Spring 2005
Vol. 23 No. 3

The Salisbury Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, 1830-1903

A Conservative Manifesto
Alfred Sherman

Politics and Competition
Richard Packer

Dining with a Despot
John Adamson

Children's TV
Harry Phibbs

Trevor Huddleston
Christie Davies

Force Feeding the Masses
Tatiana Borisovna

£4.50

CONTENTS

Articles

In Lieu of a Conservative Election Manifesto
4 Alfred Sherman
Politics and Attitudes towards Competition
6 Richard Packer
The Corporate Parasites
8 Tom Burkard
Ronald Reagan
11 Mark Coalter
Was Trevor Huddleston a Paedophile?
13 Christie Davies
How Vertebrate is Spain?
16 Curtis Cate
The Breakdown of Culture
19 Eric Hester
Fixing Shakespeare
21 Roger Sandall
24 **Roy Kerridge**
Hague's Piano or Blair's Guitar?
25 Caroline Galwey
Children's TV
27 Harry Phibbs
Letter from Moscow
28 Tatiana Borisovna
Atheism Without Tears
31 Hadrian Wise
Dining with a Despot?
33 John Adamson
Is This Valid?
35 James Docherty

REPUTATIONS — 8
37 C.H. Sisson
CONSERVATIVE CLASSIC — 17
39 Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit Books
ETERNAL LIFE
41 Peter Mullen

Book Reviews

Dennis O'Keeffe
42 on Political Correctness
Norman Dennis
44 on the English Working Class
Peter Coleman
46 on Stephen Spender
Myles Harris
47 on the Home Office and Immigration
Frank Ellis
48 on Victory in Europe
Harry Phibbs
50 on John Redwood
Stuart Millson
51 on John Betjeman
Patricia Morgan
52 on the Welfare State
Christie Davies
54 on Intelligence

The World Today Sets no Store on Faith
55 Sir Louis le Bailly
'Hail! Bright Cecilia'
56 Andrew Earis
57 **In Short**
59 **Demonstrable Failures**

Pensions — Euro-Commission Style

I recently visited the European Parliament building in Brussels. I was profoundly struck by how familiar it felt - not to the marbled halls of a totalitarian nightmare from the 1930s, but to a student's union hostel of the 1960s and 1970s. The same concrete-dull decor; the agit-prop posters next to every photo-copier; the cheapness of the furnishings; the levelled-down quality of all the areas to which most have access (though my wife assures me that there are one or two specially reserved rooms which are very different and in which Beluga caviar is served to the senior EU-crats whilst the interpreters and lower-grade cadres get cheese rolls and BR-style coffee).

The EP is not a legislature but an agit-prop mechanism. That is why it is so amorphous; hard to pin down, interfering, barmy, dangerous and powerless at the same time. It is the perfect foil for the people who really run Euro-land, the permanent civil servants in the Commission. They keep the system running; they devise, implement and enforce its rules, imprimatur'd by their nominal masters, the Commissioners. The system is run for their benefit, too. It will shock many people that the Commission has reserved 19.5 billion euros in its 2003 accounts for the payment of pension liabilities to former commissioners and employees of the Commission. For a staff complement which all EU-phanters have trumpeted as minuscule, this is a lot of money. But the really smart trick is that every last Euro-cent has been debited back to the Member States in the accounts. The Member States are shown as debtors, owing the Commission the full cost of pension benefits for all its people, from its inception to the end of the (European) world. Smartest of all, however, is the answer that Brian Gray, the Commission's chief Accountant (in effect, the Commission's Finance Director) gave me when I asked him in a public meeting whether the Member States had confirmed their liabilities as at 31 December 2003 for these pension debts. 'Whether they agree or not doesn't matter; they [the Member States] have to pay.'

Perhaps we should all adopt the Brian Gray method of accounting, as devised for the European Commission. If I owe wages to my staff, for example, all I need do is recharge my neighbours in my street, office block or industrial estate. They may not agree to becoming my debtors, but — hey, what the hell — they are my neighbours, they have to pay. I wonder what my bank manager would say if I showed him that, by Brian Gray magic, my liabilities had vanished from my balance sheet, all nicely covered to the last Queen's 5p bit by equal and opposite debts due from the residents of London W4.

I wonder what the employees of Turner & Newall will think, now that they know they are not going to get their pensions from their employer. Will they have a grandly high-minded, self-sacrificingly warm feeling that however they may freeze in old age, at least their taxes will have paid, still pay, and will always pay for Lord Kinnochio to stay a-glow by his fireside, enjoying the plush of pensioned retirement following his service for his country (Europe)? Pass me the sick-bag, Alice, or the knotted rope!

Christopher Arkell

The Salisbury Review

Editor Dennis O'Keeffe
Managing Editor Merrie Cave
Consulting Editors Roger Scruton
Sir Richard Body
Myles Harris
Literary Editor Ian Crowther

33 Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JW
Tel: 020 7226 7791 Fax: 020 7354 0383
E-mail: salisburyreview@tiscali.co.uk

Web site: http://www.salisbury-review.co.uk

Prosperity and general moral decency sometimes coincide. How long can the former continue, however, without the latter? British industrialisation, owed much to the relative enlightenment of the British eighteenth century; Victorian progress embraced both economy and morality. The British 1960s, by contrast, at the start of today's super-affluence, showed that the temptation to forget human sinfulness is never extinguished. For forty years morality has slumped, while the economic curve has continued its dizzy upward course. Our affluence and quality of life are now threatened by excessive regulations and taxes but more by the weakening of the moral order. The worst — and institutionalised — immorality, is New Labour's blatant pillaging of honest taxpayers in its patronage of bogus public sector jobs.

Alfred Sherman's Alternative Conservative Manifesto defines genuine Conservatism. At its core is allegiance to our traditions, and institutions. Abandoning these in the sixty years since 'our finest hour', we have lost the peace, Sherman claims. Louis le Bailly too recalls, in heart-breaking words, the charming solidarity and courage of the war-time ethos. The 1940s British were, morally superior to the British of today.

Our national integrity has plummeted, first gradually, then swiftly. We *are* extraordinarily rich. Our boastful government, however, ignores the economic fragility attending its irresponsible stoking of vast debts and has advisedly forgotten Labour's opposition to the Thatcher reforms, whose sacrifices temporarily arrested our decline. Our bizarre lurch back to socialism is identified in the story James Docherty relates, with retired doctors prevented from offering their services free.

Worse still is Civil Service corruption, here lamented in Myles Harris's exposé of Home Office deceitfulness over immigration. Worse again is the decay of patriotism. Who now recalls the days when Attlee and Bevin were British first and Labour second? Their dutiful loyalty contrasts painfully with the present government's scorn for British interests. The Conservative Party seems unable to articulate any proper alternative.

Gone is the everyday decency which once made us so admired. Even after a 'low decade' like the 1930s, when many cosseted academic notables had betrayed civilisation in favour of Communism, the British as a whole had maintained their standards and were able to face the Nazi challenge. Even allowing for the protection the Channel affords us, the contrast between the war-time behaviour of the British and that of the French, for example, remains instructive. Today, we have lost the wide margin of moral superiority we then displayed. Nor could we repeat today anything like our long haul of solidarity with the United States against Communism.

Patricia Morgan, reviewing James Bartholomew's book on the welfare state, argues that the ideological rot accompanying it has been even worse than the institutional damage. Norman Dennis tells a comparable story. It was the casting away by schools and families of the highly successful Victorian rule-book, an abandonment successive modern governments have endorsed, which did most harm. The very thing which had worked best was wantonly squandered.

The indiscriminate moral culture of recent years, paralleling what Roger Scruton calls the 'swamp' of popular entertainment, has claimed many victims besides the new welfariat. The Conservative Party wreckage, shows that the most solid elements in the population have suffered a loss of nerve. Consider the muted resistance to the disastrous running down of our armed forces. Can we be sure that the British, faced with a challenge such as Spain faced last year, would react any less cravenly?

Why is so little said about the strain of madness enveloping our public administration? Our blinkered élite has contrived uncontrollable immigration, the partial destruction of the British constitution, a collapse in the moral authority of adults and a weakening of the rule of law. It seeks to annihilate our identity in favour of the EU, dominated by France and Germany, two countries which have now added to their long-standing political folly, twenty years of obdurate economic mismanagement. It epitomises our moral and political malaise that we should even consider subordinating our political and economic destiny to such a corrupt fantasy.

Alfred Sherman

Sixty years ago, Britain emerged victorious from a testing life and death struggle in which — echoing Pitt's immortal words — we had saved Britain by our exertions and Europe by our example. In the supervening half century, we have gone a long way towards losing the peace. Britain may not survive as a democratic independent nation-state during the twenty-first century unless we 'reverse the trend', as the late Keith Joseph urged in his clarion call in 1974 which sparked off the Thatcher revolution. There is no point in heaping all the blame on to the Socialists; inasmuch as they marked the path, the Conservatives followed, and in some cases, even took the initiative. Our approaches need re-shaping *ab initio*. The Conservatives' decision to offer the British people socialism in 1945 following Labour victory set the direction for post-war decades which awaits reversal.

Our watchword must be 'Be Britain First!' The English language — outside of regions where Welsh and Gaelic are indigenous — British history, literature and values, should be supreme, though all residents must enjoy the right to use, teach, read, write, publish and broadcast in any languages they wish at their own expense

Our watchword must be 'Be Britain First!' The English language — outside of regions where Welsh and Gaelic are indigenous — British history, literature and values, should be supreme, though all residents must enjoy the right to use, teach, read, write, publish and broadcast in any languages they wish at their own expense, and to instruct their young in liturgical languages. All British citizens and residents must be equal under the law, but directly responsible to it: the practice of recognizing 'communities' with leaderships to be consulted and to share power with lawfully constituted authorities must be outlawed. We shall offer members of minorities not privileges in exchange for votes, but membership of an opportunity State.

Conservatives are a Church and King (or Queen) party. The Reformation provided the basis for the nation's liberties which the world envies. Christianity is an essential element of Britishness and British Conservatism. Christianity in general and Anglicanism in particular are much more than religious doctrine. Together with a sense of history and the residue of classical learning and tradition, they constitute a mindset, and frame of reference. They should not be sacrificed to the achievement of spurious inclusivity embracing Moslems, Sikhs, Hindus, animists and others who will remain as distinct from British Christian society as Englishmen are from theirs.

The United Kingdom's population is roughly sixty million, the world's six billion, a hundred times larger. It constitutes a human tsunami, a constant threat, exacerbated by the masochistic anti-nationalistic self-hate of our own liberals and socialists. Since the Second World War, the threat has been compulsively discounted, even welcomed in a spirit of national self-abnegation which goes right to the top. A *real* Conservative government would end immigration and asylum: Britain for the British! There has been no labour shortage here since the aftermath of the Black Death, only inefficient use of labour, with millions living off welfare, sick-pay, crime and the black economy. We should undertake repatriation of illegals, and give the country a chance to breathe, to keep Britain British.

In the middle of the last century, a messianic mood generated by the war ruled. It was believed that the State could win the peace as it had done the war. We have presided over half a century of failure and disillusion, but the lessons remain to be drawn and applied. The State's power has exceeded its natural limits, and the first priority of a newly-elected Conservative government will be to cut them back. The question is not how to cut taxation but how to cut government expenditure. This will be government's main task and measure of accomplishment. The rest will follow logically.

The term 'government services' needs re-defining. For a long time, transportation of people and goods was a service which beneficiaries paid for and providers earned from providing. This was radically changed, first by the introduction of transport subsidies and then by what was called — or misnamed — transport policy. A system by which users got what they paid for and paid for what they got was replaced by a non-system according to which prices, fares and

revenues were determined and doled out according to extraneous political considerations, primarily the convenience and political prejudices of transport unions and local councils. Since transport enterprises no longer depend primarily on their passengers and customers, they no longer give their needs and wishes priority. 'Take it or leave it!' has become their attitude. The result is that billions of public money are wasted annually on subsidies to rail commuters, largely better-off people in better-off parts of the country, mainly London, and helping to exacerbate congestion. A Conservative government would phase out transport subsidies. Travellers would pay for what they got and get what they paid for.

Since the Second World War, the nationalisation of education, begun in the nineteenth century and continued with the notorious Butler Act of 1944 and State establishment of universities, has proceeded apace. Like all nationalized industries, it costs more and delivers less. After eleven years of schooling, at least a quarter of our children leave school unable to read and write and do simple arithmetic. Intake into universities is of low quality. With grammar schools virtually abolished, the quality of comprehensives reflects the social levels of the catchment area. Bright children in poor areas stand little chance, much less than under selection. This is no accident. It was deliberately sought by the Left-wingers who ran Anthony Crosland's campaign for the Labour leadership, and who rejected selection and grammar schools precisely because they set bright working class children onto a middle class career path, turning them into 'class traitors'. 'Let them rise with their class not out of it!' was their slogan.

The Conservatives allowed themselves to be led by the nose on this, as on so many other issues. Like Labour, they attempted to overcome decline in quality by vast increases in quantity thereby exacerbating it. Numbers of students have risen and with them costs while quality has fallen. Poor children, however bright, are left behind. This constitutes real social regression. An incoming Conservative Government should restore social justice in education by restoring selection and grants for grammar school study to bright children from lower income groups. It would reduce inflated university intakes to what British society can afford and absorb, and reduce the bloated numbers of soft options who then inflate central and local government pay rolls and taxes. The pre war system which favoured articles and apprenticeships over full-time university education for many professionals — solicitors, surveyors, engineers — should be brought back.

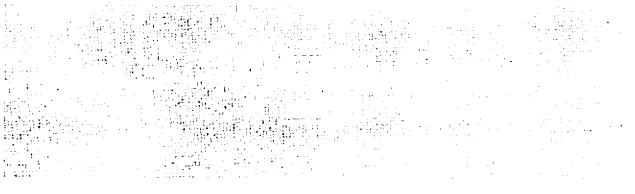
What can Conservatives offer in the way of crime reduction? Blair's much vaunted promise to tackle crime and the causes of crime falls on two main counts. There is no general agreement regarding the causes of crime, which have been with us for countless generations. Many Labour stalwarts favoured Marxist explanations, but the failure and collapse of the Soviet Empire leaves them high and dry. By contrast, we should offer a return to tried and trusted methods. There is little we can do about levels of criminality, decline in morality and family disintegration. When Sir Keith Joseph warned against the dangers inherent in the growth in the numbers of children being brought up in single parent families the hue and cry against him on the left damaged his political career. Family disintegration *is* one of the causes of crime, but Conservative policies to counter it are still awaited.

Defence of the realm has always been a staple of Conservative policy. By and large, it has been successful: Britain has survived. But there are threats. The alliance with the USA has been extended to unquestioning support for adventures, first in the Balkans, with the pogrom against the Christian Serbs in favour of the Moslem jihad, and then in Iraq, which defied credulity and self-interest. We need to plough our own furrow, independently of the Americans, the European Community and the Commonwealth. That is a tradition well worth restoring.

We need to plough our own furrow, independently of the Americans, the European Community and the Commonwealth.

Crime looms large in public concern. Labour's Marxoid promises to remove the causes of crime have got us nowhere. We must pledge to play it straight, to restore emphasis on detection and punishment. The public already believes in it, we should make the State catch up with the people. On most matters, crime and punishment, taxation, the State, the British public is ahead of its representatives. The Conservative Party's main task is to catch up.

Sir Alfred Sherman's book Reflections on the Thatcher Interlude *will be published in the Spring (Imprint Academic)*



Politics and Attitudes towards Competition

Richard Packer

A recent news item conjured the spirit of times past perfectly. It was announced that the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, was going to talk to senior management at the car manufacturer Ford to press them not to go ahead with their reported proposal to move the place of manufacture of some of their vehicles from the UK to allegedly cheaper sites abroad. Of course we all know that nothing will come of any meeting at which this subject constitutes the agenda. The whole incident relates not to Ford's manufacturing intentions but to Brown's need for Trade Union votes when the election of the next Labour Leader, and perhaps therefore Prime Minister, will take place. Of course it might be that Ford are bluffing and do not intend to move production abroad or not by as much as they first claimed. What is certain is that moral pressure from the UK government will make no difference to their intentions (though enough money might).

There was a time not so long ago when it was routine for Ministers to make representations of this sort. Indeed it was considered morally and economically right for such representations to be made if any facility, especially a manufacturing facility, were to be earmarked for closure anywhere. If some economic development were awkward for the government then action was taken to try to prevent it. Even though occasionally Ministers still act in this way the heart has gone out of the process. We all know the whole thing is done for show and nobody really expects anything to happen as a consequence. It is worth reflecting on what has changed in the body politic to alter attitudes. I suggest that a similar less active approach might usefully inform actions in some other areas where politicians are active.

What has happened in the economic sphere is that Adam Smith's insights were rediscovered and even more to the point acted upon during the period of Margaret Thatcher's tenure as Prime Minister. Smith emphasised two points. First he drew attention to how those working for their own benefit unwittingly helped others as their efforts caused better and cheaper goods to become available. Second he stressed that it was vital that there should be active competition if public benefits were to result from the efforts of individuals to better themselves. These insights having been in effect rediscovered (at least in the UK) in the 1980s, state enterprises were privatised and major undertakings allowed to go under; neither course would have been conceivable under previous post war governments. The central tenet behind both Smith's work and the economic policies which started after 1979 was that the allocation of resources should with few exceptions be left to the market which will prove a more efficient mechanism than conscious decisions by individuals however competent and well-meaning some of them might be. One important point should be stressed here. Markets are not efficient in an absolute sense. Some are but plenty of cases can be found where they are not. The claim made is more limited and more subtle. It is that markets will almost always allocate resources more efficiently than governments and/or state corporations with monopoly powers. The record of the former UK nationalised industries let alone the economic record of the former Soviet bloc stand as a witness to this truth. UK Ministers now rarely attempt to impose their own vision of what ought to happen in economic life in the direct way that was once so fashionable.

The outcome of this greater reliance on market forces and competition has been a remarkable period of prosperity for the UK which has even regained some of the ground lost to competitor nations over the previous decades

The outcome of this greater reliance on market forces and competition has been a remarkable period of prosperity for the UK which has even regained some of the ground lost to competitor nations over the previous decades. Industries which were basket cases — for example cars — have expanded albeit under different ownership. Though these ideas are accepted more readily on the right they are also accepted even if less enthusiastically by a large proportion of the left. The economic reforms of the Thatcher era have not (yet) been reversed to any significant extent by Labour. Because these ideas are now acknowledged by all albeit with different levels of enthusiasm we should not underestimate how difficult it was for

people to accept them. This is because they require people including Ministers to *let go*. The concept that matters will end up better if nobody plans anything might be counterintuitive. It might also perhaps run counter to the instincts of most potential Ministers to accept that things will work better if they do nothing.

Contrast this general acceptance in the economic sphere of the beneficial effects of allowing the results of competition to determine outcomes with attitudes in many areas of social policy. Here the efforts of the government and their supporters are often directed to reversing the results of competition.

Ministers appear to regard as axiomatic that the process of university selection is in some way culpable, because certain groups are 'under-represented' in the intake. 'Under-representation' of a socially-defined group is often regarded as being in itself sufficient evidence to demonstrate the existence of bias — or if not of outright bias then as proof that insufficient attempt was made by admissions tutors to allow for undesirable characteristics elsewhere in the educational system. Recently a wholly new Quango was established whose sole purpose is to ensure university entrance accords with Ministerial notions of what ought to happen when entry is categorised in respect of the social class and type of schooling of entrants. A first analysis on this basis has shown that many universities — in practice all the leading universities in the country — fell short when measured against these Ministerial criteria. It has been seriously suggested that this demonstrates weaknesses in the universities rather than in the criteria.

There is no more need for Ministers to decide on the nature of university admissions than on the size of the UK car industry, and any decisions they do take on the subject are just as likely to be wrong.

Many people rightly regard these developments as preposterous. It is worth analysing why they are preposterous. One reason is that the government approach makes no allowance for differences in ability, inclination, determination and aspiration among prospective students. There is plenty of evidence that these characteristics are not randomly distributed among pupils and any approach which pretends otherwise is flawed. Accordingly a purely statistical approach — the method adopted — is not sufficient to demonstrate unfairness or bias. In practice there is no need to go down this path since it is generally accepted that the overwhelming majority of university admissions tutors strive very hard to be fair to all in their procedures and generally succeed except occasionally when one of them is tempted to pay too much attention to Ministerial pronouncements.

What has happened is that in the matter of university education current Ministers are reluctant to *let go*. There is no more need for Ministers to decide on the nature of university admissions than on the size of the UK car industry, and any decisions they do take on the subject are just as likely to be wrong. University admissions should be decided by competition among prospective students, that is by exam grades supplemented if necessary by other relevant factors such as indications of potential as shown by tests of innate ability (as used in the USA) and determination as shown by those who have overcome handicaps. We do not need, and should avoid having, definite views on what the outcome of such competition ought to be.

A truly unbiased system may of course, reveal weaknesses which ought to be addressed. For example an entry system based on merit only may demonstrate that certain state comprehensive schools do particularly badly in qualifying their pupils for university admission. If so action needs to be taken at the schools in question. The necessary improvements cannot be brought about by skewing university admissions.

There are numerous other areas of social policy — the balance between the sexes and ethnic background of recruits and these promoted in public (and increasingly private) bodies are the obvious but far from only examples — where the results of competition are viewed by some politicians as unsatisfactory and the conclusion that this must be due to a defective process assumed all too readily. As a consequence a vast amount of wholly nugatory activity goes on recording data which has no economic or other value and which we all have to pay for in one way or another.

Politicians would do better to *let go* and resist assuming that there must be something wrong with the results of competition if they do not accord with their preferences. When this approach was tried on economic matters the results proved beneficial to the surprise of many at the time. Similar benefits would be found in many other areas if only Ministers showed similar humility.

Sir Richard Packer is a company director

The Corporate Parasites

Tom Burkard

Fifty years ago, most workers produced goods with their hands, be they farmers, fishermen or factory hands. In what were formerly 'industrialised' nations the impact of automation and globalisation has caused a massive shift of employment to the service sector; now we are more likely to be employed in retailing, health, education or social work. But there is another shift of profound importance which has received less attention. The number of people working in management has increased enormously. Britain used to be a nation of factories, but the dominant feature of the modern landscape is the office block.

Management has become more complex, but this begs the question as to why it should be so. Why has management failed to achieve the stunning advances in productivity achieved in the physical production of goods and services? For every blue-collar job that has been shed, at least one more white-collar job has been created. The total workforce has expanded dramatically with women leaving the home for full-time jobs, and salaried employees usually working longer hours than hitherto. The building society manager who struggled to stay awake after lunch in the 70s has been replaced by a driven professional who takes work home. This explosion of managerial busyness is often attributed to the information revolution, but it seems odd to suggest that more information should make it *harder* to manage any enterprise.

For all the millions of words that have been written about modern management, hardly anyone asks the obvious question: what do all these people do? Why are such huge numbers required to do jobs which used to be performed by a handful of white-collar employees operating without the benefit of modern technology? Although the self-serving nature and empire-building propensities of management have long been noted, we assume that the worst abuses exist in the public sector, where employees are paid to create problems, rather than to solve them. A cursory glance at the appointments section of the *Guardian* confirms that many public sector jobs are not only a waste of money, but detrimental to the general welfare — or even evil. The *Sunday Telegraph* recently revealed that the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, which is supported by £12 million of our money, encourages women to have abortions and refers them to a clinic in Spain where illegal late abortions are performed.

The explosion of white-collar employment in the public sector has been matched by similar — if less spectacular — growth in the private sector. Most, if not nearly all, of this growth is parasitic. Much activity in the modern organisation creates no value whatever, either for the shareholder or the consumer. This will vary considerably from one firm to the next, but as a rule smaller and newer enterprises where ownership and management are closely related (if not identical) are largely immune from the disease of *managerialism*.

Managerialism — a neologism whose meaning will be obvious to anyone who has ever worked in a large organisation, or who has read the satirical cartoon strips *Alex* or *Dilbert* — is characterised by a phenomenon which will be familiar to the student of public choice theory. Within any organisation, the primary motivation of any individual is to maximise remuneration and chances of advancement, and both of these aims are nurtured through promoting one's personal influence. Organisations are efficient insofar as these individual aspirations are met by maximising the efficiency of the organisation in producing value for others — shareholders and consumers. *All other activities can be classed as either personal business or as managerialism.* Managerialism is the art of extracting as much of an organisation's income as possible for the benefit of management. The conduct of personal business on company time has been increased by computer technology. Likewise, the ubiquitous notion of 'teamworking' has increased opportunities for socialising during working hours. A study of managerialism must begin with William S. Whyte's *The Organisation Man,* published in 1956.

Whyte contrasted pre-war enterprises, where managers rose through the ranks and were intimately acquainted with all of the operations and personalities under their control, with the post-war corporation where managers were recruited from universities and parachuted into various positions of authority. The old-style manager typically answered only to his boss and

had to assume personal responsibility for everything that happened in his department. Post-war management culture was all about team-work, committees and diffusion of responsibility. The cult of the organisation was a product of the inter-war years, when the sons of industrialists started to go to university instead of picking up brooms in their fathers' factories. At Yale and Princeton, they imbibed the democratic ethos of the age — and paradoxically, a fine appreciation of their status as masters of the universe. They rejected their fathers' authoritarian practices and spoke the language of social responsibility and consensus. Their new management theories owed more to the scientism of sociology dons than it did to practical experience. They created a Platonic concept of management as a universal science which allowed initiates to manage anything they chose, even enterprises about which they knew nothing. As these men took over giant American corporations — bloated with wartime profits — the new managerialism appeared to be the wave of the future.

But, as Whyte astutely observed, the underlying nature of management was still the survival of the fittest. The rules of the game had changed, but not the objectives. The main difference is that the attention of managers, which was previously focused on getting the best out of the poor bloody infantry on the factory floor, was now concentrated on gladiatorial exchanges in committee rooms. As teamwork replaces individual initiative, the smart young executive devotes his time to becoming a good team player — he spends his time politicking and intriguing for pole position. Since he has no individual responsibility for anything except paperwork, he need not concern himself about the profitability or efficiency of his department. The aspiring manager is more likely to distinguish himself (or, increasingly, herself) by creating complex management solutions to non-problems or by promoting high-profile initiatives which promote the organisation's image as a caring, socially-committed employer. Whoever was responsible for the ludicrous 'Investors in People' scheme is guaranteed a permanent seat in the managerialists' Hall of Fame.

The organisation run on managerialist principles seldom fosters or produces innovation. Whyte observed that 'Something really bold and imaginative is by its nature divisive, and the bigger the committee, the more people are likely to be offended'. These organisations dominate markets through inertia, and by forming cartels and quasi-monopolies. They support regulatory regimes, run by like-minded public sector organisation men, which stifle competition by stacking the rules against smaller enterprises which could never survive if they did not operate by the entrepreneurial rules of pre-war management. It is not accidental that the Confederation of British Industry — which mainly represents businesses run on managerialist principles — supports European integration, whereas the Institute of Directors does not. Firms that belong to the IoD generally support free enterprise.

Whyte's *The Organisation Man* has stuck in my mind because I read it just before my first encounter with the American organisation in 1968. Prior to being hired by Ford, I had worked at a number of small factories in Michigan which supplied parts to the major auto manufacturers. As a rule, their management adhered to pre-war practice. Productivity was high, and new employees did not last long if they exceeded their allotted breaks by more than a few seconds. Unions ensured productivity contracts were in force; they had enough sense to realise that no profits meant no pay rises. Although the work was hard, pay and morale were generally high. Initiative was rewarded, and promotion was almost invariably from within. You could be sure that your bosses, even the ones in the front office, could don coveralls and do your job just as well as you could. The only time I ever manned a picket line, the bosses would always stop for a friendly chat at the braziers before they went in to work.

Ford recruited me by the simple expedient making an offer I could not refuse. I came at a time when stock control was first being computerised, and I was responsible for ensuring the supply of parts purchased for carburettor production. Before computerisation, the production control staff for the carburettor section consisted of two employees. With all this new information to process, we now needed seven. This is not to argue that stock control systems should not be computerised. Keeping track of stock is one thing that computers can do supremely well, at least with the right software. At Ford, they did it so well that the only useful work that remained in our department was to check the computer-generated releases sent out to suppliers each month, reconcile the theoretical amount of stock on hand with what we actually held, and to phone suppliers when shipments were late. All this could have been done by one man.

To solve this dilemma, Ford's managerialists programmed the computers to generate a four-inch-high stack of the old green and white computer sheets each day. Nearly all of my own share of this went straight into the bin every morning, because it had no relevance to anything. In theory, we were supposed to check it all manually, but no one ever explained what we were supposed to be checking it *for*. This did not bother the

chap who sat next to me, a clever and ambitious black man who clearly understood the importance of playing the game. I was left with the problem of what to do all day, and I soon became tired of wandering around out on the shop floor finding other employees who had even less to do.

The information revolution has come a long way since 1968, and the opportunities for wasting time have grown in the same proportion. We have become so obsessed with collecting vast amounts of information that the major problem is to discover what, if any, of it is relevant to the problem at hand. An even greater problem is the Derrida dilemma: how can one be sure that this information is an accurate reflection of an external reality? Massaging data is now so commonplace that organisations such as Enron can live in a 'virtual' environment and no one is the wiser until the cheques start bouncing. The more modest, garden-variety managerialist knows how much the milch-cow will stand, and knows where to stop.

Some would argue that none of this matters much. Britain is a wealthy country, and we can afford to have a substantial proportion of our middle classes engaged partially or wholly in meaningless busywork. Our major competitors are all infected with the same virus. The supply of immigrants, illegal or otherwise, shows no sign of drying up, and they can be persuaded to do the menial work very cheaply.

Yet if we accept this, as a nation we are in danger of becoming effete and perhaps, in a few generations, disappearing entirely. More immediately, surveys reveal that the majority of young 'professional' people are unhappy in their jobs. The essential meaninglessness of so much of their work must be a major factor in their dissatisfaction. Getting ahead, which they see as their only salvation, requires long hours of yet more meaningless work. People whose jobs make a real difference are seldom discontented; building workers have the highest rate of job satisfaction.

Although it is very hard to stifle enterprise, the unholy coalition of managerialists and civil servants is getting the upper hand. More and more real jobs are disappearing overseas because the supply of new, innovative businesses is being choked off by regulation. Few people realise how short the life cycle of a business is. In *Markets in the Firm,* Cowen and Parker cite data showing that between 1983 and 1995 — a period of 12 years — almost 40 per cent of the top 500 American corporations passed on. The record in Britain is similar. Without continuing vigorous growth at the beginning of this life-cycle, our economy will soon become as moribund as those of France and Germany.

Politically, the problem is very difficult, and made worse because control of government spending quickly passes into the hands of the civil service. Therefore, one of the few sources of patronage for politicians is to create new spending. And since there has to be 'accountability' for public spending (the sickest joke in public life), there are more regulations, many of which are invented at the whim of our quangocrats. The ease with which regulations can be made in Britain puts the old Soviet system to shame.

The ambiguity of Conservative politicians has been exposed by David James, who was engaged by Michael Howard to identify waste in government expenditure. A *Sunday Telegraph* report by Robert Watts claimed that James knows full well that huge swathes of our civil service could disappear with no ill effect to the country whatever. Oliver Letwin's pusillanimity on public spending reduction is well-known, and many of the cuts suggested by James would not necessarily be implemented by a Conservative government. It is not just a matter of reducing spending. Unless we have a New-Zealand style bonfire of regulations and a serious rethink about the most fundamental aspects of modern democracy, the managerialists will bounce back in no time.

The problem is urgent: if the European Constitution is ratified, the solution will be out of our hands. The entire European project has, from the earliest stages, been run by managerialists for managerialists. It has skilfully cloaked itself in the language of peace, harmony and social justice, while assiduously promoting the interests of cliques which are every bit as parasitic and illiberal as the *nomenklatura* of the old Soviet Union. The ancient British constitution, which limits the powers of government and enshrines the liberty of individuals (as opposed to their 'rights' or entitlements — a theme which was brilliantly developed by Roger Scruton in a recent *Spectator* article), will become null and void the moment the European Constitution is ratified. We cannot rely on our veto; if only one or two nations withhold ratification, you can be assured that it will be ratified, and the abstainers put under extreme pressure to join. When this happens, Britain will no longer be a country governed by law. The ambiguities of EU treaties and law allow officials to do as they will, as tyrants will. Then, the only true constitution will be Lenin's dictum: *who, whom,* that is who does and who submits? Paradoxically, this will all have come about as a result of managerialist doctrine, which supposedly replaced authoritarian management structures with ones run in accordance with democratic and socially-responsible theories.

Tom Burkard is Director of The Promethean Trust

Mark Coalter

With the exception of the architectural colossus that is Chicago, the mid-western state of Illinois is not celebrated for its international landmarks or tourist attractions. The John Deere museum in Dixon or its anthropology counterpart in De Kalb can hardly compete with the Sears Tower, the John Hancock Building or the Chicago Art Institute in respect of global recognition. Curiously, Chicago is merely Illinois' second city in deference to lesser-known Springfield, the State Capital and final resting place of Abraham Lincoln. However, size matters and with its large population and well-oiled Democrat machine Chicago exercises a disproportionate influence over the direction of Illinois' politics and votes in the Electoral College.

This political journey takes us beyond metropolitan Chicago, with its affluent areas resembling Hampstead and Islington in ideological outlook, to rural Illinois, which is, perhaps, the epitome of the American heartland. Here one will encounter a barren landscape dominated by cornfields, their vast expanse periodically interrupted by wooden houses with tall grain silos. Front gardens are adorned with ornaments representing objects as diverse as wild game to heraldic lions, whilst the variety (and number) of Protestant houses of worship, humble in their architectural simplicity, are a counterbalance to their grander (and occasionally vandalized) Chicago counterparts. Illinois can also claim to be at the centre of many of America's key historical milestones. For a State that joined the Union in 1818, it is no modest claim to be directly associated with three Presidents, two giants of the Civil War, Lincoln and Ulysses S Grant, and more recently Ronald Reagan.

Reagan was born in Tampico, western Illinois, a small town nestled between Illinois' ubiquitous cornfields. The area has remained dry since 1907, instead boasting a number of churches and a barber's trading under the name of *Hair Force One*. Aside from the fact that Reagan was born here there is little to distinguish it from other such settlements. The Ronald Reagan Park contains a civil war memorial (the Union side, of course), whilst a Reagan mural detailing his days at high school and as a sports announcer, is opposite his birthplace, a second floor flat above a bakery on the main street, which subsequently became the First National Bank and is now in the process of restoration. Owing to Tampico's relative isolation the Reagan birthplace has remained a fairly low-key operation, reliant upon the anecdotal knowledge of its octogenarian tour guides Lloyd and Amy McElhiney. The tales are mainly of a local nature, though there is the odd gem. On November 3, 1980, on the eve of the Presidential election, Lloyd took a photograph of a rainbow descending into the roof of Reagan's birthplace, which he promptly sent to the future President. Reagan considered the omen 'eerie'. Indeed, at the time Lloyd was convinced that Reagan would be elected not once, but twice, as a second rainbow appears on the far side of the photograph. When a reporter asked Reagan on the morning of Election Day if he had won, his reply, 'you know me, I'm too suspicious to answer anything like that,' was perhaps influenced by this premonition from his hometown. Reagan never forgot his roots in Tampico or its people. He visited at least once after he left office, attending a Sunday service in the local Disciples of Christ church where his mother had been baptized, and even as President Elect sent greetings to an elderly Tampico resident on the occasion of her ninety-third birthday.

Tampico is yet to fully realize the commercial success that characterizes the better-publicized boyhood exhibition in near-by Dixon, population 16,000, which is manned by a dedicated team of volunteers and benefits from superior transport links and marketing. After all, the world's media decamped here after Reagan's death on June 5, 2004. In keeping with the politics of its most famous associates, Lincoln and Reagan, the offices of Republican Senator Peter Fitzgerald and Dennis Hastert, the rotund Speaker of the House of Representatives, are on Dixon's main street, and the town, whilst not dry, has its own collection of evangelical churches. When I visited Dixon, a week after Reagan's funeral, floral tributes and jellybeans adorned the Reagan statue, alongside personal messages from ordinary Americans. Amongst the many Stars and Stripes, a solitary Polish flag stood out, adding an international flavour to this mid-western community's grief, and reminding the more astute visitor

of one of Reagan's lasting contributions.

Dixon and Tampico are typical of small-town America and far removed from dynamic cities such as Chicago, San Francisco or New York. This is also part of their immense charm. Merely by visiting one can glean the early influences that not only shaped Reagan, but also underpinned the ideological battles of the 1980s. Hard work, thrift, and Victorian values were as much traits of 1940s Tampico and Dixon as they were in Grantham when Margaret Thatcher was growing up. However, Reagan's principles, unlike those of Lady Thatcher, can still claim to be of greater relevance to the vast majority of small town and suburban Americans than the Iron Lady's in her own backyard. It is also difficult to imagine such affection and love attaching itself to any other surviving President. A state funeral would no doubt be provided with the accompanying closure of Federal Government and the New York Stock Exchange, but the legacies of Ford, Carter, Bush (Snr) and Clinton are more difficult to quantify. With Reagan's background, general humility and sunny optimism, it is entirely appropriate that both Tampico and Dixon should feel honoured by the association. Conversely, for the shameless, urban good time boy Clinton or the patrician New Englander, and sometime *faux* Texan, Bush (Snr), it is unimaginable that such public outpourings of grief would manifest themselves to the same degree as America witnessed after Reagan's death.

Before running for office Reagan was a household name, but his ability to relate to and communicate with the ordinary citizen, meant that both his wealth and Hollywood lifestyle were overlooked by the very people who became his staunchest supporters. The present incumbent of the White House shares Reagan's ability to relate to this constituency through his Texan twang and evangelical delivery, despite lacking the experience of near poverty that marked Reagan's early years.

As I walked through the car park behind the Reagan house in Dixon a bumper sticker caught my eye. This is not unusual in a country where parents occasionally boast of their children's academic performance or advertise religious soundbites through this medium. However, this was different. It read, 'President George W Bush: Boy, Were We lucky.' I thought that I had stumbled upon an example of Illinois irony, however, on seeing that the other side of the bumper featured an extremely large 'W', I realized that this was wishful thinking. It is unsurprising that Republican supporters make the pilgrimage to the metaphorical stable from where their saviour emerged, but this sense of confidence in the righteousness of their cause and devotion to George W Bush, has its antecedents firmly rooted in the 1980s. November 2, 2004 confirms that if this was once Reagan country, then through electoral and cultural inheritance it has now passed to W.

It was with slight reluctance that I left America's heartland to return to the commercial comforts of Chicago, having been struck by spending an afternoon listening to uncritical admiration for the achievements of President Reagan and Lady Thatcher. All of this may sound anathema to the metropolitan elites, who dismiss the man and his achievements, but they write off Ronald Reagan's political legacy, both contemporary and historical, at their peril. Reagan, during the 1980 Presidential debate, posed a simple question to the American people: 'Are you any better off than you were four years ago? Is it easier for you to go and buy things in the stores than it was four years ago?' The answer was a resounding no and he easily defeated the incumbent in the Electoral College by 489 votes to 44. In 1980, however, Americans were not just vexed about their flagging economy. The legacy of Watergate cast a long shadow, undermining confidence in government, and public figures, whilst the aftermath of Vietnam and the Iranian hostage crisis fostered a national sense of bewilderment and denting of confidence in American power and prestige. Reagan, in his finest role, rescued America, revolutionised economic norms and reclaimed the USA's rightful place on the world stage. He gave Americans a sense of purpose and belief. Traders on Wall Street and technicians in Silicon Valley may have been the most noted/notorious beneficiaries of this economic largesse, but ordinary folk in places as simple and conventional as Dixon and Tampico also gained, not just materially but also emotionally. And Reagan's reward: a landslide in 1984 and an enduring place in the hearts of the majority of ordinary American people.

The recent Presidential election has confirmed that America is more closely divided than in 1980 or 1984. It was always going to be impossible for Bush to achieve a similar margin over John Kerry, than Reagan did against the inept Carter and the hapless Mondale. Yet, W's victory in both the Electoral College and the popular vote are, in part, due to his ability to ape Reagan, the 'Great Communicator,' by reminding the American heartland that even after September 11, Iraq and the pessimistic economic outlook, it can still count on *their* President to deliver. However, unlike Ronald Reagan, George W Bush's electoral success is more a triumph of myth over reality.

Mark Coalter is a solicitor

Was Trevor Huddleston a Paedophile?

Christie Davies

Was Trevor Huddleston a paedophile? A new book by Piers McGrandle, *Trevor Huddleston, Turbulent Priest,* Continuum, 2004, provides interesting evidence about a case of interference with little boys that was investigated by the police. McGrandle concludes 'we shall probably never know the full truth' but then we never do. In the twenty-first century we are historians not jurors.

In April 1974 the police questioned Huddleston in the presence of his solicitor because a mother had complained that he had behaved improperly with her two schoolboy sons. A report was sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. A *Sunday Express* reporter contacted the mother and the editor John Junor later told Prebendary Dewi Morgan that he was sure that Huddleston was guilty. The *Sunday Express* prepared to publish the story and its legal adviser read it out to Prebendary Morgan. Subsequently for reasons that are not clear but probably due to pressure from the Church of England hierarchy and particularly the Bishop of London, George Ellison, it was decided not to publish. A reference to it appeared two years later in *Private Eye*.

Meanwhile the D.P.P. referred the case to the new Labour Attorney General, Sam Silkin Q.C., to decide whether or not Huddleston should be prosecuted. Five years later Silkin said on the radio:

> I found that I was in difficulty as the man was very well known. If he had been prosecuted at all it would have ruined his career. Within the D.P.P.'s department everyone thought he would be acquitted, though there was clearly evidence.

This sounds like a classic 1970s cover-up for a clergyman known in Africa for his love (not necessarily carnal) of small, beautiful boys. It was a cover-up of a kind common in the Anglican and even more so in the Roman Catholic Church. Such deceptions have been repeatedly exposed and then come back to haunt the churches in the decades since. The then Bishop of London did not necessarily act in bad faith in regard to his junior, Huddleston, Bishop of Stepney. Like many other bishops he found it difficult to believe that such accusations could be true.

It was the Attorney-General, Sam Silkin, who showed a lack of judgement. Silkin is best remembered today for his refusal of John Gouriet's request in 1977 to bring an injunction against the Union of Post Office Workers to prevent it from illegally calling on its members to refuse to handle mail to South Africa. Gouriet obtained an injunction from the courts as a private citizen and the union complied with it. Gouriet then sought a declaration that the Attorney-General had acted improperly. Silkin said they had no business making such an order even though it used the very words of the relevant statute. Lord Denning commented 'What then does all this come to, if the contention of the Attorney-General is correct. It means that he is the final arbiter as to whether the law should be enforced or not'. This seems to be also a fair description of Silkin's attitude over the accusations made against Huddleston. It is difficult to believe that Silkin was not biased, not influenced by Huddleston's position as a left-wing icon or by his own obsession with South Africa. There is no such thing as equal justice on the left. It is a closed-minded world where assessments are shaped by prejudice and wishful thinking. Silkin must have felt uneasy about his decision or he would not have blurted about it on the radio five years later.

John Junor saw the point and wrote in the *Sunday Express* of Silkin's admission:

> For that could be another way of saying that the prominent man was not necessarily innocent but that in any court proceedings it would have been his word against the word of the little children and that a jury would almost certainly have accepted his word.

Thirty years on the matter would not have been handled in this way. If evidence appeared against a clergyman today it would immediately provoke a far reaching investigation and even a search for other allegations, often about incidents that may or may not have happened in previous decades. Today suggestible children are induced by witch hunting adults to make further accusations against a man under suspicion and undue weight is given to the testimony of adults claiming to remember in detail incidents that occurred twenty or thirty years ago when they were children. Some of them are motivated by the hope of

monetary compensation or a wish for revenge against an unpleasant priest or sadistic Christian Brother who mistreated them, though not in a sexual way, when they were young. Who would not like to avenge the humiliations of childhood, even if they were inflicted within the accepted rules of that time?

The criminal justice elite have swung from the idiocy of never believing children and denying the harm caused by the grossest of paedophiles to the lunacy of being willing to believe unsubstantiated and unlikely accusations and taking a statistically unjustifiable view of the degree of harm caused by opportunistic petty gropers. In the past priests and brothers were able to commit the most monstrous crimes without fear of detection and their victims suffered for life, further embittered by never having been believed. Today clergy are so vulnerable to false accusations that they must avoid any kind of innocent physical contact with children. The change has been partly driven by the ideological malice of the left with their rampant underdoggery. The old leftist doctrine was that any damage done by pederasty was merely the result of the upset caused to the child by a subsequent investigation, part of a general policy to minimize deceitfully the consequences of crime. It was also an attempt to protect male homosexuals, given that a high proportion of sexual offences against children are committed against boys. The aim of the radical criminologists was to head off the demands of a 'judgmental and punitive' public for retribution and also to diminish the stigma attached to criminality. However, with the rise of feminist criminology, sexual crimes had to be denied this kind of exculpation and treated with disgust and contempt even in cases where the general public takes a relatively tolerant view. The social sciences are not science, they are merely shaped by whatever left-wing prejudices happen to be in fashion. Huddleston might well have been treated very differently today.

The denials by Huddleston's supporters that he could have been inclined towards pederasty are ridiculous. One of their defences has been to suggest (without any evidence) that the Stepney incident was set up by Huddleston's political enemies, notably the Afrikaner South African government's Bureau of State Security (B.O.S.S.). Associates of Jeremy Thorpe, including Sir Harold Wilson, likewise suggested that Thorpe was being framed by B.O.S.S., when he was hit by rumours of sexual misconduct in the 1970s. A rather different story emerged at Thorpe's trial. Others have argued that Huddleston must have had clean hands or else B.O.S.S. would have used evidence against him from his time in Africa. B.O.S.S. was a great bogeyman for the left but it never had the resources or the manpower to mount massive covert operations in Britain, certainly not on the scale of the K.G.B., the Stasi or even the umbrella-wielding Bulgarian secret services.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's indignant disbelief about Huddleston is quite laughable: .... 'How ghastly to want to besmirch such a remarkable man, so holy and so good.'

Tutu asserted that a man of piety and a lover of children could not have touched-up young boys. Why not? Psychiatrists who treat paedophiles referred to them by the courts, say that they find it much easier to treat the vicious predatory monsters among them than the shy mild ones done for less heinous versions of the crime, because only the former realise that they have to change. The latter assert that they could never have harmed children because they love them so much. That was probably Huddleston's view of himself. It would account for his complete mental breakdown after the accusations in 1974, when for months he was hardly able to feed or dress himself. It also helps to explain why there were some in the D.P.P.'s office who thought they would be unable to obtain a conviction. In 1974 love of children might well have worked as a defence. It is not satisfactory to invoke cultural difference and to imply that familiarities with children that Huddleston had found acceptable in Africa were disturbing only to the petulant proles of Stepney. That ultra-progressive Bishop of Birmingham, Mark Sanger, remarked that 'African bishops with some justification given the history of misconduct of missionaries tend to associate homosexuality with paedophilia'.

As an attempt to explain away the African bishops' appalling prejudices against gay people, the Bishops's statement is foolish but it does make the useful point that there has been enough misconduct with boys among European missionaries in Africa for the Africans to complain about it.

No one has thoroughly investigated whether there were complaints about Huddleston's conduct, not in South Africa where he would have been under police observation, but when he was Bishop of Masasi in Tanzania where he could relax because he was a close friend of its oppressive socialist dictator Julius Nyerere. Nyerere did a great deal for poverty in Tanzania, to perpetuate it that is. Huddleston, the apostle of the poor, never spoke a word of criticism, even when poor peasants were uprooted from their homes and forcibly relocated into larger settlements where they could be watched and controlled. Nor would he speak out when asked to do so by the friends and relatives of those who had been tortured and

imprisoned because they had been Nyerere's political opponents or even merely members of their families. Nyerere's former foreign minister, Oscar Kambona, in exile in London, asked Huddleston to use his influence to get his brothers out of prison. Huddleston asserted that they were enemies of Tanzania. Indeed neither of them had ever taken part in politics. Huddleston was to Nyerere what the Red Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, had been to Stalin. Presumably Nyerere was willing to return the compliment of silence and complicity.

In the light of what happened in Stepney it is important to find out what (if anything) Huddleston got up to in Masasi (1960-1970), or as Archbishop in Mauritius (1976-1981) after he left. The official papers dealing with the allegations against Huddleston and the correspondence that followed from this may well already have been deliberately lost. Why should we bother? What happened in Stepney is a sociological puzzle that needs to be solved — a case of a public scandal that could have happened but did not. Sociologists spend an excessive amount of time on the detailed study of the way in which particular deviant acts such as interference with children become amplified by the press into great moral panics. Why do some scandals explode when others are still-born? I suggest that Huddleston was protected by a double hegemony. In 1974 the widespread sexual misconduct with children whose exposure has since struck the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches so hard already existed but so strong was the influence of the traditional hierarchies that its discussion could be contained. Those who complained were neither believed nor reported. But Huddleston also enjoyed a second and stronger level of protection because he lived in a society where left-liberal values, priorities and heroes cannot be challenged. The newspapers did not dare openly and directly to print what many journalists would have known or thought about his sexuality. Curiously *The Sunday Express* did not in the end publish the story about him in 1974, despite having one prepared and checked by their lawyers and despite the then editor's strong dislike of Huddleston and his politics. What kind of pressure was put on the paper to spike the story? Who was leaning on them and on the other newspapers? It is a measure of the intrusive and almost total power of our left-liberal elite that even the tabloids were silenced. It is censorship by stealth by the sinister establishment. Many cannot imagine that the heroic Huddleston was a paedophile, let alone look for additional evidence. The British are not as free a people as they think and political correctness will probably inhibit future historians. It is indeed fashionable to write speculative psychobabble about the purported sexual leanings of such pillars of empire as Baden-Powell, T.E. Lawrence, or Rudyard Kipling but Huddleston is immune even from factual investigation.

Huddleston neither understood nor even listened to the libertarian capitalist opposition to apartheid of men like W.H. Hutt or Walter E. Williams. He saw to it that anti-apartheid funds went not to liberals but to socialist extremists, thus objectively slowing down the abolition of apartheid. His attacks on patient far-sighted negotiators for change like Margaret Thatcher were unfair and stupid. When, thanks to Willem de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, the final negotiations were succeeding, Huddleston was carping and unhelpful; he was being deprived of his revolution and South Africa's slide into the universal poverty and rural idiocy of his beloved Tanzania. Mikhail Gorbachev really made the dismantling of Afrikaner South Africa possible. The dismantling of the Soviet Empire meant that pious Calvinist Afrikaners no longer feared that majority rule would lead to communism and the *verlichtes* (enlightened faction) among them led by de Klerk prevailed over the hardline *verkramptes*. It was Klerk's willingness to concede that was heroic not Huddleston's ranting moralism.

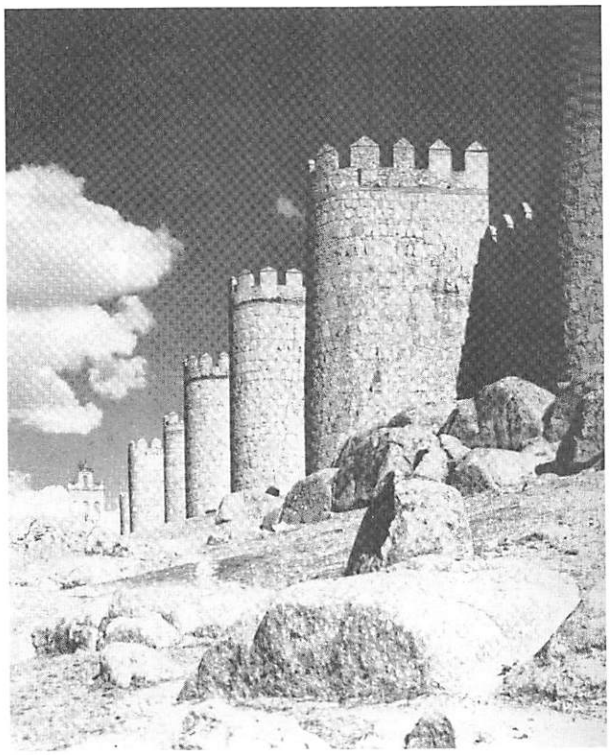
Huddleston remains a monument to the foolishness of combining and confusing religion and politics. Religion demands certainty about the things of another world for which we can have no immediate empirical evidence. Politics requires caution about consequences in the face of a great deal of conflicting information. Politics is the art of avoiding the possible, for the bad can always subside into the worse. A Tsar, a Shah, a Chiang, a Smith can give way to an infinitely worse Lenin, Khomeini, Mao or Mugabe. Huddleston's failure ever to grasp this point will prove far more disturbing to future generations than his sexual antics. The latter will prove only interesting because they reveal the corruption of an age in which truly good men such as Cardinal Archbishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor and Dr Peter Hollingworth, former Archbishop of Brisbane and Governor-General of Australia, were reviled for mere errors of judgement, while the scoundrels who covered up for Huddleston are likely to escape unmasking let alone blame.

Christie Davies's latest book is The Strange Death of Moral Britain, *Transaction, 2004. Many of the quotations and some of the facts in this article have been taken from Piers McGrandle's book but the conclusions reached are those of the author alone.*

How Vertebrate is Spain?

Curtis Cate

In *España invertebrada* (Invertebrate Spain), first published in 1921 and the most prophetic book to have been written about Spain during the twentieth century, the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset proceeded with surgical precision to pin-point the dire malady from which his country was suffering in four simple words. The cancer that was fatally undermining the fragile stability of Spanish society was, he claimed, the 'particularist' propensity of each Spanish individual or group to live purely for himself or itself, heedless of others, and, as he put it, not to '*contar con los demás*' (to have to deal with others).



It is one of the paradoxes of modern politics that the most crucial factor guaranteeing the success of democratic government is something so juridically intangible that it goes unmentioned in written constitutions. This is the ability displayed by people to live pacifically side by side in what the Spaniards aptly call a state of *convivencia* (living together) without cutting each others' throats. In other words, a sense of tolerance combined with a sense of team spirit and *fair play* — an attitude so basically alien that it had to be imported in its untranslatable English form into Latin languages and cultures, where what is truly typical is far more the *combinazione* of the Italian, the ideological intransigence of the Frenchman — sublimely illustrated by the fatuous phrase '*Que périsse la République plutôt qu'un principe!* (Let the Republic perish rather than a principle!) — or the individualistic '*no contar con los demás*' of the Spaniard.

It is no accident that the people who are regarded as the first successful practitioners of parliamentary government should also have been the ones who invented football, rugby, cricket, and hockey. Group games almost invariably demand two rather than three, four or more simultaneously competing teams — the latter being a sure recipe for chaos and confusion. This sportive common sense aided the successful development in Anglo-Saxon societies of an essentially two-party system of government — which has proved to be far more stable than those that have to function, or rather dysfunction, with six, nine, or a dozen different parties.

Many foreign observers struck by Spain's dramatic economic development in recent years — four out of every five Spaniards is now the owner of his or her apartment, house, or farmstead — have spoken of a 'miracle'. But a miracle has surely been in the field of politics, where something close to an essentially two-party system has begun to emerge.

Three Spaniards in particular have been responsible for this astonishing transformation of a once strife-torn and then autocratically ruled country (the so-called *dictablanda*, or 'soft dictatorship', of Franco) into a now stable constitutional monarchy. The first is King Juan Carlos, whom Franco had wisely insisted on having taught the rudiments of drill and warfare at the Military Academy of Toledo rather than be educated at a foreign university — this being the price he had exacted for the restoration of the monarchy. When, in February 1981 (six years after Franco's death) an irate colonel stormed into the Madrid Congress of Deputies in a coup aimed at restoring military rule, Juan Carlos, thanks to his prestige as a graduate of the Toledo Academy, was able to thwart the coup by personally

telephoning different captain-generals in a number of Spanish provinces. The king's firmness in crushing the coup and preserving parliamentary rule so impressed the Communist leader, Santiago Carrillo, who had earlier ridiculed him as destined to be 'Juan Carlos the Brief', that he added his voice to the popular cry, '*Viva el Rey!*'

The greatest achievement of Felipe Gonzalez, a charismatic lawyer from Sevilla, before coming to power in 1982, was to have freed the old Socialist and Workers Party of Largo Caballero and Indalecio Prieto from the tyrannical grip of rabidly republican exiles based in France, and to have persuaded his fellow Socialists to renounce their revolutionary allegiance to Karl Marx. As prime minister, he had the good sense to 'let sleeping dogs lie' and not to antagonize the nostalgic diehards of Falangism by ordering the immediate removal of all public plaques and statues honouring Franco.

José María Aznar deserves much credit for the diligent transformation of the distinctly right-wing, neo-Falangist Popular Alliance of Manuel Fraga Iribarne (a former Franco minister of Information and Tourism) into a centre-right *Partido Popular*, now officially allied to other Christian Democratic parties in the European Assembly at Strasbourg. Today, thanks to his talents as a political organizer, his moderately conservative party numbers 600,000 members — five times more than the French UMP (*Union pour la Majorité parlementaire),* which was supposed to provide President Jacques Chirac with a solid political base.

Spain, like Great Britain, is in a very real sense a United Kingdom, and for that reason (in this age of often grotesque ethnic provincialisms) also a Disunited Kingdom — not least of all in the realm of languages

In March 2000, after four years in power, this methodical, unexciting prime minister flabbergasted the journalistic pundits at home and abroad by achieving an unheard-of conservative plurality in the elections of March 2000 — with 44.5 per cent of the national vote, and an absolute majority of 183 (out of a total of 350) seats in the Congress of Deputies. These spectacular results reflected the widespread feeling that Aznar and his conservative party had succeeded economically where Felipe Gonzalez and his Socialists had failed — most notably by reducing the national level of unemployment from 20 per cent (in 1996 the highest in the European Union) to 15 per cent in just four years. (By the first quarter of 2004 this high rate had been further reduced to 11 per cent of Spain's working population.)

If success in the economic field were the only thing that mattered in politics, Aznar's Popular Party would still be in power today. But the retiring prime minister's obstinacy in defying Spanish public opinion, vehemently opposed to the American invasion of Iraq and even more to Spain's modest contribution (1,900 soldiers) to the 'Allied' war effort, caused the party to lose one million votes and 36 (from 183 to 148) parliamentary seats in the Congress of Deputies, in the elections of March 17, 2004.

Far from being a 'landslide', as many left-wing newspapers in France as well as Spain immediately proclaimed, the victory won by José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero's Socialists was anything but outright — with a national plurality of 42.6 per cent (2 per cent less than Aznar's Popular Party in 2000), and a parliamentary plurality of 164 seats, 12 seats short of an absolute majority, and twice that number less than what Aznar's PP had obtained four years before. Spain's new prime minister, José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero — the unassuming, uncharismatic, unprestigious opposite of the flamboyant Gonzalez — will consequently have to make parliamentary deals with the leaders of at least one of a dozen minor parties represented in the Congress of Deputies. That means in practice with one of the three parties representing differing shades of factious opinion in the most significant of Spain's seventeen 'autonomous' regions — Catalonia, which stretches for several hundred miles from the Pyrenean mountains in the north down the country's Mediterranean coast as far as Valencia.

Spain, like Great Britain, is in a very real sense a United Kingdom, and for that reason (in this age of often grotesque ethnic provincialisms) also a Disunited Kingdom — not least of all in the realm of languages. Just as English, derived from its main component, is the official language of the British Isles, so Castilian is the official language of the Iberian Peninsula. But whereas in Great Britain Scottish and Welsh today are mostly spoken by a handful of nostalgic old-timers, scholastic lovers of folklore, and muscle-flexing demagogues, in Spain Castilian is 'shadowed' or trailed by three 'co-official' languages that were accorded this status in the Constitution of 1979: *catalan,* spoken more or less willingly by some six million Catalans (many of them inhabitants of the bustling 'capital' of Barcelona); *gallego,* (a form of Portuguese) spoken by more than two thirds of some three million inhabitants of Galicia: and *euskera*, a kind of Basque esperanto derived from different valley dialects which was more or less 'codified' in the 1970s, so that it could be taught as a mandatory second

language in all the primary and secondary schools of Euskadi — the Basque name for what the Castilians call 'Vasconia' and which embraces the three northern provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava. All of these regions have their 'national' flags and even their 'national anthems'.

These 'nationalistic' pretensions could be dismissed as folkloric idiosyncrasies, were it not for the fact that in Catalonia, with the radically left-wing *Esquerra republicana de Catalunya,* and in the Basque regions of northern Spain, with the terrorist movement of the ETA and its overtly 'pacific' political ally, the party of Henri Batasuna, there are extremists who have been preaching the language of secession. It is here that the ancient Iberian propensity to disregard others (*'no contar con los demás'*) has found its present-day refuge — forever a temptation in a country with a remarkably low sense of patriotism. (In a revealing survey undertaken by UNESCO four years ago, Spain ranked twenty-third, or next to the bottom, in its country's sense of patriotism. Only 25 per cent of those polled answered affirmatively to the statement, 'I want to be a citizen of my country.')

Today, in Catalonia, this aggressive provincialism has assumed an increasingly restrictive form. From being an accepted 'possibility', the teaching of *catalan* has now become a 'duty' — not only in primary and secondary levels of education, but in universities and institutes of higher learning as well. Jobs are rarely offered to 'outsiders', and particularly not to Castilians. A well-known Madrid architect who made his mark as the designer of an ultra-modern hospital told me that he had never been able to obtain a contract in Barcelona, even though his office partner is himself a Catalan.

Fortunately, in Spain, the land of Sancho Panza, the tragic is often offset by the comic, *opera seria* easily turns into *opera buffa.* Shortly after assuming power in the late spring of last year, the new Socialist government of Rodriguez Zapatero learned that the government in Dublin was going to request that Irish be added to the twenty-one officially recognized languages to be used in the administrative and public deliberations of the recently expanded European Union. Madrid promptly informed the authorities in Brussels that, if Irish were recognized as an official working language, then the European Union would also have to accept Catalan, Galician, and Basque *(euskera)* as well! The inhabitants of Dublin were left to drown their disappointment in Guinness.

During a recent visit to Madrid I did not meet a single Spaniard who was not an enthusiastic supporter of the European Union. One of the most enthusiastic is the present prime minister, José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Shortly after Valéry Giscard d'Estaing unveiled a proposed 'Constitution for Europe', he announced that his government would be among the first to have the project ratified by the people of Spain in a national referendum to be held on February 20, 2005. To make sure that he was not offending his countrymen's linguistic susceptibilities, he had all of the Constitution's 448 articles translated into Castilian, and also into Catalan, Galician, Basque *(euskera)*, and Valencian. When the news reached Barcelona, it created an uproar. 'What!' objected the irate Catalans. 'Everyone knows that valenciano, when written, is identical with catalan.' In Madrid's leading (left-of-centre) daily, *El País,* Pasqual Maragall, the new 'strongman' of Catalonia, declared that it was high time to establish a minimum of 'linguistic rigor' to keep Spain from becoming the laughing stock of Europe.

Realizing that he had lent over too far to please Catalonia's 'autonomous' neighbour to the south, the Spanish prime minister hastily backtracked, and agreed to limit the number of official translations of the proposed European Constitution to four — Castilian, Catalonian, Galician, and Basque *(euskera)*. He did not have to wait long for the reaction: a noisy protest in Valencia, with 50,000 demonstrators blocking the city's main shopping arteries, during which the Madrid government was accused of craven capitulation in accepting this outrageous affront to the autonomous validity of the Valencian language, inflicted on them by the arrogant bullies of neighbouring Barcelona.

Curtis Cate's most recent book is a biography of Friedrich Nietzsche (Pimlico 2003)

The St George's Day Dinner

will be held on Thursday 21 April

at 7.30pm

at the

New Cavendish Club, 44 Gt Cumberland Place, London W1

£26 to include 3 courses and wine

Lord Stoddart of Swindon will propose the toast of St George

Tickets available from the Managing Editor

Eric Hester

Since I was a teacher for most of my life, I cannot resist asking questions. Here are some questions that I put to audiences.

Name:

1. Any three German-speaking composers.
2. Any three English poets and recite four lines of any one of his (or her) poems.
3. Any French, German, Italian or Spanish poet and quote a line or phrase from any poem.
4. Any two artists from Italy, France, the Netherlands or Spain and give some examples of their paintings or other works.

The questions look absurdly easy. However, there is one qualification for all the questions: each person named has to be living today. Few audiences — and I have tried this with head masters of distinguished schools — can name a single living composer of any nationality. If one is named, I ask a supplementary question: whistle a few bars of any of that composer's works. Here I have never had an answer. Similarly, an erudite audience could name some living English poets but were floored by the request to quote even a few lines. We can all name a few British artists that are exhibited in galleries but why can we not name any Italian, French or other European artists, not to mention those of the United States? Here is a paradox: in this great age of instant communication, there is less knowledge of living world culture than ever. The questions above, to name living artists, would have been absurdly easy at least up to the end of the 1930s or later. Elgar, Holst, and Delius, all died in 1934. Rachmaninov died only in 1943, Richard Strauss in 1949, Poulenc in 1963, and Benjamin Britten in 1976. I can remember listening on the radio — on the Home Service, I think, since all good music was not then shunted onto the Third Programme — to first performances of music by Vaughan Williams (died 1958) and William Walton (died 1983). Of literary figures, Yeats died in 1939, Shaw in 1950, Eliot in 1965, Robert Frost in 1963 and Pound in 1972. Betjeman (obit 1984) and Larkin, 1985, may not be great poets, but many people can still quote something from what they wrote with great affection. If we take Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate, the living poet most often named in my test, I find that educated people struggle to quote any lines, the most common being from early verses like 'Half term break'. It is sometimes suggested that in the past the great artists were not acknowledged in their own lifetime, the argument being, in an appalling *non sequitur,* that therefore today's unacknowledged artists are great. But this is simply untrue. If we consider English writers, until, say, the 1960s, there was always at least one great poet who was acknowledged as such and widely read. The same is true in other countries of Europe and of the other arts.

So is it that we simply are unaware of the great living writers in French, the Italian artists, the German composers or — and this is the more disturbing thought — could it be that we are simply not producing great works of art any more? I cannot name any work written in English since 1985 that I consider a work of genius. I cannot whistle any piece of music written in the last twenty years, or think of any visual artists whose works I should go into a gallery to see. What has happened? The totality of the reasons is complex but I want to argue that in each of the arts in the twentieth century modernism, with the requirements to produce something new, i.e. 'novel', sent the arts up a blind alley.

Modernism is difficult to define but always includes a conscious attempt to break with the past by removing what were previously considered essential requirements: in music, the tune or melody and even the requirement for a key or tune was consciously rejected by Schoenberg and his followers, still dominant in the BBC. In poetry, not only were rhyme, metre and rhythm considered unnecessary but meaning itself, the obvious point of all language, was considered passé. Eliot famously said that he did not know what his poems meant and Auden, according to Isherwood, moved lines from one poem to another without regard to meaning or resulting obscurity. In the visual arts, any attempt at making the work on the canvas resemble the real world was considered otiose. It could be noted that in modern architecture, artefacts cannot always carry out their basic functions: buildings, such as the Roman Catholic cathedral in Liverpool and many schools built in the nineteen-sixties, let in water when

it rains, and bridges are not always safe. One feature of a modernist work is that it is difficult or impossible to detect a mistake: who could identify a wrong note in modernist music, a misprint in a modernist poem or a blemish on a modernist painting? All the stirring up of modernism led to a contempt for what Dr Johnson had called respectfully 'the common reader' or the equivalent in the other arts. A fine statement of the effect of the modern in the arts is that written by Philip Larkin writing, in 1970, in the first instance about modern jazz:

> And yet again, there was something about the books I was now reading that seemed oddly familiar; this *development,* this *progress,* this *new language* that was *more difficult,* more *complex,* that required you to *work hard at appreciating it,* that you *couldn't expect to understand at first go* ... Of course! This was the language of modern painting, modern poetry, modern music. *Of course!* How glibly I had talked of modern jazz without realizing the force of the adjective: this was *modern* jazz, and Parker was a modern jazz player just as Picasso was a modern painter and Pound a modern poet.... Of course! After Picasso! After Pound! There could hardly have been a conciser summary of what I don't believe about art.... the term 'modern' when applied to art, has a more than chronological meaning: it denotes a quality of irresponsibility peculiar to this century, known sometimes as modernism.... My own theory is that it is related to an imbalance between the two tensions from which art springs: these are the tension between the artist and his material, the artist and his audience.... (which) has slackened or even perished. In consequence, the artist has become overconcerned with his material and, in isolation, has busied himself with the two principal themes of modernism, mystification and outrage. (reprinted in *Required Writing,* Faber & Faber, 1983).

The reader might reply that a number of the modernists mentioned by Larkin or by me produced works of undisputed genius, but I contend that this is because they were living off the capital of previous generation. Eliot and Pound, for example, were steeped in the literatures of the whole of Europe, but those who followed their example did not have this background. They simply noted that poetry did not have to have any rhythm or make any sense. When they saw Pound quoting Chinese symbols in his *Cantos* they noted that nothing was too outrageous and that one need not consider the audience at all, since almost no one who reads English poetry has a working knowledge of Chinese. Pound influenced Eliot and, famously, helped to rewrite *The Waste Land* so that it is incomprehensible. Other poets, like Hopkins and Owen, had certainly experimented with English verse but neither had discarded the need to make sense or to have basic forms. As a result of modernism, in Britain, poetry has almost died. Publishers like the Oxford University Press have stopped publishing it and very little modern poetry is bought by private individuals, those who are spending their own money. I cannot write about the novel in such a short article, but it is clear that the popular novel has thrived and continues whereas the modernist novel, best exemplified by *Finnegan's Wake,* has not been an influence. In drama, Becket's experimental work has not been successfully imitated.

In music, we might be living in one of the great ages of performance, but almost no new music seems to be written that audiences clamour to hear. The BBC, with its stranglehold over British broadcasting, compulsorily funded, strives to promote modernism. However, music is still reliant to a large extent on the sales of tickets for live performances and on the purchase of CDs. Here, people stubbornly reject the thrusting of modernism on them. In the visual arts, the state apparatus is in control to a large extent since public money is used to buy 'modern art' and most people cannot buy anything at all. As David Hockney has said, drawing is not taught and yet this is a way of looking not just a way of producing art. Paul Johnson in his fine book *Art: A New History* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003) refers to modern art, from Cubism onwards as 'fashion art'. Though he is finally optimistic, Johnson describes 'the decline, and in some cases, the disappearance, of effective training in art skills.... At the heart of the process whereby beautiful objects are produced there is an abyss.'

Of course, the breakdown in the arts was part of a wider breakdown of all traditional order in the twentieth century. Zola had given his chilling cry, 'Families I hate you!' and, remarkably, Nietzsche had said, 'I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar.' The dominant theories of the twentieth century were those supplied by Marx, Darwin and Freud — each, at least as taken in their popular forms, determinist, leaving little scope for human beings who were consequently devalued by them. Martin Amis in *Koba the Dread* (Jonathan Cape, 2002) shows how, despite the discrediting of Marxism and Communism, academics and 'opinion formers' in the West still call themselves Marxists, whereas anyone who called himself a Nazi would be ostracized or worse. Eliot himself made the connection between surrealism in the arts and logical positivism in philosophy: 'For as surrealism seemed to provide a method of producing works of art without imagination, so logical positivism seems to provide a method of philosophizing without insight and wisdom.' (Preface

to Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture,* Random House, 1948).

Is the whole future gloomy? Not necessarily. Chesterton wrote that it is not true that one cannot put back the clock. One of the key periods in the arts is The Renaissance, the rediscovery of the past. In British architecture, from about 1700 to 1920, nearly all fine buildings were copies of either Gothic or Classical architecture. We have everything in our favour. The great artists are attractive and will continue to be so; the charlatans will not last. However subsidies to the arts must be removed since this gives the power of patronage to those who are not spending their own money. Philip Larkin (*op. cit)* described this as pernicious in poetry and it is just as bad in the other arts. State patronage stops the influence of the 'common reader' and substitutes that of the bureaucrat or, even worse, the politician. We should never be afraid of saying that a poem is incomprehensible, a painting is ugly or a piece of music tuneless. Hans Christian Anderson's *The Emperor's New Clothes* should be compulsory reading.

Eric Hester was a head master of grammar and comprehensive schools

Fixing Shakespeare:

What playwrights' ghosts have to endure

Roger Sandall

When did you last see a straight production of a classic? — one that does not recklessly twist the author's meaning? There is currently a travelling version of Strindberg's *Dance of Death* described as an 'adaptation' by the man who altered it, American playwright Richard Greenberg, a production that started out in 2001 with Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren in the roles of the artillery captain Edgar and Alice his wife. Like much else in Strindberg it shows that life is impossible and marriage is hell — the standard actor's view of matrimony.

But the black comedy is not just pushed to the limit — it goes well beyond. Michael Billington tells us in the *Guardian* that this production 'goes further than any I have seen in suggesting that the only possible response to emotional vampirism on this scale is laughter'. What he does not say is that a good deal of the laughter is ultimately at Strindberg's expense and even makes nonsense of the title of the play itself.

Not only does the adapter emphasise the comedy of the 'dance' rather than the misery of the 'death' — he eliminates the captain's death entirely. In Strindberg's original play Edgar has attempted to drown his wife, Alice audibly wants her husband dead, and when the tyrannical army captain is dying from a stroke at its conclusion she cries 'Oh God, on my behalf and that of all mankind, I thank Thee for having freed us from this evil!' But in the Greenberg version, as opposed to the Strindberg original, it's more like Darby and Joan: Edgar and Alice sit comfortably reconciled on either side of the stage as the curtain falls. This neutralises the deadly thrust of the play, falsifies the characters, and puzzles the audience. It's almost as odd as Colley Cibber's legendary happy endings for *King Lear.*

Who cares about Strindberg? He is lucky to be revived at all. Why should his ghost be vexed if both Part Two — that's just about half the play — and an entire subplot with two more characters is cut? A paranoid 19th-century Swede whose art mirrored his own neurosis is obviously fair game for plundering adapters. In any case ambitious theatre men want a bigger and more famous target, a larger reputation to abuse and exploit and that of course means Shakespeare.

'Not long ago', writes Terry McCabe, 'a celebrated production of *Hamlet* featured, at the play's most famous moment, Hamlet spray-painting on a wall TO BE / NOT TO BE and then turning out to the audience and saying, 'That is the question.' The director seems to have been rather pleased with himself for this innovation. Talking later to an interviewer he explained how 'It exploded the play in this wonderful way: everybody just laughed and got over it in a perfect symbiotic relationship.' But does *Hamlet* need exploding? Are its disturbing thoughts something 'symbiotic relationships' are supposed to cure?

The argument of McCabe's excellent little book (*Misdirecting the Play: an Argument Against Contemporary Theater)*, is that 'directing that seeks

to control the text, instead of subordinating itself to the text, is bad directing. I believe the director's job is to tell the playwright's story as clearly and as interestingly as possible.' In his old-fashioned way McCabe believes that the playwright's story — Sophocles' story, Shakespeare's story, Chekhov's story — should be paramount. And if the tragic intention of a work has long been recognised by judicious critics then it should not be played for comedy. While it is healthy for directors to bring to the stage a vision of *Hamlet* which has some originality and does not merely echo a stale or stagnant tradition, 'one thing seems sure: a tragic hero contemplating suicide should not get a laugh'.

One of the odd features of *Hamlet* productions is that they so often illustrate the faults Shakespeare warned against in his advice to the players. Deaf to his drift, they repeatedly provide what philosophers call an ostensive definition of the very failings Hamlet points to: 'Oh, it offends me to the soul' he cries, 'to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise.'

One of the odd features of* Hamlet *productions is that they so often illustrate the faults Shakespeare warned against in his advice to the players

Imagine my surprise therefore, at a recent Sydney production, to hear an obstreperous Polonius shouting his final lines as if his fellow players were deaf, heavily accentuating everything to do with Hamlet's mental condition as if he were playing to children ('... that hath made him **mad**! ... I have found the very cause of Hamlet's **lunacy**!') and providing exactly the kind of gratuitous noise meant to split the ears of the groundlings and set barren spectators laughing — indeed, those near me snickered on cue.

Then imagine my even greater surprise to find that Hamlet's advice to the players had been entirely cut by the director. Why was a shrewd piece of criticism, designed by Shakespeare to alert the Elizabethan audience to the manifest failings of his fellow actors, thought suitable in London around 1600, but unsuitable for Sydney 400 years later? Perhaps the bad acting stage in this production could not stand the fierce illumination of Shakespeare's own theatrical thought. And not only those lines had been lost. Laertes' warning to Ophelia — 'the canker galls the infants of the spring' — was missing, and those who looked forward to hearing how young Fortinbras 'sharked up a list of lawless resolutes' were disappointed to find neither sharks nor sharking here. Admittedly, Hamlet's words to the Ghost, asking what it can mean 'that thou, dread corse, again in complete steel, revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon, making night hideous', does make life rather hard for the people in the wardrobe department.

'Costume designs are metaphors for characters' writes Terry McCabe. 'You are what you wear. This is why . . . productions of *Hamlet* that wish to emphasize Hamlet's melancholy nature costume him in black, and why, to help convey the suggestion of a moth in Blanche DuBois's manner, Tennessee Williams specifies that her costume be white.' Prophetically foreseeing the waywardness of modern directors, Shakespeare wisely put into Hamlet's mouth that phrase about 'my suits of inky black' — and what a pity he did not suggest something for Ophelia too. A single line about 'my gowns of pearly white' might have prevented her being rigged in a red figure-hugging provocation looking like something out of the wardrobe of Heidi Fliess. Certainly few of us want to return to the Ophelia of Sir Laurence Olivier's film: Jean Simmons now seems decidedly insipid. But must we go to the other extreme with scarlet dresses and a whorish personality too? Whatever one thinks of the knowing rhymes Ophelia recites when mad, there are indications of a prevailing reserve, and if her brother describes her flesh as 'fair and unpolluted' we shouldn't disregard his testimony.

According to Hamlet she spends at least some of her time at prayer ('nymph, in thy orisons...') and also doing needlework, and when Ophelia reports that she was accosted by Hamlet 'as I was sewing in my chamber', this is more than just a line of dialogue. It sets a scene and denotes a character. Unlike the wild and distraught prince, her own life is one of order, the domestic order to be found in a Book of Hours, the social order of a court in which conduct is observed, constrained, and commented on — and Shakespeare knew exactly what he was doing when he conjured up that image of a young lady embroidering in her chamber.

'Even moderately competent acting can mesmerize an audience with Ophelia's madness' writes R. M. Frye, and the young woman who played Ophelia in Sydney demonstrated this truth. By then, in a cream slip, she succeeded in winning a tear with that magical flower speech, but the clash between the brazen identity projected at the outset, and the broken figure struggling to hold her mind together at the end, means that a wholly unnecessary contradiction is introduced — a confusion which merely obstructs our understanding.

Should the 'To be or not to be' speech be moved out of Act III and placed in Act II? The second act is indeed where the speech comes in the much shorter First Quarto, and I gather that by removing it from the more familiar Folio and Second Quarto position in Act III this provides a not uncommon variation. One might think it would have serious repercussions, and there have been arguments pro and con.

Those opposed to the earlier position point out that the prince feels suicidal in this speech, and that it is logically the climax of a series of agonised self-questionings, moving from mere disenchantment with a weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable world, through the self-accusations of a muddy-mettled rascal who exclaims 'What an ass am I!' all the way to the crisis in which, acknowledging that 'conscience does make cowards of us all', his own inability to act is both explained and excused.



Muriel St Clare Byrne broadly favours this argument:

> I am more than doubtful about the wisdom of following the order from the First Quarto, though I can well believe that this is how the play may originally have been acted (but not, therefore, constructed). *Hamlet* does not drive ahead like *Macbeth* or *Othello*: it is a play which needs space as well as speed, expansion as well as progression — a movement like the waves of an incoming tide, which fall back after each surge forward, and spread more widely the next time.

Are these literary rather than dramatic considerations? The meditative detachment of the famous soliloquy should make it unique so that it could be put anywhere. Such has been the argument of those favouring the earlier location. R. M. Frye in his *The Renaissance Hamlet* is characteristically judicious. The poetry allows the soliloquy to stand alone and could indeed be located earlier. But to treat it in this way is to ignore not just its role in increasing suspense, but in deepening the philosophical treatment of life and death.

The theatrical case for a fuller text allowing a more gradual pace of development was also recently put by Kenneth Branagh. Under Adrian Noble in the 1992 Royal Shakespeare Company production he played Hamlet in the 'eternity version' of the text (all of the First Folio plus additions from the Second Quarto) and reports as follows: 'The performance matured as it had not before, and continued to surprise me, not least by the way in which the full text offered a much more comfortable playing experience for the actor. It was more imaginatively paced. One could take advantage of the 'breaths' that Shakespeare had given the actor. Paradoxically, it was much less physically exhausting to play, and the cumulative weight of the longer evening made for an immensely powerful finale.'

'A set design is more than just an environment for the action,' writes McCabe. 'The physical world of a play is a metaphor for its theme.' So how did the physical world of this *Hamlet* illustrate its theme? We saw a simple black box, with a couple of doors either side for the actors to come and go — 'very contained and quite claustrophobic' as the director put it at a pre-production public discussion. Where had this come from? Well, he continued, Hamlet's remark that 'Denmark's a prison' is a line that has resonated with us in working out the design'. Above the platform, he explained, were three highly visible TV monitors, and surveillance cameras feeding these screens were on throughout the play.

The director then told us that this is what you see in every bank nowadays. A closely watched bank guarded by an all-seeing electronic Argus is his model of Elsinore. 'There's a sense of always being spied on, eavesdropping is happening all the time, everyone is being pried into throughout the play' said Bell. So this was the ruling concept for the physical and social environment of the production.

We may grant that Hamlet's depressed mental state does transfigure the world with its 'brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire' into a dank and claustrophobic cell. He says so himself. But the environment of the play is a hundred times larger than this brief and constricting figure of speech. The haunting sense of being minutely and critically observed derives more from the anxieties of the theatrical fraternity themselves who suspect, correctly, that they are under inspection by the world at large, and that their radicalism is increasingly judged to be symptomatic of political and artistic delusions.

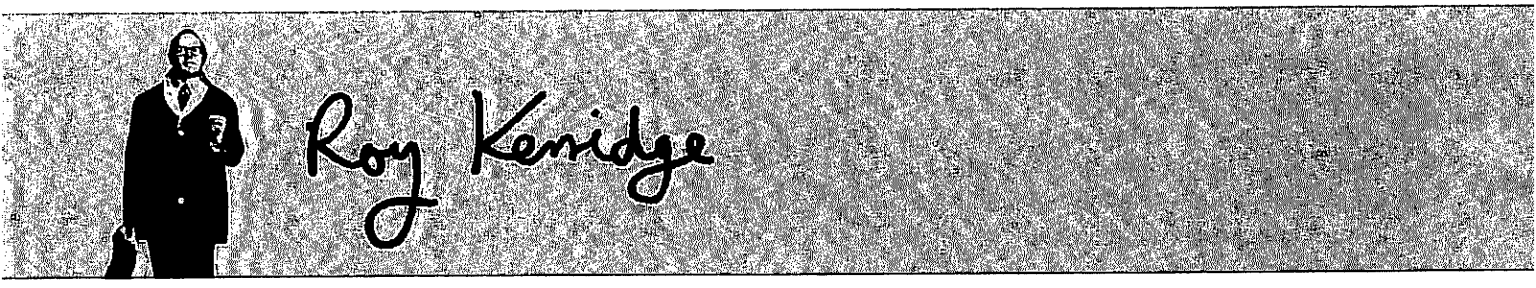
Hamlet itself abounds with delusional states, so perhaps unsurprisingly theatre folk find disturbing reflections of their own hysteria in its hero's discontent. This confirms something which many of us have long

suspected — that the leading character displays manic-depressive tendencies of a tiresome kind. Horatio's mourning comments at the close about great promise unfulfilled must be respectfully listened to, and then set aside. It is that Hamlet, 'had he been put on, would have proved most royal', for by the time the curtain falls it is fairly obvious he did not have the right stuff. Plenty up top, but not much 'bottom' in the 18th century sense. Not only is he overimaginative and prone to hearing voices in the dark, not only is there a tinge of misanthropy, he is a moral hysteric capable of finding fault anywhere, anytime, with anyone, a psychological type so disturbing and dangerous, so unforgiving of human frailty, that in the world's opinion such people are usually considered unfit to rule.

Hamlet's social bonds are weak and conditional. He appears to dislike his own country Denmark. His conduct toward both Ophelia and Gertrude is hateful — breathtakingly callous. Instead of Polonius, the most conspicuous 'wretched, rash, intruding fool' in Gertrude's boudoir is the impulsively violent Hamlet himself.

'I believe only in absolutely independent, individual and lonely virtue, and in the serenely unsociable practice of the same.' said Henry James; but in some of the prince's moods these words could be Hamlet's too. The fiercely pure intolerance of such a character can easily veer into mania. Whatever Horatio might say or think it is hard to believe he had much of a political future. But the play most certainly does, and that it still grips one despite directorial eccentricities shows that even after 400 years the tragedy of Hamlet the Dane is just about bulletproof.

Roger Sandall is the author of the Culture Cult. *His website listed under the weblogs on* Arts and Letters Daily, *is www.culturecult.com*



Is it possible, out of misplaced loyalty, for a man to reject literature that he feels he might enjoy? Yes it is, and I am the living proof. Many crusty old Tories have one out-of-character weakness, a youthful opinion that meant so much to them that they cannot give it up. To do so would feel like a betrayal of their younger selves. My youthful abhorrence is Shakespeare.

Again and again, as I grow older, I have betrayed the teenage Roy Kerridge. I have turned against reefer smoking and learned to love Dickens. But I will *never*, betray the original Roy so vilely as to read or see a single play by Shakespeare. A horror and a hatred of Shakespeare are among my first memories, instilled in me by a culture-hating grandmother and later reinforced by a succession of culture-loving schoolmasters.

Only once, since leaving school in the 'fifties, have I weakened. I admit it — I did read *Julius Caesar.* At first it went badly. I found I was enjoying myself; the play's anti-democratic message well suited to the crusty old Tory within. Then came the same old Shakespeare ending, vaguely remembered from school — a war offstage, the place littered with bodies falling absurdly, Second Corpse Bearer, First Corpse Bearer and so on. Yes *Julius Caesar* was redeemed by turning into nonsense and thus I have been able to go on enjoying my early prejudices. A new generation may be able to approach Shakespeare with a fresh mind, thanks to the collapse of state education: 'Last term we did Shakespeare. I think he was some sort of King', a fifteen year old acquaintance told me.

A hamster is better than an author. The average hamster delights in organizing its cage, with everything in its places, no detail overlooked. Yet every other day the hamster's owner turns the whole cage topsy turvy with fresh bedding put in and all hoards of old food removed.

Instead of going berserk, or making a scene, like an author whose wife has tidied up his desk, the hamster excitedly explores his old domain made new, and then reorganizes it to his own liking, with great zest and enjoyment.

Any modern person reading Carlyle's *On Heroes and*

Hero Worship must wonder what Carlyle would have made of Hitler. A German inspired by Woden and worshipped by his people, Hitler has all the makings of a Carlylian hero. Churchill may have pleased Carlyle, but I note that Carlyle writes about Napoleon, not Nelson or Wellington. Hitler's sense of mission and his transformation of the once demoralized German people — apart from Jewish Germans whose transformation went another way — might well have appealed to Carlyle. Carlyle seldom agrees with the views of his Heroes, but admires their verve and purpose. It would be very interesting to read Carlyle on Hitler. By the way 'Jewish Germans' seems to me preferable to 'German Jews'. Until the rise of Hitler, thousands of Jewish families felt themselves to be Germans first and foremost.

Caroline Galwey

Consider the case of two British politicians. One, as a long-haired youth, fronts a rock band. He is still young and glamorous when he becomes leader of the Labour party, then Prime Minister. He poses with an electric guitar, coins the slogan 'Cool Britannia', and talks groovily of his love for rock'n'roll and his inability to get to grips with classical music. Everyone loves it. The other politician is handed the poisoned chalice of leadership of the Conservative party in its post-Thatcher identity crisis. He is even younger, but no one sees it as a selling point. After a few years of failing to make his mark, he resigns. In retirement he begins to learn the piano, and writes eloquently of the satisfaction that it has brought him — but hardly anyone notices.

The fortunes of Tony Blair and William Hague might stand for the fortunes of popular music and classical music in the English-speaking world. Pop is relevant, dynamic, accessible; the classics are an anachronism, safely left to a ghetto of cardigan-wearing also-rans.

The fortunes of Tony Blair and William Hague might stand for the fortunes of popular music and classical music in the English-speaking world. Pop is relevant, dynamic, accessible; the classics are an anachronism, safely left to a ghetto of cardigan-wearing also-rans. It suits devotees of both kinds of music to let this be the last word on the matter. If classical-music lovers can present themselves as mild-mannered fuddy-duddies who just happen to like this sort of thing, without wishing to suggest it is any *better* than pop, then they can hope to survive. For they cannot take their survival for granted: those who dislike classical music choose to present their feelings about it as boredom and mild amusement, but their underlying reaction is much stronger — visceral fear and hatred, in fact.

You see this seam of hatred exposed if you watch a teenager carry a musical instrument on to a school bus, or if you invite an average Briton to go and see an opera. Mere indifference would not make people so ready to mock an art form of which they know almost nothing. Straightforward class envy and dislike have something to do with it, but class animosity is a blunt instrument with which to analyse a reaction that is just as likely to come from the rich and successful as from the poor. A liking for almost any other privilege of wealth or intellectual culture — fine wine, country houses, art, the theatre — arouses much less hostility. What is it about classical music that annoys people so much?

The strange contortions that its practitioners get into to excuse their habit may suggest an answer. Intellectual music-lovers retreat into the role of custodians of the clever, coping with the more arcane reaches of our culture because somebody must. In the opposite camp are the Classic-FM types for whom music exists to be 'relaxing', a superior consumer product, like a Miele washing machine. Then you have the music educationalists who claim that Mozart is good for children because it stimulates their brains and makes them better at their school work; and promoters of various competitions, such as the BBC's Young Musician of the Year, which convert music into a winner-takes-all spectator sport.

Notice what can and cannot be admitted here. You can admit to being entertained, to taking mild pleas-

ure in classical music; that is what music is for. You can admit, at least if you are over forty, to using classical music as a symbol of established affluence: money is never out of fashion. You can expect tolerance, even credit, for the hard work it takes to master a musical instrument, although in these days of pre-programmed synthesisers you may seem like a mug — why work to achieve a result you could simply pay for? Even the intellectual elitism inherent in understanding classical music is just about pardonable. You can point out that the brainpower and technical knowledge that Bach or Wagner could draw on to construct their huge scores are on a level that no popular songwriter could ever dream of, and people may admit that truth. The deadliest crime of elitism committed by classical music is seldom referred to — *emotional* élitism. What we can never admit is that classical music moves us more deeply, more subtly, in more different ways than popular music can.

When we listen to classical music we are just as likely to end up in tears or find ourselves abandoning the ironing and punching the air. Commercial pop music does not do this. At its best it gives pleasure, but not serious, intense pleasure. One is a prolonged erotic encounter with a partner who knows one's desires only too well, the other is a drunken two-minutes. The first takes more effort but it is also more fun. We listen to music for a pleasure that we refuse to do without, however embarrassing. To jeer at the buttoned-up style of the old-fashioned Radio 3 announcer is to miss the point. The stuffy style suited the situation; like a commissionaire at a 'massage parlour' or a flagellation club.

Classical music, to most people now, sounds *immodest*, in both senses: both indecent and boastful. It publicly asserts private emotion as a serious matter. This music comes from the time when people had stopped feeling as if they belonged to an unchanging, God-given order, and had not yet started feeling like atoms in an empty universe; the age of enlightenment, romanticism and progress. It is about the man or woman of destiny, the great, individual human spirit, the unique hero or heroine of their own story. But since Darwin and Freud, and the failures of civilisation in the twentieth century, we have been utterly put off the idea of the 'great' individual in politics and society; more distasteful still is the individual who claims to have finer, more sensitive feelings. The argument that grand passions are not elitist, that anyone can have them, is not accepted. This is especially true in England, where there is a long-standing preference distrust for public displays of emotion. But the tendency is present in the whole western world. Guardedness and irony in the face of anything that might look like emotional self-importance are so general that we hardly notice them.

Scarcely anyone is aware of the emotional impoverishment of our public life. We think that we are in touch with our emotions, and open about them; in fact we have diluted them and airbrushed them out to near-invisibility. The 'cool', trifling pose that has spread from television to nearly everyone's public persona is mirrored in the vacuity of the music one hears in public places. Any emotional content that popular songs have is deniable, constantly reducing itself to pose or parody. The majority are as bare of emotion as of melody and consist of little more than a fidgeting rhythm and a voice that seems pitched at a constant sneer. Young people, at whom this 'music' is ostensibly aimed, buy very little of it compared to what they used to in the 1960s and 1970s (it is not just classical music whose audience is in decline). If they declare themselves fans of particular groups, it is the carefully packaged, conformist aggression and sexuality of the band members that attract them, with the music as an optional extra. The importance of the music lies only in its volume and hypnotic rhythm, its ability to drown out individual emotions and sensitivity — in fact, to do just the opposite of what Romantic music was designed to do. Nearly all the music that most people ever hear is, in this sense, anti-music. In this climate, imagine the vulnerability of a practitioner of music that *really* arouses people's feelings. Orchestral musicians pretend to be indifferent to their work and escape to the pub within five minutes of the concert ending — not just because of the pressures of doing a difficult job at unsocial hours for a miserable salary, but because of the dread of looking like a velvet-suited sensitive soul, our society's ultimate figure of mockery.

If classical music were the expression of a world-view that society no longer holds, or can hold — then we might as well give up. But there is nothing inevitable about it. Classical music is the music of the great Western project of individualism, the belief in the value and uniqueness of *every* person, not just the members of a privileged caste. The project has not died a natural death: it was nearly aborted a number of times in the twentieth century, but is still struggling to be born. Soviet Communism has passed and the old Left is reduced to remnants casting about for new causes to which to attach themselves. We are left with the resentments that communism fed on — the levelling attitude, the lazy, envious, vandal's attitude to the finest fruits of civilisation: it is too hard to give them to everyone, so instead we will try to ensure nobody has them.

More people than ever have the chance to get them.

While western intellectuals desert the ideal of individualism, ordinary people still struggle distractedly towards it through the maze of the consumer society, clutching at self-help books, New Age beliefs, assurances that 'You Too Can Be A Writer/expert/celebrity' ... The 'classless society' has reached the point where more people can afford to compare the merits of Merlot and Shiraz. Why not Mozart and Beethoven too? If you want to distinguish worthwhile goals from fake ones, you could do worse than to take classical music as your guide. You do not need much money, 'success' or 'personal fulfilment', you can be lonely, and depressed, yet the wordless wisdom, the unity of mind and heart in classical music can still speak to you — as William Hague has found out, and as Tony Blair, trapped in his increasingly threadbare glamour, has yet to discover.

That is on the individual level. And at the national and international level, we in the West need to rediscover the tragic and heroic, to take up the huge responsibilities to the world which come with our good fortune. The day we have a Prime Minister who admits to preferring Elgar to Eminem, I will know some progress has been made.

Caroline Galwey is a part-time university lecturer (and a Bye-Fellow of Girton College)

Children's TV

Harry Phibbs

At first it seemed obvious, that the BBC lefties were trying to undermine the capitalist system by instilling class antagonism at a very early age. Tinky Winky, one of the four Tellytubbies, was attempting to put on a pair of mittens but wasn't sure where they went. Perhaps they went on his ears? Or on his knees? While attempting this he giggled and spoke the mushy lazy apology for the English language favoured by him and his fellow tubbies. But simultaneously offering a running commentary in cut glass tones, the flowers spoke in an unpleasant, sneering tone. 'Oh, how ridiculous. Everybody knows mittens go on your hands.'

The association formed in the minds of the viewing toddlers could only be that people who were posh were also mean spirited. But another BBC programme for young children, Balamory, could scarcely be more different. It overflows with the spirit of social harmony. Were there such a thing as a Class Relations Board it would give the programme a prize. Archie the kilt-wearing inventor lives in a castle and has a velvety accent but happily mixes in with everyone else in the village.

Balamory's deep conservatism is reflected in its stress on good manners and deference. PC Plum is well regarded as the community policeman. Miss Hooley, the school teacher, is treated with respect by the children. Yet in other respects it is Politically Correct in an entirely beneficial way — the cheerful characters include a full ethnic minority and disabled quota. The programme's popularity is so strong that Tobermory, where it is filmed, has been beset by four-year-olds who have persuaded their parents to take them to the real Balamory, a response representing something of a fillip to tourism on the Isle of Mull. Bob the Builder would also appear to be toff-friendly. In one story, Bob and his team restore a castle. They style themselves 'Knights of Can-a-Lot' and wear suits of armour.

I am afraid The Tweenies, however, are common and 'in your face'. They sing songs with such disagreeable titles as 'Peter Rabbit's Got A Fly Upon His Nose', 'We Like Being Dirty' and 'Townie. Call me a Townie'. Their theme song includes the lyrics: 'You can run about and scream and shout/You can dance with us/ Take a chance with us/ It's OK/ What do you say?' I say 'No thanks'. The Fimbles, on the other hand, are neutral in the class war, insofar as they are too witless and banal to influence thought in any way. They are soft toys that go around finding things. Doubtless the BBC realized the merchandising opportunities of putting it on the air. You would be better off giving your children neat gin than subjecting them to such viewing. Increasingly parents contract out child rearing to television sets. It is so easy to absorb a child's attention by slipping in a video cassette even

if none of these programmes happen to be broadcast at the time. That means that the values inculcated by the television will dominate.

When it comes to the way that work and enterprise are portrayed on 'preschool' television the picture is also mixed. Money seldom seems to change hands in the world of children's television. Bob the Builder may be a self-employed businessman with a strong work ethic, but the portrayal is deceptive. He spends his time actually building things. He never spends his time filling in VAT returns or worrying about health and safety regulations. In December 2000, *Can We Fix It?*, Bob's theme song, topped the charts in the UK, outselling the previous record-holder, Elton John's *Candles in the Wind.* Bob is a rare private sector hero in children's television. Perhaps there would be less sympathy among adults for the striking fireman and post workers had they been portrayed more objectively in children's programmes. Postman Pat does not sit around complaining about his uniform. *Come Outside*, which features Auntie Mabel and Pippin the dog going about in a spotty plane, assists the enterprise culture and has genuine educational value. Pippin breaks something and Auntie Mable zooms off to find out how to replace it. For instance a teapot is broken and we visit a potter to see a new one being made. *The Shiny Show,* featuring a cat, a dog and a monkey, manages to celebrate success and achievement while offering encouragement to those who failed but tried hard. 'Give yourself a pat on the front,' says its song in the closing title for those who, for example, identified a rudder on a boat. 'Give yourself a pat on the side, you tried you tried,' adds the song in a message for those who gave the wrong answer.

Much of the PC rules over such programmes is understandable, or even positive but the astonishing absence of family life is excessive. In the Tweenies the feral children are indulged by their carers looking after them in a play group. We never hear about their parents. Toddlers display an innate conservatism on property rights. 'Mine', is a word uttered with robust frequency. Again this is played down, although to be fair the Teletubbies do each have their own individual possessions. Laa Laa has a ball, Dipsy a hat, Tinky Winky a handbag and Po a scooter; but in one subversive episode they all end up in Tinky Winky's handbag. The objections to the Teletubbies, that it teaches children to say 'Eh-Oh' rather than 'hello' and that it is endlessly repetitive, have been endlessly repeated. If you want your children's minds to rot, then the Fimbles should be the programme of choice. The Teletubbies is required viewing for the children of the revolution. Tory tots stay tuned to Balamory.

Harry Phibbs is a journalist

Tatiana Borisovna

It is easy to criticize President Putin for his chronic inability to cope with unexpected situations, recently demonstrated by his blundering intervention in the presidential elections of Ukraine. Time and again — as in the *Kursk* submarine disaster, the *Nord Ost Theatre* and Beslan hostage crises — he has displayed a lack of ingenious versatility in dealing with problems that take him by surprise: a failing exacerbated by his refusal ever to admit having made a mistake. You have to doff your hat to him for his astounding achievements, where he has had time to think, to weigh his chances, to prepare and go for the kill only when he is sure of success.

This is primarily true of Putin's declared domestic aims, openly aired when he first came to power. He announced that he was out to strengthen the 'vertical' of State Power and to restore order in the country. With hindsight we can see that he did not mean it in the institutional and political sense alone, although his achievements — the installation of four presidential henchmen in strategic areas of Russia, the axing of gubernatorial elections, the dramatic return to what is virtually a one-party system with its relentlessly growing domination of official life, are remarkable enough in themselves. (A governor recently admitted in public that he was joining Putin's *Edinaya Rossia* (United Russia) because 'there was no getting away' from it).

What Putin has managed to achieve in the space of only four years in power, is an almost total control of the hearts and minds of 'his' people. According to statements he has made in conversations with his G-8 mates, he is Russia's foremost 'democrat' and is having to 'slowly teach his people the basics of democracy'. This kind of ideological domination — or, in 'Grandpa' Lenin's lingo, 'distracting the masses from the class struggle', (from the truth of what is actually happening around them), was always the backbone of the Soviet ideological machine. It was almost a cliché, but one that seemed finally buried as a thing of the past after the liberal, multi-party and free-speaking binge of the 1990s, when the old fears of the System and its crippling constraints seemed to have gone forever, opening up people's starving minds to an multitude of ideas and views of the world. How did Putin manage, in a few years, to squeeze the genie of this hard-fought-for Freedom back into its bottle? How did he contrive to turn his country's thinking populace into a contented, thoughtless, and voiceless mass?



There are probably, already, distinguished sociological scholars exploring this subject, and they will come up with profound findings and present them impressively to their academic audiences. On a much less profound level, however, one can point out a new development that is at once so mundane, and so dramatic that over the years it has created a near-revolutionary change in Putin's Russia.

In Russia where, as the poet Brodsky so aptly put it, 'the steppe is more important than the rider', ideas and ideals have always been by far the most important thing in life. With its vast spaces, its peculiar history, and its Euro-Asian situation, with its pathological penchant for going to extremes, Russia has always been a land of thought, poetic myths, with a compulsion for deciding the fate of the world, and incorrigible lofty, often imperial, attitudes. This peculiar passion for the image, the metaphor, world-embracing view, is what really makes a Russian's life, what turns it into an interesting adventure of the mind.

Television has become, after the economic and social upheavals of the Gorbachev and Yeltsin years, by far the most important factor in the traditional sources of ideas. The advent of the new order — something that the leaders of the land like to call a 'market economy' but which people know as a time (roughly since the early 1990s) when everything, from food to books, theatre tickets and newspapers, has suddenly become too expensive to afford — has rearranged the priorities in one's essential sources for ideas. Because of the dramatic gap between the richer (10 percent) and the rest, one has lost the regimented sameness that made friendships so easy in Soviet times — people live differently from each other now, they are not so ready to share their stories and thoughts. Many have lost friends while en route towards a new life.

For more than a decade Russian films had nearly disappeared from cinemas. What was left was dominated by cheap American thrillers — a novelty at first and regarded as another 'victory' of the market. The theatre, too, after a painful 'transition' period, when it lost out to the newly free press as the only source of the 'truth', (and bankrupted itself in the process) has for years been in a state of culture shock. Today the TV is perhaps the only source of information and ideas that has retained, and even enhanced, its importance in people's lives. By operating through the 'blue screen' (the old Soviet 'poetic' metaphor for television), Putin has cleverly captured the imagination of his people and has been keeping them spellbound.

It started, back in the late 1990's, with a few rather low-brow Russian television series about the police – like *The Menty* and *St.Petersbourg, City of the Bandits*, which tendentiously showed both the guardians of the law and the opposing bandits in a moderately heroic and appealing light. (Essentially, they promoted the image of law-and-order heroes, for these films, which, by the way, are still running, are never without their 'educational' momentum.) Next came a few detective stories, some of them based on more recent bestselling books, with, more rarely, screen versions of famous Russian novels, love stories, historical dramas. Then more and more and on and on they came,

in the true Russian exaggerated manner, until three, four, or five such films were being featured on each of the half dozen available channels .

As a result, Russian television today has been dramatically overwhelmed by a foolproof Atkins diet for the Russian mind, an ingenious new product which has burst upon the unsuspecting and curious audience — the new Russian TV Film. It cannot be called a 'soap opera' or even a 'TV series', as, unlike these two media, the Russian TV film is a serious, and professionally executed cultural creation, involving the country's top theatre and cinema actors who had fallen on hard times with the economic collapse of the theatre and feature film business. Most of these offerings are thoroughly analysed and reviewed on the radio, TV and in the press as a new, artistic phenomenon.

Each of the ten channels have since last autumn been featuring dozens of TV film premieres, one after another — running to an impressive 20, 40 and even over 100 parts, often with sequels. Catering to all sorts of tastes, some lowbrow, others less so, but strictly observing the requirements of the new orthodoxy, these films relentlessly deliver their patriotic, educational and internationalist messages. Most of them are based on much loved, known books, including Dostoevsky's *The Idiot,* and *The Possessed*, Bulgakov's *Flight* and *Master and Margarita*, Aksenov's *The Moscow Saga*, Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, Gogol's *Dead Souls, Overcoat* and *Viy*, Ilf and Petrov's *The Golden Calf*, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, even Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*. Together with brilliant casts, they assure their serious and deserving status. Some, especially those running into hundreds of parts with sequels, have their scripts written specially or based on more trendy novels and detective stories, but all are thoughtfully and skilfully done. We are now being force-fed love stories, war stories — including very serious Chechen War and Great Patriotic War ones — Stalin purge stories, police stories, adventure stories, detective stories, family sagas, Russian versions of Western serials like *Sex in the City* (called *The Balzacian Age, or All Men are S...*) and of Western films (*My Big Armenian Wedding*).

The serious quality of the films, their desire to 'uncover' a bit more truth than was previously made known and bring out the issues and facts about Russia that were for a long time kept in the dark, in a carefully ideologically crafted way, cannot help but appeal to every kind of viewer. The advent of this new cultural phenomenon, is, on the whole, probably not a bad thing, compared with lowbrow foreign offerings. This is why most Russians watch them. It has helped to revive all the film studios, not only in Russia, but also in Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and other CIS neighbours which for years before had been dead and buried, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The sudden Russian TV film boom has been a godsend to the acting profession in the post-Soviet space — with famous, newly famous and famous-to-be actors rushing around from location back to the theatre, suddenly feeling wanted and appreciated again.

It is not only the actors that this new film boom has been keeping on the hop. Most people, confronted with this amazing choice of wonderful visual material, are having a hard time juggling the channels, trying not to miss anything. While pensioners can rely on the morning repeats to keep up with the films they missed the previous evening, the wage slaves are reduced to taping their second and third choices, and filing them for safety, in the never-never cupboard, because new premieres keep coming.

What is the price of this sudden TV renaissance? The new Russian media space, and especially the TV, has, within the last four years, been changed beyond recognition. Given the restrictions on what is current and real, the new wave of lyrical and nostalgic half-truths about past and present Russian heroes, patriots and remarkable personalities in the turbulent life of the country is what you get. But you cannot find a news programme or a political discussion. With the demise of the last mainstay of relative TV 'freedom', the old NTV channel — another coup so brilliantly pulled off by Putin — there is nothing remotely relevant to current Russian life to be found on the screen. Some newspapers still provide an answer, but at the current prices they are out of reach for most people. The only cheaper source of facts and ideas about Russia today is the Radio Echo of Moscow (*Ekho Moskvy*) service, which is very popular among more discerning intellectual and professional groups. But — and this is another masterful stroke by Putin and his comrades, who know the ideological weaknesses of their subjects — this radio station has come increasingly to be regarded, just like the dwindling liberal minority, as a stronghold of the (often Jewish) oligarchs and other 'parasites' (on the body of the hard-working citizen).

Has this spectacular manipulation affected people's minds in any significant way, apart from keeping them happily glued to their sets? Has this bread-and-circuses technique really been distracting them from the class struggle? Well, not that much to begin with. For, reassuringly, only last summer opinion polls showed that 63 per cent were opposed to Putin's scheme to abolish elected governors and have them appointed instead. A few months later, however, after a particularly overflowing dose of the reality-free

television, another sociological survey, in December 2004, showed that Russian minds were slowly but surely reverting to their previous blinkered state. This is an inevitable outcome if one is put on a diet of regular untruths about current events and partial truths, poetically presented and ideologically charged, about Russia's dramatic past.

Today most Russians are, as a result, increasingly and more firmly behind their leader. According to a public opinion poll undertaken by the VTsIOM, (All-Russian Centre for Public Opinion Surveys), most Russians embrace the idea of greater state control and support a complete nationalization of the country's fuel and energy complex. One third of those interviewed believe that oil and gas companies should remain in private hands, but more strictly controlled by the State. They are as suspicious as ever of foreigners, whose sole aim is to 'rob' Russia of its natural riches. The idea of having Western companies participate in the country's oil and gas complex, which is in dire need of foreign investments, both monetary and technological, does not find much support among average Russians. Only 5 per cent of them think that this would be an effective way forward.

While Russia's economic and political elites have been exercised about the crisis of the YUKOS Oil Company, the country's citizens at large have been so unconcerned about it that YUKOS ranks low on the list of their worries, so little indeed, that only the same 3 per cent of the respondents expressed any anxiety about the outrageous lawlessness of the whole business.

Putin, acting in the best traditions of classical dictators, is proving himself a past master in the subtle art of mass hypnosis — through something quite unprecedented; a truly Gargantuan glut of televised *foie gras*.

Tatiana Borisovna is a translator

Atheism Without Tears

Hadrian Wise

Philip Vander Elst makes a spirited conservative case for God (*Salisbury Review*, Autumn 2004), but as a conservative atheist, I must reply.

He tries to use the Argument from Design to show that atheism is irrational. It is fantastically improbable, he says, that systems and phenomena as complex as the universe and the human brain should have come about by chance. Grant the existence of a supreme intelligence, however, and their emergence becomes likely; so God probably exists. But this is fallacious. There are infinitely many logically possible combinations of matter under infinitely many logically possible sets of natural laws, so the existence of *any* particular material objects under *any* set of natural laws is fantastically improbable — would they *all* need a God? It is fantastically improbable I shall win the lottery unless it is rigged in my favour, but if I did win, that wouldn't entail it had probably been rigged. Something that makes my winning probable is not itself made probable by my winning. Ditto my existence.

Ah, but why should blind natural forces be a more probable cause of an ordered universe than God?

But perhaps of all the infinitely many possible universes, this particular universe, containing precisely the phenomena it does, is the best universe there could possibly be. This would be evidence of intelligent choice, albeit still too weak to escape the probabilistic fallacy. But how could we arrive at this evidence in the first place? We would have to examine an infinite list of possible universes, and show that every single one was inferior to ours. Nobody, not even a theist, has time.

Mr Vander Elst's second ploy is to point out that the most complex and sophisticated products of human intelligence — computers — are less complex and sophisticated than the wellspring of human intelligence itself — the human brain. *Ergo*, the human brain must be designed by a higher intelligence still. But this begs the question. The human brain may show that *blind nature* produces more complex mechanisms than intelligence does; it depends whether the brain is made by nature or an intelligent God. Yet this is precisely the point at issue. (See Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* for similar arguments.)

The other classic arguments for the existence of God are no better. The ontological argument, advanced by St Anselm and Descartes (*Meditations* Bk 5), states

that God exists by definition, since he is perfect in every respect and it is more perfect to exist than not. But as Kant pointed out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, existence is not a predicate: you can't *apply* it to a posited entity, as you are already assuming the entity's existence in positing it. And to assume God's existence is not to prove it. The cosmological argument, Aristotle's 'unmoved mover' thesis (*Metaphysics* Bk VIII) that God is needed to explain the existence of the universe as its 'first cause', collapses into the ontological argument as soon as you ask what caused God, the only possible answer being that God doesn't need a cause because he exists by definition. As we have seen, that will not wash. And since *reality*, rather than God, does exist by definition, there is no need for a first cause of reality anyway. If the alleged 'proofs' of God's existence fail, atheism must be less irrational than theism, at least when, as seems natural, we place the *onus probandi* on the theist. To rescue the situation, he must go beyond pure reason.

***Our moral sense comes from reason; moral imperatives are obligatory because reason tells us so. Kant worked it all out in the* Critique of Practical Reason *and the* Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals.**

Vander Elst next attacks Darwinism. He says it is improbable that the long series of genetic mutations required to bring about the human eye for example, could happen by chance rather than design. But this is simply restating the probabilistic Argument from Design, and the same objection applies: *any* organism would be improbable, so the human eye is no more improbable than any logically possible alternative; God's making it probable does not mean the human eye makes God probable. It may be more complex than most organisms, but it's hardly improbable that a blind system should contain some relatively complex organisms. Ah, but why should blind natural forces be a more probable cause of an ordered universe than God? Leaving aside how ordered the universe *really* is (at the quantum level at least), we can surely answer because there is direct evidence that these blind natural forces exist. In the case of evolution, for example, we have DNA. *Per contra*, the only evidence of God's existence is an order in the universe analogous to that in a human creation, but as this order is even more analogous to an organism's than a machine's, we could more plausibly imagine the universe springing from a giant seed than from a divine watchmaker's workshop — see Hume again.

The theist needs something more. Fortunately Vander Elst gives it to us. Atheists, he says, cannot account for human consciousness. For if all our reasoning is the result of blind electrical impulses in the brain, it has no real autonomy, so cannot be relied on to yield us the truth — in which case, if atheism is true, there can be no rational argument for it. A powerful objection to materialistic determinism, but why assume atheists must be materialistic determinists? I for one am not, as I believe you can never account for mental activity by describing physical activity in the brain: the neurological and the mental are two different, incommensurate, but complementary kinds of explanation of the same phenomena — so it makes no sense that neurological events should cause mental events or *vice versa*. They are the *same*.

What has this to do with God? I could be a dualist, for all any theist knows: I would merely have to believe mind and brain were different substances synchronized together. Then I would certainly not be a materialistic determinist, but there is still no reason I must believe in God, since contrary to what Mr Vander Elst assumes, belief in the soul and belief in God need not go together. If there is a spiritual world existing side by side with the universe, why must it contain a supreme being? All the spiritual beings we actually *know* — our fellow humans — are somewhat less than perfect. Why on Earth should there be a perfect one somewhere? To create the others? He would have the power, but what about the motive? Why should a perfect or even just very superior being want to create such imperfect ones? 'It's a mystery.' Intelligent causes are not explanatory until you give them a motive; if the motive is mysterious, then the cause remains as mysterious as any other hypothesized mysterious cause. If theism cannot give dualism a ground, it is no improvement on groundless dualism.

How can atheists account for man's moral sense and the necessity of moral imperatives? Our moral sense comes from reason; moral imperatives are obligatory because reason tells us so. Kant worked it all out in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*. A moral reason is one that does not depend on our own desires; it appeals merely to our reason, and is binding on us inasmuch as we are rational beings able to understand reasons for acting. Thus only maxims we can coherently construe as binding on all rational beings are moral. The chief such maxim must be never to treat rational beings as means to an end, since we are bound by the same moral laws as other rational beings, and only those laws, not our own personal wishes, can bind any such being.

But how could a biological organism reason morally in this way? Leaving aside that atheists do not

need to see us as 'mere' biological organisms, we can surely see that an effect need not be the same as its cause. Just as a face 'supervenes' on the canvas once a certain number of individually non-descript brushstrokes have been made, so our consciousness and moral sense have supervened on evolution from the accumulation and combination of cells in the human brain. (The argument of the late Donald Davidson.) Just as the face is more than the sum of its brushstrokes, so the mind is more than the sum of its brain cells. Even though our ability to reason morally is the chance result of a chain of evolutionary causes, morality itself is not. Rather, by evolutionary chance, we have developed the ability to understand and apply moral truths, in the same way we have developed the ability to understand and apply mathematical truths. Those truths are available to any being able to recognize them.

But surely the truths themselves come from God? Vander Elst says: 'Since moral knowledge, like all knowledge, does not exist in a vacuum but is grasped and possessed by intelligence, that eternal Goodness which illuminates our consciences must somehow be grounded in... the Supreme Mind or Spirit to which all life owes its being, in other words, God.' Knowledge does indeed require a mind to reside in; but *truth* doesn't. A proposition is true whether or not anybody knows it; the world would still be round even if nobody knew about Christopher Columbus , and it would still be possible for mere human beings to discover its roundness, as indeed they eventually did. Only by miscalling moral truths moral knowledge can we jump from moral truths to a God who knows them. Only by assuming there is a God to know moral truths can we use moral knowledge to prove God's existence. The argument is equivocating and circular.

Often the theist says that morality is simply what God commands. Our conception of moral truth is an intuition of the will of God. This supposedly explains the mystery of why moral duties are binding. Only it does not. To have an explanation worth the name, the theist has to say why God should have chosen the particular moral commands he has, why God has made such-and-such a moral command and something else not. If he refuses to do so — 'It's a mystery' — he is not explaining anything; arbitrary fiat is not morality even when backed by omnipotence. If he gives reasons for God's commands, those reasons, if enough for God, would surely be enough for us with or without God, and God becomes redundant to the explanation.

Vander Elst ends by arguing that religious belief encourages scientific progress and free institutions, but even if these arguments carry, they cannot convince an atheist, since religious belief may be useful without being true. It is possible to support established religion as an institution without actually believing in it; indeed there is a long tradition, starting with Cicero through Hume to Michael Oakeshott, of conservatism without actual religious belief. It is neither irrational nor immoral.

Hadrian Wise is a management consultant

John Adamson

We were about to leave Trabzon when a tall, rugged man in his sixties clambered up into the van and sat himself down beside me. The only luggage he brought with him was a smallish parcel loosely wrapped in old newspaper. Kemal, who had been born in a house set among the hazel groves behind Trabzon, introduced him simply as a friend of his father's and announced that this man was coming all the way with us to Batumi.

Off we went. The stranger sat there on my right, the parcel on his lap jogging with the motion of the vehicle. I stole a look at his face: Ottoman nose, neat, busy moustache, and a knowing twinkle in his eye. Somehow, though, he hardly seemed the type to be coming on a trade mission to Batumi, coastal capital of Adjaria, that semi-autonomous, semi-tropical province of Georgia on the Black Sea.

On the outskirts of Trabzon we pulled off the high road as the rain began to fall and halted for a snack at a rather utilitarian restaurant. The fluorescent lighting and bright plastic tabletops were reflected in the puddles forming on the forecourt. After we had each eaten a plateful of grilled chops with chilli sauce and salad, the tall stranger rose to his feet and unwrapped

his parcel. And there he was clutching a Black Sea bowed fiddle, reminiscent of a medieval rebec and known in Turkish as a *kemençe*. With a flourish of his bow he struck up a haunting tune full of Lydian harmonies and began to sing. He had a light, smiling voice and the words tumbled out rhythmically and repeatedly. Rather like Django Rheinhardt his missing finger did not hinder his dexterity.

All at once I heard the words 'London' and 'Batumi' and it dawned on me that within a set pattern he was making up his song as he went along and giving us a full running commentary on the proceedings of the evening. For an instant I was the burden of his song.

'This is his way of welcoming you to Turkey,' said Kemal.

It took some hours to reach the Georgian border. The road had become harder to negotiate and the rain was now coming down in rods. In a flood of lights the frontier was upon us, gleaming out of the murky night like a film set. Border guards in Russian-style peaked hats took away our passports. Then we spotted the friendly face of the Intourist man we had met last time. He was standing there in the rain in his off-white raincoat.

'The president awaits you for dinner,' he told us.

We were running rather late but the journey from Trabzon had not been easy and it must have been at least half an hour before we were eventually waved through, now accompanied by the Intourist man. The relentless rattle and swish of the wipers now replaced our musician's melodies as we slowly drove through the heavy rain the ten miles or so to Batumi and the president.

Within this small region of some half a million souls we may see in microcosm many of the post-colonial challenges besetting the world today.

Late and tired, we drew up outside a refurbished building that might must have been the old bey's palace from the Ottoman days before the Russo-Turkish war, and were ushered quickly inside. After a flurry of official activity, there was the president. Aslan Abashidze rose from his desk. He was a man of medium build and beaming face. His first name is the Turkish word for lion and seemed a fitting description for a leader of such local might — yet a paradoxical one, it struck me, for a man of so little mane.

Could the Western press have been too hasty in its condemnation, lacking a deep enough understanding of the complexities of this microcosm of post-colonial affairs, in which Aslan had lived and worked?

Dinner was served. I sat on the president's left and his wife, Maguli, on his right. The welcome was warm though the food quite unremarkable. There were no sheep's eyes, no horns of Georgian wine, not even the traditional Adjarpuri dish of baked dough, cheese and egg. Rather than dining amid the grandeur of centrepieces and candlesticks, I recall cold chicken drumsticks, salad and soft drinks. As soon as the main course was over, Kemal asked leave for our man to entertain us with some Turkish music. Aslan readily assented. The musician picked up his *kemençe* and the dining room was soon filled with plaintive tunes and song.

We smiled as he outlined our gruelling journey from Trabzon and laughed when he made a wry comment about Maguli's midnight-blue dress studded with gold and silver stars. Were they symbolic of the stars of the Adjarian flag, we wondered? Neither she nor Aslan spoke Turkish so they only realised afterwards that they were being sung about. Once again we were listening to the minstrel as eyewitness, while he improvised in that great oral tradition harking back to feudal times.

The performance came to an end and Aslan asked if he could try and play the instrument. He put it on his lap and began to bow it, coaxing a few whining notes out of the fiddle. Handing it back to the musician, he said: 'You know, I can't speak Turkish, but nevertheless I am going to sing a Turkish nursery rhyme that my nanny taught me when I was a little boy.' Aslan had a good voice and his memory brought back several verses of the song. Our musician knew the tune and soon joined in with a string accompaniment.

Yet all that was long ago and I am unable to reconcile the warmth and friendliness of our simple dinner with the turn of events of the summer of 2004 when Aslan fled the country. Were the quelling of demonstrations on the streets of Batumi by his own militia, and the blowing up of bridges to block access to the province the work of a ruthless tyrant as the Western press said he was — or of a cornered lion? It is impossible to untangle the skein of Adjaria's history. Within this small region of some half a million souls we may see in microcosm many of the post-colonial challenges besetting the world today. Had Aslan's role perhaps been to mastermind the transitional economy of the region in a period of great upheaval? Did he know and ultimately accept, albeit grudgingly, that his role was therefore a transitory one?

Down the ages the region has changed hands on numerous occasions: Batumi had been the site of an ancient Greek settlement; it had been held by the Turks for several hundred years during which time the Islamic faith had been established in the region. In 1878

Adjaria was transferred to the Russians, but after Western interference — even a a short spell when the Batumi region was under British occupation — ended up again under Turkish tutelage, only to be ceded by Atatürk to Lenin's Bolsheviks in 1921. Georgia as a Soviet republic had thereby been prevented from gaining full control of the strategic Black Sea port of Batumi. When Georgia regained its independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the region remained semi-autonomous and Aslan became chairman of Adjaria's Autonomous Council in 1991 and was elected president of the province in 1998. He exploited Batumi's position as Georgia's chief port and as terminus for the pipeline from Baku on the Caspian Sea, assiduously cultivating trade with neighbouring Turkey and the West.

Aslan was proud to be an Adjarian, his grandfather was the writer Memed Abashidze, who was shot on Stalin's orders in 1937, his father a survivor of the Gulag. A graduate of both Batumi and Tblisi universities, he was not a separatist, rather a believer in regional autonomy as the route to economic success. But were his methods as draconian as recently reported, were his policies in fact rooted in self-gain? Was his book, *Adjaria: History, Diplomacy, International Law*, published in Russian by a Muscovite press, an exercise in self-justification or in regional identity?

Crisis came with the forced resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze in November 2003 and his replacement as Georgian president by Mikheil Saakashvili, who decided in 2004 to bring to an end the special status of Adjaria. The tiny, anomalous 'fiefdom' ceased to exist as such and Aslan, under extreme pressure from Tblisi and the West, flew to exile in Moscow.

Could the Western press have been too hasty in its condemnation, lacking a deep enough understanding of the complexities of this microcosm of post-colonial affairs, in which Aslan had lived and worked? Our musician of those earlier, happier days might well have sung of that departing overlord, of his tithe barns full to the eaves, of the man's success as a leader over some thirteen years, but having met him, would he have rashly dismissed him a despot? Conversely, might he — and indeed I — not have seen the iron fist for the velvet glove? The fiddle may now be back in its newspaper but the riddle remains to be unwrapped.

John Adamson is an editor and publisher and co-author of Maharajas' Jewels (2000)

Is this Valid?

James Docherty

I am going to be 'struck off'. No, I haven't raped or murdered any patients, but I and thousands of other retired doctors have been told by the Government that we shall cease to be registered medical practitioners. We shall be forbidden to do any kind of medical work. No pharmacist will be allowed to dispense our prescriptions. Voluntary work for charities and sports clubs will no longer be permitted.

A career in medicine is becoming less and less attractive in Britain. This is not surprising, since doctors are having daily confrontations with aggressive patients, high on drugs and drink. Several thousand are attacked every year.

Since 1858 doctors, once admitted to the Medical Register, have remained on it for life unless removed for misconduct. Their position is similar to that of other professionals — clergymen, dentists, lawyers and architects. Of course, in every occupation there are some who in time become less effective and, in theory, it might be useful to make barristers and bishops resit examinations every five years. No doubt repeated driving-tests would make for safer roads. In practice, no one would seriously suggest such a system: the bureaucratic nuisance involved would outweigh the advantage of sacking a few incompetents. It is assumed that professional men and women will have the integrity (and self-interest) to keep themselves up-to-date.

The Government has now decreed that all doctors will have to be 'revalidated' every few years. Revalidation will be impossible for those who have retired because:

> All doctors must routinely collect and retain data and information drawn from their day-to-day medical

practice to support their case for revalidation. The information must also include appropriate reports about clinical governance arrangements. All the evidence must be verified at source or readily verifiable by the General Medical Council.

Doctors who have retired will be unable to comply and will lose their right to do any medical work. On those who are still working, the bureaucracy involved will impose yet another burden and at the same time it will deprive them of help at times of stress. At present, they often call on retired colleagues to assist them during illness, epidemics and other crises. Now this source of labour will be cut off.

A career in medicine is becoming less and less attractive in Britain. This is not surprising, since doctors are having daily confrontations with aggressive patients, high on drugs and drink. Several thousand are attacked every year. There is the constant threat of litigation by aggrieved or greedy patients. A recent survey has shown that most doctors now wish they had chosen another occupation. Many take early retirement. This is the only country which cannot persuade enough of its ablest young men and women to choose medicine; the only country in Europe which has to import 50 per cent of its doctors, often from places where standards of training are low. Intelligent school-leavers are realising that in the words of *Look Back in Anger*, 'It's not much of an occupation for an educated young man'. Revalidation will make a medical career even less appealing. Why spend six years to qualify only to find that every few years one might be deprived of the right to work because of a decision by the 'assessors' of the G.M.C.?

The legislation which will enforce this change has not been debated in Parliament. It has been 'nodded through' by an Order in Council. It has not been reported in the media, and the public, hearing daily about the troubles of the N.H.S., are unaware that the Government is about to create even more problems for the service. Ours is the only government to inflict this 'reform' on doctors: there is no revalidation in the rest of Europe. For once, we cannot blame Brussels for daft new rules and revalidation will be a peculiarly British institution, like Guy Fawkes Night or the Boat Race.

Apart from the practical effects, no one seems to have considered the legal and ethical aspects. An arbitrary and unilateral breach of faith with doctors must raise doubts about the future. A supine G.M.C. might impose almost any conditions at the Government's behest. Medicine can no longer be considered a liberal profession. But some will benefit. Hundreds of well-paid jobs are being created to administer the brave new system and the General Medical Council is moving to splendid new premises in London's West End and in Manchester. And the patients? They will find that doctors have even less time for them than before, but they will have the consolation of knowing that the poor devils are struggling 'routinely to collect and retain data and information to support their case for revalidation'.

James Docherty is a retired doctor

Sophists' Corner

All 12 year olds at a comprehensive will be told today that homework is being scrapped because teachers have better things to do than mark it. St John's School in Marlborough sees itself as at the forefront of radical educational change and Dr Hazlewood, the Head Teacher, is testing a futuristic project devised by the Royal Society of Arts which rejects the notion that a teacher's job is to transmit a body of knowledge to pupils.

The project aims instead to encourage pupils to 'love learning for its own sake' and is intended to replace the 'information-led, subject-driven' national curriculum with one based on 'competences for learning citizenship, relating to people, managing situations and managing information'.

'I want to give pupils responsibility for and ownership of their own learning, I want parents, many of whom are disengaged, to become proactive partners in the process.'

The Department for Education said that homework was 'an essential part of a good education'. At the same time its 'innovation unit' is helping to pay for the RSA project.

The Daily Telegraph

Peter Mullen

Here lies a civil servant. He was civil
To everyone, and servant to the devil

Poet, critic, translator and senior civil servant, C.H. Sisson was one of the finest minds of the 20th century and a genius in the tradition of Eliot and Pound. His natural antecedents were the classical authors of Greece and Rome — especially Catullus, whom he translated — and the Anglican divines George Herbert, John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes.

His excellence as a writer is demonstrated in poetry, translation, literary criticism, political commentary and fiction. He was also a contributor to this magazine in its early days. An outstanding achievement is his translation of *The Divine Comedy* which shows up many earlier translations, such as Dorothy Sayers' attempt, for the sham antique that they are. Sisson's design was not to preserve Dante in aspic, or some imagined reverential version of English, but to render in our own tongue the vigour and ecstatic originality of the medieval Italian. Here, for example, is the transcendent conclusion of *Paradiso:*

At this point high imagination failed;
But already my desire and my will
Were being turned like a wheel, all at one speed,
By the love which moves the sun and the other stars

Like Eliot before him, Sisson is often accused of elitism — as if he had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but that was not so:

I was born in Bristol, and it is possible
To live harshly in that city.

In his novel *Christopher Homm* — we are made aware of Sisson's Christian belief by the title — he chooses for his hero a working man. Martin Seymour Smith thought that Sisson had 'surpassed Beckett'. Certainly there is in this sparse tale the brooding hint of redemption which is utterly absent in Beckett's nihilistic sneering at values of any kind. *Christopher Homm is* a comic novel; but all genuine comedies have the imprint of tragedy upon them. As they say, you don't know whether to laugh or cry. The redemptive power of fiction lies in its capability of telling the truth

The mark of the true creative writer is a complete rejection of sentimentality. He caustically opposed the mawkish 'higher righteousness' of so many of his more fashionable contemporaries: 'E.M. Forster's creed is an amused disowning of everything that is not himself. In place of the banker-journalist — a crude masculine figure in comparison — is his troop of "the sensitive, considerate and plucky". Readers of his novels will know who is meant: the cosy snobs of *Howards' End* and the picnickers in *A Passage to India...'* Of course, sentimentality can rejoice in ugliness and pornographic violence as easily as it can present itself in a novel by Barbara Cartland. I should have liked to hear Sisson on Martin Amis and Ian McEwan, on their trademark of sadism-chic. Admirers of Damien Hirst and the giggling *aficionados* of the Turner Prize should read what Sisson wrote in 1972:

> Art and all things made for their own sake tend towards permanence rather than towards change and saleability, and there is no more terrifying symptom of decay than the replacement of art, in the public attention, by the saleable products of anti-art. Those who do not believe that that is happening do not know what art is. The devil has many disguises, and what is called 'freedom of expression', particularly in the great trade of sex, has more to do with the nature of the financial system than with art.

His supreme literary skill was as an ironist. It might even be said that he was a sort of ironical Christian. He was a member of the Church of England but he knew more about theology, precisely because he knew more about language, than all the bishops put in a tub:

> The fashion now is for clergymen who would teach before they have learned, and who excuse themselves by pretending that they need no more than the media-soaked language of their more ignorant parishioners.

His own conversion to Christianity happened in the 1930s when, on his way home from his office in Whitehall, he took to calling in dark churches where he would sit at the back and read *The Book of Common Prayer* until he finally succumbed. When he went to tell the priest he wished to be confirmed he said, 'It was like giving myself up to the police.'

Sisson the poet and critic regarded euphemism and the preoccupation with theory as the sort of literary equivalent of profligate usury; but I deliberately

choose a euphemism in saying that he 'took early retirement' from his senior position in the Ministry of Labour after he had written in 1971 three devastatingly critical articles about the running of the civil service under Sir William Armstrong:

'The characteristic of the last few years is a growth of the mythology of *management*. There has been a deliberate and persistent propagation of the idea that management is a new conception of the civil service and an attempt to persuade people that analytical procedures of a kind which have always held an important place at middle executive levels have now been introduced as a startling novelty from the top; and that this is about to produce a new golden age of efficiency ... while at the same time it remains true of course that it is possible to occupy a major department in Whitehall without having the capacity to run a tobacco shop.'

All Sisson's books are packed with insights, but every page in *English Poetry 1900-1950* contains at least one miraculous utterance. I suppose schoolchildren these days, even if they are allowed to penetrate more deeply into poetry other than Roger McGough and Wendy Cope, are introduced to English verse through the sentimental pacifism of Wilfred Owen:

'Owen's famous sentence about the poetry being in the pity comes near to being absolute rubbish. The saying about poetry not yet being fit to speak of heroes connotes an ill-placed progressivism. Were there any grounds for thinking that the language of Chaucer and Shakespeare was taking a turn for the better so that one day, if it continued to get good reports, it would be able to speak of matters which were above the heads of those beginners? "Might, majesty, dominion and power" — and other Prayer Book trash: none of these things is serious compared with what Wilfred is going to say.' The other great fraud of 20th century poetry was Auden who loved to say nasty things about *Majors, Vicars, Lawyers, Doctors, Advertisers, Maiden Aunts.*

'It was perhaps unfortunate that, on leaving Oxford, Auden went after a year in Germany to teach in such an establishment as The Downs School near Malvern. The protective covering must have been pretty thick there. It is not very brave to shout 'Boo!' to your maiden aunt from such a hideout, and at the same time to associate yourself vaguely with the threats of death and revolution and the irruption of a rough proletariat turning nasty on the dole ... The combination of revolution and privileged self-interest — that old Whig formula — was the whole tone of the Oxford Communism of the 1930s.' This exposure of hypocrisy at the political heart is why socialists who prattle on about equality while availing their children of private education and themselves of private hospital treatment are not generally among Sisson's most avid readers.

Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle both, in their different styles, demolished the phoney logic of Cartesian dualism and the whole philosophy of egocentricity to which it led. Sisson dismisses the *cogito* in his own homely, ironic fashion:

'The real difficulty of the Creed is the first word — I — the number and person of the *Credo*. For the *ergo* of Descartes, like many others before and since, now looks like a confidence trick.' This is no more nor less than the insistence that I think therefore I am is a tautology failing to provide the new knowledge Descartes imagined. Sisson develops his criticism of the egocentric perspective over a dozen pages in the ordinary, lovable almost vulgar English style. This achieves its end far more convincingly than Wittgenstein's excursions into the realms of private language and it shows up Ryle's notion of the category mistake for what it is: a mere critical device.

What exactly is literature and what is the simple business of reading all about in our time? Sisson's answer is satirical and accurate:

> If Dante and Catullus, Horace or Raleigh, or some equivalent figures, are not of actual importance to you in terms of pleasure and enlightenment, then literature — the designation of the permanent elements in man — is not what you are interested in as you turn to the weeklies and the Sunday supplements.

His character is a deep and sincere creative pessimism sutured by irony:

> If you had hopes once, they have turned to reason
> If you had reason, it has turned to evidence:
> The evidence is against you

I knew him for twenty five years and there was always wisdom and merriment around his dining table. One of the favourite pleasures of this apparently austere Englishman was to drive around village churches and hide the copies of the modem translations of the Bible and the trashy modern worship books which have now supplanted the *Authorized Version* and *The Book of Common Prayer.*

What do we do when we see all around us the decay of our institutions, the wilful corruption and despoiling of what were created in order to sustain us? Some shrug it off as best they can and try to accommodate themselves to the changed polity and try to reserve a little privacy in which, during the intermittent times of leisure, they can imagine that the great decline has not happened. Others go and live abroad — some even in France, where they try to pretend that the social and political apocalypse has not in fact occurred. Sisson said, 'I prefer to stay and fight my corner.'

Conservative Classic — 17

Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit Books

Merrie Cave

'Now my dears' said old Mrs Rabbit, 'You may go into the field or down the lane but don't go into Mr McGregor's garden. Your father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs McGregor.' With these direct sentences began *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, heralding twenty two more stories which have been enchanting children for four generations and have probably become the best loved children's books in the English speaking world. Translated into many languages, Potter has become a cult figure in Japan in spite of, perhaps because of, her essential Englishness. One of the delights of being a parent and a grandparent is to rediscover their magical charm but also to appreciate their profound wisdom. The exquisite illustrations alone, sometimes compared with Bewick and Constable, would have ensured her a place as an outstanding children's artist of the Twentieth Century.



Beatrix Potter's childhood was a diminished one even by the upper middle class standards for child rearing of the time. She referred to Bolton Gardens, Kensington as 'my unloved birthplace' when she heard it had been bombed. She neither shared her parents' life nor mixed with other children but her loneliness was sublimated into teaching herself to draw and paint and spending hours in the recently opened Natural History Museum. Fortunately, however, her parents took prolonged summer holidays in Scotland and the Lake District, awakening Beatrix's passion for the countryside and her interest in farming. Until her mid thirties she concentrated on studying plants, animals, illustration and writing her secret chronicle, smuggling dead and live specimens into the house, skinning and dissecting them. She even managed with the help of her brother to skin and boil a fox. These days she would have become a scientist or botanical illustrator but realized the advantages of being self-educated. 'Thank goodness my education was neglected.... The reason I am glad I did not go to school —— it would have rubbed off some of the originality (if I had not died of shyness or been killed with over pressure).... I fancy I could have been taught anything if I had been caught young; but it was in the days that parents kept governesses, and only boys went to school in most families.'

As soon as her ex-governesses' children could read, she sent them illustrated letters (Peter Rabbit was her pet rabbit), which evolved into the stories and their subsequent successful publication, thus transforming her life. What Margaret Lane called the 'magic years of Beatrix Potter' lasted only thirteen years. The Warnes (her publishers) kept a friendly household and Beatrix became engaged to the younger son, but his death dashed hopes of an escape from her parents' oppressive domain. Eight years later with her own money and a legacy she bought a farm at Sawrey in the Lake District and married the solicitor involved in the sale — against her parents' wishes of course. Beatrix Potter, the shy authoress, became Mrs William Heelis, a formidable lady farmer fond of driving a hard bargain at auctions and fairs. The books ceased, except one or two, not of the previous standard. Only *Johnny Town Mouse* was written in the familiar style. Enquiries were repulsed except from America; her future biographer, Margaret Lane's, attempts to meet her prompted 'the rudest letter I have ever received'. Her life and work remained somewhat of a mystery until Lane gained the confidence of her widower, William Heelis, and access to

the letters to her publisher. Later Leslie Linder took nine years to decode and transcribe her 200,000 word secret journal. We now have as much information about her as we need or want yet there remains something elusive about her genius.

In her stories the human and animal world are strangely intertwined. No sentimentality about either is allowed to escape into her flawless prose. Both are sad as well as joyful places punctuated by cruelty and death: *The Tailor of Gloucester* is likely to die penniless and starving and every animal may end up as another's dinner. Perhaps human qualities predominate but there are sharp observations of animal behaviour and much emphasis on the differences and similarities between us. In *The Pie and the Patty Pan* Tabitha Twitchit's reaction to the news that her cousin Ribby is having Duchess the dog to tea shows the cat's dislike of dogs and human village snobbery.

'A little dog indeed! Just as if there were no cats in Sawrey. And a pie for afternoon tea. The very idea!' Jeremy Fisher relating his adventure to Sir Isaac Newton reminds us of tedious hours spent listening to pompous old men and anglers' fishy tales as does enduring the irritating uninvited guest like Mr Jackson in *The Tale of Mrs Tittlemouse.* Like many women, she is excessively house-proud and addicted to spring cleaning. Jemima Puddle Duck was the special duck at Hilltop Farm, an updated Little Red Riding Hood figure whose story has a happy ending, also highlighting the problem of getting ducks to sit on their eggs. 'Jemima Puddle Duck became quite desperate. She determined to make a nest right away from the farm.' The foxy gentleman with his impeccable manners we recognize as that brand of charming man, so dangerous for innocent girls. The illustrations show the idyllic landscape near Hilltop Farm where Potter's ashes were scattered.

The virtues of sound money and good business practice in *Ginger and Pickles* have even been referred to by academic economists. Ginger and Pickles run into difficulties because of their habit of giving credit. Small children are thus introduced to the virtues of fiscal rectitude and the meaning of credit at an early age. When the shop closed 'Tabitha Twitchit raised all the prices of everything by a ha'penny but continued to refuse to give credit.' *The Tale of Mr Tod* is perhaps the most frightening. 'Now for a change I am going to make a story about two disagreeable people. I still revel in the exciting suspense without an ending — 'but Peter and Benjamin waited long enough to be able to tell the end of the battle between Tommy Brock and Mr Tod'.

Beatrix Potter hated any critical discussion of her work and was particularly furious about Graham Greene's essay in which he discussed the period of the great comedies — *Tom Kitten, The Pie and the Patty Pan, Mrs Tiggy Winkle* and the dark period of *Samuel Whiskers* and *Mr Tod* as if she were Shakespeare. Potter's genius is rooted in the morality of everyday life, an acceptance of the unchanging nature of the universe and an awareness of original sin. Her work belongs to the traditional wisdom enshrined in folk tales, fables and the ancient scriptures. It certainly has nothing to do with the Freudian school of criticism and impossible moral and social abstractions which can never be realized in this world.

Text and illustrations by Beatrix Potter copyright © Frederick Warne & Co., 1902, 1905, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1978, 2002, reproduced by permission of Frederick Warne & Co.

Notes on Reviewers

Peter Coleman is a journalist in Australia. This review first appeared in *Quadrant.*
Norman Dennis's latest book is *Cultures & Crimes* (Civitas 2005).
Frank Ellis is Lecturer in Russian at Leeds University.
Myles Harris is the author of *Tomorrow is Another Country*, Civitas.
Stuart Millson is a freelance writer.
Patricia Morgan is the author of many books on crime, the family and Social Policy.
Dennis O'Keeffe is consultant to Liberty Fund's forthcoming translation of the works of Frédéric Bastiat.



One of the great insights of modern historical study is that the way we record an event tells us as much about those who do the reporting — *us* — as about the event itself.

What behind all the reports *is* the true nature of the event itself? As Schopenhauer said, '*the perceptions of an animal being killed are, we may suppose, quite different from those of the animal who is doing the killing*'. The uncomfortable fact is that all we shall ever know — all we *can* know — about the disaster in the Indian Ocean is what is given by the media. We have now received a barrage of information about this catastrophe. What do we learn from it? What does it teach us about ourselves?

The media coverage tells us that we have an insatiable appetite for harrowing words and pictures. If not, the mass media would not keep delivering its exquisite photographs of the dying and the dead. Our appetite for the sensation of suffering observed, not suffering endured ought to make us reflect on what sort of people we are. Is there an element of the voyeur here? Is this what the mass media are feeding? If we revolted against these images, they would stop feeding us with them.

I was disturbed and ashamed by what I discovered on the Internet. I wanted to see what the local newspapers in Indonesia and India were saying about the disaster and I found a full page article on the front of that renowned newspaper *The Indian Times* — which in Imperial days was known as *The Times of India.* The editor was angry and bitter. He asked the question in banner headlines WHEN WILL THE BBC STOP THIS CORPSE SHOW? He was complaining about the rows of dead bodies filling western television screens every hour. He objected because, as he said, restraint on portraying the dying and the dead *was* shown after the attacks on the twin towers on 11th September 2001. Why could not the same restraint be shown now?

The lurid and sensational portrayal of distressing events is insensitive to the relatives of the victims. The graphic display of heartbreak and grief demeans and trivialises the suffering of those involved. You will hear this terrible disaster glibly referred to by those who know no better — the broadcasters and newspaper men — as a *tragedy.* It is not. A tragedy is a literary term for a drama involving a great man or woman brought low by some personal flaw or lack of character: ambition, say in Caesar; or indecision in Hamlet.

The suffering and death in the Indian Ocean is not a tragedy, but a disaster or a catastrophe. We can learn from the idea of a tragedy nonetheless. The ancient Greeks were the masters of tragedy. You have only to think of the great trilogy of Sophocles. The Greek tragedy was bloody and brutal; horrific in the extreme; men having their eyes put out, but they had a way of dealing with the dreadful aspects. They had them happen off stage — literally *obscene*; and that is where we get the meaning of that word. There was no denial of the brutal reality, but it was delivered with restraint, — so that it could be assimilated, meditated upon and prayed about.

Our civilisation knows nothing of tact and sensitivity. We are driven by two modes of destructive explicitness. The first is psychoanalysis and its foul influence on the art, literature and cinema of the last hundred years. This false doctrine says that none of our thoughts and feelings should ever be repressed. Indeed there is much in us which we *must* repress if we are to save our civilisation and our souls. The second mode of destructive explicitness is television. The foul result of television is simply that if something — however awful — *can* be shown it *will* be shown. Nothing, in the Greek sense, is obscene any longer. Nothing is taboo nor sacred. Every human emotion and act is portrayed for everybody's perusal. What we have is abject suffering as documentary and catastrophe as entertainment, agony and death among the advertisements for holiday destinations and sitting room furniture.

Many in the newspapers and on radio and television have been blaming God for the disaster. I read an article by one prominent woman journalist who said that, after the tsunami she could no longer bring herself to attend Mass. Another writer said the events of this last week had turned him into an atheist. If it were not so pathetic — and if the circumstances were not so terrible — you could laugh. Is it only *this* event which has destroyed their faith? It's a bit late in the day. They continued to believe despite knowing about the Black Death, the Lisbon earthquake and the flu epidemic of 1919 which killed 40 million! Why had they not stopped being believers long ago?

We are always threatened by natural disasters.

Nothing has happened in the Indian Ocean that has not happened in a score of other places time and again. To blame God is the last gesture of a bankrupt intellect and worse, a failure of humility. Who do they think they are, these who blame God? Who do they make themselves out to be? Ezra Pound warned such people: *Pull down thy vanity.*

We need to come back to where true comfort is to be found. And it is found next to true knowledge and true wisdom — in the Bible, in the voice of God. Job complained to God about the hard time he was having and why did God let him suffer so...and what, incidentally, God, do you think you're doing?

And the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man: for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me...

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth....?

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb...and said hitherto shalt thou come but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed...

And again he said, *be still and know that I am God.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Lenin's Progeny

Dennis O'Keeffe

Political Correctness and the Theoretical Struggle: from Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault, Frank Ellis, Maxim Press, 2004, NZ$19.95.
Web: www.maxim.org.nz.

This is a short book, but a powerful one. As with Frank Furedi's *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?* its theme is intellectual corruption. Like Furedi's book, Ellis's tract warns against the nihilism now contending for our souls. It also summons up certain features of modern life which help explain the extraordinary progress of a frightening unforeseen incubus.

The state is too big for one thing and too keen on filling the world with its paid creatures. This it finds easy, since advanced societies are awash with easy, undisciplined money, transferred from its rightful owners/earners, to a bossy, predatory, spendthrift state. Since PC came our way mostly from America, it is often assumed that it is of American provenance. Ellis shows emphatically, that like many of the twentieth century's on-going ills, it is one of Lenin's creations. Ostensibly detached from the central Marxist project, namely *material,* global domination, PC aims at a close alternative, the construction of a universal mind-set, what in the 1970s Basil Bernstein called, without reproof, 'a closed and specific ideology'.

PC is not a murder system, like Communism or Nazism. The purpose of mass murderers was always and only mass murder, though history shows that if resisted vigorously they eventually lose the stomach for it. When, fifteen years ago, Alain Finkielkraut called the modern ideological imperative 'The Undoing of Thought', he was identifying an intellectual vandalism comparably pursued for its own sake. For Ellis, totalitarianism still aims at conquering the means of production. Formerly, this meant the conquest of capital. Now, he says it means the conquest of *language.* It would be more accurate to say today that the conquest of language *subsumes* material production. One unresolved question is how far a falsified language could persist without causing the decay of real wealth. Communism failed because it could neither produce real wealth nor revoke its appeal. The choice now — and how could the stakes be higher? — seems to be between intelligibility and economic stasis.

At present, the PC project seems content to subsist as a parasite of affluence. In any case it has been astoundingly successful. It has drastically narrowed the range of intellectual positions without censure or worse consequences, especially in the English-speaking world. The English language has been ruthlessly vulgarised and constricted. For example, some masculine singular pronouns and adjectives have been anathematized, 'the student must have *their* (*sic*) library card with them (*sic*) at all times' is now the typical language of university administration. And almost everywhere in America and Britain today, one sees the results of the ruination of language.

Apparently, sane people can be made to live with the lavatory logic of PC, with its toilets 'male', 'female' and 'disabled'. This debasement can be seen in most British or American universities. Maybe this is the price a brilliant language pays for its lack of grammatical gender. Hence we suffer the grating narrative 'she' in low level texts, or the grotesque 's/he' in others. Treated thus, ordinary words cease to be at ease with one another. This curtailing of intellectual rationality and comfort represents a body blow to the best side of the Enlightenment. Ellis rightly stresses the ideological origins of political correctness, in the *irrational* practice of Leninism and in Mao's war against intellect. The Russian and Mandarin exact equivalents of 'correct' and 'correctness' were apparently the words repeatedly used. In the Marxist ascendancy all intellectual life must bow unconditionally to the state. The ideological monopoly on 'truth' has also been boosted further, Ellis rightly says, by the widespread, anxiety-provoking belief that God has vanished from the human scene.

This illusion is the core of modernity's troubles. God being off-limits, authority is transferred to the human state. This proves pitifully inadequate when it must shoulder the job on its own, but its incumbents may succumb to a deadly hubris. Ellis quotes Vladimir Makanin to the effect that the statist ideologues not only 'abrogate the judgement of heaven, they appropriate its unbounded competence to their own ends'.

One prop of ideological mania is affluence itself. Long decades of easy living make populations unwary. Affluence does not, however, directly promote intellectual corruption. There has to be the mediating statist influence, the ever widening ring of publicly financed bureaucracies. Ellis notes the vast siphoning off of citizens' resources in the hyper-correct European Union, for example, a deliberate move by the Euro-ideologues to provide the wherewithal for their agenda. Perhaps Ellis does not take his analysis quite far enough domestically. The British have subverted intellectual life on their own doorstep, whichever way continental Europe may be moving. Nor does Ellis sufficiently explain the links between public finance and rent-seeking, in particular the tax-funded recruitment of personnel for *specific engagement* in the suborning and hijacking of intellect. This has happened in education from top to bottom.

By tracing the PC story back to the heartless Lenin, Ellis offers us a clear analysis of the phenomenon, one nobody of conservative or genuinely liberal outlook should ignore. He is clear on PC's main contents, which run from oppressive equal opportunities legislation, to scientifically illiterate feminism and the promiscuous cult of 'gender', on to an absolutist multiculturalism and finally to a set of relativist attacks on truth. The intellectual damage and confusion which all this is sowing world-wide is not readily graspable, so extensive is its scale. Those of our children who are not wholly contaminated and wish to fight back, will face a vast job of intellectual scouring and detoxification.

The overall posture of PC is the familiar abstract sentimentality of the Marxist order, with a specific western variant: intimidation masquerading as our defence against intolerance. In this respect Ellis's treatment of the likeness of PC to Maoism is very instructive. The telos of PC is universal stupidity. Mao, with his determination to submit educated Chinese to the most relentless self-abasement, was the type and patron of the PC bully. Lenin and Mao sought a moronised population presided over by bullying gangster ideologues. Because many of our freedoms continue, the PC élites of the West cannot have immediate recourse to such gangsters. There is little doubt, however, that some of our leading apparatchiks of social work, teacher education, the probation service and 'progressive' journalism would love to kill those who oppose them if they could.

Why do these murderous impulses appear? Frustration is a large part of it. The strategic heart of the PC project is the pretence at the abolition of power in the name of a protean 'equality'. This too is the old attack on the empirical reality of politics, so dear to Lenin, in which the Party somehow embodies freedoms of a kind superior to the bourgeois freedoms it so anxiously opposes. Such freedoms cannot be specified because they do not exist. But a non-stop pretence to the effect that they do is kept up. To this unreal and ignoble end the most influential of all neo-Marxists in Ellis's reckoning, Herbert Marcuse, continued to misconstrue the properly bounded power of modern democratic government and society, as 'repressive tolerance'.

In the event, however, all forms of earthly power are now belaboured. In the 1970s and 1980s the most successful of all the Marxisant projects was the one dominating the sociology of education — the discrediting of the idea of 'social control'. The trick was to represent all order as arbitrary contrivance and exploitation.

Few voices were raised against this error. Elementary reflection should have led scholars to conclude that all societies generate social control, civilisation being one of its forms and despotism merely a historically more common one. Sociology was the worst offender. Indeed, during the 1970s and 1980s neo-Marxist sociology virtually abandoned any economic

perspective. Little attention was paid to the voices of dissent. Back in 1976, one sound sociologist of education, Brian Davies, pointed out in his *Social Control and Education,* that society must control its membership, and that 'control is not some dark opposite of freedom'. This insight, a commonplace among economists and philosophers familiar with voluntary exchange and spontaneous order, should have been given wide recognition. Such was the mood of these decades that it was swiftly lost. Today, behind the smokescreen of PC words, lurks a power that will countenance no stay to its imperious demands.

To get the measure of PC practices, is to gain a sense of Camus' searching observation that 'the real passion of humanity is for servitude'. Maybe this search is a minority obsession rather than a general one. Sad to say, modern times have shown that it is often the minority which carries the day, or perhaps one should rather say, the night.

There is some pretence at pluralism in all this agitation. True, it was gravely inconvenient for PC that by the 1980s, as Ellis points out, it had become a byword for obscurantism and absurdity. It had pushed too swiftly and too radically against one of the greatest of human defences: common sense. Even so PC has won much ground. It often shamelessly denies having had victims, though since some of them are friends of mine, I find this silly. In all the free societies PC has considerable power, over law, politics and above all the unelected bureaucracies which aspire to rule the world. The nihilist project disingenuously affects a show of pluralism, maintaining that people like Foucault, a nominal anti-Communist, are not part of it. Roger Scruton long ago pointed out that Foucault is essentially Marxisant, a promoter of the hermeneutics of suspicion, imbued with the terrible desire, with us since the French Revolution, to overthrow all existing power in the name of unrealisable liberation.

None of this means that PC is precisely the same phenomenon in free societies as control by the Party in outright Communist ones. Its scope is much less for one thing, and history may anyway be about to deal the over-mighty states of the free world a body blow. Free societies have in all probability already reached the fiscal barrier of tolerance, beyond which private property will rebel against further predatory government. Serious wealth slipped the net long ago. When middle class or ordinary wealth do so, as they surely will, given our present means of communication, governments will find their coffers emptying and their expansionist ambitions radically blocked. In this eventuality, Ellis's brilliant tract will supply some useful demolition material.

The Wrong Side of the River

Norman Dennis

The Likes of Us: a biography of the white working class, Michael Collins, Granta, 2004, £12.

Michael Collins says that he was stimulated to write his book by what he observed at the Macpherson inquiry. He was struck by the uncharacteristic demands of those middle-class progressives who clustered around the proceedings, and who would normally have been expected to emphasise the importance of court procedures in establishing guilt or innocence. The crowd outside and inside the hall made it clear, that the unconcealed racism of the white-trash gang from Eltham was sufficient proof that they were the murderers of Stephen Lawrence. 'From the mouths of middle-class professionals in the crowd, and from the pens of journalists and columnists noteworthy for their liberal sensibilities, came the argument that we should hang 'em high, or at least lock 'em up and throw away the key.'

Collins also noticed the contrast between liberal middle-class reactions in the crowd and the media to the suspects in the murder of Stephen Lawrence and reactions to the suspects in the hacking to death of Pc Blakelock at Broadwater Farm a few years before. One M.P. publicly declared that the police 'had it coming to them', and there was scarcely a murmur of protest.

The Macpherson report made it clear that racism was no longer an isolated problem. It was pervasive in the police force, and throughout British society. August national institutions without any prompting had confessed to it. But the only racism that was at issue was the racism of white English people against other groups; and the white English people who were racist were not university students or middle-class professionals but the white English working class.

Had the English working class, for long the idol and ideal of middle-class progressives, changed so much for the worse? Or had the change occurred in the sentiments of middle-class progressives towards it? To what extent was it the one or the other, and what was the interplay between them? If the white English working class or the sentimental attachment of middle-class progressives, or both, had changed, then in what ways, how and why?

Michael Collins's family had lived for generations in Southwark, and he places the nineteenth century experiences of his Southwark forebears within the context of the political and industrial development of

Southwark and of England. Dickens, Mayhew, William Booth and other familiar explorers all recorded their incursions into the area. He quotes Mayhew on the low level of theft between costermongers in the area but overlooks what Mayhew clearly reports, that in the mid-nineteenth century theft by *anyone* from the costermonger's stalls, that were not cleared of their goods at night, was rare. Even Collins cannot escape the influence of the ingrained prejudices of today's public intellectuals. On the other side of the river, Charles Booth was glad to report that a large criminal class did not exist. The loafers and the criminals who fouled the reputation of the unemployed and the whole working class, Booth wrote, accounted for only 1.25 per cent of the population of the East End. To many people the culture of the English working class up to the 1950's seemed the ideal basis for a socialist society of selfless mutual aid under the aegis of the local authority and the national state.

Collins has drawn on the memoirs of his nonagenarian maternal grandmother. Through her, other close Southwark relatives, and through the public history of the area, he reconstructs the culture of Southwark's working-class inhabitants in the first half of the century in vivid vignettes: what people approved and condemned in the attitudes and behaviour of themselves and others, and what they did on different social occasions, and how they viewed the outside world. What did they do if they thought their country was threatened by a foreign enemy? (In the army recruiting campaign of the summer of 1915, Trafalgar Street in Southwark achieved momentary fame for sending more of its men to war than any other street in London.)

In August 1912, the boy-scout troop from St. John's Church in Larcom Street went off to camp on the Isle of Sheppey. Eight of the scouts were drowned when their boat capsized in the Thames. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, ordered the bodies to be brought back up the river in the destroyer *Fervent*. All the factories and the wharves were silenced, and no other ship moved on the river as the *Fervent* moved past. Collins's maternal grandmother was among the 100,000 who passed through St. John's Church to pay tribute to the boys. During their dinner break at midday, draymen, cabmen, railway men, coal porters queued dirty from work to file past the coffins. One report said that the crowd that lined Walworth Road eight deep in the thunderstorm on the route to the cemetery numbered one million. The barrier to keep them from the thoroughfare was no more than the lines of boy scouts in khaki, 'each standing to attention, not turning as the procession passed, but keeping their eyes ahead'.

Rightly or wrongly, this working-class culture encouraged certain kinds of risk-taking, not skill in eliminating danger or success in attributing blame and claiming compensation. The object of public and family honour was not the person whose plight was most conspicuously most pitiable, however he or she reacted to that plight, but the person who displayed the sort of valour shown by Private Moyse, 'a man of low estate', who rather than kneel to his captors who decapitated him when he continued to refuse, 'died as proud as Sparta's king/Because his soul was great'.

When any neighbour died, Collins's grandmother recorded, 'everyone in the street or the block put in for a wreath. All the men in the street used to wear a black diamond, cut and sewn on the sleeve of their coat.' The elegance and comfort absent from a man or woman's everyday life were provided by family and neighbours at their funeral. In 1912 this was Southwark's way of handling death, and in the Leysdown tragedy Southwark's and the nation's characteristic way of handling disaster.

Fifty years ago Richard Hoggart wrote the great classic of English working-class life in the first half of the twentieth century — the first part of *The Uses of Literacy*, first published in 1956. His account is mainly of Hunslet in Leeds, but the similarities with Southwark are striking. Collins was born in 1961, and later became a journalist and author. In a sense, therefore, Collins takes up where Hoggart left off, describing life in Southwark in the last thirty years of the twentieth century.

In the second part of *The Likes of Us*, the life of the white working class in Southwark since his childhood is, to use his apt word, 'evoked'. Collins's account is particularly interesting from the point of view of social anthropology, because it documents the changes in the younger generation in an area where the changes cannot be explained in Marxist terms as the inevitable disappearance of the cultural superstructure when the economic base is destroyed. This is a plausible theory when applied to the coal mining districts and textile or shipbuilding towns of the North of England. Before the demise of dockland, the food processing and other factories closed, and while the working class of Southwark was still engaged in London's full-employment service economy, hostile and more powerful cultural forces were 'noiselessly unwinding the springs of action' that had driven working-class family life and culture. What Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy* had only feared as a possible future, Collins documents as the accelerating reality of working-class life from the late 1950s to the present day in scenes as sharply observed, and as beautifully described, as anything in Hoggart's justly famous book.

A Lyric Voice

Peter Coleman

Stephen Spender, The Authorised Biography, John Sutherland, Viking, 2004, £25.

The great T.S. Eliot called him 'the lyric voice of his generation'. Evelyn Waugh said that watching him fumble our rich and delicate language is to experience the horror of seeing a Sevres vase in the hands of a chimpanzee. By the end of his long life (1909-1995), the pendulum had swung against him. He had been dropped entirely from anthologies of English poetry. Now Professor Sutherland's 'authorized biography' sets out to restore his good fame, or at least to do justice to the poet, critic and public intellectual.

Spender had an extraordinarily active life. Look at his CV, each entry in which has its book. He had been one of the revolutionary poets in 'the Auden gang' of the 1930's *(Poems, 1933);* done his stint in the gay-liberationist cabarets of Berlin and Hamburg *(World within World);* joined the communist party in 1937 *(Forward from Liberalism)* and actively supported the Republican cause in the Spanish civil war *(The Still Centre).* When his friends W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood left England for America before the War in 1939, Spender stayed on in London and did honourable service as a fire-fighter in the Battle of Britain *(Citizens in War - and After)* and as an editor of the literary magazine *Horizon.* At the end of the War he worked for the de-nazification of German intellectual life *(European Witness).* In 1949 he was the sole English contributor to the famous anti-communist *God that Failed* and he wrote his influential autobiography *World within World.* In 1953 he published his modernist break with Marxism, *The Creative Element,* prepared his *Collected Poems 1928-1953,* and became co-editor of the leading English literary-political monthly *Encounter.* He joined and championed the Congress for Cultural Freedom (which sponsored *Encounter)* but renounced it in the 1960's after its CIA funding was confirmed. He embedded himself briefly in the New Left *(The Year of the Young Rebels),* was appointed the Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress and became a fixture on American campuses *(Love-Hate Relations).* Any account of his huge output must include his novels, plays, operas and translations of Sophocles, Schiller and Rilke. In 1985 there was a new *Collected Poems 1928-1985.* He was knighted in 1983. Professor Sutherland of University College, London, canvasses the whole *oeuvre* and almost every chapter has a new or fascinating detail. Since poetry is not his strong suit, he concentrates more on the controversies of Spender's life and work, usually settling the arguments in Spender's favour. But his tone is judicious, sometimes Olympian.

Take the Spanish controversy which began in the 1930's and still festers. Spender wrote and spoke eloquently for the Republican, anti-Franco cause in the Civil War. His book *Forward from Liberalism* (1937) influenced many young men to join the International Brigade. Yet when he himself went to Spain, first to gather intelligence for the Communist Party and then to a 'Writers' Congress' in Madrid, he saw that the Stalinists had seized control of the Republic and were systematically murdering the anarchists and Trotskyists. His gay friend and former 'secretary', Tony Hyndman, was in a Republican prison as a deserter. He was desperately ill and expected to be killed. Spender did everything in his power to have him released. But he had to play a double game. He privately urged his English friends under no circumstances to volunteer for the 'Hell' of Spain and its commissars. At the same time, he still publicly urged working class youths to volunteer. This duplicity was the price he had to pay for the release of his friend. Sutherland is not judgmental and simply states the facts. What, dear reader, would you have done? Or take the magazine *Encounter* and the secret CIA funding in its early years when Spender was co-editor. Here Sutherland is heavily judgmental, in Spender's favour. It is clear that without that early funding, there would have been no *Encounter,* but if the CIA's role had been open and public, no one would have written for it. It turned out to be the best magazine in England.

The CIA's role was finally exposed in the mid-1960's. A righteous and furious Spender claimed to have been suckered and demanded that the magazine be closed down. Maybe he had been deceived for all those years, but I am sceptical. I think he had been aware of the American funding but did not want to know the details. In any case nothing justifies his rancorous attempt to destroy one of the best magazines in the world. Fortunately its brilliant editor Melvin Lasky was able to save it. It is difficult to agree with Sutherland that Spender acted entirely in good faith.

Sutherland resumes his judicious posture when he considers two inflammatory books about Spender published in the early 1990's. One is a biography titled *Stephen Spender, A portrait with background.* Spender wrote to his friend, the poet Ted Hughes (himself accused by 'biographers' of the murder of Sylvia Plath) that he regarded the book as 'spiteful, vicious and vulgar. Its thesis is that I have never in my whole life

sought for anything (apart from sex) except self-advancement. The book is vilely written by a miserable creature called Hugh David.' It presented Spender as a spineless snob and a life-long traitor to the gay community. Spender and his wife Natasha produced a counter-pamphlet, *Errors of Fact and Misreadings of Texts.* Lady Spender asked why real estate agents and dentists have to conform to a code of ethics but biographers are free to insult, if not libel, at will.

Then a few months later the American gay novelist, David Leavitt, published *While England Sleeps.* Its story draws on Spender's account of his relationship with the homosexual Tony Hyndman. The 'plagiarist' then added several sex scenes of pornographic crudity. Spender's publisher (Faber) sued Leavitt's (Penguin). In an out-of-court settlement the English edition was pulped. The publisher soon brought out a purged version which, benefiting from all the publicity, sold well. Leavitt's defiant preface noted that Spender, official patron of *Index on Censorship,* had censored him.

Sutherland easily persuades us that enough is enough. Spender had endured more than his share of defamation and, in his 80's, was entitled to defend himself at last. He would have found some consolation in A *Garland for Stephen* which his son-in-law Barry Humphries brought out for his eighty-second birthday. Forty acclaimed writers paid homage. They ranged from Joseph Brodsky and Seamus Heaney to Iris Murdoch and Anthony Thwaite (who contributed an astonishing poem, 'The Potter', about an artist who destroys his best work.)

A couple of years ago Professor Sutherland published a riveting memoir called *Last Drink to L.A.* about how he beat the demon booze. Once he had recovered his clear head, he wrote, he realised that he was not the genius he had once thought he was, but he was still 'competently good at his job'. That sums up this biography. It will not be the last word on Stephen Spender but it is competently good at its job of defending this Shelley-esque intellectual and minor poet against some of his critics and defamers.

Inside the Asylum

Myles Harris

The Great Immigration Scandal, Steve Moxon, Imprint Academic, 2004, £14.95.

At school I used to smile indulgently when my form master would warm to his favourite theme, the independence of the civil service. Any country, he said, that did not have an independent civil service could not be properly governed. Our civil service gave impartial advice to ministers and saw that all citizens were treated fairly. Long a puzzle to foreigners — it could not be bribed or coerced — it was one of the ingredients of the secret elixir of British democracy. That was in 1957. In 2004 reading Steve Moxon's book *The Great Immigration Scandal* it is shocking to realise how corrupt, partial and publicity-seeking our modern civil service has become. Moxon's book is about the failure of Britain's immigration policy but he has also provided us with a vivid description of how an entire civil service department can become the tool of a dishonest government.

Moxon joined a Home Office 'Managed Migration' unit in Sheffield as a case worker. His job was to examine applications for permanent settlement in Britain by asylum seekers, foreign spouses and students. Until he began work he had no views on immigration, except perhaps a vague feeling it was a probably a good thing. After six months he radically changed his opinions. He discovered our immigration laws were being systemically flouted by the Home Office, 'For the seemingly unfathomable reason that if an unworthy application arrives on your desk you should grant it as fast as possible, because if you don't he or she will simply disappear and stay in the country anyway.' But it did not stop there. 'In effect' says Moxon 'We were the arm of the government's effort to supply spurious information to the Office of National Statistics.' 'Any decision which looked remotely like attracting an appeal with any chance of success was turned around to a grant.' (of permanent residence). Moxon highlights the fact that recently the immigration service has begun to be paid by results — by the numbers let in — so that no matter what the long term cost of letting in floods of unqualified migrants and their dependants, in the short term the service will help pay for itself.

Moxon's description of the goings on in the Home Office is strongly reminiscent of a Mafia money laundering operation. Just as the Mafia might infiltrate a genuine high street bank and while keeping all the appearances of respectability: managers, clerks, computers, safes and customers, use it as a front to launder vast quantities of money, so the Home Office has set up an operation to launder vast numbers of migrant applications. Immigration units look like government departments, behave like a government departments, and, frighteningly, are government departments. But their intention is to deceive. Unable to control the flow of migrants, terrified of being seen as racist and anxious to supply as much cheap labour as

it can to drive down indigenous wages and keep its commercial backers happy, New Labour has embarked on a policy of letting almost anybody in who applies.

How is this is achieved? On Moxon's desk is an application for settlement on the basis of marriage. The applicant has provided an application form, a gas bill, a marriage certificate and a passport. The marriage certificate will have been 'checked' by another department whose staff have no knowledge of the languages in which such certificates are written. Moxon was not given any training in detecting passport forgeries or what the passports of various countries looked like. Similarly, visas are taken on trust as are wage slips and other papers. (In another department Moxon was formally reprimanded for checking documents too enthusiastically.) Each application takes only a few minutes. A computer button is pressed, the Home Office printer spits out a printed slip and, hey presto, our taxes, pension funds and public services are at the disposal of another stranger.

Occasionally when the Mafia Bank of Immigration was under pressure and the *Daily Mail* was shrieking 'No more Migrants!' a programme called BRACE (Backlog Reduction Accelerated Clearance Exercise) was put into effect. Similar to the staff of a fraudulent bank trashing its files before the arrival of the auditors, BRACE was a system whereby home office immigration case workers opened the plastic pouches in which immigration applications come and, almost without any consideration whatsoever, granted the applicant permanent right to remain. There was even an 'Ultra ultra BRACE.'

Eventually Moxon had enough. When his departmental minister Beverley Hughes visited his office in Sheffield he tried to have some questions put to her through his departmental heads. These were side lined, but he persisted, and eventually Hughes, who was caught lying about covering up a particularly fast 'BRACE' — including the admission of a one legged roof tiler from Romania — was forced to resign. It was then that Moxon learned the true price of standing up to corruption. He was sacked and the character assassins of the wealthy left moved in for the kill. *The Independent* described his book as 'a crude and inflammatory, anti-immigrant tract', an 'Asian-bashing rant', 'an Islamaphobic rant' 'A Powellite swamp of ethnic bigotry.' Moxon's book is none of these things and if that is the standard of the *Independent's* journalism then I would be cautious about believing the numbering of its pages, let alone its contents. As a direct result of the *Independent* article David Davies, the Conservative Shadow Home Secretary, cut and ran. He failed to attend Moxon's book launch. ('Dave the Runner' is a convincing argument for spoiling your ballot paper at the next election.)

Moxon's book is a frightening description of a total failure of government. Its most important — if unintended — message is that if the Home Office Immigration Department is anything to go by, Britain is far advanced down the road to losing its independent civil service. In so doing it has quietly slipped from being a strong democracy to a moderately weak banana republic, its borders policed by demoralised guards who are not sure who they should fear most, the gang masters they are trying to fight or our ruthless and vain politicians.

Victory in Europe

Frank Ellis

Armageddon: The Battle for Germany 1944-45, Max Hastings, Macmillan, 2004, hb £25, pb £9.99.

The events described in *Armageddon* have all been covered before but even now there are some surprises and opportunities for fine tuning. For example, the oft-cited fact that air reconnaissance had revealed the presence of SS armoured units near Arnhem is not nearly as significant when we know, as Hastings reveals, that ULTRA decrypts had showed the same thing to Allied planners. That such first-class intelligence data were ignored suggests that after the German collapse in Normandy there was a general belief even at the top that the Germans were on their last legs, even that the war would be over by Christmas 1944.

Hastings's account of Holland's winter of starvation makes grim reading. The Dutch experience reminds us that civilised societies can easily break down, and revert to darker impulses, when the food runs out. The fate of the Dutch serves as the focal point for a cluster of themes which have not attracted the attention they merit: the British army's failure to clear the approaches to Antwerp (despite warnings from the Royal Navy); the obvious plight of the Dutch population; and the mutiny on Texel island when Georgians who had been conscripted into the Wehrmacht mutinied in April 1945 and were savagely put down on Hitler's orders. Hastings remarks: 'If the law had been enforced against all Germans who committed crimes against humanity in the countries occupied by Hitler, post-war executions on a Soviet scale would have been necessary'. Perhaps those who complain about

Dresden and the insistence on unconditional surrender for Germany should consider that fact.

The quality of Allied and Wehrmacht generalship and the combat performance of their infantry are major themes in *Armageddon*, particularly the reluctance of the Allies to take heavy casualties. 'Hitler's and Stalin's armies', Hastings argues, 'were imbued with an insouciance, indeed brutality, about casualties'. Is insouciance the right word to describe Stalin's despicable waste of soldiers' lives? On the other hand, German insouciance was based on solid professionalism, an awareness that German soldiers and commanders were well trained at all levels. German commanders understood that they could take risks in the knowledge that their men were capable of showing the necessary initiative, not so in the Red Army, and frequently absent in the Anglo-American armies. What appears to be risky behaviour in the Wehrmacht is the ethos of a highly professional army — Daraufgängertum as the Germans would say.

Most Westerners cannot conceive of a society so indifferent to loss of life. The willingness of Stalin and Soviet commanders to accept huge casualties, often grotesquely disproportionate to any real military gain, has nothing to do with the professional conduct of modern war. Rather, it reflects a contempt for human life that is deeply entrenched in Russian history and culture. Had the rank and file not been sacrificed by Stalin and his commanders to achieve their goals, the war might well have dragged on beyond May 1945. Then perhaps the final outcome of the war on continental Europe would have been resolved by atomic bombs of which, thankfully, the Western Allies enjoyed a monopoly in 1945. Zhukov, the Soviet general, does not deserve the Hastings accolade that he 'was the most outstanding allied commander of the Second World War'. That honour belongs to Montgomery, the best all round general the Western Allies had.

Any comparative assessment of the British and Soviet war effort must consider that Britain, unlike the Soviet Union, was waging a global war. Stalin's declaration of war against Japan when the war was almost over was precisely the vulturine behaviour noted by Churchill, that between September 1939 and June 22nd 1941 the Soviet Union fed upon the carcasses of Germany's kills.

The Anglo-American Armies differed from the Wehrmacht and the Red Army in that they recruited soldiers from a society that had evolved a strong individualistic ethos, unlike the social and economic collectivism of Wilhelmine and then Nazi Germany and Tsarist and Soviet Russia. The West was more Athens than Sparta. The Nazi exhortation cited in Grossman's Stalingrad novel, *For a Just Cause*, 'You are nothing your people are everything' would be received with rather less enthusiasm in Britain that it was in Nazi Germany.

Good, sometimes excellent on the big picture, especially on the Western front, Hastings is not always convincing when discussing Soviet topics. The consequences of the purges on the Red Army and the responsibility that Stalin bears for the disastrous failures in the summers of 1941-1942 are never really explained. When he says that 'Stalin never indulged in sentiment' we require some explanation why disgusting and incompetent creatures like Lev Mekhlis, one of many senior commissars who were allowed to damage the Red Army, or why military retards such as Budenny, Kulik and Voroshilov were not shot out of hand. Like any good socialist, Stalin could not resist punishing talent while protecting mediocrities. Hastings asserts that: 'The allies' failure to anticipate Hitler's assault [The Battle of the Bulge] was the most notorious intelligence disaster of the war'. That dubious honour surely belongs to Stalin's unforgivable and criminal incompetence in the period leading up to Sunday 22nd June 1941.

A recurring and serious error in *Armageddon* is the author's conflating Russian with Soviet. Not only does Russian not equal Soviet but it also complicates the whole question of patriotism. One reason why the Baltic states, Ukraine, Belorussia and the Central Asian Soviet republics provided so many people willing to work for the Germans was because they hated the Soviet Union. They had good reason. Patriotism for them meant the assertion of their own national identity. They hoped that the collapse of the Soviet Union would gives them the chance they wanted. Nor can those Russians who remained loyal to the Soviet Union lay claim to being the sole representatives of Russian patriotism.

On many occasions Hastings is far too willing to accept the testimony of Soviet veterans at face value. What he writes about Soviet soldiers who had been encircled is not supported in Soviet war literature and, indeed, in the declassified documents relating to the NKVD and SMERSH. 'Men', he states, 'spoke with pride of having survived two, three, four encirclements'. Soviet soldiers who had been encircled, regardless of circumstances, were an object of intense suspicion and after April 1943 liable to SMERSH interrogation. Thereafter they bore the mark of Cain. Curiously, there is no mention of SMERSH in the text or index.

There are a number of translation and transliteration

errors in *Armageddon*. For example, Vlasov, the name of the Soviet general who collaborated with the Germans, is written as Vlassov. Any shortcomings are redeemed by Hastings's sense of proportion and, occasionally, flashes of real wisdom. *Armageddon* is a reminder of what was at stake sixty years ago, and of the debt that we owe to our mothers and fathers, our reluctant heroes.

Can the Tories Recover?

Harry Phibbs

Singing the Blues, The Once and Future Conservatives. John Redwood, Politico's, 2004, £18.99.

This is a lively account of where we are, how we got here and where we ought to go next. Amidst all the agonising among the Tories in recent years and the media preoccupation with image it is satisfying to encounter someone so interested in substance and with such robust intellectual self confidence. The second half of the book consists of a fizzing policy agenda. Listing all the Quangos he would like to see abolished might not enhance the book's literary merit but it does add credibility to its political message. In this cynical age voters look to politicians for specifics to back up their more generalised aspirations.

The book begins more as an autobiography and includes some touching passages. Redwood became a Tory early in life. 'I spent my early life in a council house,' he says. 'I did not enjoy the experience and had a great sense of excitement when I was four, when my parents decided they could just afford their first owner-occupied property with a mortgage.' Later as a young boy he recalls a street of Victorian terraced houses being pulled down in his home city of Canterbury to make way for tower blocks. 'I remember as a young boy walking with my mother past some of these new flats when they had just been completed and asking her for reassurance that we would not have to live in one.'

Because of his job as the head of the Downing Street Policy Unit under Margaret Thatcher, Redwood, then aged just 32, was at the heart of power well before being elected an MP. He was involved in several of the radical privatisation projects. Here he is reflecting on the changes brought about by the sale of the National Freight Corporation to the lorry drivers themselves: 'I remember one of the drivers telling me how, when it was a state owned corporation, if the lorry didn't work very well he would kick it and get extremely angry. He said today he nursed it and looked after it because, he explained, 'I own part of that lorry so I'm not going to do it any harm.' It was exactly the transformation of industrial attitudes we were looking for.' Wider ownership remains a passion. 'This is unfinished business but it is not out-of-date or backward looking business,' he says.

There are lighter moments. In his candid account of his leadership challenge to John Major, he reflects on how the dress sense, or lack of it, of some of his supporters blew his chance of becoming Prime Minister. Mounting his leadership challenge to John Major, Redwood recalled entering his launch meeting in a crowded Commons committee room. 'As I made my way to the desk through the crowds I realised that Teresa Gorman and Tony Marlow, attired in very colourful clothing, were going to be prominent in the pictures,' writes Redwood. 'I had to make an instant judgement. I was very glad for the support of any Conservative MP as I was conscious I needed to work hard to get a good number. The last thing I wanted to do was to start a leadership campaign by picking a row with two volunteer MPs, in my case because of the way they were dressed, and because their Prime Minister might brief against them. I decided it was best to run with it as it was.'

Far from his caricature Redwood comes across as sensitive to feelings of others and sensitive to the many attacks, which he has withstood. Far from his being an economic reductionist concerned only with statistics and balance sheets, each page radiates with how the measure he proposes are a means to an end — to advance the lives of the people. There is a chapter on the environment. He rightly identifies making fee-paying schools affordable for all as a crucial objective. He is always on the look out for ways in which the free market can help the poor as well as the rich. For instance he offers a policy for those having trouble getting on the first rung of the housing ladder. This group of younger, aspirational, floating voters has been identified by Central Office as a crucial part of the electorate. 'People should be given the chance to take on rundown, derelict or empty properties in the public sector at advantageous prices in return for doing them up and living in them,' he says. 'There are over 150,000 empty public sector properties in the United Kingdom and these should be brought back into use one way or another as rapidly as possible.' Selling them has another benefit, for even if they were flogged off cheap they would still raise a tidy sum for the Treasury.

Redwood makes great efforts to be fair to everyone —even John Major whom he acknowledges secured the opt out from membership of the Euro, something

which Major's leadership rivals Lords Hurd and Heseltine would have been unlikely even to attempt. Redwood is not well served by his publishers — there are a number of names misspelt and other irritating typos. Inevitably some episodes are sketched over lightly — after all this is only just over 300 pages and Redwood is clearly preoccupied more with the future than the past. His gravest misjudgement, his decision to back Ken Clarke over William Hague in the final ballot of the 1997 leadership election, is not mentioned. But this is a hugely satisfying book. Those Conservatives who had given up on the Conservative Party should have it as compulsory reading — not least if they are contemplating abstaining or throwing away their votes on a fringe party in the forthcoming General Election. Redwood is bullish about Michael Howard's prospects of taking back powers handed over to the EU, which offers the nation a 'stark choice'. Redwood adds: 'Those voters who wish to opt out and spend the rest of their lives saying, "Don't blame me, I voted UKIP" are free to do so. But in practice I, and many like me, will blame them entirely.'

Summoned by Betjeman

Stuart Millson

Betjeman — The Bonus of Laughter, Bevis Hillier, John Murray, £25.

For so many people, Sir John Betjeman, — poet laureate, conservationist, TV performer, defender of suburbia and Victorian terraces — was the personification of the slightly absent-minded, old-fashioned Englishman; and the last representative of a breed of aesthete created by the culture of the 1920s and 30s. Betjeman was always courageously out-of-step with the modern cults of convenience and conformity, which by 1984 — the year of his death — had still not reached the feverish levels which terrify most of us today. Bevis Hillier has laboured for the past 25 years to produce the definitive biography of our best-loved poet laureate — this rich, overwhelmingly detailed edition forming the third and final part of a remarkable 'life of Betjeman'. By anyone's standards it is a superb achievement, and a tribute to the astonishing dedication and vision of the author.

Betjeman was in his element in any 1920s suburban street, in a Norfolk church, Somerset branch-line station, or on the coast of Cornwall. He was a man devoted to the old and the eccentric, and deplored the increasing emptiness and lack of imagination which is to be found almost everywhere in the England of today. Yet he led a complicated private life, torn between his wife, Penelope Chetwode, and his mistress, Lady Elizabeth Cavendish — with whom he eventually settled.

Betjeman was never 'conventional', and as an employee of Shell Oil (he was a copywriter, able to produce hilarious advertising lines) seemed to keep his own hours, and drift along — almost oblivious to the tedious office rules which bound more ordinary men. These traits stayed with him throughout his life. Indeed, in 1973 when filming his famous *Metro-land* programme for the BBC, he infuriated the camera crew and director by announcing that he could only give them a small amount of time that morning, as he had made arrangements to do some work on a film somewhere else. Such tales are the things by which Hillier brings his subject to life — and the material at the author's disposal (endless letters, cuttings, reminiscences etc) is astonishing.

However, John Betjeman first made an impression upon me, not really through his poetry, but (ironically) through television which he blamed for many of the modern ills he opposed. The sight of this self-styled Pickwickian figure, in boater and raincoat, with dishevelled collar and unfastened cuffs, inviting us to explore a station waiting room, or overlooked alley in Devizes; or to follow him to 'where the sky widened to Cornwall', was compelling — for unlike so many 'TV people', Betjeman offered us a life-affirming *celebration* of England.

This celebration reached its zenith in his 1977 television anthology, *The Queen's Realm* — a lyrical and passionate hour of poetry and aerial views of England, woven together with some particularly fine choices of music — Tippett's *Corelli Fantasia* for 'bounteous May', and Vaughan Williams's Third Symphony for the ghostly mists and ruins of Tintern Abbey in late Autumn. As Bevis Hillier points out, 1977 was also the year of Derek Jarman's film, *Jubilee* — a film which, to quote the biographer, was almost a 'satanic negative' of *The Queen's Realm.* At a time when the fashion was, and still is, to tear institutions or 'nice' things apart, or to treat them with, at best, irony or sarcasm, Betjeman reminded us of the sort of familiar experiences and places which most of us like, or long for.

However, just to reassure the cynics, *The Queen's Realm* — and indeed Betjeman's output as a whole — was not all Maypoles and strawberries swimming in the cream. One scene from his film showed a

punished, ravaged industrial landscape, with a rusting goods train in 1970s BR livery, heaving its way through acres of sidings and rubbish; another showed industrial waste being dropped from a crane onto a polluted, dead coastline; and another showed the dreadful, golf-ball buildings of the atomic early warning system on the Yorkshire moors. 'I have a vision of the future, chum, the workers' flats in fields of soya beans...' With subtlety and a clever juxtaposition of opposites, Betjeman achieved far more of the gritty, uncomfortable realism and 'truth about life' which other contemporary film-makers claim to have discovered.

Hillier shows us that Betjeman was not a man who took refuge from reality. Instead, he actively confronted the trends of which he disapproved, forever campaigning against heartless, pushy 'town planning'. He correctly identified the phenomenon of the housing estate, as an unnatural, characterless thing — a dull mass of housing just bolted on to a town, or dropped down on its outskirts; and contrasted such estates with the pleasant almshouses, cottages and streets built by high-minded private companies for their employees. Of a proposed new London airport for Buckinghamshire, he wrote:

> The birds are all killed and the flowers are all dead
> And the businessman's aeroplane booms overhead;
> With chemical sprays we have poisoned the soil,
> And the scent in our nostrils is Diesel and oil...
> ... For who'd use a footpath to Quainton or Brill,
> When a jet can convey him as far as Brazil?

Today, we may well be 'citizens of the world', and inhabitants of this fast-spinning globe. But thanks to John Betjeman at least we have the courage and spirit to say to our masters: 'Excuse me, but do you mind if I get off?'

Blind Alleys

Patricia Morgan

The Welfare State We're in, James Bartholemew, Politicos, 2004, £18.99

As a leader writer for the *Daily Mail,* James Bartholomew recalls attending the news conference on a day when the litany of violence included the rape and murder of an old woman, robbed for a few pounds. Many will agree that Britain has suffered a fall from grace. Teenagers tell me they go out in boots, because if they get caught up in a late night fracas, they are likely to be downed and communally kicked — if they do not get knifed. In the east London where I grew up after the war, there were notorious brawling venues, at particular 'rough' pubs at 11pm on a Friday. These were isolated — like the remaining 'criminal areas' which social scientists explored as an anthropologist might visit a Stone Age tribe in Borneo. Moreover, the code prevailing even among thugs forbad kicking a man when he was down, using a weapon, or a group attacking an individual. That was for cowards: 'real' men fought man to man, fist to fist.

My east London went down before a surge in crime that began its cliff face ascent in the 1960s, much of it involving children. What had been rare and furtive, became widespread, group-supported activities. Street furniture was smashed in broad daylight and vacated houses torched. Parents often stood guard, waiting to abuse anyone who might try to stop their children expressing themselves. The intelligentsia loftily dismissed disquiet as moral panic stoked up by the media, or ignorance about working class customs — which they knew more about than the natives until the problems spread to salubrious areas.

James Bartholomew blames the welfare state. I remain convinced that the descent owes much to the child-centred parenting and education, adopted at a time of high birth rates and young (too young) parents — resulting in a brat plague. All nineteenth century reform movements sought to instil character, or develop self-restraint and inner control. Principles of proper conduct could not spring from individual wants, 'needs' or self interest. Bartholomew describes how the friendly societies and other voluntary bodies prescribed decent behaviour as well as offering financial protection. In the twentieth century, new strictures effectively forbad proper upbringing. There were no longer dangerous impulses to be curbed, but harmless instincts that must go unchecked. Authoritarian parenting and teaching were 'trauma' making. Children must be protected from 'damaging' expectations, restrictions and judgements, and left unrepressed to live their lives freely. This movement started in the 1960's, not the1980s, as Bartholomew alleges.

This abandonment of cultural transmission was part of a wider revolution which forsook the moral order for a deterministic paradigm of society, whose fortunes were to be managed by expert elites servicing every need. Determinism mingled with nihilism to let dormant talent blossom. More mental illness, addiction and violent crime arrived instead.

When James Bartholomew describes the way in which state education, the National Health Service, the benefits system, and housing, have been used to

order people's lives, is collectivism not what he means? His book is very short on definitions. In the aftermath of the Seebohm report in 1968, small welfare units dealing with truants, home helps and hospital patients became generic social work departments. Side by side with a re-structured comprehensive education system, this paraded as 'science in the service of the community'. The 'experts in living' would mount an onslaught on the difficulties of families and improve the lives of communities. The goal? A Utopia of therapeutic self actualisation. These tools of social engineering were a vehicle for the advancement of the ideology of professional social work. When collectivist notions were first mooted in 1892, Herbert Spencer sourly predicted that society would be dominated by unaccountable cliques spending its resources as they advanced their own interests.

However, the book is immensely comprehensive, and a *tour de force* of so many bailiwicks of the almighty, all-caring Leviathan. The welfare state was originally intended to function as a national insurance company but it obliterated the multitude of private provisions existing in the 1940's. This was not what Beveridge intended. War increases the power of the executive, and unleashes the managerial might of the state. Beveridge had wanted to organise the workforce for the war effort. Thwarted, he tried to insure all against life's risks compulsorily. Aneurin Bevan objected to the pre-1945 health service not because the standard of medical care was low, but because it was not 'planned as a whole', and run from the top. In contrast, Beveridge admired the friendly societies and wanted minimal interference in people's lives, preserving self reliance and mutual support. Tragically, his state imposed structure was a Trojan horse, all too easy to co-opt to collectivist causes, as well as prey to pressure group demands and government expediency.

The welfare state was not about vertical redistribution of wealth or egalitarianism but an antidote to the appalling effects of means testing. Anyone ill, unemployed or at retirement age, would receive a flat rate payment. Universal family allowances, like tax exemptions, were a way of alleviating financial stress without creating disincentives to work, raise earnings, or support dependents. These put a 'floor of wages above the ceiling of relief'.

Means testing or 'targeting the needy' has a fatal attraction. Socialists object that the welfare state did not redistribute income and wealth, and has been a smokescreen to disguise the failings of capitalism. Conservatives claim that the middle classes benefit more than the 'poor', by making use of health services, education and tax breaks, which are 'wasted wealth' thrown at 'the rich'. We should now ensure that only the 'needy' receive help. Bartholomew himself seems to fall for this misunderstanding, by citing New Zealand as a place which has rolled back the welfare state. New Zealand has abolished all universal benefits and tax allowances (except those for pensioners), and just gives means tested relief to 'needies'. This policy has created massive welfare dependency, with the highest numbers of lone parents on benefit in the developed world.

We never learn from history: In the 1920/30s means tested assistance had to take account of dependents; it was bound in many cases to overlap wages, making it more profitable to be unemployed. The Speenhamland system in the 18th century made up the wages of poorly paid breadwinners; encouraging low pay while discouraging individuals from bettering themselves. As expenditure rose, those taxed to pay for the relief might qualify themselves.

We have had Family Income Supplement, Family Credit, Working Families Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Childcare Tax Credit, all helping to turn 'the social security aspect of the welfare state into a catastrophe'. Now around 38 per cent of people are on one means tested benefit or another. Because of the disincentives to work, save and marry, targeted or means tested assistance fails on its own terms. Help restricted to the poor creates more poor people or, in Thomas Malthus' s words poor laws 'create the poor which they maintain'. Targeted welfare channels support to those who depart from the norm and, as such, affirms their deviation. The bulk of child contingent support now goes to lone parents, as the system has been used to underwrite the family unit as one of mother and child, wed to the state.

As we have waded deeper into the morass, a measure to deal with disincentives at one point in the system creates or exacerbates disincentives at another, and so further batteries of benefits are created to get people off benefits. Top ups are given for part time work to make people work at all. They stick there, and another benefit is created for full time work. Target 'the *truly* needy' say economists. But these are hardly a finite population. There are always people on the margins who will rearrange their affairs to qualify, unless entitlements are slashed so much that it defeats the object of targeting needies. A commentator in *The Times* condemns the 'absurd plethora of means-tested benefits and poverty traps we have today', and imagines that 'the Treasury can devise a few simple tests along with some sensible tapering' to avoid the traps. It cannot. To reduce the disincentives at one point down the line, involves extending means

testing to many more people up the line, who lose 70 per cent or more of extra earnings to save others losing 90/100 per cent. As the system breeds dependency, we fear letting go of nurse. This is the biggest welfare trap of all. Bartholomew is not confident that we can spring it.

The BBC's Black Hole

Christie Davies

Spinning the Spies, Intelligence, Open Government and the Hutton Inquiry, Anthony Glees and Philip H. J. Davies, London, Social Affairs Unit, 2004, £30.

The central conclusion to be drawn from this excellent analysis of the Hutton Inquiry and the events leading up to it (the Iraq dossier, the BBC programmes and Dr. David Kelly's death) is that 'openness is not always a virtue and secrecy not always a vice'. There are dangers in making intelligence public. If intelligence data is held within a ring of secrecy it gives those within it 'a freedom of speech to consider options and issues that they could not address in the public eye'. It prevents intelligence from becoming politicised. Once intelligence is used as propaganda those who provide it are placed in a false position.

The Hutton report shows that the BBC journalists behaved badly in making false accusations both against the politicians and against those responsible for gathering and assessing intelligence but they would not have been able to make them had there been no dossier placed before the public. It is clear from Glees and Davies' account that it was a mistake to use such material to gain approval for decisions for which the politicians alone were responsible. It also misled the public because it played upon and reinforced the erroneous idea that what is secret and obtained by clandestine means is by its very nature more important and convincing than the other sources of information that are available to and used by decision makers. A further general point that they make is that revealing intelligence data is dangerous. It could lead to the detection and even execution of a human source of information or to the closing off of a conduit by a now alerted enemy. In the particular case of the Iraq war it gave prior warning to Saddam's men as to the basis of British strategy and of the need to hide and destroy any evidence relating to weapons of mass destruction, not the weapons themselves which probably never existed but of plans to procure and manufacture them. When Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athists are put on trial much of the evidence will be missing.

Blair's lurch into openness was not unprecedented nor unexpected. Kenneth Gordon Robertson (cited by Glees and Davies) had argued in 1998 after the Cold War that the new emphasis on the role of the intelligence agencies in tracking and catching terrorists and those involved in organized crime meant that there had to be greater openness and accountability because one of the main goals of intelligence activity was now a successful prosecution in the courts. It is difficult to see why this should so, particularly when an operation is being conducted outside British jurisdiction. It is an outmoded view of terrorists and organized criminals to see them as an extension of shoplifters, rapists and burglars. Surely the legal system should be changed not the intelligence services? To bring their secret work into the open is an act of unilateral disarmament.

The authors have provided an excellent, detailed yet succinct account of the Hutton Inquiry and of its complications. This particular case study casts light on three much more general problems. First 'spin', the present government's obsession with presentation often to the point of deception. Who has any faith in anything that emerges from the Home Office and the ministries concerned with education? Perhaps in consequence the government and its servants are perceived as liars even when they are not, which might account for the BBC's reckless and self-righteous attack on them over Iraq. Second, the deterioration of public service broadcasting. It did not happen overnight as Glees and Davies imply. Large sections of the BBC have long behaved as if they were an independent corporation free to take a partisan line and free of all obligations to those who are compelled to pay their licence fee. This time they were exposed because they were also foolish enough to go for a scoop and to get it wrong, but the real and unresolved problem is the BBC's culture of bias. The ill thought out drift to open government was first pushed by the witless John Major because he was seeking a new progressive looking ideological slogan. It will not lead to more information being made available in untainted ways but merely to more bureaucracy, an undermining of quick, informal decision making and an obsession with process rather than product. These views may not be shared by the authors but they were provoked by *Spinning the Spies*, a clear and factual account of a major crisis for BBC and government alike. I can strongly recommend it to anyone with an interest in public affairs.

The World Today Sets no Store by Faith

Louis le Bailly

The 24th of May is a special day for me. My ship, *HMS Naiad* — heavily down by the bows due to bomb damage from three hits and 180 near misses in a hectic four hours of battle with Hitler's air force, as we sank his seaborne reinforcements to his airborne forces fighting for Crete — was limping back to Alexandria. We had buried our dead during the night. Then, just as we came to our buoy in the harbour and the hospital barges came alongside for our wounded, we heard that *HMS Hood* had been sunk. I had served in her, aged just 17, for over a year, rejoining four years later, and, after 30 months' service, went to war in her. Of the 1,418 lost I had known 300 of the engine room crew, all lost, and probably a couple of hundred others. The sudden utter destruction of my first naval home, leaving only three survivors, was a knockout blow.

Ten months later, with those not 'below' when the torpedo struck, I found myself swimming in a choppy sea, on a dark night, as *Naiad* sank stern first to the seabed. There was lots of jabbering and cries for help as we tried to get those who could not swim or were burnt on to the few rafts; and then Leading Stoker Davies, a Welshman with a lovely voice, started to sing *Abide With Me* as he had learnt the hymn in his Methodist Chapel in the Rhondda. Most joined in and the last line, 'In life, in death, O Lord abide with me', seemed rather appropriate swimming in 600 feet of water 25 miles from shore. The task force — less its Admiral, now in the water with us — had sped on its way. As Davies ended, an extraordinary hush ensued. Was it, I have always wondered, 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding?' When we have discussed it at our reunions most have agreed that it was. And then suddenly *HMS Jervis* appeared, by a miracle of navigation, for we had no lights. There were shouts to 'hurry up', for the German submarine was in the vicinity. So, swimming madly, we pushed the rafts to the jumping nets over *Jervis's* side. And when, towards the last of us, Davies was helped up them, his great heart gave out and he died.

In *Naiad's* 22 months of action it was the fortitude of sailors, stokers and artificers that gave me strength. Few of them had had much of a life — jobless, the soup kitchens in Jarrow or Sheffield or rounding up the sheep in the chilly Cotswold Hills. That had been their upbringing, after leaving school at 14. We had 20 boys under 18, and many little older. A boy re-rigged the aerials under fire; a 22-year-old handed up shells in a flooding magazine, till the water reached his chin. Boiler room crews never flinched.

It has never seemed to matter to me since to which Christian church one belongs. Twenty years ago Solzenitzhyn, that author survivor of Stalin's gulags, where 40 million lives were ended, speaking in London on seeing the empty pews, asked: 'What happens to society when people have forgotten God?' He knew a cruel Empire which explicitly denied the freedoms to which we are used. Where the State is sovereign there is no place for religion. Only private faith can challenge. I sensed that the inner life of those staunch young men I came to know so well was not determined by their social and material background. By today's standards their lives had been sordid. But somehow from Board School or parents it was faith, not reason, that gave them their fiercely independent outlook, allowing them to measure the condition of their lives and giving them an individuality and a spirit not in any way the result of those outward conditions. In two years of fighting only one man broke. I had left him too long in a lonely post. Today we are urged by politicians to rely only on the good things of life which can be measured and paid for. The churches, anxious to appear 'relevant', are obsessed with social and material factors. They deny to the young a spirit resting on mankind's acquired experience of faith, on a knowledge of ultimate things, on Moses' 'signposts', on the Christian foundations of our nation's freedom stretching back to Alfred's laws.

Vice-Admiral Sir Louis le Bailly served in the Royal Navy

'Hail! Bright Cecilia'

Andrew Earis



Every 22nd November for the past four hundred years celebrations have taken place in honour of St. Cecilia, the Patron Saint of Music. In Britain, there is an annual service at one of the London cathedrals, together with a festival concert in one of the major concert halls. Numerous literary works have been written, music composed, and paintings drawn in her honour. But who was St. Cecilia, and why is she the Patron Saint of Music?

The Acts of St. Cecilia, the *Passio Caeciliae*, which appeared late in the fifth century, describe her life. Cecilia was of saintly disposition, and had vowed to keep her virginity. She married a young man named Valerian, and on their wedding night she converted him to Christianity; he was baptised and agreed to a marriage of celibacy. His brother, Tiburtius, converted too. Both brothers were sentenced to death by the Roman Governor, Almachius, for their Christian preaching. Cecilia was also condemned to death but miraculously survived suffocation in a steam bath and immersion in boiling oil. She was then given three blows to the neck with a sword, and lived for a further three days. On her death she left her house, in Trastevere in Rome, to the church, and on the site now stands the Church of St. Cecilia, where she is buried. But why is she the Patron Saint of Music? The clue lies in the *Passio*, where there is a single reference to music: '*Venit dies in quo thalamus collacatus est, et, cantatibus organis, illa in corde suo soli Domino decantabat: Fiat cor meum et corpus meus immaculatum, et non confundar*', 'The day on which the wedding was to be held arrived and while musical instruments were playing, she was singing in her heart to God alone saying: make my heart and body pure, that I not be confounded'. In later versions of this antiphon, *illa in corde* was omitted, suggesting that she sang herself, and *organis* was later translated as meaning 'organs' rather than 'musical instruments'. The phrase therefore became 'while playing the organ, she sang' and Cecilia's association with music began.

The first record of a celebration of St. Cecilia's Day was at Evreux in Normandy in 1570. Liturgical performances and a composition competition, in which Orlando Lassus won a prize, took place. Shortly after this, in 1584, she was adopted as Patroness of the Academy of Music in Rome. In England, St. Cecilia's Day celebrations began with the formation of the Musical Society in 1683. They traditionally attended a service in London, usually at St. Bride's Fleet Street, to enjoy a sermon preached in defence of cathedral music and an anthem newly written for the Festival. A banquet followed at Stationers' Hall, and afterwards an Ode to St. Cecilia was sung. The first of these, *'Laudate Ceciliam'*, was written by Henry Purcell. Among the authors of these Odes was Dryden, who wrote his *Song for St. Cecilia* in 1687:

> But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
> When to her Organ vocal breath was given
> An Angel heard, and straight appear'd
> Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

This was set to music by Handel in his *'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day'*. Music was also written by composers including John Blow, Jeremiah Clarke and Maurice Greene. As well as in London, celebrations took place in Winchester, Oxford, Salisbury and Gloucester. Regrettably, in the early part of the nineteenth century music in England reached a low ebb, and the custom of commemorating St. Cecilia died out.

The custom was revived in the middle of the twentieth century. In 1942 Benjamin Britten, whose birthday was on St. Cecilia's Day, composed an Ode in honour of St. Cecilia to a text by W.H. Auden *Anthem for St. Cecilia's Day*. Later, Herbert Howells wrote *A Hymn for Saint Cecilia* based on words by Ursula Vaughan Williams '*Sing for the morning's joy, Cecilia, sing, in words of youth and phrases of the spring*'.

One of the leading musical figures who proposed this revival was Sir Henry Wood, founder of the Promenade concerts. On his death in 1944, his ashes were interred in what is now the Musicians' Chapel in the Church of St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate in the City of London. His wish was finally realised in St. Sepulchre's in November 1946 with the first St. Cecilia's Day service, organised by the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. This has become an annual tradition, with an important feature of the service being the performance of a specially commissioned anthem. Composers have included Ralph Vaughan Williams, Lennox Berkeley and Francis Jackson, with perhaps the most

famous commission being *God is gone up* by Gerald Finzi.

This tradition has continued to the present day, the service now rotating between Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St. Paul's Cathedral. New works are still commissioned, a number of which have entered the mainstream choral repertoire. Concerts also take place in Britain and throughout the world, establishing St. Cecilia as a focal point for the celebration of music, its performance and composition.

> Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
> To all musicians, appear and inspire
> Translated Daughter, come down and startle
> Composing mortals with immortal fire.
>
> (W.H. Auden)

Andrew Earis is Director of Music of St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate, the National Musicians' Church, in the City of London.

IN SHORT

Jabez, The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Rogue, David McKie, Atlantic Books, 2004, £12.99

Political rogues have always provided good copy and merriment in gloomy times. Horatio Bottomley, Stonehouse, Maxwell and Archer have all excelled themselves in this field.

The author discovered this forgotten scoundrel of the nineteenth century when he visited Portland prison in search of information about a relative who had been a warder there. *The Times* called Jabez Balfour 'one of the most impudent, heartless business scoundrels on record'. McKie became fascinated by his dramatic fall from grace and began researching Balfour's business empire based on his Liberator Building Society. His book reads like a thriller and would make a splendid film. Always a liberal, Balfour was one of the most prominent non-conformists of his day, becoming the mayor of Croydon and MP for Tamworth and Burnley. Many of his activities were admirable: fine buildings in London and a fine harbour in Bembridge. 'It was beautiful and simple, all the great swindles are'. McKie traces the intricate weird transactions on which his apparent success rested, the huge business crash of 1892 bringing poverty and ruin to many investors. After some of his colleagues were arrested he escaped to Argentina and would have stayed and flourished there had it not been for a determined detective who sought him out and arranged an extradition. He was sentenced to fourteen years and died on a railway train on his way to a new job. In the midst of all these adventures Jabez found time for wives and mistresses. Many of the facts resonate with the scandals of our own times: auditors who failed to be watchdogs, directors who attended rarely and never asked questions, MPs and Lords who looked good on the letterheads but were ready to swallow Balfour's lies and enjoy their money. 'It is a most extraordinary fact, said the Registrar, that each director comes here and says that he never took the trouble to see the statements upon which they were getting these immense sums of money'. Remember when a public enquiry concluded that Maxwell should never be in charge of a public company again; he went on to swindle *Daily Mirror* pensioners and others a decade or so later.

Merrie Cave

Ireland's Holy Wars, Marcus Tanner, Yale (Nona Bene), 2003, £10.95

Ireland, England's first but most unsuccessful colony, is one of those countries which has far too much history and is dominated by its memories. This outstanding book, now in paperback, tackles the problems from the religious angle elucidating much, for me, that was previously somewhat opaque. Marcus Tanner had previously covered the Balkans and written a book on Croatia, producing unexpected comparisons and allusions between the two areas. He sees many history lessons in a journey taken from Dublin and the old Pale towns to Belfast and then up towards Derry: the contrast between the English quality of Drogheda and the explosion of flags in Belfast, 'the Jerusalem of Protestants' (Derry) and its curious customs inexplicable to an average English TV viewer. Along the way he met people with seventeenth century mindsets: one

man told him that when he was ready to die 'he wanted to whirl a sword around his head and decapitate as many Catholics as possible'. The hatred is only comprehensible by looking at England's failure to impose the Reformation on Ireland in the sixteenth century. All the subsequent problems flow from it. The Reformation set the English in Ireland at each others' throats; the original settlers (Old English) were loyal to the Catholic church and had always relied on the English to defend them against the 'wild' Irish around them. England's failure to convert either group led to James I's Scots settlement in the North but the Church of Ireland did not benefit because the Scottish Protestants were Calvinist. Their reformation was carried out in opposition to the Crown not with it as in England. Oliver Cromwell rounded off years of unwisdom and Catholics became strangers in their own country, reduced to worshipping in hedgerows until Catholic emancipation. By 1850 and the aftermath of the great famine the Catholic Church became identified with Irishness. Ever since partition Catholics predicted that there would be a catholic majority eventually. The change has taken longer than expected but at present it looks as though the Protestants have lost the demographic battle.

Merrie Cave

Britain and the European Project, Christopher Hoskin, June Press, 2004, £3.

All of us who have had to speak, give interviews, take part in media discussions on the EU know how little is known or understood about the project outside the small circle of political nerds. (I am one of them, knowing, as I do, the difference between the European Council and the Council of Ministers, not to mention where the IGC fits into the scheme.)

Each time we seem to have to go back to basics and one wonders what happens to people's memories between various large events, such as a new treaty or a constitution. It is reassuring to find that each time there are more people around who remember and understand it. Fortunately, there are papers and pamphlets that can be used or quoted, such as this recently published *Britain and the European Project.*

Christopher Hoskin, who has 'closely followed the European debate for many years', writes in a breezy and chatty style, but I would question some of his arguments. He seems to be a historian of the superwhig school, who sees only the good things in British history (Toleration Act but no Test Acts, respect for rights and property but not how late the Married Woman's Property Act was passed). I have no real problem with it except that when the same method is applied to the twentieth century and the constitutional set-up, it becomes difficult to understand how we ended up in the mess we are in. It is surely time to abandon the line about the huge success with which Britain disembarrassed herself of her empire. As one thinks of the massacres on the Indian sub-continent and surveys the disastrous post-colonial history of Africa, one needs to question some of the assumptions about decolonization and the events that followed it. On the other hand, there were no catastrophic colonial wars like the ones France had in Vietnam and Algeria. This, too, must be noted.

With all those cavils, this is a remarkably useful paper because it does what we need: it goes back to basics and spells them out in a way that everyone, even school children can understand, though, I suspect, arguments made to politicians will have to be made even simpler. Perhaps Hoskin can be persuaded to produce a Janet and John version for MPs and MEPs.

Helen Szamuely

The Price of Parenthood Jill Kirby, Centre for Policy Studies 2005, £7.50.

Why are our political parties so against marriage? There are now no tax advantages in being married unlike the rest of Europe where married couples enjoy transferable tax relief. Marriage is *not* a private matter but the bedrock of the state and the government could reward married couples without bashing single parents.

Sir Keith Joseph first drew attention to this problem in the seventies and suffered derision thereby but our situation is much worse today. We now top the European league for single parents while successive surveys have shown the physical and psychological advantages of marriage, above all for the children. Jill Kirby supplies up-to-date figures and comparisons which make depressing reading. She also rightly emphasizes the American experience where welfare reform has brought a reduction in family breakdown and welfare dependency and a rise in the birth rate. When is anybody apart from Frank Field going to take some notice? The Tories might be on to a winner if they did.

Merrie Cave

Demonstrable Failures

The *Salisbury Review* will report on huge demonstrations that never happened.

On the 15th of August 2004 sixteen year old Atefeh Rajabi was publicly hanged in the Iranian city of Neka. She had been accused of 'acts incompatible with chastity', following allegations of a sexual relationship outside marriage. She was said to be mentally ill at the time and, it was reported, she had no access to legal representation.

In London the night before her execution huge crowds of protesters, mostly from the left, as well as famous actors, actresses and TV personalities, were NOT seen demonstrating outside the Iranian Embassy. Nor, as far as we know, was the Iranian Ambassador summoned to the *Today* programme to explain his country's act of utter barbarity. No TV station carried the story.

(Readers might like to consider the reaction if a similar execution — say of an 18 year old woman convicted of murder — were to happen in the United States.)

The Salisbury Review

33 Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JW
Tel: 020 7226 7791 Fax: 020 7354 0383
E-mail: salisburyreview@tiscali.co.uk

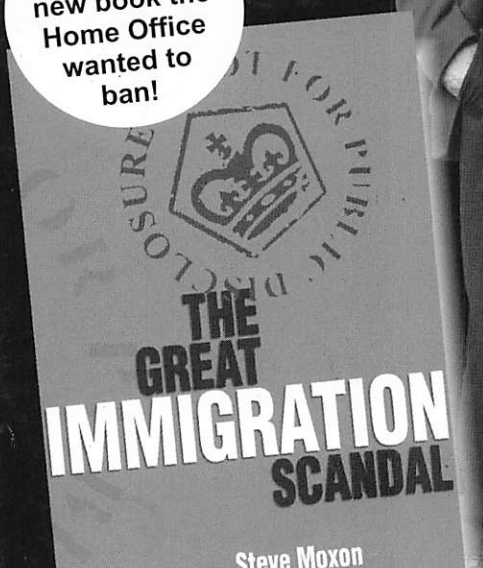
Web site: http://www.salisbury-review.co.uk

Published quarterly in September, December, March & June, volume commencing with September issue.
Annual subscription rates: £18, Europe/surface rest of world £20, £25. Airmail rest of world; Single issues £4.50
ISSN: 0265-4881. North American subscription from ISI, 3901 Centerville Rd., PO Box 4431, Wilmington, DE 19807-0431, USA.
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or other without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.
Copyright ©The Salisbury Review
Printed in the UK by The Warwick Printing Company Ltd.
Typesetting — DASH
Design — Jessica Chaney

The whistleblower's story



The controversial new book the Home Office wanted to ban!



Steve Moxon
The Great Immigration Scandal

ISBN 1-845400-119, 256p. (hbk.), £14.95/$29.90

Is this book 'a fascinating insider's account of the immigration and asylum fiasco of 2004' (David Green, CIVITAS) by 'an intelligent and courageous man' (Sir Andrew Green, Migrationwatch) or is it 'a crude and inflammatory tract'? (Boyd Tonkin, *Independent*)

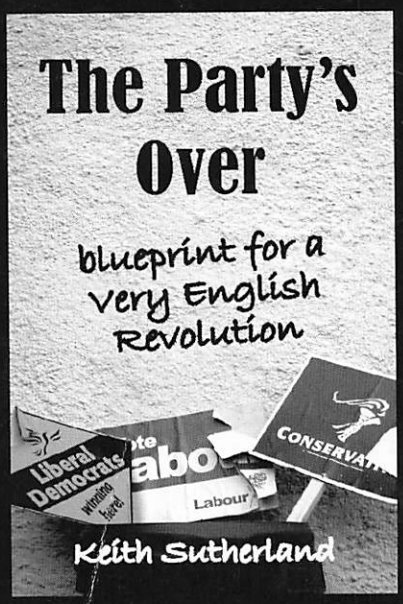
As a result of the *Independent* rant, shadow home secretary David Davis suddenly discovered he didn't agree with the book. But is it right for elected politicians to dance to the journalistic tune, in desperate pursuit of the 'floating voter'?

Who runs this place, and how has our democracy been so corrupted? Why is the left so afraid to debate immigration?

Read this book and draw your own conclusions

"A slow-burn Molotov cocktail on immigration . . . the most serious indictment yet published. Moxon's revelations in The Sunday Times brought down a minister and confirmed voters' belief that the government's managed migration policy is anything but that. . . A basic shift of allegiance could be under way, with Labour's immigration policy the catalyst. At the last election, I found the Tories won the campaign (on tax cuts and asylum) but voters concluded they were unelectable. Labour might not be so lucky next time.

Frank Field MP, *Sunday Times*, 17/10/2004



The Party's Over: Blueprint for a Very English Revolution

Keith Sutherland 200pp. £8.95/$17.90 ISBN 0-907845-517 (pbk)

The tyranny of the modern political party should be replaced by a mixed constitution (*politeia*) in which the phrase 'Her Majesty's Government' is restored to its original meaning, advocacy is entrusted to a true aristocracy of merit, and democratic representation is achieved via a jury-style lottery. Keith Sutherland's previous books include *The Rape of the Constitution?* (2000).

- 'The Party's Over is an extremely valuable contribution, not least beacause it will encourage debate about democracy. A subversive and necessary read.' **Graham Allen MP**, *Tribune*
- 'Anyone concerned about the serious lack of interest in the parliamentary system should read this book.' **Bernard Weatherill**, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1983-1992
- 'I recommend Keith Sutherland's challenging contribution *The Party's Over*'. **Tam Dalyell MP**
- 'Pithy, pungent, provocative – Sutherland is becoming the Hazlitt of our age.' **Professor Robert Hazell**, Director, The Constitution Unit, University College London
- 'His analysis of what is wrong is superb . . . No one can read this book without realising that something radical even revolutionary must be done.' **Sir Richard Body**, *Salisbury Review*
- 'This is a political essay in the best tradition - shrewd, erudite, polemical, partisan (sometimes), mischievous (frequently) and highly topical. It is provoking, annoying and seductive by turns. **Professor Barbara Goodwin**, *Contemporary Political Theory*

SOCIETAS

essays in political and cultural criticism
www.imprint-academic.com/societas

IMPRINT ACADEMIC

PO Box 200 Exeter EX5 5YX, UK T:01392 841600 F:841478
Email: sandra@imprint.co.uk www.imprint-academic.com
Visa/Mastercard/Amex/Switch/Delta/cheque (Imprint Academic)
Inland postage: £1 per book (3 or more free of charge)

US Orders: Philosophy Documentation Center
PO Box 7147, Charlottesville VA 22906-7147, USA
T: 800-444-2419 F: 434-220-3301 E: order@pdcnet.org
Overseas airmail: £2.50/$5 per book (3 or more free)