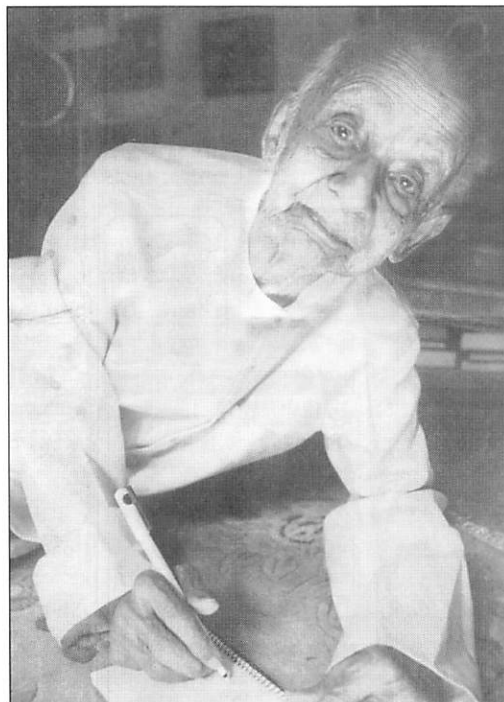
'5 o'clock.'

'In the morning?'

'Yes. I have found that if I write anything in the afternoon, I have to throw it away the next day, so why should I waste my time?'

'So how do you occupy your afternoons?'

'I'll tell you.' But he continues with the previous



subject. 'Even when I was in salaried employment, I never went back to the office after lunch. As long as my work was completed on time, which was writing talks for broadcasting, they permitted it. Now – I wear Bengali clothes at home. Cool, easy, relaxed. I believe you can add 10 years to your life if you wear clothes like this.'

He is sitting on a chair beside the fireplace, legs crossed, hands clasped round one knee, in his fine cottons. Does he ever wear western clothes?

'Of course. Outside. Here in England. Now I'll tell you what – I'm a believer in authenticity. But unless you are authentic to the circumstances in which you are born you can never be authentic in any manner you are adopting. So I can enjoy the authentic life of an English gentleman only by not ceasing to be an authentic Bengali. I didn't start to wear European clothes until 1942 when I was 44. There were English tailors in Calcutta but they went out of business in 47 with Independence. After that all my European clothes were made in England. I have three evening dresses, including the tail. Nowadays you don't see a hat on anybody – but I have six hats. My body is very small and also asymmetrical so I can only wear bespoke, Walters used to make my clothes here but they don't do tailoring any more so I had to go to Hall Brothers where they used to make 200 suits a year and now they make 20. My tweed jacket, do you know how much it cost?'

'£200?'

'£340!'

'And your afternoons...'

'Do you know something? Recreation is as necessary as food. I adopt a new recreation every five years – without giving up the old one. Gardening, listening to music, reading, walking, nature, architecture – you must keep mind moving. And also some external changes. For example, in the hall I have recently switched two pictures round.'

This systematic approach to pleasure is very Bengali and indeed very Victorian. No wonder the two got on. He then presents me to his hi-fi equipment, a curious ensemble bedecked with home-made adjustments – weights, lagging, and so forth. It's like something out of H.G.Wells and he explains every aspect with pride and painstaking detail. Here is a little extract.

'I cannot afford first class equipment, so using my grey cells – as Poirot says in Agatha Christie novels – I have raised third class equipment to the second class. It took me 7 months simply to place the speakers properly. They are angled towards each other and upwards – the alignment must be 3 or 4 inches above the ear – I know something about acoustics. The ideal for domestic listening is a room 15 feet by 9, exactly the size of this one, a fortunate accident – but –'

'I'll change the subject –'

'No, longevity, so this is an interest, a purpose in living. And a sign of success – when an author's books are

reprinted after a long interval, because most books now die in six months. Look, here is the most widely-circulated Bengali weekly magazine with a picture of me writing – when I write in Bengali I always write on the floor with a pen but when I write English always on a typewriter at table. Now listen but! One extraordinary thing I'll tell you – I write terribly fast! *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* – nine and a half months only – and I was working in government service at the same time –'

'Government service?'

'All-India Radio is a government department. I can write fast because I never sit down to write until I have the words in my head and I don't write chapters in the order they are published but the one which is most forward in my mind. Another extraordinary thing – I am the only major writer in India who writes in two languages. Either they do it in the mother tongue or in English.'

'Narayan?'

'English only. But I have never allowed my English books to be translated into Bengali, nor vice-versa, because in writing, almost a third of the expression is the rhythm and the two languages have utterly [g-l-i-ssando] different rhythms. Next – I surrender myself to myself. My books are very sincere. When proof-reading I can never explain where the ideas and words have come from because the thing is done sub- or supra- consciously. The writer and the reviser are two different persons. Do you know what I have found? That sometimes I have written a word whose meaning I don't consciously know – but I have used it correctly.'

'I've done the same. I have also done the opposite of course.'

'So I surrender myself to the subject and the subject has dictated its expression.'

Michelangelo – I consider sculpture the most difficult art because you cannot revise – someone asked him how on earth he could get the expression on the face of his statue Night without making any mistake. Do you know what he said? That statue was already in the marble block and I had no trouble at all – I had only to cut away the little pieces of marble around it.'

This explains why Chaudhuri's books are original in their form as well as in their content. He has meanwhile taken down a volume on Michelangelo to verify the reference and show me the statue's beautiful expression, sitting down beside me on the sofa, tapping my knee and arm, and looking directly into my eyes with a grinning pixie-like face. The only obvious signs of ageing are his laugh lines and mottled complexion. For a bibliophile the volumes are few and unremarkable – *The Joy of Knowledge*, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, popular editions of the classics; His library of 5000 remains in India. The furniture is plain, in no particular style, and although he says that all the prints are 18th century, such items are not rare and this is not the interior of a moneyed man. However he has obviously escaped the poverty of earlier days. What are the advantages of old age?

'I have all the advantages of experience, retaining all the enthusiasm of youth! The reception of my work heartens one at the end of life. I have struggled against abuse ever since I began to write. Because I wrote the truth.'

'But in the end the truth is irresistible.'

'Exactly. To sacrifice conviction for popularity is the worst mistake a writer can make. In 1898 Kipling's *Jungle Book* had sold only 34 copies. *Gone With The Wind* – probably the novel with the highest [glissando to screeching falsetto] sales in the history of fiction – not even mentioned in the article on American fiction in the Encyclopaedia. Not even mentioned! Do you know the trouble I had with *Thy Hand*? First of all the editor said halve its length, but I couldn't even though it might mean that my book is never published – ever. Six months later Chatto asked for it again. New management. They agreed to publish as it was – on one condition, American collaboration. They approached 25 American publishers – every one rejected it. Then Chatto said never mind, we'll go ahead. When it came out with good reviews I got my American edition – ha, it's even better printed and bound than the English edition and price less! But Americans will only publish books which are already successful.'

'Well, they don't like anything with the individual stamp – it must be corporate, conform to a type.'

'Then no serious book on any subject can be written in America because there is no creation without individualism. Our individualism is given to us so that we will add something to creation. And unless you are doing something creative, you have no right to individualism.'

What does Nirad think of Gandhi?

'Great man. But his way was not my way. I have always condemned abnormal asceticism like Gandhi's because I say anything which is anti-physiological, anti-biological cannot be moral. No human being in moral conduct can be higher than a wild animal – because in nature there is no conflict.'

Mountbatten?

'What a bounder!'

Krishnamurti?

'Charlatan, utter charlatan!'

'I liked him.'

'All these wretched Hindus exploiting Western superstition. Disgusting. I lost my faith in everything religious at the age of 18, 19. Fundamentally I am against all supernatural agencies.'

'So was he.'

'Funnily enough I have the make-up of a mystic but believe everything is immanent. Nothing from outside.'

For me Chaudhuri's and Krishnamurti's way of speaking have a lot in common, though superficially dissimilar. Opposite sides of a coin. But only Churchill in modern times seems to command his full respect. What writers does he admire?

'Nearly all English writers from Shakespeare and Hooker to George Moore but from 1925 onwards I have

not tried to keep up-to-date. I never consciously modelled my prose – nonetheless it was deeply influenced by my reading of French, especially the prose of the 17th century. I'm the only man in India who had the complete works of Pascal in 14 volumes. Anatole France influenced me profoundly. Walter Pater – I don't write like him but magnificent prose in his way.'

For his fellow Bengali, Tagore, he has great admiration too. 'But! Very hostile to his own people, maladjusted – exactly like me!'

Am I going to meet Nirad's wife? I don't think so. I think she's upstairs. Chaudhuri has recounted the Hindu obsession with fair skin and his own problems in marrying a 'dark' girl.

'Don't forget that India has always been the creation of foreigners. Aryan, Persian, British. The Aryans were Europeans by origin from south Russia and they have never forgotten their original complexion. I'll tell you, I never saw my wife before the wedding night. A relative came and warned me – what are you going to do, marrying a dark girl and you a poor journalist and you will get some dark daughters and never be able to marry them. I knew a beautiful, very dark Indian girl from Pietermaritzburg in South Africa who came to India and she said "I was treated better in Pietermaritzburg". A mother reproaching her daughter – why are you so stuck-up? You will never get married with your dark complexion. Diabolically cruel, monstrous! I knew a young girl reproached like this, daughter of a vice-chancellor of a University, and she hanged herself and died'

India he calls the Continent of Circe, after the goddess who turned all visitors to her island into swine. He has not been back since 1970.

'And I don't want to. The political conditions make me very angry and I'd do something rash and have to suffer for it. The present regime is the most corrupt in our long unhappy history. Pakistan is probably worse. And that wretched Bangladesh – muslim Bengal – is the worst of all. We Hindus wanted independence for 1700 years and how we have bungled it! There is no psychological subtlety among modern Indians. They are crude. Everything is good, bad, black, white. I am too complex for them.'

And England?

'England is decadent, the young people are savages, but here I can still live according to the lights I have always known and nobody will interfere with me. Of modern Britain I like nothing! But there is a timeless Britain which I can always get at – landscape, old houses, Oxford bells. The other day I went to Malvern. Wonderful!'

'I think that is under siege too. The landscape certainly is – which frightens me. What frightens you?'

'One thing which frightens my wife and me – we never talk about it – it would be horrible to leave one without the other. Who shall go first? She is just 80. For the first 50 years of our married life she was the stronger and I was the invalid. Now it is the other way round'

Where will he be buried?

'The other day somebody said do you have dining rights in any college and I said no and he said you should have and I said what does it matter, I'm soon going to the Oxford Crematorium!' Explosive mirth... 'I have no official connection with the University, none, but I have an odd feeling that there's a kind of resentment in the academic community that I'm here, a non-academic poking his nose in, pretending to be learned when he is not.'

Oh yes, that sounds very Oxford, guarding its perimeter. But one need not be sentimental about human beings who reach the age of 92 – they are not sentimental about us.

'I don't mind,' he says, 'because academic life brings about a kind of fossilisation.'

'You're a rebel.'

'No! Being a rebel is being estranged – rejecting. I am above that. Rebellion is the mark of a slave.'

'Returning to landscape – will we save the ecology?'

'I doubt that this can be accomplished by idiots. Although we Indians are morons squared, you British at least are morons! You can't eliminate human greed but it must have different objectives. Greed for clean air for example.'

The Americans he considers the most degenerate people in the world today. This leads him onto the destructiveness of the motor car and of television, the collapse of family life and conventional sexual morality, and at this point, for the very first time, he begins to take on something of the cliché of every old man who says that the world has gone to the dogs, that things were much better then. When indeed wasn't the world decadent and shitty to many minds? To all people who say that our social ills come from the breakdown of traditional family life, I always cite Sicily where traditional family life is the strongest in the west and where public life is totally corrupt and all forms of banditry still widespread. A whole criminal system – mafia – has been built on traditional family life. I tell Nirad this now.

'Oh... He's man enough to stop in his tracks but it's not in his nature to give an inch and he's immediately clawing back the situation. 'Well... you see, there must be balance in everything!' and there follows lots on the subject of balance.

'Do you know what I believe? The British have lost their standards.'

'Oh, that's a shame.'

'I have been asked to give a lecture to the Historical Society of St John's College. I have chosen the Hinduisation of the British People – an extraordinary taking on of the habits of slovenliness and viciousness which they vehemently condemned in their Indian subjects.' He explodes with laughter again. 'When my wife was well we would have guests for a five course dinner or four course lunch and always three wines at the table and never serve a wine except in its proper glass. So I never drank hock until I could afford to buy hock glasses – it is expensive for me to buy glasses because all mine are cut crystal. But in 43 years since I took up

alcohol I never once opened a bottle for myself, only for conviviality. Always château bottled. And never anything later than 1975. I have a wine which is 1871, a Madeira!'

'You took up alcohol late.'

'I took it up in my 40s. One – to teach my sons civilised drinking so they don't roll in the ditch with the first tumbler of rum. Two – socialising among Europeans in Delhi – you can't just offer them chlorinated water. And three – to enjoy wine with European food.'

In the course of his rushes of monologue he will frequently scamper to the bookcase, pull out something and read (after removing his spectacles) not quotations but whole chunks of text. He quotes much from memory in English and French. Kipling he quotes many times. He has written that the ruling Englishman in India 'resented our devotion to English literature as a sort of illicit attention to his wife...' A lifetime of feeling the outsider has made him fearless and rigid in his opinions. But this is tempered by sweetness of character, high spirits, delightful candour.

'Do you dream?'

'At night? Horrible dreams! For 20 years I dream almost every other night but only about India and every dream a nightmare. I'm drowning, I'm being crushed, I'm not having anything to eat. I have lived a happy life my own way but why do I never dream of anything pleasant in India? Last night I dreamt I was in a horrible Indian landscape, lost, couldn't find my way, oooooo terrible! I love Indian architecture but I only dream ruins or labyrinths'

He pops out and returns with crisps and Löwenbrau beer on a tray.

'That's strong beer.'

'Not strong for me,' he says. 'Oh yes, no one will say I'm a sensible person. Totally mad! Even though we live in a world of cultural, social and environmental decay brought about by technological progress, I try to be an optimist.' Squeals of laughter. 'I have just bought a new recording of Handel's *Messiah* – what glorious singing! Now, yes, listen!' He reads a great chunk from his own book, comparing the present age to the 5th century when Saint Augustine saw the Graeco-Roman world crumbling all around him.

Readopting his specs he says 'Perhaps a new generation will arise out of the desert, so I quote Racine – sing, people of the world, sing! I said this to Bertrand Russell and he replied "But I shan't live to see it". I wanted to say "What does it matter whether Bertrand Russell lives to see it?" But I didn't.'

'What is happiness for you?'

'In function. Oh I don't believe in an afterlife! Since I think we come into the world not for ourselves but for the sake of the world. So – to neglect one's gifts and not use them is a sin against the law of life.'

This article will be included in Duncan Fallowell's forthcoming collection, The Rise and Fall of the Celebrity Interview. His third novel, A History of Face Lifting, will be published in February 2003.

Is the European Union the new Soviet Union?

Vladimir Bukovsky

I ought to be the happiest man in the universe today after in 1991 my lifelong enemy the Soviet Union collapsed and disappeared. Indeed twenty years ago speaking in Westminster Hall, President Reagan boldly proclaimed the Soviet Union and the communist system to be on the ash-heap of history. At the time his words were greeted at best with disbelief or at worst with mockery but twenty years later even the Communists don't like to be called by that name any more, while the last General Secretary of the Soviet Government earns his living selling pizza. In reality however, I find very little to celebrate. We might have won a few decisive battles under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher but contrary to popular belief we surely did not win the Cold War. If we interpret the Cold War as some kind of military confrontation between the Warsaw Pact and NATO there was some sort of victory, but first and foremost it was an ideological war, a confrontation between the liberal democracies and communist totalitarianism, and that war will never be finished.

The Soviet Union and its allies collapsed not because we won but because they exhausted themselves, mostly through their own stupidity, in the arms race, and attempting to finance their huge empire, they simply over-stretched themselves, but right to the last moment of their existence, the West actually tried to prop them up with loans, technology and diplomatic support. In the crucial last seven years the Soviet government received 45 billion dollars of foreign assistance to prolong its existence. In those seven years the West shifted its support from real democrats like us to liberal communists and communist reformers, thus making any of our efforts completely useless. And when the Soviet Union finally collapsed there was no jubilation in the West, no demand for punishment for the most odious perpetrators of crimes against humanity. The Western leaders even looked saddened and embarrassed by the death of their former adversary, although it was probably the most significant event of the whole century.

The consequences of this unfinished business are very grave indeed, more serious than the unfinished war with Saddam Hussein. Just imagine if in 1945 instead of unconditional surrender the victorious allies would have accepted some kind of *perestroika* from the Nazi

regime. What would have happened in Western Europe? In thirty years Europe would have had anything but democracy. It would have had a post-totalitarian period, whatever that means, and of course in a few years the Nazi party and its collaborators under a different name would have come to power in every country. They would have run a milder version of their regime, but nevertheless they would be doing it. And that is exactly what is happening today not only in Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria but even in Poland, where recent elections brought a stunning victory for the former communists. Is that a victory in the Cold War? Do we still believe we won it?

In Russia things went even more badly. The last Presidential elections show what kind of democracy this country had established for itself when the voters had a surprising choice between a communist leader and a colonel of the KGB. Indeed, the KGB has won. After ten years of half-hearted attempts at reform the power was handed back to them once again, and they were very quick to establish their authority throughout the country. The last outlets of the independent media were closed down one by one. We didn't have political prisoners for ten years; but several people are in prison now for speaking out against the war in Chechnya, or some abuses of military powers, or about the pollution caused by nuclear waste.

Corruption today in Russia is something out of another world. It's not corruption any more, but a system where the KGB have become something like a crime syndicate not unlike the famous Spectre of the James Bond films. This is a very bad moment for the West to suddenly warm towards Russia, yet that is exactly what we are seeing. Putin was received by President Bush who said he looked into his soul. In my many encounters with KGB officers soul is the one thing I failed to spot. Your Prime Minister Tony Blair went to Russia to welcome the new allies in the anti-terrorist coalition. He said how pleased he was that Russia stands alongside the West in this war because, and I quote, 'Russia has such vast experience in fighting terrorism'. I never thought I would live long enough to hear a Western politician making such a strange statement. It's as insulting and callous as saying that Germany has a vast

And when the Soviet Union finally collapsed there was no jubilation in the West, no demand for punishment for the most odious perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

experience in dealing with the Jews. In its former phase Russia practically invented terrorism and spread it across the world, and these new hot spots of terrorism, be they Muslim or otherwise, all have a previous history of Soviet invasion, of Soviet subversive operations, or Soviet so-called liberation fronts financed and trained in Moscow. That's what Russia's experience of terrorism consists of.

What about the West itself: the former communist collaborators, sympathizers and apologists, are they now condemned, are they now retired or pensioned off? On the contrary, in many Western European countries they are still the decision and opinion makers, and they are developing a new structure in our continent. It's really puzzling that we just buried by a miracle one monster which had been threatening us for fifty years and yet another one remarkably similar to the one we buried is being built.

The USSR was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. What is the European Union? Quite recently, before the elections in Italy and Austria, it was almost a union of Socialist Republics. The Soviet Union was always very eager to keep its own model of socialism in place and if anyone tried to deviate, they were either invaded or put under enormous pressure. That method was called the Brezhnev doctrine. Now exactly the same has happened in Europe. When Austria deviated from the course of socialism it was ostracised. Milosevic's socialism was somewhat different from the people in Brussels, so his country was bombed.

How was the Soviet Union governed? It was governed by fifteen unelected people who appointed each other and who were not accountable to anyone. How is the European Union governed? By two dozen people who appoint each other and are not accountable to anyone, and whom we cannot sack. How was the Soviet Union created? By coercion or very often with the military occupation of the Red Army. How is the European Union created? Admittedly not by armed force, but by coercion and bullying, making it impossible for any other country to live outside it economically. It is like a shot-gun marriage. The Soviet Union had in its constitution the right of secession for the constituent republics. It existed for propaganda purposes, particularly as there was no actual procedure and even to talk about it was considered a crime against the territoriality of the Soviet Union. I was amazed to discover that more or less the

same situation exists in the European Union. You can enter it but you can't quit. No one said so far you cannot quit but a procedure is not in place. That seems to be very similar to what I used to know.

The Soviet Union was a very aggressive country; it couldn't exist unless it spread its own model of socialism further and further. The moment it stopped spreading, it started collapsing and I suspect that the same thing is true of the European Union. Although economically it makes no sense for them to attract more new countries, they impose enormous pressure on the half-developed Eastern European countries and some other European countries like Switzerland to join the union. It seems to be ideological. They used to be told in the Soviet Union that the purpose of its function was to create a new historic entity, the Soviet people. We were supposed to forget our nationalities, our ethnic traditions and customs. Growing up in Russia, you couldn't tell a Ukrainian from a Russian; it was not supposed to be mentioned, for we

were supposed to be one entity. The same seems to be true of the European Union. They don't want you to be British or French. They want you all to be a new historic entity – European. One of the grand purposes of socialism was always the destruction of the national state. The old belief was that the state would wither away –

with some help from them. And that's exactly what we observe in Europe. The purpose of this agglomeration from Brussels is to absorb nation states, so that they should cease to exist.

Some might say my comparison is not accurate because the Soviet Union was an ideological state and the European Union is a practical, pragmatic arrangement. In reality the European Union today is based on a very firm ideology. It's a statist ideology involving the preservation of socialism for ever but also the ideology of political correctness, which has become the rule. One might say that the Soviet Union had a gulag, and as long as a country doesn't have a gulag it cannot be compared with the Soviet Union. I think we already have the beginning of a gulag in the European Union. At least we have an intellectual gulag. When anyone tries to speak his own mind on questions of race or gender, if their views differ from those approved, they will be ostracised, might not be able to occupy a professional job or to publish a book. This is the beginning of the gulag. The Home Secretary has tried to introduce a bill making 'hate' speech a punishable offence, something completely contrary to the common law of this country.



The Treaty of Nice includes provisions for creating a European Police Force which will have enormous privileges, including diplomatic immunity. Can you imagine, a policeman coming to you, beating you, taking whatever he wants, and you can't even sue him because of his diplomatic immunity? If you introduce some kind of subversive hate speech into a computer in one country, you might be extradited from your own country without any prior hearings and without any of your rights being defended by local law. I have seen myself how easy it is to lose your freedom and how difficult it is to get it back.

The EU is only half a plan. Even being a half is awful enough. In a sense I can tell what will happen because to re-jig Lincoln Steffens's phrase, I lived in your future and it didn't work. The results of what they are doing in Europe will be exactly opposite to what is promised. They told us that they need the federal state to avoid war in Europe; there is no danger of war at the moment but after many years of the European Union, Europe will certainly be on the verge of conflict. We are told that to surmount all our prejudices and national feelings we will be living as multi-national communities ever after. The opposite is going to happen. After living in the Soviet Union, which was supposed to be a happy family of nations, we had more ethnic conflicts than anyone. We are told that the aim is to become prosperous, the economy will be strong, on a par with the United States, and capable of competing with it. The opposite will happen; the over-regulated, stupidly organized economy of the European Union will become very weak. People will become increasingly poor and more dependent on the United States. The game the Socialists play in the West is very similar to Lenin's game. He concentrated on the proletariat and on minorities in order to take power and govern in their name. The western socialists are doing very much the same. A couple of years ago I read a revealing study published by the European commission about employment problems in Europe: In twenty years Europe will be so short of labour that thirteen million people will have to be imported from the Third World. In France there is high unemployment at present and they are not in danger of a shortage of labour. Why from the Third World? Plenty of qualified workers exist in Eastern Europe and Russia. The European Commission doesn't want them to come here; they want ethnically different people. Being from Eastern Europe myself, I sympathize with people seeking asylum from persecution and I am very tolerant, but it is one thing to be tolerant of what you have and another to deliberately create a huge problem which will become disruptive.

We all know that the absorption of immigrants from

the Third World is a painful process. Why do they do it? First they will create an electorate for the Social Democratic parties by redistributing wealth and assistance. Second we will all be made to appear guilty. Anyone who says anything about this problem will instantly become a pariah: very convenient for repressive measures to silence opposition. The ultimate goal of these Utopians is to have one big state out of the whole world. We insensitive and egotistic people don't sympathize enough with the problems of the Third World. If the Third World is brought into Europe, they will have to sympathize much more, or else. I don't think the European Union will ever develop a chain of concentration camps because you don't have a Siberia. The Shetlands are not bad enough. What might happen is that they will send us for counselling. Instead of spending time in a psychiatric prison, there will be collective counselling which will be the European version of the Gulag.

I can predict that this Union will collapse. It has within it the seeds of its own destruction, like the Soviet Union, but it will leave immense destruction behind and we will be left with huge economic and ethnic problems. The sooner they are assisted in their own destruction, the better. The good news is that it's much easier

to resist the bureaucrats in Brussels than the KGB. They are just intellectuals; they want to talk about love for humanity; they don't have any experience of ruthlessness or the capacity to kill millions of people. The bureaucrats in Brussels are afraid of crowds. Look how

scared they were by the anti-globalist demonstrators. If we have a real mass movement against the Brussels project, they will forget all their plans and run away. The one thing we can count on is their cowardice.

This article is based on a talk given at a public meeting in the House of Commons in February 2002, organised by the Anti-Common Market League. Vladimir Bukovsky spent twelve years in Russian psychiatric prisons and labour camps, a victim of the crackdown on political demonstrations in the early 1960s. He came to the West in 1976.

A bibliography of the the writings of George Chowdharay-Best, [a former contributor to the *Salisbury Review*] is available in the new electronic British Library Journal at <http://www.bl.uk>

James Anthony Froude and the roots of our modern political malaise

John Coleman

In writing about James Anthony Froude in this journal it is surely most appropriate to begin with the letter from Lord Salisbury in 1892 offering him the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Oxford, two years before his death:

Dear Mr Froude,

As you are doubtless aware, the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Oxford is vacant by Dr Freeman's death. I write to you with some hesitation: for on the one hand it may be that you are thoroughly disinclined for the duties of such a post – though they are not heavy. On the other hand, I do not like to sacrifice any chance of obtaining the services for Oxford of her most famous historian – a feeling to which a recent perusal of Katharine of Aragon has naturally given great vividness. Pardon me if I have done wrong in asking you to allow me to submit your name to the Queen.

In any case consider this communication confidential for the present.

Yours very truly,

Salisbury

Froude had had difficult times at Oxford after the publication of *Nemesis of Faith* in 1849. Like his friend John Ruskin he was unhappy with the popular Victorian version of religion, which Ruskin described as 'gas lighted, gas inspired Christianity'. He was also viciously attacked, as Lord Salisbury must have known, by his predecessor as Professor of Modern History, Edward Freeman, whose taunt that he was 'constitutionally inaccurate' has pursued him ever since and is even to be found in recent editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His American biographer Waldo Hilary Dunn has done much to restore his reputation as an historian. The second volume of the biography starts with a quotation from Professor Francis Clarke in the London Mercury of August 1930: *If his "constitutional inaccuracy" is to remain a compulsory article in the creed of historical scholars, it is time some constitutionally accurate scholar began to prove it.*

The motivation perhaps for much of the opposition to Froude has its origins in the emerging scientific spirit of the Victorian era. His essay 'The Science of History' expressed his view that it is hard to verify a fact in the present day, never mind five hundred years earlier. The accuracy of his painstaking historical works as opposed to certain articles and sketches is probably beyond question but his view of history that it is nearer to a drama than a chronicle is disturbing to historians.

The third major conflict in his life was with the political economists of his time – those who argued that everything is determined by market forces and that morality is only applicable at the individual level. His view of the economists is clearly expressed in his biography of Disraeli, whose views on this subject he saw as identical to his own:

Under the old organisation of England, the different orders of men were bound together under reciprocal obligations of duty. The economists and their political followers held that duty had nothing to do with it. Food, wages, and all else had their market value, which could be interfered with only to the general injury. The employer was to hire his labourers or his hands at the lowest rate at which they could be induced to work. If he ceased to need them, or if they would not work on terms which would remunerate him, he was at liberty to turn them off. The labourers, in return, might make the best of their own opportunity and sell their services to the best advantage which competition allowed. The capitalists found the arrangement satisfactory to them. The people found it less satisfactory, and they replied by Chartism and rick-burnings.

Froude wanted both sides regulated by duty. 'Liberty in the modern sense,' he wrote, 'liberty where the rights of man take the place of the duties of man – such a liberty they [the old English] neither sought nor desired'. This idea is expanded on vividly (to borrow Lord Salisbury's word about *Katharine of Aragon*) in his chapter on 'England and Her Colonies' in his *Short Studies on Great Subjects*:

Under the conditions which I have supposed, England would become, still more than it is at present, a country of enormous cities. The industry on which its prosperity would depend can only be carried on when large masses of people are congregated together, and the tendency already visible towards a diminution of her agricultural population would become increasingly active. Large estates are fast devouring small estates; large farms, small farms... I have spoken of the effect of modern city life upon the body: it would be easy were it likely to be of any service to say more of its effect upon the mind. In those past generations, when the English character was moulding itself, there was a virtue specially recognized among us called content. We were a people who lived much by custom... The same family continued in the same farm, neither adding to its acres nor diminishing them. Shop, factory and warehouse were handed down with

the same stationary character, yielding constant but moderate profits, to which the habits of life were adjusted. Satisfied with his share of this world's goods which his situation in life assigned to him, the tradesman aspired no higher, endeavouring only in the words of the antiquated catechism 'to do his duty in that state of life to which it pleased God to call him'. Throughout the country there was an ordered, moderate, and temperate contentedness, energetic – but energetic more in doing well the work that was to be done, than in 'bettering' this or that person's position in life. Something of this lingers yet among old-fashioned people in holes and corners of England; but it is alien both to the principles and the temper of the new era. To push on, to climb vigorously on the slippery steps of the social ladder, to raise ourselves one step or more out of the rank of life in which we were born, is now converted into a duty. It is the condition under which each of us plays his proper part as a factor in the general progress. The more commercial prosperity increases, the more universal such a habit of mind becomes. It is the first element of success in the course to which the country seems to be committing itself. There must be no rest, no standing still, no pausing to take breath. The stability of such a system depends, like the boy's top, on the rapidity of its speed. To stop is to fall; to slacken speed is to be overtaken by our rivals. We are whirled along in the breathless race of competition. The motion becomes faster and faster, and the man must be unlike anything which the experience of humanity gives us a right to hope for, who can retain his conscience, or any one of the nobler qualities, in so wild a career.

In such a state of things a wholesome one? Is it politically safe? Is it morally tolerable? Is it not certain for one thing that a competition, of which profit is the first object, will breed dishonesty as carrion breeds worms?

In his day Froude could look towards America with hope, great hope. He wrote:

They are the people of the future. In the Americans we may read the character and tendencies of the ages that are to be. They are sprung, like us, from the loins of our own fathers. They claim an equal share with us in the traditions of English history; and their great men trace their descent with as much pride from historical families. Theirs as well as ours are the Plantagenet and Tudor princes. Theirs are Drake and Raleigh, Burghley and Cromwell. Theirs are Chaucer and Shakespeare and Bunyan. In our modern poets and men of science, in Scott and Byron, in Burns and Tennyson, in Macaulay and Carlyle, in Tyndal, in Huxley, in Darwin, in John Mill, they will allow us no exclusive right of possession. Let any Englishman, whom the Americans have learnt to respect, go over there among them and see if he is received as a stranger. Their voluntary and instinctive sympathies prove that between the American and English peoples there are bonds uniting them closer than those which unite any nations on the globe, and

only the action of what are called the governing classes among us prevents the political relations from becoming as intimate as the spiritual.

If Froude were alive today, I think he would have been very sad to see the Victorian commercial culture which he so heartily disliked dominating the United States of America and extended to include the selling of ideas and even selling one's own person, not just one's labour. He would also have been sad to see England's involvement in the present structures of Continental Europe at the expense of both Commonwealth and American links, although I believe he would have welcomed the efforts to construct more peaceful relationships between the Continental nations. He quoted Washington's famous remarks in 1791 about keeping America clear of the entanglements of war, preparation for war and the commotions in Europe and England. Even now I think he would have suspected that many of the old rivalries and quarrels were not so far below the surface. He thought the only sound basis for federation was mutual goodwill, not the scheming of the so-called governing classes.

His views on the two most notable Prime Ministers of the Victorian period, Gladstone and Disraeli, and theirs on him, can only be touched on here. He strongly disliked what he feared would be the effect of Liberal policies and was certainly not well disposed towards Gladstone, believing that he had little sense of the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people. When Disraeli came into a dinner one sensed a response from everyone present, from the Queen to the waiters. Nevertheless he was surprised and pleased when Gladstone responded favourably to his biography of Disraeli. For although he certainly may have disagreed with many of Froude's views, Gladstone had a very high regard for him as he showed in the Home Rule debate in 1886 when he quoted at length from *The English in Ireland* and introduced it saying:

But Mr Froude, although perhaps a man of prepossessions – on that I offer no opinion – is certainly a man of truth and honour, and a man who, if he sees what he believes to be an injustice, will not allow his heart and his conscience to tamper with the principles involved in exposing it.

Froude's view of Disraeli was quite another matter, although he disliked some of his more jingoistic policies with a remarkable intensity. In preparing to write the biography – and he hesitated about this and perhaps would not have done it without the help of Ralph Disraeli, his brother – he revealed his motivation in a letter to Lady Derby:

The point is to make out what there was behind the mask. Had it not been for Lothair I should have said nothing but a charlatan. But that altered my opinion, and the more often I read it the more I want to know what his real nature was.

Froude was surprised and I suspect pleased at Gladstone's positive response to the book.

A few of his thoughts about Empire must be included here. He was no imperialist centralizer. I am sure he would have welcomed the term Commonwealth. He wrote:

No province of such an Empire will be denuded of its wealth, denuded of its genius, denuded of its self-dependence, where the life-blood of the heart will flow freely to the furthest extremities. I saw in Natal a colossal fig tree. It had a central stem, but I knew not where the centre was, for the branches bent to the ground and struck root there; and at each point a fresh trunk shot up erect, and threw out new branches in turn, which again arched and planted themselves till the single tree had become a forest, and overhead was spread a vast dome of leaves and fruit, which was supported on innumerable columns, like the roof of some cathedral. I saw an image as I looked at it, of the future of England and her colonies, if the English people can read the signs of the times.

No doubt Froude would have been delighted today if he could see a similar structure arising in Europe in peace and partnership. Indeed he wished that to happen for the common good of all mankind and yet he knew that there was a cancer latent in most political – indeed most human – endeavours that can suddenly and tragically spring to life. The demon of ambition, that drive always to push ahead and never to be content with the position in life in which we find ourselves could and did ruin the chances of such a hope coming to fruition in this present world.

Many Liberals might have considered Froude an absolutist, but a wiser estimate was expressed by the American Bret Harte in a letter to his wife when he was staying with the Froudes in Devon: ‘He is great, honest, manly – democratic in the best sense of word.’ Froude was never too sanguine about his hopes for the future and his mixed feelings come vividly through another letter to Lady Derby in 1880:

I am glad there is to be an end to “glory and gun-powder”, but my feelings about Gladstone remain where they were. When you came to power in 1874, I dreamed of a revival of real Conservatism which under wiser guiding might and would have lasted to the end of the century. This is gone – gone for ever. The old England of order and rational government is past and will not return. Now I should like to see a moderate triumvirate – Lord Hartington, Lord Grenville, and your husband, with a Cabinet which they could control. This, too, may easily be among the impossibilities, but I am

sure that at the bottom of its heart the country wants quiet, and a Liberal revolutionary sensationalism will be just as distasteful to reasonable people as “Asian Mysteries”, tall talk and ambitious buffooneries.

Much earlier he had written: ‘I have no hope that things will go right or that men will think reasonably until they have exhausted every mode of human folly’. His forebodings grew rather than diminished with the years and were similar to those expressed by the third Marquis of Salisbury when he contemplated the 20th century as he walked along the beach with his daughter, as recorded by his most recent biographer Andrew Roberts.

As a postscript it might well be asked what the relevance of these views is today. Froude was not first and foremost an historian. I believe his primary concern was with what was happening in his own times, which his depth of interest in Carlyle amply demonstrates. Were

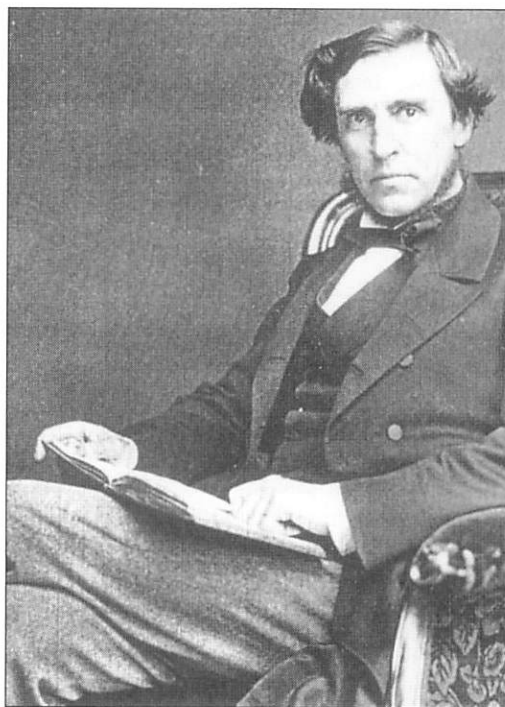
he alive today, I am certain that he would apply the same critical criteria to the present as he did to the Victorian era. It seems to me that in what is now called the post-industrial age, with its intellectual quicksands of post-modernism, the present conservative Party has nowhere else to turn except to Conservatism in the very sense in which Froude understood it.

The race to which Victorian England was committing itself in his day – which I suppose is what ordinary people now refer to as the ‘rat race’ – has provided the Labour Party and the Liberals (in all their varieties) with the opportunity to recover every item of clothing stolen from them by the Conservatives

over the last 150 years. This competitive society has spawned an education system which is seen by most parents as a means of enabling their children to rise in the volatile social scheme of things. It is the very reverse of the older order which said ‘Like father, like son’. John Ruskin described it unforgettably in *Sesame and Lilies*:

But, an education “which shall keep a good coat on my son’s back; – which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitors’ bell at double-belled doors; which shall result ultimately in the establishment of a double-belled door to his own house; in a word, which shall lead to advancement in life; – this we pray for on bent knees – and this is all we pray for.”

However, far from lifting the poor of the world out of destitution, industrial policies based on competition are plunging us into a consumerist nightmare. Neighbours do



not co-operate but seek to get one up on each other, the environment is sacrificed to economic growth, those who fail in the 'rat race' resort to street crime, families and communities break down and welfare schemes are largely devised to mitigate the worst effects of the breathless race. Added to this is the fact that those who gain power have to struggle frenetically to manipulate the resentments of the various groups, usually minorities, that they claim to support in order to keep ahead in the opinion polls on which their precarious power depends. Modern sleaze is surely a natural outcome of this race to which the England of Froude's day committed us. Likewise, the negative aspects of feminism are a very understandable response of women who have been bewitched by the spell that has long gripped the world of men.

The war against terrorism, which is substantially a by-product of this competition and cannot really be won, is likely to confront us with the fact that we are at the end of the road on which the Victorians were enthusiastically embarking in Froude's day. Perhaps it will dawn upon mankind that the real choice is whether we build our

society on the rock of duty or on the shifting sands of economics.

Froude, like Disraeli, believed that the influential classes had largely jettisoned their obligations to society. Both, however, thought that the working classes had on the whole retained their sense of duty. In the 20th century the trades union leaders looked at the behaviour of their masters, saw the opportunity to exploit it and in doing so created their own greasy pole, not infrequently receiving peerages at the end of their careers. Margaret Thatcher dealt with them in a robust way but failed to deal with the burgeoning forces of corporatism in big business which have blighted the latter half of the twentieth century and now threaten the future at least as much as terrorism.

I believe that both Froude and Lord Salisbury would have dealt with big business and the unions in a more even-handed way, for both men believed in a rational, stable form of government.

John Coleman is Co-Director of New European Publications.

Losing the Peace?

Richard English

Northern Ireland has a lot to celebrate,' argued its then Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam, at the end of 1998. It had, she said, been 'a year of achievement', with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and its subsequent endorsement by popular referendum: 'People in Northern Ireland should rightly feel proud of themselves and their politicians for what they have accomplished together.'

It was easy to sympathise with such a view. After thirty years of something like war, Northern Ireland finally had an Agreement which enjoyed approval from most constitutional politicians and also from parties representing republican and loyalist paramilitary politics. The 1998 deal provided for a Belfast assembly, and for a power-sharing executive which featured Irish republicans from the very Provisional movement itself. In a previous era the sight of Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness in the grounds of the Stormont parliament might have led an anxious unionist to telephone the police. Now McGuinness was to become Northern Ireland's Minister for Education.

This sea change attracted world-wide attention, and rightly so. For the London and Dublin governments had facilitated a deal which promised at last to resolve the Northern Irish troubles. Journalists who were long attuned to producing chronicles of bombing and shooting,

now reported instead on what looked like peace.

Were such hopes naïve? They came to look so even within months of the Agreement itself, when dissident Irish republicans produced the single worst atrocity of the troubles with the Omagh bomb in County Tyrone. But the peace process struggled on, jolted as it was from crisis to crisis, from stand-off to stand-off; and the world began not to hear as loud a set of noises as had been customary from the north of Ireland.

Yet now there are again daily tales of shootings, attempted murders, intense inter-communal rioting or continued paramilitary vibrancy and action. Each day's news in Northern Ireland brings, for the most part, no longer political murder; but it does deliver regular instalments of brutal sectarian violence and paramilitary action. Senior police officers frequently warn that the volatile situation is one of genuine danger. Is the peace of 1998 coming to and end in 2002? Why is trouble being re-ignited?

The central problem is one which those familiar with Northern Ireland ought to be very well-placed to recognise: a sizeable minority of the population which feels lastingly and structurally excluded from politics, and which considers their opinions to have been delegitimised and ignored by those in authority. This was, after all, the problem which generated the Northern Irish

troubles in the first place. But this time, it is the Protestant population which is involved, rather than the Catholics. Among many Northern Irish Protestants there is a sense of betrayal, of political insecurity, of anger and of a lack of that very trust and confidence necessary for positive engagement with the region's rapidly changing times.

There are two main causes for this disaffection. The first is a longer-term unionist scepticism or anxiety regarding the entire 1990s peace process. Whether or not one agrees with such scepticism, it is easy enough to explain. Many unionists, already possessing their goal of Northern Ireland's UK membership, saw political change as inevitably moving in the wrong direction. It would be nationalists who would gain concessions through the peace process, they thought, and the process would be one which would weaken rather than strengthen the union with Britain. If nationalists seemed to welcome movement towards peace as synonymous with movement towards the ending of Irish partition, then unionists felt wary as a consequence. 'The unionists are not aspiring for anything,' Ian Paisley suggested to me in 1994: 'they've already got their aspirations, they're in the union, and they mean to maintain the union'. If you had what you wanted, then change was dangerous.

The prevalence of this attitude was reflected in referendum voting on the Belfast Agreement in 1998. Nationalist Ireland, north and south, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the deal. Unionist Ulster, by contrast, was split down the middle. This might itself seem rather ironic. For the Good Friday Agreement was, in many ways, a deal which was more orange than green in complexion (some dissenting Irish republicans even going so far as to suggest that 'GFA' might better be held to stand for 'Got Fuck All'). For the 1998 Agreement saw the British and Irish governments formally recognising that 'the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, freely exercised and legitimate, is to maintain the union and, accordingly, that Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom reflects and relies upon that wish; and that it would be wrong to make any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people'. And, more significantly, this unionist consent principle was endorsed in referendums by the overwhelming majority of Irish nationalists.

Yet the process leading up to this concession towards the end of the nineties was one which many unionists simply viewed with anxiety, as a peace process as producing change necessarily to their disadvantage. By the time of the 1998 deal, many unionists felt that they had just witnessed years of erosion of the ground underneath

their UK feet. The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, the 1993 Downing Street Declaration and so on were felt to have left Ulster perched uneasily on the UK's window-ledge. If the peace process was aimed at resolving the problem in Ulster, and if fashionable opinion saw that problem as one of Catholic disadvantage, then change would be change hostile to unionist interests.

The second broad explanation for current unionist disaffection, however, arises from the subsequent, practical implementation of the 1998 deal. This has been seen by many unionists – including quite a number who voted for the Belfast Agreement – as having vindicated the warnings of those who had interpreted the peace process as a victory for republicans and nationalists. Sinn Féin are now in government in Northern Ireland and even, indeed, have a Belfast mayor, while their profile in the Republic of Ireland also rises with each successive election. IRA prisoners have been released, while the Royal Ulster Constabulary – the largely Protestant police force – has been dissected and reinvented. All of this, so it is argued, has taken place against a background of very little concession from the republican movement itself. The decommissioning of IRA weapons, once seen as a necessary step prior even to Sinn Féin participation in talks, was put off again and again until eventually it was kick-started in 2001 in the wake of September 11 and

the new anti-terrorist spirit in the USA. But the IRA continued to engage in frequent punishment attacks and, occasionally, in killings. They remained a vibrant political army, and Blairite promises that republican involvement in the new Ulster order would

depend upon IRA dissolution seemed laughable in the face of unfolding events.

When, on 22 May 1998, the referendums had been held north and south on the Belfast Agreement, Tony Blair made public pledges and pleas on its behalf, in particular trying to reassure nervous unionist opinion: 'There can be no accelerated prisoner releases unless the organisations and individuals concerned have clearly given up violence for good,' the Prime Minister promised. 'Representatives of parties intimately linked to paramilitary groups can only be in a future Northern Ireland government if it is clear that there will be no more violence and the threat of violence has gone. That doesn't just mean decommissioning but all bombings, killings, beatings, and an end to targeting, recruiting and all the structures of terrorism.' But the IRA did not follow such a path, and yet their suit-wearing Sinn Féin comrades did become a lasting part of the government of Northern Ireland.

To many unionists, this seemed unpalatable. Not only had IRA violence failed to evaporate during the peace process, but during the post-1994 period there

Gerry Adams even claims Belfast has become 'the most republican city' in Ireland. For, in contrast to their divided and demoralised unionist opponents, northern nationalists seem to be in possession of the future.

had been a dramatic rise in punishment attacks by the IRA within their own community. In 1993 (the year before the first IRA ceasefire) there were 31 paramilitary republican shootings or other assaults; in 1994 this figure rose to 86; in 1995 to 141; and in 1996 to 175. Unionists, unsurprisingly, saw this as evidence of continued republican gangsterism. At times, indeed, they felt that the world had turned upside down. In order to placate republicans (responsible for nearly 60% of the deaths in the troubles) one saw the villainising and effective destruction of the RUC police force (responsible for under 2% of such deaths).

As sharp republican strategists had anticipated, unionism found it difficult to know what to do in face of a changed political world. When the war was being fought, the enemy was predictable, and the need for nimble footwork less striking than it is now. Once republicans adopted a new strategy, there was much unionist bewilderment. So unionists became divided over how to respond. Some cried that the process was too corrupt to be endorsed, others that it offered their only hope for a serious future. The unionist world became deeply fragmented. A listing of parties eligible to compete electorally in Northern Ireland in 2001 included the Democratic Unionist Party, the Liberal Unionist Party, the Northern Ireland Unionist Party, the Progressive Unionist Party, the Ulster Unionist Party, the United Kingdom Unionist Party and the United Unionist Assembly Party, and the relations between (at times, within) some of these groups have involved stark hostility.

Against all this, Irish nationalist confidence in Northern Ireland was palpable, reflected in the utterances of articulate republicans. While Danny Morrison could argue in 1997 that, 'Throughout the north nationalists have a drive and a confidence which is palpable', Sinn Féin's Tom Hartley can now tell me about the post-Agreement 'amazing confidence of the Irish nationalist community in the north'; Gerry Adams even feels able to claim that early-twenty-first-century Belfast has become 'the most republican city' in Ireland. For, in contrast to their divided and demoralised unionist opponents, northern nationalists seem to be in possession of the future. Unionists feel besieged by nationalist opponents within the north and by a hostile government in Dublin; they feel betrayed by London; and they (rightly) sense that international opinion is more green than orange on the Ulster question. Yes, the London government might promise that unionist consent is required for constitutional change. But this government has shown itself not to keep its promises. Can it even be trusted on the consent principle at the heart of the Belfast Agreement?

It is against these two contexts – that of long-term peace process scepticism, and that of horror at the nature of post-1998 Good Friday Agreement politics – that the current Northern Ireland crisis is to be understood. In

areas in which Protestants feel sharply threatened by nationalist neighbours (parts of north and east Belfast in particular, on sectarian interfaces), the concerns outlined above manifest themselves in violent action. This finds an antiphonal response from republican neighbours, and localised conflicts thus simmer and occasionally boil over and burn.

It would, of course, be wrong to overstate the problem. In contrast with the politics of Northern Ireland ten or twenty years ago, the violence of 2002 is comparatively limited. It involves far fewer fatalities; and it is limited to localized areas of aggressive inter-communal tension, rather than reflecting large-scale paramilitary guerrilla campaigns. Moreover, Protestant perception is not necessarily an entirely accurate mirror of political realities. While unionist fears and anger are explicable, so too are the attitudes of Irish nationalists in the north who feel that political change was indeed long overdue in Northern Ireland, and who point – quite fairly – to the great ideological distance which republicans have travelled over the last fifteen years.

And it may be that the absence of any viable, cross-community 'Plan B' for Northern Ireland – any serious alternative to 1998 – will, in the end, allow for the maintenance of the Good Friday Agreement. But if a majority of the majority population in an area feel hostile to its political structures, then there are stark dangers open for all clear-sighted observers to see. The leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, David Trimble, has been eloquent in defence of his strategy of pursuing compromise with Irish nationalism, and has emerged as an able advocate of the Good Friday Agreement deal. But his room for manoeuvre is ever more limited the more Ulster's Protestants feel disenchanted with the practical workings of that compromise. Unless something is done to reassure middle-ground unionists that the new order is a trustworthy one, then Mr Trimble will cease to have a strong enough position within unionist politics to bring his side of the Good Friday package with him. And there is no figure in unionist politics able and willing to take his place.

In the late-1960s Ulster stumbled into conflict against a background of rising Irish nationalist expectation, of unionist anxiety in the face of changing times, and of a London government which took too long to recognise the gravity and nuance of the local situation. If the experience is not to be repeated, then the Protestant disaffection of 2002 must be addressed.

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Michael Oakeshott and the Conversation of Mankind

M. Raphael Johnson

In Michael Oakeshott's well-known (1959) essay, 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind,' one detects a version of a social foundationalism, something that Oakeshott's idealism normally does not permit. The foundation in question is to be the fact that social life is essentially a conversation.

For Oakeshott, a voice in the conversation is created by the development of social tradition, and tradition itself is dependent upon social practices that develop over time. Such practices, in a general way, can be called 'modes of experience', and these, in turn, develop their own languages, or forms of self-understanding. Each 'mode of experience' can be said to have a voice, a mode of self-understanding and self-identification in no way detached from the developed body of knowledge upon which it is based. In fact it is both utterly dependent upon it and partially definitive of it. A voice evolves and develops as the practice upon which it is based develops. The social conversation is a dialogue among traditions that, *in toto*, have come to define a certain society.

Each voice is the reflection of a human activity, begun without premonition of where it would lead, but acquiring for itself in the course of engagement a specific character and a manner of speaking of its own: and within each mode of utterance further modulation is discernible.

A sense of social wholeness, a unity in tradition (that is to say, language) that is not found in the methodologies of the social sciences, is known only through the medium of conversation.

Oakeshott's 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind' is an essay in aesthetics, in which he develops the theory that the social conversation exists for no exterior purpose to itself, for no predetermined end, and whose beauty lies in the very act of conversing: 'All utterance should be relevant: but relevance in conversation is determined by the course of the conversation itself, it owes nothing to an external standard.' Aesthetics, in fact, comes across as utterly central to Oakeshott's moral and political theory. His 'Conversation' essay is absolutely vital in understanding his thought. Oakeshott writes of the aesthetic elements in this conversation:

As I understand it, the excellence of this conversation

(as of others) springs from a tension between seriousness and playfulness. Each voice represents a serious engagement (though it is serious not merely in respect of its being pursued for the conclusions it promises); and without this seriousness the conversation would lack impetus. But in participation in the conversation each voice learns to be playful, learns to understand itself conversationally and to recognise itself as a voice among voices.

It is not as if each mode of utterance is wholly sealed off from any other. A language representing a distinct mode of experience is not wholly unintelligible to other modes, for otherwise there would be no social life whatsoever. Such a language, translatable into social discourse, is, however, still dependent upon the practice that gave the language life:

Each voice is at once a manner of speaking, each is wholly conversable. But the defect to which some of the voices are liable is a loosening (even detachment) of what is said from the manner of its utterance, and when this takes place the voice appears as a body of conclusions reached (dogmata), and thus, becoming

eristic, loses its conversability.

The problem for this conversation, then, is that some of the voices take themselves to be the voice of all the others, a voice the vocabulary of which is utterly definitive of the society as a whole. Oakeshott accuses science and 'practical activity' of having precisely that ambition to dominate:

In recent centuries the conversation, both in public and within ourselves, has become boring because it has been engrossed by two voices, the voice of practical activity and the voice of 'science': to know and to contrive are our pre-eminent occupations.

The idea of 'practical activity', in short, is of humanity seeking its own self interest in the social sphere. What Oakeshott is claiming in 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind' is that not only does society suffer by the loss of the conversation, our entire social foundation loses because it is, at root, an aesthetic affair.

Differing ideas make up the universe of each voice. For the 'practical' man, for example, Oakeshott writes: '...every image is the reflection of a desiring self engaged in constructing its world and in continuing to

The place of the poetic (or aesthetic) is central to understanding the moral foundations of Oakeshott's thought.

reconstruct it in such a manner as to afford it pleasure.' Ideas derive from activity and become a part of that activity's vocabulary. The ethical self has for its linguistic nexus 'approval' or 'disapproval', while the scientific has 'fact' and 'not fact', in relation to quantity. In Oakeshott's scheme, the general roles and practices in a society look like this:

1) Practical activity

The world as viewed from the point of view of the will, or the desiring self. Its images and vocabulary derive from viewing things as satisfying a certain desire. This is connected, though not identical to, approval/ disapproval which is the domain of morality. Practical activity consists of these two moments. Either way, the world is to be made coherent by human action in the world in accordance with an idea.

2) Scientific activity

The world as viewed from the point of view of the quantitative. 'Nature' becomes a series of interrelated and logically congruent ideas or, to be more accurate, quantitative concepts.

3) Aesthetic activity

This is a value-free, purposeless imagining; mind without a practical or scientific end; mind 'for itself'.

The place of the poetic (or aesthetic) is central to understanding the moral foundations of Oakeshott's thought. The conversation of mankind, this intersubjective dialogue between differing but conversant idealisms is part of the 'poetic' element of humanity. Oakeshott uses the term 'poetic' interchangeably with the 'aesthetic' and 'contemplative'. This is a mode where contemplating images is done for its own sake, not to engender ideas of 'approval' or 'disapproval', 'fact' or 'not-fact'. When individuals become alienated in a world dominated by science and economics, the aesthetic makes its appearance:

In general, it would seem that any occasion which interrupts the affirmative flow of practical activity, any lessening of the urgency of desire, any softening of the wilfulness of ambitions, or anything that blunts the edge of moral appraisal offers an invitation to contemplative activity to make its appearance.

This should be taken not that aesthetics is a mere pastime or an escape but, in Oakeshott's notion of social conversation, it takes on this character due to its perceived inferiority to the monotone voices of science and business. What makes this perception more believable is the radically different character of the aesthetic experience from the practical and the scientific. These latter have a certain end to which they are headed. It is true that there is no conclusion that can exist apart from an already functioning world of practice, but there is a certain end point at any specific time in a practice's

development. No such point exists for the aesthetic. There are no truth claims made for it, no conclusions, not even any appraisal. Oakeshott's argument, quite counterintuitive for those interested in the field of aesthetics, is that aesthetic images transcend a 'fact/ not-fact' distinction, for they comprise the social conditions by which other functions can become coherent.

Yet it may be supposed that the diverse idioms of utterance which make up our current human intercourse have some meeting place and compose a manifold of some sort. And, as I understand it, the image of this meeting place is not an inquiry or an argument, but a conversation.

In a conversation the participants are not engaged in an inquiry or a debate; there is no 'truth' to be discovered, no proposition to be proved, no conclusion sought.

Of course, a conversation may have passages of argument and a speaker is not forbidden to be demonstrative; but reasoning is neither sovereign nor alone, and the conversation itself does not compose an argument.

Here, the idea of the human conversation fits the concept of the poetic or aesthetic outlined above. The conversation, taken in itself, has no intrinsic purpose. Any sort of 'end' to be discovered is to be found in the course of the actual activity of conversing in the same sense that tradition provides the citizen with a guide to moral behaviour. Though this end is purely contextual and thus tentative, and in no way can be considered 'ultimate', for this 'ultimate' must then have a base outside of the conversation.

The broader point to be understood here is that Oakeshott denied any form of rationalist moral foundationalism in the conventional sense of that phrase. There is no 'state of nature' to provide us with a convenient starting point for social intercourse; a starting point which would furnish us with an 'end' or purpose for our collective life. No end is to be found previous to or outside of the conversation, as an ultimate end can not be found in any mode of activity. Ends are not things which are independent of activity, but are a product of activity. They are the product, therefore, of tradition.

Again, this conversation of Oakeshott's is a metaphor: a metaphor, it might be reasonable to say, crystallising our drive for wholeness in a world where political, social and scientific knowledge can only be contingent and partial. This conversation, in addition, might be taken to refer to the gradual development of a society, its social and productive capital, and the mutual interaction of the various modes of practice that make it up. It is a conception of a society as a whole, in all of its difference; or a society viewing itself as a whole.

The idea of 'friendship' is a relatively common idea in political thought, it is found in developed form in

Morality serves to balance interests in the interest of 'good behaviour'. Oakeshott writes that it is education whose primary purpose is to engender good 'conversational' skills within its beneficiaries.

Aristotle and Cicero and is a significant part of the classical political legacy. Oakeshott's conversation depends upon it. Oakeshott claims quite consistently that there is a reciprocal relationship between traditional social practices and the means whereby human beings come to understand themselves. However, the conversation becomes necessary so as to bring these diverse self-understandings together in dialogue, providing a foundation for stable social intercourse of the society as a whole. It is, further, another example of how our social life, at its most general level, is ultimately an aesthetic and poetic experience:

Friends and lovers are not concerned with what can be made out of each other, but only with the enjoyment of one another. A friend is not somebody one trusts to behave in a certain manner, who has certain useful qualities, who holds acceptable opinions; he is somebody who evokes interest, delight, unreasoning loyalty, and who (almost) engages contemplative imagination. The relation of friends is dramatic, not utilitarian.

Friends also, probably above all, converse. Here, Oakeshott implies that the conversation of humanity is aesthetic. Friendship, in the classical (public and aristocratic) and not in the modern (private and utilitarian) sense, is a means by which the significant distinctions of specific practices can be partially bridged to create a very general idea of a society; the root and foundation of the social conversation and, therefore, of society itself. Social actors, with their specific idioms, develop a common language that comes to define the society as a whole: it is the society's foundation. It would make some sense to say that this arrangement of the component parts of civil life is a moral idea in that it seeks a balance between competing interests within a society, and such a balance, its social acceptance and its communicability is, as we have said, a set of images that derive from civic friendship and, in turn, come from the minimal basic level of communicability among social practices. It is a residual tradition.

Thus, it is quite reasonable to claim morality as a component part of the conversation, but not its ultimate expression:

And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance. I say 'in the end', because, of course, the immediate field of moral activity is the world of practical enterprise, and intellectual achievement appears, in the first place, within each of the various universes of discourse; but good behaviour is what it is with us because practical enterprise is recognised not as an isolated activity but as a partner in a conversation, and the final measure of intellectual achievement is in terms of its contribution to the conversation in which all universes of discourse meet.

Morality serves to balance interests in the interest of 'good behaviour'. Oakeshott writes that it is education whose primary purpose is to engender good 'conversational' skills within its beneficiaries. Morality (in

Oakeshott's definition) is then a junior partner in conversation, an enabler and facilitator at best. Thus, the conversation of mankind must be of a different quality. That quality is quite clearly aesthetic.

The conversation is both the ultimate and the primary expression of our collective life as such. Some of its problems include, as Oakeshott points out, the domination of the conversation by science and (non-moral) practicality. The point is that, in order for any society to function, there must be a basis for communication. Without any general purpose for a social community (outside of specific modes of activity), the conversational metaphor is as close as idealism gets to social foundationalism. It itself has no purpose and is understood merely as a basis for social action, a state of affairs through which a society develops some notion of its own coherence.

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Sophist's Corner

...There have been fatalities among combatants on all sides. We acknowledge the grief and pain of their relatives. The process of conflict resolution requires the equal acknowledgement of the grief and loss of others. The IRA is committed unequivocally to the search for freedom, justice and peace in Ireland...

The IRA Apology, July 2002

Keeping Britain Out Of The Euro

Peter Goodchild

For parties, groups and committed individuals who have already determined their position on Britain's possible entry into the Euro the promised referendum poses an enormous challenge. What is exercising the minds of this relatively small section of the UK population who know clearly what they think on the subject – and in most cases why they think it – is the question of how they can persuade to their own view the vast hordes of Don't Knows and Don't Cares whose votes will of course decide the issue for the nation. This challenge exists principally for the national Yes and No campaign groupings but also for other interested organisations and for individuals who may be trying to persuade friends and relatives. This article sets out to show how that challenge might best be met by those fighting against the Euro (designated the Antis), of whom the author is one, through using what is fundamentally a marketing analysis of the task at hand.

Before looking at the possibilities we need to acknowledge that the majority of even the best educated and best-off among the Don't Know and Don't Care target audiences know virtually nothing of the EU project. You might find older people who remember the Treaty of Rome and the referendum that confirmed our membership of the EEC but only the tiniest number have heard of the Single European Act or the later treaties or the Social Chapter or the Schengen Agreement or '*acquis communautaire*', or QMV (qualified majority voting) or 'subsidiarity' or the ECJ. Among the wider target audience ignorance of how the UK actually got to where it is now within the EU project, let alone where it is going to be if it joins the Euro, is virtually absolute. It is simply not seen as an issue of moment because other matters loom larger in the public imagination and because the entire process has been so gradual and, to be brutally candid on behalf of most people, so very, very boring. It is against the background of this ignorance and indifference that we need to try to establish what could move these people. What will make them think, and animate them to the issue?

For those in favour of the Euro (the Pros), whether operating under the banner of organisations or as individuals trying to persuade colleagues and friends, the challenge of developing a strategy of persuasion is fairly straightforward and, indeed, is largely complete. It amounts to narrowing the entire debate as much as possible. In practical terms this will mean remaining silent on the constitutional implications of Britain losing its

own currency, saying nothing about complex economic and fiscal arguments and avoiding all unpleasant detail such as the transfer of Britain's gold reserves to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. Advocates of the currency will concentrate on the practical benefits of sharing a currency – not needing to change one's money when visiting another EU country, easier ordering and invoicing for businesses, the removal of all exchange rate variations among member states.

These practical 'pluses' will be supported by a wide range of generalities and platitudes which seem to permeate the Yes camp. Firstly, it will be presented as a wholly modern development fitted to the 21st century when nations pooling their resources (even if it means giving up control over what occurs within their own borders) is a positive forward move from the bad old world where strong nation states were pre-eminent. Then there is the greater influence we can achieve by being part of the entire Euro process (as if the views of one among 15 or 20 or 25 could ever be determinant). Next will come unsubstantiated claims for the currency encapsulated in such phrases as 'good for jobs', 'good for investment', essentially meaningless expressions without specification of what jobs and how many and what investments and how much.

Finally, there is the most seductive Pro argument of all – inevitability. Inevitability has long been regarded by the politically mature as a characteristic of only two phenomena, namely death and taxation, but for the Pro-Euros presenting the currency in this light gives it a unique force which, they believe, makes the proposition truly irresistible. Of course, it ignores the fact that Nazism, Communism, the power of trade unions, a wide range of serious infectious diseases and the inability of man to fly have all been regarded at various times and places as inevitable. A measure of determination and perseverance proved otherwise in every case but this cannot be acknowledged by those in favour of the Euro. At its heart inevitability is the main driving argument of the Yes campaign. If they can create the illusion that there is a rolling wave which cannot be withstood, (just look at all those other countries who have happily joined, they will say) residual doubts among the uncertain will disappear and the need for serious and detailed debate be removed.

Perhaps the reason why inevitability and other arguments, which will not withstand serious scrutiny are so favoured by the pro-entry movement is that they

themselves are not entirely sure why the Euro is such a good idea. They seem to have fallen in love with the idea of the single currency and therefore do not have a need to question their own belief in it too deeply. Eurosceptics are indeed sceptical in the correct sense of the term while Europhiles seem to have been blinded by a kind of adoration for all things European.

But the Antis must not underestimate the Pro arguments and most particularly that of inevitability. There is a very specific reason for this, which advertisers and marketers will know very well. To make a product or service appear favourable to a particular audience, to encourage trial purchase and eventually loyalty, there must be some point of resonance within the sales proposition which draws a target group of consumers to it. Examples: a point of resonance for baby food products is the idea of responsible motherhood; a point of resonance for banking products is the idea of responsible and skilful care of your money; a point of resonance for certain cars is the positive reflection of purchase on the self-image of the owner. There is always something in the proposition which makes the purchaser feel good about making the purchase; it answers some inner need not directly related to the product or service itself.

An additional point of resonance is the assumption that in the future money will be international – the future occurs inevitably – so accepting international currency is simply accepting that the future comes inevitably. Many British people of all types and social backgrounds will react in this way unless they are given some alternative motivating idea which crystallises the subject for them in an equally simple and digestible way – but in the opposite direction.

What then could be the true point of resonance for the Antis? What is the idea which can form the heart of their campaign for drawing the Don't Knows and Don't Cares to their side? Firstly we must examine and reject a number of possibilities which are being considered by the Antis in their various groupings at the present time.

Sad though it may be it is highly unlikely that calling the British constitution (or to be more precise Britain's constitutional independence) in aid will work. Most people, even among the well educated, have no clear understanding of what 'constitution', 'constitutional authority' and 'sovereignty' mean and certainly know nothing of the history of the arguments and national and international experiences upon which their actual definition rests. Any message which says that joining the Euro will mean abandoning the constitution or surrendering our sovereignty will largely fall on uncomprehending, even deaf ears. Sovereignty in particular is a potential negative because in the minds of many persons it is erroneously believed to have something to do

with our imperial and colonial past.

What about economics as a source of an inspirational idea for the Antis? To discuss the Euro in economic terms requires some knowledge of economics itself, the state of play in the economies of at least the other major countries of the EU and an understanding of economic cycles; it also requires a grasp of the subtle and not always predictable relationships between economic growth on the one hand and jobs and investment on the other. The majority of those voting in a referendum could not even begin to approach the issue from this standpoint. As for 'convergence criteria' there are probably no more than a thousand people in the country who could actually recite Mr Brown's version of them and even fewer who could attempt to determine whether they have been met, are being met or will be met. Economics, the dismal science, just does not have a sufficiently populist resonance within its disciplines for the subject to act as a potential rallying point for people en masse.

'Save Our Pound' was a Conservative rallying cry at the last election. 'Don't let them abolish our pound' is one now being used by some Anti groups. The problem in trying to build a point of resonance around the currency alone i.e. presenting it as a thing of value in its own right is that at bottom people are more interested in

how much money they have rather than what denomination it is in. Most of the target audience would abandon the pound tomorrow if they believed they would become seriously richer or that their incomes might be significantly more secure. For this reason

the call to keep the pound for its own sake, because it is inherently good by being ours, will have less persuasive power than one might first think. One has only to imagine a few government ministers on television saying with furrowed brows that not joining the Euro could cause a reduction in UK prosperity and increase in unemployment and quite a large number of not particularly well informed people could be frightened into shedding their instinctive loyalty to their country's own currency.

Yet another approach for the Antis is to take head-on the view that the Euro is only a part of the entire EU process and that the only way to resist the Euro is to expose and deride the process behind it. This in effect means telling people that the EU is a seriously flawed political project which we should abandon; the Euro must therefore be rejected as joining it would carry us in the exactly opposite direction to the one which is best for the longer-term national interest. This approach would be doomed. Rightly or wrongly the majority of the British people believe that we ought to be part of the EU but should resist attempts to enmesh ourselves too

This deep but not yet fully articulated desire to avoid control by foreigners... is surely the most potent theme to drive any anti-Euro campaign.

deeply within it. They will only consider leaving it as and when more conclusive evidence that we should do so emerges. No point of resonance then in trying to throw the EU itself out with the Euro.

It is hard to believe that any of these subjects – the constitution, economics, the currency itself as a unit of exchange, the come-out option – are capable of offering up the magic idea which will energise opposition to the Euro on a mass scale. For most people these subjects are variously too dry, too difficult or too radical and, most importantly for communicators, lack the potential to generate a single persuasive idea. As core subjects for the Anti campaign they will almost certainly fail.

There is however one potential theme which runs through every part of this debate. It features in British newspapers and not just the tabloids; it is spoken of in pubs and flickers constantly at the edges of the entire debate about Britain and its relationship with the EU. It concerns not dislike or hatred of foreigners; nor is it dislike or hatred of foreign culture. It is a fear of domination by or falling under the control of people who do not belong to this place and to this culture. This fear must be distinguished clearly from xenophobia and chauvinism. Many people adore France and what it represents culturally; many cannot wait to return to Italy to soak up the charm and excitement of that extraordinary country; few have failed to be stimulated by Spain and its distinctive blend of European and Moorish cultures. The languages of these and other EU countries are widely (and rightly) learned. But none of these things mean that the same people who appreciate them wish Frenchmen, Italians or Spaniards to have a major say in how they are governed in their own country. In essence there is a powerful difference between good friends and good friends who wish to run our lives for us.

Perhaps for older people this suspicion of foreigners and their intentions, this fear that we shall fall under their control, has something to do with the Second World War in regard to Germany and Italy specifically and perhaps also owes something to our ancient rivalry with France. Whatever its source, it is there. Rich or poor, clever or less so, well-educated or ill-educated there is among the majority in this island country a sense of anxiety as to what the EU 'process' is actually doing in relation to our ability to rule ourselves as we please. It expresses itself in relation to specific subjects as, for example, why should an unelected Italian ex-politician (Romano Prodi) pontificate about how British people should be governed and what rules and laws they should be subject to. Why should a French cabinet minister freely opine that Britain joining the Euro is inevitable? Why should a Dutchman, then a Frenchman determine the policy of the European Central Bank and thereby

potentially be in a position to hold great sway over business conditions here if we were actually to join? Why should foreign judges determine the outcome of cases in which the participants are all British?

This deep but not yet fully articulated desire to avoid control by foreigners over what may or may not occur within our own national borders and within our international relations with other states is surely the most potent theme to drive any anti-Euro campaign. It will be hard to get right. It must dramatise the continuing threat to our operational freedom within our own borders but do so without appearing to represent foreigners as being responsible for the erosion of UK sovereignty (they are of course completely blameless; it has been our own governments which must take the responsibility for such erosion). It must also be memorable without being overly slick.

Such a strategy is of course undeniably risky. It may be wrongly construed as xenophobic and it may be difficult to formulate as a proposition without giving at least some offence to some people. But its potential power as a unifier of existing Anti-opinion and as a persuader of the uncommitted easily outdoes other approaches all of which depend upon a target audience with a depth and breadth of knowledge which simply does not exist.

Finally there is the most seductive Pro argument of all – inevitability... but for the Pro-Euros presenting the currency in this light gives it a unique force which, they believe, makes the proposition truly irresistible.

While the task of developing the campaign and the central message must be given to some of the best advertising specialists and their copywriters as a matter of urgency I cannot conclude without at least having a try at the central message itself. Perhaps something

on the lines of : 'Vote Yes to the Euro and help Britain become a province of a foreign power'.

Any half-competent copy-writer could do better but I submit that the core idea is strong and simple and offers that vital point of resonance to the millions (and let us not forget we are talking of millions) of British people who will not wish to deal with deeper levels of the argument and who will decide by some intuitive process stimulated by a single direct message. Couched, as it is, in the positive, the message appears to be telling people what to do which is one way of ensuring that they may well do the opposite and the words 'foreign power' avoid direct mention of any particular EU member state. But its principal virtue is truthfulness; on all the evidence a vote for the Euro is another step on the road to a centralised EU state which has Britain as one of its larger provinces. They may not know it with any degree of sharp consciousness but the majority of the people of Britain do not want that.

Peter Goodchild is a marketing consultant and researcher.

'Anti-Fascism' is the New Fascism

Aidan Rankin

When I hear the word 'fascist', I do not think of the assorted pub bores or the few full-blooded bigots who are the stereotypical activists of the 'far right'. Nor do I think of half-drunk, testosterone-driven skinheads in tight-fitting jeans or combat trousers, bawling out anti-immigrant slogans richly spiced with obscenity. Least of all do I think of the thousands of disgruntled Labour supporters, ordinary men and women in working class enclaves, who have given the British National Party its newfound electoral clout. None of these people are fascists, in any meaningful sense of the word. They are victims rather than aggressors – victims of failed liberal social experiments, heartless economic programmes and, above all perhaps, of betrayal by a Labour movement that was set up specifically to defend them.

The left, and many *bien pensant* liberals and Tories with them, would like us to visualise fascists as aggrieved, poorly educated working class whites – white males in particular, since they are a double negative for the Politically Correct. Such progressives (as they invariably call themselves) use accusations of racism and fascism as excuses to bully and oppress impoverished white communities and isolate them in racially based ghettos. For white liberals, anti-racism becomes a form of auto-racism, directed at members of their own race who are deemed to be socially inferior. It is, in other words, a new type of snobbery and social exclusion. Likewise, the true heirs to fascism are not skinheads, bigots, or BNP-voting former socialists. They are the BNP's sworn enemies, the 'anti-fascist' shock troops of the left, whose slogans of contrived defiance, melodramatic gesture politics and emotional blackmail reach far beyond the Marxist coteries where they originate.

At Burnley, where the BNP made its strongest local government gains this year, the paradox of anti-fascism was apparent in a demonstration by the Anti-Nazi League, images of which were widely disseminated in the press. Piously anti-racist and inclusive, the protesters were overwhelmingly white and middle-class. Proclaiming the virtues of tolerance, their eyes shone with the purity of hatred that is the prerogative of extremists the world over. In that almost archetypal left-wing demo, the chants and clenched fists of the scruffy young

men, the screams and hot tears of the even scruffier women, the banners calling for political parties to be suppressed (in the name of tolerance, presumably) expressed something larger than a Lancastrian quirk. For anti-fascists base their campaigns on a sense of outrage that anyone, anywhere should dare to disagree with them. In their appeal to feeling over reason, force over argument, such activists resemble most those phantom Nazis they are claiming to 'fight'. This is why, in a stroke of post-modern irony, anti-fascism is the new fascism.

There is, in British – and especially English – political culture, a rich vein of sentimental radicalism, to which anti-fascist slogans appeal. It is from this section of politics and society that anti-fascist campaigners derive emotional (and, crucially, financial support). Unlike working class communities, they do not see the violent, arrogant face of anti-fascism, any more than most of

Germany's *Mittelestand* witnessed directly the violence of the Brownshirts. This strand of radical thought, ironically, has its origins in the imperial epoch, amongst a burgeoning middle class influenced strongly by evangelical Christianity, which believed

that it had a duty to 'save' benighted natives. The missionary impulse usually placed concern for the Empire's subject peoples, and their material or spiritual well-being, well above concern for the indigenous working class. Typical of such philanthropists is Mrs Jellyby in Dickens's *Bleak House*, whose eyes 'had a curious habit of seeming to look a long way off, as if they could see nothing nearer than Africa'. Like many a modern liberal, Mrs Jellyby neglected those around her, including notoriously her own children. Her thoughts were directed instead towards the (fictitious) African possession of Borrioboola Gha and her idealistic plans for its 'development'.

The world of Non-Governmental Organisations is replete with Mrs or 'Ms' Jellybys. But in a post-colonial age, the phenomenon of immigration has brought their concerns closer to home. Today's Ms Jellyby is just as likely to work for the race relations unit of a local authority as for a Third World NGO. For 'ethnic minority communities' have become the new Borrioboola Gha. They are to be patronisingly helped and pitied, even given special rights, but their members are not to

Anti-fascism is, however, a radical secular ideology that allows no possibility of repentance or absolution.

be treated as individuals and the reality of their cultures is to be ignored or scorned. As the white liberal person's burden, the black or brown skinned citizen is supported as long as he reads from a Politically Correct script and shows gratitude and obeisance to those pressure groups that 'care' about him. It is into this Jellyby Syndrome, a legacy of the missionary age, that anti-fascist groupings successfully tap. Guilt-ridden liberals confuse the violent cant of anti-fascism with humanitarian concern, much as the violent cant of fascism was once confused with appeals to tradition and order.

But the missionary impulse does not end with ethnic minorities. In anti-fascist campaigns, there are vestiges of earlier evangelical missions, aimed at the indigen population, with a view to controlling and pacifying it. Working class communities are treated by anti-fascists, and their liberal apologists, as benighted white tribes to be civilised and subdued. The evangelical fervour present in anti-fascism accounts for the lachrymose quality of its activists, whose tearful appeals are often a prelude to acts of violence or demands for censorship. This is a characteristic they share with fascists, who were the most emotional and least reasoning of political campaigners. Like evangelical temperance campaigners of a bygone age, anti-fascists appear to be trying to save working class people from themselves. Their particularism, expressed through opposition to large-scale immigration, is labelled as 'racism' and treated as a new form of vice. Their patriotic gut instincts, and their wish to preserve the traditional character of their neighbourhoods, are dismissed as ignorant prejudices, from which white working class men and women must be emancipated just as their forebears were emancipated from drink.

Like evangelicals, anti-fascists seek to liberate by a combination of moral pressure and legal force. Anti-fascism is, however, a radical secular ideology that allows no possibility of repentance or absolution. The evangelical Protestants who joined temperance or anti-vice campaigns were often oppressive and insensitive, but their zeal was frequently held in check by a concern for individual souls. Anti-fascists, by contrast, have no such concerns. They seek to save communities, by changing their collective consciousness or forcing them to conform. Their ideology allows for no concern for individuals, except for attack or denunciation. This contempt for the individual, the white, male worker in particular, allows the anti-fascist to reconcile two contradictory demands – for civil disobedience (including violence) and for the massive extension of state power.

Anti-fascist propaganda makes frequent address to the history and mythology of the left, to which the movement volubly lays claim. *Searchlight*, anti-fascism's house journal, make frequent reference to the Spanish Civil War, carrying photographs of heroic resistance fighters and carrying interviews with stalwarts of the International Brigade, now elderly and impressive. They evoke the memory of 'The Battle of Cable Street'

and similar events in the 1930s when working class Jewish communities stood up to the Blackshirt followers of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. There is in these images an explicit and false assumption of continuity. It is false because in both the Spanish Civil War and Cable Street, a high level of working class self-organisation was involved, and with it a genuine aspiration towards a just society.

Searchlight, by contrast, bases most of its activities on accusation, smear and incitement to hatred – often class hatred directed at working class racists. This was not always so. Its founder, Maurice Ludmer, was a thoughtful ex-Communist Party member for whom the education of working class communities was important, and who believed in freedom and dignity for individuals of all backgrounds. Anti-fascist campaigners today, including *Searchlight*, refuse to concede to their opponents – especially working class opponents – any sense of human dignity. Working class racists are described routinely as scum or products of the sewer, in a curious echo of the Nazis' twisted denunciations of Jews and other 'enemies' of the *Volk*. *Searchlight* still, on occasion, carries intelligent, thoughtful commentaries, especially on events abroad, but in its refusal to compromise with or attempt to win over its opponents, it perpetuates conflicts of a social and racial character.

This latter attribute it shares with the Anti-Nazi League, which is far more explicit in its advocacy of violence and its hatred of the white working class. At one level, the ANL sets itself up as a secular missionary organisation for anti-fascism. At another, its overwhelmingly bourgeois or petty bourgeois activists set out to create an atmosphere of intimidation and violence when they descend on areas such as Burnley. Like a fascist movement, the ANL is explicitly committed to the abolition of free speech. Its activities make it the heir less of the Cable Street battlers and more of the BUF interlopers. Like the Blackshirts, ANL protesters assume the 'right' to descend on working class areas, threaten and harass their inhabitants, incite and engage in violence.

The Anti-Nazi League is linked intimately to the Socialist Workers Party, the best known and most aggressive far left faction in British politics since the demise of orthodox Communism. Unlike the Communist Party, the SWP is opposed to the parliamentary road to socialism and advocates violent revolution. The SWP worldview regards all existing political institutions as outgrowths of 'capitalism'. Neither capitalism itself, nor its institutions, can be 'patched up' or 'reformed'. The party's struggle, therefore, is as much against 'reformist ideas and leaders' as against the capitalist economy:

The state machine is a weapon of capitalist class rule and therefore must be smashed. The present parliament, army, police and judges cannot simply be taken over and used by the working class. There is, therefore, no parliamentary road to socialism.

This rhetoric of class warfare disguises a critique of

parliamentary rule identical to that of the Italian Squadristi, Mussolini's foot soldiers who closed the Italian parliament and installed a fascist state. To Mussolini, parliamentary rule was so corrupt – and, indeed, 'bourgeois', that it could not be patched up. The fascist ideal of the Corporate State was based on representation by trade. This policy finds strong echoes in the SWP, which seeks to replace Parliament with a series of 'workers councils'. It also resembles the modern anti-fascist obsession with group rights, whereby racial minorities (and all 'oppressed communities') are represented collectively by activist pressure groups that claim to speak for them. Whilst resembling fascist politics, the SWP's position differs dramatically from that of Marx, who especially in his later years strongly favoured the parliamentary road. Even Lenin, who was always a pragmatist, believed in the use of any expedient institutions, including parliaments. In ultra-left groupuscles he saw only an 'infantile disorder'.

Another far left faction that has had a seminal influence on the anti-fascist is the International Marxist Group (IMG), whose luminaries included Tariq Ali. Long defunct now, the IMG played an important role in the student agitation and violent demonstrations of the late 1960s, many of which called to mind the behaviour of young Stormtroopers in the colleges of Weimar Germany. Crucially, the IMG rejected the white working class as hopelessly reactionary and saw the new revolutionary elite as students, ethnic minorities and feminist women. The ideology and tactics and ideology of anti-fascism today owe much to the IMG's profoundly anti-working class and anti-white prejudices.

These far left groups have based their politics on interpretations of Trotsky's 'permanent revolution', a purist doctrine of continual change akin to that of Mao's Cultural Revolution – and Hitler's Third Reich. To the Führer, the Nazi 'revolutionary creative will' had 'no fixed aim,... no permanency, only eternal change'. On the left, anti-fascism has risen to prominence at precisely the time when socialism lacks permanency and continuity, whether as an ideal or a practical programme. In their strident emotionalism and ritualistic denunciation of opponents, anti-fascist campaigns act as a substitute for a coherent left-wing ideology. The same was true of fascist movements, which aimed to replace the left by appealing to more basic psychological impulses of fear, envy and hatred.

Anti-fascism shares with its alleged opposite a belief in the cleansing or redemptive power of violence. They share as well an obsessive preoccupation with race. Indeed it could be said that organisations like *Searchlight* and the ANL do more than even the BNP to

keep racial awareness alive. Both fascism and anti-fascism are uncompromisingly modernist movements, concerned with narrow categorisation and so unsuited to a post-modern age of complexity and permutation. *Searchlight*, for example, was horrified when some Hindu and Sikh community workers refused to be classified alongside Muslims as 'Asians'. Here were ethnic minorities daring to defy the pressure group definitions. In reality, the violence and nihilism of anti-fascist activists are almost laughably remote from the conservatism of most ethnic minority populations.

It is easy, and tempting, at times, to dismiss anti-fascism as a peripheral fringe interest, irrelevant to our lives and thoughts. However its crocodile-tear appeals are in some ways more effective than those of the more traditional far left. Anti-fascists claim to be opposing a political evil. In so doing they evoke memories of that evil and the wrong done to millions of our fellow human beings. Many people of good will, therefore, fail to see that they are being manipulated. This is why ritual denunciations and balkanising 'group rights' are in danger of pervading public life. The subjectivist definition of a racist incident in the Macpherson Report – any incident that the victim or anyone else 'perceives' as racist – has all the totalitarian characteristics of anti-fascist fascism, yet few dare to describe it as totalitarian for fear

that they might be smeared as 'racist'. Likewise, the attempts of New Labour apparatchiks to unearth political 'information' about the Paddington rail crash survivors had all the furtive and perverse instincts of a *Searchlight* campaign. Such

influences have touched conservative politics as well. In the interests of inclusiveness, the Tories tend increasingly towards reverse discrimination and group rights, forgetting that many black and Asian people want freedom from racial politics.

Anti-fascism, like its fascist precursor, is primarily anti-human and misanthropic. It despises its supposed constituents as much as its sworn enemies, and has a vested interest in promoting racial conflict. When we recognise that fascists and anti-fascists are as one, their rhetoric of hatred will lose its power.

Many people of good will, therefore, fail to see that they are being manipulated. This is why ritual denunciations and balkanising 'group rights' are in danger of pervading public life.

Aidan Rankin's book, The Politics of the Forked Tongue: Authoritarian Liberalism published by New European Publications, 14-16 Carroun Road, London SW8 1JT. Price £12.95

Non - Le Pen Enrages The Press

Antony Milne

The first round of the recent French presidential elections, held in April 2002, revealed much about British journalism and journalists. No violent revolution had taken place on French streets, nor was there any widespread civil disorder, just an election in which candidates won or lost. But it produced nothing but histrionics in the British press.

The Sun even outdid the vitriolic prose of the old *Morning Star*: 'What has happened in France is repugnant... the FRENCH PRIME MINISTER was BEATEN by the Fascists. This is STUNNING... *The Sun* warned that Jean-Marie Le Pen, the racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, nasty piece of work standing for President would do well. AND HE HAS... Le Pen is a vile politician... the Fascists are on the march again.'

The Daily Mail used similar strident language. In its comment column of April 23, it had a headline: 'The failures that created a monster'. Its op-ed leading article, by Andrew Neil, once editor of the *Sunday Times*, was headed: 'Arrogant elite that enabled this thug to rise to power'. Edward Heathcoat Amory, in reference to M Le Pen, similarly had an article captioned: 'Fantasist, bigot and brutal thug'. 'Socialists fall victim to ugly face of French politics', shouted another *Times* headline. In an eight-page supplement on 'The Rise of the Far Right', the leading headline was 'Menacing charm of one-eyed bully boy'. Libby Purves labelled the votes of 'five million French' as having allowed their 'basic human decency' to be swamped by other emotions. Single-handedly she succeeded in libelling a very large number of French voters.

Is the use of personal insults directed at a leading French politician – a presidential candidate – the type of journalism one expects of what used to be 'Britain's journal of record', once edited by pipe-smoking dons who would look with cool detachment at changes on the world scene, no matter how momentous? Emotive headlines and subheadings of the type used recently in the *Times* would certainly not have been allowed under the editorship of the late William Haley or even under that of Lord Rees-Mogg.

I have singled out the *Sun*, *Mail* and *The Times* because together they reveal a drift towards centrism and political emotionalism that is reflected within the political system itself. I do not believe this to be a healthy development in what used to be known as 'the Tory press'. Other newspapers, like the *Telegraph*, were either more balanced in their coverage of the French elections (but only just), or, as in the case of the

Guardian and *Independent*, and in virtually all the other tabloids, just as strident. There was virtually no difference of editorial opinion among any of them. If 'passion has returned to the politics of Europe', in the words of Roger Boyes, himself of the *Times*, then passion has definitely returned to the newspaper headline writers (who often appear not to have read the more balanced analysis given in the article they caption).

What is worrying is the fact that news editors, and many journalists, do not appear to have read their Orwell. 'Newspeak' is a strictly utilitarian English with many words re-defined, so that it can be used only to say conformist things. Big Brother is good by definition, and 'good' has no meaning apart from his will. Nothing opposed to Big Brother could ever be 'good', as Jean-Marie Le Pen can never be good.

Most newspapers in the postwar years had clear house styles that embodied the best practice of good journalistic training. Concise, accurate, detached reporting, and restraint in comment, were prized above all.

Now there is clear evidence of editorializing in news 'copy', with little apparent attempt to keep comment and news separate. In non-political stories the reader should not confuse what is criticism by others with criticism of the journalist himself. Most of all this should not be the case in regard to political opinions, if one doesn't want to be accused of using his newspaper as a propaganda sheet. Journalists used to report the abusive remarks that politicians hurled at each other in a mood of wry aloofness, even cynicism. They would certainly not join in the abuse themselves. And one should preferably avoid saying, even obliquely, 'I am writing about a rather distasteful subject here...'

In *The Art of Writing Made Simple*, Geoffrey Ashe wrote in the early 1970s, 'If you have strong convictions, watch yourself...'. He makes several other salient points. One is to 'treat your readers with respect... put yourself in the reader's place, appreciate his difficulties, and try to meet them... prose should be right, both in meaning and in fact... good written communication presupposes clear thinking.'

He asked: 'When you make or imply a broad general statement, have you enough grounds for it? Are you basing it on... He referred to the problem of the *non sequitur*: 'When you say or imply that something follows from something else, does it?... the argument (or assumption) is frequently made that because a thing is true in some cases it is true in all, or that because a thing

is happening now it will go on happening. The latter error appears in the form of “trend” thinking, that the whole world will fit into a certain idealistic mould, that the world will become “capitalist” or “fascist” or “communist” just because there were certain epochs when some forms of rule predominated...’

He cites the example of a French newspaper, some years ago, which, when reporting a murder trial, kept referring to the accused as ‘The Monster Assassin’. When the defendant was acquitted, the headline was: ‘Monster Assassin Acquitted’.

It is worth returning here to the British press reaction, or over-reaction, to the French elections. The lead front page headline in the *Times* of 23rd April read: ‘British leaders urged to fight racist advance’. But ‘racist’ was not put in inverted commas; should not the title more neutrally have read: ‘British leaders urged to fight anti-migrant sentiment’? Of course, the headline as it stands is shorter and snappier, but is it as accurate? I am often surprised how news desk editors are prepared to use the words ‘xenophobia’ and ‘racism’ in a more loaded way than would be allowed by strict dictionary definitions of the term.

Perhaps the reaction to the French elections is somehow tied in with the discernable trend in the media towards left-liberal values away from traditional conservative (small ‘c’) values. What brought this about? Family and community cohesiveness, social stability, law and order were core features of many national and provincial papers in the postwar years.

One notable characteristic, dating back to the conclusions drawn from reading the 1947 Royal Commission on the Press, is the ameliorative, somewhat didactic nature that was apparent in many British newspapers. The provincial press, in particular, serving often close-knit communities, was somewhat high-minded in tone. For example the view put forward to the 1947 Commission by a spokesman for the Northcliffe Newspapers Group Ltd, said ‘I believe newspapers have some responsibility in encouraging public interest in worthwhile matters – such as the development of citizenship and its responsibilities...’ Other editors looked upon their newspapers as duty-bound to give the public not only ‘what it reasonably wants, but to some degree what it ought to want’ (Tillotson’s Newspapers Ltd).

The 1947 Commission attempted to assess the part played by editorial bias by asking to what extent ‘the accurate presentation of news or the adequate expression is distorted or restricted by... the limitations and prejudices of journalists and editors’. Many press companies, in answering a questionnaire, allowed the possibility of prejudice, but added that every effort was made to minimise it. The East Midlands Press Ltd said: ‘Journalists and editors, being human, cannot avoid having some prejudices and failings, but the training of journalists in the provinces is on the whole good, and the ethical standard of the great majority is high... in addition the staff should be so balanced as to prevent the

distortion of news and opinion’.

In *Practical Newspaper Reporting*, first published in the 1960s, the authors, when dealing with ‘newspaper feature writing’, made the following penetrating observation: ‘Middle class intellectuals, and this includes some journalists, are basically insecure and seek to conform to thought-forms and attitudes which they think will be acceptable to other intellectuals like themselves... There is no need, then, to copy other people’s attitudes... Remember that ideas printed in newspapers can have enormous, even frightening, influence, so do not reach conclusions in which you do not believe’.

What is revealing is the press’s early attitude to Enoch Powell. While espousing invincible community values, when it came to Powell journalists generally expressed disapproval of his remarks. This was the first time it was clear that editors were prepared to go against public opinion. After Powell’s Birmingham speech on 20 April 1968, the *Wolverhampton Express* and *Star* received 5,000 letters supporting him, and 300 against him. A subsequent postcard poll resulted in over 35,000 votes in Powell’s favour, with hardly any against. In the light of this evidence, John Dodge (then Director of the National Council for the Training of Journalists) said: ‘The race issue has presented British editors... with a pressing moral problem. It is an accepted part of an editor’s job to campaign against injustice and incompetence and in this he can normally assume that he is battling for the majority of his readers... The race issue is different, as the Wolverhampton experiences shows, in areas with large coloured populations an editor who takes a liberal line is often at odds with the bulk of his readership’.

The authors get to the heart of the issue: ‘The “liberal line” would be that the coloured community is here to stay, and that every effort must be made to improve race relations and immigrants’ social conditions. Hence emotive attacks on immigrants are seen as a catastrophic retarding influence...’

This is then a noble, morally improving virtue, but only as looked at in regard to the status quo, in connection with existing ethnic populations. However Powell’s predictions about the future growth of the ‘coloured community’ were ignored, as have all similar post-Powell predictions.

Looking at the media from a broader perspective, the left-liberal tinge of western journalists is, no doubt, the legacy of 20th century totalitarianism. It was writers for the media, and intellectuals, that were most often persecuted. Hence journalists retain to this day a vested interest in opposing what they believe to be a threat to their freedom of expression. Hitherto the discernible conservative bias in the media has been based on the Cold War assumption that the threat came from the Left. Now, with the left apparently moribund and fragmented, the threat comes from the Right.

In America, the press was generally right of centre until the late 1950s. What tipped them over to the left

was the excesses of Senator McCarthy's virulent campaign against so-called Communist sympathisers in the media and the arts community. They believed the intellectual establishment was under attack from the Right. They have been left-liberal ever since – indeed some 80% of all leading US journalists have successively voted Democrat ever since the Kennedy era.

But the overwrought concern with being attacked by anti-democratic forces has led them a little astray. One serious intellectual failure is to equate 20th century fascism with contemporary nationalist movements, anywhere. The historical situation that gave rise to fascism in Europe dates back 80 years, and has little resonance with the present-day concerns of disaffected voters. Yet it is surprising how often the fascist era, and the 'warnings' we must learn from it, is mentioned in the press.

Unjournalistic *non sequiturs* often re-appear on this subject. It is assumed that as Hitler gained power legally, and then gradually abolished all opposition parties, this could happen again should Le Pen and his ilk gain power in Europe. Le Pen, in other words, is a 'threat to democracy'. Yet many journalists admit that fears of a loss of democracy today do not come from European parties of the left or right but from international organisations and multinational corporations. In particular it has been said to come from the institutions of the EU which have whittled away at the sovereignty of states, and that this in turn has emasculated the policy platforms of European political parties.

As with the French journalists, the British left liberals were too complacent about the social condition of France. 'Not one paper forecast or even suspected the result', said Claude Angeli, the editor in chief of *Le Canard Enchaîné*, France's leading purveyor of serious investigative journalism. 'It has to be said that we French are a bit self-satisfied, a little arrogant', he said, 'In our heads Le Pen and what he stands for is not France, and yet it is. In our hearts, we know it is.'

One rather malign factor in regard to the changing attitudes of the western press, generally, is the growing control of national media organisations by multinational corporations which view countries merely as economic zones rather than as ethnic nation-states with a rich cultural heritage. Many top editors and leading journalists now seem to welcome all entrepreneurial foreigners to help boost the economy, while their colleagues write lucidly about the tensions immigration is causing in the political scene throughout Europe. For example, at the height of the sensation caused by Le Pen in April the *Times* published not one but two leading articles in effect pleading for more immigrants to come to Britain.

This explains why the question is often begged: is immigration (generally a good thing, according to the leader writer) the cause of growing rightwing support in France, or is it just neo-fascism for its own sake, a form of political regression that has inspired so many headlines about 'the shame of France'? If other electorates in

other countries vote increasingly for far right candidates will they also be accused of shameful behaviour? Will there be further endless articles about 'soul-searching'?

Of course many commentators know the broader reasons for Le Pen's electoral success; it is just that they don't want to acknowledge it. Or rather, some do and some don't. This unsettling diversity of fact, analysis and biased opinion between different journalists writing for the same newspaper may be due to the fact that they can no longer communicate with each other in a Fleet Street pub. Each sends his article via email without any idea of what his colleagues might be thinking or writing on the subject. As a result press stories seem to conflict as much over political events as over the interpretation of those events.

Hints of lucidity come from Adam Sage who wrote about an 'unprecedented snub for a mainstream French political class that was unable to understand or communicate with a volatile electorate'. Simon Jenkins also said that Le Pen appeals, in the tradition of Pierre Poujade, to 'le petit peuple' as 'the candidate of the people against candidates of the system'. He denies that France had lurched to the racist right. He wrote: 'The cities of the South (of France), like those of Austria and Italy, have seen massive immigration in the past decade, far more than to British cities. The hundreds trying to climb aboard Eurotunnel trains at Calais are nothing to the thousands who disappear from North Africa into the backstreets of Nice, Montpellier and Marseilles....'

Other *Times* writers, unaware of what was being tapped into the laptops of their colleagues, professed to be shocked by it all. Ben Macintyre wrote: 'The voting figures show that Le Pen's support has remained solid; the shock is not that it has increased but rather that it has not withered away'! What a shock to admit! Macintyre, like Libby Purves, doesn't appear to like populism, (inevitably practised by right-wing demagogues), preferring to espouse the didacticism, compassion, and anti-Powelliteism of an earlier generation of journalists. Perhaps they thought they were continuing with an honourable journalistic tradition. But at the same time their tradition required them to be democrats. Simon Jenkins points out – populism means popularity, which is the base line of democracy.

There are other factors which have rattled the newspaper establishment: a taboo against discussing immigration has been broken; the liberal agenda might not actually be working out; journalists' pride in their ability to monitor social change looks like it has failed them (in other words the rapid cultural and racial changes of the last 30 years has got a bit beyond them, and their histrionics may be a sign of this). Another thing: all their adverts and features are illustrated with multicultural people – why won't people accept that multiculturalism is good and here to stay?

Perhaps it is precisely because it is here to stay that people are turning angry – perhaps even frightened. This

social fact itself means that liberal journalists might have to put up with growing support for 'racist' parties in Europe for a very long time to come.

The press, in conclusion, were perhaps remiss in not perceiving early enough that the shared cultural assumptions which underpin social cohesion can so easily be eroded by immigration on the present scale. They have frequently campaigned and proselytized on a vast array of social problems, but have too often missed the big picture. They have failed to pre-empt future problems by writing about them when they had the opportunity to do so. Instead of attacking complacent politicians they became complacent themselves. They kept looking over

their shoulder at history, when they should have been anticipating the future.

They should have read Alvin Toffler's 1970 *Future Shock*, whose opening words were: 'in the three short decades between now and the twenty-first century, millions of ordinary, psychologically normal people will face an abrupt collision with the future. Citizens of the world's richest and most technically advanced nations, many of them, will find it increasingly painful to keep up with the incessant demand for change that characterizes our time. For them, the future will have arrived too soon'.

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NOTES ON REVIEWERS

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(University of Missouri Press)

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How the World Has Changed since 1982

Brian Crozier

Yes, truly: we were living in a different world when *The Salisbury Review* was launched in 1982. And by 'we' I don't mean just we Brits, but also 'we Yanks', 'we Ruskies' and the rest of us. Just think back:

The year began quietly enough. Then, on 2 April, Argentina invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands, overwhelming the small contingent of Royal Marines stationed there. No big deal, some might say, but the invaders had not counted on Britain's Prime Minister at that time, Margaret Thatcher, otherwise known as 'the Iron Lady'. She lived up to that unofficial title, sent in the Royal Navy and the Marines, and freed the islands' 2,000 Brits and half million sheep. She was relieved of Lord Carrington as Foreign Secretary and (rightly) basked in the glory of success.

Actually, apart from that, 1982 was a relatively unremarkable year in international affairs, but some events are worth recalling, if only because they show what a different world we were living in twenty years ago. Would the new generation know who was in power in Moscow at that time? Have they heard of Brezhnev? Well, the Soviet leader, who had been in charge in the Kremlin for 18 years, died on 10 November 1982. He was 75, and the Kremlin obituary hailed him as a 'true continuer of Lenin's great cause and an ardent champion of peace and Communism'. He had toppled Khrushchev in a bloodless coup in October 1964, and his main claim to mention (for the outside world) was his almost total inactivity, apart from a gradual building up of weaponry to rival the US. His successor – typically for the old regime over which he had presided – was Yuri Andropov who, for 15 years, had been chairman of the KGB. At about the same time (on 12 November) Poland's Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa, was freed from detention after a lonely year in a hunting lodge, which showed that under General Jaruzelski, Poland might be moving away from a ruthless communist dictatorship.

Let us step back a few months: to 17 February, which brought bad news from what was then Africa's newest independent State: Zimbabwe. That day, the Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe – better, or rather worse, known today than he was then – ousted the veteran nationalist, Joshua Nkomo and two other ministers. Mugabe had accused Nkomo of plotting a coup. If so, the pity turned out to be that Mugabe had seized total power. Years of arbitrary seizures of white farms followed; and are still going on. What else? Well, on 29 May Pope John Paul II visited Britain: the first of his kind and rank to do so.

Ten days earlier, by the way, the big news in Europe's newspapers was that the glamorous Italian film star, Sophia Loren, had been gaoled for tax evasion. A month later, the news was that she had served her sentence and was released. Big news, of a more serious kind, came early in June, when Israeli troops, on the orders of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, invaded Lebanon. The excuse was that the Israeli ambassador in London had been shot by Palestinian gunmen. The next related news item came on 31 August, when Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, left Beirut, abandoning his base for the last 12 years. The previous month had brought two items of interest to the newspaper public: On 14 July, the Iranian army launched an offensive against Iraq. Three days earlier, news of a very different kind had hit the headlines in a matter of interest to 2002 soccer lovers: on 11 July 1982, Italy had won the World Cup with a 3-1 victory over West Germany.

Apologies to our readers for my relative frivolity. Let us turn now to news of a more serious kind: disarmament. On 3 February 1982, President Brezhnev had told a delegation of the Socialist International that never since World War II had the international situation been 'so serious'. He proposed that both sides should reduce their medium-range nuclear weapons by two-thirds by 1990. Next day (the 4th), President Reagan rejected Brezhnev's proposal, as 'based on selective use of data and not a meaningful basis of negotiations'. Reagan, never to be seduced by unconvincing Soviet proposals, gave his answer, indirectly, through the US Department of Defense which announced on 11 February that the United States would increase the number of its nuclear warheads targeted on the Soviet Union by deploying an additional 50 Minuteman III ground-based ICBMs – a plan, said the Defense Department, that aimed 'to arrest the downward trend in relative capability' of the US missile force compared with that of the Soviet Union.

How things have changed, for the better, since those days of superpower confrontation. March 1985 brought Mikhail Gorbachev to power and the Western world, broadly speaking, fell for his PR charm: with President Reagan as the great realistic leader. There was no world war, and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The new Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, is doing his best (I believe) to turn post-Soviet Russia into a successful, flourishing democracy. But recent events were far from predictable when *The Salisbury Review* was launched. *Brian Crozier's last book was The Rise & Fall of the Soviet Empire (Praeger)*

Conservative Classic: - 7

Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano*

A.D. Harvey

Player Piano, originally published almost exactly fifty years ago, in August 1952, was Kurt Vonnegut's first and perhaps most important novel. It is much less of an over-contrived, tongue-in-cheek parable of the sort that afterwards brought Vonnegut international fame and fortune, much more of a measured projection into a not-too-distant future of already evident trends, after the fashion of George Orwell's *1984*, a work published just over three years previously. The central character, Dr Paul Proteus, is the manager of an almost wholly automated factory complex in up-state New York. He and a dwindling elite of engineers and managers enjoy large salaries and privileges while the majority of their fellow citizens, having no useful economic function in a society where everything is produced by machines, live idle and demoralized lives that are to a large extent cordoned off from the notice of the technocrats. Dr. Proteus finds that his superior status leaves him dissatisfied: when those higher up the technocratic hierarchy give him the task of penetrating an organization committed to the overthrow of the machine economy and the restoration of self-respect to the mass of the people, he is already on the point of throwing in his lot with the subversives.

Some key details of Vonnegut's scenario now appear, in the changing perspectives of the last half-century, curiously out of focus. He was, of course, correct in predicting that examination results would establish themselves as a principal measure of an individual's value and status in society, but underestimated the almost insatiable demand hi-tec society would have for qualified manpower. In *Player Piano* the number of engineers and managers in employment is constantly shrinking as more and more productive and distributive processes are automated, creating a tension between society's demand for more qualifications and its requirement for fewer people with these qualifications: a policeman explains to Dr Proteus that anyone who has done more than four years in college but has no job is automatically considered to be a potential saboteur. As things have transpired, the growth of the service sector, which Vonnegut was unable to foresee, has created a demand for even the most meaningless paper qualifications, though, of course, he was correct in predicting the degraded and diminished status of those who simply fail to obtain adequate examination results. *Player Piano* is also a classic portrayal of 1950's-vintage gender-relations, in which make-believe macho males with university degrees and important jobs go out and win the money while lovey-

dovey wives of markedly inferior education stay at home and help them spend it. To some extent, of course, today's Bridget Joneses are only a thinly disguised version of Anita Proteus, but at least they now have degrees and salaries.

In other respects Vonnegut's prescience in *Player Piano* is impressive. He even, in the name adopted by the secret subversive group of which Dr Proteus becomes figurehead – the Ghost Shirt Society – predicted the exact brand of bogus sentimental folklore into which critics of society post-1960 would so often retreat. He also foresaw how an exam-obsessed meritocracy would still continue to accommodate mediocrities whose sole achievement was the accident of close kinship to those already in positions of power. Vonnegut is essentially a satirist, with a satirist's cynical insights: at the end of *Player Piano*, having temporarily wrecked their machine-dominated society, the gadget-obsessed common people begin scrabbling amongst the debris for mechanical components that they can cannibalize for new devices they have invented; at first reading this seems too neat, and then one realizes it is not neat, merely absolutely true to human nature – Vonnegut sees all too clearly that the horrors of automative culture are not simply imposed on people from above. What gives *Conservative Classic* status to *Player Piano* is not only its critique of automation, megalopolist big business and the diminution of the value of the individual, but also its underlying recognition that human imperfectibility is an essential feature of man's condition, exhibited, as much by failed saviours as by successful sinners.

Indeed, there is a human dimension in *Player Piano* despite the somewhat diagrammatic characterization of its protagonists, that makes Vonnegut's dystopia much less heavy-handed, much less one-dimensional, than Orwell's *1984*. We are nowadays not so much bullied by Big Brother as jockeyed along by a mass of Little Brothers; instead of Orwell's prediction of a television in every room that cannot be switched off, we have millions of households with a television in every room which is switched on voluntarily. Orwell lacked Vonnegut's instinct for the ironies of human endeavour. It may well be that the world of *1984*, with its crude assertions of power, will one day return and that Orwell's fairy tale of defiance will once again be relevant and inspirational, but at the moment, the world we live in is much more like the one Vonnegut warned us against.

Sir,

'Sophisticated believers' and Roman Catholic doctrine agree, in fact, that saints are not 'deities', as Audrey Parry remarks ('Saints and Miracles', SR Summer 2002). The call to 'salvation' and the call to sanctity are identical, and a return to what (but for Adam) one would have been, the image of God that was bright in Adam and restored in Christ. What Greek Christianity calls 'deification' is a return to created human nature, neither surrender to the nature with which politics deals, nor the manufacture of false gods.

That in this life a 'cause' for sanctity can capture more limelight (Mgr Escriva) or less (Matt Talbot) is a matter of politics, yet the outcomes of canonisation stand in the same relationship to the communion of saints as a lens to a light. Meanwhile, I cannot see the purpose of Audrey Parry's article. Is it opposing, or proposing, anything? Philosophical objections to miracles apply to acts of God whether through the saints or not, creation included. I can see why someone who found those objections good, would have a global objection to Christianity, but not, why he should wish to pose it as anything more detailed.

A.J.J MACDONALD POWNEY, WOKING

Sir

Michael Wharton writes of the pre-war 'MacSpaunday' quartet, parenthetically, that Stephen Spender was 'actually not a communist' (Summer 2002). This is said more often, I think, of W.H. Auden who had no party card, like Louis MacNeice but not the other two.

Does not your nevertheless admirable reviewer's aside resemble somewhat the various denials that, for example, Ezra Pound, Josef Weinheber, Robert Brasillach or Saunders Lewis were ever really 'fascist' poets? Spender himself stated that his poetry presented communism as an 'intellectual and emotional necessity'. It was Harry Pollitt's request for help in Spain that resulted in a brief open party membership. *Forward from Liberalism* (1937) included both an apologia for red terror and an expectation that the new 'constitution' would dispense with it. It is understandable that sensitive writers of Spender's background would back Stalin against Hitler.

His commitment was not so deep, durable or disciplined as that of most contemporary fellow-travellers, but his valuable 'epitome' in *The God that Failed* (1950) of the Soviet seduction of the 'intelligentsia' owes its strength partly to insider familiarity with 'the comrades' and shared international socialist aspirations.

Communism entailed 'playing' with some very 'rough boys' indeed – in the end too much for this reflective soul, destined to be vilified by their post-war successors as a CIA hireling. We might remember Spender, however, as a subsequent pioneer against political censorship, and an admirer of an England now threatened not by the Kremlin or King Street but, perhaps more dangerously, by demography and 'deconstruction'.

DAVID ASHTON, SHERINGHAM, NORFOLK

Sir,

To support her only too true contention that 'fixing the facts is hardly new' Patricia Morgan cites two illustrations. She is wholly right to maintain that 'Margaret Mead played fast and loose with Samoan culture to help kick start the sexual revolution....'. The whole fascinating story of the total discrediting of the supposed findings reported in Margaret Mead's enormously influential *Coming of Age in Samoa* was told by Derek Freeman in his *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard UP, 1983) and *The Fatal Hoaxing of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis of Her Samoan Research* (Boulder Co and Oxford: Westview, 1979).

But Patricia Morgan was wise to be cautious in asserting that 'Sir Cyril Burt, determined to establish the inheritance of intelligence, purportedly manipulated research with twins'. For these charges were made after Burt's death, and no leading psychologist was then prepared to defend a colleague whose findings had been so politically incorrect. But although they remain politically incorrect the evidence for their truth has since become overwhelming. So anyone looking today at R.B. Joynson's exhaustive study of *The Burt Affair* can confidently conclude that Burt, if not perhaps all of his accusers, was completely innocent.

ANTONY FLEW, READING

Sir,

A.D. Harvey's recent book *Arnhem*, a review of which appeared in your June issue, confirms that this bold imaginative British plan is still a rewarding subject for analysts, but sadly we must accept that the annual re-screening of that offensive film *A Bridge Too Far* will no doubt reach, and therefore influence, a larger percentage of the population. The American script provides for continuous anti-British sniping and even includes sneers from German and Polish Generals. Authenticity is suggested by hiring a compliant British Director and leading British actors to stand around and dumbly take a tongue lashing from any passing American. These sustained allegations of British sluggishness can be refuted by the facts.

After overcoming stiffish resistance south of Eindhoven the Guards found the first bridge on their route at Son blown, dropping U.S. paras north as well as south of the bridge might have prevented this. Several hours were required for the REs to build a strong Bailey Bridge but once over it, as Mr. Harvey records on p. 122, the Guards reached the penultimate bridge at Nijmegen only 5 hours later with the final bridge at Arnhem only some 9 miles away and still reachable within the 48 hrs. that the British Airborne had been asked to cover. Arnhem then was never 'too far'.

Nijmegen produced the most crippling delay of all since that bridge was also uncaptured and once again no U.S. troops had been dropped north of it so that the slog-ging match to break through the southern fortifications was unnecessarily protracted because German supplies and reinforcements were able to move across the bridge throughout the battle. When Grenadier tanks finally dashed across in the teeth of anti-tank fire from the far end night was falling, and by the next morning almost 2 days and any remaining element of surprise had been lost. This is where the film makers resort to a deliberate lie in order to give Americans credit for what was achieved by British troops, a familiar Hollywood practice of course. The Americans who paddled across the Waal some distance downstream are shown taking the north end of the road bridge then posturing as though they had made it possible for the British tanks to cross. They never even approached the bridge prior to its capture and contributed nothing to it.

If the British public cannot be protected from this poison perhaps someone will create a TV counterblast which takes this travesty to pieces scene by scene and thoroughly discredits it. Some fair-minded US survivors might like to dissociate themselves from its style and false claims.

HERBERT FERGUSON
(EX GUARDS ARMoured DIVISION), BRISTOL

Condemned to repeat it

We can all picture the scene: black limousines whizz up to an important house; heavily armed people surround the one slightish person who runs out of the house. Cars scream off, down a road that had been closed off while pedestrians have been pushed to the sidewalks by armed police. The limousines and motorcyclists screech in through the heavy gates, the slight man climbs out of the car and surrounded closely by the heavily armed guards runs in, slightly bending forward to make himself into a smaller target for putative assassins, whose presence is questionable as the courtyard has been cleared of all outsiders, even though they had been searched thoroughly before being allowed in. We have all seen it. Moscow? Peking? Some African dictatorship? Any reader can witness this on any Wednesday, while Parliament is sitting, on Whitehall at just before three o'clock. It is a sacred time, because that is when the Prime Minister pays his weekly visit to the House of Commons to refuse to answer questions from the Leader of the Opposition and backbenchers. But before he goes through the farce of Prime Minister's Questions he shows the world his importance by rushing in a closely guarded limousine in the British equivalent of the old Soviet 'Chaika lane', called after the official cars, which were the only Soviet cars that were any use at all.

Scenes like this are older. It did not take place in the old Russian empire. The tsars were often approachable as it was part of their mystique that the ordinary people could appeal directly for mercy or justice. Alexander II paid with his life for that approachability. Long before there were the Roman lictors, who beat citizens who had the temerity to get in the Emperor's way. In Imperial China peasants and townspeople were pushed out of the way by imperial servants. The French aristocrats shoved their inferiors into the gutter until they found themselves being shoved somewhere even worse. The French King was surrounded by guards and courtiers until such time that he and his family found themselves at the mercy of the mob they despised. The obsession with personal security whether there is a reason for it or not manifests itself in tyrants. Those who believe in freedom and democracy do not fear the people and do not hide from them in limousines with darkened glass or behind heavily armed guards. The Prime Minister has clearly not learned from history. He may well find himself repeating it.

Helen Szamuely

BOOK REVIEWS

Tracts for a Time John M Vella

**The Spirit of the Oxford Movement,
Christopher Dawson, The Saint Austin
Press, 2001, £14.95**

Keith Feiling once wrote that 'the whole principle of authority in the nineteenth century would be unintelligible without reference to the Oxford movement.' Christopher Dawson would agree since the central objective of the Tractarian movement in his view was the defence of 'Authority and Tradition against Liberalism'. The central question asked by the Oxford Movement was this: Will the Church of England preach doctrine authoritatively or will it be seduced by the Liberal scepticism of modern times? The Tractarians sought to defend the Church of England against religious Liberalism – what John Henry Newman called the anti-dogmatic principle – by reintroducing to their contemporaries the authoritative teachings and liturgical and devotional practices of the apostolic age.

Dawson's classic introduction to the central figures and animating ethos of the Oxford Movement remains as valuable today as when it first appeared in 1933, because he examines more closely than other authors the nineteenth-century challenges to religious orthodoxy that remain with us still. Here, Dawson puts the Oxford Movement into historical perspective, tracing the roots beyond the usual perimeters of Highchurchmanship. The Caroline divines who laid the foundation for High Church Anglicanism led Newman, John Keble, and Richard Hurrell Froude to see Catholic antiquity as the most authentic source of divine truth.

In politics, the Movement was Tory in that its members sympathized with figures like Southey, Coleridge and the young Disraeli who were among the first to denounce the injustices of the Industrial Revolution and the new Poor Laws. But what exercised the Tractarians even more was how the spirit of the age, characterized by utilitarianism and the rationalist idealism of the

French Enlightenment, was affecting the Church of England. The passage of the liberal Reform Bill intended to disestablish the Irish state church was an occasion of 'National Apostasy' for John Keble because it signaled the abandonment by the state of the English Church and its religious obligations. Political decisions like this one affecting matters of religion lead to their eventual rejection of the erastianism so closely associated with the High Church party.

Keble, according to Dawson, was 'the last and in some respects the finest flower of the old Tory High Church tradition'. He was a champion of obedience to existing authority and detested, in Newman's words, 'heresy, insubordination, resistance to things established, claims of independence, disloyalty, innovation, a critical censorious spirit'. He followed the Christian pragmatism of Bishop Butler and so found reason alone an insufficient moral guide. The cultivation of spiritual instincts through obedience to norms of sacred tradition and the Law of God, rather than the self-confident rationalism of Benthamite Liberalism, was the only way to obtain true knowledge.

Froude was a student of Keble and classmate of Newman whose polemics against the Protestant Reformation and nostalgia for medieval Europe made a strong impression on Newman. The reformers represented to Froude what Keble taught him to abhor: hostility toward tradition and contempt for the past, slavishness toward the state, and a violent scorn heaped on the sacred mysteries of Catholic worship. Richard Whately also helped disabuse Newman of his evangelicalism. Dawson records how Newman came to believe that the Calvinist theology of grace produced a harsh and unattractive Puritanism without the benefit of a rich liturgy or sophisticated dogma. Belief in the total depravity of man led to the impoverishment of intellectual and material culture.

The theological differences between Catholic Christianity and Protestantism could not be ignored even though the corrosive naturalism of Comte and Feuerbach and Hegel preoccupied their minds. Their opposition to Protestantism was animated not by a wish to revive sectarian hostilities but by a fear that Reformation theology could not withstand the secularizing tendencies of the modern age and would only provide false hope to those who trusted in its tenets. The Protestant practice of private judgment cut off the individual believer from divinely constituted authority

outside of himself and made him vulnerable to the spirit of the age.

The new biblical criticism subjected Protestantism's sole source of authority to the demystifying effects of liberal rationalism as illustrated by the controversy over *Essays and Reviews*. Without an authority impervious to the corrosive affects of philosophical atheism and sentimental humanitarianism, the Church of England would inevitably capitulate to the larger secularized culture and upon losing its spiritual identity become irrelevant. Newman came to see the authority and wisdom of Catholic antiquity as a more authentic expression of Christianity capable of resisting these dangers.

Liberal rationalism, when applied to religion, did not deepen human understanding of transcendent truths but produced the opposite effect. As Dawson explains, 'To eliminate the element of mystery from religion, to measure the transcendent and the eternal by finite and temporal standards is not to make religion rational, but to misconceive its real nature and thereby to impoverish the human mind and to narrow its range of vision.' Far from being narrow-minded, the Oxford Movement was rescuing human reason from the irrational prejudices of contemporary Liberalism.

In the introduction to this new edition, Dr. Nockles correctly identifies the French influence upon the Oxford Movement as one of Dawson's most original insights. In this, Froude was the main conduit. His sympathies toward Rome predisposed him to oppose English erastianism following Lamennais's attack on French gallicanism. Here Dawson suggests that Froude got the idea for the *Tracts for the Times* from Lamennais's *L'Avenir*. Furthermore, we learn that Disraeli's *Coningsby* contains passages identical to the anti-erastian writings of Froude.

Marvin O'Connell has charged Dawson with exaggerating the extent to which French Catholicism, and particularly the views of Lamennais, molded the thinking of Tractarian leaders. O'Connell even reprimands Wilfrid Ward for writing that Newman 'had devoted his attention to the Church of France for quite fifteen years'. Yet no one should casually dismiss the observation of the Tractarian historian R.W. Church who recorded in *The Oxford Movement: 1833-1845* (1891) how members lost their ignorance and insularity by exposing themselves to 'the originality and eloquence of De Maistre, La Mennais, Lacordaire, Montalembert'.

Dawson devotes only a few pages to the French connection but his claims are well supported by available evidence. Froude's essays on Lamennais and the French Church in the *British Magazine* published after his 1832 tour of France later appeared in the *Remains of the Reverend Richard Hurrell Froude* edited by Keble and Newman following his death in 1836. It was Froude's writings that inspired William George Ward to write his controversial *Ideal of a Christian Church* which advocated the reform of Anglicanism following the Roman

model. Ward and Frederick Oakeley credit Froude for their conversion to Rome. Other Tractarians such as Thomas William Allies, J.D. Dalgairns, and F.W. Faber travelled to France and eventually crossed the Tiber.

Newman famously admitted his admiration for Montalembert and Lacordaire in the *Apologia*. He upheld as role models for Catholic youth such lay Christian apologists as De Maistre, Chateaubriand and Montalembert in his *Idea of a University*. While the correspondence between Newman and Montalembert is not extensive, it reveals a mutual respect that would be unlikely between individuals who knew nothing of each other. Terence Kenny may be correct to suggest that Newman had no 'acquaintance with Bonald's work', despite a 'similarity which may be detected in the general sense of the value of tradition'. However, such similarity – which has been widely recognized – can justly be identified by Dawson as a result of conversations with Froude whose knowledge of French ultramontanism was greater than Newman's.

In 1837, Newman published a lengthy essay in the *British Critic* on Lamennais' philosophy and downfall. It is unlikely Newman would have devoted much attention to Lamennais and his disciples had it not been for Froude. In his essay, Newman opposed Lamennais's theory of the *sensus communis*, calling it a Roman innovation inconsistent with apostolic teaching. However, Newman appeared to reverse himself in 1845 with the publication of *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* shortly before his conversion to Rome. In 1895, Lord Acton discouraged any connection between Lamennais's 'theory that we can be certain of truth only by the agreement of mankind' with Newman's idea of doctrinal development, since the development the abbé meant 'led up to the Bible, and ended at the New Testament instead of beginning there'. Yet years earlier Acton was not so sceptical. Indeed, the ideas are sufficiently similar for Acton to suggest in his Cambridge lectures on the French Revolution that the 'maxim that the voice of the people is the voice of God' 'was employed in our day by Newman to prop his theory of development'.

The disruption to the Movement that followed Froude's death was minimized by the inclusion of Edward Pusey into its leadership. Only after Newman's departure can the Movement be said to have died, despite the desperate efforts of Pusey to salvage what remained. Dawson argues that the effects of the Movement can be seen in the renewal of English Catholicism and the revitalization – though short lived – of Anglican Highchurchmanship. It can also be seen in the forestalling of an anti-religious Liberalism in politics due to the influence of sympathetic public figures like William Gladstone. If true, this moderating effect did not contribute to the longevity of nineteenth-century Liberalism, at least in English political life. Indeed, it is hard not to wonder with Matthew Arnold whether its

demise was partly due to 'Dr. Newman's movements'.

Ultimately, however, the Oxford Movement failed because the ideas it represented were alien to the reality of religious life in England. The Anglo-Catholic party in which Dawson was raised 'was lacking in authority' he wrote elsewhere. 'It was not the teaching of the official Church, but of an enterprising minority which provided its own standard of orthodoxy.' What drove Newman to Rome was the realization that the religious ideal he sought to restore to the Church of England was incompatible with Anglican belief and practice. Near the end of his life, Newman lamented the secularization of English society in his lifetime though he had predicted it decades before. Newman's fears are echoed in Dawson whose warning is even more urgent today as the process of secularization continues to remove from public consciousness the moral and spiritual heritage of our forefathers.

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The Breakdown of Nations **Aidan Rankin**

The Breakdown of Nations, Leopold Kohr, Green Books in association with New European Publications, 2001, £9.95

A small-state world would not only solve the problems of social brutality and war; it would solve the equally terrible problems of oppression and tyranny. It would solve all problems arising from power. Indeed there is no misery on earth that cannot be successfully handled on a small scale as, conversely, there is no misery on earth that can be handled at all except on a small scale. In vastness, everything crumbles, even the good, because, as will increasingly become evident, the world's one and only problem is not wickedness but bigness; and not the thing that is big, whatever it may be, but the bigness itself. This is why through union or unification, which enlarges bulk and size and power, nothing can be solved. On the contrary, the possibility of finding solutions recedes in the ratio at which the process of union advances. Yet all our collectivised and collectivising efforts seem to be directed towards this one fantastic goal – unification. Which, of course, is a solution, too. The solution of spontaneous collapse.

The solution Leopold Kohr proposes for the problems of over-government sounds refreshingly simple. It has about it the refreshing clarity of Rousseau, but without

the neurotic sentimentalism to which the Genevan thinker often fell prey. Like Rousseau, Kohr is concerned with reconciling with the demands of civil society the natural impulses of human beings: loyalty and territoriality as well as tolerance and exploration, a sense of community and order as well as a need for individual liberty. Kohr's conclusion is that the larger the state, the more complex and less soluble its problems become.

This view of the state also resembles Rousseau, who distrusted large-scale states and centralised authority, preferring small or medium-sized communities where consensus could prevail. However for Kohr the small state should not aim for homogeneity. It should, like Ancient Athens at its best, be an arena for free discussion and the interplay of ideas. Indeed, far from being inward looking or narrow as in the caricatures of big government 'liberals', Kohr's small state provides the best guarantee of diversity and variety, be it in politics, economics or education. Large states, by contrast, tend to develop tyrannical characteristics. They impose absolutist legislation that ignores individual and local needs and they value conformity above idiosyncrasy. Large states pass too many laws and hand down too many court rulings. The intention of these might be benevolent, but in practice they cannot work because they are by their very nature inflexible.

In the 1960s and early seventies, the theme of 'living within limits' was one of the ecological movement's defining features. The pioneers of the modern green sensibility were adamant that there were limits to growth, both in economics and in the role of government. E.F. Schmacher's *Small is Beautiful* was in large part the application of Kohr's ideas to the economic sphere. In 1969, Edward Goldsmith spoke in *Blueprint for Survival* of the nascent movement's goal as 'a society made up of decentralised, self-sufficient communities, in which people work near their homes [and] have the opportunity of governing themselves'. This was entirely compatible with Kohr's idea of the small state, as was Mahatma Gandhi's vision of swadeshi, or 'home economy', based on self-governing village communities, small businesses and traditional craftsmanship, in opposition to developmentalism imposed from above and the worship of technology for its own sake.

Ecologists have placed less emphasis on limits as their political wing has turned further towards the big government left, with pro-bureaucratic, pro-growth policies presented in green wrapping paper. However the idea of limits was applied to modern politics by Kohr ten years before the green pioneers. He drew upon a decentralist tradition in Western political thought that has challenged, and sometimes successfully fought off, the rival tendencies to expansion and grand design. Aristotle belonged to this tradition because of his belief in equitable, enforceable laws and the role of custom and tradition in ensuring good government. Warning his fellow Greeks against expansionism, he argued that there are

natural limits to the size of states, just as there are to plants and animals.

Kohr applies this theory of Aristotle to modern times in what might best be called political ecology. As well as the Greek city states, he takes as his models the Medieval and Renaissance principalities of Central Europe and Italy. At that time, there was not only a greater cultural diversity, but also (ironically) a greater sense of what it meant to be 'European'. Influenced by Kohr, Sir Richard Body takes up this idea in *Europe of Many Circles* and its sequel, *The Breakdown of Europe*, a profoundly optimistic book, despite its title. Body contrasts the architectural variety of the European Renaissance with the dehumanising carbuncles of the European Union's bureaucracy. The first represent vitality and organic cultural evolution, the second abstract blueprints and a deracinated 'official culture' imposed from above. Kohr also draws inspiration from the cantonal systems of present day Switzerland, participatory and democratic, yet traditional in origin and respectful of local need.

There can be many problems with small states: small is not necessarily beautiful, as John Papworth constantly reminds students of Schumacher. Kohr was aware of such problems, but he argued that in communities of limited size, there is a greater possibility of reconciliation, good government and freedom. Evidence for this can be found in many areas: the peace and stability of much of small town America, in comparison to the oversized cities; the freedom and variety of Danish education, in comparison to Britain's monolithic 'National Curriculum' and educational factories; the success of Switzerland in reconciling four language groups. To the surprise of many, Communism can also 'work' in a small-scale setting. One of India's best-governed, most successful states is Marxist-ruled Kerala.

Kohr's book was first published in 1957. His ideas would have had value then, as the European Community was taking shape and the process of decolonisation was underway. Today, they provide a still more timely warning against the development of superstates, the push for uniformity that does not create true unity but – as we saw with the USSR and Yugoslavia – will almost inevitably fall apart. The forewords by a man of the left, Neal Ascherson, and a Tory politician, Richard Body, point us towards another aspect of Kohr. He is radical because he is conservative and conservative because he is radical. As such, he transcends the left/right division that has sterilised modern politics.



Thinking the Future

David S. Oderberg

Philosophy In The New Century, Anthony O'Hear, Continuum Books, 2001, £14.99

The aridity of what passes for much of contemporary western philosophy ought to make any sane member of the profession question on a fairly regular basis why they remain in it. Mind-numbing materialism, soul-destroying reductionism, technicality for technicality's sake, the false worship of science as the governing idol of philosophical practice: all of these, combined with the virtual disappearance of philosophy from the public square, combine to raise the question of what philosophy is for in the twenty-first century.

In *Philosophy in the New Century*, Anthony O'Hear has set himself to answer just that question. Following on from his thought-provoking books *Beyond Evolution* and *After Progress*, O'Hear returns to the theme that has animated his recent work: whether philosophy can, in the face of the challenges of scientism, relativism and cultural fashion, recover its status as the discipline par excellence that seeks after wisdom and understanding. Lamenting the fact that twentieth-century philosophy, by rejecting what it took to be 'the dross of the past', also 'swept away too much of value, too much of what was needed to keep one's humanity intact', O'Hear asks 'where, in the new century, philosophy ought to go.'

And, for those familiar with O'Hear's recent work, the answer is unlikely to surprise: philosophy must return to the traditional task of uncovering the fundamental truths of reality without undermining or distorting our ordinary human experience of it. To this end, he traverses in a broad sweep the most important topics that have traditionally exercised philosophers: wisdom; meaning; knowledge; the person; morality and society; science; art; religion; and death. His treatment of these topics is unified by the basic idea that there are certain conditions which alone make a coherent account of reality possible, and which are inconsistent with the dominant materialistic and reductive worldview shared both by the scientific priesthood and the philosophers which have become its acolytes. The idea is fleshed out by exploring particular areas of reality and systematically uncovering their philosophically salient features, features which in our ordinary experience and quotidian transactions we know to exist but rarely articulate.

For instance, when it comes to understanding myself as a person, I realise that I am not 'an isolated

intelligence, cut off from the world', a free-floating Cartesian ego, nor am I the purely material by-product of evolutionary and other blind forces beyond my control. Rather, I am a complex being at once rooted in nature and bodily experience as well as possessing a consciousness and subjectivity in virtue of which I transcend merely animal existence. I am inevitably shaped by traditions which long preceded me and which I sweep away at the cost of loss of purpose and of identity. As a social creature, I yearn for membership of a society whose drive and purpose shape my own. But my possession of reason also enables me to question and to reflect upon the social forces which have to some degree moulded me. This conception of myself is the true Third Way between a materialism which evacuates my identity of reason and reflection and the Cartesian conception in virtue of which I am 'wholly malleable', an egocentric point-person free from bodily nature and answerable to no one. From which O'Hear concludes not only that 'in assaulting nature, we assault ourselves', but that we can also reason about the forces – natural, cultural, and historical – that have shaped us 'in a way which allows us to broaden and extend perspectives we inherit.'

Again, in the case of morality, O'Hear observes that 'life together would be impossible did individuals not conceive themselves as living within all-pervading and pre-existing networks of duties, obligations, concerns and rights.' In particular, the existence of rights falsifies utilitarian reasoning which seeks only the greatest happiness of the greatest number even if this involves running roughshod over the individual. But rights do not exist in a vacuum, rather they are 'far more complex and historically contingent' than the exponents of rights-based theories often recognise. This leads O'Hear to ask, of Rawlsian social contract theory with its 'anonymous and mutually unknown individuals', what could possibly be 'the basis of loyalty or allegiance or even the sort of patriotism and affection which tie together all actually successful societies?'

Perhaps the pivotal chapter of the book is the one on science, in which O'Hear deftly counters the pretensions of scientism. On the one hand, he says, 'if an account which abstracts systematically from everything of human interest or concern is the most economical way of doing physics, well and good.' However, 'problems are going to arise only when a science, such as physics or biology, implies that its concepts and explanations capture the whole of the reality.' For modern physics, the world is a blind buzzing of particles, stripped clean of colour, sound and taste; a view enthusiastically supported by philosophers ever since Descartes. And yet, as O'Hear points out, these so-called 'felt' qualities ('secondary', as they are technically called) have no less reality simply because they require human sensory organs to perceive them. On the contrary, understanding how human beings perceive the world is integral to understanding what is actually in the world, and natural sci-

ence has no more exclusive dominion over this than does economics or history or anthropology. 'The prestige of science and its success may incline us toward scientism, but there is no necessary move from science to scientism. One can admire science and its achievements without holding that science can tell us everything worth knowing. One can be a scientist without believing that science can explain everything, or that only 'scientific' considerations should influence policy.'

Unifying O'Hear's considerations is his emphasis on what might be called the great trilogy of the Good, the True and the Beautiful: 'Part of what it means to see another as a human being is to see him or her as able to act for the best, and in the light of what appears as true and beautiful.' He sees quite clearly that relativism, scepticism, and materialism (not to mention postmodernism) conspire to destroy all three; and without them, of course, the world has no meaning. The job of philosophy is to provide ceaseless defence of these foundations, thereby fulfilling the Aristotelian promise of 'recovering the full meaning in our humanity' so as to 'pave the way for wisdom, even if it does not directly supply it.' Can the humane ideal of philosophy be restored? It is hard not to think that this will depend greatly on forces outside philosophy, but there can be no doubt that the presence of thinkers of the sensitivity and humanity of O'Hear and the handful of philosophers (one thinks immediately of people such as Haldane and Macintyre) who remain faithful to tradition is a sine qua non of any such restoration. In the new century, they also restore one's faith in the profession of philosophy itself and in the value of remaining within it.

Not dead, just sleeping
Derek Turner

The Death of the West, Patrick J. Buchanan,
St Martin's Press, New York, 2002,
US\$25.95, hb.
(obtainable from The American Cause, 115
Rowell Court, Falls Church, VA 22046)

Pat Buchanan is best known in the UK as the controversial Republican who terrified the GOP establishment and the US Left by winning the New Hampshire primary in the 1996 race to become Presidential candidate, and who later became leader of the Reform Party, only to be defeated ingloriously in the 2000 elections. But he has also been a senior adviser to three American presidents (Nixon, Ford and Reagan), and is a respected TV

show host, newspaper columnist and a best-selling author of profound and often disturbing books.

His 1975 *Conservative Votes, Liberal Victories* was a keenly-observed description of how despite electoral successes, conservatives were failing to halt, let alone reverse, America's steady Leftwards drift. His 1998 *The Great Betrayal* was a well-expressed attack on free trade very much at odds with the world-view of the neo-conservative 'Beltway Right' – and which also diverged from the views of some astute critics, such as Peter Brimelow. In 1999, he moved yet further away from the neo-conservative *weltanschauung* when he called for a revival of an 'America first' foreign policy in *A Republic, Not an Empire*. But as if his outspoken views on free trade and foreign policy, and his ill-fated stand with the Reform Party, were not reason enough to have him excluded forever from many Republican cheese-and-wine parties, *The Death of the West* has probably now sealed his fate.

The Death of the West is subtitled 'How dying populations and immigrant invasions imperil our country and civilisation'. Although his book encompasses much more than this, this is the central topic – and it is one that America's Republican hierarchy (like Britain's Conservative hierarchy) would really much rather not think about. It is only human to wish to close one's eyes to unpleasant realities, such as that America is likely to be a majority non-white country by 2050, if present trends continue – and that this matters. And not just America – Buchanan's thesis is that all First World countries (he includes Japan) are in the same boat, thanks to negative First World population growth and burgeoning population growth just about everywhere else. Eastern Europe is under the same projected sentence of demographic death.

The Death of the West is full of alarming statistics and projections – by 2050, only 10% of the world's people will be of European descent. Between now and 2050, Europe will lose the equivalent of the entire populations of Norway, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Holland and Germany, while Asia, Africa and Latin America will grown by the equivalent of 30 to 40 Mexicos. By 2050, one in three Europeans will be over 60. There are many more such figures. Unless these trends are reversed, both Western civilisation and Christianity will eventually become unsustainable. As he put it in a recent interview: 'I can't see how Western civilisation can be preserved if the people who carry it in their hearts, minds and souls are dying out'. If we do not wish to 'be at one with Nineveh and Tyre', he says we had better do something about it.

Some believe that the declining indigenous birth-rate and Third World immigration are unimportant, and that America is 'a nation of immigrants' anyway. But Western values are dependent on the physical presence of a critical mass of Westerners; if there are no, or too few, Westerners, there will be no Western world. And

although all nations are, at base, made up of immigrants, at some stage in their history they have become defined as a particular kind of nation. For instance, America was founded by English immigrants, and this Anglo-Saxon stamp still marks American life. Introduce into an established nation too many people whose traditions and loyalties predispose them to other civilizational models, accentuate these differences with multiculturalism and effectively forbid discussion of the ensuing problems through political correctness, and the existence of the nation in its accepted form must eventually be challenged.

Buchanan records remorselessly the century-long retreat by Westerners into their ancestral homelands, and describes how those homelands themselves are under siege, with vast numbers of economic migrants from the Third World (often disguised as 'asylum-seekers') seeking entrance. The majority of those who are now taking advantage of our unwillingness to protect our frontiers are either indifferent to Western civilisation, or actually hostile to it (pace those who committed the September 11 atrocities). Those who might have been amenable to our values are outnumbered by others, and further stymied by our refusal to promote, or even defend, our own civilisation.

The reason we won't promote or defend our civilisation, Buchanan says, is that not enough of us – and certainly not our political elites – believe in Christianity any longer. Even many conservatives view it as an historical artefact rather than a living faith. Without believing in the 'cult', we can't believe in the culture that sprang (largely) from it. The Frankfurt School, with its deconstructionism and relativism, is largely to blame, and Buchanan gives an excellent potted history of these civilizational saboteurs.

We cannot expect recent immigrants to pick up our values by osmosis. Yet this seems to be just what the Left believes they will do. If Leftists have ever thought about the future of multicultural societies at all, they seem to have concluded that eventually everyone will just coalesce in a coalition of 'communities' whose relations will be mediated by an expanded class of sensitized bureaucrats – fundamentalist Muslims will metaphorically lie down with militant homosexuals, feminists with African genital mutilators, animal rights activists with voodoo priests, Hutu with Tutsi, and so on. To put it mildly, this flies in the face of all human experience. This is essentially a religious vision, like a Muggletonian sermon or the gaudy pictures in a Jehovah's Witness text, rather than a serious political programme. They have yet to realise that not only Western, but also liberal, values are simply incompatible with large-scale immigration and multiculturalism.

Economic prosperity is also at stake. If immigrants pay taxes, they also use the welfare state (which needs to be slimmed down), and puts pressure on the already-creaking infrastructure and the environment, while the availability of cheap labour depresses wages and

inhibits technological advances. Large-scale immigration means importing poverty, a point interestingly picked up recently by the Labour MP Ann Cryer.

But there are various reasons why the situation, though exceedingly grave, may not be as dreadful as it seems. The West is not dead, just sleeping – although I recognise the irony of using a Victorian gravestone motto in this context. At the risk of sounding positively Panglossian by comparison with such a distinguished commentator, it is possible to draw different conclusions from the same data.

There can be no doubt that our declining birth rate is important. To permit massive, almost uncontrolled immigration into all of our countries is astonishingly foolhardy, for all sorts of reasons. National independences and identities are sorely threatened by a combination of Leftist dislike of patriotism and big business greed. And the ‘adversary culture’ of multiculturalism and disrespect for the past, which has downgraded Western civilisation in the eyes of its inheritors, and made it vulnerable to attack by others, is a potent (if amorphous) enemy. But these phenomena do not necessarily spell the end of the Western world. Mr Buchanan may have succumbed to that common human vice – the belief (which is sometimes also a desire) that ‘we are living in end times’.

We cannot tell what the future holds (and there will be a future!). The figures quoted by Mr Buchanan are indeed alarming – but they are nonetheless only projections, a point he emphasises himself. In any case, the concentration on numbers may be misleading, as quality is more important than quantity. A few thousand Englishmen administered India for 200 years. Were it not for immigration, our relative decline from a numerical historical high would not matter all that much.

The undoubted retreat of the West from its former position of dominance may in fact only be a retreat to more defensible frontiers, in a world in which other peoples are now asserting their legitimate right to govern themselves. There will be yet more retreats, and not all of these will make any great difference to the rump West. In the British context, for example, the Commonwealth fulfils no useful purpose, and we would not be damaged if it were to fall into desuetude.

The globalism and Leftist internationalism decried by Mr Buchanan clearly often conflicts with national and local freedoms and distinctiveness, but could be mitigated, if only people wished so to do (and many do). The ‘adversary culture’ that Mr Buchanan rightly blames for so many of our ills is only skin-deep, and riddled with contradictions. Most people think and behave as they have always done. Over time, the various component parts of this anti-civilisatory infection can be taken on and defeated.

The decline of Christianity is certainly serious, but it is difficult to know what to do about this. The solution, if there is one, lies beyond the realm of politics. This

decline may be inevitable within successful civilisations, as life becomes less precarious and people have time to speculate about philosophical subjects. Yet it is not necessary to be a devout Christian to be a Western patriot, although all Western patriots should be respectful of the legacy of Christianity.

And there are things that we can all do, now, that will make a difference. Buchanan himself lists a number of practical activities that could be undertaken by those Westerners who still love their civilisation in its various national manifestations. He recommends, for instance, ‘cashiering the old generals’ (those ‘conservatives’ who have manifestly failed to arrest our decline), countering enemy propaganda, anti-abortion legislation, citizen boycotts, local initiatives and referenda, ‘defunding the cultural revolution’ (campaigning to withhold public monies from institutions that attack the West – perhaps the BBC might fall into this category), devolution of power down to local level and the proper teaching of history. The list might also be extended to include, for instance, greater participation in the arts and more involvement with the green movement. These are all perfectly reasonable and mostly feasible suggestions, and I wish Mr Buchanan had emphasised these more. (A problem with publishing books with depressing titles – *The Death of the West, England – An Elegy, The Abolition of Britain* – is that they may become self-fulfilling prophecies, by demoralising those whom they should be inspiring. We need a call to arms, not funerary orations or lapidary inscriptions.)

Just because the intrinsic Right has been largely unsuccessful since about 1960 does not mean that it will always be unsuccessful. In fact, recent political developments in many Western countries imply that the West is not entirely comatose. Not all Westerners are ‘slouching towards Gomorrah’, and not all of our intellectuals wish us ill. And literate, polished, powerful books like *The Death of the West* thrust the shocking facts squarely into the public domain, and prove that though we may be down, we are certainly not yet completely without resource. Eventually, I am confident – and Mr Buchanan must himself be confident, otherwise why would he have gone to the trouble of writing at all? – we will come to our senses. And if we do, Patrick Buchanan will deserve enormous credit – not just for the present work, but for a whole lifetime of principled self-sacrifice on behalf of our common civilisation.



Another fine mess

Helen Szamuely

Czechoslovakia – The Short Goodbye, Abby Innes, Yale University Press, 2001, £25.

Harold Nicolson, while describing at length the Munich crisis in his diary, quotes a conversation with his wife, Vita Sackville-West. If the ethnic Germans' rights in the Sudetenland were acknowledged, agonised Nicolson, the Magyars will want the same and the Slovaks will push for separation. Czechoslovakia would cease to exist. The far less politically minded Vita responded with typical common sense: if a country can be broken up with such ease, is there any point in its existence? While acknowledging the truth of that, Nicolson found the thought unbearably depressing. For a veteran of the Versailles negotiations Czechoslovakia was the epitome of the post-1918 liberal Europe as it was supposed to develop but never did. The country was a union of two hitherto oppressed Slavic nations, a democratic liberal bourgeois republic that had managed to avoid the agonies of 1918-20. Its existence would put a check on German and Hungarian ambitions. And, perhaps, it would show the way towards peaceful, multinational development in Central Europe.

Alas, as Abby Innes shows in *Czechoslovakia – The Short Goodbye*, reality did not live up to the fine theoretical expectations. The German and Hungarian minorities were never treated as anything but the defeated enemy and remained sullenly resentful; the Slovaks, whose history and culture was, in fact, very different from that of the Czechs, never felt themselves to be equal partners; the Czechs, convinced of their own liberal and European credentials, failed to appreciate other people's resentments. The history of the first republic was taken up with national and ethnic problems that came to an end shatteringly in 1938. Czechoslovakia did not stand up to the attack it had been set up to repulse. The strength of internal national dissension proved to be too great; the Czech army, strong and well-equipped, ready to fight, was not, tragically, given the order to do so. A couple of months after the German move into the Sudetenland, the same Czech army was sent into Slovakia to impose martial law. The problem of national minorities was not solved until 1946 when 3 million ethnic Germans and about half a million ethnic Hungarians were expelled in what would now be called ethnic cleansing. Most Jews had disappeared during the Nazi occupation and the existence of the Slovak client

state. Only the Roma are left as an insoluble problem.

The events of 1938 and 1939 created enduring myths of betrayal on all sides. The wartime resentments, images and stereotypes persisted into the post-1945 world, the years of Stalinism and purges, the Prague Spring (which had actually originated in Slovakia), the 'normalisation' of the seventies and eighties, the dissident movement and the years immediately after the fall of Communism. Finally, in 1992, the fitful experiment was over: Czechoslovakia ceased to exist. The Czech Republic, to the great satisfaction of its people, was acknowledged to be in the vanguard of post-Communist development. Slovakia, under the populist lawyer Vladimir Meciar remained more problematic. And the West shrugged its shoulders, thankful that the break-up had been peaceful. Had we not always known that Slovakia was more backward, less liberal, less likely to make the transition to democracy easily?

However, as Abby Innes shows, the break-up was not inevitable. The country and its small dissident community that had emerged from the Velvet Revolution of 1989 were largely in favour of continuing as a union. There were a few separatist organisations in both parts but these were not popular and failed to capitalise on existing grievances. In the 1992 elections the two victorious parties, Vaclav Klaus's Civic Defence Party and Meciar's Movement for Slovak Democracy campaigned on the basis of an explicit though vaguely defined commitment to a single state, whatever form it might take. Within a few weeks of winning the elections, without consulting the electorate, the two leaders negotiated the divorce. How and why did that happen?

Abby Innes contends that it is not enough to blame the break-up on long-standing national tensions and more attention should be paid to the effects of Communism and the post-Communist transition period, still not over in a number of states. This is a refreshing attitude. It is true that the collapse of Communism brought back into focus the long-standing historical divisions of Europe. On the other hand, the distortions of the Communist system corrupted post-communist politics to an extent that is poorly understood in the West, which persists in viewing Communism as nothing more than just another autocracy. The deliberate destruction of all political and social activity meant that the first couple of years in all the post-Communist countries were spent in a vacuum that was too large for the minuscule group of dissidents and only gradually filled with new and old politicians. These were not, in the nature of things, the idealistic opponents of the old system, who were rarely able to formulate detailed political platforms.

The villains of the story, as far as Abby Innes is concerned, are Vaclav Klaus, who committed the crime of being a free-marketeer and disdaining advice thrust on him by Western well-wishers, and Vladimir Meciar, a populist and politically opportunist lawyer. The break-up of the country happened because of their personal

ambitions and the forces they unleashed and could only partially control. Abby Innes, like most people, would like to see Havel as the hero but clearly finds it frustrating that a man so feted and admired inside and outside his country proved to be so helpless when the crisis came. It seems that Havel, like his illustrious predecessors, Tamas Masaryk and Eduard Benes, is better at being a moral beacon than actual day to day politics. Though ailing, he is still in the Castle, to which he had been swept by popular acclaim in 1989, unable, perhaps, to imagine Czech political life without himself.

The two instigators of the divorce have been forced temporarily into back seats. Klaus, a more incisive and ideologically principled thinker than his contemporaries, has recently lost an election to his socialist rivals, many of whom are former Communists. His past demands for vetting have not really been complied with. Too many people were involved in some way with the Communist system to make a real lustration feasible. The Czech Republic is no longer an exemplar of post-Communist development, having lost economic momentum and become enmeshed in the usual financial scandals.

Meciar tried to establish a nationalistic autocratic system but lost the election in 1998. He is now making a come-back or, at least, his party is. For the European Union, to demonstrate its own democratic credentials, has told the Slovaks that if they dare to elect Meciar in September they would once again be relegated to the outer circle: no EU membership and, more seriously, possible sanctions. Whether this, too, will feed Slovak paranoia remains to be seen. EU membership looms for both countries but the terms are unclear. The future for all post-Communist countries remains to a greater or lesser degree murky.

It would be good to think that *Czechoslovakia – The Short Goodbye* could give the reader some pointers. But it is hard to envisage who the readers are meant to be. Abby Innes gallops through the years 1918 to 1988 in about forty pages, then devotes almost 200 to the events of just two years, as these lead to the break-up. She analyses the developments over and over again from the point of view of different sociological theories. The first section is confusing because so much has had to be left out, the second because so many details have had to be put in. The book is useful only as part of a larger picture of the transitional period in Eastern Europe, a concept Abby Innes seems to think she invented. Not so. Few people who knew anything about the Communist countries expected a smooth change-over to liberal democracy or free-market capitalism, particularly as these concepts are being discarded in Western Europe.

It is, however, worth asking ourselves as a new multinational state, the European Union, prepares to expand to the east, how it intends to overcome the sort of tensions and resentments that proved fatal in a country of just two nationalities and a couple of ethnic minorities.

Perhaps the readers of this book ought to be the officials and political analysts who blithely advocate the creation of a greater European state.

Enchanting encounters? Helen Szamuely

**Letters from England, Karel Capek, trans
Geoffrey Newsome, Claridge Press, 2001,
£12.99**

One cannot help feeling nostalgic when reading the recently re-translated *Letters from England* by Karel Capek. Not because the England (and Wales and Scotland) he describes has long ago disappeared, for it never really existed, but because he himself is a character of a vanished and, probably, happier past. *Letters from England* is not about the country it purports to be about – it is about Capek, the eternal Central European intellectual, highly literate and educated, superficially knowledgeable and widely read. Eternal in a way, but the new post-Communist Central European intellectual, though he may try to show all those qualities, is nevertheless, a sadder person. His country, whichever it is, has sipped full of real horrors not the discomforts of the Habsburg Empire. One trait remains instantly recognisable and Capek shows it in abundance. He talks much of his wonder and admiration for England (for which one must always read Britain, since the intricacies of the different British nationalities escape him) but what hides under that is a somewhat supercilious disdain for a people who are different: less cultured in his opinion, less refined, not very artistic, materialistic and insular. The last description, repeated several times, is particularly startling as few people are more truly insular than the average highly literate and educated Central European intellectual.

Capek, for example, shows no real curiosity about the country he is visiting and is content to give witty and exceedingly charming descriptions and comments, all of which merely reiterate the certainties Central Europeans hold about Britain, whether they actually visit it or not. He complains amusingly about the English Sunday and English food (tapioca pudding appears to have particularly bemused him); he notes that people do not talk in trains and hold no discussions in streets; on the other hand, he waxes lyrical about English grass, English trees and is bemused and fascinated by English love of traditions. He is more sentimental, less acerbic but also oddly less perceptive than George Mikes, the doyen of Central

European observers of Britain.

As Geoffrey Newsome's excellent notes at the end mention, Capek was, in fact, feted in Britain and he met various writers and commentators, sympathetic to the young country he had come from. Newsome also points out several inaccuracies in the book, but it is clear that Capek is, at all times, more concerned with giving a general impression rather than a detailed description. The notes are very helpful: they explain the various references Capek makes to otherwise unrecognisable parts of Britain and to Czech literary figures. If only Mr Newsome's introduction were as useful. But after giving a brief summary of Capek's early writing career, it turns into an adulatory analysis of the charm, childish puckishness and humanism of the *Letters*. This delightful and slight tome does not need analysis or careful signposting – its appeal is immediate and lies in the language, the line illustrations by the author and the wistfulness that imbues it. More about Capek the writer would have been useful. How did he really fit into the Czech literary scene? How did his collaboration with his brother Jozef really work? How do the *Letters from England* compare with his other travel accounts, the *Letters* from Italy, Spain, Holland, Poland? And, crucially, what was the Capek brothers' politics? For it is not precisely true that their writings were suppressed by both the Nazis and the Communists. *Letters from England* may have been for a while but after the end of the ferociously Stalinist era of Klement Gottwald the Capek brothers were published both in Czech and Russian. They were known throughout Eastern Europe in the fifties, sixties and seventies as well as later as bourgeois but left-wing writers, fellow-travellers if not actual Communist sympathisers. How accurate is that, one wonders? Could it have been a deliberate distortion made in order to capture two leading writers posthumously for the cause or were the Capeks really far on the left?

One thing is certain: just as Geoffrey Newsome does now, so the Soviet litterateurs in the past praised the Capeks' 'humanism', a key concept in Marxist literary studies, an amalgam of sentimentality and correct left-wing politics. The well-known literary scholar, historian and translator Ronald Hingley called the 'humanism' of Marxist scholarship 'goomanship' to show that it had little to do with humanism, humanity or humanitarianism as we understand it in the West.

Happily, little of Capek's 'goomanship' is visible in this enchanting and enjoyable volume. It is a delightful read that will leave one with a severe case of nostalgia for the Central Europe that disappeared in 1939.

The God of the Old Testament

David Levy

The Hebrew God: Portrait of an Ancient Deity, Bernhard Lang, Yale University Press, 2002, £25.00

Over the last century or so our understanding of the world of the Bible – the Old Testament in particular – and so of the religion and culture of the ancient Hebrews, has been immeasurably enriched and transformed by the wealth of research, archaeological, anthropological and philological, devoted to the study of the civilizations that were their neighbours and, all too frequently, their conquerors. These studies have brought to light hitherto unsuspected affinities and parallels between the culture and belief systems of the Hebrews and those of both their precursors and their contemporaries in ways that have apparently challenged the religiously sanctioned uniqueness of our common biblical heritage. However, what remains exceptional in the Hebrews' story is the way in which their particular religious legacy, and that of no other cognate group, has come to be formative of Western civilization both through the remarkable persistence of Judaism as a living faith and the no less extraordinary triumph of Christianity as a purportedly universal creed intended not for a particular people but for all mankind. This may, as many believe, be a theological mystery but it is most assuredly an irresistible provocation to continuing further secular research and speculation among believers and unbelievers alike.

As Professor of Old Testament and religious studies at the universities of St Andrews and of Paderborn, Bernhard Lang has, in this exceptionally acute study, drawn together the fruits of a century of past scholarship to paint a vivid and altogether convincing portrait of the Hebrew God as he may have been originally understood among his first devotees. Drawing on the theories of Georges Dumézil, first developed quite independently in studies of ancestral Indo-European society and religion, Lang examines the character of the God of the Old Testament in his threefold aspect as lord of wisdom, lord of war and lord of all that is conducive to the material sustenance of life – animal husbandry, the cultivation of the land and individual well-being. Taken together these aspects constitute the universality of what comes eventually to be seen as a single, unique and exclusive deity. Looked at apart they reflect the tripartite division of ancient civilisation as a world of scribes, kings and peasantry as well as the three estates of the realm – clergy,



nobility and commoners – recognised in feudal Europe.

The result of Lang's inquiry is a fascinating and thoroughly accessible work that can be read with pleasure as well as intellectual profit by non-specialists as much as by those especially concerned, whether religiously or academically, with its subject matter; and it is fair to say that no one will emerge from a reading of this book without at least a degree of reconsideration of what he or she thought was true about the apparently original form of modern monotheist faith.

This is an exceptionally well organised volume, with each chapter prefaced by an informative summary of its content. It is illustrated by finely chosen images drawn from the civilizational heritage of the ancient Near East that encapsulate covert aspects of the Hebrew divinity which Lang wishes to bring to light from behind the cloak of our seeming familiarity with a biblical text that we misunderstand in often anachronistic ways. Only occasionally does the author's enthusiasm for a particular pet idea tend to lead him into an over-narrow or eccentric interpretation of one or another aspect of Hebrew text or practice in a work that is otherwise marked by breadth of scholarship and a degree of interpretive sensitivity which is unusual among specialists in Old Testament studies as it is among other members of the contemporary academy.

It is hard to envisage a cultivated reader who will not learn something new about a fascinating subject with which we all have at least a passing acquaintance and it is difficult to imagine a better introduction than this to a field of inquiry that cannot but concern us all as spiritual or, in some cases, ethnic heirs of those who first worshipped that mysterious and enduring being, the Hebrew God.

Has the Church of England Resigned? **Peter Mullen**

**Secularisation, Edward Norman,
Continuum, 2002, £16.99.**

This devastating book has reprinted within a few weeks of its first publication. It is a comprehensive criticism of the effects of the Church of England's secularising tendencies over the last thirty years. In that time the Church, as traditionally understood, has for all practical purposes, resigned. 'Christianity is not being rejected in modern society – what is causing the decline of public support for the Church is the insistence of Church leaders themselves in representing secular enthusiasm for humanity as core-Christianity'. That's it in a nutshell.

For a generation these hirelings and blind guides – 'this elite of self-conscious social progressivism' – have imagined that the Church would prosper if it became less religious. Whereas in fact at every stage in the secularising, dumbing-down process – including the virtual abolition of The Authorised Version of the Bible and The Book of Common Prayer and their replacement by inferior texts which are alternately risible and blasphemous – there has followed relentless desertion from the pews. Why can't the bishops and the 'liberal' elite who control the General Synod see that when you are in a hole you should stop digging? Instead, their recipe for restoration and growth is yet more of the policies which have failed not once but time and time again. For example, this week the General Synod is seeking to pass a resolution allowing priests to wear lounge suits at the altar instead of the traditional vestments. That won't bring the missing millions flocking back. People want religion to be religious: they want powerful, sonorous liturgies; inspiring music; insightful theological sermons which refresh the parts which the jogging for Jesus happy-clappy clergymen can't reach. If you want proof of that, just look at the success being enjoyed by the Eastern Orthodox Church in which the services are traditionally framed and where the clergy actually speak as if they believe in God.

'Once Christ has been represented as primarily concerned with justice and welfare, rather than with sin and corruption, the equation of his religion with the leading tenets of modern humanism is easily effected.'

The secularised relativism of the faith has permeated our schools as well: 'Because of sensitivity over ethnic issues and a very proper desire to give no offence to the non-white adherents of Hinduism or Islam, these other world religions, taught as a required part of the curriculum, are presented to the children in a wholly uncritical manner, whereas Christianity is often hedged about with all kinds of reservations touching its supposedly tainted record in social issues and similar matters'. Christianity is not being taught as if it were true, but only one lifestyle option among many.

'Indoctrination' is a word now used only in a pejorative sense and no attempt is being made to teach people what Christianity is, that is what its doctrines are. Instead, 'religion now is a species of personal therapy'. Norman is bewildered to the point of utter incomprehension as to how this has been allowed to happen: 'Why does the Church seek to associate itself so closely with the ideals of plural society? Through most of its history, the leaders of Christianity – like the leaders of Judaism and Islam – have taught exactly the reverse'.

The whole of society is affected as political correctness is leading us inexorably towards 'something that used to be called totalitarianism'. And, 'The state has begun to regulate huge areas of social exchange once regarded as exclusively within the determination of individuals. The state, instead of being a neutral arbiter between the competing elements of the social pluralism, is actively

engaged in a collectivist explosion of legislative promotion of approved attitudes and practices’.

The bewilderment turns to controlled, superbly expressed fury as the author rails against, ‘most terrible of all, the Church’s lack of holiness’. He laments: ‘Everything has become so informal that the dignity and solemnity of studying the truth of Christ have been lost, and the priceless reservoirs of learning which once supplied the aspirants to Christian service have run into the sands’.

The fundamental tragic catastrophe is that all this has not fallen upon the Church through the machinations of external enemies, but it has willed its own destruction. The image is of apostasy and betrayal. The Church no longer understands human nature. It refuses to teach the uncomfortable doctrine of Original Sin and so, of course, it cannot go on to preach the forgiveness of sins. ‘The religion which Christ came to deliver is about the inability of men and women to put what is wrong with themselves right. It is about human sin, and the flawed nature of each person which renders everyone incapable of self-redemption’.

Norman concludes, ‘The Body of the Lord, the Church, is still in the world institutionally, and those whose duty, as members of that body, is to preserve the purity and authenticity of Christ’s truth, need to direct their mission to the Christian remnant in England.’ Pigs might fly.

Rights or Claims?

Audrey Parry

Human Rights, Michael Ignatieff, Princeton University Press, £13.95

What right have human beings to rights? What is so special about our species? The Human Rights movement owed its origin to revulsion against the horrors of the Holocaust and of the excuse ‘I was only obeying orders.’ Since then it has gone from strength to strength. Its opponents say that it attracts ambitious lawyers, whingers who divorce notions of rights from responsibilities, and is an assault on state sovereignty. John Laughland, who opposed the indictment of Milosevic, regards world government as an absolute tyranny as there would be no escape. Yet zealots of the enforcement of human rights appear to regard this as their goal. Some who are uneasy about human rights still regard them as a convenient bolthole against oppressive government or law. Thus huntsmen, Lady Porter and the Freedom Association have in their time invoked them. In two elegant essays Michael Ignatieff considers their meaning

and their future evolution. His critics reply and he in turn replies. He does not deal with enforcement nor with the question of the democratic deficit. How many Englishmen were asked if they wanted a convention on the right of asylum? How many wanted the abolition of capital punishment? But this is not to carp. In Ignatieff’s case brevity is the soul of wisdom.

Ignatieff accepts the Human Rights argument but he enters many caveats. He thinks that rights only become effective when they are anchored in the constitutional traditions of particular peoples. Rights follow the stability of states, not precede them. Only when we accept the dignity of people do rights have meaning. ‘Are we not brothers?’ was the rallying cry of the anti-slavers, not ‘Are we not rights-bearers?’ Rights can conflict with each other and since they are absolute there can be no easy pragmatic solution. The right to full employment (how could this be enforced?) might conflict with the right, if it exists, to a stable currency. If you allow the rights of independence to an ethnic group it may produce such chaos and bloodshed as to destroy the right to existence itself. Members of a minority group may wish to opt out of that group and should be free to do so and to know about such a possibility. For this reason he stresses freedom of speech and of the press. It is ironic that the latter is itself very much to the fore in rights of privacy and confidentiality. Nevertheless he accepts that the media are essential in creating checks and balances against coercive governments.

We have difficulty in the West with immigrants from strong patriarchal societies, eg Islam, which want to preserve their traditions particularly family life. We may think that women should be told of their reduced status but what if they claim that they are not oppressed at all and are quite content with their lot? Ignatieff’s answer is that they should at least know all their options and should be allowed to leave the group if they wish. There is a minefield here.

Ignatieff makes the point that many NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations, whose officials are not elected) purport to speak for victims but we only have their word for it. Do the victims agree? Are the personnel of the NGOs, we may ask, sufficiently scrutinised?

In view of these factors and with his inherent distrust of ‘rights inflation’ it is not surprising that Ignatieff adopts a minimalist stance. His last sentence says that the elemental priority of all human rights activism is to stop torture, killings, rape... and to improve as best we can the security of ordinary people. ‘My minimalism is not strategic at all. It is the most we can hope for.’



The Debt to Tailors

Jane Ridley

Sex and Suits, Anne Hollander, Claridge Press, 2002, £15.50

If you think that the history of fashion is a woman's thing, forget it. In this sparkling essay, Anne Hollander proposes a radically different view. She has a theory that the real breakthrough in fashion was made by men. The sartorial revolution was the invention of the suit.

The modern suit, consisting of separate, loose-fitting trousers and jacket, was created by English tailors around 1800. Eighteenth-century gentlemen were pear-shaped. They wore tight-shouldered, full-bellied coats with long waistcoats and breeches which accentuated their waists and hips. The modern suit transformed the male body shape, bringing wide shoulders, tapered waists and flat thighs. Showing the body without constricting it, the suit was designed to make men's bodies mimic the nudes of classical Greece, as rediscovered by Neo-Classical art and design.

The essential fabric of the suit is wool, which is elastic and flexible. In colour, the suit is muted and dull. Suits rely for their effect on cut and movement rather than colour and surface decoration, which are traditionally hallmarks of female clothing. The suit, says Hollander, is a work of art, and its very simplicity gives it an erotic charge. Like classical architecture, the suit is a form which allows infinite variation, but always within the limits imposed by formal rules.

After the invention of the suit, men's basic scheme of clothes never really changed for two centuries. Some people see this as the Great Masculine Renunciation of Fashion. The opposite is the case, says Hollander. Men's clothes didn't need to change. They were streets ahead of women's clothes, which still followed the basic medieval scheme of undergarment and over garment. Female dress was fussy, concealing, restricting and frivolous. This was partly because women's clothes were made by female dressmakers. Unlike men's tailors, who were skilled at cutting and shaping garments to fit the body, dressmakers merely applied shapeless fabric to the female torso, which itself was artificially (and painfully) moulded by stays.

Changes in women's fashion almost always involved borrowing from men. Even loose long hair was characteristically a male feature (remember Van Dyck's long-haired Cavaliers). Women had long hair, but they wore it up or plaited. When they borrowed loose long hair

from men, it was a sexual invitation – hence the custom of brides wearing long hair at weddings. The most distinctive female contribution to fashion was the selective revealing of bare flesh – sometimes arms or legs, sometimes chest and, today, the midriff.

Traditional female dress did women no favours. The effect of dressing men identically in suits – in morning coats or tuxedos or lounge suits – is to make each face stand out as an individual. Women, on the other hand, might all wear different, brightly coloured dresses, but they seem just a crowd of women, not individuals.

The history of women's fashion in the twentieth century is the story of how women came to wear the trousers. One landmark was the rise of male designers. The first of these was Worth, who trained as an English tailor but worked in Paris, dressing Edwardian ladies. He understood the male trick of cutting clothes to fit the body, rather than draping it with shapeless fabrics. Women began to wear tailored coats and skirts. They cut their hair short like men.

These changes didn't make women seem butch and masculine. On the contrary, as George Sand discovered when she wore men's clothes, body-hugging tailoring made women look erotic. The 1950s saw a regression to wasp-waisted Victorian fashion as women aspired once again to bake bread and have five children. The rebellion of the feminists of the 1960s was correspondingly extreme, and they burned their bras in protest against the 'unbelievably static mammary projections' fixed high on the chests of 1950s movie stars. Soon wearing a bra became a matter of individual choice.

The last stage in this modern revolution in women's clothing was the universal wearing of trousers. Trousers were the basic feature of the male suit, but trousers for women had to wait until the world had got used to the sight of women's legs, proving that the upper half of the female body was integrally related to the lower half. 'The permanent shortening of skirts was in fact the most necessary step in furthering the modernization of women, the most original modern contribution to feminine fashion accomplished without recourse to the standard male vocabulary.' Today, with the near-universal wearing of trousers by women, the modernisation of women's clothes – the borrowing by women of the once-revolutionary suit designed by men two centuries ago – is complete.

Of course, men's fashion has changed too. The basic suit scheme has been adapted to jeans and tee-shirts. Like so many sartorial innovations, both derive from working-class sources. Jeans were borrowed from American navvies, and the tee shirt was originally a male vest.

Nor has all the borrowing been one way: men have borrowed from the women's scheme too. Men's clothes are far more colourful than they used to be. And men have taken the women's idea of baring flesh, wearing jeans slung below the hips to reveal the cleavage of a

builder's bum. Suits are still worn, but chiefly as work clothes, and sporting and casual clothes are androgynous. Men and women today dress the same, in parody sports gear or in clothes that mimic children's zipper jackets and bright colours. As Hollander notes, the decline of the suit and the retreat into childhood clothes connotes a flight from the burdens of adult sexuality.

After finishing this book I found myself looking at people in the street with new eyes: the book allows you to 'read' clothes in a way that I had never thought possible. Anne Hollander's theory is elegant, well-cut and seductive. First published in 1994, the book left me hungry for more. What do men's shaven heads tell us about gender politics? I wanted more too on body shapes. To what extent is the rise of anorexia related to the decline of stays?

A Mean & Irrational Harassment **Dennis O'Keeffe**

Euthanasia for Death Duties, Barry Bracewell-Milnes, IEA, 2002, £10.

What does it signify if parents leave to their children certain properties or other forms of wealth? Apart from the fading claptrap of the Marxist sort, about the reproduction of the capitalist 'ruling class,' an economic sociology almost no one takes seriously now, there is a range of more mundane and thoroughly individual possibilities. It could be that the testator, whatever his position in the social hierarchy, if he were imprudent or unlucky, actually inherited more wealth than he now bequeaths. More typically though, given that in the last sixty years of the twentieth century the overall trend in Britain has been an upward curve of prosperity, it means that the testator, sharing in that growth of prosperity, saved some of his income, crystallised as wealth. Certainly, the intentions of many citizens today could hardly be clearer. They wish to leave some of their substance to their children or other family. That parents mostly wish this, was pertinently observed by Alfred Marshall, says Bracewell-Milnes. Yet today once an estate exceeds £242,000, inheritance tax is levied on it at 40%. In many parts of the country, especially in the South East, very modest houses are worth twice that much or more. Effectively the state is removing from people's children a large slice of the only wealth being left to them – their parents' homes, which the latter worked for decades to pay for and maintain. Should not the mildest of temperaments be moved to outrage by

such predation?

This learned and elegant monograph does, indeed, exhibit a quiet indignation. Why is the thing maintained? Other English-speaking countries, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, have abolished death-duties, with apparently, so the author says, no adverse consequences. Since those who bequeath and those who inherit are obvious losers in this process, who, exactly, gains? Inheritance taxes yield a derisory amount to the Treasury, the gross take being small and collection costs very high. The net yield to the Exchequer in this country had fallen to 1.6% of total revenue by the start of the third millennium. Moreover, giving and inheriting have 'negative economic taxable capacity.' The revenue yield from them is always exceeded by the social loss (destruction of wealth) which they cause. As the author goes on to explain, people spend away their wealth when they know it will be penally taxed before it reaches their heirs.

Bracewell-Milnes comes to the core of his argument in Chapter Two. The desire to bequeath is itself a significant stimulant of the pursuit of wealth and the presence of death duties a significant deterrent to the same, whether we are talking of great or of modest wealth. Penal taxation of that which one leaves one's heirs is similar in effect to penally high income tax or corporation tax, it encourages consumption and deters savings and investment. On the whole, moreover, as the author points out, the incidence of death duties tends to fall disproportionately on 'middle wealth,' the poorer groups avoiding it partially or wholly and the rich having their own means of fiscal non-compliance. Death duties were spurred onwards in the nineteenth century, first by the abiding influence of the French Revolution and its animus against the rich, secondly by the totalitarian thought that Revolution fertilised and by the growing favour in which the insidious perspectives of social engineering were held. None of this has much of an audience now, and Bracewell-Milnes opines that the 'principal ally' of death duties today is inertia.

Yet the survival of inheritance taxes is surely a rather exotic case of inertia. It is also inertia which permits the survival of socialised education and medicine, people fondly holding on to the state nurse lest the private dispensation turn out to be far worse. In these cases the fatal inertia is at least compensated by some pretence at production, however inadequate. Inheritance tax is all cost and no benefit, not even producing inferior outputs like those of LEA schooling and the National Health Service.

Dr Bracewell-Milnes's Chapter Four ought to be included on all undergraduate economics courses. It deals with that minority of cases where enjoyment and use, which are usually complementary, as in the pleasure one gets from consuming a bottle of wine which one owns, instead compete. This is so when decision-makers engage in 'perpetual saving' that is to say saving which is deliberately never depleted. Typically these decisions

might be by parents whose 'enjoyment' of their perpetual saving derives from the satisfaction of knowing that these resources will, undepleted, be at the disposal of their children. Provided they remain in cohesive ownership, for example by close-knit families, resources whose possession people enjoy while they refrain from ever using them, are never idle, but rather become, via the operation of the financial system, a permanent loan to the rest of society. Even if Say's Law that supply creates its own demand did not hold one hundred per cent, they are certainly more available than when they are being destroyed by predatory taxation. Any taxation of perpetual saving through its encouragement of consumption will effect a diminution in this permanent loan.

Some of the surrounding and supporting obiters in this monograph deserve to be more commonplace than they are. For example, since there is no universal standard of equality, egalitarian principles do not furnish taxation with any policy basis. Another such example is the fact that there are multiple types of prosperity which cannot be reduced to a single standard of calibration. A legitimate sense of prosperity attends the activity of perpetual saving, which as the author points out may be the result of a single act or of a series of cumulative acts. One cannot simply total a person's expenditures to see how 'prosperous' he is.

As so often with anti-interventionist writings, a free market counterfactual, uncovering the better and more efficient alternatives at present obscured by state activities, forces its way through an analysis of the latter, with a salutary rebuke. We would almost all be better off if the state would only butt out of our private affairs. Apart from a dwindling band of bureaucrats and socialists whose first joy in life is spending other people's money, very few persons benefit from the present rapacious and irrational fiscal dispensation under which we live.

The Error Of Syllabuses

Robert Grant

Smiling Through The Cultural Catastrophe: Toward The Revival Of Higher Education,
Jeffrey Hart, Yale University Press, 2001,
£18.95

This is a curious work. Its author, Jeffrey Hart, is a senior editor at the US *National Review*, and a regular contributor to the similarly conservative *New Criterion*. A pupil of those great Columbia University humanists of the 1940s, Lionel Trilling, Jacques Barzun and Mark van Doren, he was latterly, until his retirement,

Professor of English at Dartmouth College.

Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe comes garlanded with loyal tributes from friends and colleagues, including the venerable Barzun himself. Professor Hart believes, rightly, that Western civilization, in its enormous diversity, is a great achievement, while not disparaging the achievements of other civilizations. So, despite his fantastically optimistic title, his sympathies might be thought to accord roughly with those of this journal.

Hart is devoted to the Great Books programme, first invented at Columbia in 1919 and adopted by Chicago in the 1930s. One blurb likens *Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe* to Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon*. In fact Bloom, like other distinguished scholars in mid-career including Frank Kermode, did much to encourage, or at least permit, the near-wholesale takeover of literary studies by (self-refuting) poststructuralist and other nonsense. One's joy at their belated recantations is matched only by one's wonder at their previous supineness (which never afflicted their colleagues in philosophy).

Professor Hart, by contrast, has always kept faith with literature, and probably at considerable professional cost. America, which gave us the Great Books or liberal humanities 'canon', is the only seriously religious country left in 'the West'. The whole notion of a 'canon' is religious, being a collection of texts to whose authority the members of a given community, if they wish to be counted as members, are required to subscribe (or 'confess'). This is why radical academics opposed to the allegedly 'official' literary canon – invariably stigmatized as 'Eurocentric', however many non-European classics it contains – generally offer an alternative 'political' version, typically consisting of utterances – artistically inferior both in fact and by definition, otherwise they would be in the regular canon – by the 'excluded' or 'marginalised'.

Being belief-defining, canons make perfect sense in doctrinal religions such as Christianity, just as common ritual practices make sense in non-doctrinal ones (Ancient Greece and Rome, Japan). But how far does a canon really make sense in philosophy, literature and art?

Take literature. F.R. Leavis's Great Tradition notwithstanding, the Great Books have never really caught on here. We have distrusted syllabuses, except the purely propaedeutic. We liked our books to be, not Great (though many were), but clever, touching, imaginative, profound, amusing, provocative or quirky. They reflected life at both the everyday and the exalted levels, and both were important. At university, as in an informal garden, we browsed among them at will and were encouraged to do so.

In 1960s Cambridge (to speak personally) we had no syllabus and no prescribed reading, only periods and (later) genres, periods being largely an administrative convenience (though a 'sense of period' really did matter, and we were tested on it). Any opinion was permissible,

so long as it was backed by evidence and argument. Ever-conscious, Collingwood-fashion (though we hadn't read him) of our books' chronology and historical limitations, we certainly did not see them as a timeless Straussian colloquium, nor string them out into a Whig-historical grand narrative or *Gradus ad Parnassum*, and say: Everybody who aspires to be a full, respected member of our great democracy (and civilization) should be familiar with these towering cultural landmarks. (An ideal now reproduced in miniature, and at the level of mere quotidian information, in E.D. Hirsch's 'cultural literacy'.)

It is possible that the Great Books (many being American) were intended not so much to express a common culture, as to create one among the children of that vast, heterogeneous wave of late nineteenth-century immigrants to the United States. Many of this second, American-born generation were studious urban Ashkenazim, such as Lionel Trilling and Alfred Kazin, who attended and were later to staff such institutions as Columbia, but whose parents still spoke the language, and retained the outlook, of the ghetto and the shtetl. Even if naturalizing the young Kazins and Trillings was not the Great Books' purpose, they achieved it.

To return, however: a work of pretended Scripture either is, or is not, the authentic Word of God. If not, it is not canonical, no matter how pious it is. If it is, its artistic, philosophical or literary quality (as with the 'alternative' literary canon) is irrelevant. But artistic, philosophical and literary canons are different. All attempts, such as the French neo-classical critics', to make them official have ended in absurdity and mediocrity. For they are informal, permanently open to question in a way impossible in religion, and subject to constant change and development. Joshua Sylvester (1562-1618), in his own time a major European poet, is now remembered chiefly for the ludicrous line: 'The bald-pate woods are periwigged with snow.' Until T.S. Eliot's critical revolution, Donne seemed intolerably harsh and knotty, and Blake a near-total madman, except to the Pre-Raphaelites.

The true, if well-worn, criterion of a (non-Scriptural) work's canonical status, or rather of the importance which that term implies, seems to be the test of time. Even here we are not necessarily talking about value, though it is true that Shakespeare's universal appeal seems inseparable from his 'greatness' as a writer (he now enjoys more performances per head of population in Japan and Nigeria than anywhere else). On the other hand – and this is nothing to do with philosophy per se – the reputations of (say) Plato, Kant and Hegel have long been fiercely contested. Kant has been savaged by Nietzsche, Hegel by Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, and Plato and Hegel (unfairly) by Popper. They are still, however, 'canonical', that is, enduring and influential enough to have attracted, and survived, such heavyweight criticism. And as Nietzsche himself says, the errors of great men are more fruitful than the truths of little men.

This maxim is brilliantly equivocal. Is it 'true', or 'fruitful'? Professor Hart would doubtless consider it characteristic of the 'dialectical' – by which he means argumentative, adversarial, open-ended and many-faceted – character of the 'Western' mind and 'Western' experience generally. According to him, the Western dialectic stems from the West's dual classical and Judaeo-Christian heritage, its fusion into a combined tradition of Greek rationality ('Athens') and Hebrew spirituality ('Jerusalem').

The Athens-Jerusalem polarity was possibly first so named by Shelley, in *The Triumph of Life*. It figures also in an essay by Leo Strauss, mentioned earlier, to whom Hart is deeply indebted. What holds the two cities together, given their deep difference and occasional antagonism? Alternatively, what drew them together in the first place?

Hart does not say, but it cannot be geography. The Greeks had traded with their next-door neighbours, the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, who were also Semites, but had little in common with them. Some might deny that Jerusalem contributed equally with Athens to inaugurating the Western tradition, simply because so much Christian thought was already thoroughly Greek (Stoicism, for example, was a major Christian source). Others might point to the Orphic strain in Greek, and especially in pre-Socratic, thought as an indigenous, non-rational 'spirituality' that owes nothing to Hebrew influence.

The true affinity between Athens and Jerusalem (let us hazard) is their common belief in objective, autonomous existences: nature on the one hand and God on the other (human beings bridging the two worlds, which together make up 'reality'). Both are immune to magical manipulation, and thus compel our respect (and, in God's case, a healthy fear too). By a strange paradox, and despite its contrary Faustian tendency, the global success of European culture, and even its partial conquest of nature, has stemmed from its fundamental, outward-looking humility in the face of reality, its genuine acknowledgement of the Other (God, nature, other people, other cultures), its sober acceptance of its own existential limitations, its refusal, in the end, to allow itself to be ruled, Tamburlaine-fashion, by egoistic fantasy or barbarian hubris.

Hart is a Whig historian. He reads his 'Western' narrative backwards into implausibly remote times and cultures. Perhaps it is not wholly anachronistic to see Socrates as 'Western', if only because his methods and mind-set have consciously informed the modernizing process. But to call Homer 'Western', when the Homeric Greeks will have been totally unconscious of any such category, is surely stretching the idea beyond breaking point, as it almost is to call St Paul 'the first theologian of the West'. (Modernity is of 'the West' in the sense of having started there. But science, which is part of modernity, is not even 'Western' any longer: it is just science.)

Hart sees Socrates as 'internalizing the heroic', as that is

conceived by Homer, and Jesus as doing the same with Mosaic leadership. (Both, incidentally, were martyred.) The suggestion is fertile and interesting, but I do not see where it leads. Until we are all like Socrates or Jesus, as we never shall be, what they stood for will need defending, and for that we shall still need to conscript the unregenerate Achilles-types and Moses-types from amongst us, thus diverting them from the mischief which, like Napoleon, they would otherwise cause. We need both heroic virtue (internalized heroism) and the straight, practical heroics of the warrior and the statesman, but also to make sure that the second remains subordinated to the first.

Gospel Christianity is radically anti-institutional, and could never have survived in its original form. To survive, Christianity needed organization and structure, to be a Church. Hart, in his vague, ad hoc, rambling way, tells us much that we already knew about St Paul and St Augustine, but the retelling is not disagreeable (the road to Damascus, the theft of the pears, and so on). The oddest of many odd things about this book is that, though clearly intended as a continuous narrative ('how "the West" was won', perhaps, or 'a tale of two cities'), it is so episodic. It is like a tour through some half-built archaeological 'heritage' site, with each newly-restored monument standing proudly above the weeds and rubble and supposedly leading to the next (the whole to culminate in a great panoramic Acropolis-view of 'the West' in its entirety) but with no clear paths or directions, and with numerous byways in which to get lost.

I can see how *Hamlet* or *Crime and Punishment* fits into the Athens-Jerusalem schema, but not how *Le Misanthrope*, *Candide* or (of all things) *The Great Gatsby* does. *Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe* reads like an anthology of the author's diverse enthusiasms culled from a lifetime of teaching, but squeezed together under a single rubric, and with the inevitable gaps being filled (when they are filled) by anecdote, seminar chat or bald assertion. It has all the marks, which include very inadequate copy-editing (though there are few actual misprints, and the volume is handsome enough), of having been hastily assembled at the publisher's suggestion, possibly from old lecture notes (some no more than mnemonic, others fully written out). Among such marks are its unevenness in both style and content (some chapters are really quite pithy, as are the preface and afterword, others loose), its astonishing pleonasm ('tenebrous darkness', 'Punic wars with Carthage', 'the tent Tabernacle'), solecisms ('theodicide' for 'deicide', 'Publius Maro Virgilius' for 'Publius Vergilius Maro') and other misspelt proper names: Fagels, Eckleberg, Copleston, Rosenkrantz, Anaximines, Manitea (i.e. Mantinea).

Other faults are less attributable to haste. *Hamlet* is treated as a real, historic person, whose deeds are frequently recounted in the past tense (always a bad sign). 'From the classical and humanist side of his mind' (which is certainly there) 'he might have reflected on the

exemplary figure of Aeneas.' Unfortunately Shakespeare says nothing on the subject (though the Player's 'Pyrrhus' speech is given in the person of Aeneas). But then, as L.C. Knights long ago joked, he was similarly unforthcoming about Lady Macbeth's offspring. Further, despite (by current best estimates) making his stage debut in 1601, *Hamlet* 'is well aware of the skepticism of Montaigne, especially of *The Apology for Raymond Sebond*, newly available to Shakespeare in the John Florio translation (1603)'. 'His tenderness comes to the fore,' we learn, when on killing Polonius he exclaims, 'Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!' 'Tough love', indeed. Moreover, 'what Keats said of his Nightingale is also true of the prince: he poured forth his soul in an ecstasy of song.'

Like other things in the book, such disconcerting bathos (imagine what cruel fun Housman would have made of it) makes one wonder just what audience *Smiling Through the Cultural Catastrophe* is aimed at. Educated readers do not need to be told what a Pharisee or a distaff is. They will fret also at the gaucheness of the presentation and the lack of sustained argument and analysis.

On the other hand, like himself and his acknowledged mentors, Hart's actual subject matter is decidedly high-brow, and, for all his would-be breeziness, unlikely to capture or retain the attention of an uneducated reader. Perhaps the target market is high-school leavers, the pre-educated as one would nowadays have to call them, to be caught before their college instructors deprive them permanently of the powers of thought and discrimination. Be that as it may, Hart's idiom – indeed, his very project – unconsciously recalls the middlebrow, didactic, vade mecum, self-improving, relentlessly upbeat ethos of the 'old' *Reader's Digest*, though his book, for long stretches, could have done with that journal's fabled expertise in condensation, as well as with expansion elsewhere.

It gives me no pleasure whatever to apply these strictures to such an earnest, humane and well-intentioned book, but there is no point in glossing over its deficiencies, on which intelligent, nihilistic radicals will already have fastened with glee. It has not a hope in hell, as it stands, of sparking a 'revival of higher education'. Nor do I know what has. One thing seems reasonably obvious, and we know it also from politics: that catastrophes typically befall plans which are too idealistic, ambitious and prescriptive; too 'rationalist', in Oakeshott's terminology. The Great Books were themselves a nation-building, quasi-political project, and thus a model for that nakedly political revolt – against books, nation, liberal education, reason and 'the West' generally – which has proved all too successful in the academies. A revival of higher education can come only from its total depoliticization, and that must involve recognizing that education proper can have no other purpose than itself. How I should have subsisted on a diet of Great Books, I don't know; but I am quite glad that I was not required to do so, despite my resulting ignorance.

PLATFORM

CFC Revisited

In the mid-80's chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were attacked because of their alleged damage to the ozone layer in the stratosphere. They were subsequently banned under international agreement, and some of the costs of this action are apparent in the scandal of disposal of old refrigerators. It is perhaps worth revisiting the science behind this expensive initiative, with the wisdom of hindsight, and trying to draw some lessons from it. CFCs are odourless, tasteless, non-toxic and non-inflammable gases and liquids. Their very inertness makes them extremely difficult to destroy and they will persist in the air almost indefinitely. Under radiation in the stratosphere there is no doubt that free radicals form from these molecules and they can interact with the ozone layer.

In 1972 a scientist discovered that there is a hole in the ozone layer over the South Pole. Around the same time considerable concern was growing about the increased incidence of skin cancer, which can be correlated with exposure to radiation from the sun that has not been attenuated by the ozone layer.

All these issues were drawn together and the release of CFCs into the atmosphere was blamed for this problem. Despite some opposition by the chemical industry, the international ban was imposed. The simple message given to the world was that CFCs had caused a hole in the ozone layer and now this had been dealt with, in the course of time all would be well. The facts that are ignored in this message are many:

There is little doubt that the 'hole' in the ozone layer over the South Pole is due to volcanic activity in and around Mount Erebus. The 1972 hole had probably been there for thousands of years. Volcanic activity in the Antarctic, where humidity is so low, will release active gases straight up to the stratosphere without their being 'washed' by the atmosphere. The quantities of active gas from such a volcano will far exceed the annual production of CFCs from the chemical industry at its height.

The existence of CFCs has no bearing whatsoever on that hole in the ozone layer. Nor is there any mechanism that could have enabled CFCs to migrate to the South Pole from the Northern hemisphere when they had been released. The hole over Antarctica was a complete red herring. Similarly the argument that ozone layer depletion was responsible for increased skin cancer occurrences was based on some questionable assumptions. The huge increase of sunbathing and seaside activities on Australian and Californian beaches correlates better than the depletion of the ozone layer with the increased incidence of skin cancer.

But why, it may be asked, if the arguments for correlating CFC use with the hole in the ozone layer are so weak, did no-one fight the ban on CFCs? The fact is that they did, to start with, but the green bullies are tough opponents and better not tackled head on. Besides, the patents on CFCs had expired and the chemical industry had invented some 'new and improved products' which were deemed to be less environmentally dangerous – albeit more expensive.

So CFCs were banned and everyone was happy. But at what a cost. Some of the safest fire extinguishers were eliminated. More expensive and less efficient substitutes for many products were introduced. The cost of disposal of refrigerators and air conditioners is enormous. Great for the egos of Government and eco-warriors. Not bad for the pockets of chemical giants. Bad for science and bad for the world's economy and very bad for the consumer.

So CFCs were banned and everyone was happy. But at what a cost. Some of the safest fire extinguishers were eliminated.

Ralph Clitheroe

The Myth of the Holy Cow

DN Jha, Verso, 2002, £16

This scholarly essay, showing that the sacredness of the cow is not an original and fundamental tenet of Hinduism but a subsequent accretion, was denounced as blasphemous on its publication in Delhi in August 2001 and made subject of a court order to prevent its sale and circulation. A self-nominated spokesman of the Hindu community sentenced its author to death, and the dust wrapper of this London edition (no doubt incorporating the latest developments) announces it as 'a book the Government of India demands be ritually burned'. The relative success of India in social and political terms since independence – especially when compared to Pakistan – and the much lower profile presented by the Hindu community in Britain as compared to the Asian Moslem community has made it easy for westerners to persuade themselves that east of Belgrade fanaticism and intolerance are somehow uniquely characteristic of Moslem communities. Professor Jha's book, and the hostility it provoked in India, are a timely reminder that it might not be quite as simple as that. It is based on an exhaustive analysis of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina scriptures, the oldest of them dating back to 1500 B.C; but Jha does not discuss the possibility – probability? – that the Aryans who migrated into India in the second millennium B.C. borrowed a great deal from the culture of the more numerous, and in many respects socially more advanced, populations already established in the sub-continent. Even some of the Hindu gods, the elephant-headed Ganésa and Hanuman the monkey god, and various goddess consorts, seem to have been taken over from earlier cults that had flourished before the Aryan migrations. Already, in the third millenium B.C. the Harappa culture in the Indus valley had a cult of the bull: which suggests the possibility that the sanctity of the cow was something the early Hindus found already established when they came to India, initially discountenanced, but eventually adopted and made their own. Jha is not obliged to believe that this is what happened: the cultural complexities of one or two or thee thousand years ago can only be a subject for hypothesis, never a matter of hard demonstrable fact. Nevertheless it is curious that he does not mention the possibility of non-Hindu elements in present-day Hinduism. In attempting to rescue Hinduism in its original purity from subsequent accretions it may be that he has his own Brahmanical agenda

AD Harvey

Who Killed Shakespeare? What's Happened to English since the Radical Sixties.

Patrick Brantlinger, Routledge, 2001, £14.99

'Who Killed Shakespeare? is tangentially about Shakespeare' explains Patrick Brantlinger in his introduction, 'it is primarily about the current and future situations of English, cultural studies, the university, and society at large'. In other words this book is not actually about 'what's happened to English since the radical sixties'. It's about being a faculty veteran so eminent that he can persuade a major publisher to bring out a book that has nothing to do with either its title or sub-title.

When, more than twenty years ago, the first Cultural Studies programmes were being set up in British polytechnics – institutions that only later achieved university status – a frequently voiced fear was that the new discipline would degenerate into something like the old London University BA General which it was intended to replace: a kind of degree in General Knowledge. Judging by Professor Brantlinger's book the apprehensions of a quarter of a century ago were not groundless: they were simply too narrow in their framework of reference. Brantlinger knows a little – though it seems not very much – about some of the writers in the Norton Anthology of English Literature. He has a first year undergraduate's knowledge of English social history. He knows about Hegel. He has an impressive familiarity with the works of Foucault and Derrida. He writes rather well. Yet nothing he says rises much above the level of faculty dinner party conversation. He seems never to have read a book that was not on someone else's reading list. He never discusses an idea that he has traced to its historical sources. He never cites a historical conjunction that he has himself identified from his own original research. He has never even asked himself why he has set up his stall as a Professor of English instead of trying to obtain a PhD in Social History at a half-way decent university. I am afraid that after all the well-chosen words and expansive reflectiveness one is left with the impression of a talented man who has decided that in today's university it pays better to know what everyone else knows than to know things that other people don't.

AD Harvey

Federalist Thought Control, The Brussels Propaganda Machine,

Martin Ball, Robert Oulds, Lee Rotherham, The Bruges Group, 2002, £3.95.

Before one goes into battle, it is as well to know one's enemy. There is, possibly, a great battle ahead of us all: the euro referendum. Eurosceptics will be fighting that battle at a great disadvantage: they will not be choosing the timing of it or the battle. The campaign on both sides will be about far more than just the single currency but it will be the other side that will choose the issues on which they will want to fight. The 'no' campaign will be responding.

At the very least, the euro-realist camp ought to know what it is they are dealing with. *Federalist Thought Control*, the latest publication from the Bruges Groups provides us all with a great deal of knowledge and potential ammunition. The three authors have traced the money that is provided by the European Union in one form or another to the many organisations, some seemingly innocuous and praiseworthy, in order to integrate them into its large campaign to create a European people and a European culture that is loyal to the new nation-state of the European Union. It is a complex and somewhat devious development, of which the paper merely scratches the surface. There is much more to come. For instance, we need a more penetrating analysis of the nature of the EU's propaganda and how its commissars operate.

Federalist Thought Control analyses the near-impenetrable EU budget to find out how much is allocated to propaganda and what those moneys go on. The authors then classify the different sections of the never-ending work of trying to convince the European people that the European Union is good for them. A number of suggestions are made as to changes in legislation and government behaviour in order to prevent one-sided propaganda reaching every part of Britain and every section of British society. And, instead of just responding the Bruges Group is preparing to fight by setting up a 'Propaganda Archive' and inviting readers to contribute examples of blatant EU propaganda. *Helen Szamuely*

Asians In Britain: 400 Years Of History,

Rozina Visram, Pluto Press, 2002, £14.95.

This superbly researched book describes Indian settlers or visitors to Britain from 1600 to 1947, and records some of their impressions. These members of what the Queen, while Princess Elizabeth, called 'our Imperial family', ranged from Lascars to Princes. Most decisive for the future of India were the British-educated intellectuals of the late 19th and early 20th century. These took a prominent part in British life, and were active in social reform.

Dr. Frederick Akbar Mahomed, who died in 1884 aged only 35, was a pioneer of clinical research, and the first to realise that high blood pressure was a clinical condition. Sophia Duleep Singh, daughter of the exiled Prince, was an active suffragette. Dr. Chuni Lai Katial, Britain's first Asian Mayor, was the 'driving force' behind the Finsbury Health Centre, which anticipated the NHS. Surat Alley campaigned for the rights of Indian seamen (over 59,000 served in the British Mercantile Marine in World War II). Krishna Menon may not have shone as India's Defence Minister later on, but while in Britain he ran Penguin and Pelican Books.

Two outstanding characters were opposed to the thought of the Left. Sir Maucherjee M. Bhowmagraee, M.P., held Bethnal Green for the Conservatives from 1895 to 1906. Among other causes he pressed the British Government to speed up technical and industrial education in India, instead of increasing the numbers in the learned professions. Cornelia Sorabji, a 'British Empire patriot', was the first woman ever to study law at a British university, her 'substitute scholarship' being subscribed to by Florence Nightingale. The Bar remained closed to women until 1919 (she was admitted in 1922), but back in India she was able to help women and minors under the Court of Wards with cases of property, and in 1909 was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal for her work for women in purdah.

Elsbeth Chowdharay Best

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