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The 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, 1830 -1903

Governmental Creep

Kenneth Minogue

Doctors on Trial

Myles Harris

The UK and the US

Alfred Sherman

Letter from Turkey

Owen Matthews

The Russian War Novel

Frank Ellis

The English Countryside

Duncan Fallowell

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CONTENTS

- 4 **Governmental Creep**
Kenneth Minogue
- 7 **The NHS**
Max Gammon
- 10 **Tool Up or be Struck Off**
Myles Harris
- 14 **History Lessons**
Audrey Parry
- 16 **A Defence of Political Realism**
Simon Anglim
- 20 **UK and US**
Alfred Sherman
- 23 **Letter from Turkey**
Owen Matthews
- 24 **Post-Communist Rumania**
Petru Stetiu
- 28 **Dark Mischief – Ethiopia**
Christie Davies
- 31 **The Russian War Novel of the 1990s**
Frank Ellis
- 35 **Conservatism and Sport**
Lincoln Allison
- 38 **The Mystique of the English Countryside**
Duncan Fallowell
- 42 **LETTERS**
- 44 **CONSERVATIVE CLASSIC –11**
The Open Society and its Enemies
- 45 **REPUTATIONS**
David Hume
- 47 **ETERNAL LIFE**
Peter Mullen
- 48 **Michael St John Parker**
on Empire
- 50 **Merrie Cave**
on the Scottish Enlightenment
- 51 **Anthony O'Hear**
on Steven Pinker
- 52 **Penelope Tremayne**
on A L Rowse
- 54 **Peter Mullen**
on Antony Flew
- 55 **Elizabeth Endycott**
on Zimbabwe
- 56 **Robert Hugill**
on Modern Music
- 58 **IN SHORT**

THE END OF BRITISH DEMOCRACY WITHIN A YEAR

**(i.e. the hard-won right of the British people to elect and dismiss those who make their laws and levy their taxes)*

Memo on the draft new EU Constitution, proposed by M. Giscard d'Estaing's 'Convention on the Future of Europe':

The draft EU Constitutional Treaty quite simply gives the EU almost complete power over the Member States.

It does this by turning the EU into an independent mega-state, like the United States of America, with full law-making powers over its citizens. National Parliaments will only be able to make laws when the EU can't be bothered.

Technically, laws covering most areas of our national life will be passed by Qualified Majority Vote in the EU's Council of Ministers, where the UK has only 14 per cent of the votes. Once our Ministers have agreed or been outvoted on a new law, Parliament must put it into British law, on pain of unlimited fines in the Luxembourg 'court'. Few people realize that this mechanism already governs our commerce and industry; social and labour policy; agriculture, fishing and environment. The corrupt EU bureaucracy, the Commission, already has the monopoly of proposing new laws. Once a power has been passed to Brussels, it cannot be returned to national Parliaments (the 'Acquis Communautaire' or ratchet). Hence all the ruinous regulation we have suffered from Brussels for many years, for which the House of Commons has become a rubber stamp.

The main area which we may now keep for a while is control of our armed forces, thanks to French and German behaviour over Iraq. We may also keep the pound, although there's not much point if everything else is controlled by Brussels. There are clauses hidden in the existing Treaties which could force us to give it up anyway. There are also clauses which could force us to cede control of taxation to Brussels.

What happens next?

The Giscard Convention finalised its proposed Constitutional Treaty at the end of June. There will be another Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) of the heads of all the Member States, in October who have to agree the new Treaty unanimously. It is not yet clear what will happen if they don't, but the Prime Minister has already agreed its worst aspects. (He is said to be bored with UK politics, and to want to become the first President of the new mega-state). Whatever Treaty emerges from the IGC will be rubber-stamped by the House of Commons. The Lords might vote for a referendum this time, but the Government says it will not grant one.

So we may be about to sacrifice our democracy for the 9 per cent of our economy which trades with the EU. This would not be lost if we left the EU altogether, which is the liberating, modern, enriching and obvious thing to do anyway.

What is to be done?

People feel helpless. But they can insist on seeing their MP and pressing for a referendum on the new Constitution. They can besiege the BBC until it fulfils its charter obligation to hold a balanced national debate. I fear this does not mean someone else; it means YOU!

Malcolm Pearson (Lord Pearson of Rannoch)

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The twentieth century demonstrated that the central secular question of modern times is the relationship between the individual and the state. Anxious Christians will subsume this under the prior issue of man's respective relations with God and Caesar. Even the secular argument, however, acquires a kind of reverent halo in the great political novels of the mid-century, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, and in that era's great theoretical treatises, like Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies*, here examined by Norman Barry. These masterpieces take the State as existing for us, rather than us for it.

Wickedness was central to Nazism and Communism. Petru Stetiu anatomises its residue in the corrupt, bureaucratic inertia of Post-Communist Romania. Kenneth Minogue notes, however, the fatal tendency even of free governments to favour excessive growth of public purse and power by stealth and 'creep'. Indeed, in today's free societies, the strongest innocent intentions cannot guarantee containment of the state. Government 'creep' is the crucial British problem today, both from relentless intrusion at home and the bungling, messianic interventions from Continental Europe. The idea that the British, who invented modern industrial civilisation, should submerge their identity in the a-historical politics and economic paralysis contrived in recent years by Germany and France, will affront patriots. Unfortunately for freedom, too many Britons now have little sense of their country, while a powerful minority despise it and its more confident American progeny.

Bureaucratic harassment, posing as accountability, bedevils British education and medicine. Max Gammon shows how unproductive 'administration' displaces genuine medicine, in the NHS. Myles Harris moves from general gross inefficiency to particular – the insulting, politically correct 'critical appraisal' proposed for doctors. Now we learn, moreover, that our would-be Continental masters, in thrall to medical orthodoxy, require the suppression of our ancient traditions of alternative medicine.

In the wider world, though, how shall free peoples protect a gravely threatened individualism? Simon Anglim seeks to restore the limited politics of national interest; he sees foreign

crusading, by contrast, as both more dangerous and weaker in political logic. It is not clear, however, just how the liberal order should confront terrorism. Sir Alfred Sherman argues that the 'international community' is a figment, like Rousseau's General Will, and subject to comparable objections. Insofar as it is communal it is not international, and insofar as it is international it is not communal. Present supra-national arrangements, principally the United Nations, could not properly resist totalitarianism in its time, and today cannot resist fundamentalist Islam. They cannot defend a liberal conservative consensus they do not embody.

Nor could the intellectually amorphous European Union be relied on in the face of totalitarian or Islamicist threats. Indeed, Sir Alfred suggests that the present enlargement of the EU permits us to ask whether we should retain membership and on what terms. Why should our trade with Europe suffer from our abandoning the morass of restrictions and regulations? It might even expand.

The European Union holds out a dismal prospect. The vast corruption and blatant rent-seeking on the continent proceed unchecked. The Franco-German production axis is close to lifeless, with unemployment at levels unimagined since the 1930s. The European Convention has on instruction produced a draft Constitutional Treaty proposing a new European Union, with its own legal personality, enjoying policy primacy in law, security, health and commerce. The great European nation states, France, Great Britain and Spain, face abolition. The power of un-elected officials increases proportionately with weakened member governments. And the appalling truth is that no referendum is envisaged for this treaty. The threat dwarfs the proposed abolition of our currency – a detail by comparison. For the third time in a century, Europe is swept by fantasy. The Salisbury Review joins Ruth Lea, Malcolm Pearson, David Heathcoat-Amory and all the voices of sanity, in demanding a referendum on these proposals. More: we call on the Conservative Party to resume its historic function of defending national integrity. A proper balance between individual and government requires that sense of identity and common purpose which only the nation state has hitherto supplied.

Governmental Creep

Kenneth Minogue

In an age of spin, the trick is to keep your eye on the ball. Spinning is merely a version of confidence trickery, where the attention of the punter is directed to irrelevancies. When governments spin, they keep tossing up distractions to take attention away from the one vital question: what is actually happening? We, the punters, the people, on the other hand, need some device to save us from distraction. Let me suggest that what we need is the concept of 'creep'.

It isn't new. We first became aware of 'fiscal creep' in the 1970s when rapid inflation kept promoting us into higher tax brackets even though we weren't getting any richer. And that's the essence of creep: government doesn't need to do anything new in order to extend its power. The machinery already in place is quite enough. And the consequence is that a bit more freedom goes gurgling down the drain.

After 'fiscal creep', we became conscious of 'mission creep'. How do missions 'creep'? The common case is when some foreign commitment turns out to demand more troops or more cash than we first calculated. Sometimes this happens from the brutishness of fortune. But the suspicion must always arise that a government keen on some mission might understate the dangers in order to soothe our fears. A certain amount of 'soothing' by governments is the necessary correlate of creep.

In order to make sense of creep, we need to recognise that while the state must indeed use its power to perform certain tasks that are necessary for good order, the actual government of the day is also an institution with its own interests, and that these interests always involve extending its own power and command over resources. This interest is likely on occasion to diverge from the interests of the nation. It is no doubt convenient for the government to legislate as much discretionary power as possible, since future circumstances might make such power necessary. It saves legislative time. But it also equips governments with a vast quantum of power that can be used later in unexpected ways.

Taxation is always a good example of the bureaucratic instinct, which is why 'stealth taxes' are a favourite device of government. We commonly think that the British government takes in tax about 38 to 40 per cent of GDP, give or take a per centage point or two, depending no doubt on circumstances, accounting conventions, the sometimes muddled figures of the Office of National Statistics and so on. But this turns out to be a mistake.

The government actually takes over 50 per cent of the wealth of the nation. This is not immediately evident because the immensely complicated rules of the Revenue allow a variety of exceptions, remissions, tax breaks and tax credits. Charities for example have exemptions from tax, and children in means tested families get 'credits'. So there is a sense in which the 'take' is significantly less than the tax as a whole. There are, as it were, three kinds of money: what we pay in taxes, what we are allowed to keep, and an intermediate category which is notionally part of taxation, but which the government first claims and then, for the moment, remits.

Does it matter? Is this not perhaps merely the shuffling of figures? It matters, in fact, because these supposed 'remissions' of tax are construed by governments as if they were subsidies. This is why the British government periodically claims to be 'subsidising' private education in the form of charitable remissions of tax, and every so often it threatens to withdraw the subsidy unless the latest demands are met. Sports clubs get remission of council tax, but this is now being threatened unless they make their grounds more 'community friendly' – setting up picnic tables, and allowing outsiders to use their grounds, for example.

Here we have the clearest case of creep: nothing new is happening except that the government is adjusting the conditions on which it will 'subsidise' civil institutions. Universities are the most dramatic examples of civil institutions being destroyed by creep. It can take a long time, but it is relentless. The destruction of the universities as independent self-moving institutions began with the large legislative leaps taken in a sequence of Education Acts which transformed the gentle regime of the University Grants Committee into the bureaucratic violence and fiscal brutishness of the Funding Council. As the process of destruction began, the fatal subsidy by which universities became instruments of the state was not at all stealthy, no doubt because it was initially so popular with the universities themselves. A decade or so of generous funding was then followed by the thin edge of public accountability which left universities entirely at the mercy, year on year, of the Treasury. Having abandoned their independence, universities were left helpless before whatever fancy might strike the Ministry of Education, such as opening universities up to 50 per cent of the young: not, you understand 48.5 per cent or 52 per cent, but the nice round figure of 50.

The universities are but one example, though a large one, of creep. But it will be found across the whole field of political life. A GP in Kingston in Surrey has struck children off his register because the practice will lose thousands of pounds if they do not have the MMR vaccination, which many parents resist. The Schools Minister, David Miliband, turns out to be a notable exponent of the use of threat to achieve creep, a technique pioneered by Czars and Sultans. He suggested that Eton might like to invest £2m to set up a comprehensive school, and he linked this with the suggestion in a Cabinet Office paper that the 'public benefit' offered by independent schools should be looked at again. The classic form taken by threat creep is a Minister telling a profession that if it doesn't put its house in order, the government will be forced to legislate. Hints from men in power make everyone eager to comply.

Consider a quite different area: The Sex Discrimination Regulations of 2001 refer to a *prima facie* case of sex discrimination having been made before a tribunal, whereupon 'the burden of proof shifts to the employer to show that there was a non-discriminatory reason for his actions'. The Customs and Revenue pioneered this extension of the burden of proof, but the independent regulators and agencies have clearly been happy with the way in which it simplifies their work.

It will be clear from these examples that we are not here concerned with the tendency of one political party or another. All parties are exponents of creep, though New Labour has become marginally more shameless in its espousal of the technique. Schools, for example, are now regulated to within an inch of their lives, both by the Ministry and by local educational authorities in many areas. But the Ministry has come up with a new scheme by which schools that please the Ministry – 'successful schools' they are called – may be freed from some of the restrictions. The new status is to be called 'earned autonomy'. As in the taxation case, freedom has been first taken into the governmental sphere, and then some of it has been given back, conditionally and on terms.

Rights are much the most important case of governmental creep. The essence of English freedom, as philosophers from Thomas Hobbes to Herbert Hart always made clear, was to do anything at all that one might wish to do so long as it was not against the law. The freedom of the British is now catching up with foreign models: fragments of it are being parcelled out into a variety of rights which can be presented as gifts accorded to us by government. We are happy to be bribed with our own money at election time, and we now seem to be happy to have our freedom taken from us and handed back in little controllable fragments called 'rights'. Rights often serve creep because they turn out

to be useful in destroying the very independence of civil institutions which in the past actually constituted our freedom. Legislating against discrimination, for example, can be used to bring economic enterprises or clubs within the orbit of law. Lawyers in this area are, as it were, the jackals of the creep process, because every piece of governmental creep throws many tasty scraps to a legal profession acquiring ever more power to adjudicate on how we may be permitted to live.

I have defined creep as an extension of governmental power that happens without the government having to present some new piece of legislation before Parliament. It can obviously be facilitated most easily by incorporating large chunks of ministerial discretion into complex Acts of Parliament. Protests about such discretion and all forms of delegated legislation go back even beyond Lord Hewart attacking 'the new despotism' in 1930. Legislating in broad terms sets up opportunities for endless creeping. The administrative learning process has taught governments everywhere that these reserve powers are too useful to give up.

One new form of creep is growing apace. It consists in the fact that many governments – including the British – have the constitutional power to accede to international treaties without their actions being debated in parliament. This no doubt made sense when such treaties were

few, but since 1918 and at an increasing rate since, international bureaucracies have become adept at constructing treaties out of vague affirmations of virtue to which politicians are happy to commit their countries. Vagueness is ideal soil for creepers. Much

the commonest form these treaties take is declarations of human rights, and who could deny that declaring rights or standards can do no harm and might well do some good? Western countries are especially prone to sign up to these instruments partly no doubt because they are generally confident of their own virtue, while popular opinion, if it takes any notice of them at all, imagines that they strike a blow against torture or sweated labour. Often years will pass before anything untoward results, but in time any fragment of abandoned sovereignty will have painful consequences. Eventually we find ourselves up before some international committee, or the European Court. At this point, the government itself can wash its hands of the matter and say: 'there's nothing we can do about this. It's a done deal.' The concept of necessity is a vital part of creep. Accession to virtuous-seeming treaties illustrates, as an aspect of creep, a basic fact about human nature without which government would be impossible. It is that an unsavoury task that people mostly refuse to perform can be done if it is split up into two or preferably more separate aspects. Judges do not have to be their own executioners. And in the case of

The freedom of the British is now catching up with foreign models: fragments of it are being parcelled out into a variety of rights which can be presented as gifts accorded to us by government.

international instruments, those who commit to them usually leave it to their successors to face the fine print. Sometimes these days, however, a bit of soothing is necessary, as when Robin Cook recently assured Parliament that British soldiers would not find themselves before the projected International Criminal Court which the British government, always a soft touch for conspicuous virtue, was proposing to join.

It's not that governments themselves don't have trouble when these wayward chickens come home to roost. The British government of today is not happy with the European Convention on the Treatment of Refugees of 1951, which its predecessors so insouciantly signed. Others are not happy with the consequences of the Single European Act, and indeed with many other commitments which turn out later to have been made in the log-rolling bureaucratic atmosphere of Brussels. Today's Britons find themselves the more or less helpless victims of many a thoughtless commitment made by the rulers of yesteryear. Who, for example, would not now wish for Britain to get back control over its own fishing waters?

Britain has recently been subject to criticism by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The British government, complained the severe moralists of the U.N., has been 'taking no significant action' to ban smacking of children. A ten member committee 'deeply regretted' the British Government's refusal to 'update' English law on corporal punishment, which remains based on an 1860 statute that allows 'reasonable chastisement' in families. Members of NGO's such as the NSPCC were interviewed by the media about the Report. It will hardly be news that they took it very seriously. 'It's puzzling' said one spokeswoman, 'that we are the only country that thinks we don't need a Children's Rights Commissioner.' Cloning humans may be unethical, but bureaucratic bodies love nothing so much as setting up a Dolly of their own.

Another woman in the media response said that this was in no way an attack on 'normal families'. The idea that 'normal' people will not be affected by new administrative powers is the immemorial cry of the rising tyranny in Western states. It is a variant of the idea that 'the innocent have nothing to fear' from the latest lunge for power, a proposition which would be true only if judicial and administrative processes were infallible. We know, however, that they are not.

Governments have learned a lot from international experiences. They have learned that a package of virtuous abstractions can generate agencies with vast powers. What are equal opportunities? asked jesting Harold Wilson, and soon we had an Equal Opportunities Commission, the forerunner of Ministers for Women and all manner of improving initiatives. The Race Relations Commission was a later addition to the claim to be empowering virtue. It is an important feature of these powerful and expensive agencies that they do not contain 'sunset clauses' limiting their tenure of power. They thus

have an interest not only in solving some supposed social problem, but also in keeping the problem in business. And they are virtually immune to criticism. The government has no responsibility for their decisions, and outsider critics can seem only like opponents of virtue.

The basic use of rights in contemporary society has been to destroy the autonomy of institutions. The rights of women, for example, erodes the freedom of all-male clubs or firms that do not adapt to female employees. It may well be argued that institutions ought to adapt to contemporary values, but there is no doubt that this kind of compulsion to virtue is both unnecessary to civil order and an invasion of our freedom to associate with whoever we choose. In schools, pupils have sued because some item of uniform violates some human right, and because some pupil claims that the punishment of detention infringes her human rights. Schools thus lose a part of their autonomy. Children's rights have made discipline in schools much more difficult, which is one of the reasons why education in comprehensive schools often has such poor results. Jails can no longer be conducted according to the decisions of the Home Secretary because prisoners can demand, and have been increasingly demanding what they understand to be 'human rights'. A famous serial killer has sued the Home Secretary on the ground that his right to male pornography has been denied him in prison. In all of these cases, the working of institutions is subject to tribunalisation down to quite small details, indeed to matters that an earlier generation would have dismissed as trivial rather than as invasions of rights. Rules have costs.

At this point we seem to encounter a paradox in the idea of creep, for in many of these cases, the creep of power turns out to be a restriction rather than an enhancement of governmental power. Part of the explanation for this is that creep is in general a benefit to both governments and lawyers, but no one can fully predict where in unforeseen circumstances these benefits will come. In some cases, lawyers will inevitably be 'empowered' in ways inconvenient to governments. It is also true that the vanity of espousing a declaration of virtue sometimes can rattle the wits of statesmen so that they may become indifferent to the problems they will leave to their successors.

It is not unknown for politicians to sign up, in the spirit of Louis XV, to commitments, with a certain delight in the trouble such things will cause their successors. But what the paradox reveals is that we cannot explain the phenomenon of creep merely by pointing to the interest of national governments. It is, as the psychologists say, 'over-determined'. Creep is in fact part of a much more general explosion of the regulatory industry. A century ago, Britons were subject only to the Parliament at Westminster. It then took little interest in how they chose to live. Today they are subject to rules emanating from a host of agencies, ranging from the United Nations to international treaties, from the Commission in Brussels

to the Westminster Parliament, and if they have the misfortune to be Celtic, also to the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies. I leave out of account local government and the threat we face from regional assemblies. We are moving towards a situation in which every citizen will be, as Lenin predicted, a politician. The politicians and the lawyers have carved us up, and with every cut our freedom as individuals diminishes.

The most surprising fact about this development is that the British, a nation long admired as lions in the cause of freedom, have turned into such lambs. You might think that an absurd U.N. Committee telling us how we must rear our children would have been laughed out of the country. Not at all. A Home Office Minister called John Denham was called to account by the media and began gulping down large quantities of humble pie. We are not up to speed on children's rights, he admitted, but we have made progress in mitigating child poverty. That an NGO

such as the NSPCC thinks we ought to do what other nations do is perhaps not surprising, but that the government should take these acolytes of busybodydom in so sycophantic manner tells us all we need to know about the British government as a protector of our freedom.

It may be that vanity lies at the heart of creep. We sign up to declarations of motherhood virtue with a feeling of superiority. These standards are to be directed at others, not at us. The problem is that if we start taking the admiration of outsiders seriously, we shall soon find that we have to jump when they disapprove. There is an extensive literature on freedom in politics, but it tends to be abstract. What is happening to freedom on the ground requires a close attention to the way things are actually happening. The concept of governmental creep seems to me an essential bit of machinery for paying such attention.

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An Unstable Constitution

Max Gammon

Dead! Dead!' absolutely *bursting* from the tongue and not the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once – within the space of a single minute, or even less, shrunk – crumbled – absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands.

Edgar Allan Poe. Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar

A few years ago I went to visit a patient in a hospital with which I was not familiar. Standing, completely lost, in the middle of a wide corridor flanked by tall glazed doors, I asked a passing nurse if she could direct me to my friend's ward. 'Oh, I don't know where the wards are. I am in administration.' She replied, as though affronted, and then swept through the pair of glazed doors beside me. As she did so I saw that what once had been a long Nightingale ward was now converted into an open plan office. Meanwhile in the A&E department on the floor below patients were lying on trolleys for up to twenty four hours waiting for a hospital bed while others were having their operations postponed owing to 'shortage of beds'.

It is now more than twenty five years since the November evening when I noticed the similarity of the curves, in opposite directions, of two graphs lying on my desk, and discovered a close correlation between an increase in numbers of NHS administrative staff and a fall in numbers of NHS hospital beds over the preceding nine years (linear regression analysis correlation coefficient was -0.99). Arthur Seldon, of the Institute of Economic Affairs, catalysed my development of the 'Theory of Bureaucratic Displacement' by saying, 'You

have found a mathematical relationship, but where is your hypothesis?'

I subsequently suggested that the correlation could be explained if the number of *designated* administrators were proportional to the bureaucratic activity of the workforce as a whole, thus providing an indicator of overall bureaucratization of the system. The correlation with the fall in the number of beds available would then follow from a progressive displacement of productive activity of the workforce by the proliferation of useless and often counter-productive bureaucratic activities throughout the organisation. In this way an expanding workforce and increased expenditure would be matched by a fall in (emitted) production; the more that was put in to the system the less that would come out of it, a process which I likened to the implosion of a Black Hole.

Many questions still remain and of course the close statistical correlation which I discovered is not in itself necessarily significant. However, owing to a combination of favourable circumstances which existed twenty five years ago, I was given a glimpse of a deep mechanism which is usually concealed by 'contaminants'. Those favourable circumstances were: the very large size of the organisation which damped out the effects of local variables, a rigidly centralised structure, absence of the distorting pressures of commercial viability, and ignorance within the Department of Health of the significance of the statistics which they were publishing. The

NHS had provided a huge 'culture medium' for the uncontaminated growth of bureaucracy.

Since that time there have been two major underlying causes for the failure of various attempts to 'reduce bureaucracy' and improve the performance of the NHS.

The first cause stems from the failure to recognise that bureaucratic displacement is a disorder which is not confined to designated administrative staff but which involves all members of the organisation. A field change rather than a localised pathology, *bureaucracy's most destructive effects are due to its permeation and vitiation of the activities of non-administrative staff*. A good example of this is provided by the progressive transformation of even those nurses still remaining on the wards from patient-centered carers to administroids whose requirement to produce detailed 'Patient Care Plans' and to participate in 'Workshops' and seminars leaves little time for them to attend to patients' basic dietary needs or to prevent them from developing of bed-sores.

The second major cause for the failure of attempts to reduce bureaucracy comes from the mechanical nature of the phenomenon. Bureaucratic proliferation is not simply the product of individual empire building. Although a bureaucratic organisation both encourages and is itself nourished by individual self-interest in building personal empires, *proliferation is inherent in the system itself* and it is at base independent of individual volition.

The following story illustrates the point: A physician took a group of medical students to see a very sick patient in a hospital bed. The physician told the students, 'This patient has had no fewer than twelve major, highly dangerous and complex operations. Every one of them has been absolutely essential to her survival, except the first which was totally unnecessary.'

Almost every procedure in *any* bureaucracy could be convincingly defended as essential to the working of the system. Moreover experience shows that any attempt to modify or eliminate a procedure will sooner rather than later add to the overall bureaucratic weight of the organisation. As with Hydra, if you cut off one head two will grow in its place.

Chaos theory can provide a clue to the fatal flaw which lies at the heart of centralised bureaucracies. We now know that minute changes in the variables of complex physical systems can lead to vastly different and therefore unpredictable outcomes. If we apply the same

concept to complex human systems we get the familiar 'law of unintended consequences'. In gigantic centrally directed systems like the NHS unintended consequences arising from remotely generated directives will endlessly be emerging and will provoke centrally prescribed adjustments which in turn will have their own unintended consequences which will require further adjustment... and so on until 'noise swamps the signal'.

Of course no organisation is 100 per cent bureaucratic, but the disorder directly or indirectly and to a greater or lesser extent permeates, vitiates and displaces the productive activity of all members of the organisation. Moreover a socio-pathological equivalent of Gresham's Law acting upon productive workers adds to the bureaucratic pressure tending to displace their useful work by

useless work. Just as 'bad money drives out good', so overloaded and underpaid productive workers will increasingly be drawn into debased and counterproductive but better paid administrative jobs. The effects of this malignancy are now widely manifest in the police force, schools, and above all the EU.

Bureaucratic monsters arising among organisations whose survival depends upon their persuading customers to buy their products are sooner or later killed or dismembered by their competitors. However, in a protected environment shielded from lethal competition, a bureaucracy will grow indefinitely and approach ever more closely to the perfect Black Hole state in which its externally supplied resources are entirely consumed by its furious internal activity.

By contrast, within the non-bureaucratic organisation continuous *ad hoc* procedural adjustments are made on personal initiative rather than imposed by remote directive. If successful these *ad hoc* local adjustments are likely to be more generally adopted and if unsuccessful they are usually eliminated without widespread damage. In short the efficient non-bureaucratic organisation has a Darwinian internal economy involving a process of natural selection and survival of the fittest practices. Such organisations may be described as 'sensitive' or spontaneously responsive to internal and external stimuli. An essential component, indeed the motor, of such systems is the dependence of their survival upon their performance. Sensitivity to external stimuli transmitted throughout the system, rather than centrally prescribed rules and directives, is what ultimately drives and governs individual performance in the non-bureaucratic organisation. In this context it should be noted that, apart from developing labyrinthine systems of 'monitoring', it is characteristic



of centrally funded and directed bureaucratic organisations to attempt to improve performance by the setting of 'targets' with penalties and rewards according to failure or success in meeting them. In practice, as was notoriously demonstrated in the Soviet Union, not only do centrally imposed targets cause systemic distortions and rigidities militating against improved performance but they also, inevitably, lead to the falsification of statistics and the coercion of those tempted to reveal the truth.

My original analysis of NHS hospital statistics covered the years 1965 to 1973, the earliest and latest years for which the relevant figures were then available. On the basis of that analysis I predicted that the number of beds available in the NHS would fall below four per thousand of the population by the year 2000. The official statistics now published show that the number of beds available in the NHS fell from 400,000 or 8 beds per thousand of population in 1973 to 186,000 or 3.8 beds per thousand of population in 1999/2000.

Detailed figures for NHS administrative staff are no longer published. Instead a composite figure of 250,000 (1997) for Management and Support Staff is given. This figure includes administrative and clerical staff together with maintenance workers, ward cleaners, catering staff, and ambulance staff. However it does not include the large number of senior 'nurses' whose work is purely administrative. It is therefore no longer possible to make an accurate analysis of the relationship between the numbers of administrators and numbers of beds available. However, based on the last published figure for administrative staff of 150,000 in 1993, it seems possible that the NHS now has more *acknowledged* administrators than beds; but of much greater significance is the concomitant proliferation of bureaucratic procedures *involving all staff* and progressively displacing their productive activity.

Some years ago, following the publication of one of my papers on the destructive growth of bureaucracy in the NHS, I was told by Patrick Nairne who was then Permanent Secretary to the DHSS that reforming the NHS resembled 'operating for appendicitis on a man carrying a grand piano'. I believe that this pithy observation does indeed go to the heart of the matter. But the disease is more like metastatic cancer than appendicitis.

Irrespective of the precise pathology of the disorder, the solution must involve a process of transferring the load. This is how I think that it could be done.

- Decide what medical services must for the foreseeable future be provided by the State. Then announce a timetable for the withdrawal of State provision for the rest. For some procedures, 'Breast Enhancement' and 'Gender Reassignment' for example, withdrawal could be immediate. For procedures at the other extreme such

as major surgery in the elderly, perhaps twenty five years should be allowed to give time for the building up of an insurance base.

- Encourage the use and development of independent medical services by tax relief on all *bona fide* private medical expenditure and medical insurance premiums. Of equal or greater importance would be publicity designed to reverse the perversely negative view of 'private medicine' by admitting the magnitude of the problem confronting us and by emphasising the civic duty of all who can afford to do so to use and to help to build up the independent medical sector.

- Make an immediate start on the rebuilding of the medical and nursing professions vitiated by several generations of a virtually universal nationalised medical service. This could be done only by encouraging the development of independent commercial/charitable hospitals with their own medical and nursing schools. We have roughly half as many doctors per thousand of population as the European average, our GP surgeries and hospitals are overloaded with patients while hundreds of well-qualified school-leavers can find no places at medical school each year. Only the State stands in the way, so 'let a thousand flowers bloom'.

Politically impossible? At present, yes. To replace the NHS will require an all-party approach such as we adopt when we have to fight a major war. Will we do it? Eventually I believe that we will, but only after much more decay and much more suffering.

reforming the NHS resembled 'operating for appendicitis on a man carrying a grand piano'. I believe that this pithy observation does indeed go to the heart of the matter. But the disease is more like metastatic cancer than appendicitis.

Max Gammon is a practising doctor

Myles Harris

Until this year once you became a doctor you were one for life. The only way off the medical register – apart from death or failing to pay the annual fee – was via the disciplinary committee of the General Medical Council. Few doctors passed the doors of the GMC without a shiver. Through them every year passed a sad procession of alcoholics, drug addicts, fraudsters and those who had slept with their patients. Forty or so years ago medical students were shown a film of a doctor who, having slept with a patient, appears before the GMC and has sentence of professional death passed on him. He becomes a door to door salesman. One day he finds himself on the doorstep of a house at the same time as the local doctor. The door opens, the doctor is welcomed in, the door is then slammed in the salesman's face. The message was quite clear. 'Don't.' We didn't.

But by the eighties the GMC started to loose its fixation with the bedroom – although it has not lost it altogether – and began to concentrate on the operating theatre and the clinic. What could be done about doctors who were not up to the job, surgeons who botched operations or GPs who turned over in their beds when called by patients dying of pneumonia?

Cases of bad treatment were increasing. In 1975 medical malpractice claims were £6 million, in 2002, in comparable figures, they had risen to £446 million. Given the avarice of lawyers and the tendency of insurance companies to settle out of court, not all of this was due to proven negligence. But the customers were getting restive. This was an era in which people, having conferred almost magical status on doctors in the past, now wanted to tear them down. Nothing was more gratifying to the public than to see a surgeon – a representative of an old order of learning and self-discipline – publicly humiliated on TV.

There was a similar problem in general practice. There is a small but significant number of GPs, who since they left medical school, have never set foot in a lecture theatre, opened a medical journal or turned the pages of a textbook. Within a few years of setting up practice their clinical world contracts to a desk, a prescription pad and a pile of out of work certificates.

The GMC could set mandatory exams for all doctors every few years, but they decided against this. The official explanation was that you could not test all 91,000 doctors in Britain with the same examination. Many secretly feared that a lot of older doctors might not be able to pass

exams. It is easy to take one when you are young, much harder as you age. Why sack a fifty five year old successful heart surgeon with half a million pounds worth of training invested in him because he can no longer manage a multiple choice exam for 25 year olds ?

Nor is an exam a test of that most important quality of a doctor – his character. Most doctors can be trusted. Trust gets you out of bed at night for that call you are certain is frivolous but about which you cannot be sure. Trust makes you revisit a patient on the wards if there is a doubt in your mind. A reasonable solution to this problem would be to make it a condition of a doctor's licence that he spends a fixed period each year retraining. The choice could be up to the doctor. There already exist huge numbers of well attended postgraduate courses but they are voluntary. Such a plan would have the merit of being extremely simple to administer. It would also force those doctors who were not bothering to keep up to start doing so.

But reliance on trust has also been declining in the medical educational establishment for years. The idea of a doctor planning his own postgraduate training without supervision filled the educational industry with horror. What they wanted was a system that was far more intrusive and micro-managerial. It would also satisfy their thirst for paper. What is not written down does not exist.

What I am going to describe applies to general practice, with which I am familiar, but the same criticisms can be levelled at the control of specialists. In the specialities intrusive, time-consuming tests of quality, largely useless, have been annoying surgeons and physicians for years. One complained that his work was now overseen by 27 committees.

The GMC had for some time been trying to come up with a way of testing doctors when Harold Shipman and the Bristol babies scandal broke. Suddenly they were in a hurry. If they delayed government would create an 'Off-Doc' run by civil servants. The GMC had a ready made set of rules to hand in their publication 'Good Medical Practice' on medical ethics. Its cover displays the Americanised cliché 'Protecting patients, guiding doctors'. Change a few words and it could be the manual for Boeing, McDonalds or Pricerite.

Healthcare is increasingly provided by multi-disciplinary teams. Working in a team does not change your personal accountability for your professional conduct and the care you provide. When working in a team, you must: respect the skills and contributions of your

colleagues; maintain professional relationships with patients; communicate effectively with colleagues within and outside the team;

How will doctors prove they have worked in 'multidisciplinary teams' or 'respected the skills of colleagues?' They will submit themselves to yearly appraisals of their work. The appraisals are not done by the GMC but take place wherever the doctor is working. At the end of five years doctors will then present the evidence from their appraisals to the GMC. This process is called revalidation. If the five appraisals are satisfactory the GMC will issue a licence for a further five years. Revalidation is relicensure. The GMC supports the BMA line that 'Five satisfactory appraisals equals revalidation.'

This brute reality horrifies appraisers who maintain that appraisal is only about raising a doctor's game. They are not there to judge, or to test competence or performance. Instead, during appraisal educationalists want doctors to 'self actualise'. Self actualisation is a psychological, management tool based on the work of Abraham Maslow, a humanist psychologist who described human behaviour as 'a hierarchy of needs'.

Humanists focus upon potentials. They believe that humans strive for an upper level of capabilities. Humans seek the frontiers of creativity, the highest reaches of consciousness and wisdom. This has been labelled 'fully functioning person', 'healthy personality', or as Maslow calls this level, 'self-actualizing person'.

Everybody is good, all can be improved. All shall have prizes. It explains the use of words like 'validation', 'celebrated' and 'support' in the lexicon of medical educationalists. One told me if a doctor lost his licence he would be 'supported' out of the profession. Presumably in line with the non-judgemental nature of the process. The doctor's lawyers might think otherwise.

The doctor is encouraged by a great deal of praise, 'positive regard', to spill the beans on himself and his work. When he 'self actualises' that is sees himself in his true relationship to society, he is then in a position 'to align his needs with that of society'. In simple English he will improve. All this goodness and noble intention can then be written down on forms provided by the NHS called 'Toolkits'. They are on the web.

They are a nightmare of jargon. The aim is to get the doctor to reveal what he has been doing, what mistakes he has made, how he has been keeping up to date and how he is getting on with his patients and colleagues. The toolkit descends into dizzying bureaucratese.

Continuing professional development in primary care should be purposeful, patient-centred and educationally effective. It should integrate consumer and patient interests with those of the NHS, both nationally and locally, and be constructed in such a way as to encourage team working within primary care and facilitate the appropriate adaptability of professional roles.

Herculean efforts of social accounting are suggested. Doctors should record all the meetings they have attended.

Most of us attend a great many. Generously the tool-kit informs you: 'You can carry forward each individual meeting from this year's appraisal (2003/4) to next year's appraisal. However, you must first 'sign off' this year's appraisal.' And the same for learning. 'Learning needs' can similarly be carried forward to next year's appraisal, but of course you have to sign off those you have already returned before doing so. Doctors are advised to record patients' unmet needs, PUNS, why? So they can dovetailed with the doctors' unmet needs: DENS. 'It's simple really!' says the toolkit. You could ask a doctor the simple question. What courses did you attend last year and did you learn anything from them? Why make it simple? The toolkit has a better idea.

Identify current level of competence. Specify competencies to develop. Decide how to develop these competencies and by when. Set performance criteria to be achieved as a result of the development. Take development action. Decide how and when to review progress.

This enormous mound of verbiage is then strained, codified and condensed into a obligatory personal development plan, a 21st century confession of past sins and a promise to seek redemption in the future. All this activity is surrounded by a forest of an even denser and more impenetrable jargon, a comfort language like a toddler's blanket. If the doctor seeks help on outside courses he may come across:

Change management for primary care. Portfolio demonstrating the use of change management theory and its practical application with reference to a work based scenario. The portfolio will require students to design, manage and evaluate a proposed health service change from a published list. Students' selected changes will be encouraged but will require the prior agreement of the module co-ordinator. The agenda of revalidation is uniformly consumerist. The doctor is being encouraged to see himself as a faucet of medical consumption. Is he satisfying his customers' consumer needs? Does he open his shop on time? Does he conduct customer satisfaction surveys? Are his accounts in order? Has he audited his work? Is he up to date on the goods in the shop. Does he serve homosexuals, transvestites, people of colour and heterosexuals with the same smiling, non-judgemental face? Is he keen to root out work place bullying and discrimination? Is he compassionate, can he provide a video of his listening and empathic skills? Can he promise better sales in the future?

This will be manna to a flourishing appraisal industry. The open-ended language of the GMC guidelines lends itself to being infinitely processed, measured, met over, conferenced, lectured on, and above all expanded. Waiting in the wings are quality 'experts', personal development plan advisors, portfolio managers, 360 degree appraisers, and an infinitude of bureaucrats. At present appraisal is done by doctors, but the RCGP has no objection it says to 'suitably qualified' lay appraisers testing doctors.

There are plenty of potential candidates. Red tape is

WHEN YOU CONSULT YOUR USUAL DOCTOR, HOW DO YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING?	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Does not apply
How <i>thoroughly</i> the doctor asks you about your symptoms and how you are feeling?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
How well does the doctor <i>listen</i> to what you have to say?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
How well the doctor <i>puts you at ease</i> during your physical examination?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
How much the doctor <i>involves you in decisions</i> about your care?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
How well the doctor <i>explains</i> your problems or any treatment that you need?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
The ammount of <i>time</i> your doctor spends with you?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
The doctor's <i>patience</i> with your questions and worries?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
The doctors <i>caring and concern</i> for you?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

now expanding three times faster than the NHS is recruiting doctors and nurses. Between September 2001 and 2002 4,900 managers joined the NHS, a rise of 17.8per cent. Family doctors rose by 1.6per cent.

Appraisal will be intrusive. Among other 'tools', doctors are recommended to use patient questionnaires to demonstrate their competence.

And if you really want to be sure the doctor is doing exactly what you want why not make him record his consultations ? The next time you visit your surgery you might catch a glimpse of a video camera in a corner. It will not be on. They are used – only with a patient's permission – to video GP trainee consultations. The tapes are then sent, anonymised, to medical invigilators who mark the doctor on her attitude, reflective silences, ability to explain, history taking, examination and so forth. It cannot be long before supporters of appraisal are already calling for this to be extended to all GPs. In time doctors may be obliged to acquiesce. Not being able to get patients to agree might be construed as evidence of poor practice. 'After all if your patients trust you surely they would not mind....'

Preceded by endless assurances that appraisal will be open, non intrusive, supportive, an educational tool not an exam – and unconnected with the needs of the NHS (how that can be is almost impossible to conceive) the medical profession is now set on a path that will lead to the same disaster that has occurred in our universities and schools. There an out of control bureaucracy laid waste to public education. Those doctors who can see the storm coming are folding their tents. Some indication of how many are leaving can be gleaned by the unprecedented golden hellos now being offered by the NHS to retired doctors to return to practice. Recruitment of younger GPs is a disaster. Dr John Chisholm, chairman of the BMA's general practice committee, said: 'We are approaching meltdown

in general practice with a dire shortage of family doctors. There aren't enough to go round.'

Does appraisal work? A search of the authoritative medical literature data base the Cochrane index reveals that it is based on very shaky ground.

There is evidence that critical appraisal teaching has positive effects on participants' knowledge, but as only one study met the inclusion criteria the validity of drawing general conclusions about the effects of teaching critical appraisal is debatable. There are large gaps in the evidence as to whether teaching critical appraisal impacts on decision-making or patient outcomes. It is also unclear whether the size of benefit seen is large enough to be of practical significance, or whether this varies according to participant background or teaching method The evidence supporting all outcomes is weakened by the generally poorly designed, executed and reported studies that we found.

Nor are the results of appraisal elsewhere encouraging. Preventive surveillance and audit have been a feature of banking for years. Before that people trusted in the adage 'My word is my bond.' Today people would no more trust a banker's word than a three card trickster. The cocaine filled frenzy that led to the 2000 stock market bubble took place against the most intensive audit and self regulation to which any profession has ever being subjected .

Nor is it true that huge numbers of doctors are seriously failing. Since the GMC brought in its performance tests for poorly performing doctors in 1995, a total of 27 doctors have gone through the process out of some 90,000 on the medical register. Out of the twenty seven who took the test, which is extremely stringent, seven passed. Moreover as one commentator noted:

Recurring themes in these cases (those who passed) included poor local resolution and documentation, failure of local complaints systems to deal with angry,

grieving patients and relatives and that difficult, awkward doctors are not necessarily incompetent.

There is no escape for doctors by leaving the NHS. Private doctors have to be appraised and validated. For single-handed private GPs this involves the added nightmare of facing a paper-hungry, statist GMC. Nor have doctors realised that from now on the burden of proof of ethical behaviour will be reversed in their relations with the GMC. Previously you could only end up in front of the disciplinary committee if there was a *prima facie* case against you. From now on even in the absence of any evidence of fault, a doctor will have to prove his innocence. If he fails to produce signed proof every five years of good behaviour his license will be withdrawn. This implies that doctors are not to be trusted.

But the GMC insists that this mass of regulation will be done 'with a light touch'. They are confident that the number of poorly performing doctors will actually fall as a result of the new regulations. But doctors fear that far from being a light touch this will unleash a tide of bureaucracy that will drown the profession in a sea of certificates and paperwork. Many doctors say that such things as keeping up to date, honesty, behaving with courtesy toward the sick and to colleagues are the very essence of the moral occupation of being a doctor. That it is quite impossible to quantify or standardise such things as courtesy or the degree to which you get on with your colleagues. If we have to have safety tests then let them be about medical competence or a simple register of education undertaken. Only when a doctor is convicted of a crime or there is *prima facie* evidence of neglect or malpractice should the GMC be involved.

Meanwhile the profession in its activities outside appraisal is forced to work in an NHS that Dr Ian Bogle, the chairman of the BMA, in his retiring speech, described as 'an obscene culture of politically driven NHS targets.' Why did the BMA not notice this when it was calling for appraisal he did not explain. Dr Bogle went on to complain of '...the cheating going on by the government having put human beings in such a position they feel they have to do it to preserve their jobs.' Cheating includes packing accident units with temporary staff to reduce waiting times while the department was having its performance assessed. Or pushing patients out of hospital at the end of four hours to meet targets. James Strachan head of the audit commission complains that 'large numbers of managers are having almost to play games with the system to meet targets.'

There will be pious statements that doctor assessment is independent of such pressures, that it is not about waiting lists but how well a doctor is doing. But appraisal takes place within the NHS, in practices paid and run by the NHS. Assessors are paid for by the NHS. However cuddly and non-judgemental the appraisers are, the GMC which has a mandate to protect the public will be looking for facts and figures. The only place they are going to find them are in a doctor's prescribing, held on his NHS

computer, in his scores on patient questionnaires, held in the practice records, in the number of blood cholesterol he has checked, held on his NHS payment returns. Very quickly appraisal and revalidation, which are supposed to take place independently of any contractual obligations, are going to elide into what sort of an NHS performer the doctor is. Doctors will find their licences tied to government policy.

There are those who say that privatising the NHS will, at one stroke, banish this nightmare. Doctors freed from the meddling, insinuating hand of NHS bureaucracy will enjoy the freedom of the open market. Those who keep up to date, are thoughtful and attentive will survive, the rest will be 'killed' by market forces. It is possible that this may never happen, that the NHS has, as my colleague Dr Gammon suggests on another page, an intrinsic nightmare life of its own. But if the NHS does die, it will not end our dependence on medical technology. Out of the ashes of the NHS will come the market.

We will then have even more to fear. It is a mistake in the post-Marxist hangover of the 21st century to believe that capital is neutral and that it is the consumer who makes the choice. One of the most astonishing corporate success stories of the 20th century, the fast food industry in America, is now faced with the irreversible consequences of selling much too much food to far too greedy customers. But in biology, the customer is often altered by the product. The more fast food he eats the more hungry he becomes. Epidemics of diabetes, heart disease and stroke now threaten increasingly younger sections of the population. Last week doctors heralded the arrival of a new pill to cut heart disease by 80 per cent. Everybody over 50 should take it. Capital will certainly be able to deliver it. They will also be able to persuade people to swallow it. When its mass administration has been built into doctors' licenses it will become practically compulsory.

Ivan Illich in his book *Medical Nemesis* warned against 'pleonexia' – radical greed. There is no limit to the freedom people are prepared to give up in their search for health. Most of us would rather spend six months being tortured on a respirator than miss the tiny sliver of hope it might offer us for an extension of life. If we are prepared to endure physical torture, what a silly detail privacy must seem when we enter a hospital or surrender the most intimate details of our lives to an NHS computer.

This week we were told that at some time in the future it will be possible for a human being to be born one of whose biological parents was destroyed before its birth. There has never been a time when the moral voice of an independent medical profession was more needed. But with these reforms it is set on the road to silence.

*Myles Harris is a practising doctor
Go to <http://www.gpaq.info/>
for permission to use the questionnaire.*

Audrey Parry

Flippancy is not usually associated with Hegel but his remark that men learn nothing from history save that men learn nothing from history, is worthier of the Drones Club. A more menacing formulation of the view is that those who neglect history are compelled to relive it. But the runes may not be easy to read. Palmerston said of the Schleswig-Holstein question that only three men ever understood it and were either mad, dead or had forgotten it. What lesson could one deduce from this for modern conflicts? The war in Iraq provoked a number of historical precedents from commentators who might have been better advised to look back at Gulf War I to appreciate the dangers of prophecy. On that occasion Denis Healey, the former Chancellor, said that Saddam would win, our men being no match for his 'seasoned troops' and that burning oil-wells would spread ecological disaster for decades if not forever. At the end of the war, Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary, emphasised that the UN had not sanctioned 'regime change', that we had to retire, but Saddam was doomed anyway and would not last the fortnight. So far Healey has said nothing and Lord Hurd has spoken merely to warn Blair of poodledom.

Dr Goebbels was ever one to listen for the rustle of the wings of the Angel of History. When Roosevelt died in 1945 Goebbels phoned Hitler and said 'The Tsarina is dead.' He was referring to an incident in the wars of Frederick the Great when he heard that his enemy, Catherine of Russia, had died. Our modern commentators have chosen similar apocalyptic parallels in history. Not for them the humbler lessons in modern times such as street fighting in Ulster, useful though this must have been to US troops. They have opted for grand themes such as the League of Nations, Abyssinia, Munich, Suez, Vietnam and Stalingrad and as a quaint extra, 1914.

Tony Blair rightly drew attention to what he called the 'Abyssinia test' which revealed the inadequacies of the League of Nations, the first international organisation which tried to substitute 'jaw-jaw for war-war', and which embodied so many hopes. It was not inclusive since some countries the US and Russia declined to join and others like Germany which was first refused admission and then subsequently joined, then left. Hence the

League's writ was restricted and it had no means of enforcing its decisions. Ironically Abyssinia itself barely made entrance since it was dubbed insufficiently advanced but nevertheless its Emperor took his grievance to the League after Italy executed an old-fashioned war and occupation of his country. Sanctions were imposed against Italy which were more effective than is sometimes supposed but the conquest remained. A cynical piece of realpolitik, the Hoare-Laval pact, which would have allowed Abyssinia at least some territory, was frowned upon, so, finally, there was no remedy at all. In a much more heartfelt case, the Spanish Civil War in which Russia, Germany and Italy were helping their respective clients, the League was ineffective. Indeed, nobody bothered with it.

So Blair's point was that if international organisations

cannot deal with the situations that actually present themselves, what good are they? The UN has not been able to deal with dreadful tyrants such as Pol Pot (Cambodia) and Idi Amin (Uganda) and salvation only came to the inhabitants of those countries from Vietnam

and Tanzania respectively, and only because those countries had themselves been under attack from the two rogue states. A tyrant such as Saddam, so long as he did not invade anybody else's country, was apparently immune.

Michael Ignatieff, who is in favour of the war, has said that organic democracies cannot evolve from police states, which have to be overthrown, presumably from outside. It was probably a mistake, in his view, to emphasise the caches of WMD, discovered or otherwise, and we should have stressed the potential and earlier use by Saddam. Richard Perle, the US hawk, will not allow the responsibility issue to be evaded as to who actually keeps order. In a brutally sarcastic vein he asked 'If Liechtenstein wants to be the world policeman, that's fine by us. We'll just step aside.'

Blair was less successful when he cited Munich, the example of the blind denial of the aggressive intentions already displayed by a tyrant. Suez is often cited by peaceniks as an example of a country punching far above its weight for ends that were unworthy anyway. Both these cases have high iconic status but perhaps it is time

Professional soldiers coming from democracies are less likely to ask 'Why are we here?', to query orders or to take much notice of public opinion, particularly since the latter is so volatile. In the Iraqi war support grew steadily with success and revelations of Saddam's cruelty.

to give them a rest. Ironically Eden, then Prime Minister, quoted Munich when he launched the action on Suez, in collusion with France and Israel. This was a reply to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by Egypt under Nasser, who fast forwarded an outcome that was legally due in a few years anyway. Suez has always been condemned but it left some unanswered questions. First it was never unpopular with the masses and we may compare this with the steady rise in the opinion polls of popularity for the Iraqi war. Before Suez, when Herbert Morrison was Foreign Secretary, he observed at the time when Iran took over the oil wells that 'The foreigner is not always right'. Perhaps Peter Mandelson his grandson remembered those words. Then on the legal question at least one eminent jurist has asked what would happen to international law if countries could just tear up treaties. Again, President Eisenhower, who took such a hostile attitude over Suez, said later that he much regretted his stance. Presumably he was thinking of what precedent this afforded for the Panama Canal and whether he really preferred Nasser to the UK as an ally. There is, of course, the overwhelming difference that in the latter war the UK and the US were such fast allies.

The Stalingrad parallel is quickly disposed of. Apparently the citizens of Baghdad would fight like tigers against the invader. Julian Manyon (ITN, Spectator) 'Saddam may be a bastard but he's OUR Bastard' will be the cry of the defenders. In fact they quickly caved in. A Republican guard (Radio 4) spoke of demoralisation through the bombing and lack of orders. The troops changed into their civvies and went home.

The Vietnam parallel is different and it likely to remain so since there are so many imponderables. The lesions are deep and the issues unresolved. It was the first TV war in which the grim toll of body-bags was made plain to the viewer as were the injuries to civilians often dramatically displayed. Hence it was the policy and the desire to spare such injuries and this might hinder military strategy. It was argued by the strategist Edward Luttwak that such forbearance could lengthen the war and thus cause yet more injury to civilians and soldiers alike. The Falkland War did not have to apply this brake since civilians were not much involved. Even so there was concern about the loss of life of the Belgrano conscripts and this pinpoints the difference between Vietnam and Gulf War II. In the latter only professionals were involved and there is evidence that it was the draft that made the Vietnam War so unpopular, more particularly when student exemption from the draft was abandoned. Professional soldiers coming from democracies are less likely to ask 'Why are we here?', to query orders or to take much notice of public opinion, particularly since the latter is so volatile. In the Iraqi war support grew steadily with success and revelations of Saddam's cruelty.

Voices from the past will always be seductive but the message is sometimes Delphic.

Audrey Parry was a barrister

Sophist's Corner

If a child under your care has died you must explain, to the best of your knowledge, the reasons for, and the circumstances of the death to those with parental responsibility. Similarly, if an adult patient has died, you should provide this information to the patient's partner, close relative or a friend who has been involved in the care of the patient, unless you have reason to believe that the patient would have objected.

From *Good Medical Practice* published by the General Medical Council

A Defence of Political Realism

and a critique of some current security policy practices

Simon Anglim

The doyen of realism, Hans Morgenthau, summarised the realist argument as follows: 'Politics, like all human activities, has objective laws rooted in human nature, the most important being the quest for interest defined as power. What constitutes 'power', and what it is best used for, varies according to context: consequently, realists reject the possibility of one ideology providing the answers to all the world's problems.' Morgenthau's contemporary Reinhold Niebuhr, a Lutheran pastor seeking a Christian interpretation of politics, equated such absolutism with a refusal to accept one's insignificance before God's will.

Such world-views as Morgenthau's and Niebuhr's are currently unpopular, not least among those formulating security policy in certain Western nations. Bill Clinton publicly eschewed balance of power politics, at least one distinguished observer of the Clinton administration's actions over the Bosnian civil war suggesting they were shaped primarily by a sentimental desire to come to the rescue of a 'gallant underdog' (and a 'multi-cultural' underdog at that), far more than the perceived security needs of the US or its friends. Upon coming to power, New Labour proclaimed that its foreign policy would be 'ethical' rhetorically implying that that of previous British governments was not. Yet, for all its perceived unattractiveness, and current unpopularity, political realism remains a valid philosophy of international relationships and security affairs, and provides a logical and comprehensive framework for security policy. Moreover, some of the alternatives, including collective security and the various 'ethical' policies currently doing the rounds, fail to satisfy many of the requirements for true security that realism does, and in practice may lead to more, not less, international confrontation.

Realists claim to see the world as it is, not as it should be, and admit that what they see is rarely attractive. Central to their worldview is the state's pursuit of power – which we might define for our purposes as the capability to achieve ends despite opposition – the centrality of military force to that power, and the inevitability of conflict in a world of multiple sovereignty. Realists argue that the international system is 'anarchic,' with no central authority to impose order on the international community; sovereignty, at least currently, therefore

inheres in nation-states. States have needs which may not be compatible with those of others, and a state can never be totally sure about the intentions of others and so can never be certain that it will not be attacked. Consequently, in a world in which states are ready, and possibly willing, to attack each other, states interested in preserving their sovereignty – and, presumably, most are – must be wary of trusting others. States agree to cooperate for practical or ideological reasons, but all that is required to upset any international community is one state acting selfishly. Moreover, with no central authority to turn to for help and no mechanism for repelling aggression other than the preservation-instinct of third parties, states have even more reason to be afraid.

Lacking any higher authority to rescue them when danger arises, states must help themselves, particularly by pursuing interest defined as power. Power is intangible, capable of 'measurement' only relative to that of others. For instance, Paul Kennedy reminds us that Britain is now richer in absolute terms than it was in the Victorian period, and its forces possess destructive power beyond the wildest dreams of Victorian commanders, but this matters little when its share of world product has shrunk from 25 per cent to 3 per cent and it shares the world with the armed might of the USA, Russia and China.

Realists do not deny the role of 'morality' and law in interstate relations, merely that they are less important than others may wish. Realists agree with Rousseau that to be sane in a world of madmen is itself a form of madness, with Machiavelli that, in a world full of people who are not virtuous, the virtuous man cannot survive on virtue alone. Western liberal notions of morality and legality derive themselves largely from precedents set by the ancient Greeks and the Judaeo-Christian scriptures, yet these come to us because Classical Greece withstood the threat of Persia by winning the battles of Marathon, Salamis and Plataea and because the ancient Jews had the military strength and resolve to conquer the Land of Canaan.

Indeed, one might speculate on how efficacious public readings of Thales or Protagoras would have been in repelling the Persians, or whether enunciating the Ten

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Commandments would have intimidated the Canaanites into submission. To realists, the central mechanism for peacekeeping is not 'morality' but the balance of power, wherein an increase in the relative power of one state is countered by increased strength or expanded alliances of others. While this process is inherent in the international system, balance of power policies can be pursued deliberately.

This opens the issue of whether gathering power should be a priority of the state. Fortunately for realists, there are reasons to suggest that it should, provided one shares the realist view of what power is actually for. We detect two broad schools of thought on this issue. The Utopian school has been in the ascendant in political parties since 1945, is socially fashionable, and most of the current crop of 'just warriors' and 'ethical' policymakers are followers. Platonists see politicians as conduits for ideology derived from theory, stemming from philosophy or religion or communion with some Platonic parallel universe of parallel universes, always providing clear views of what needs to be put right with the world – there is, invariably, much – and how to achieve it. To Platonists, the prime imperative for political leadership is intellect, the sole criteria for its judgement, capacity to generate ideas and the party political skills to obtain and hold office. Students of the alternative Machiavellian school, to which realists belong, accuse their Utopian rivals of lacking the sense to see their limitations, their pursuit of intellectual and moral purity often sliding into narcissism, forgetfulness of why they are in office and, possibly, when taken to its illogical extreme, the atrocities of a Hitler or a Pol Pot. To Machiavellians, politicians are trustees for the welfare of real people, and must live in the real world, not in some idealised Erewhon. They must be judged by their efficacy as public servants, measured by their execution of effective action to deal with problems of public interest as they arise. The Machiavellian philosophy dovetails with the Hobbesian notion that man is intrinsically bad and violent to produce the realist world view.

Homo homini lupus, or perhaps *homo homini homo*; realists accept that history has losers and victims and believe it the duty of policymakers to ensure that their constituents are not among them, and with good reason, because we have ample evidence to support Hobbes' conclusions. Since 1900, perhaps 100 million people have been killed by police or 'security' forces relying on starvation and hard labour to kill the majority and on firing squads, gas or clubs to exterminate the rest. Their murderers overcame little resistance; because their victims could not fight for themselves they were murdered in peace. Confronted with such evidence, realists argue, public servants have no right not to prioritise the security of their peoples.

The concepts of an 'anarchic' international system and the need for security are linked closely. St. Augustine argued that man's sinfulness made government necessary;

examples of what happens when higher authority is removed, as in post-colonial Africa, the former Yugoslavia or what was once the Soviet Union, apparently bear him out. The absence of central authority means the absence of an entity capable of resolving disputes and of enforcing those resolutions on the community. This perhaps explains why many policymakers currently place their faith in systems of 'collective security' to deter threats or restore peace when deterrence fails. Collective security agrees with realism that military power is central to international relations, but believes power can be managed through collective international institutions such as NATO or the UN. Its proponents express distaste for the balance of Power and power-based alliances, and desire a world where realist models no longer apply. Collective security requires that all states agree to settle differences peacefully: if so, there would be no need for collective security. It is 'rogue' states, who commit acts of 'aggression' in the pursuit of selfish interests, that collective security is intended to counter. Collective security posits that states must not think of self interest when acting against 'rogue' states, instead equating their interests with the broader interests of the 'international community'. Specifically, states must believe that their interests are so linked with those of others that an attack on one becomes an attack on all. Trust is the most important component of collective security; states must be absolutely sure that others within the system will come to their aid should they be targeted by 'rogues'.

Collective security does not provide answers for one fundamental question which realism does: how can states trust one another? Realists maintain that states fear each other because they have offensive military capability in an anarchic world and can never be certain about others' intentions. Collective security has nothing to say about this and condemns the balance of power, a way by which that fear might be eased. Moreover, John Mearsheimer poses eight conundrums for states participating in collective security arrangements.

First, it can be difficult to distinguish between aggressor and victim, particularly in the case of pre-emptive strikes, as with the 1967 Six Day War. Secondly, the theory assumes that all aggression is wrong, but there are cases where conquest was possibly warranted, as in the Allied crushing of Germany and Japan in World War Two, and Saddam in Iraq and might be again in the case of Kim or Mugabe. Thirdly, some states are friendly or hostile for historical, ideological or cultural reasons, and may be reluctant to join collective action against their friends or alongside their enemies; it is difficult to imagine the USA using direct military force against Britain or Israel, for instance, and in the former Yugoslavia, the participating powers, excepting Britain and the USA, all showed reluctance to act against their co-religionists. Fourthly, even if states do agree to act collectively, there may be controversy over burden sharing, and the

response of a collective security alliance can depend on the political will of its main burden sharers, as differing Western responses to Bush's 'war on terrorism' indicate. Fifthly, there is the problem of guaranteeing an efficient response, particularly if the aggression is unforeseen; the Western Allies took six months to remove Saddam from Kuwait; many states are unlikely to invest in a system that delivers aid only after a long interval, possibly long after they have been conquered. Sixth, collective security posits the threat of escalation, particularly if the aggressor has friends with strong interests in the area of conflict, as, initially, with Serbia and Russia. Seventh, the notion that states must respond automatically to aggression creates problems of sovereignty; collective security denies states the right to declare or stay out of war; states, particularly democracies, are likely to debate vociferously over whether or not to confront an aggressor. Lastly, there are philosophical contradictions about the use of force that could impede states coming to the rescue of a victim: collective security is rooted in the liberal notion that war is so repellent that states should renounce it, creating doubts about the will of states not threatened directly, and, indeed, most proponents of collective security prefer the use of diplomacy and economic sanctions to force.

This leads to perhaps the principal flaw of collective security institutions – they are frequently nothing more than the expression of the will of participating nations, and if those nations do not react, then they are helpless; if they do react, then it is not the institution itself which is promoting 'international law' but the participating powers. Moreover, 'peace enforcement' operations have worked only if one or more of the great powers have participated, guaranteeing adequate military might – witness events in Bosnia in the early 1990s. There are, therefore, reasons enough to suggest that seeking security exclusively through such a system may be imprudent, and states that recognise these problems are likely to prefer the realist practice of self-help. Few do.

Another feature of realism is the assumed centrality of the state to international relations. The validity of this worldview was challenged in the 1960s, when behaviouralism was presented as an alternative.

Behaviouralists claim realism is oversimplified, that the growth of international communications and transnational linkages means that a significant proportion of international relations now bypasses the state. While behaviouralism has not produced an encompassing theory of international relations, some of its offshoots challenge realism's monopoly, amongst these being Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and Interdependence.

FPA studies factors influencing foreign policy, and rejects one of the core tenets of realism, that the state is a unitary actor which manages its policies rationally to maximise its power. Rather, there is fragmentation and rivalry within the state, and input from the domestic community, including special interest groups and the media,

and the ideology and career interests of policymakers, providing a persuasive account of the making of foreign policy, with its occasional dithering, inconsistencies and illogicalities. It was from FPA that the concept of 'interdependence' arose. 'Interdependence' is currently popular amongst the Western liberal 'intelligentsia', the diplomatic community and certain Tory grandees, and reworks the classical liberalism of Adam Smith and the Marquis De Montesquieu, who believed that free trade would create an international 'division of labour' wherein the economic interests of one state would be tied to those of all others; with states able to obtain goods via trade, the need for wars and conquest would diminish. Similarly, the withdrawal of trade – 'economic sanctions' – can be used to restore the balance of power by forcing states to act as others wish. These assumptions rest on the proposition that the state is losing its dominant position in international relations to commercial entities, and so military power is not as important as before.

Yet realists have never claimed that the concepts of the nation state and of interest defined as power are linked inextricably. Indeed, it was not the actions of nation states, but of social groups, that attracted Niebuhr to realism, and Morgenthau himself wrote: '...the contemporary connection between interest and the nation state is a product of history, and is therefore bound to disappear in the course of history.' The nation-state is a recent phenomenon, and before it there were other foci of loyalty such as the *polis* of classical Greece or the principalities of medieval Italy. A review of the pre-nation state era provides no evidence for the view that the pursuit of security is inextricably linked to the nation state system and no other form of discourse. We can find entities fighting for territory, raising armies, subjugating others, forming alliances and spheres of influence and resolving differences by force or threat; in proscribing realism, Michael Walzer cites not modern states, but the Greek *polis* of Athens and the absolutist monarchy of Henry V of England. More recently, Samuel Huntington has noted the current tendency of nation-states sharing common cultures and belief-systems to gravitate into larger, multi-national cultural groupings, or 'civilisations' – Western, Islamic, Sinic, etc – which, he argues, are increasingly acting similarly to nations, confronting each other and balancing power in particular, suggesting that the realist model may apply for generations to come. If realism admits that the nation-state is the product of a particular era, and we can find political actors in other eras conforming to the realist model, then it has little to fear from the demise of the nation-state predicted by interdependence theorists.

Meanwhile, for all the talk of 'civilisations' or 'global issues', the nation-state remains responsible for resolving issues of war and peace, the environment and so forth, individuals still delegate security and welfare functions upon it, and transnational entities remain subject to the laws of nation-states. In many ways, the modern state

is a unitary actor. Mearsheimer draws attention to perhaps the most serious flaw in interdependence theories: economic resources are essential to support a large security establishment, and so the relative size of a state's economy affects profoundly its standing as a military power; it is more than a coincidence that the United States of America, the mightiest military power in the history of the world, has the biggest and most aggressive trading economy in the history of the world also.

It is difficult to draw a line between economic and security issues, and so relative gains must be considered even within the economic domain. Concerns as to relative gains colour any method of achieving trust between nations by economic means: even if covert action was totally impossible, gaps in gains could soon be translated to military advantage. Moreover, we detect another failure to see the limits of rationality. Economic relationships will not deter states who feel strongly enough that their interests can be served by force. The placing of most European economies onto the Gold Standard did not prevent the Second World War, and the USSR was supplying Germany with timber and other raw materials until the very day it was invaded in 1941; most damningly of all for interdependence theories, three quarters of all conflicts since 1945 have been civil wars, involving the breakup of integrated economies. Moreover, in a reversal of the classical liberal argument, some states may attempt to gain by force what they lack the patience or ability to obtain by economic means, as with Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Saddam, Kim Jong-il and bin Laden may, one day, become free-trading 'men of reason' but what about the meantime?

Finally, in many cases the replacement of the nation state hoped for by interdependence theorists has taken on malign form, exemplified by ethnically based civil conflicts or the growth of unwelcome transnational movements, including terrorists, religious fundamentalists and international criminal cartels. These groups can be observed taking the pull of interest defined as power to an illogical extreme. The killing of the hundred million cited above was in many cases sanctioned by states, parties and organisations similar, if not identical in political philosophy and method to these emergent groups, and this should be cause enough for those who face them to concern themselves with their own security.

The current guiding principal of the security policy of the Atlanticist powers is, apparently, a hybrid of interdependence and collective security we can term 'moral interventionism'. Moral interventionism argues that 'civilised' states must seek a more democratic, understanding and, by implication, peaceful world through a range of means, including military action, although this should be used only as a last resort against 'aggressor'

states: war, in RH Tawney's words, becomes either a crusade or a crime.

Moral interventionism combines the Utopian impulse to better the world with the muscular Christianity and 'can do' philosophy of the Western professional classes and is fuelled, some argue, by a combination of vicarious guilt and the moral agenda of former 1960s radicals. Consequently, in contrast with other Utopian movements, which are generally patient and opportunistic, moral interventionism is often robustly proactive, lying at the very core of the external policies of liberal parties such as the American Democrats and Blair's New Labour, but also contributing to Bush's notion of 'an axis of evil'. Such a worldview is intrinsically confrontational, setting up elites, in a small number of states, as judge, jury and sometimes executioner of the ways of life of others, a phenomenon suggested, for example, in Blair's assertions over recent events from Sierra Leone to Serbia to Afghanistan, that the ends justified whatever means might have been used, even if those means contradicted his 'ethical' policy. In its assumption that others may wish to live in Western-style liberal democracies it is also parochial and smells of cultural imperialism, both likely to be counter-productive in practice. Moral interventionism is as Utopian as other millennialist theories of interstate relations, and is potentially as unlimited in its

aims. Not only are confrontations between moral interventionists and other Utopians more likely, but are more likely to escalate, as the Second World War indicates.

In denying that history has some grand purpose, realists acknowledge that it is not just

their particular state or way of life that has vital interests, but all states and ways of life. These interests can be assessed rationally, and perhaps accommodated with our own. At least we might pursue our interests so that others do not feel that theirs are threatened, so allowing relations between states to occur in an atmosphere of mutual respect, in a considerably more adult manner, and in a safer world, than in a situation dominated by those who feel they have God, ethics or historical inevitability on their side. In a world of multiple, equally valid interests, opportunities for inter-state and inter-civilisational cooperation will be greater, and true interdependence may result. Moreover military action in the pursuit of rationally assessed state interest can surely be controlled and limited more efficiently than apocalyptic crusades, as Clausewitz argued at the very beginning of the modern era. No apologies for quoting again an oft-cited remark of AJP Taylor: 'Bismarck... fought "necessary" wars and killed thousands; the idealists of the twentieth century fight "just" wars and kill millions.'

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Alfred Sherman

Towards the end of the Second World War, Harold Macmillan, then Minister-resident in the Middle East, admonished colleagues that the British should reconcile themselves to the role of 'Greeks of the Empire' (to America's Rome). For most of the subsequent sixty years, successive British governments, oppositions, policymakers and opinion-formers have grappled with the implied obligations and opportunities subsumed in this concept of the 'special relationship'. For most of the period, the special relationship held up. It was attacked from the Left, which preferred to seek common ground with the Soviet bloc, neutrals and third world, from Commonwealth nostalgics of various orientations and from the more exclusivist Europeanisers, some of whom regarded the United Kingdom itself as an anachronism and obstacle to Britain's piecemeal European nirvana. However most partisans of the special relationship saw it as compatible with parallel orientations: NATO, EC, UN and Commonwealth, and saw no disparity between British membership of a 'Europe of nations' and devolution for the Celtic fringe. From the US side, there was generally less enthusiasm for the relationship and a more pragmatic evaluation. For some, from time to time, the EC or Germany seemed a more desirable partner, and for others a Pacific orientation. Except for the period of the Reagan-Thatcher partnership (and perhaps its lineal predecessor, that between Roosevelt and Churchill) the UK was seen less as partner than as subordinate, the relationship was special but one-sided.

The Iraq war has called the whole pattern of international allegiances into question. However the Iraq adventure ultimately ends, whatever 'ends' may entail, and whenever it may ultimately be said to have ended, things seem unlikely to be the same again; an unravelling process has been set in motion. This in turn is bound to have implications for Britain's defence strategy, external orientation, self-image, and the sense of national purpose which implicitly underlies major strategic decisions.

In retrospect, the onset of American hegemony, which we are increasingly obliged to confront, was coming for some time. During our lifetimes, the disproportion between the UK and US has grown exponentially.

whereas successive US governments' efforts to fight off Soviet expansionism met with fierce resistance from the mass media entertainers and academics, intervention in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq has received a fair wind at home.

During the Second World War, Britain still disposed of the support and resources of British India, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Egypt, Iraq and Palestine. Much of the New World's assets were owned in London. Britain was the most intensively mobilised for war of any society. Sterling was a major world currency; at a price, the Pound Sterling 'could look the dollar in the face.' In the past sixty years, the disparity has grown.

The implosion of the Soviet geopolitical system took the world by surprise; in the sense of relief which followed, its implications remained to be fully traced. Changes in needs and responses induced by the ending of the Cold War were not foreseen, and await identification and appreciation as they work themselves out. However, it is common ground that the collapse of the Soviet system decades after the disappearance of Japan

as a world power, and before the developments needed in order to permit India and China to turn their massive populations into corresponding geostrategic power have worked their way through, left the USA in the unique position of sole world megapower, its

implications emerging over time.

Ex hypothesi, there are real limits to the uses to which this power can be put. It can easily be led by hubris, what was once called 'manifest destiny', into false positions, as in Vietnam. There are costs to the use of armed force and economic power for political ends. However the current mood in the USA tends to underplay these limits and costs. In a style reminiscent of 'manifest destiny' at the turn of the 19th century, America is flexing its muscles, fuelled by a sense of military, diplomatic and economic power – *quo potest capere capiat* – self-righteousness and impatience with the old world's complexities and hesitancy. This mood has come and gone over the generations, alternating with isolationism. America's Vietnam misadventure, initiated by President Kennedy in the springtime of his presidency, inflicted serious social, political and economic damage on America, as a result of which a 'never again' mood held sway for a time. But whereas successive US governments' efforts to fight off Soviet expansionism met with fierce resistance from the mass media entertainers and academics, intervention in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq has received a fair

wind at home. The low level of American casualties in these wars and the time-lag between military expenditures and their wider economic impact has helped to obviate a major domestic political backlash. America has got the bit between its teeth. Its allies and associates can do little to counter this, but must work out their own independent salvation.

One effect of American muscle-flexing has been to accentuate differences both between the USA and other powers, and among them. The burdens and dilemmas of adjustment were bound to fall most heavily on the UK, because it is most closely aligned with the US. The Iraq imbroglio brought to a head dichotomies which had accumulated over time, and which were under-recognised. The reassuring image of a Britain linking and mediating between the US, EC, Commonwealth, NATO and the UN has been shattered, and replaced by the obligation to choose between rival constellations, whose members' minds were already made up and conditions for cooperation with Britain already formulated. These implied choices come at a time when Britain's links with the institutions in question appear less secure or cut and dried than was previously taken for granted.

For several years, since the US articulated aspirations to create a 'new world order', and took steps to spread the *pax Americana* with British collaboration, the foreign and defence debate in Britain has taken on a surreal character. For centuries, the debate had been carried on, with varying degrees of logic and skill, in terms of the national (including Imperial) interest and consideration of the European balance of power. In recent years, contemporaneously with the waning of British power and the waxing of America's new status, the criteria have become moral and abstract: world peace, democracy and the will and writ of the 'international community'. (This latter concept is reminiscent of Rousseau's 'general will', which is posited *a priori* rather than ascertained. The 'International community' is defined by moral rather than demographic criteria: China, India, Russia and other populous states are omitted from the list insofar as they oppose American policies; Germany and France are demoted as Europeans in favour of Spain, Italy and Bulgaria.)

The manner in which President Bush's inner circle first persuaded him of the need to invade Iraq, then won over Congress and the American media, then the British leadership and other governments, in face of popular opposition, deserves close study by political scientists and historians. It bears comparison with Lord Palmerston's triumph in single-handedly, with support from the popular press, pushing Britain into war with Russia, with such disastrous long term consequences for all concerned. The arguments for and against intervention in Iraq will have been well rehearsed, and I do not need to repeat them here. What counts most is that a precedent was established, extending the earlier precedent of NATO intervention in disintegrating decommunitising Yugoslavia. The arguments for intervention,

which has entailed invasion, heavy bombing, assassinations, total liquidation of all civil authority, and criminal proceedings against Iraqi nationals for acts committed when in sovereign government, could have been levelled with equal force against a considerable number of states, and there is a danger that they will be in due course.

The question is how far a Labour government in Britain can and will continue to support US policies in Iraq, where Britain is not involved, which give every sign of being reproduced elsewhere since American policy-makers are cock-a-hoop and wholly un-self-critical. The role of 'Greeks of the Empire' risks becoming that of Sancho Panza to an American Don Quixote. It is precisely because the alliance with America over Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq became so contentious, that its unravelling would have such wide consequences. The conceptual basis of British foreign policy as it developed since the end of the second world war: the special relationship, NATO, the EC, UN and Commonwealth ties, cannot avoid being challenged.

The *raison d'être* of NATO, largely an American creation, has now belatedly been called into question by the Americans themselves. As a defensive alliance it was a brilliant success, winning the Cold War without firing a shot. Then, instead of being stood down when the threat de-materialised, this multinational defensive alliance was converted into a US equivalent of the Warsaw Pact run from Washington, in their words as a politico-military instrument with unlimited purview. Its first operations were directed against the Serbs to the benefit of Croat-Catholic irredentism and sectarian warfare and then of Moslem fundamentalism and Albanian-Islamic nationalism, in Bosnia, the Sanjak, Kosovo, Serbia and Macedonia, in cooperation with Bin Laden and other mujahidin.

Subsequent French and German unwillingness to allow NATO to become a wholly-owned US subsidiary has led the USA to question the institution's further utility and *raison d'être*. This has aroused an equal and opposite echo among the French and Germans, in pressures for the creation of a European rapid reaction force. That the lack of any agreed purpose for NATO does not necessarily imply that the European Rapid Reaction Force mooted in its place will make a viable substitute. Like NATO, it lacks a credible enemy against whom to 'react'. Military alliances may survive without friends, but not without enemies. The European Rapid Reaction Force will have to create its rationale in order to justify its existence. Where conflicts do not exist, they are in danger of being generated.

These considerations oblige Britain to restate the rationale of its defence and foreign policies *ab initio*: what the realm must be defended against, why and how, without presuming to serve as the world's policeman or judge, foreswearing the myth of the international community, clarifying for what national interest we are prepared to send our forces to fight, to give aid or apply sanctions.

Another shibboleth of post-war Europe was the European Community; it is still growing, if not necessarily flourishing. In Britain, unlike continental Europe, it was not rooted in events or political culture, but was artificially imposed from above. The lack of debate over the most crucial constitutional change since the Norman Conquest has been unworthy of the magnitude of the issues involved. Per Gaitskell, it meant turning our backs on a thousand years of history. For many Europeanisers, membership of the Common Market, as it was then classed, was one of a series of panaceas alongside socialism and the Keynesian compromise as an alternative to either further socialism or deeper structural reform. It was a faith. In the 'sixties, the USA broke with tradition by encouraging Britain to seek membership, at a time when the matter was by no means cut and dried here. The idea of a single transatlantic interlocutor in place of several had its attractions for Johnson, who initiated the *volte-face* in US policy. But it was based on the implicit assumption that new Europe would be generally receptive to US-generated policies in their economic and diplomatic dimensions.

European attitudes towards US involvement in former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq directly violate these assumptions and with them Washington's assessment of the European Community, as it has since become. The change in US attitudes coincides with the EC's projected enlargement, mainly with less advanced economies which would be heavy net consumers of subsidies. Their greater numbers will act as a spur to organisational streamlining and a pretext for it, designed to reduce member states' autonomy in favour of the centre. Is it too much to see it as an occasion for reviewing Britain's membership?

The concept of Britain's European identity is also overdue for questioning. In the narrow geographical sense Britain is European, as European as Albania and Greece. But in its historical geography and political culture, Britain is quintessentially distinct. Since the sixteenth century it has been a maritime power, linked to the wider world, turning its back on Europe as much as possible. With brief exceptions, it has avoided European alliances and entanglements, intervening only to preserve the balance of power and prevent one continental power dominating. Language, the Protestant religion, common Law and the tradition of liberty marked Britain off from continental Europe. Propinquity does not create or foster identity. Englishmen may be European, but are not Europeans. The British character is the product of centuries of separate development, and intermingles with the nation's institutions. Even after two centuries of separate existence and mass European immigration, the USA and Britain have much more in common than either has with the continent.

So long as the EU survives, it is bound to be dominated by France and Germany. Their domination will only be increased by expansion, bringing in small, poor, and

therefore dependent states. They will continue to work towards re-creating a modern version of the Holy Roman Empire, political, cultural and military as well as economic; the antithesis of Britain's inherent destiny. At one conjuncture, the EU and NATO seemed due to coincide. Now, they share each other's divisions. Like the special relationship with the US, and the Commonwealth ties hallowed in speeches but angled in only one direction, these all-or-nothing ties need replacement by less institutionalised and more tentative links of convenience than those which grew up in the special conditions of the postwar and cold-war world.

Britain must not only choose its allies where it can, but also the character of its alliances. Britain may no longer be a great power in the sense it was for several centuries, but it is still a power, capable of independent existence, not bound to American manifest destiny out to impose visions on a reluctant world nor to a European super-state with aspirations beyond its potential, nor to a United Nations whose parameters stand in need of constant reassessment, and whose apotheosis creates a counter-productive gap between image and reality which works to the institution's detriment. In contrast to much of British history, there are no major current external threats to Britain, only home-made ones, colonisation by the third world, threats to quality of life and 'civility', and compulsive enslavement to passing fashions in politics, economics and international relations.

Wars may generate enthusiasm and flag-waving in the short term. But if undertaken in order to generate support they may easily produce cynicism. The Iraq war is a hostage to fortune for Britain, because the US leaders undertook it not as an extension of policy by other means but as a substitute for policy, and Britain tagged along with the USA in a war it would not conceivably have started. We should remind ourselves that economic and military power, even where real, do not of themselves confer wisdom on their possessors; on the contrary, they generate a greater need for it. America's Iraqi adventure – which has heralded the 21st century alongside 9/11 and the SARS epidemic – advertises the need for jargon-free re-assessment of the forces working to shape and reshape international relations. If America bites off more than it can chew, that should be no cause for us in Britain to suffer indigestion. Nor should we stake our well being and safety on utopian aspirations of the new world. Rather look back and learn from our own history.

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We may have to wait a while – maybe a generation or so – to see whether George Bush’s muscular efforts to bring democracy to the Middle East have truly succeeded. But while we’re waiting, we might wish to note that something is going rather badly wrong with the one pro-Western Muslim country which is close to being democratic. You know, the one which the US is always holding up as a ‘model’ of tolerance for the rest of the Islamic world, the country which has achieved a surprisingly seamless marriage of Western values and Islam and is (or perhaps was) on the verge of joining the European Union. Turkey, the US’s poster-child Muslim nation, NATO member since 1952, loyal ally of the West, land of swimsuit models on billboards, raki and wine, girls in crop-tops, is the living proof of how an Islamic country can also be something other than a repressive failed state.

But over the last few months, Turkey has been convulsed by what can only be described as a series of political earthquakes – an analogy one does not use lightly in this country – which threaten to throw the country off its pro-European, pro-US course, with disastrous ramifications not just for Turkey but for the West’s relationship with the Islamic world as a whole. The threat comes not from the supposedly Islamist government of the Justice and Development, or AK Party. On the contrary, AK is making the running in trying to reform Turkey and advance its bid for EU membership (*pace*, Eurosceptics, I am one of you – but for Turkey, membership means prosperity, jettisoning the last vestiges of a police state and, most important, finally joining the mainstream of European civilisation after a century of trying). No, the problem comes from the self-appointed guardians and vanguard of Turkey’s democracy and modernisation drive, the military.

In June, in a series of closed seminars and conferences at the War College to which academics, diplomats, senior tame politicians and a few chosen journalists were invited, the military set out a strongly nationalistic vision for Turkey’s future. Most surprising was the military’s readiness to turn away from its age-old alliances and pursue a more independent line. Chief of Staff Hilmi Ozkok criticised the West’s hypocrisy on battling terror yet not including KADEK, a Kurdish separatist group, in the definition. Ozkok accused European countries of ‘encouraging’ terrorism and even suggested sanctions be imposed. Ozkok’s deputy, General Yasar Buyukanit, blasted the US for trying to impose its ‘hegemonic’ will on the world

through globalization. He also accused Washington (albeit indirectly) of ignoring Turkish interests and concerns in Iraq – and suggested that this was a way of ‘punishing’ the Turks for not allowing a US deployment on Turkish soil during the Iraq war. And in the backrooms of the conference senior military figures let it be known that if US deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was hurt and ‘surprised’ at Turkey’s attitude to the Iraq war, then so were they surprised by the US. How could the US preach democracy and civilian rule, then blame the army for not twisting politicians’ arms in the run-up to the fateful March 1st parliamentary vote which nixed a Northern Front in Iraq? How can the US expect Turkey to follow its hawkish policies in the Middle East to the letter, and still retain any regional credibility? And why is the US allowing Kurds to create the rudiments of an autonomous state in North Iraq?

The text of the official statements may not seem to be banner-headline material. But translate them with a dictionary of Turkish political vocabulary, and the veiled verbiage actually adds up to something very significant. For one, it’s been years since the Army was this outspoken on such a range of issues, signalling that they want a major correction of Turkey’s political course. Two, despite the fact that all participants paid lip service to the importance of Turkey’s joining Europe, never has the army been so critical of its Western allies.

Three, the Army’s outspoken nationalist agenda is a deliberate shot across the bows of Ankara’s civilian government. The timing is not accidental, either. Turkey’s ruling AK Party, which was elected last November with a massive mandate to bring Turkey into the EU, is currently preparing the first of what promise to be several ambitious packages of laws designed to bring Turkey into conformity with Brussels’ human rights norms. That means scrapping more restrictions on freedom of speech, curbing police powers and reforming the judiciary – as well as granting Kurds more rights to speak, learn and broadcast their own language. By publicly running their views up the flagpole, the Army is giving notice that many of the more radical parts of the AK Party’s long-term pro-European programme will have to be binned – particularly Brussels’ demands that the military stop interfering in the country’s political life. This means, effectively, a major spoke in the wheels of Turkey’s EU bid, because to have a real shot at joining Europe anytime soon, the government has to pass the whole reform package.

Add to that three other foreign policy disasters of this Spring – the refusal of Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktas to allow his own people to vote on the UN's reunification plan, paving the way for Ankara's sworn enemy Greek Cyprus to join the EU alone; the botched vote in the Turkish parliament on US troop deployments; the consequent loss of a \$24 billion aid package which could have turned around Turkey's economy. The AK Party, and the whole European project, is on the ropes. Instead of pushing through revolutionary liberal reforms, they haven't won a single trick since coming to power – Iraq, Cyprus, and now the latest EU reform package, have all been sabotaged in different ways by the nationalist military and political establishment.

Publicly, Turkey's leadership seems unfazed. 'The Turkish Armed Forces are the architects of Turkey's modernization process,' said Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan last week, in stirring language reminiscent of the late Brezhevite Politbureau. But Erdogan has served a prison sentence for expressing 'anti-secularist' views and could be bounced from power, like his political mentor Necmettin Erbakan in 1997, if he steps out of line. The Army has him in its grip – they remain the power behind the throne.

A crisis is looming in relations between the Turkey and the West. At the root of it is an inherent contradiction between Turkey's European destiny as envisaged by the

Republic's modernising founder, Kemal Ataturk (the Army's nationalist, etatiste vision), and as envisioned by Brussels (liberal, pluralistic, the AK party's goal). Sooner or later, the military had to decide whether its going to sacrifice some of its own interests and obsessions in the interests of Europe (such as its own power, Kurdish language rights etc), or sacrifice Turkey's real chances of EU accession in the interests of a Kemalist ideal of Westernisation which now exists in a strange civilisational limbo inhabited only by Turkey.

Now that EU membership has gone beyond slogans and into the realm of nuts and bolts reforms, that paradox is coming to a head – and it looks like the army have chosen their own brand of nationalism over the AK Party's Europhilia. The shift has been gradual – like an ocean liner, the military's policy thinking turns slowly. But when it turns, it does so decisively. In a small but measurable way, the centre of Turkey's political gravity is turning away from the West. Just how far it will go remains to be seen. But the implications of a rift go far beyond Turkey. This could be a turning point for the one genuine case of integration and rapprochement between the two civilisations whose conflict is coming to define the decade. If Turkey fails in its efforts to become a normal, prosperous, European country, what hope is there of engaging the rest of the Islamic world?

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Petru Stetiu

At the Prague NATO Summit, 2002, Romania, along with nine other ex-Communist countries, was invited to join NATO, full membership expected by January 2004. Romania had long been an associate member and had also sought entry to the European Union. To these ends negotiations continue. In Copenhagen, December 2002, the EU Summit set Romania's entry as January, 1, 2007. These two membership goals – NATO and the EU – have decisively influenced Romania's evolution since 1989.

Why was Romania not invited to join NATO at Madrid in 1997 and why does EU admission take so long? To answer these questions we must remind ourselves of some historical facts and analyse both the state of Romania after the Communist collapse and the subsequent evolution of events.

In 1984 I visited Livadia Castle near Yalta, site of the notorious Summit of 1945. As everybody knows, by a secret decision there, Europe was divided into two.

Several East European countries, including Romania, were handed over to Soviet domination, in exchange for Greece's freedom and therefore free world control of the Mediterranean. Yalta was a huge historical mistake, since General Patton's troops could otherwise have liberated the whole of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania, freeing the South Western part of what was later Soviet controlled Europe. Instead, they stopped unexpectedly, letting the Russians occupy all these countries. Gazing at this fateful table was an embittering experience for a Romanian. Though its troops had fought against the Axis forces since August 1944, and contributed to freeing Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and parts of Austria, for Romania, Yalta had disastrous consequences: the take-over of power by Communists and the abolition of the rule of law; the elimination of the entire political class and of prominent intellectuals, Romanians remaining without true leaders; the abolition of private property, with people deprived of

their goods and their dignity. Can any international Agreement justify such 'achievements', such misery borne by countless persons? After Yalta, how could Romanians enjoy any autonomy in the subsequent unfolding of their history?

A folk poem of the early 1960s ran: 'All stars die every morning/ Only red ones die next spring'. This shows with telling clarity that most Romanians, ignorant of Yalta, hoped the USA and Western Allies would intervene in Romania to eliminate Communism. Some Romanians did more. For ten years after the end of the War, in the mountains of Romania, as nowhere else in Communist Europe, anti-Communist forces were active. Yalta precluded Allied intervention, however, and eventually this resistance was destroyed. The population, tired of waiting in vain, were constrained to adapt to oppression as best they could.

Romanians were not the only people to lose hope. Even scholars hostile to Communism lost hope, for example the former American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, George Kennan. His *American Diplomacy* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984) held that the Soviet leaders, absorbing the contributions of modern technique to the arts of despotism, had solved the questions of obedience within their writ. Few challenged their power; and even those who did, could not prevail against the state. The Soviet apparatus was so strong that the whole country was one huge labour camp. The only chance of change was from American pressure. In the event, in the years far ahead, faced with functional break-down, Gorbachev initiated certain reforms and a new wind blew throughout the Russian orbit.

Following this, however, the Romanian situation got even worse, for Ceausescu was too narrow to adapt to new vistas. He preferred, foolishly, to pay off all Romania's huge foreign debts and build vast, fantastical residences. To these ends he submitted Romanians to savage restrictions, from rationing food and fuel to limiting domestic heating in winter. The régime became intolerable. Unsurprisingly then, in December 1989, in a wide popular movement we like to call a 'revolution', Romanians got rid of Ceausescu and his régime.

An era of extraordinary joy began. We were of course idealistic and naïve. But we were sick of Communism and demanded the banishment of the Party. Overnight it was pronounced 'dissolved', but, unfortunately, without a clear political trial, as had happened for instance in Germany with the Nazis after 1945. The only trials were the summary one of the Ceausescus in December 1989, followed by their execution, and two or three cosmetic ones of a few high ranking Communists, involved in the bloodshed organized during the revolution in Timisoara and Bucharest. Later, most of those few convicted were released under different 'humanitarian' pretexts. This suggested, implicitly, that the Ceausescus alone were responsible for what had happened.

Letting the Communists off so lightly had important

consequences. First, it permitted former Communists to join new civic or political organizations; secondly, the historical guilt for Communism was spread over all former Party members, though few were significantly responsible. This effectively dissolved *all* such guilt. The Communist Party of Romania was the only one in the Communist-bloc to have a sizeable membership (some three million people). Few members had real power, the rest being there only to facilitate political control.

Romania in January 1990

The country was bankrupt. The monumental errors of central planning had been the backbone of the economy. The centralised system could neither foresee nor adapt to detailed rapid changes in markets. Centralization was so extreme that the management of enterprises was reduced to an executive rôle. Huge planned industrial investments, without proper research, usually involved expensive equipment and often violated patents. They resulted in costly, non-productive enterprises, mainly based on un-repayable foreign loans. Exports were handled only by central enterprises, under Party control. Enterprises did not have any real, first hand information about foreign conditions. Worst of all, in order to please the dictatorship, reports were falsified, by the addition of non-existent activities. These data were then used as starting points for new, even more unreal plans, and so on, in a vicious circle.

Agriculture was even worse. After the land of former owners was distributed free to the peasants in 1945, it was forcibly nationalized in the 1960s and the notoriously huge, kolkhoz-like cooperatives controlled agriculture almost entirely. These cooperatives did not own their own farming equipment. Here too control was in the hands of the State. Rural youngsters were enticed into industrial production. Consequently, the agrarian population was ageing, unskilled and badly paid. Management was chaotic. The cooperatives had major debts, due partly to lack of decisional power and partly to incompetent leadership. The crops, always insufficient, were exported and the population brought to the edge of famine.

In a crazy plan by Ceausescu for an even more extensive agriculture, villages were threatened with destruction. This plan envisaged the abolition of existing small and medium farms, with farmers removed from their homes and set up in block accommodation in concentrated areas, that is to say submitted to an unprecedented alienation.

Post-Communist Politics

After the overthrow of Communism, because of the atmosphere of freedom, many new political parties appeared. These enrolled a huge number of people from a diversity of occupations, who felt duty-bound to contribute. This trend was accompanied by two reactions. First, previously active Communists penetrated the new organizations *en masse*; secondly, those released from prison or returned from exile re-founded old parties, considering themselves alone entitled to lead Romania's new politics.

Post-Ceausescu parties fall into two, large classic categories. One group has an explicit left doctrine, such as the National Salvation Front (NSF), the National Unity Party of Romanians from Romania (NUPRR) and the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). On the right are so-called historical parties like the National Liberal Party (NLP), which resembles the British Conservatives and the National Peasant Christian Democratic Party (NPCDP), and also new parties such as the Civic Alliance Party (CAP). Very special is the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania (DUHR). This is not doctrine-based but an opportunistic union of the Hungarian minority. The 'Free Trade Unions' are not a political party either but interested only in advantages for their members.

Left-wing parties have a clear electorate. The whole society was in 1989 almost homogenous. What Communists called 'the working people,' meant everybody who worked. The DUHR's constituency is entirely Hungarian. The remaining electorate is a slender base divided among too many parties. So, different right-wing parties address very few people, those with a political culture. Both rural and urban groups lacking such a culture have retained instead certain utopian shibboleths from the Communist period. Choice of party is mostly guided by family tradition, or the charisma of Party leaders.

Political objectives are dominated by our old dream of Westernisation. Every party affirms the restoration of private property and a free market, the democratisation of social life and a departure from Russian influence replaced with a return to a European identity. The latter supposes the security of the country through adherence to NATO. All these aspirations were necessary conditions for entering the European Union. The only difference between parties concerns ways of achieving these goals. This is a crucial consideration, explaining almost all post-communist politics in Romania. However, the left-wing parties did not initially have all these aims. In 1990 the leader of the NSF (the main party) Ion Iliescu, proposed the simple idea of 'a Communist régime with a humane face'. This would maintain Communist power with a notional movement towards the free market. Later he spoke of a 'social market-economy,' an idea Gorbachev also expressed.

Fortunately, Romanians still had a few great old politicians, who, speaking through the free media, encouraged us to dare much more. International influence was also significant. With the borders opened Romanians could see the economic conditions of the West and real democracy, so they no longer accepted half-solutions. The dramatic changes also greatly constrained the Communists. Recently even senior former Communists have everywhere had to change their ideas or quit. In Poland a former Communist, President Aleksander Kwasniewski, has worked hard for his country to enter NATO and the EU. Similarly Russia's President Putin at least claims to pursue 'Western' democratic changes, an unthinkable thing before for a former KGB chief.

Economic Management

A veritable mania for affluence has perverted the nation's purposes. Nobody asks how wealth accumulates. Acquiring it has been seen as all that counted. Whatever their orientation, members of the political class have been increasingly accused of corruption. Unsurprisingly, then, privatisation is delayed and corruption remains immense. Only this year Parliament issued a law requiring politicians and state dignitaries to declare their wealth holdings, at their election or nomination, and on leaving office.

Under Communism people were told that industry must be built on everybody's resources, because property belonged to 'the people.' If this really was the status of industry, how could it be privatised? The question was theoretically and practically cogent. During the late Ceausescu years at least 30 per cent of every industrial company's assets was forcibly 'bought' by their employees. This was because Ceausescu, short of operating funds, because of his megalomaniac projects, sought employees' money to finance industry, and simultaneously to attach employees to their companies. This increased the dissatisfaction of industrial workers, because, despite extreme poverty, they had to contribute, for several years, a large further part of their earnings.

In 1990 the Provisional Government made the first step in privatisation of state-owned companies. It encouraged them to learn to run themselves. It also returned in cash the value of the above-mentioned 30 per cent of assets to employees. Given the terrible poverty, this was at first hugely popular and the National Salvation Front acquired great political capital. Only rarely, however, did the return of these funds promote private business.

The situation was disastrous. First, companies remained without operating funds and had necessarily to borrow from banks. Secondly, the lack of managerial experience, decisions no longer coming from 'above', led to an accumulation of unsold products, largely financed by this borrowing. Exports declined, the Romanian Lei depreciated and inflation accelerated. Thirdly, because of the galloping inflation, banks increased their interest rates and most enterprises incurred debts, while operating funds diminished drastically. Fourthly, unable again to produce or repay, industry contracted drastically, increasing inflation even further. To free up the situation the state had to deplete public reserves. Finally, incomes devalued very fast. The population was effectively without property or income and dependent on the state. This was the most disastrous policy *impasse* of post-Communist Romania. In fact real privatisation in industry began only after the 1992 ballot.

In agriculture the privatisation of land began spontaneously. In many places farmers took back their land and distributed the livestock, effectively dissolving the Cooperatives. Sometimes, in the climate of revenge, instead of being revalued and distributed, assets were completely destroyed. Later Parliament decided to return

the land to its former owners but at 50 hectares only per family. So local committees were set up. Even now these have not all accomplished their tasks. To return woodlands to their owners a new law had to be adopted much later. Even so, overall, agriculture is now privatised.

Human Rights and the Rule of Law

In 1990-1992 a new Constitution was adopted by referendum. We also suffered two marches on Bucharest by the miners, both Communist inspired, first in 1990, when President Iliescu and Prime Minister Roman adopted a stance of anti-anti-Communism, perhaps in imitation of those many Marxisant voices in the West which affect to this very day to find something of worth in the Communist ideal. The second occasion was in 1992, when Iliescu wanted to get rid of the Roman government. Each time the miners acted like vandals, killing several people and injuring many. Outrageously, no trials were organized and nobody convicted. Nor, at this time, did we deal with those guilty of murder during the 'Revolution.' So the policy of pursuing 'democracy and the rule of law,' proceeded very unsatisfactorily.

In 1992, in the first free ballot, the left-wing party, the Party of Social Democracy of Romania (PSDR), got the most support and headed up a coalition government. The country was extremely badly managed, privatisation progressed slowly, the parties playing on mass sympathy, by sustaining dying industries on public money. The new government made the second step to privatisation. All state-owned firms were converted to share-based private ownership. Thirty per cent of shares were given free to the population. The other seventy per cent remained state property. Free enterprise flourished, but only small or medium companies were founded. Later on, many vanished because of high taxes, imposed to secure state revenues and to sustain inefficient industrial 'dinosaurs'. Privatisation of the 70 per cent of shares owned by the state remained slow owing to unstable laws and regulations. This explains why foreign investors have not been attracted to Romania and why incoming investment has been lower than in other post-Communist societies. The country was disastrously managed, poverty became worse and corruption became manifest.

Foreign Issues

Nevertheless, between 1992-1996, Romania was successful in foreign policy. It was the first East European country to adhere to the concept and practice of NATO-Partnership, aiming to achieve full membership. Despite losses of more than three billion US Dollars, Romania respected the blockade on Yugoslavia during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, expressing clearly its solidarity with international peacekeeping. All political parties supported joining NATO. This agreement is institutionalised now. The signing of the historic Treaty of Peace

with Hungary was also important, along with plans for Treaties with Ukraine and Russia. Romania became a force for regional stability.

In 1996 came elections involving the first democratic ideological alternation in power. The coalition party, the Democratic Convention, and other assorted parties, formed a new governing coalition which controlled the Parliament. There was also a vigorous opposition. Unfortunately, the differences between political doctrines, and an unwise division of powers between the governing parties, produced chaos in central and local administration. The middle class situation stagnated, the population got even poorer and unemployment soared. The Trade Unions, cleverly manipulated by the left, organized huge popular discontent.

Privatisation progressed, though insufficiently, amid allegations of fraud in the mass media. Economic data stabilised somewhat, but electoral promises of 'first hundred day improvements' proved empty. Inflation raged. No progress was made over the murders of December 1989. The miners marched again through Bucharest amid fears of a coup d'état. The government's crisis management was egregiously bad because the Right did not keep their promises. A former dissident, the poet, Mircea Dinescu, memorably pronounced: 'I do not care if those who administer the country are or are not former political prisoners, they have to do it properly.' This opinion summarized popular discontent and disillusion. Nevertheless, Romanian specialists, together with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, drafted a blueprint for economic improvement in

Communists seem to be more efficient than others in transforming the country. Is this simply because some of them later became big owners? Is their cooperation an unpleasant price for development Romanians may simply have to accept?

Romania and the necessary steps for entering NATO and the EU. The general election of 2000 saw a shift from right to left but demonstrated Romania's improved democratic stability. The right-wing parties were now a weak and heterogeneous opposition

Abroad Romania did well. In 1997 came the first visit by an American President, Bill Clinton. He urged democratic change and suggested Romania would be accepted by NATO. From 1996 to 2000, Romania participated in many humanitarian actions with NATO or UN troops, showing its soundness as a military partner. The Peace Treaty with Hungary was ratified and similar ones with Ukraine and Bulgaria. The Pope visited the Head of the Orthodox Church of Romania, Patriarch Teoctist, pointing the way to future reconciliation.

These efforts had positive results for Romanians. In January 2002 Romanians were exempted from EU visa requirements. Romania occupied in 2002 the presidency of the Organization of Cooperation and Security in Europe, a very important office, demonstrating our competence for managing international conflicts. Romanian troops participated in military joint actions in Afghanistan

acting as a *de facto* member of NATO; and the list could continue here.

It is unsurprising, then, that Romania was invited to join NATO. We have a long way to go before becoming a true free-market economy and fulfilling all the exigencies for joining the EU. The Romanian public mentality must change, the quality of local and central administration must improve, corruption must be eliminated and national economic performance must be raised. These are only a few particular goals for the future.

Romania is retarded by the crude legacy of Communism before 1989, by the slow tempo of privatisation, by obdurate mentalities, by corruption and inefficiency. Almost all these reasons are open to political explanations, namely the particular prevailing group or party interests. When Romanians unite, however, the

results are praiseworthy. It is also clear that the difference between left and right parties is not as great as often assumed. These differences may deepen when Romania becomes a real free-market economy and an efficient democracy. The greatest and most bitter irony is that the former Communists seem to be more efficient than others in transforming the country. Is this simply because some of them later became big owners? Is their cooperation an unpleasant price for development Romanians may simply have to accept? Must we settle for a phase of history which began with the exoneration of senior Communists and now continues with their prosperity?

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Christie Davies

While I was in Ethiopia earlier this year, the Ethiopian newspapers were still indignant because a Nigerian journalist on learning that a famine was imminent in Ethiopia had written in English that Ethiopia was an embarrassment to Africa. The Ethiopians replied angrily that they alone unlike the Nigerians had heroically repulsed the European colonial powers. British progressives reacted to the same news of famine with an attack on Nestlé for pursuing a claim for compensation against the Ethiopian government for property confiscated during the time of the Soviet supported communist dictatorship of Mengistu. Such a claim was they said 'obscene'. Why seeking legally to defend the rights of those on meagre pensions funded by holdings of shares in Nestlé against a rapacious African political elite should be associated with sexual indecency is difficult to say.

In truth the Ethiopians are neither shameful nor heroic. Famines are normal in independent Africa. I am not saying that they are desirable nor that they should not be prevented, merely that they happen all the time, rather like crime in Blunkett's England. Unless it is prevented by the violent overthrow of Robert Mugabe there will soon be a monster famine in Zimbabwe, something that would have been impossible in a self-sufficient, indeed food-exporting, Rhodesia. It has nothing to do with drought. Droughts cause temporary food shortages which are offset by food imports paid for by commercial exports or by borrowing by the credit worthy. They also lead to the adoption of different farming techniques and patterns of production so that crop failure becomes less likely in the future. In the

twentieth century famines in peace-time are not caused by drought but by political oppression and incompetence. That is why they are to be found in Africa. The pre-colonial history of Africa was also one of famine due to primitive agricultural techniques, lack of storage facilities and an absence of roads and railways along which to transport food and any kind of administrative organization. Only European colonialization provided for the first time the means to combat famine. The Ethiopians were unlucky in that the Italians occupied their country for only five years in the late 1930s before being thrown out by the British army during World War II. During that time the Italians built fine military roads across the length and breadth of Ethiopia in the manner of the former Roman rulers of Britain. Even more important the Italians provided training in road building and maintenance and in motor mechanics for the local people. The Italians may not have been much use as soldiers but they did build good roads. Their lorries ran on time. If they had stayed longer and covered Ethiopia with autostrade, it would much easier to relieve local famines today.

However, Ethiopia became independent again when the British army left at the end of the war (due to strong pressure from the United States) and there were more famines notably in Tigray in 1958 and in Wollo in 1966. It was considered impolite to say anything since Ethiopia was the oldest of Africa's independent countries. It was more fashionable to write about malnutrition in the Northern Transvaal that could be blamed on the Afrikaners than to undermine the image of an independent African government by pointing out that its citizens

were starving to death. Besides reporters and researchers could travel more freely in South Africa and the hotels had better air-conditioning and a wider range of alcoholic drinks.

In 1973-4, however, there was a major famine in Ethiopia that was widely shown on British television and accordingly called 'The unknown famine'. Photographs of starving children on British and American television led to a well-documented outbreak of 'Ethiopian jokes' about the effects of famine among Britain and America's heartless and hard-bitten teenagers and young people much like the jokes they had told earlier about Biafra and were to do later about Eritrea. Such are the consequences of television. Within Ethiopia itself these pictures were often juxtaposed with those of the Emperor Haile Selassie, his family and his entourage enjoying luxurious banquets and picnics; left-wing opinion in Britain may well have termed the Emperor's indulgence on these occasions 'obscene' in a knee-jerk kind of way. It would, of course, have been very much a racist epithet for the little emperor was at the time still a hero to liberated black people everywhere. There is still a portrait of the Emperor Haile Selassie on a huge mural next to the inner ring road of one of Britain's leading towns; so far as I know it has never been defaced by a Guardian reader spraying 'obscene' across it in protest against famine.

In the late 1970s, Marxism-Leninism was still somewhat more powerful among the British progressive elite than black history and so there were few protests when the Emperor was deposed and he and his family murdered and replaced by a Soviet-backed Communist dictatorship. No-one noticed that a genuinely indigeneous African leader had been swept aside and killed to make room for a crackpot ideology invented by one European in London and rendered even more vicious by another European in Krakow and subsequently Zurich, or that Ethiopia had become militarily dependant on Russia, the last major European colonial power. The Russians, of course, had great experience in dealing with famine. They had deliberately caused one in the 1930s through their programme of the forced collectivization of agriculture which led to many millions of deaths. A large part of these occurred in the Ukraine, a country with as much right to self-rule as Ethiopia. The new Communist state was led by Mengistu (Haile Mariam) the chairman of the 'derg', the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces. Much of the land was now nationalized and turned into inefficient state farms that received a veritable lion of Judah's share of the capital resources controlled by the central planners. Student radicals from the cities supervised other land reforms and the existing and pioneering efficient truck farms were suppressed. The peasants were forced to work unpaid on state projects and compelled to leave their scattered homesteads and be forcibly resettled in villages, ostensibly so that they could more easily be provided with government facilities. (Much the same had been done earlier in Tanzania by that saintly socialist

Julius Nyerere with finance and encouragement from progressive Western governments. Nyerere later said he was shocked to discover how it had been done and with what consequences. He was either a fool or a liar. Unsurprisingly Tanzania remains poor and backward). The real reason was better to control and exploit the tillers of the soil in true socialist fashion. The peasants were forced to deliver up quotas of agricultural produce to the government at prices set well below those that could be commanded in the market place. Agricultural production fell steadily year after year while the population continued to rise at three per cent per annum.

Predictably there was a famine in 1984 far worse than the one that had triggered the revolution; it was a truly socialist famine with 10,000 people dying every week. It has been well-described by Myles Harris in his excellent account *Breakfast in Hell*. The socialist leadership ignored the famine and lavishly celebrated the tenth anniversary of the revolution. British progressives do not appear to have regarded the celebrations as obscene. Milovan Djilas who had attended Soviet banquets would have appreciated the irony of this. There was no food aid forthcoming from the regime's sponsors in Eastern Europe who in fairness had no food surplus themselves. They sent tanks instead, the wreckage of which still litters the Ethiopian countryside. In the end the famine was alleviated by food aid from the west which made the donors feel good, gave publicity to sundry entertainers and helped to provide a justification for the subsidised over-production of food in the E.U. and North America, (a phenomenon also responsible for much of the poverty in poor countries dependant on agricultural exports). In this respect the outcome was not as bad as it had been during the famines in the Ukraine and in Maoist China, the news of which was suppressed by a combination of a more effective socialist control of information at home and a deliberate lack of curiosity and indignation among progressive opinion abroad. Socialist famines don't count. When academic economists analyse the causes of famine, they do not even mention them. Nonetheless it is striking that those who campaigned and organised for famine relief at the time were able neither accurately to diagnose the socialist causes of the famine nor willing to demand the social, political and economic reforms necessary to prevent its being repeated. When Mengistu fell in 1988, it was only because his Soviet communist sponsors withdrew their assistance. Predictably he fled to his spiritual home in Zimbabwe. No doubt he subsequently advised Mugabe on how to bring about starvation in Zimbabwe.

The present chronic malnutrition in Ethiopia that periodically slides towards famine calling for yet more western aid stems partly from the present regime's unwillingness to undertake truly radical capitalist reforms and partly from the continued rapid growth of the population. The population has doubled in size since the severe famine of 1984 and is now probably over

sixty-five million. By 2050 Ethiopia's population will be 186.5 million people and only Western and by then Chinese food and medical aid will prevent a Malthusian catastrophe. It is though unfair for the Nigerians to describe Ethiopia as a source of shame for Africa. It remains the most African of African countries. It is not their fault that they lack the advantages enjoyed by the Nigerians, namely a long period of British colonial rule and oil fields demanding exploitation by multi-national corporations.

It was largely chance not heroism that the Ethiopians avoided European colonial rule in the late nineteenth century during the 'scramble for Africa'. Had the Egyptians who for long controlled parts of Eritrea not run into difficulties in the Sudan they might well have expanded into Ethiopia and their British sponsors would soon have taken charge and ruled the country through their Blues. As it was the Italians moved in and in 1895 tried to establish a protectorate but were defeated by the Ethiopians at Adowa in 1896 and decided to withdraw. The victory at Adowa has ever since been a matter for celebration by talented Ethiopian artists who depict the defeated pith-helmeted Italians vividly down to their bad teeth. The 'otherness' of the Italians is often shown by their faces, teeth and all, being shown only in profile whereas the Italian army's much more numerous Eritrean troops are shown full-face. Adowa was not really a great victory. After all everyone defeats the Italians. The Ethiopians had an army of 100,000 men, the Italians only 20,000, more than half of them Eritreans drawn from Ethiopia's traditional African adversary. The Italian general on the spot was in fact fighting a winning campaign until the government in Rome demanded a quick and splendid victory with lots of exotic prisoners to be paraded in triumph through the streets of the capital. Some things never change. Most colonial powers would have sent in reinforcements as the British (victors over the Ethiopians at Magdala) did in the Sudan against the Mahdi, but the Italians were engulfed in one of their periodic financial crises. Ethiopian independence was achieved by a debt-crisis in third-world Italy. Wars are won by those with good credit ratings.

Besides the Ethiopians were themselves imperialists who not only coveted and probed Italian-held Eritrea and Somalia but slices of the Sudan and Kenya as well, areas occupied by people's with quite different identities and traditions from themselves. When Ethiopia applied with Italian support to join the League of Nations after World

War I, the application was opposed by the British government because of the continued existence of slavery in Ethiopia, an institution which the British had dedicated themselves to suppressing. Indeed anti-slavery was the driving force behind a good deal of British colonial expansion in Africa, much to the disgust of the Arabs for whom slave-trading in black people was a valued and profitable tradition. In the case of the Ethiopians what particularly annoyed the British was their insistence on carrying out slave raids across the border into territories administered by the British, notably the Sudan. It is hardly a story that should make them heroes in the eyes of black people living in Britain or the United States. At least the Nigerians have the excuse that they too are the descendants of slave-traders.



Eventually of course, the Italians under their great war-leader Mussolini did conquer Ethiopia (with great brutality and some notable religious persecution); this time victory was achieved because the women of Italy exchanged their gold wedding rings for ones made of base metal and safe-guarded Italy's financial stability by donating the gold to the government. Ironically it broke the League of Nations, the main forum for the criticism of Ethiopian slavery, and led to Germany's defeat in World War II. Had the Germans not had the support of an Italian government alienated by Anglo-French criticism of Italy's Ethiopian adventure, they would probably have won the war. No Italian alliance,

no Greece, no Yugoslavia, no North Africa, no British naval blockade and Germany wins. There is a moral there somewhere but it is difficult to know quite what it is.

However, the Ethiopians are African heroes; not because they beat the Italians but because they defended the continent against Muslim invasion and kept alive an ancient and indigenous branch of the Christian faith and a tradition of royal descent from Israel's King Solomon. We can indeed revere the Lions of Judah. They are heroes in the tradition of Charles Martel, Sobieski, Don John of Austria and the Knights of Malta.

Christie Davies has travelled extensively in Africa over many years. His work on the plight of the East African Asians has been published in India and the tape recordings he made in Africa have been deposited in the British Library.

Note: Myles Harris, *Breakfast in Hell, a Doctor's experiences of the Ethiopian Famine*, London: Pan (Picador), 1986.

Allied and Axis responses to the outcome of World War Two appear to justify paraphrasing the opening sentence of *Anna Karenina*: namely that in war all victorious nations resemble one another, whereas the defeated bear the burden in different ways.

Britain had a good Second World War. Under the hammer blows of failure (Saint-Valéry, Tobruk, Dieppe and Singapore), muddle eventually evolved into solid professionalism. Dragged from isolationist tendencies by the attack on Pearl Harbour, America in 1945 could also look back on a job well done. Across the English Channel, Gaullist propaganda based on the myths of self-liberation and universal resistance to German occupation tried to turn the French into one of the victors, ignoring Vichy and the shameful and enthusiastic collusion of French officialdom with Eichmann's genocide. In Germany the noble and determined efforts made by politicians on both the left and right to face up to the Nazi past have unfortunately created a psychological terror as nasty as anything imposed by Goebbels. At all levels in the education system and the national media Germans are relentlessly brainwashed to believe that Hitler was the greatest mass murderer of the twentieth century (a good example of Hitler's Big Lie at work). That Günter Grass's recent novel – *Im Krebsgang* (2002) which deals with the theme of Germans as victims – has proved to be a taboo-breaker is testament to the power of the politically correct orthodoxy that has dominated Germany since 1945. The willingness of so many Germans to engage in endless self-flagellation and to think in ways determined by officialdom is as intellectually abnormal as French bombast about resistance to Nazi occupation and self-liberation. Japan demonstrates another side of intellectual abnormality in defeat. The rape of Nanking is brushed aside as if it was an example of Western lying and the poisonous myth is fostered that Japan was somehow the victim of aggression in the Pacific rather than a prime cause. As Harry Guest has noted: 'Of war guilt there seems to have been hardly a trace.'

One of the three victors of 1945, Russia in so many ways resembles one of the losers: millions of soldiers and civilians killed; vast areas laid waste; and as Vasily Grossman pointed out in his Stalingrad epic, *Life and Fate*, the huge sacrifices prolonged the Stalinist terror in the Soviet Union and exported it, under the guise of 'liberation', to Central and Eastern Europe where it survived until 1989. Again, the industrial scale of party-

sponsored myth-making about the war is consistent with the Soviet Union's behaving like one of the war's losers not one of its victors.

Myth-making on that scale was not possible without censorship and, indeed, censorship was a vital building block of the Soviet terror apparatus. It compounded and prolonged the grief and agony of the war by denying and suppressing the truth. Soviet Russian writers, such as Viktor Astaf'ev, Grigorii Baklanov, Vasil' Bykov, Vasily Grossman, Anatolii Kuznetsov, Viktor Nekrasov and Emmanuil' Kazakevich, who tried to challenge official myths, suffered the full weight of the censorship mechanism which was only officially abolished in August 1990. One notorious example was the 'arrest' of Grossman's typescript of *Life and Fate* in 1961 by the KGB. In an interview with Mikhail Suslov, the party's chief ideologue, Grossman was informed that publication would be out of the question for at least 250 years. (*Life and Fate* was first published in the Soviet Union in 1988). That the Soviet censorship regime lasted for so long is one factor that accounts for the Russian obsession with the war. Censorship made a minority of writers determined to reject the party's organised lying so that they might find and preserve the truth. Four war novels published in the period leading up to the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War Two in 1995 can be seen as an attempt to draw a line under the 1941-1945 war which in the West (with the exception of Germany) would have happened long before 1991. The four novels in question – Viktor Astaf'ev's *The Damned and the Dead* (1992-1994), Vasil' Bykov's *The Great Freeze* (1993), Georgii Vladimov's *The General and his Army* (1994) and Vladimir But's, *Heads – Tails* (1995) – are all worthy successors to some of these authors' earlier pioneering work.

All Bykov's major works – *The Third Rocket* (1962), *The Dead feel no Pain* (1966), *Sotnikov* (1970), *The Obelisk* (1972), *The Wolf Pack* (1975), *The Sign of Disaster* (1983) and, most recently, *The Great Freeze* – reflect his obsession with the moral extremes and choices of war, especially those made during the German occupation of the author's native Belorussia.

The Great Freeze concentrates on a communist partisan, Azevich, the lone survivor of his group who is trying to evade capture. Pursued by the Germans, weakened by an acute bout of pneumonia, which has just killed the group's commissar, and unable to trust the

local population, his own people, Azevich wanders across the winter countryside, trying to find what shelter and succour he can. Terrain and weather both conspire against him as well. Bykov's story inspires the same atmosphere of menace as Angelo Jank's sinister winter painting, *Der Tod im Baum*. In a number of flashbacks which occur in dreams induced by bouts of fever, Azevich recalls collectivization and the attempt by the party activists, including himself, to destroy the old rural way of life in the 1930s.

The Azevich of the 1930s is a simple farm lad who is seduced by the promises of communism. Appointed as the coach driver of a local communist official, he witnesses the attempts by the party to cajole and eventually to terrorise the peasants into accepting the collective farm. The arrests begin and various 'enemies of the people' start to disappear. As his moral and intellectual corruption progresses, Azevich's mother and father sense that their son has joined the ranks of the enemy. Once in the party, Azevich fully participates in the systematic destruction of rural life, the symbol and substance of which is the village millstone. Destroying millstones is far more than the state's preventing the independent milling and baking of bread, so forcing dependence on the collective farm; it is above all an attack on the old customs of the village, the arrival of a brutal and ruthless modernity. That Azevich actively cooperates in this Satanic vandalism compromises him – he destroys the millstones in his own village – and chains him to the party, the real 'enemy of the people'.

Azevich's eventual survival and the death of the commissar at the start of *The Great Freeze* are symbolically linked as Bykov explores the impact of collectivization on Belorussia during the 1930s and the way in which it made collaboration with the German invader all the easier for those who hated the Bolsheviks. Those same Bolsheviks who pushed through the party's policies in the 1930s now find themselves outcasts under German occupation. In a sense they are victims of policies they inflicted on their people in the 1930s. The commissar's death from pneumonia and Azevich's own descent into exhaustion and the threat of death can be seen as punishment for their moral and cultural betrayal of their native Belorussia. Thanks to the bread and water provided by a chance meeting with a peasant woman Azevich survives. The path from physical prostration and near death to improved health is perhaps complete when at the end of the story he crosses himself. Having abandoned God as a communist, Azevich, the reborn Belorussian, as it were, rediscovers Him. He has cast off the incubus of godless communism and returned to his people.

An apocalyptic vision of Russia's dying overshadows *The Damned and the Dead*. With its painstakingly

detailed scenes of horrific violence and disease and the author's cogitations on the end of the world, the novel is not for the faint of heart. Written in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse and with the knowledge of Russia's demographic decline, the novel explores one of Astaf'ev's deepest fears, namely that the Russian nation, exhausted and broken by communism, will perish. The war novel *per se* begins in Siberian training camps. The time is late 1942. The Battle of Stalingrad is nearing its climax. In Book Two, *The Beachhead*, we encounter many of the same recruits as they are about to cross a major river. The river is crossed under heavy fire with massive loss of life (The forcing of the river and the ensuing bloodbath bear an uncanny resemblance with the opening scenes of Bloody Omaha's capture in *Saving Private Ryan*). There follows a ferocious battle to gain and to retain the beachhead. After much mutual slaughter the Germans are forced to retreat. The westward advance of the Red Army continues.

One of Astaf'ev's main themes is the stupefying cruelty and indifference of Soviet military commanders towards their own troops both in training and in combat. From the manner of their arrival and treatment in the training camps, very little separates one day in the life of a Soviet recruit from that endured by the *zeks* (slang for political prisoners). In Astaf'ev's parallel universe the recruits live in squalor, and in the struggle to secure even the most basic creature comforts – extra food, an upper bunk or a place close to the stove – it is everyone for himself. Some will prosper, some will succumb. The same brutal induction process can be seen in

James Clavell's *King Rat* (1962), an account of life in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp: 'For the men, Changi was more than a prison. Changi was genesis, the place of beginning.' Astaf'ev's use of camp slang, *dokhodiaga* or *goner*, to describe soldiers who, crushed by the conditions, have lost all will to live, is another conspicuous parallel with the *zeks*. The way the *goners*, hapless young soldiers, are treated by their fellows marks a further spiral downwards into bestiality, a coarsening of spirit and behaviour. The weaker they are, the more they are beaten. Many of Astaf'ev's soldiers remain aloof from the ritual barbarism of the training camp and are truly inspiring characters. Their survival imperatives are not merely biological. They resist the beast in their own hearts, not succumbing to the gratification of violence.

That many of Astaf'ev's soldiers profess Old Belief or come from regions of Siberia where there are many adherents to Old Belief and, additionally, that they are the source of much trenchant opposition to the Soviet state and its organised lying, strikes one from the very outset as significant for interpreting *The Damned and the Dead*. The Old Believers' rejection of the Russian state

Censorship made a minority of writers determined to reject the party's organised lying so that they might find and preserve the truth. Four war novels published in the period leading up to the fiftieth anniversary in 1995 can be seen as an attempt to draw a line under the 1941-1945 war.

in the 1650s as having sold out to the Antichrist (the reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon) is offered as an allegory of Russia's succumbing to the twentieth-century's Antichrist, communism.

Astaf'ev's obsession with the spiritual, physical theme of bread reveals most fully the nature of the plague that has ravaged Russia in the twentieth century. There was, Astaf'ev suggests, a time when the tiller of the soil ploughed the land, 'thinking his thoughts of the land and God'. Far worse than 'the wild and half-wild tribes' who plundered Russia's lands from the east like a steppe fire from out of which new life emerged were Russia's twentieth-century enemies. They have proved far more dangerous because they have 'humiliated history and reason'. The revolutionaries have taught men to forget their past, to worship the false gods of 'progressive ideas'. Astaf'ev echoes the warning given by Paul in his epistle to the

Colossians: 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ' (*Colossians*, 2:8). The revolutionaries bring a different type of fire, a fire that destroys men's minds, that sends them mad. And it is not just Russia that suffered from this

disease of the mind and soul: it is universal. Communism, the creed of the godless, destroys the peasant's link with the land and so he loses the meaning of his existence, sinking into vice. The Terror Famine with millions of dead, dispossessed and damned is the work of the devil.

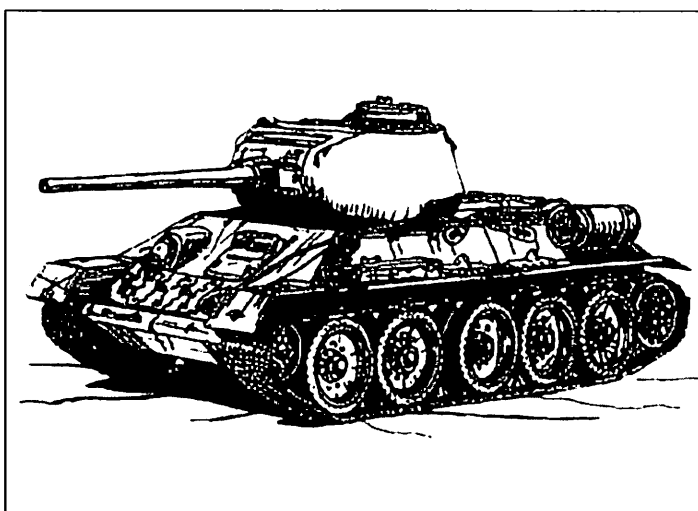
Collaboration is the main theme of *The General and His Army* and Georgii Vladimov deals specifically with the fate of Andrei Vlasov, the Soviet general who collaborated with the Germans. The novel is, though, far more than just an exploration of the theme of political loyalty. It explores the much deeper questions of love of country and the nature of reciprocal obligations, not just in the context of war but also in the wider and unique context of Soviet Russia, with the memories of the Terror Famine and the Stalinist purges. The German invasion of the Soviet Union exposed a lack of allegiance on the part of large numbers of Soviet citizens towards their leaders which has no parallel in the history of war. Even with the obvious advantages of vast spaces and strategic hinterland, limitless human and material resources, this lack of allegiance very nearly proved catastrophic for the Soviet Union. Martin Malia is quite correct to argue that: 'if the Soviet Union had been a country the size of

France, or even several times the size of France, the Soviet experiment would in fact have ended in 1941'.

Vladimov is by no means the first Russian writer to have taken up the Vlasov case. The whole question of mutual loyalty in the conditions of the Stalin state receives a searching examination in the first volume of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* (chapter 6, 'That Spring'). Solzhenitsyn condemns the Soviet High Commands's abandoning of Vlasov's Second Shock Army after the attempt to lift the blockade of Leningrad had failed. Stalin, Solzhenitsyn argues, was the architect of this and other disasters and was himself guilty of treachery. Solzhenitsyn defends Vlasov's men, arguing that they had been driven to do what they did by a regime which demanded total uncompromising loyalty yet treated its soldiers and citizens as disposable commodities, as raw material to be expended. The desperate plight of these

Russian soldiers, faced with starvation and death from slave labour or the chance of survival in German uniform, is something quite unique in the annals of warfare, as Solzhenitsyn asserts.

The war against the Germans is straightforward. It is the civil war, covert and overt, explicit and tacit, and utterly pitiless, being prosecuted by Russians against



Russians, with the Russian-German war's being the backdrop, that Vladimov wants us to follow. As Marshall Nikolai Vatutin, who appears in the novel, and who himself will die from the bullet of a Ukrainian separatist, poignantly notes: 'We fight our own more than we do the Germans. Were we not fighting each other, we would have been in Berlin long ago'. Herein lies the terrible tragedy, the moral apocalypse, that has wrought such devastation on Russia and which, in the words of Solzhenitsyn, perhaps its greatest interpreter, '... revealed to us that the worst thing in the world was to be a Russian.'

This ideological civil war is prosecuted by the representatives of the NKVD, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and SMERSH, the counter-intelligence service (the SMERSH acronym is formed from the Russian, Death to Spies). Major Svetlookov, the SMERSH officer, is one of Russia's demonic tormentors. He is the symbol and substance of the nation-killer, the corrupter of loyalty and friendship, the zealous protector and promoter of party interest, the destroyer of heresy and its bearers. He is a familiar type in much Soviet Russian war literature: the cynical and ruthless bureaucrat cum-murderer, securing his own self-interest on the backs of others. As befits his occupation, his

machinations are everywhere. He is the party's witch-finder general, who seeks to root out all heresies. It is not enough for the Soviet state to own the bodies of its citizens. Consistent with the Leninist origins of political correctness, the state wants their minds. Ever fearful that the compliant masses simulate devotion, the state, personified by Svetlookov, must compel devotion by unimaginable cruelty.

While it must be stressed that all the belligerent nations of World War Two have had to confront the problem of collaboration (even Britain), it was nowhere near on the same scale as in Soviet Russia. Those who remained loyal to Stalin and the Soviet state, and have dreadful memories of Nazi occupation, are repelled by a novel that can defend Vlasov and offer a sympathetic portrayal of the German general, Heinz Guderian. The fact that Vladimov's novel won the Russian Booker Prize in 1995 is also seen as another attempt on the part of liberal Russians to denigrate and thus to destroy Mother Russia. Yet Vladimov's detractors seem oblivious to the consequences of Stalin's Final Solution of the Peasant Question in which some 11,000,000 peasants were exterminated and the horrors of the Great Terror which followed on. The harsh question that Vladimov raises, and which his critics fail to answer, is why should the citizens of the former Soviet Union, or any state for that matter, whose leaders ordered the murder, torture, starvation and imprisonment of their mothers, husbands, sons and daughters in the millions *not reject* their tormentors and seek help wherever they can even from an invader? Talk of betrayal here is evasion, a failure to face up to what Stalin was doing. Moreover, when so many rejected the Soviet state on a scale from open armed defiance to hostile indifference and passivity, it calls into question the intellectual and moral sense of those who remained 'loyal'. What does it mean to remain loyal to a monster like Stalin in such circumstances? And in 2003 the question still means something when so many Russian remember Stalin with affection.

Set in the late autumn of 1943, *Heads – Tails* chronicles the disastrous Soviet attempt to secure and to hold a bridgehead on the Crimean coast. In the aftermath of the first landing attempt it emerges that many of the survivors are *shtrafniki*, members of a penal unit. In the confusion of the landing, ordinary soldiers are mixed in with them, a suggestion from But that in one sense they are all penal troops. Death does not discriminate between the two categories and so the distinction and the stigma breaks down. Soviet audiences and readers had to wait until the late Gorbachev years before anything like an open discussion of the role of penal troops was possible. The ice-breaker was Lev Danilov's documentary, *Shtrafniki*, shown in 1990. In a subsequent article on the film and the wider question concerning the use of penal troops, Vyacheslav Kondrat'ev conceded that harsh disciplinary measures were probably necessary in the summer of 1942 (a reference here to Stalin's 'not-a-step-backwards' decree) but that this exacerbated the war's

inherent brutality, creating plenty of leeway for the professional sadists to exploit a dire military situation. Kondrat'ev's article drew a furious response from a number of senior officers. Danilov's film, they insisted, was of the same order of lying and propaganda which characterised a Goebbels production. The generals were particularly sensitive to the ratio of Soviet to German dead cited by Kondrat'ev, since the discrepancy suggested further military incompetence on the part of the Soviet high command.

And indeed it is the competence of the Soviet officer corps with its baggage of ideological functionaries that constitutes the main theme of *Heads – Tails*. But seems to suggest – the dreadful moral and psychological pressures applied by the party apparatus notwithstanding – that army commanders cannot entirely evade responsibility for decision-making, even under the conditions that obtained in the Red Army. As the commander demands that sacrifice of blood and life from his men in carrying out their mission, so the willingness of the men to lay down their lives imposes a reciprocal burden on the commander to sacrifice himself as well. In essence this means the commander's willingness to refuse to carry out orders which he as a senior and experienced officer knows and judges to be criminally negligent and irresponsible, and to accept the consequences. The chain of command which stretches from Colonel Selivanov, But's *honnête homme*, to Stalin is not based on professional military considerations. Its links are made through fear and the destruction of military judgement. These links are only as strong as the fear which they inspire is able to overpower the professional judgement of its officers. The commander who refuses to be intimidated and breaks ranks, weakens the authority of the party apparatus, the spell of Stalin. Although the clash between political and military considerations assumes a grotesque form in the Stalin state, it was by no means confined to the Soviet political and military establishments. Hitler frequently interfered in military decision-making, often with disastrous consequences, and Alan Clark's *The Donkeys* (1961) is an unbearably painful catalogue of military incompetence and stupidity on the part of senior British officers.

The final twist – one of a number in But's expertly crafted novel – concerns the behaviour of the Soviet bridgehead commander, Selivanov. Disgusted by the senseless waste of life and by the fact that they have effectively been abandoned to their fate by the Soviet High Command, he decides, should he make it back, to tell his superiors what really happened. At the very moment when he is about to launch what we have been led to believe will be a blistering, Solzhenitsyn-like tirade, he learns that he has been promoted to general. He succumbs to the temptation to say nothing, trying to persuade his conscience that as a general he will be better placed to influence events and save lives, when all his own painful experience overwhelmingly suggests otherwise. Vanity and fear, expertly manipulated by the

party, have triumphed.

While adding substantially to the memoirs and literature of the Russo-German war, Astaf'ev, Bykov and Vladimov, and to a lesser extent But, are also dealing with the question of national identity. Nearly sixty years after the guns have fallen silent there seems to be less certainty and confidence about Russia's future than when the war was being fought. In a foreword, added to the book edition of part one of *The Damned and the Dead*, Astaf'ev, ever a loyal son of Russia, agonized over the fate of his country:

Oh Motherland of mine!, Oh, life!, Oh, people of mine! What are you? What more must be done so that you recover your sight, that you be resurrected, so that you do not fall into oblivion, so that you do not cease to exist? And if you still exist, my people, then perhaps you will heed the prophetic words of a modern, persecuted poet: 'And perhaps, through the torments of hell, across all its bloody paths, you will understand that no one must be blindly believed and that the lie must not be cited as the truth'.

This echoes Solzhenitsyn's eleventh commandment that man shall not live by the Lie. It is an honourable

creed for those who struggled against communist party lies and tyranny so that at least some of the truth about Russia's Great Fatherland War might be heard.

Finally, the thoughts of Russian writers on the fate of their country are not solely a question of interest for those of us who study the war on the Eastern front. For the same hostile forces, internal and external, that inflicted such misery on Russia – Internationalism, National Socialism and communism – have not perished. They have mutated into a new and virulent form of supranational corporatism. Those who want to compel Britain to complete the final act of abandoning her independence and sovereignty are heirs to the same ugly tradition of Mosley, Vichy, Quisling and the would-be traitors in Britain who wanted to come to some kind of arrangement with Hitler. If their machinations are successful then the same questions of loyalty, mutual obligations, moral, intellectual and cultural legitimacy and, as a consequence, the same considerations of whether to engage in armed defiance, insurrection, civil disobedience and assertion of nationhood will also arise for Britons.

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CONSERVATIVE SPORT

Lincoln Allison

Has there been a distinctively conservative (or Conservative) approach to sport? And should there be? The answer to the first question will be a fairly clear no and to the second a rather paradoxical and complicated yes.

Sport in Britain has not been a matter for party politics, nor even – in comparison with most other European countries – of much concern to the state. British sport developed in a social space which was part of civil society, but outside of the realms of normal commerce and normal politics. It belonged in the school, the university and the club. True, there was always a covert politics of sport in that the very idea of modern sport suggested a kind of moral worth which came to colour a great deal of policy towards the Empire and the educational system. True also that for much of the twentieth century the Foreign and Colonial Office saw sport as having a useful role in creating and maintaining international goodwill despite the occasional clear example – like the 'bodyline' cricket controversy of 1933 – and George Orwell's categorical statement that it had the opposite effect. But Harold Macmillan's wildfowl and grouse shooting and Edward Heath's sailing were part of a private life and required no policy.

They were, one might say, the business of neither the law nor the state. This introduces an interesting historical

irony because the phrase 'not the law's business' was most famously used in the Report on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution of 1957 which recommended a Millian liberal approach to what came to be called 'victimless crimes' and came to be used as the justifying document of the permissive legislation of the 1960s. That committee was chaired by Sir John (later Lord) Wolfenden who also chaired the 1960 committee of the Central Council for Physical Recreation which recommended the establishment of 'Councils for Sport' and a much enhanced role for the state in the organisation of sport. More than any other human being Wolfenden was responsible for getting the state out of sex and into sport.

Since that time legal intervention and the role of the state have grown massively. One dimension of that growth has been the breakdown of what I have called 'the amateur hegemony' allowing the full exploitation of the commercial potential of televised sport; such commercialisation requires regulation in ways that the world of the amateur club did not, including the political and legal issues arising from the distribution of broadcasting rights and the application of basic legal principles to the sporting labour market. But there has also been an 'etatiste' tendency based in politics rather than commerce: political demands for international sporting success have

led the UK state (and most others) to imitate the Soviet Union in subsidising elite athletes and politicians have looked to sport as a (cheap) way of being seen to tackle a variety of problems including juvenile delinquency, rogue states (through boycotts) and even health problems like obesity.

So there exists a wide measure of agreement, among academic commentators at least, about what has happened to sport in the last forty years: it became more commercial and more political as the old amateur hegemony broke down. But there has seemed to be little systematic difference between the parties on the subject. We might expect, for instance, that Labour would be the more interventionist. It is true that it was a Wilson government which created the Sports Council and appointed Dennis Howell as Minister of Sport in 1964. On the other hand the groundwork for these moves was laid under Tory governments and Lord Hailsham became Minister for Sport in 1962, though he may have volunteered for the post in order to pre-empt others who might interpret the role more actively.

Margaret Thatcher's image as a roller back of states makes little sense in a sporting dimension. At the beginning of her period in government she tried unsuccessfully to coerce British sport to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Towards the end she put her personal energies behind a draconian (and risible) attempt to regulate attendance at football matches which was passed and suspended in 1989. It was a Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, who revolutionised the funding of British sport with the introduction of the lottery in 1994 while the Conservative government of 1992-97 spent more on sport than any other during a period in which the voluntary and charitable sectors were in marked decline. Spokesmen were always keen to deny that lottery money was 'public' money in the moral sense, but what is undeniable is that it created a mechanism of public control as clubs and sports competing for funds had to meet criteria set by government, whether it was equal opportunities, social 'inclusion' or contribution to national prestige goals.

We might also try the hypothesis that Labour would prove to be more egalitarian or, at least, anti-elitist. Certainly the Sports Council's ethos was one of mass participation or 'Sport for All' under Labour in the 1970s. It is an accurate caricature to say that the administration of British sport became obsessed with trying to get Muslim ladies into swimming pools in order to rectify statistical anomalies. But these policies continued under the Conservative governments of the 1980s, often with a re-oriented rationale of social order. Equally, the Majorite emphasis on 'excellence' and the subsidising of medal potential have been continued under New Labour.

If you look at the principal statements made by spokespersons before the 2001 election – Kate Hoey for Labour, Peter Ainsworth for the Conservatives and Menzies Campbell for the Liberal Democrats – they are all remarkably similar. All of them argue that sport is a very good thing, beneficial to society in numerous ways and deserving of much more government support, though Ainsworth did acknowledge that there was a special need for a Conservative to justify this position. None of them is prepared to recognise publicly the depth of the dilemmas facing sport, that what is good for elite sport is not necessarily good for sporting grass roots and traditions – that the current success of English elite rugby, for example, coexists with a massive decline in participation and equally massive financial problems for most clubs.

In short, fashion, period and individual idiosyncrasy have been far more important in determining government attitudes and policies towards sport than have any systematic differences in party ideology. The differences between Thatcher and Major were greater than those between Labour and Conservative. Thatcher was profoundly uninterested in sport and fully prepared to use or regulate it without regard to sporting values or the views of those who had devoted their lives to it. Major was a genuine sports fan (prouder, he said later, of being President of Surrey County Cricket Club than of being Prime Minister) whose impact on British sport through the lottery was of historic significance.

However, the question of whether there should be a distinctive conservative approach to sport is capable of furnishing very different kinds of answers. And the emphasis must be on the plural: given the nature of conservatism nobody could claim to have *THE* conservative approach to sport or anything else, but only one of the possible approaches which would be distinctly, but not uniquely, conservative. Economic liberals and preservers of national institutions – to take two of many possible approaches and vaguely designated at that – might have opposite views which contest conservatism. So I am going to outline one set of ideas and claim only that it lies within a conservative plurality.

It is worth remarking on the sense in which modern sport is a conservative institution. Originating in the public schools, it always sought to encourage a complex set of values which allowed for individual achievement within the framework of collective endeavour and devotion to a particular cause within the constraints of a code of rules. It was a common – though by no means universal – aspect of leftism to be opposed to sport. Marxism-Leninism declared it to be essentially bourgeois until after the Second World War. The triumph of sport and a near-universal acceptance by the end of the twentieth

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century might be seen as a kind of victory for conservatism, but the victory might also be seen as Pyrrhic, the breadth of acceptance being achieved at the cost of the strength of the values. In any case, I mean nothing of substance by these remarks; leftist sportsmen would be entitled to argue that whereas sport may be conservative in some vague and broad sense, Conservative governments have done more to damage it than any other particularly through the effects of the National Curriculum and the sale of playing fields on sport in the state educational system.

A Land of Clubs

The system of sport which came into being in Britain in the late nineteenth century and which was still fairly fully in place in the 1950s was based on two principles: the superiority of amateurism and the independence of the club. A distinctly conservative view of sport should see clubbability as its essence.

I am not here referring to the most prominent form – the professional football club – but to the tens of thousands of clubs in such sports as cricket, Rugby Union, golf and tennis. Clubs were typically highly independent, running their own finances, membership, events and fixtures. Once established, they were remarkably free from commercial constraints and from government interference. Indeed, many of their members regarded them as oases from the harsher realities of the world, devoted to their own game and the vision of the good life which it represented, to friendship and sportsmanship. They were a sector of civil society defined by hobbies and tastes rather than religion or occupation.

I say 'were' because though the forms and vestiges of club life still exist the context in which they operate has changed so much as to constitute in some cases an essential change in the nature of the institution, though this is much more true of some clubs than others and much more true, as a general example, of rugby clubs than of golf clubs. There have been three, related kinds of force for change:

Firstly, many rugby and cricket clubs now pay some players and engage in competition within a form of 'National Pyramid' in which they can rise and fall. There is, therefore, a much greater sense of pressure than there used to be and it is also more difficult to make ends meet. Perhaps one should also include 'competitiveness' as an independent factor; though it is clearly connected in most cases with commercialism and professionalism, it also pre-dates them. When I conducted a survey of officials with long experience in club cricket in 1996 a majority spontaneously mentioned excessive competitiveness as one of the things most wrong with the game. Equally, many rugby followers would see the coming of league competition in 1987 as more significant, even, than the legalisation of professionalism which took effect in 1996. Commercialism affects clubs in its broad social consequences: because people spend more time now in specific acts of production and consumption than

they did even twenty years ago they have less time to be chairmen, secretaries and captains. Most club chairmen will tell you that it is far more difficult to fill posts adequately than hitherto.

Secondly, the state, which preys on the new financial weakness to exercise new forms of control over the formerly private world of the club. It does so directly through the sports councils and the lottery and indirectly through national associations like the Rugby Football Union and the Lawn Tennis Association. If you do not conform to national policy you will not receive funding for new facilities; if you do not get these new facilities your members will defect to the favoured club down the road while you enter a cycle of decline and are considered a failure. The control can be exercised to implement general policies of the 'social inclusion' sort or in the interests of sporting projects concerned with 'excellence' and national success. The paid-up tennis club member can be faced with both at once when he turns up at his club only to find the courts fully occupied by Henman wannabees wearing baseball caps backwards.

Thirdly, global power. Both forms of rugby have been reshaped by global media organisations with their origins in Australia. The structure of English football is threatened by decisions of the European Commission and the European Court of Justice, particularly the Bosman judgement. Sport is a field in which global institutions such as the Federation Internationale de Football Association (sic) and the International Olympic Committee have real power in sharp contrast to their equivalents in (say) the environment or human rights. Though this power is usually exercised in ways which threaten our national interests and traditions in sport there is no challenge to it from the state. British government has been far keener to secure the World Cup or the Olympic Games than to oppose the policies of the major world sporting bodies or to question their obvious corruption.

To preserve and revive the traditions of English sport and clubbability is a proper conservative task even if Conservatism has not yet realised this; the forms and values are still there, if dormant. As usual, we cannot return to the past, but we can preserve and revive aspects of it that we value. It is not a task which could ever be trusted to people from a social democratic tradition, whose etatisme and egalitarianism lead them to think of the good life as led in traditional sports clubs in terms of 'exclusiveness', 'bastions of privilege' and 'obstacles to progress'.

Lincoln Allison was Founding Director of the Warwick Centre for the Study of Sport from 1993 to 2002. He is Reader in Politics at the University of Warwick, Visiting Professor of Sports Studies at the University of Brighton and the author of a number of books including The Politics of Sport, Amateurism in Sport and Right Principles.

The English Countryside

Duncan Fallowell

When it all becomes a bit too much, the inner voice says: get out of town! Fortunately as a self-employed writer I am able to do that and have been doing it all my life. This is not only running from something but also an escape to something – the English countryside – which for me is above all a place of healing where I can get normal again. This isn't because I'm a country boy at heart. I'm not. I grew up in both town and country and both are equally important. It is the see-saw between the two which is so rewarding, the thrill of driving into London after a spell in the hills, the mental excitement which accompanies the tightening of the stomach as one hits one's first traffic jam. But oh the blissful sense of release driving west out of London; the clutter, filth and tension which slip off one with every progressive mile. This is what the heroine does at the opening of my new novel. 'The city was very hot. She had to get out of it.'

We are lucky that when the command comes, we have something as miraculous as the English countryside to get in to. The French novelist Stendhal said: 'I suppose the English countryside is the most beautiful in the world'. At the time this was the consensus in the civilised world. And they were right. What the sensitive visitor then saw was a gorgeously layered work of art, a collusion between man and nature, raised to a kind of religion, not long before Stendhal, by the romantic poets and the pictures of Constable, Turner and early Samuel Palmer.

England had certain advantages: an incredible variety of landscape for example, none of it hugely beyond the possibilities of control. Furthermore it is a small country, not difficult to police given a central power sufficiently strong to deal with marauders from Wales and Scotland. The effective authority of London was from the beginning vital to the evolution of England's rural paradise.

In continental Europe the cult of the countryside was never so strong because as a place it was never so safe. To this day in south-eastern Europe the chances of a hostile army tramping through are not at all remote. Round the Mediterranean it is the cult of the seaside which holds sway and the hinterland is traditionally considered to be an inimical place full of wild winds and bandits. The idealisation of rustic Provence and Tuscany is recent. In Sicily farm workers still drive out from the towns to till the steep fields – and drive back again before it gets dark. Thereabouts you have to go back to the ancients to find the countryside treated as a place of

felicity – the bucolic poetry of Theocritus (Greek) and Virgil (Latin). The Greeks may have invented the worship of Pan and the idea of *Arcadia* but it was the *Pax Romana* which allowed the development of the life of the country villa. And here a curious thing happened. An examination of the archaeology reveals that outside Italy itself, the largest Roman villas – the rural estates centred on a grand house – were in England. Some of them were huge. And through its own inner momentum, villa life continued in England well after the fall of the Roman Empire in Europe.

But finally the Dark Ages, accompanied by Christianity, reached even our blessed shores. For nearly a thousand years the countryside was dominated by warfare and castles and fortified monasteries. It was the Tudors who brought light back into the fields and they had the spirit of the Renaissance to help them. What we now understand by the country house – something open at the front with several storeys and proper windows in a big garden – started to appear then. Philip Sidney's novel *Arcadia* was written largely at his sister's country house, Wilton, and the pastoral setting is very charming, though in dreamland not England. The new atmosphere was celebrated most obviously in the plays of Shakespeare which are full of people being complicated and amusing in bowers, orchards, flowery dells and woods. But this was only the beginning and Shakespeare's nature settings – like Sidney's – are often fantastical, foreign or on the outskirts of towns. It was not until after the Civil War in the seventeenth century that the countryside in England began its wholesale ascent towards heaven.

The English discovered something exceptionally interesting: that the way to impose order on the countryside was not by running straight lines across it but by running curved ones. The Romans had never made this discovery, nor had anyone else. The prevailing idea had always been that nature had to be tamed. Oh no, said the English, who found that their environment was relatively tame already, the way to do it is by co-operating with nature. And thus was born English landscape gardening which reached such a high point of sophistication in the hands of Capability Brown, who loved nothing better than the sinuous bend of a stream to work with, that he often introduced a sense of wildness where none had existed before. The agrarian revolution associated with Coke of Norfolk, with its characteristic patchwork, imposed a comparable order on working farmland so

that by the end of the eighteenth century the garden faded into the park which faded into the countryside and all was divine harmony. This is the world of Gainsborough. It is how the English countryside at its most archetypal still looks to-day. Oh, the lushness, the greenness, those great puffs of trees and tangles of flowers! I love it. Strangely not everyone else does. Norman Douglas, who preferred the dryness of the Mediterranean, once said to Viva King, 'I hate the English countryside, it's like being buried in salad.'

So effective was the eighteenth century transformation that eventually it led to a cult of the sublime, of nature *untamed*. The lakeland poets celebrated the ecstasy of nature without man. Such a refinement of sensibility would scarcely be possible in a society which had to battle hurricanes, deserts, snowstorms, volcanoes and earthquakes on a regular basis. The sublime was easier to adore when one's existence wasn't actually threatened. What is so fascinating about the Regency period is that it is in some ways the climax of eighteenth century *douceur de vivre* but made piquant by Romanticism as well as triumphant by the defeat of Napoleon. Here at last all the fancies were catered for. A dandy and his gal might forsake Vauxhall Gardens for the Dukeries of Derbyshire and there discover that the latest country houses had French windows opening *directly* into gardens (beforehand there had always been a terrace and staircase before encountering the sod). Verandahs for sitting in summer and conservatories for winter were suddenly everywhere. Just as the barriers between different degrees of husbandry had already been artfully phased into each other, so now the same happened with that most fundamental barrier of all, that between indoors and outdoors. The grandest heiress would squeal with delight at the very latest fad, the *cottage ornée*, charming to the point of absurdity.

But for the more spectacular effects one had to go beyond England. A rash of mock gothic castles appeared on crags in Wales and Scotland. Adventure holidays became popular in Switzerland. And that biggest adventure holiday of all – the British Empire – which we are always told was an accidental, trading phenomenon, was nonetheless fuelled by a spirit of adventure which could no longer be satisfied by an England whose every wood and vale had been domesticated. Yet the English countryside remained the luminous ideal. Attempts were made to reproduce it all over the world and in parts of America, Africa, India, Australia and New Zealand they almost succeeded. But in these tracts the threat of more furious forces close by always remained and many an imperial nightmare was sustained by the dream of retiring to the Cotswolds or the Sussex Downs or the Yorkshire Dales. Only in such English places might an

abiding peace be found.

But mystique requires more than a sedate retirement for its power over the imagination. A thread of danger, a thrill of the strange, still lies among English fields. It is here that crop circles have chosen to make their tantalising appearance. Its prehistoric relics too, more extensive and older than almost anywhere else, have something similarly cosmic about them. The Stonehenge you see is underpinned by wooden predecessors older than the Pyramids of Egypt. The landscape of Thomas Hardy's novels is the setting for a rich pagan wonder and terrifying dramas of the heart. For the Brontës the Moors were not only a place you could lose your soul but also where you could lose your mind. The banshees have fled Ireland and the last ghosts in the western world lurk in the corners of remote English manor houses buffeted by howling gales yet undisturbed for centuries. In Peckinpah's film *Straw Dogs*, Cornwall is where you can be murdered. The contemporary landscape photographs of Don Macallum, mostly of Somerset in winter, are bleak indeed. Houseman's *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) is very bitter-sweet, as is George Butterworth's tone poem based upon it.

The revival in English music from the 1880s is characterised by a turning away from the essential aspects (empire and industry) of our national pre-eminence at that time. Delius (despite his tone poem *Paris*), Elgar

(despite his *Pomp and Circumstance* marches) and Vaughan Williams (despite his *London Symphony*) are bewitched by the haunted and tender loneliness of the countryside, a mood quite different from the let's-go-for-a-picnic attitude of the eighteenth century.

These three composers lived through the Great War, and the younger generation to which they gave rise – Walton, Britten, Moeran, Rubbra – were deeply conditioned by it. This school of music is sometimes thought of as late romantic which is certainly true of a minor figure such as Bax. Otherwise it wasn't anti-modern so much as anti-metropolitan. Indeed Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and Peter Warlock's *The Curlew* are great masterpieces of modern twentieth century music in which a sense of spacious longing is transfigured into a kind of religious mystery. Britten managed to overcome this prevailing and highly addictive mood of sadness and loss (Warlock committed suicide) by going further back in time, to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for much of his inspiration. Nonetheless the jocularity of the new Elizabethans could never drown out the reflectiveness which came with death in war and the loss of imperial greatness. The English cultural scene would have to await the arrival of Swinging London for that. Which brings us to one of the most potent moods currently to be experienced in the English countryside: nostalgia.

It is now quite common to decry the phenomenon of the middle-class country cottage as a second home, on the grounds that it has destroyed village life. But it was this phenomenon which saved villages.

All the forces contributing to the great English rural idyll had reached their fullest flowering by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The upper and upper middle classes who ruled this world were numerous, rich, confident and educated. Never before or since has country life anywhere been so superbly evolved. Despite the building explosion of the Victorians, which left the countryside littered with gigantic 'Gormenghast' palaces, the number of available properties was still insufficient and the great architect of the era, Sir Edwin Lutyens, was called upon to create a series of fabulous homes in which almost every fantasy found a delicious yet practical place. Because his houses are so beautiful, well-built and up-to-date, only Lutyens has created a serious challenge to the Palladian ideal of the English country house.

Then 1914. Which didn't sweep it all away. It still hasn't all been swept away. Indeed many of the English show villages have never looked better in their lives, with a prettiness so intense that it becomes as intoxicating as a drug – and as unrealistic. Since the full complement was originally so great, a large number of country houses remains, including nearly all the most important ones, and often full of the original furniture, pictures and family trappings too – a national treasure that is not found

anywhere else. Outside the national parks, the least spoiled examples of English landscape are nearly always where old money has held on to its land or passed on the property intact to the National Trust. The enormous estate of Lord Barnard in County Durham is still marked by all the houses having to be whitewashed. Barnard supplies the paint, you have to put it on. The effect of driving into his kingdom, the sudden flurry of white buildings dotting the landscape, is magical.

But it was after the Great War that the English countryside became an endangered realm. Destruction would sometimes come from the natural world itself – the 'immemorial elms' of Oxfordshire and Berkshire succumbed to a beetle. But usually the destruction has been human. A recent study has calculated that 1700 major country houses were demolished or (more rarely) lost by fire in the twentieth century. The climax came in the 1950s with a frenzy of bulldozing before listing came in and made it illegal to destroy an historical building. Great estates were broken up. Farms sold to corporations. Machines took over. Land workers moved to the cities. Subsidies encouraged total exploitation – meadows, lakes, ponds, woods, hedgerows, all the secret

places, were cleared and incorporated into large fields up and down which farmers would drive relentlessly and alone. One interesting statistic: there are currently more trees in the UK than there were in 1900 but this is due to the huge programmes of urban planting. Trees are one of the chief glories of modern London; the country comes to town, another English speciality.

It is now quite common to decry the phenomenon of the middle-class country cottage as a second home, on the grounds that it has destroyed village life. But it was this phenomenon which saved villages. Generally the working-class wanted to leave old damp buildings for new flats or bungalows and it is on account of this that most parts of Europe have seen a massive loss of rural buildings at the cottage level. It was among the back-to-the-country English middle class that the mystique of the countryside burned strongest and if they hadn't stepped in, the great array of historic domestic architecture across

the counties – another treasure trove which we now take for granted – would have vanished. It was this class which eventually became the backbone of the preservation societies which saw the countryside through its darkest hour. The actual farmers themselves have long co-operated in the poisoning of the earth and the destruction



of traditional features. Whether the new generation of organic farmers will improve the situation remains to be seen. On environmental matters the first corner seems to have been turned. Subsidised monoculture is on the way out – theoretically. Light pollution, which makes the stars invisible, is being reduced by the introduction of downflected lamps. Quiet tarmac is being laid so that even if you live near a dual carriageway you can pretend you do not. Many little places here and there are being reclaimed for our sense of the mysterious to revel in.

Why is the countryside important? Because we are rats in an overcrowded cage. Because Tesco and television don't have the answer to everything. People say blithely 'Oh there's still lots of countryside left,' but much of that is already disfigured and England is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Countryside is not just fields separating towns but something in which you should be able to get lost. These days it is quite hard to get away from it all unless you leave England altogether. The motorway, the supermarket and the giant housing estate are stretching everywhere. The greatest threat is from suburbanisation, a characterless half-development. Suburbia is the creeping sludge of affluence and

an ever rising population, and yet perversely it is also the result of our fantasies of the countryside: rows and rows of quasi-rural houses on quasi-rural plots.

There is no doubt that the present ruling class – the technocrats, managers and international financiers are anti-rural, – though of course they all have rustic hide-aways because they, too, need healing from time to time. The whole cultural tenor of the moment is towards the rootless and the mass-marketed. I am the first serious novelist for some time to set his book in deepest England because modernism marginalised the countryside as a subject. It wasn't considered glamorous.

If the countryside is out of favour in the centres of power, it is not so among ordinary people. In a crazy mixed-up world, the vision of the English village becomes that of the perfect community. But not always for those who actually live in it. I am not aware that mental health is higher in villages than in cities. The spatial freedom of the city lies in its anonymity. In the village you may be surrounded by fields but everyone is observed. For the past ten years I have rented a cottage for the summer in the Welsh borders. Apart from the great beauty of the district, it also has one of the lowest crime rates in the UK; churches are unlocked, front doors frequently open. The biggest danger is traffic on single-

track roads. Crows would attack the windows of the cottage at first light, waking me up at 4 am in the summer – until we attached electric fence wire to the sills which bounced the birds off immediately. The postmistress (the post office was the front room of her cottage) had been there since the 1930s. The pub had stout eighteenth century chairs and a blunderbuss, the church magnificent sixteenth century pews. The back of the cottage was a suntrap by day. At night I loved to read with the doors wide open and the air and wildlife passing freely through. Hilly, lush and pylon-free, this part of England has always made me feel wonderful.

I presumed it also made the farmer who owned the valley and the cottage in which I lived feel wonderful. He trundled about his elysian fields with quiet pride and a smile of contentment. A little while ago, he shot himself. It wasn't the state of modern farming or anything like that. It was personal. I'd got him totally wrong. Now the valley, one of the most beautiful, hidden and unspoilt in England, with a perfect river winding through it, is a tragic place for me. It is important to understand that the picture on the chocolate box is also a place of deep stories.

Duncan Fallowell's novel A History of Facelifting was published in April (Arceadia Books)

The Sixth Marquess of Salisbury

The Salisbury Review takes its name from the great Third Marquess of Salisbury; but it owes its existence to the Sixth Marquess who died in July. By his example and guidance, as well as by his generosity, he helped us through our early years and remained a constant friend and benefactor thereafter. For Englishmen of my generation he was a figurehead, an example of the old ideals of aristocratic government, for whom family honour was far more important in the scheme of things than any merely personal gratification.

Robert Salisbury regarded the enduring role of the Cecil family in the public life of our country not as a personal acquisition and source of boastful pride, but as an example to live up to in a spirit of humility. It was a matter of the highest concern to him that he should maintain the ancestral homes of Hatfield and Cranborne, and devote his energy and resources to showing that the peaceful, dignified and local life of the resident aristocrat was not only viable in modern times, but also still able to cast its radiance round about. Robert was a pious Anglican, and a sincere believer in the dispensation of old England – the England that created him and which his family did so much to create. At the same time he and his public-spirited wife Mollie remained eagerly in touch with political and cultural developments, and played an active part in ensuring that conservatism should be a living part of the modern political organism. *The Salisbury Review* owes much to the late Lord Salisbury; so too does our country.

Roger Scruton

Sir,

I agree with much of Roger Scruton's appraisal of American conservatism (Summer 2003). Compared to Europe, America has a more dynamic conservative movement that has been able to create influential political, social and intellectual organizations. As such, the American Right has slowed the growth of the leviathan state (at least when compared to Europe) and has kept religion in the public square. Conservatives are also struggling to reform legal, health and educational systems. But, despite these advances, American conservatives are also at a disadvantage compared to their European cousins.

While Europe is more secular in outlook and socialist in politics, the European pattern and pace of life is more conservative. The onslaught of modernity has not completely eradicated ancient customs and traditions. As a result, there is still a degree of familial, communal and regional solidarity. In Europe, it would not be uncommon for a Marxist to reside in the same town he was born in, and still live with his mother! In the socially mobile and individualistic USA, such arrangements are almost unheard of, even for a conservative. Much of this has to do with the domination of American society by the market culture. This culture has given Americans unprecedented wealth, technology and mobility, but it also hinders the development and preservation of the organic community – which forms the basis of society. As a result, America is rapidly becoming a land of social nomads, whose main allegiances are to career and consumption. This is evident even in the conservative movement, which has become a lucrative career for many 'professional conservatives' – politicians, pundits, fundraisers etc.

It is no irony that the American conservative movement has never addressed the negative social effects of the market culture. This is because the movement is dominated by neoconservatives, who view the spread of the market as an absolute good and as synonymous with conservatism. They are also eager to spread this ideology throughout the world – by force if necessary. In contrast, traditional conservatives (paleoconservatives) argue that a society fixated with wealth and social mobility, cannot sustain family and community life in the long run. Without a stable communal life, the health of a nation will inevitably fail. Thus, the conservation

(or restoration) of the organic community must be the primary goal of any authentic conservative movement. In America, this movement still struggles to gain a political voice. But, it continues to survive and grow despite persistent attacks from the left and what masquerades as the right.

Tobias Lanz, South Carolina

Sir,

The portion on Nigeria in Antony Flew's *Islam's War against the West* (Summer 2003) is largely inaccurate. First, the major driving force behind communal conflict in Nigeria is tribal, not religious, in nature. The first communal catastrophe in post-independence Nigeria was the January 1966 Iroquois coup which was Ibo planned and executed against the constitutionally established, and multi-tribal, governments of the Federal Republic, Northern Nigeria and Western Nigeria. In the process of the coup large numbers of politicians and senior army officers (mainly Northerners of Hausa/Fulani/ Kanuri origin) were specifically targeted and murdered. The second communal catastrophe was the July to September 1966 counter coup led by Yakubu Gowon (a Northern Christian). I can personally attest that during the coup period Ibos were killed in the North irrespective of their religion while non-Ibo Southerners were left completely unmolested whatever their religion. The reverse was true in Eastern Nigeria where Hausas and other Northerners were slaughtered because of their ethnic origin. The Civil War was the third communal catastrophe and although somewhat more complicated in its development than the earlier two disasters, a large percentage of the Federal troops fighting against Biafra were Christians as were many of the Federal Army leaders, for example Gowon himself.

There was no coup in 1973 – the author may be referring to the Buhari coup announced in January 1984 which took out the Shagari administration. The assertion that one million Ibos died in the Biafran War was originated by Ojukwu's brilliant Swiss PR consultants. The only person who believes this figure is Frederick Forsyth.

The rise in prominence of Sharia law in many of today's Northern Nigerian states has certainly added to the divisions between the country's major tribes but this

is largely a Northern reaction to the general erosion of their previously dominant political position under either civilian or military rule. Many observers think there will be another communal catastrophe in the future and predict this will take the form of violence between the (mainly Hausa) North and the (mainly Yoruba) West. Professor Flew will be aware that possibly fifty per cent of Yorubas are Muslim but they will fight for tribe not religion if this catastrophe should materialize.

William Moore, Sunderland

Sir

Sir Alfred Sherman (Summer 2003, Review: *Appeasement feeds Islamic terror*) says Charles Dickens complained that 'the law is a ass'. He did no such thing. What Dickens did was create the character of the oafish, henpecked workhouse master Mr Bumble who was told that he was guilty of a crime committed in his presence by his shrewish wife because 'the law supposes that your wife acts under your direction'. Mr Bumble retorted: 'If the law supposes that, the law is a ass – a idiot'. It is crass to infer that a novelist himself holds an opinion he attributes to one of his characters – particularly one so ignoble and outlandish as Mr Bumble.

Francis Bennion, Budleigh Salterton

Sir,

I am writing a book on the Persecution of Patriots and Traditionalists in the UK since the war. May I through your journal ask that anyone with experience of the persecution of patriots and traditionalists sends them to me? For example, there was the censorship of a book by the former Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning. There was also the persecution of the *Financial Times* columnist C. Gordon Tether who after starting and developing the Lombard column found his articles being censored and was finally replaced. Anything along these lines would be most helpful.

Glyn Roach, West Midlands, glyn_roach@yahoo.co.uk

Sir,

The problem with pensions has arisen from the creation of the Welfare State, which may have 'seemed like a good idea at the time'. The fundamental flaw was the removal of responsibility from the individual – the essence of Socialism – to give the state more control over people's lives, instead of encouraging freedom and independence. The attraction of being provided for

'from the cradle to the grave' has proved to involve inflationary taxation, as the statistics produced by Charles Cecil (Summer 2003) well illustrate.

To counter the impending impasse the basic attitude of looking after one's own affairs must be regenerated. To give credit where it is due, present government thinking pursues this principle of personal responsibility. The idea of providing for one's old age had no appeal to a youngster. The current calculation when I was young was to set aside ten per cent of income but I needed more than the promise of future riches to persuade me to part with that last ten per cent – what a wise friend referred to as 'fun money' – the essential spending money for whatever it is that makes life worth living. I wanted a car and a boat! Gradually I discovered that putting away hard-earned cash for 'tomorrow' would mean handing over to a pension fund 'manager' about one per cent of the capital set aside every year, for this 'privilege'.

It didn't make sense to me, so I paddled my own canoe and now, fifty years on, am able to confirm that money placed in tangible assets and real estate, realisable by sale when the going gets hard, have been adequate, if far from profligate. After Gordon Brown's raid, abolishing tax relief on dividends, we are now 'contributing' about £220 a year in lost tax 'credits' even though our total income is under £9,000 per annum. Yet those who already have a tax liability may offset their 'credits', giving to those that have and taking away from those that have not, even that which they have. Are we, too, living under an evil regime?

Beverley James Pyke, Alderney.

DENNIS O'KEEFFE

WE ARE VERY GLAD THAT DENNIS O'KEEFFE HAS AGREED TO BECOME OUR NEW EDITOR.

DENNIS HAS BEEN CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH THE REVIEW SINCE IT BEGAN IN 1982 AND HIS PROLIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE COVER A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS AS WELL AS HIS OWN SPECIALITIES – EDUCATION AND SOCIOLOGY

FOR MANY YEARS HE WAS A LONE RIGHT-MINDED VOICE IN THE FIELD OF TEACHER TRAINING. HE IS NOW PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AT BUCKINGHAM UNIVERSITY AND SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW IN EDUCATION AT THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

HIS TRANSLATION OF BENJAMIN CONSTANT'S *PRINCIPES DES POLITIQUES* WILL APPEAR IN THE AUTUMN.

Conservative Classic: - 11

Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*

Norman Barry

First published in 1945, this two volume work remains a classic defence of liberal democracy and the limited state. Although it is not a conservative book philosophically, the values that Popper admired are derived from a particular European tradition that venerated tolerance, scientific innovation and the growth of knowledge. Popper was to spend his life as a professional philosopher exploring these values. Born an Austrian, Popper wrote *The Open Society* in New Zealand and spent most of his academic career at the London School of Economics.

Although his intellect was admired, Popper's politics were unfashionable for much of the post war period. Firstly, Marxism was dominant in the social sciences and his devastating refutation of that doctrine, especially with regard to its scientific pretensions, did not endear him to the intelligentsia. Secondly, the prevailing philosophy of the period was analytic and linguistic and claimed to have nothing to say (professionally) on political issues. Popper never accepted this somewhat conceited reticence and insisted that philosophy was directly concerned with substantive matters – epistemological, scientific or political.

Indeed, *The Open Society* may not inaccurately be described as an extension of the lessons of the philosophy of science (in which Popper made his reputation) to the study of society. It was published at a time when Europe was reeling from fascist, Nazi and Marxist totalitarianism: they had common intellectual origins. Of Popper's many targets, historicism, essentialism, collectivism and totalitarianism should be stressed. In fact, he sees a causal link between all of these errors. For example, the mistaken belief that history has a discernible pattern and its future can be known is going to tempt people to hurry up the process and impose a utopian scheme on present day societies. Furthermore, all these mistaken doctrines are anti-individualistic.

Popper sees historicism as a recurring feature of European thought but it is prominent especially in Plato, Hegel and Marx. While Plato does not have the grand historical themes of Hegel and Marx, his account of the decline of the state from its ideal form or essence is a progenitor of that thinking. It is also an open defence

of rule by an intellectual elite (philosophers) and its explicit authoritarianism is antithetical to Popper's open, liberal society. But it is Marxism that is Popper's most formidable enemy because of its superficial affinity with science and progressive thought. Yet, as he demonstrated, Marxism is profoundly unscientific and its fundamental error derives from its confusion of prophecy and prediction. The Marxist thinks that by describing patterns in history, such as the rise and fall of feudalism, the emergence of capitalism and its inevitable collapse (by certain 'laws' which reveal its inner contradictions) we can forecast the future. But these 'predictions' are no more than the prophecies of a fortune-teller. History is made by individuals; it is not laid out in advance and it has no laws.

But we can make genuine predictions. If government increases the supply of money and production remains constant, inflation must result, or if it pursues a coercive and egalitarian incomes policy, inefficiency or a loss in liberty will be the outcome.

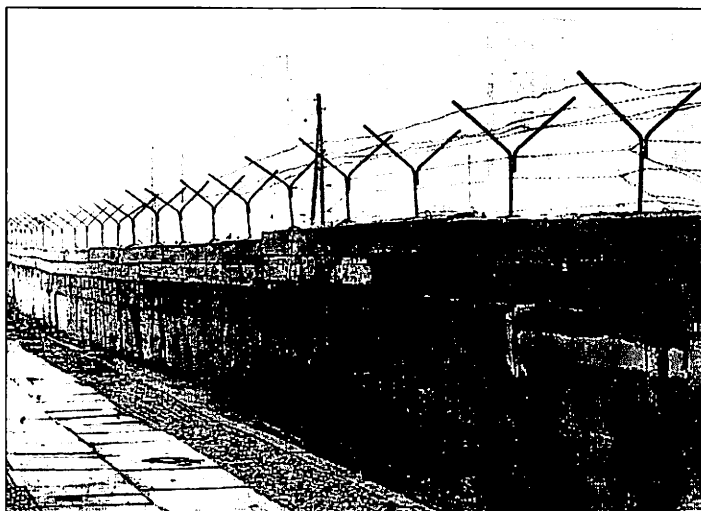
Popper's refutation of historicism follows from his philosophy of science. A law of science, whether it is in physics or sociology, is not established by repeated or empirical observations but by bold conjectures which have survived the crucial test of falsification. Even our most firmly held beliefs can be challenged so that we can only say that scientific laws are those propositions that have not yet been refuted. In the social sciences, the familiar Marxist 'laws' of history, for example, the prophesied increasing immiserisation of the working class and the claim that revolution will occur in industrial societies, have been clearly refuted by events. The only social science theories that meet Popper's standards are the laws of economics; the law of demand and the quantity theory of money are good examples. Popper never wrote about Keynesian macroeconomics but one suspects that he might have doubted its efficacy, if only because it depends to an extent on theories of large scale phenomena that appear to be inconsistent with his methodological individualism.

Allied to this is Popper's argument about the impossibility of wholesale, holistic planning. In a theory which was made much of by Hayek, Popper most plausibly

But it is Marxism that is Popper's most formidable enemy because of its superficial affinity with science and progressive thought. Yet, as he demonstrated, Marxism is profoundly unscientific and its fundamental error derives from its confusion of prophecy and prediction.

claimed that governments with even benign motivations, which he knew was unlikely, could not have the knowledge of social phenomena to plan on the grand scale. Proper social science should be restricted to the analysis of small scale observations, such as the effect of minor interventions in a market economy, about which we can have reliable data, rather than total planning about which we can know little. Indeed, the open society, unlike the primitive, closed society is stable despite the fact that its inhabitants are basically anonymous agents. So far from being progressive, modern planning theory is redolent of confined and backward orders which are only stable because of the intimate, almost personal, links that bind their members.

When it comes to specific proposals Popper unsurprisingly favoured what he called 'piece-meal social engineering'. With our limited knowledge we can make minor improvements: and Popper was a modest utilitarian. His commitment to certain social reforms has angered libertarians. He wasn't against a form of social welfare and one of his arguments against historicism was its inability to see that small scale social reforms could alleviate the excesses of *laissez faire*.



The idea that microeconomics could dispel for all time the possibility of some reform would have run up against his falsification principle as well as his personal predilections.

Popper undoubtedly produced the best defence of liberalism since John Stuart Mill. His philosophy of science was superior and his social observations more acute. No doubt conservatives cannot accept his con-

temptuous dismissal of Aristotle (whom he regarded as a pale reflection of Plato) and Hegel (who was simply a Prussian authoritarian posing as a philosopher). His individualism, both methodological and moral, is not attractive to conservatives who seek a notion of personal identity in some concept of community.

But Popper himself was a modest utopian. His ideal liberal society was a version of the scientific community where progress and the growth of knowledge come about through conjecture, refutation and the free play of ideas. But is this realistic? Apparently he was not like that himself. His dogmatism in argument led to a famous LSE joke: there is a book called *The Open Society* by one of its enemies.

Reputations - 2

David Hume

Sean Gabb

David Hume (1711-76) was a thinker of comprehensive genius – philosopher, historian, economist, political theorist and literary critic. He was also one of the greatest prose writers of his age. How is the essence of his vast achievement to be understood?

One answer is to see his work, in all its diversity, as part of one consistent project. Hume was interested above all in what we can know about ourselves. His philosophy can be seen as a purely negative achievement – as a retreat into scepticism. It is that. But it is also a great clearing away of misconceptions. Most previous thinkers had regarded knowledge as most surely gained by a chain of deduction from undeniable first principles. Hume denied that reason in itself gave any knowledge

about the world. For him, there could be no jump – as there was for Descartes – from simple to complex certainties. He rejected the old Platonic distinction between an intelligible world of essences and the world of appearances. Instead, he completed the work of Locke and Berkeley, focussing attention on the world of appearances. Even this, however, could not yield certain knowledge. The evidence of our senses was no more than a stream of sense impressions that might or might not be related to an external reality. These impressions we processed according to conceptions of cause and effect that could not themselves be rationally demonstrated. To say that A caused B for Hume meant only that we had always experienced certain events one after the

other, and that we had a customary expectation that they always would be experienced thus.

He did not deny the possibility of knowledge. But he did define our capacity to know in far less ambitious terms than it usually had been. There could be no dogmatic certainties, only provisional hypotheses. The test of truth was to be not its inventiveness or its appeal to the emotions, but its economy of hypotheses and its accordance with common sense. This was the conclusion of his philosophy, and the beginning of his investigations into the world of appearances.

His most important achievement in this respect was to bring the notion of impersonal laws into the study of mankind. In the previous century, Newton had replaced the mass of speculation on occasional miracles that passed for physics with a few simple laws of motion. These could be used to explain the position of every atom in the universe. Hume believed that by observing human affairs over a long period, we would find it possible to arrive at similar laws for ourselves.

Therefore, his writings on history explained events in terms less of individual character than of general tendencies. James I and Charles I, for example, were stupid men who helped bring on a revolution. At the same time, though, the progress of commerce was raising classes of men who could not be contained within the old order, and also generating problems of finance and administration which could not be solved in the old ways. Some reconstruction of English government would have happened regardless of who wore the crown or of what he did. Hume was one of the first historians to move away from the chronicle of events inherited from the Middle Ages, or from the analysis of high politics inherited from the ancient world, towards an understanding of the social and economic tendencies which connected events and gave shape to the actions of those in and around power.

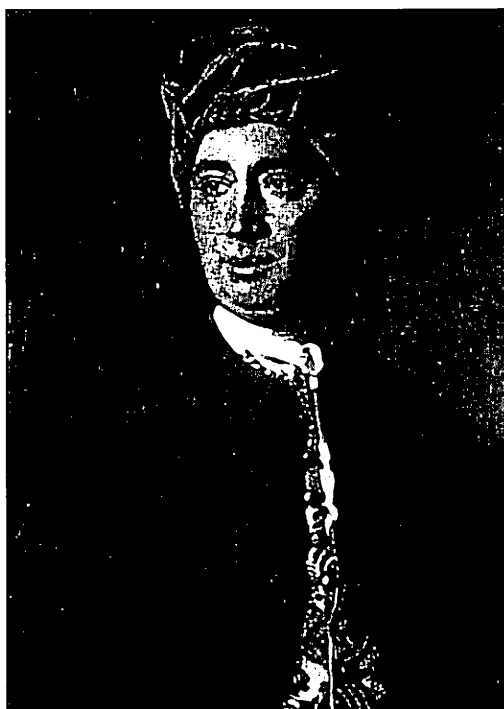
These laws or tendencies of human nature could be used not simply to explain events, but also to reconstruct them from the distant past. Most famously, he rejected the almost universal belief of his day that the ancient world had been more densely populated than the modern. He looked at the rate of interest on loans, and at the forms and productivity of ancient agriculture. He used a combination of literary sources and linguistic analysis to guess the nature and extent of slavery in the Roman Empire; and he used the known facts of slave reproduction from the Americas to discuss birth rates. He looked

at probable death rates. His interpretation of all the evidence pointed to a very sparsely populated Western Empire compared with the France and Italy of his own day. A quarter of a millennium of further work in historical demography has not shaken his conclusions.

Hume was not original in all his work. There had been intelligent writers on economics and history before he came to those fields. What Hume did was to provide a theory of knowledge which justified a search for general laws; and he showed how those laws so far discovered could be unified into a single conceptual framework with which to explain and predict human affairs.

His philosophy stands on its own merits. Indeed, it may be fair to say that the whole of modern philosophy is an argument over the first book of his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739). It is true that in other subjects he was eventually eclipsed by his contemporaries or by those who came soon after. In economics he was excelled by Adam Smith, in history by Edward Gibbon, in moral philosophy by Adam Smith and the Utilitarians of the next century. For every ten who read them, perhaps only one reads Hume. It is nevertheless hard to imagine how, without his example, they could have written as they did.

To argue for precedence in an age as rich in genius as 18th century Europe is perhaps unwise, but any short list of candidates for the title, greatest man of the Enlightenment, must include David Hume.



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The 'gay Bishop' of Reading furore should not be regarded as a single and simple controversy. Our whole attitude to sexual morality and mores has gone awry and is becoming more destructive every day. The so called sexual revolution began in the mid 1960s or as Philip Larkin said in his poem *Annus Mirabilis*:

Sexual intercourse began
In 1963
(Which was rather late for me)
Between the end of the Chatterley ban
And the Beatles' first LP

The myth has it that we were all prudish and buttoned up before the 60s and that the great blessing of that decade was that it taught us to 'let it all hang out'. And sure enough, what had been unswung for so long was soon swinging all over the place. It was also described as a time of sexual liberation, but to preach the loss of restraint as a form of liberation is foolish. Are we insane? Do we really want to say to people that to be a slave to our desires and lusts is liberation? It is the opposite. It is slavery. And you can be a slave to yourself just as much as the old time cotton-picker was slave to his master. A man who cannot say 'No' to himself and his desires has no freedom at all.

Sex has been debased – with the connivance of the Church – from its historic status as a sacrament, a sacred act between two people with a lifetime commitment, into part of the leisure industry – a merely recreational pursuit without any moral entailments. But this is stupid as it is wicked. Sex has moral consequences. It can involve the procreation of children and thus bestow upon those who have sex responsibilities which last a lifetime. It is the casual attitude towards sex which has caused the social evil of many single mothers, deprived children and absent fathers.

The use of abortion as a form of contraception is nothing but the wholesale murder of the next generation to pay for the sordid pleasure of this one. There is something profoundly askew about a nation that can become exercised over fox-hunting – the legitimate culling of vermin – and yet allow 180,000 abortions every year. It is emblematic of our amoral times that the welfare of vermin is sentimentally

preferred over the care and nurture of our unborn children.

And even if children are not involved, sex is still a serious and profound matter. It is about personal involvement of the deepest sort. So when it goes wrong it is the cause of unspeakable jealousies, hatred and violence. Haven't you noticed that a lot of people have been driven to murder because of it? And to return to the subject of emotional slavery, read in the newspapers the horrible stories of those many thousands of people addicted to internet porn with the result that often their marriages are destroyed, families break up and the great proportion of the domestic income is squandered on phone bills to pay for this electronic filth.

We were not all pure and chaste before the sexual revolution. Millions of us went wrong. People had affairs and deceived their wives and husband. But in those old days

adultery and sexual promiscuity were regarded by society as wrong, sinful, taboos. Now educators and sociologists rejoice that all the taboos have been removed. This is not an act of enlightened liberation, because we need taboos as powerful emotional and spiritual

customs which underline the supreme importance of laws, morality and regulated behaviour. The problem is that what was formally tolerated is now celebrated. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the squalid, narcissistic so-called 'Gay Pride' marches. The old sense of hating the sin while loving the sinner has given way to a world from which the concept of sin has been expunged. All sense of right and wrong in sexual morality and behaviour has been abolished and, from their youth up, men and women have been encouraged to regard one another as mere objects of gratification. We are being told that in sexual matters it is quite acceptable to behave like savages.

Whereas Kant instructed us that it is never right to treat others as means to an end but only as ends in themselves, Kierkegaard said that most people are subjective towards themselves and objective towards others; but the real task is to learn to be objective towards ourselves and subjective towards others. Our Lord commanded us to love one another. But in the debauched world 'free love', there is no such thing as love.

Peter Mullen

Sex has been debased – with the connivance of the Church – from its historic status as a sacrament, a sacred act between two people with a lifetime commitment, into part of the leisure industry

BOOK REVIEWS

Recessional **Michael St. John Parker**

Empire:
How Britain made the Modern World
Niall Ferguson, Penguin, 2003,
£25

If one belongs to that generation which still cannot forget, or quite forgive, the gleeful malice of Dean Acheson's description of Britain as having 'lost an Empire and ... not yet found a role', it can come as a shock to find that there are limits to the extent and depth of post-imperial angst. Yet in recent years historians, by no means Marxist in their affiliations, have demonstrated conclusively that the imperial idea never, even at the height of its glory, evoked anything like unanimous enthusiasm from any section of British society. Rather more influentially, the thought-police who enforce the National Curriculum have been tireless in compelling schools to present the Empire as the product of a conspiracy between upper-class militarists and middle-class slave-traders. And, perhaps most potently productive of prejudice, the resentments generated by mass immigration since the 1950s have provoked an angry disposition on the part of many of the native British to repudiate the very memory of those imperial connections which provided passports for the first waves of incoming settlers. While one generation still remembers what it was like to lose an empire, the next would prefer to forget that such an empire ever existed.

The ambiguities which complicate British perceptions of their imperial history are further shaded by different, yet closely related, issues of interpretation connected with the two World Wars of the twentieth century. Most accounts describe these titanic struggles in terms which suggest that their origins lay in the instability of the European balance of power, or, in the case of the Second World War, in the necessity of opposing totalitarian dictatorship. But such limited explanations, however

popular they may be with Europhiles and liberals, do not sufficiently account for the realities – the gigantic scale of events, and the actions of the combatants themselves. India and South Africa, Australia and Canada did not go to war with Germany over Belgium in 1914, or over Poland in 1939; they answered Britain's call to a global struggle which recalled the imperial wars of the eighteenth century. Churchill was prepared to enter into alliance with one dictator, Stalin, against another, Hitler, when the survival of the British Empire was at stake. The United States were unwilling to enter either war until they saw their *bête noire*, British imperialism, significantly weakened and could be sure that they themselves would profit from the outcome. (Compare Britain's policy towards the declining Dutch Empire during the Napoleonic Wars.) In short, there was an imperial dimension to both World Wars which current political correctness finds hard to digest.

When the costs of the two great conflicts of the twentieth century were weighed, they proved so ruinous that they brought about the collapse of the very structures they had been fought to protect. What followed was a retreat (and not only in Britain's case) from the very concept of an imperial polity. After 1945 the British middle classes, the backbone of the imperial undertaking, lost their faith in the Empire as a source of employment and enrichment, and turned instead to the staid, if often masochistic, attractions of the Welfare State.

Lying behind all these processes, however, and of still more secular significance, is a well-recognised phenomenon, a revulsion against the use of force as a means of settling disputes, bringing about resolutions and advancing interests. Of course, this revulsion is far from universal, or unqualified, or consistent even where it can be seen to have occurred; but it is profound, and is particularly pronounced among the groups that supply Britain's leadership. There may be a peculiar irony in the fact that the two value systems which have contributed most to bringing about the repudiation of forcefulness, namely idealistic Christianity and Enlightenment rationalism, were also among the principal dynamics of imperialism; but the British Empire, like any other, was founded on the willingness of the imperial power to use force in the advancement and protection of its interests – and that willingness expired, with remarkable suddenness and completeness, in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

Premonitions of this retreat from forcefulness had been apparent much earlier, for example in the reaction

of sections of British opinion to the tactics of 'frightfulness' employed by Tarleton in the War of American Independence; in response to the ferocity with which Eyre suppressed disorders in Jamaica in 1865; again, in opposition to the concentration camps of the Second Boer War; and, most notably, in the widespread repudiation of Dyer's display of ruthlessness at Amritsar in 1919. But when R.A.F. pilots refused to fly missions against Egyptian targets in the Suez episode of 1956, the writing was plain for all to read on the wall. Britain bowed, gracefully enough on the whole, out of an Empire that had suddenly come to seem untenable, and the flood of national aggressiveness, that had flowed so turbulently for so long, dwindled to the trickle of football hooliganism that has been memorably celebrated by the late Alan Clark.

To place such almost Nietzschean emphasis on the significance of will in the national story is not to ignore the economic realities that underlay both the growth and the decline of the British Empire. Realities they were – but as such, subject in a considerable degree to the readiness of human agents to negotiate, exploit, or overcome them. For nations as for individuals, life is pretty much what you make of it. Thus, as Lawrence James has observed, in the early eighteenth century, 'Britain dominated every field of human activity and its people seemed to possess an almost demonic energy.' And now?

Exhaustion does not of itself produce objectivity, but perhaps we are at least approaching a point from which we can hope to look back dispassionately on our imperial past. Niall Ferguson's six-part television series entitled *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, screened on Channel 4 in January and February of this year, conveyed an instant, exciting sense of overview, while his book of the same title attains still more commanding heights. Not that Prof. Ferguson pontificates; on the contrary, he writes with a lucid elegance that persuades as it entertains, and informs as it beguiles the reader – who must be grateful, too, for a book so superbly illustrated, free (almost) of typographical errors, and beautifully produced. In such a context, the occasional minor slip becomes almost endearing (Joe Chamberlain's family firm manufactured wood-screws, not 'wooden screws' – p.247).

The theme of 'Empire' is made immediately explicit in its sub-title, and questions about values are directly addressed from the very first sections of the book. Ferguson neither enthuses nor deplores, but allocates credit and discredit where each is due, with attention paid to cultural as well as to political and economic dimensions; perhaps the effect of impartiality which he achieves owes something to the summary nature of his survey, in which some significant territories – Nigeria and Malaya, for example – hardly rate mention, but in general he weighs and balances with admirable deftness. Enterprising soldiers evoke more sympathy from him than do ambitious missionaries, but both are essential

manifestations of the imperial urge to rule. The merchants, bankers and industrialists present a more complex set of problems for evaluation; in sum, Ferguson offers some significant modifications to recent orthodoxies, seeing India as unprofitable after the Mutiny, but other elements in the imperial economy as essential to the prosperity of the mother-country. Thus to Ferguson it is the loss of Empire that is the cause of Britain's decline, whereas to Correlli Barnett and others it is the very fact of Empire that is the root of failure.

Ferguson is no more of a cynic than he is a sentimentalist, but he has a nice line in debunking, nonetheless. The saintly Gandhi appears as a pragmatic opportunist who advocated Indian involvement in the military effort of the Great War in order to curry favour with the imperial authorities; 'whingeing Aussies' who persist in bewailing Gallipoli are quietly reminded of the vastly greater scale of British losses at that mismanaged debacle; and Tony Blair is coolly rebuked for the ignorance of history which led him to describe the War of American Independence as directed against slavery.

The British have never, in fact, been very self-aware, let alone doctrinaire, about their imperial activities, despite the best efforts of such as Seeley, Milner and Kipling. Ferguson quotes with evident approval from the writing of that other Blair, George Orwell, colonial administrator and hungry idealist: '...I could get nothing into perspective... I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it.' One may feel that this unintellectual, almost muddle-headed approach had its advantages, if it played a part in limiting the effectiveness of the programme of Social Darwinism, or eugenics, advocated by Hunt, Galton, Pearson and others in the second half of the nineteenth century; the homosexual subculture identified by Ferguson among the British military of the same period may also have been best suited by remaining undeclared. But it is perhaps of more serious consequence that the imperial ruling class never succeeded in making up its mind whether its policy towards subordinate races was one of domination or of assimilation.

It can be argued that this is specifically an English problem, and that it persists to this day in the ambivalences which beset policies directed at Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The loss of the American Colonies, and Westminster's long history of uneasy relations with the white Dominions, form sad counterparts to the patronising liberalism of the policies followed in the non-white territories of the Empire. Will the new imperial power, the United States of America, have any clearer a vision? Niall Ferguson thinks theirs 'an empire... that dare not speak its name. It is an empire in denial.' We may find this worrying.

The Scottish Miracle

Merrie Cave

The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World

Arthur Herman, Fourth Estate, 2003,
£8.99, p/b

'In the name of God what can you grow here?' exclaimed an American tourist on surveying a barren prospect of the Highlands. 'In the name of God we grow educated men', retorted the aged ghillie. This exchange might sum up the robust spirit of the Scottish Enlightenment which is in many ways as important as its continental counterpart. The distinctive contribution of the leading luminaries of the Scottish school – Hume in philosophy, Black in science, Robertson in history, Miller in social theory and Smith in economics was recognised in Europe: 'Where in Germany is the man who can write so well about the moral character?' wrote Kant of Adam Smith. 'We have nothing to compare with him, and I am embarrassed for my dear compatriots', exclaimed Voltaire. Not many read Diderot's *Encyclopedia*, but most houses have a copy of *Britannica* (founded in Edinburgh). For over a century every cultivated home took the *Edinburgh Review* (1803), the leading magazine in the English-speaking world. Arthur Herman's outstanding study, now available in paperback, supplies all the gaps in this story. It is everything you want in a book: an exciting narrative blended with illuminating detail and full of anecdotes and vignettes of the main players with a critical bibliography as a bonus.

In the eighteenth century Scotland transformed itself from a lawless tribal country to a confident society which in the following century spread its intellectual influence and technical expertise across the globe. Without the Scottish diaspora the British Empire might not have occurred. The Scottish emigrants were superior to others in literacy, skills and character and changed every land to which they travelled. Many American patriots were of Scottish origin and the new American constitution was strongly influenced by Enlightenment ideas. At the turn of the eighteenth century two Scotsmen, John MacArthur and Lachlan McQuarie changed Australia from a brutal dumping ground for convicts into a successful colony. Macconachie's humane reforms in Norfolk Island predated improvements in British prisons by a generation.

At the end of the seventeenth century Scotland was

dominated by a harsh Kirk and a selfish nobility although the latter had a democratic system of government and habits of thought which would pay dividends in the future. In 1696 Thomas Aikenhead, a student, was executed for blasphemy, 'the last hurrah of the ayatollahs of the Kirk.' But in that same year an Act for 'setting schools' in every parish was passed and within a generation nearly every parish had some sort of school. By the end of the eighteenth century Scotland's literacy rate was higher than that of any other country, leaving the English lagging behind until the 1880's. Allan Ramsay had started the first lending library in Edinburgh soon imitated by many other towns while students from varied backgrounds enjoyed cheap university education.

However it was the Act of Union in 1707 with England and Wales which provided the essential conditions for making a modern Scotland. The intelligentsia informed by Enlightenment *Realpolitik* saw the advantages of relieving dire poverty – there had been three famines at the end of the seventeenth century – and exchanging peace and order for a nominal independence; a growing middle class wanted access to English overseas markets. The Kirk supported it through fear of a Stuart restoration – even in the '45, the Scots had more to lose than the English from a Stuart victory. Scotland after the Union enjoyed minimal interference from London giving her more scope for innovative activity. By the 1720's the economy was recovering and Glasgow merchants embraced the Atlantic trade with America. By the 1770's they were dominating it.

Many clever men lived in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the eighteenth century. Edinburgh, 'a giant think tank,' presented a sharp contrast to the glittering salons of Paris or Berlin. Its cultural life was not dominated by wealthy patrons; it depended instead on didactic clergymen and university teachers who all knew and lived close to each other. Unlike the French sceptic clerics, they believed Christianity could be reconciled with the new modes of thought: 'Christianity not only sanctifies our souls but refines our manners'. Adam Smith, Joseph Black, and John Miller regularly commuted to Edinburgh from Glasgow to join in the evening parties and the numerous social clubs which crackled with intellectual discussion about all the new ideas: the universality of knowledge, Kames' four stage theory of evolution or Smith's theories of human nature.

Without Francis Hutcheson and Lord Kames the founding fathers of the enlightenment, one a clergyman and teacher who inspired a generation of Scottish intellectuals, the other a lawyer and judge who wrote books on law and society in between court sessions, *The Wealth of Nations*, the pinnacle of the Scottish Enlightenment might not have been written. This then revolutionary book as well as demolishing the prevailing philosophy of mercantalism contained so many ideas that we now take for granted: the existence of 'society', the laws of the 'market', the organisation of labour illustrated in his

famous description of a pin factory. Smith described the workings of production, competition, supply and demand and prices among other observations into how self interest could benefit the common good. But Adam Smith was essentially a moralist who would not have approved of economics becoming an end in itself.

Links between the practical and intellectual were a strong feature of the Scottish Enlightenment. After pioneering innovations in high quality printing in Glasgow, Robert Foulis established a School for the Art of Design, Britain's first. Robert Adam departed from the rigid canons of conventional Palladianism and together with Sir William Chambers changed the direction of artistic activity in Britain. Chambers persuaded George III to create the Royal Academy and trained Sir John Soane who was a great admirer of the Adam style. Edinburgh built the first suburb, with its elegant terraces and imposing public buildings, inspiring future developments elsewhere. The New Town triumphantly celebrated adherence to the Hanoverian succession and the new *British* patriotism with its English and Scottish place names.

In the century after 1750, Oxford and Cambridge produced only 500 doctors. Scotland educated 10,000. The products of the Edinburgh school, where John Hunter, James Simpson and Lister revolutionized surgery, were taught to diagnose and treat their patients while elsewhere students were discouraged from physical contact with the patient. 'Mcadamised' roads transformed the Highlands and elsewhere, and Telford created a new landscape with his massive canal aqueducts and bridges. Remote glens and gorges now became accessible making Highland tourism possible which Sir Walter Scott had encouraged. James Watt's partnership with Matthew Boulton in 1775 gave them a complete monopoly over steam engine construction for the next quarter of a century and transformed Britain's economic life, demonstrating how technology was the key to the future of the division of labour.

The retreat from Empire, the disappearance of heavy industry and the decline of traditional party politics have affected Scotland much more seriously than in England. The SNP has attempted to fill this vacuum. These days the Act of Union is often decried as a betrayal of true Scottish culture while predictably the founders of the Scottish school are dismissed as sexists and elitists. Certainly some Scotsmen want to be like some Irishmen – bitter and resentful about their links to Britain. Hollywood does not help. They should remember that one of the most important lessons of the Enlightenment was that people need to escape from myths and confront reality. In 1707 Scotland gained much more than she lost; in reclaiming her sovereignty she might undo that process. Scotland contributed an indispensable part to the making of the modern world and as Andrew Carnegie put it, 'without Scotland the world would have been a poorer place.'

Missing the Mind's Mystery Anthony O'Hear

The Blank Slate

Steven Pinker, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press,
London, 2002,
£25.00, h/b, £7.99 p/b

Another blockbuster from Steven Pinker; another pot-boiler, the unkind might say, from Professor Pinker and his many 'friends and colleagues' who have, so the author says, 'improved this book in innumerable ways', including, one might add, writing outrageous puffs for its back cover. Sample: 'a work of outstanding clarity and sheer brilliance'; 'stimulating, fearless, immensely learned'; 'the best book on human nature that I or anyone else will read'.

It is, of course, nothing of the sort, but one hardly knows where to begin when confronted by an onslaught of this sort. Indeed the book is hard to write about at all, because one is never sure quite what sort of animal one is dealing with. There are indeed an immense number of references to other authors and sources from all manner of disciplines. The book can thus give the impression to the unwary at least of being written by a kind of modern Leonardo of the mind, a genius in a multitude of fields; but one should beware – hardly a single paragraph of Pinker resonates with the originality of da Vinci's smallest sketch, and some will find the jokes, cartoons and breathless journalese not a little trying.

However, even though in this case *le style, c'est véritablement l'homme* (look at the author's picture, replete with a mane of curls, a cross between Kevin Keegan and Sir Simon Rattle), style is not the issue, or not the main one anyway. The main issue is the sheer impenetrability of some of the book's central claims, specifically that the mind is a biological organ and our thoughts, including those about right and wrong, are neural constructs, 'movies we project onto the interior of our skulls', and which have been honed in our evolutionary history to mesh, up to a point, with real entities in the world.

We need to remind ourselves once again that the mind, or what we refer to when we speak of mental things, is not an organ, and so cannot be a biological organ. It is no organ at all, but an aspect of our whole existence and activity. Contrary to appearance, Pinker, like so many of his colleagues, is in the grip of a Cartesian picture, and failing to find a soul concludes that the mind is the brain. Nor are thoughts neural constructs, if only because

thoughts have a rational, self-transparent and intentional nature neural constructs do not and cannot have. No doubt without brains and neural activity there would be no thoughts or minds; but to assert a necessary condition is not to assert an equivalence, still less to make the assertion of an equivalence even intelligible.

What Pinker does in his book is to expound and defend a moderate version of evolutionary psychology, and much of what he says is sensible, or would be could it be detached from its under-pinning in brain science (which is supposed to give us the hard-wiring on which our behavioural programmes run). At least, in comparison with those who would deny any human nature, much of what he says is sensible. Pinker thinks that we are born with certain predispositions to perceive and think and behave in specific ways because of the evolutionary past of our ancestors, and this annoys many feminists and the political left who find the truth of any such claims inconvenient for their utopian projects. Pinker certainly amasses a lot of evidence for certain predispositions in us as we currently are, and which he sees as genetically based. At the same time he is at pains to emphasize that these are only predispositions, and do not determine us; but as his leftist opponents (and opposing leftists is why he is regarded in academe as 'fearless') also admit that human beings are not wholly malleable, one sometimes wonders what all the fuss is about.

And here, like the leftists, one begins to sense a difficulty with Pinker's general stance. He admits that there are strange ideas we have about modern physics and also that we speculate about the origins of the universe and the nature of mind and consciousness. He follows the currently fashionable nostrum that at these points we may be hitting at the limits of what we can know. Now, it is true that if our cognitive abilities were honed just to get our ancestors around the savannah a few millions years ago, this would be probable. But, given that we have had considerable success in modern physics and other abstruse areas which could have no conceivable relation to the promotion our ancestors' survival, wouldn't another possibility be that our cognitive abilities cannot be explained in terms of our evolutionary past, and suggest that we may be made for something else?

Similarly, in one of the weakest sections of the book, Pinker largely repeats what he said in an earlier book (*How the Mind Works*) on aesthetics. Our artistic creativity can largely be explained in terms of displays of wealth and virtuosity, as well as cueing into the architecture of our brains. In making these claims, he is able to make some wry remarks about the aesthetic poverty of much contemporary art, but what he says hardly begins to address the sense we are given in great art of transcendent value or in the very strong impulse on the part of many of the creators of great art that in their work they were reaching out to a reality beyond the everyday. Nor, on a more mundane level, does it explain why wealthy people (and many of the rest of us) value art as a

manifestation of wealth.

And although (naturally) Pinker argues against our being imprisoned by the various violent and selfish tendencies that may stem from our genetic inheritance, and gives some account of where more co-operative tendencies might come from, he is less clear about what would motivate us to let conflict resolution rule our moral roost rather than conflict. Pinker, along with other evolutionary psychologists would say that if we want to change things for the better, we have to understand our nature, including its more negative aspects – and it has to be admitted that he and they do a fairly good job in reminding us of things about ourselves we might prefer to overlook. But the difficulty from the evolutionary perspective is to see why the better motivation should rule – unless, once again, we admit that the evolutionary perspective is far from giving us a complete perspective on human nature.

We are not blank slates. But nor is our nature explicable in evolutionary terms. Rather against its intentions, this is the true moral of Pinker's book.

A Cornishman in Thirty Thousand Penelope Tremayne

The Diaries of A L Rowse;

ed Richard Ollard, Allen Lane, 2003,
£25

The first thing to note about this book is that despite its length it is very good reading. Most diaries, being episodic rather than narrative, give of their best when dipped into. But this one engages your attention at once, and holds it; and, especially if read straight through, it unfolds a remarkable character, of great simplicity, ('singleness' might be a better word), capacity for suffering, and dogged strength.

The trace of tragedy is discernible throughout. Rowse recalls, for example, long talks and exchanges of thought in 1928-9 with Adam von Trott. 'He supposed I didn't care for Browning, any more than I should approve of the interest in religion. Oh, it's vain to remember it all. The light is failing, I can hardly see to write; the awful kids are outside in the avenue, shouting, kicking a ball, quarrelling as usual We talked about national qualities; he thought that there was a great deal of the Roman qualities in the English.' (A footnote here., added in 1979: 'Nothing of them in evidence to-day.') 'He thought that I had some of them: self-sacrifice, the

ability to subject what was not in keeping with my deliberate plans. This must be more evident in my relations with other people than it is to myself.' Von Trott was not wrong. What a clear picture the diaries give of two young men, both adolescent in emotions if not in mind and Rowse himself oddly the more so, both half-mad, not with the sex-mania so fashionable to-day but with loneliness and the knowledge, not shared by most of their elders, that their worlds were tumbling helter-skelter to destruction.

It was immaturity too that pitched Rowse into the pit of socialist theory, though he seems nearly always to have been on the brink of seeing through it. He speaks of himself for many years as 'an activist' meaning that he stood twice (unsuccessfully) as a Labour candidate, and fulfilled many speaking and writing engagements. That is hardly a Leftist idea of activism. But he was too clear-sighted to be at ease in any of the political parties on offer in the thirties. And he was by temperament utterly unsuited to politics. 'One cannot trust the people; one can trust only one or two rare individuals: in the end there is one-self alone.' I think he never quite forgave himself for falling into the seductive net of Marxist socialism, which to so many between the World Wars seemed to hold the answers to human happiness and virtue. For a time he believed in it passionately, suppressing the messages from his unflinching mind that its map of the world did not correspond to facts on the ground.

He had very little self-confidence; hence his need to blow his own trumpet, understanding perfectly that no-one would do it for him. But he did trust his own intellect, and although he wanted, and felt he ought, to stand for the Left, intellect told him that the castle was built on shifting-sand. He tried to escape by blaming not the dogma itself but 'the people'. 'Civilisation is the creation of the dominant classes, not the creation of the proletariat, though it may have been squeezed out of the surplus value of their labour. Their unself-awareness, compared with the self-awareness the dominant classes have of their position, tradition etc., is one of the things I despise most about the people. It is what enables the poor fools to be ruled so easily, and makes them incapable of ruling. They can't rule themselves, how can they hope to rule others? The upper classes know this only too well. It is a comparatively late discovery for me and a bitter one, for after all I belong to the fools, not to the other side.'

Later he distanced himself a little from this ferocious resentment, though he never denied his own working-class origins. Slowly he transferred his strongest hatreds to the middle classes, not so much for their stupidity as for their philistinism and general inability to recognise or value what is beautiful. ('What no-one realises' he once said to me at the age of 85 or so, sitting up in a bed strewn with sheets of his current book in progress, slender hand waving above his head, 'is that humans simply CAN'T THINK.' I didn't ask what race

he himself belonged to. Whatever it might be, he was certainly a rare specimen.

As time went on, he took to caricaturing himself, and thereby did his own reputation a good deal of harm; for many people (this would hardly have surprised him), failed to recognise it as caricature. And he found criticism, if publicly expressed, hard to bear. All too often he felt himself undervalued (as he certainly was at times) and says so plainly. But loyalty was not lacking in him, and in his diary he judges himself just as severely as he does others.

I have read one or two reviews of these Diaries. One accused AL of 'coarseness', for using the word 'bitch' (though only in his diary not publicly or applying it to anyone identified in any way); and seemed to infer from this that the love of beauty which so dominated his thoughts and reactions must have been somehow bogus. Did familiarity with the word show coarseness of spirit, or what? It seems an odd comment in the present day. A perhaps more perceptive reviewer, referring to a written attack made on one of Rowse's books by a friend who had privately congratulated him on it, quotes his comment: 'I knew it would be impossible for him to translate such generosity into print.' I would like to reinforce that with a personal anecdote. When Peter Levi hopefully announced a hitherto undiscovered poem of Shakespeare, and journalists and scholars were busily shooting him down, I asked AL if he intended to add his own voice to the argument. 'Certainly not', he replied. Did he then think there could be something in it? 'Of course not, anyone can see that. It doesn't matter; Levi's a good man and he's been good to me in the past. I can't support him in this but I wouldn't dream of stirring the pot and making things worse for him.' And there is much else to show that he was both generous in giving praise or support to others (especially small-fry) and loyal to his friends.

Richard Ollard's biography of Rowse (*A Man of Contradictions*, Allen Lane, 1999) drew a discerning portrait of a very exceptional man. In choosing what to include in this new volume (and there seems to have been a great mass of material) he has managed to bring the figure still more clearly out of the frame: a man desperately over-sensitive, an intellectual phenomenon, an emotional child, but always true to his own daemon.

Whatever the disagreements about AL Rowse the man, there is one thing reviewers, including myself, have found in common: the urge to quote his own words. Could there be a more telling tribute to a writer?



Flew and False Philosophising

Peter Mullen

Social Life & Moral Judgement

Antony Flew, Transaction Publishers, 2003

£28.95

One of the horrors of modern life, as predicted by George Orwell, is doublethink. Why is it that, in an age when we are reputed to have so many 'freedoms', we are truly free to think and say only those things of which our politically-correct masters approve? It takes an acute philosophical brain to indicate exactly where the absurdity lies in the fine-sounding new clichés of social morality. And Antony Flew is a virtuoso of the philosophical trade. For example, 'We are told we must 'respect the beliefs of others' – but this requirement fails to distinguish between respecting someone's right to hold and to express a belief and respecting the content of that belief.' Those who utter the noble sentiment about respect for the beliefs of others would not tolerate for an instant my beliefs that fox-hunting is a good thing; that wearing fur is morally unexceptionable; whereas abortion is the greatest evil of our age.

Flew is very proficient at exposing the fashionable modern fallacies as logically inept and morally pernicious. He is also good at supplying us with actual moral cases – the vast increase in crime for instance. He points out that successive policies have advisedly made the English criminal justice system much softer in dealing with youngsters. They now know that short of a major felony not much punishment faces what they do. In 1994 only 10 per cent of boys under fourteen picked up by the police were ever found guilty of anything. In 1954 of boys under fourteen picked up, 75 per cent, having been indicted, were found guilty. So now we know why there is so much more crime these days.

Notice too that in addition to doublethink we also have plenty of newspeak. 'Juvenile delinquent' has been replaced by the euphemistic and sentimental term 'young offender'. There is black humour in this. What is a young offender like? Is he like a Young Conservative? The trouble is with the modern criminal justice system's ultra-leniency towards juvenile crime, that most young offenders graduate to become old lags.

Flew launches a coruscating attack on John Rawls' influential theory of justice – which has had deleterious consequences for public morality equivalent to the implications Keynes' economics had for the public

finances. Flew exposes Rawls' cavalier and in effect totalitarian contempt for logic. And he does this in the best way possible, by quoting Rawls himself who, in one place says that he is 'eager to leave questions of meaning and definition aside and get on with the task of developing a substantive theory of judgement'. It's like saying that we should leave the hot water and the tea bags on one side and get on with the task of making a pot of tea. In these examples, Flew reveals himself as a devastating satirist.

Again we see the pervasiveness of newspeak in the modern project, and again Flew dynamites it conspicuously: 'Rawls, the author of *A Theory of Justice*, would be ideally suited to a position of general editor of a series of equally obese and misleading studies of something as something else – works with titles such as *Marriage as Cohabitation*, *Freedom as Necessity* and *Property as Theft*.'

He has a delightful gift for the exact aphorism: 'Profit motive evil? Why is it we never hear of the rent motive evil or the wages motive evil?' Or, turning to that bottomless pit of waste and inefficiency, the health and welfare industry whose controllers ascribe every incidence of ill health to 'social inequality', Flew remarks on the report *Inequalities in Health*: 'Characteristically, it gives no consideration whatsoever to any possibilities of self-improvement.'

On the arbitrary ideological judgements characterising 'radical' thinking, we have: 'Several of the major life-threatening or disabling diseases, notably for instance, heart disease, respiratory diseases and AIDS are related to the kind of life their victims choose to lead – whether they smoked, what they ate or the nature and extent of their sexual activities. Even poverty is now increasingly linked not with inevitable old age but with the disruption of or the failure to form families. Yet single parenthood and divorce both result from the choices of individuals.'

Flew picks out William Bennett's devastating words on American education, in his *A Nation at Risk*, as entirely appropriate to our own, given the sheer, wanton destructiveness of the educational project in our two countries: 'The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on us the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands we have allowed this to happen to ourselves.'

Flew quotes the Macpherson report to the effect of condemning it out of its own mouth; and he points particularly to the absurd doublethink sentence: 'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person.' By this standard of evaluation, if I invited you for a cup of coffee, you could, if you were perverse enough, shop me to the police for racism. And what is the Report's concept of 'institutional racism' – by which the Metropolitan Force was forced to shrive itself and put on sackcloth and ashes – except a

prime chunk of newpeak?

The Europhiles constantly insist that our belonging to the EU does not affect one jot or tittle of our constitution. But, to give just one example, the presumption of innocence has effectively been abolished through our membership of the EU. 'Under the "Burden of Proof Directive" of the EU, anyone who is accused of any form of legally recognised employment discrimination is to be presumed guilty until and unless they succeed in proving to the Court their innocence.'

Flew's book is a luminous survey of our national decadence and a sane prescription for our restoration. Government ministers and EU apparatchiks ought to read it – but they won't.

Mugabe, Marxism & Murder

Elizabeth Endycott

Degrees in Violence

David Blair, Continuum, 2002

£17.99 hb, £12.99 pb

David Blair was born in Malawi and worked in Zimbabwe as correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* from May 1999 until June 2000 when he was deported, as part of the war being waged on independent journalists by Robert Mugabe's government. The title of the book is taken from a speech by Mugabe who, for more than thirty years, has made no secret of the fact that he would gain power by means of violence, and having achieved it, intended to hold it for life – if necessary, also by violence.

Degrees in Violence benefits from Blair's personal knowledge of Africa, and from his skill as a reporter of the realities of what has happened in that tragic continent. He has not written a polemic, but a fair and honest account of events that he has witnessed. He has not fallen into the trap of seeing the unfolding tragedy of Zimbabwe in terms only of the dispossession of white farmers, but recognises that the overwhelming burden of suffering has been borne by Zimbabweans. The subtlety of the propaganda emanating as a result of the Zimbabwe's government's actions (actually orders coming directly from Mugabe) is such that most of the world's media – in particular the British media – have concentrated on the plight of the white farmers. This has resulted in a distortion of the true situation because there is little sympathy worldwide for a small section of the population perceived as a racist group holding onto land amassed 'illegally' – some of it as long ago as a hundred years.

In 1993, seventy farms covering 475,000 acres, were earmarked for acquisition. Among them were farms belonging to Mugabe's black political opponents – the President was already using the land issue to settle old political scores. Churu Farm, near Harare, was owned by the late Ndabanugi Sithole, who actually founded ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) which is now the ruling party of Zimbabwe, and who was originally its leader. At first, Sithole was a protégé of the evil Tanzanian dictator Julius Nyerere, who was probably the most influential African leader of the post-colonial era. But Nyerere changed tack and backed the then relatively unknown Robert Mugabe. Sithole was ousted and for the rest of his life, loathed Mugabe. When his farm was seized, government officials were backed by riot police. Many thousands of black workers were evicted; there were deaths, but no official figures.

James Chickereana, at one time a senior figure in the opposition political party ZAPU (led by the late Joshua Nkomo) formed his own party to fight the 1980 elections. Mugabe determined to break him; his 800 acre farm at Zuimba was seized and hundreds of black workers and their families were chased from their farms by riot police. Such illegal acquisitions have been ignored by the world's press, indeed the Mugabe propaganda machine was able, pre-1990, to hint at South African involvement to destabilise Zimbabwe, or later, pro-white farmer sympathisers. (The 'South African connection' has also been used as an excuse for the toned-down, or non-existent, condemnation of the massacres of Ndebele people in the 1980's. The opposition ZAPU was strongest among the Ndebele; Mugabe and his henchman are from the Shona tribe, the largest in Zimbabwe.)

Blair is shrewd and honest enough in his reportage to point out parallels between the insanities of Mugabe's regime and the equal insanities of Ian Smith's UDI regime. Mugabe's Zimbabwe has been run by a small coterie of Marxist fanatics. Ian Smith's Rhodesia included people like PJ van der Byl, Information Minister, who amused himself by taking a helicopter ride and randomly shooting at terrified black villagers below. His contemporary counterpart, Jonathan Moyo, froths at the mouth and screams schoolboy abuse at the press, reserving his most paranoid ravings for his 'brothers', the brave journalists of the independent Zimbabwean media. On the Smith/Mugabe parallels, Blair comments: 'perhaps the most obvious is their limitless capacity for self-delusion'. Remember Smith's ridiculous claim that whites would rule Rhodesia for a thousand years. The memoirs of Smith's Chief of Intelligence, Ken Flower, record the 1976 raid on Nyadzonja, planned and led by the notorious killer Ron Reid-Daly, when more than a thousand refugees – mainly women and children – were slaughtered in a hail of bullets, or were burned to death or drowned while fleeing across the river. At this time, Smith enjoyed the overwhelming support of the white farmers.

Millions of Zimbabweans are enduring Stalin-inspired

state terror, and protracted deaths from starvation and AIDS. The world looks on in callous indifference. In the British Parliament more time has been given to the fate of foxes than to this horror. *Bien pensants* like Glenys Kinnock and Peter Hain have voiced carefully worded and ineffectual criticisms of the Zimbabwean leader; criticisms of his initial seizure of power through flawed elections and a campaign of intimidation throughout the rural areas were dismissed as South African propaganda.

Church leaders in the UK have also been quiet. Where is the support for the courageous Archbishop Neube of Bulawayo, who has been threatened with mutilation and death for condemning the withholding of food from areas believed to be supporting the MDC, the opposition party in Zimbabwe? His visit to London in June this year was ignored by the Catholic Bishops, the Foreign Office, the BBC and the other media. Who issued the diktat to keep that troublesome priest silent?

'The past is full of eras of progress that ended in darkness', Robert Conquest wrote on the cynical utopianism of Marxist states. Zimbabwe is the latest addition to this catalogue of nightmares. At least Mugabe has been consistent on the land issue. His election manifesto of 1980 was quite clear: 'The people's government shall hold the land and administer it.... Consequently, there cannot be any private ownership of the natural wealth as it belongs to the people as a whole.' Who can say we were not warned more than twenty years ago? David Blair's book should be compulsory reading for those wishing to gain further insights into the horrors of Mugabe's murderously insane policies.

Sacred Beauty

Robert Hugill

Surprised by Beauty: A Listener's Guide to the Recovery of Modern Music,
Robert R. Reilly, Crisis Publishing,
Washington DC, 2003, \$19.95

This illuminating book consists of an introduction, thirty-four short essays on thirty-nine different composers, a postscript 'Recovering the Sacred in Music' and six interviews with composers (well, five composers and Robert Craft, who discusses Stravinsky and Schoenberg). The essays are all drawn from the author's writings for the magazine *Crisis*, a monthly magazine based in Washington, D.C. that covers politics, culture and the Catholic Church. So far so good, but books of recycled

musical journalism are moderately common. What distinguishes this book is that each essay comes with a recommended list of discs to enable you to explore the composer more fully. And this incitement to exploration is the book's biggest distinguishing point. Reilly has written almost all of the essays with a view to encouraging the reader to explore 20th century music.

Reilly writes lucidly and with genuine enthusiasm. After reading some of his single composer surveys (for example the long piece on the symphonies of Roy Harris) you want to go out and buy the discs that he recommends, to experience the music for yourself. The book is written to encourage those who are reluctant to explore 20th century music, so the essays work best when you do not know so much about a composer and are willing to let yourself be carried away by the writer's enthusiasm. If you know too much about a composer, then it is all too easy to nit pick, especially given the abbreviated nature of the essays. But even when dealing with a mainstream composer such as Janacek, Reilly's enthusiasms and descriptions are appealing.

The book is written from a very particular point of view that Reilly does not try to hide. Given the book's origin in articles written for a magazine that has a religious point of view, it is not surprising that a subtitle for the book could almost be '*Recovering the Sacred in Music*', the title of the author's postscript essay. This can lead Reilly into some lop-sided enthusiasms and a degree of tunnel vision. But any book that purports to survey the bewildering variety 20th century music is bound to suffer from limitations and one can only applaud Reilly for being direct about this.

There are times when you start to question his choices. His keenness to discover the sacred in music means that the essay devoted to John Adams deals exclusively with 'El Niño' with rather worrying attempts at parallels with the 'Messiah'. Reilly reviews *El Niño* as a sacred work, rather than a dramatic one, so that he takes exception to the sections of the text drawn from the Gnostic Gospels. Surely, this is unhelpful to the casual reader. Adams and Peter Sellars had good dramatic reasons for their selection of texts and we should be trying to appreciate them. Reilly goes on to question Sellars' comment that 'There is no one point of view about Mary. It's the opposite. The nature of truth is not that it belongs to this person or that person. The truth hovers in the middle.' *El Niño* is one of the most recent stage works from one of America's major musical dramatists, so even though the essay avoids discussion of Adams's earlier CNN operas, it does make a real attempt to draw you in and make you think about the work. From there it is surely a small step to listening to and trying to understand it in your own terms, sacred or not.

Where I take real issue with Reilly is his characterisation of the issue of serialism in the same terms as the sacred. Nearly all the composers in this book wrote music that was broadly tonal. With the exception of John

Cage, whose essay is entitled 'Apostle of Noise', composers have either forged a tonal path or have had a change of heart like George Antheil ('Bad boy made good'). In terms of encouraging listeners to explore contemporary music, this is no bad thing. There are composers of complex music here and an experienced listener might choose to start listening to complex serial music if they so desired. But Reilly cannot accept this and constantly demonises serialism. To link the absence of God in the everyday world with the absence of order in composing music I find unhelpful.

Reilly also tends to define composers in terms of their spirituality. His essay on John Cage, whilst not always approving, is lucid in its exposition of Cage's philosophy. Is it really helpful to discuss the views of St. Paul on the role of God in man's creation of things. But, even with more conventional composers, the sacred is never far away. Reilly's comment about Finzi that 'beauty was Finzi's window onto God, his meeting place with Him' is perhaps perceptive, though I do find it a little over the top. Frank Martin, whose work covers a multitude of forms and who came to his own entente with serialism, has most of his secular works dismissed with a dismissive comment about 'gray aridity'. But Reilly admits that this is personal prejudice and goes on to give an intelligent account of Martin's sacred works, marred only by a strange desire to fit the survey into a structure based on the church's year. And his selection of discs of Martin's work is surely a fine place for anyone to start exploring

this often underrated composer's work.

Reilly's decisions about which composers to include and which to omit can easily be questioned, that is after all half the fun of such surveys. My only major quibble is with the decision to label the book as 'The best composers and recordings of the last hundred years'. That is asking for someone to disagree with you. The construction of the book is probably better understood if you take the recordings as a starting point. Surely the decisions to include a composer, to feature a particular work or to group composers together can be partly understood by the appearance (or lack) of new recordings to be featured in a forthcoming article. This, perhaps, explains why poor Samuel Barber is relegated to a joint essay with Ian Krouse and Dominick Argento. It might also explain why the essay on Ralph Vaughan Williams features just one single work, *Hodie*. Surely not RVW's finest work.

This book is highly recommended. It is not all-inclusive, but it does generate genuine enthusiasm for 20th century music. Whilst having an emphasis on American composers, Reilly manages to include a number of distinguished Scandinavians who warrant exploration and even devotes an essay to Gian Francesco Malipiero, who still awaits proper discovery. What we need now is another such survey which gives due weight to UK composers and perhaps a book written from the other point of view, encouraging listeners to explore accessible music by composers devoted to serialism.

NOTES ON REVIEWERS

MERRIE CAVE IS
OUR MANAGING EDITOR

ELIZABETH ENDYCOTT
IS A FREELANCE WRITER ON AFRICA

ROBERT HUGILL
IS A COMPOSER

PETER MULLEN
IS RECTOR OF ST MICHAEL'S, CORNHILL, LONDON

ANTHONY O'HEAR
WAS PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT BRADFORD UNIVERSITY

MICHAEL ST JOHN PARKER
WAS HEADMASTER OF ABINGDON SCHOOL, AND IS NOW ENGAGED IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

PENELOPE TREMAYNE
IS A WRITER ON POLITICAL AND MILITARY SUBJECTS

A Defining Moment: A review of the issues and options for Britain arising from the Convention on the Future of Europe

Norman Blackwell, Centre for Policy Studies, 2003, £7.50

How times do change. Ten years ago, at the time of the Maastricht Treaty, three years before Norman, now Lord Blackwell, became head of the Prime Minister's Policy unit, the best eurosceptics could hope for is some sympathy for the view that the Treaty with its quantum leap towards European integration ought not to be signed. Signed it was, by John Major. Now we have Norman Blackwell openly saying that if the threatened EU constitution materialises, Britain may well find itself in the position of having to withdraw from the European project altogether. Who would have thought that matters would proceed this far this fast?

We have the EU architects to thank for the fact that many more people are opening their eyes. Worried about the cracks appearing in the architecture of 'Europe' (for this is not the real Europe we are talking about but a political construct), widened by the forthcoming enlargement to the East, they are pushing through an inappropriate constitution that would tie all the member states, they hope in perpetuity, into the ridiculous structure first dreamt of by Jean Monnet all those decades ago. The speed and blatancy with which this is being advanced has finally begun to alarm the political elite of this country. Hence this extremely useful pamphlet, which analyses the first sixteen articles of the proposed constitution (many more have been made public since) and explains why it is not possible for the United Kingdom to go along with it. If I were the carping sort I would point out that many of the policies and agreements that so worry Lord Blackwell have been around for some time and that we, eurosceptics, have been trying to call attention to them for just as long. But I am not the carping sort. I am glad that Lord Blackwell has seen the light and has presented his arguments so cogently. Let us hope his example will be contagious.

Helen Szamuely

Harnessing our Genius: British Science in the 21st Century

Stuart Lyons, Centre for Policy Studies, 2003, £7.50

Stuart Lyons navigates through the usual alphabet soup to explain how Britain's publicly funded expenditure on science is managed (answer, hardly at all). About £7.5 billion a year of our money is spent on science, engineering and technology research, of which about one third is defence-related. About £2 billion is the DTI's science budget, which goes through the Office of Science & Technology (OST) to the seven Research Councils. About half goes on to Universities, which also get about £1.25 billion for science support through the Higher Education Funding Councils (for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

There is also a Council for Science & Technology, which consists of the great and the good of science and academia, and some industrialists etc, who are meant to be the senior advisory body on the sciences, but have no authority over the Research Councils. In practice the Research Councils are loosely organised, and are not under much control by the OST. Control is mainly by the Treasury, which now determines strategies and priorities as well as budgets – good news for those who believe that Gordon Brown should be in charge anyway. A new body, Research Councils UK has been set up, to co-ordinate the Research Councils, but disagreements between departments and ministers have left the RCUK with no effective powers.

Lyons believes that the National Science Foundation, set up by the United States in 1950 as an independent federal agency, is better organised, more accountable, and much more effective. It has much more autonomy than the RCUK, and would provide a much better model for publicly-funded British Science.

He does not consider whether we are spending the right amount of public money on science. In *The Economic Laws of Scientific Research* (Macmillan, 1996), Terence Kealey, now translated to the vice-chancellorship of Buckingham University, showed that science is better funded by industry and private benefactors, rather than from taxation. Of course, public universities should teach science, and their teachers should also be researchers, but that raises the further questions of whether we have the right number of universities, and whether 50 per cent of our 18-plus group should become students.

Robin Cave

Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism?

Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich (eds.),
Princeton University Press,
2002, £45/£11.95

Never a systematic theorist of government, Friedrich Nietzsche called himself 'the man of Calamity' whose philosophy would remove mountains of millennial falsehood, thereby exploding the old social structures and merging the concept of politics with a war of spirits. 'It is only with me that the earth knows great politics.' His intellectual influence has been a perennial recurrence but his posthumous responsibility for 'fascism' in the aftermath of the first world war and 'immoralism' during the second remains debatable.

For the simple-minded, the issue seems simple: Nietzsche advocated cruelty towards the weak, and fascism was no more than sadism in its political mode; inhuman, all too inhuman. Besides, there are claims from all sides of a direct ideological linkage. Edited by two well-known scholars at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, this diverse collection of fully documented essays begins to submit this vexed question to a refreshing combination of precise and profound analysis. To be sure, Mussolini himself gets only one chapter out of fourteen, and Mosley nothing. However, the understandable Holocaustal focus on Hitler confirms the view that, although some verbal resonances can be traced in his utterances, this particular 'fascist' was sufficiently well-read to feel uncomfortable with Nietzsche's actual judgements on Germany and Jewry, Wagner or even Christ, despite the efforts of sister Elizabeth (who receives more generous treatment than usual). Some pre-war Nazis appropriated Nietzsche partly by selection and misrepresentation, while some post-modern anti-Nazis do so partly by deconstruction and misinterpretation, and objective students should 'search the scriptures' themselves rather than try to weigh a Bäumler against a Bataille.

This book is not an ethical exculpation, still less a political endorsement, of the 'aristocratic radical'. But those who cannot share many prevalent, inadequately examined

assumptions about 'equality' and 'democracy' may yet find inspiration in his original works, maybe derive in our age of 'cyclopean' science, to use the current jargon, another 'palingenesis' from those 'agonal texts'. *David Ashton*

Libertarianism, A Christian Critique

Philip Vander Elst, The Christian Institute, 26,
Jesmond Rd, Newcastle on Tyne NE2 4PQ,
2003, £2.50

Libertarianism, a philosophy of American origin, its best known luminaries being Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard, has enjoyed great success and popularity for the past thirty years. It has influenced the Conservative party here and several influential think tanks like the Institute of Economic Affairs. It is easy to see why. Apart from Margaret Thatcher's brave attempt to roll it back in the eighties, the state now grafted on to the European monster is more menacing than ever. Philip Vander Elst's useful pamphlet explains the background and basic principles of libertarianism but points out its serious defects. His cogent conclusions would certainly be shared by non-Christians and Christians alike. Most people would agree that free market capitalism is the only economic system compatible with freedom and the individual's 'natural rights'. However, it cannot be an end in itself. They would also think that state activity should be severely limited. But they would take issue with Libertarians who believe like Roy Jenkins that the permissive society is the civilised society and that there should be no restrictions on perverse forms of entertainment, perverse behaviour and the use of perverse substances. The great classical Liberal thinkers of the past who libertarians love to quote, like Mill, would be horrified at their arguments being used to justify the licence endemic today and the anti-social and criminal behaviour in our society. Liberty itself is in danger of being snuffed out because self-control, an essential tool to sustain a free civilised society, is disappearing. *Merrie Cave*

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