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The 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, 1830-1903

Is there a new Cold War?

Owen Matthews

Nuclear Power

Christie Davies

Bonfire of the Darwinists

Myles Harris

Prison Diary

Jonathan Tokeley

The Price of Ermine

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Apocalypse Soon?

Peter Mullen

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0 2 6 5 4 8 8 1

- 4 **Apocalypse Soon?**
Peter Mullen
- 7 **Nuclear Power**
Christie Davies
- 9 **Imperial Russia, or Imperial America?**
Owen Matthews
- 11 **Belarus — Moscow's Main Puppet Theatre?**
Boris Volodarsky
- 13 **Bonfire of the Darwinists**
Myles Harris
- 15 **Proud to be French?**
Curtis Cate
- 18 **A Gender-Neutral Society**
Patricia Lança
- 20 **Forward the Anglosphere**
Helen Szamuely
- 22 **Letter from Jerusalem**
Paul Gottfried
- 24 **The Price of Ermine**
H E Taylor
- 26 **Cut is the Branch**
Jonathan Tokeley
- 28 **Conservative Classic — 23**
Surtees' Hillingdon Hall
- 30 **Reputations — 14**
Alfred Milner
- 32 **Eternal Life**
Peter Mullen
- 33 **Roy Kerridge**
- 34 **LETTERS**
- 35 **David Ashton**
on Conservatism
- 37 **Derek Turner**
on Matthew Flinders
- 38 **Alfred Sherman**
on Spain
- 39 **Martin Dewhirst**
on Conquest's Expectations
- 40 **David M Holohan**
on Lenin's Intelligentsia
- 42 **Frank Ellis**
on The Red Army
- 44 **Paul Gottfried**
on Anti-Semitism
- 45 **Blair Gibbs**
on Criminals
- 46 **A W Purdue**
on The European Question
- 48 **Mark Baillie**
on Radical Islam
- 49 **Helen Szamuely**
on Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*
- 50 **Jonathan Tokeley**
on Gorky and Hare's *Enemies*
- 51 **The Art of the Portrait**
Andrew Lambirth
- 53 **Blind Faith**
David Lee
- 55 **Fighting in Ulster**
Mark Coulter on Ralph Lillford
- 56 **Andrew Earis**
- 57 **IN SHORT**
- 59 **Demonstrable Failures**
Myles Harris

Ex Africa aliquando aliquod novi

I spend all my working hours attacking the damage done to the poor of Africa by aid, protectionism and Western fads so perhaps it is worth noting that there is sometimes something new from Africa: some spectacular localised breakthroughs in corruption, some rule of law and a bit of economic growth.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation reports economic growth in Africa of 6 per cent in 2005, exports (excluding oil) up in quantity and in value and many fewer deaths in conflicts. They admit their figures do not disclose if any of this growth trickled down to the 70 per cent of Africans who work the land (producing only 17 per cent of GDP and 20 per cent of exports) but growth does look like good news.

Nigeria has peacefully ceded the border area of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon after a ruling by the International Court of Justice: the inhabitants are not happy but it is amazing that such an emotive issue has been resolved in law, especially as it involves a whale and a minnow. Equally surprisingly, Nigeria has been chasing down some of its most spectacular kleptocrats. In July this year, the Metropolitan Police handed the Nigerian High Commissioner a cheque for a million pounds recovered from Bayelsa State Governor Diepreye Alamiyeseigha's assets after a joint operation with Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Alamiyeseigha is awaiting trial in Lagos (although another governor arrested in London was given bail, fled back home and still rules his State, with immunity from prosecution).

South African Vice-President Jacob Zuma was forced to resign pending trial for corruption: many South Africans find this shameful but they should be proud that their country can bring down the mighty without violence.

The most heartening development of all came from Kenya where government advisor John Githongo declined to cover up his corruption investigation and the media pursued his revelations that showed how President Mwai Kibaki, elected as a reformer, had in fact maintained the system built up by his predecessor Daniel arap Moi, including the use of one of Moi's cover companies. Githongo is modest about his own role and is even optimistic about Africa: although rulers' 'attitudes are still quite brazen' towards corruption, 'the democratic tradition has truly kicked in across the continent. Despite challenges no one reasonable harks back to the one-party state or military rule,' he said in June. Githongo is an exceptional man and corruption is not in overall decline in Africa but his revelations were picked up and pursued by a robust and persecuted press and by brave politicians: this looks like a movement, not just an isolated event.

As for the plague of aid-dependency, even Bono has admitted that money does not create development and the British government has squeezed Ethiopia's and Kenya's handouts a little (but not as much as it claims) because of political oppression or corruption. Against these symptoms of progress, we have the endless plague of AIDS and the irruption on the scene of China, ruthless and happy to do business with the ruthless.

The West must do everything we can to make Africans more prosperous by persuading them to free their economies and open their domestic, regional and international markets and by cutting our internal subsidies and dropping trade barriers: prosperity makes good neighbours, it is the best contraceptive and health remedy and it could push back Chinese influence. Otherwise, it's on with Mugabe, back to Mobutu and to hell with Githongo.

Mark Baillie

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A rare bit of praise for Tony Blair in these pages comes from Christie Davies who welcomes his decision to embrace nuclear power: it is a technical issue not an opinion issue, he says, an industry in which the only serious accidents have been caused by Communism (even statist France, with a huge nuclear power network, has a safe record). There is a threat, however: plants in incompetent dictatorships such as Iran which, like Communists, are incapable of enforcing the safety practices of advanced capitalist nations.

As the G7+1, the leading industrial democracies plus Russia, gathered in Saint Petersburg in mid-July, we wondered why the G7 were so studiously ignoring the elephant in the dining-room that is Putin's Russia. They had allowed Russia to join in 1998 in the hope that it would learn to behave by sitting at High Table, even though it was by no stretch of the imagination a democracy or an advanced industrial economy, just a Third World country with nukes. Eight years of appeasement have failed and have strengthened Putin.

Boris Volodarsky pulls back a rusty Iron Curtain to show us Belarus, the last Soviet-style dictatorship in Europe, and its complicity with Russia, which trains its KGB (yes, they have kept the brand-name) and uses it for its own imperial ambitions. The Cold War has changed but has not gone away.

The confusing realpolitik of US-Russian relations seems to be on the path of confrontation as Vladimir Putin concentrates economic power in the state and a handful of *biznis* cronies in order to use it as an imperial weapon, while strengthening political and social control and stifling economic freedom internally. The USA was indulgent of the vile Yeltsin's armed interventions in the former Soviet satellites but is upset by the efficient (and no doubt equally vile but more presentable) Putin's economic geo-strategy. For Owen Matthews, *Newsweek's* Moscow correspondent, the reason is influence: Yeltsin's empire was crumbling but Putin's is strengthening, to the detriment of US

influence in Eastern Europe and its international aims, like halting Iran's nuclear programme.

Confusing too, as ever, are the French and their legendary nationalism, or rather the see-saw political correctness that Curtis Cate chronicles: they joined in the celebrations of Trafalgar Day last year but spurned Austerlitz. Some might think that re-assessing their glorification of the bloodthirsty Revolution and the tyrant Napoleon was long overdue but Cate sees a fundamental confusion about Frenchness itself.

From the vast complications of the external world, geo-strategy and national consciousness, we tumble into the infinite intricacies of the internal world, into the darkness in a man who killed the man he loved as they fell into the maw of drugs and delusion. Jonathan Tokely considers the internal torture he saw in his soulful cell-mate: he evokes the nature of man and the nature of sin but asks us finally to accept futility for what it is. It would take a Frenchman, unless, as Cate avers, they are now too confused, to ponder whether this is existentialism or realism.

Myles Harris does ask us to consider the nature of man as he takes Tom Wolfe's refined argument about 'the end of evolution' — shades of Francis Fukuyama's premature 'End of History'? This suggests that it is man's ability to speak that has allowed him to dominate the world and thus end the natural process of evolution: man has become the word, as 'In the beginning was the word.' Harris takes this further to equate rationalist morality, dubbed neo-Darwinism, with Nazism.

Peter Mullen asks us to consider our natures, our society and our weakness in the face of the rejectionist threat from Islam inside Europe. He traces this threat back to the Muslim empire and the rot back to the Enlightenment notion of human goodness, to humanism and to our diminishing attachment to religion. To save you waiting, Part II, outlining what we should be doing about it, is on our website www.salisburyreview.co.uk.

Apocalypse Soon?

Peter Mullen

A few years ago — certainly before 9/11 — I was at a political symposium and we were discussing the Cold War. In the final session someone tried to bring together the various strands of our conversation and said, ‘Well at least we can be grateful that the longest confrontation in modern times is over’. Whereupon one of the most senior academic members of the conference replied, ‘The longest confrontation in modern times has been going on for 1400 years. 300 years ago the enemy were at the gates of Vienna, and if they get the chance they’ll be there again’.

The enemy he referred to, of course, is Muslim imperialism. Not all Muslims are aggressive imperialists. Melanie Phillips was surely right to say in *The Times* recently, ‘In Britain hundreds of thousands of Muslims lead law-abiding lives and merely want to prosper and raise their families in peace’. There are many so-called moderate Muslims who want peaceful co-existence and co-operation. But there is a predominance of the other sort — of the ideologically-driven certainty which regards the followers of Islam as servants of the truth and the rest of the world as infidel rubbish. These sponsor the policy of ‘Convert or die’. The world for them is conveniently divided into two halves: the Muslim orthodox and the unbelieving and inferior rest: that’s us.

I am neither so foolish nor so arrogant as to dismiss one of the great world religions. There are versions and interpretations of Islam which are benign and enlightened. But these are not what are in the ascendancy now. There were and are disgraceful acts perpetrated in the name of Judaism and Christianity too. But with Islam at present it is as if the whole of it were contained and expressed on the pattern, for instance, of the Jews’ cursing Babylon — ‘Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children and throweth them against the stones’ — or the extremes of the Puritan witch-burners.

In Malta in 1565 there was a notable confrontation. The Muslims were besieging the island and they captured and killed some of the Christian Knights of St John. Suleyman the Magnificent beheaded them and floated them across the harbour on crosses. The Grand Master of the Knights of St John, Jean Parisot de la Valette, cut off the heads of many Turkish prisoners

and fired them back at the enemy like cannon balls. Whatever would the General Synod say! Six years after this, 197 ships of the Muslim fleet were destroyed by Don John of Austria at Lepanto and the Muslim insurgency was diminished. It was at the height of the Reformation, yet Catholics and Protestants were briefly united in thanksgiving for what was definitely seen as a marvellous deliverance.

Islam is a militant faith. From the start, Muslims believed in expansion by conquest. Efraim Karsh’s recent book *Islamic Imperialism* describes this policy in detail and he quotes the Founder Mohammad: ‘Fight all men until they say there is no God but Allah’. As Charles Moore has pointed out, Osama bin Laden quoted those words immediately after the attacks on the twin towers. The British press and the BBC continually upbraid European nations for their history of conquest and ‘imperialism’ but make no criticism of Islamic imperialism. While the slave trade, along with ‘Hitler’, is a favourite topic in schools’ history syllabus, the fact that the biggest slave traders of all were the

There are about 2000 mosques in Britain today and more than twice as many Muslims as Methodists. Philip Bobbitt reminded us recently, ‘We must accept that the global centre of Islamic terror is in Europe, not in Pakistan or Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia. The most important cell for 9/11 wasn’t in Jeddah, it was in Hamburg’

Muslims and that their operations were brought to an end by the British navy is rarely mentioned — British colonial rule replaced the Muslim slave trade in Africa. Heathen Africans counted as less than human for the Muslims. Muslims are bad minorities in any country, continuing their violence against Hindus in India and Buddhists in Thailand.

We are however constantly being told that the Muslim civilisation of the Middle Ages was a superior thing — an influence so benign that it actually helped Christian thought to prosper. The Islamists claim the medieval philosopher Averroes as one of the bright lights of Islamic history, and indeed he was — a man who understood Aristotle and rescued him for modernity. But Islam persecuted Averroes for his

thought, his writing, his deeds; so it is ironic that the successors of his persecutors now claim him as their pride and joy. Maimonides was a Jewish contemporary of Averroes and as great a man, a philosopher and doctor. He was given the choice of death or exile by the Islamic rulers of Spain — those Muslim conquerors of Spain who, pro-Islamist writers like to say, were so extraordinarily tolerant!

As Moore says in his review of Karsh's book, 'Islam provided Muslim leaders not only with a justification for violence, but also with a permanent excuse. They can always blame things on the infidels. Arab nations have again and again avoided helping the Palestinians or coming to terms with Israel, because the settlement of that issue would turn the focus on their own failings. Hamas explicitly rejects a Palestinian state, preferring the pan-Arab state that can never be.'

In his book *What Went Wrong? The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* Bernard Lewis sums up the impediments to peaceful co-existence: Muslim states never developed industrially, so they have for three hundred years pathologically envied the West. They have no science; no democracy; no women's rights and, apart from oil, no exports. So they do not enjoy the ameliorative and co-operative effects of lively free trade. Lewis also cites what he calls 'the blame game' — blaming the West for all the ills of contemporary Muslim states: 'For the governments, at once oppressive and ineffectual, that rule much of the Middle East, this game serves a useful, indeed an essential purpose — to explain the poverty they have failed to alleviate and to justify the tyranny they have intensified'. Lewis concludes: 'If the peoples of the Middle East continue on their present path, the suicide bomber may become a metaphor for the whole region and there will be no escape from the downward spiral of hate and spite, rage and self-pity, poverty and oppression'. The Bishop of London looks out over the same scene and remarks: 'Islam's sense of its own superiority is in terrible full-frontal collision with the evident inferiority of Muslim societies, technically, politically, economically and militarily'.

The standoff between Islam and the West has been intensified by President Ahmadinejad of Iran. This man is not an ordinarily ambitious politician. He is a sincere religious fanatic who believes that it is his duty to provoke a conflict with the enemies of Islam — us — so that the supernatural figure the Hidden Twelfth Imam will return to earth as the Mahdi for a final decisive showdown with the forces of evil. Nothing short of Armageddon. When Ahmadinejad addressed the United Nations last September, these were his closing words, 'O mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last repository, the Promised

One, that perfect and pure human being, the one that will fill this world with justice and peace'.

Niall Ferguson, writing recently, asks us: 'Are we doomed to grasp the consequences of all this only when the mushroom clouds are rising over Tel Aviv and Teheran?' I wonder if even that would be enough to rouse the West from its torpor. I was in Oxford at a church conference on 9/11. Twenty or thirty clergy were all gathered in the common room and watched the atrocity unfolding on the big screen. Over in a corner one priest was orchestrating pacifism. Another said in my ear, 'I hope Bush doesn't retaliate.' I said, 'I hope and pray he does!' I returned to London.

Your head is full of terrible thoughts and apprehensions at such a time. And I recall the banner headline in *The Daily Telegraph*: AMERICA AT WAR and thought there might be just one consolation for the appalling events in New York. I almost said aloud to myself: 'Well, at least that's the end of political correctness.' I thought at last spades would be called spades and there would be an awakening to reality.

And for a few days it seemed like it. People were strangely quiet in the City as they went about their business. There were no airliners over London. There were more people at the weekday Masses and more coming into church to pray by themselves. I put on a Requiem in St Sepulchre's and more than two hundred turned up: City workers, silent, awe-struck — not a mobile phone went off in the whole hour. I made no concession to sentimentality and gush, but made the service out of the Latin rite and The Book of Common Prayer. When they left the church many were in tears. A week later and all this had worn off. The atmosphere reverted to its usual unconcern and studied triviality.

Irshad Manji, Fellow of Yale and author of *The Trouble with Islam Today*, writes, 'The weapons of mass destruction have been found. They are people with unshakeable faith in the coming showdown between good and evil. Left in their hands, the world is heading for the clash of Armageddon.' At the time of the Siege of Malta and the Battle of Lepanto, the West was not blind to the Muslim threat. Clear-sighted people have always acknowledged it. In *Church and State*, published in 1830, Samuel Coleridge was quite explicit. Reading it again in 2006, the mind is startled by what might seem to be an example of extraordinary prescience:

That erection of a temporal monarch under the pretence of a spiritual authority, which was not possible in Christendom but by the extinction or entrancement of the spirit of Christianity, and which has therefore been only partially attained by the Papacy — this was effected in full by Mahomet, to the establishment of the most extensive and complete

despotism that ever warred against civilisation and the interests of humanity.

It is a barbarous despotism in which honour is more important than truth. The father of a Muslim household will kill the daughter he loves rather than lose honour through her fornication. Many women and girls have been killed for trivial offences such as speaking to an unrelated man. Truth-telling is not an obligation for Muslims in their dealings with non-Muslims. For example, Hamid Ali, head of the Al-Madina Masjid mosque in Beeston, Leeds, publicly condemned the London bombing of 7th July 2005. But later, speaking to a Bangladeshi reporter, he said that the bombings were 'a good act' and praised the bombers as 'children' of the militant cleric Abdullah-al-Faisal who had already taught young Muslims to believe, 'The only way forward is for you, the Muslims, to kill the kufirs' (that is the non-believers).

Certainly non-Muslims are regularly cursed in public as part of the Islamic prayer sequence, especially in the night prayers prescribed to be said during Ramadan:

O Allah, destroy the kuffar who are trying to prevent people following your path, who deny your messengers and who do not believe in your Day of Judgement. Make them disunited, fill their hearts with terror and send your wrath and punishment against them, O God of truth.

The grand mosque in Yemen has issued this prayer:

O God, destroy the Jews and their supporters and followers. O God, destroy the ground under their feet; instil fear in their hearts and freeze the blood in their veins.

1600 years ago the Roman Emperor summoned the philosopher Sidonius and told him that he was going to shut the gates of Rome against the enemy. Sidonius replied, 'But it's too late, Sir. The enemy is within'. There are about 2000 mosques in Britain today and more than twice as many Muslims as Methodists. Philip Bobbitt reminded us recently, 'We must accept that the global centre of Islamic terror is in Europe, not in Pakistan or Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia. The most important cell for 9/11 wasn't in Jeddah, it was in Hamburg. And I think this will only increase.'

'Al Qua'eda is not', says Bobbitt 'the mature threat that I worry about. It may sound absurd to say this, but I think these are our salad days'. Melanie Philipps makes the same points in her new book, *Londonistan*. Speaking recently at the Royal United Services Institute in London, the senior military strategist Admiral Chris Parry said:

Western civilisation faces a threat on a par with the barbarian invasions that destroyed the Roman Empire. At some time in the next ten years it may not be safe to sail a yacht between Gibraltar and Malta

as pirates attack holidaymakers from fast boats. Globalisation makes assimilation seem redundant and old fashioned. There will be instead a sort of reverse colonisation where groups of people are self-contained, going back and forth between their countries exploiting sophisticated networks and using instant communication on phones and the Internet. Large groups that become established in Britain and Europe after mass migration may develop communities of interest — unstable, anti-western regions. There are already more than seventy diasporas in Britain.

In his book *Islam: The Challenge to the Church*, Patrick Sookhdeo, a Christian convert from Islam, indicates important aspects of Muslim faith and practice and the threat which militant Islam poses to western civilisation — or indeed to any civilisation. He begins by quoting the Iranian liberal Muslim writer Amir Taheri:

'God is hardly mentioned in sermons. The UK's 2000 or so mosques are basically a cover for a political movement masquerading as a religion.' Muslim expansionism and imperialism is becoming very successful: 'There are sections of the church which have disappeared completely in the face of the challenge of Islam — for example, North Africa which was once a major centre of Christianity.

Nor is this expansionism confined to a spiritualising mission:

Al-jihad (holy fighting) in Allah's cause with the full force of numbers and weaponry is given the utmost importance and is one of the pillars on which Islam stands. The only sure way to go straight to paradise is to die as a martyr in jihad. And loyalty to the Umma, the global Muslim community, overrides loyalty to any nation state.

This loyalty is hugely strengthened by the severity of the punishment for denying it: 'Leaving Islam is seen as treachery against Allah and against society and therefore the penalty is death'. Sookhdeo adds: 'The more radical sections of Islam are in turn joining forces with traditionally atheistic movements such as the hard Left who share their anti-globalism, anti-capitalist sentiments and their deep-seated animosity towards western liberal democracies. A third ally for the Islamism-Extreme Left partnership is found in liberal Christianity'.

Peter Mullen is Rector of St Michael's Church Cornhill (City of London). This article is part of a lecture given at the St Sepulchre's Festival last June. Read the rest on our website, www.salisburyreview.co.uk

Nuclear Power: Safe and Essential for Britain, Dangerous under Socialism and Islam

Christie Davies

2006 is a curious year for nuclear power. It is both the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster and the year in which Tony Blair boldly decided to renew and replace Britain's nuclear power stations. Chernobyl was the beginning of the end for Gorbachev — he was *forced* to put into practice his proclaimed commitment to open government, something fatal for the Soviet system. Blair has also chosen to be open, indeed bold and statesmanlike, for the first time in his dubious career of spin, smear and secrecy. At one blow he has restored his reputation and made it possible for him to defeat the odious Brown, the pinko-greeno schlemielion-chameleon Cameron and that elderly Chinese gentleman from Scotland. It has been a truly nuclear success for Blair. When I read the news I decided for an entire twelve and a half minutes to become a Blair supporter.

Chernobyl was not about the failure of nuclear power but about the failure of socialism. I do not know exactly how many people will die prematurely in the Ukraine from the effects of Chernobyl, or suffer painful and debilitating illnesses, but it will be far less than that floated at the time by scare-mongering Greens and will be a tiny fraction of those murdered by socialism in that unhappy country — the millions who died in the deliberately engineered famines, in the crushing of the kulaks or the deportations during the war. The deaths after Chernobyl were fewer but they had the same cause — socialism. Socialism is a system in which by definition there is a total disregard for the individual human being. The 'necessary murders' praised by socialists are but one part of this disregard. There is also the grotesque carelessness and neglect that pervades any socialist economy and society. There can be no regard for the health and safety of any group of workers because there is only one employer, the state, and no independent critical bourgeois press to report and expose accidents, pollution or indeed anything else that might dent the ruling Party's image. There had been a previous socialist nuclear disaster in Kyshtym in the Urals in 1957 when a chemical explosion scattered nuclear waste over a wide area. When the West realised

there had been a release of radioactive material, Green Luddites led a campaign in Britain against our own nuclear industry. They claimed that a nuclear power station had exploded like an atomic bomb, which was, of course, not possible. The explosion was not nuclear but chemical, something that happened regularly in Soviet industry when someone smoked in the wrong place, became drunk, or decided to speed up production and meet an unrealistic plan target to avoid arrest and a labour camp. Over-fulfilling the plan meant cutting corners, not having or not enforcing health and safety rules. Socialism meant putting unqualified and often stupid people in positions of authority and responsibility through affirmative action on behalf of those with impeccable proletarian origins and because of their corpse-like adherence to the Party line. Disasters under socialism are not just a product of individual incompetence but an inevitable outcome of the contradictions inherent in any socialist system.

Sometimes socialism led directly to unsafe nuclear power plants. Those in East Germany were too weak to withstand an accident in which a commercial airliner crashed into the roof. The Swedes would have received the radioactivity released by such a crash, and offered to pay for improved casings to render the East German socialist nuclear power plants safe. That they were not safe in the first place was not because nuclear plants are inherently unsafe but because socialist planning means fulfilling a plan target, such as electricity production, to the neglect of everything else. It was a general aspect of life in Eastern Europe as in southern Poland and the Czech Lands where the burning of particularly dirty coal contaminated. No such thing as a Clean Air Act under socialism. The 'Plan' was based on using coal and was so rigid that the economic planners couldn't change it. In Prague there was even a pollution cycle; as the factories threw up more spicules of dirt and sulphur and nitrogen dioxides, so the children fell ill with respiratory disorders. Their mothers then stayed at home to look after them, rather than see them die in some socialist crèche, so that factory production fell. The pollution now lessened, the children recovered,

the mothers returned to work and the factories pumped out more filth and once more from the top.

In the end even life expectancy dropped in the Soviet Union, particularly among men. The main cause was high alcohol consumption induced by dangerous and alienating working conditions, and secondly by pollution and accidents.

This was the society that produced Chernobyl and then tried to hush it up in the usual way. Everybody understood and the popular response to Chernobyl in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia was a new burst of anti-Soviet jokes:

What were the first two announcements concerning radioactivity?

The first: There is no radioactivity.

The second: The radioactivity during the second week has subsided considerably. It is only half that of last week.

What is the next case in the World Court? Poland is suing Sweden for telling them about Chernobyl too late.

How was the May Day Parade in Kiev organised?

In rows. In the first row were the party activists, in the second were the Komsomol activists, in the third were the trade union activists and finally all the radioactivists.

By contrast there has never been a serious nuclear accident in a Western capitalist country. There have been minor errors and scares but these have been utterly trivial compared with the many deaths in the coal and even the oil industry. Those who work in the nuclear industry are healthier and live longer than average because they have more regular health checks. Levels of radioactivity are higher in the vicinity of a coal fired power station (because of naturally occurring radioactive particles in the coal) than outside a nuclear plant. I live close to the Atomic Weapons Research centre in Aldermaston and would be quite happy if they were to build a new atomic power plant next to the Thames in Reading. Every so often Greens produce scare stories about local cancer 'clusters' based on their failure to understand the nature of random distribution and they are reported in the Reading press.

Blair is right to scorn the Green Luddites who wanted to stop and delay the replacement of our existing nuclear power plants, in contrast to Sweden or Germany where they are in the process of being closed down. It is not a matter to be decided by populist hysteria — by German Green storm troopers chaining themselves to railway tracks to stop the transport of nuclear materials or even as in Sweden by referendum. Blair ought to allow policies on immigration, crime

and the European Union to be decided by referendum because the issues are straight forward and easily decided by public sentiment. Nuclear power is a technical issue and Blair has demonstrated true leadership by making the decision himself.

Indeed, he should have gone further and greatly expanded the nuclear industry to the point where most of our electricity comes from nuclear as it does in France or Japan and soon will do in Finland. It is better to live as they do with a safe and secure supply than to ruin the landscape with rows of windmills on the skyline as has happened in Jutland, Hannover and Galiza. Anyone who loves the countryside must hate the new windmills and the wretched Greens who put them there. When near Avila on my way to Extramadura, I saw the ruined sky-line and cried out, 'Where are you Don Quixote now that we need you?' I did not go to La Mancha but no doubt they are ruining that too.

Sooner or later there will be a horrendous nuclear accident — not in Britain but in one of those Islamic countries where the people are in the grip of an ideology as mad as Communism. They will go nuclear regardless of whether Britain builds more nuclear power stations or not. If the new Islamic nuclear power plants are built, maintained and run according to the high standards that prevail in Britain, France, Japan and the United States, then there will be no problem. However, that will only happen if they agree to the imperial oversight of their plants by the advanced capitalist nations. If they go it alone, as Iran is doing, there may well be an accident and a release of radioactivity. Even if Iran is not building nuclear weapons, its political system is incapable of over-seeing the peaceful production of nuclear power or the careful disposal and reprocessing of radioactive waste. The Iranians will build nuclear plants irrespective of whether Britain expands its nuclear capacity or not. Was anyone stupid enough to think that the Iranians would follow the example of the Green-blackmailed Germans or the cowardly Swedes?

Nuclear power may well be unsafe in Iran as it was in the Soviet Union but in Britain it is safe because there is no irrational ideology that will over-ride safety. It is also the only way in which Britain can be independent of gas and oil supplies from those unreliable countries which have had or are about to have unsafe nuclear plants.

Christie Davies is the co-author of The Corporation under Siege, SAU, 1998, a study of safety and environmental issues.

Imperial Russia, or Imperial America?

Owen Matthews

Does the United States wish to start a new Cold War with Russia? Recent comments by America's leaders have been the most confrontational rhetorical challenge to the Kremlin in two decades. In May, Vice President Dick Cheney opened the attack on Moscow's policies in a series of speeches in the ex-Soviet republics Lithuania and Kazakhstan. Cheney accused the Kremlin of 'unfairly and improperly' restricting the rights of Russian citizens, and of using oil and gas as 'tools of intimidation [and] blackmail' against Russia's neighbours. He also blasted Moscow for attempting to 'monopolize the transportation' of oil and gas supplies from the Caspian. Cheney's boss, George W Bush, pressed the point home in June. Speaking in Budapest half a century after the Hungarians learned the price of defying the power of Moscow:

'The sacrifice of the Hungarian people inspires all who love liberty,' said Bush as he laid flowers at a memorial to the victims of 1956. 'We resolve that when people stand up for their freedom, America will stand with them.'

There wasn't much doubt that among the 'freedom-loving' people Bush had in mind were the countries of the former Soviet Union struggling to break free of Moscow's influence.

Why has Russia attracted such a deluge of criticism from a US administration with which the Kremlin formerly enjoyed perfectly cordial relations? When they first met in 2000, Bush claimed to have 'looked into [Putin's] soul' and seen a man whom he could trust. Has Russia really changed so very much in the intervening five years — or is it, rather, America which has changed? It seems that the rhetorical attack has more to do with the fact that the tide of US influence in the former Soviet Union has reached a high water mark, and is now ebbing. It is not Putin's imperial ambitions that are being realized — rather, US ones which are being thwarted. Putin's sin is not that he is qualitatively a more repressive monster than Yeltsin (though certainly the state Putin has created is more tightly in control than Yeltsin's chaotic Kremlin) — it is that he has realized that by delivering effective

government, political stability and economic prosperity he can secure power to himself and his ideological successors, like any good politician. In the process he has squandered an opportunity to make Russia a truly democratic state, which is a crying shame. But the US's complaint is really, fundamentally, not that Putin is not a democrat but that he — and Russia — have grown strong enough to challenge America's strategic plans. By the new US theory outlined by Cheney, a newly assertive, Imperialist Russia is throwing its weight around in its near abroad as never before. Moscow is undermining fledgling democratic regimes in the region and doing all it can to support nasty dictators in Belarus and Uzbekistan, plus not so nasty but grossly corrupt ones in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Enter the Bush White House, champion of democracy, who calls Putin on his bad behaviour and tells him to back off, and at the same time asserting the moral right of the US as leader of all poor huddled masses yearning to be free (plus to buy their oil and gas direct, cutting out Russia).

Are we so sure that Russia is really more imperialist now than, say, a decade ago, under the pro-US Yeltsin? There's no doubt that Putin is guilty of wreaking low-level economic war against Georgia and Ukraine in revenge for their Coloured revolutions and interest in engaging with a dialogue with NATO. In the spring, for instance, Russian health inspectors condemned Georgian wine as unsanitary and banned imports. Georgian mineral water was also banned shortly thereafter, and fruits and vegetables quickly followed suit. The impact on Georgia's economy will be drastic — over 9% of their trade balance has just been wiped out. And Moscow has been similarly brutal with Ukraine. On New Year's Day this year, Putin personally authorized Gazprom to cut off gas supplies to Kiev after a nine-month long dispute over prices. Moscow's argument that Ukraine's demands for continued subsidies were incompatible with their stated desire for independence from Russian influence was reasonable enough, but the abrupt cut-off would never have happened to a Russian ally. If we are to condemn Putin as a bully, consider Yeltsin. Putin has blockaded

Georgian produce — but under Yeltsin, Moscow was actively encouraging the violent disintegration of the Georgian state itself. Russian troops were actually fighting alongside separatist Abkhazian and Ossetian rebels. Yeltsin, motivated by a somewhat confused divide-and-rule principle, also backed Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, ethnic Russians in Trans-Dniestr and anti-government rebels in Tadjikistan who were all waging destabilizing wars against fledgling post-Soviet republics. Putin has been rightly condemned for backing the thuggish and vote-rigging ex-convict Viktor Yanukovich in his bid for the Ukrainian presidency in 2004, but remember that Yeltsin backed the scarcely less unsavoury Leonid Kuchma, who had journalists murdered, rigged elections and tried his best to monopolize media coverage.

We imagine Putin to be more chauvinistic because of his boastful rhetoric, his talk of national renaissance and his ruthless imposition of state authority inside Russia. If anything, Yeltsin was much more imperialist in his actions and instincts than Putin, and his methods were much nastier. The difference is that Yeltsin lost just about every Imperial battle he tried to fight; Putin, by contrast, is starting to win them. Some battles, like Yeltsin's attempts to keep control over Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, he lost on his own watch when they sold their oil and gas to BP, to Chevron and Exxon-Mobil. Others were lost under Putin — Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan turned Rose, Orange and Tulip. BP built a pipeline from the Caspian bypassing Russia.

Perhaps what we are seeing is not growing Russian Imperialism, but something else: For a decade and a half, US strategy has enjoyed extraordinary success in encroaching on Russia's historic sphere of influence, reorientating Russia's near abroad to the West politically and economically. That process has now hit the buffers. Inside Russia, pro-Western liberals are down and out, and NGOs of the sort which promoted pro-Western change in Ukraine and Georgia have been silenced by Putin in a draconian new law. And in the near abroad, Putin has done everything he can to stop the spread of Orange revolutions by methods which, compared to Yeltsin's, are quite mild. Seen from the West, the Coloured revolutions which swept the former Soviet Union over the last two years seem to have been, on balance, beneficial, but can one really blame Putin for feeling threatened by them? As Republican ideologue Pat Buchanan wrote earlier this year, 'we Americans consider the Monroe Doctrine — no foreign power is to come into our hemisphere — to be holy writ. Why, then, can we not understand why Russia might react angrily to our interference in her politics or the politics of former Russian republics?'

What seems to upset the current US Administration

most is that a newly powerful Russia is successfully scotching the march of US influence in Moscow's backyard. But is it really wise to insist that such a march continues? When a group of US senators, led by John McCain, suggested that Bush boycott the G8 summit in St Petersburg in July, Buchanan blasted their foolishness.

'What does McCain think we would accomplish — other than a new parading of our moral superiority — by so public an insult to Putin and Russia as a Bush boycott?' wrote Buchanan. 'Do we not have enough trouble in this world, do we not have enough people hating us and Bush that we have to get into Putin's face and antagonize the largest nation on earth and a co-equal nuclear power? What is the purpose of this confrontation diplomacy? What does it accomplish?'

It is not a bad question. Even when the US was listened to in the Kremlin back in the mid 1990s — and Washington essentially controlled Russia's purse-strings through a cat's cradle of International Monetary Fund loans — it was unable to stop Yeltsin from sponsoring divisive wars in Russia's near abroad. The US also conspicuously failed to convince its close ally, Yeltsin, to desist from a war which killed tens of thousands in Chechnya. However wayward Yeltsin's behaviour, he nevertheless remained firmly in the West's good books because of his anti-Communism, his stated commitment to democracy, and his impotence to thwart any of the US's really vital interests.

Early in Putin's career, before he decided to stand up to Orange revolutions, the Bush administration was similarly indulgent. Washington was silent on Putin's quiet shutdown of non-State media, and its complaints over the imprisonment of dissident oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky in 2004 were muted. Now, as Putin's illiberalism becomes the target of the White House's indignation, it would be as well to remember that it was Yeltsin who showed Putin that the key to control of Russia's politics was control of the media. It was Yeltsin who pioneered fake, loyal parties of power and handed control over vast sectors of the economy to his cronies. From the US, back then, there was not a peep — only praise and IMF loans. Even when Russia opposed the Kosovo campaign and passed spy intelligence to the Serbs, there was no talk of 'a new Cold War'.

The irony is, of course, that Dick Cheney's analysis is quite right: Under Putin, Russia *has* become less free. The Kremlin *is* using its new-found oil wealth to bully its neighbours. But the reason that the Administration has suddenly chosen to wax indignant about behaviour it turned a blind eye to under the Yeltsin regime is that Russia has finally started to thwart America's strategic goals. That includes standing in the way

of Washington's campaign to gather consensus for military action against Iran, and obstructing America's attempts to win over parts of the old Russian empire to the Western camp. Maybe, in investigating the roots of

this new freeze in attitudes to Russia, we should look to Washington as much as to Moscow.

Owen Matthews is Moscow Bureau Chief of Newsweek

Belarus – Moscow's Main Puppet Theatre?

Boris Volodarsky

Was the autocratic president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenka, offended when Condoleezza Rice christened him 'Europe's last dictator'? Not at all. In fact he was quite happy, because he saw some advantages in this label.

When you are called a dictator you can allow yourself to behave like one and Lukashenka has certainly been a true dictator for the past twelve years. He effectively controls the executive branch and the legislative structure, called Parliament, he is the supreme commander of the armed forces, and he regularly reshuffles the KGB (still so called), the Security Council and the Internal and Foreign Affairs Ministries. He also tries to ensure the stability of his personal power with the help of a small army known as the Presidential Guard, which has almost unlimited powers, a special secret budget, no judicial or legislative oversight and reports to him personally. Following Stalin and Hitler, whom he openly quotes, Lukashenka calls for 'order and discipline' and wants to govern as long as his life span permits, and even then he would prefer to see one of his sons as his successor. Today such a prospect is quite possible.

Knowing how highly the US Secretary of State rates him, this former collective farmer quickly realised that his real role is not understood in the West and that his Achilles heel is well concealed under the military uniform and open demonstrations of absolute power. During recent months alone, such demonstrations have included the arrest and imprisonment of the former ambassador of Poland in Minsk, the arrest and beating of presidential candidate Alexander Kozulin, the arrests and severe beatings of about 500 demonstrators in the capital with the reported death of at least one of them, not to mention numerous violations of the human and political rights of his citizens. Nevertheless, Lukashenka remains the country's most popular leader and the opposition has little chance in this land of forests and marshes.

What is his most secret secret? The answer is simple — Moscow. Ethnic Belorussians, who speak an East Slavonic language closely related to Russian, make up more than three-quarters of the population of the country. Ethnic Russians are the largest minority group. Belarus is generally poor in mineral resources, apart from some sizable deposits of potassium salts, and is heavily dependent on imports. More than half the country's income is provided by industry, much of which processes imported raw materials. The Belarusian heavy-industrial sector is small and is wholly dependent on exports and imports. Other industries produce consumer goods like television sets, radios, watches, bicycles and computers that have no international market value. Electricity is generated using oil and natural gas supplied by pipeline from Russia. The whole economy is still largely state controlled and has been in steady decline since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Only limited, small-scale privatization has occurred.

Belarus is Russia's closest intelligence ally. The SVR (Russian foreign intelligence) Academy trains Belarusian foreign intelligence operatives; the SVR is believed to have actively used Belarusian diplomatic facilities abroad as a cover for its agents. President Lukashenka is regularly briefed by Russia's security chiefs. The Belarusian KGB co-ordinates its operations in the West with the SVR and Russian military intelligence. Some time ago Eduard Batko, a naturalized US citizen from Belarus, and Mikhail Press, a Russian national in the United States on a temporary visa, were charged with attempting to purchase and smuggle abroad sensitive US-made avionics. While the *razvedka* (intelligence service) of the Belarusian KGB works for Russia in Poland and Czechoslovakia (whose counterintelligence services even had to create special 'Belarus Departments' within their organizations), according to the available information Russian and Belarusian intelligence agencies since the second half

of 1999 have been combining their efforts to penetrate the British and American military-industrial complex. Local émigré communities in London, Vienna, Berlin, New York and other major cities are thoroughly penetrated, thus providing a wide base for intelligence gathering.

While Austria does not even have an embassy in Minsk and the US Embassy in Belarus currently consists of only six diplomats under Ambassador George A Krol, plus a defence attaché and two community liaison officers, the Belarusian embassy in Vienna, still an espionage capital, includes twelve accredited diplomats plus the technical staff. As there are no diplomatic or economic relations to service, they must be busy with their more traditional tradecraft, helping their Russian colleagues, who, according to official reports, are overextended.

Rumours coming from Belarus assess Lukashenka's personal wealth at two billion dollars; he is not planning to retire until it reaches twenty billion. Whatever the

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real figure is — and President George Bush recently filed a special report to US Congress detailing the personal fortune and income of the Belarusian president — it has not come from gambling or some magic box. Such money can only result from the illegal oil, gas and arms trade, which does not originate on Belarusian soil. Moscow needs Belarus for its shady business deals as much as Belarus depends on Moscow, politically and economically.

However, the Belarusian president is not an equal partner with the Kremlin for it has never been in the Russian tradition to have equals when it comes to friendship. Since the Stalin era, Big Brother has always strived to dictate and govern, and this is what is happening in Belarus now. Should Lukashenka, encouraged by his third presidential victory, forget this, Russian Gazprom is always ready to sober him up. What happens within Belarus itself we know firsthand. The pyramid is based on thousands of informers, who give field reports to their controllers from the KGB and the Ministry of the Interior. Both services send daily summaries to the president. In turn, the KGB's activities inside the country and abroad are controlled by the Presidential Guard, whose officers

recruit informers from within the special services and diplomatic personnel and often themselves serve as high-ranking officials and diplomats. Naturally, the Belarusian KGB and GRU (military intelligence) report directly to Moscow and Moscow double-checks this information with the help of its own secret agents in Minsk. The president, of course, does his best to limit this information by surrounding himself with trusted lieutenants from the Presidential Guard, sometimes putting them in charge of the KGB, police and Special Forces. When Lukashenka appears to be getting out of control, Moscow applies economic and political pressure.

The opposition, especially its most energetic and democratic wing, Minsk students, is effectively controlled by the Belarusian Youth League (BYL), a modern version of the Komsomol where secret membership is allowed. As trade unions are practically non-existent in the universities, the BYL manages the students' life in its entirety, including their grants, halls of residence, propaganda, obligatory brainwashing and post-graduate careers. Even the best student can get the worst compulsory job appointment if he or she is not active in the organization or shows any hostility to the president or his regime. The same applies in factories and plants. It goes without saying that, as in Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*, to report on everything and everybody is the first duty of the BYL's members. Other opposition groups are also directly penetrated by the KGB; this occurs in neighbouring countries like Poland, Lithuania and the Czech Republic as well as in other countries with a considerable Belarusian community. I know from my own experience how well it works.

Is there any chance to end Lukashenka's dictatorship in a democratic way? The alternatives are few. It is clear that no dictator — Saddam, Castro or Lukashenka — would allow any simulacrum of democracy that could threaten his power. With Belarus it is especially difficult, because it is not only the president who is pulling the strings, but Moscow too. So if the European Union and the USA want to help the Belarusians to make real moves towards democracy in the land of forests and marshes and finally rid themselves of 'Europe's last dictator', they should start from Red Square rather than from Minsk's enormous October Square.

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Bonfire of the Darwinists

Tom Wolfe on evolution and the mind.

Myles Harris

Tom Wolfe gave this year's Jefferson Lecture in the United States. The lecture, the equivalent of the British Reith Lectures, is described as 'The highest honour the federal government bestows for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities'.

Wolfe has always been my great favourite because of his hilariously politically incorrect work *Bonfire of the Vanities* which he preceded by the satire *Radical Chic — Mau Mauing the Flack Catchers*. Both works examine the corrupting guilt that upper class whites feel in the presence of blacks and how the latter sense this guilt and exploit it. He is also responsible for the phrase 'social X-rays', a description of the ultra thin women socialites of New York with bodies and faces ravaged by years of dieting.

I read *Radical Chic* when I was living among the Stone Age peoples of New Guinea. I had come across an example of the guilt Wolfe described among some of my visitors. I called it the 'cultural cringe', an automatic half-stooping spasm, coupled with a strange facial rictus, that convulsed people of a liberal or left wing mindset when confronted with anybody considered 'authentic' or 'native'. The locals were certainly authentic. Some of them were practising cannibals who occasionally refreshed their larders with their fellow men. Not that the desire to eat your fellow man is always wicked. You only have to find yourself surviving a plane crash in the Andes to realise that. Meat was often in short supply in the New Guinea rain forest before colonial times, so the practice, hedged around with rituals, became part of the culture. Such stark facts of survival are something western liberals cannot bring themselves to think about. To watch a middle class American aid worker contemplate the fact that the person he was talking to may have actually dined on human flesh — 'long pig' — the previous night, while still keeping up his liberal reflexes, was a sight to behold.

I was to see many examples of the cultural cringe over the next few years both in the Third World and at home in Britain. Cringe is not necessarily a colour thing, although for liberals anybody black by definition is more 'authentic' than anybody white, it is simple atavism, *nostalgie de la boue*. If you live in the near unbearable discomfort of the rain forest where food is

short and you can expect to live only for forty years, then somebody in America living in a centrally heated house with a fridge the size of a garage and a life expectancy of eighty years will idealise you. For the drifting tumble weed that makes up western intellectual society the rainforest, even if it is alive with malarial bearing mosquitoes, is roots. Roots, to the terrifyingly thin 'social X-ray' hostesses of Wolfe's upper West Side, were priceless truffles. In 1977 a book *Roots*, about the search by an African American for his African ancestors, was the toast of the town. Later it turned out to be an enormous historical hoax.

I sat in the primeval forest and read *Radical Chic — Mau Mauing the Flack Catchers* chortling with laughter, echoed by the parrots in the high canopy above me. In it the murderous Black Panthers are feted by Leonard Bernstein at his fashionable Park Avenue apartment. To have black men who promised the violent overthrow of the white classes at your cocktail party was a pinnacle of fashion, a new route up the North Face of the Social Eiger. Why would anybody want to entertain those who wanted to destroy them? Because the further a society becomes separated from its roots the more it seeks 'authenticity'. That anybody confuses 'authenticity' with race is of course in itself racism.

In his Jefferson lecture Wolfe returns to the theme that modern man desires above all to return to his primitive roots, but it is his brilliance that he approaches it from an entirely different direction. Modern western thought, says Wolfe, has for the last five generations depended on Darwin's Theory of Evolution. The theory, published in 1859, was popularised by Emile Zola in his book *La Bête Humaine*. In this novel about pathological murderers, including one who kills women after making love to them, Zola, writes Wolfe, 'broke the stunning news that *Homo sapiens* was not created by God in his own image but was precisely that — a beast, not different in any way from snakes with fangs or orang-utans...or kangaroos...or the fang proof mongoose.' But says Wolfe, what Zola and Darwin had not realised was that by 1888, the date of the publication of *La Bête Humaine*, evolution was irrelevant. It had come to an end when the human beast developed speech. And it is speech over everything else which places man in charge of the earth. It is why,

Wolfe says, he should be called not *Homo sapiens*, but *Homo loquax*. Man the speaker. Wolfe is not sure when speech began, but thinks it coincided with the development of agriculture about 11,000 years ago. 'Speech not only ended the evolution of man' writes Wolfe, 'It ended the evolution of animals. Animals only exist at our sufferance.' This is certainly true. When I reach out and write a prescription for antibiotics to kill microbes that might kill my patient I stop evolution. When a cowherd shepherds his cows into a barn off the winter fields of Michigan, he stops evolution. When the computers at a biology lab print out gene sequences, they are derailing a process that began with the birth of the stars.

Wolfe says the first thing man did when he was able to speak was to invent religion. 'It was religion, more than any other weapon in *Homo loquax's* nuclear arsenal, that killed evolution 11,000 years ago.' Man wanted to know who on earth he was, where he was, and why.

Milton in *Paradise Lost* puts it better. Eve, created from Adam's rib, awakes:

That day I oft remember when from sleep
I first awak't and found myself reposed
Under a shade of flowers much wondering where
And what I was and whence thither brought and how

Wolfe believes that the human beast is now 'an artificial selection, 100 per cent man made.' But what is selected, and how? Man, says Wolfe, selects himself on status. I believe what Wolfe means is that humans rank themselves in primate 'troops'. Troops are small collections of primates occupying a particular jungle clearing. Humans organise themselves similarly, not in clearings but by task. We talk of 'troops' of dustmen, cleaners, doctors, soldiers, schoolchildren and so forth. It is among these that status operates with greatest force.

Human groups, Wolfe thinks, obey Weber's idea of 'status honour'. You can see status honour most clearly among elite groups of the military, among competing surgical teams at a hospital, among girls on a playground, among baseball or football teams. Status honour depends on a value that Wolfe calls a 'Fiction — absolute'. Each individual adopts a set of values that if truly absolute in the world — so ordained by some almighty force — would make not that individual but his group the best of all possible groups.

Wolfe tells how in his book *The Right Stuff* about US fighter pilots he found, not a story of how fighter pilots eventually became spacemen, but the discovery that in the military there existed an inner group of elite pilots, obeying a set of status rules about courage, fear and death that had nothing to do with ordinary military discipline. Their reward, for spending a lifetime flying

planes which can easily kill you, was not promotion, but 'status honour'. To be the best and the bravest — *among themselves*. This is true of surgeons and doctors who compete with each other on a status ladder that nobody openly acknowledges. We are more occupied with our status among ourselves than with anybody outside.

Darwinists will shrug at this point and say status is a matter of brain structure, evolved over the millennia. Wolfe however points to the work of the Spanish physician Jose Delgado who could stop a bull maddened by picadors as it charged at him. He did so by pulling a switch on a small pocket transmitter linked by radio to a neural pathway in the bull's brain. This external (socially determined) signal caused the bull to stop and trot quietly away. Wolfe believes there is a centre in the brain that collates all external stimuli and the most important of these are not artificial electric shocks, but words. He asks whether 'The human mind is in fact not the possession of the individual but more a town square into which anyone can come... and what the human beast thinks is his mind is in fact' ... (Delgado's words) ... 'a transitory combination of elements borrowed from the environment.'

Wolfe's attack is mainly aimed at Neo Darwinism — an intellectual cult very much in fashion among the left today, and one practiced in the Nazi stud farms of the thirties. Not only, say the Neo Darwinists, have our bodies blindly evolved, but so have our minds and our morals. We love, feel a sense of injustice, worship God, know right and wrong, not because such things exist, but because by keeping the social order they help preserve the human race. To the Neo Darwinist successful coitus with impregnation, not love of God or your neighbour, is the wellspring of human morality. It is why, Wolfe says, that Neo Darwinists 'have always characterised human behaviour as but an evolutionary echo of non-human beasts'. The external world impinges on the brain, but it is the brain that evolves and determines action. It is all in the genes. Chickens have their pecking order, lions their prides. The weak have evolved to submit to the strong. And so with humans. The world was once divided into warriors and slaves, warriors fought among themselves for women, winners helped themselves to the best women, and so generation after generation they got stronger and more dominant.

Wolfe says this is fundamentally misconceived and falls in the face of the astonishing power of religion, which is nothing more than words. (Words even more powerful than the electrical shock to Dr Delgado's bull's brain, and unlike the shock with no physical reality.) 'Extraordinary individuals have been able to change history with their words alone, without the

assistance of followers, money or politicians. Their names are Jesus, John Calvin, Mohammed, Marx, Freud — and Darwin.' Richard Dawkins has tried to get around this by suggesting such ideas are 'memes', the cultural equivalent of genes. But Wolfe says. 'Genes exist. Memes don't.' Wolfe's views will be loathed by Darwinists who forbid any questions about the rightness of evolution. The Victorian clergyman's theory has been elevated to sacred doctrine in western society. It is the lens through which we view all our actions. If Wolfe is right and the Neo Darwinists are wrong, then man is not just a beast pulled here and there by his inherited reflexes, a creature of no moral purpose, but a creation of the word, a view uncomfortably close to that of the first words of the St John Gospel. 'In the beginning was the word.' A sentence Wolfe remarks on in his essay.

The test of this idea is if it can be put into practice. Can the word be made to drive evolution? You do not have to go far to find out. In most towns and cities in the west you will find family planning clinics. They

are created by words: marks on paper, plans, chemical symbols, mathematics, committee decisions, statistical graphs, all the written paraphernalia of modern government and science. The words of *Homo loquax* are bit by bit switching off the natural selection engine of his own species. Family planning clinics do not arise by natural selection. They are creations of man. Man's words come first then the physical world follows. And even if Dawkins calls these words memes, they are conscious memes, we know about them and order them. There is nothing 'natural' about their selection. And if we survive and go on to populate our galaxy, will the thinking, engineered creatures we send into space that step from our spaceships onto other worlds be creations of the word, or products of natural selection? And has this been done before? If so who exactly are we with a strange, enormously complex DNA blueprint locked in each cell of our bodies?

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Proud to be French?

Curtis Cate

Years ago, during a trip to Algeria made in 1958, shortly after the military putsch that brought General de Gaulle back to power, I was invited to attend a *veillée d'armes* — a kind of military 'watch' or vigil, accompanied by gastronomic and other entertainment — in the town of Tipasa, some sixty kilometers west of Algiers. At the dinner-table I found myself seated opposite a lieutenant colonel, who said to me: 'Monsieur, I have no right to influence you in what you are going to write. But I do hope that you will make it clear to your readers that we French are here to stay. Yes, Monsieur, we shall still be here in twenty years' time!' I could not but marvel at this magnificent self-confidence, at this sublime but blinding faith in France's 'civilizing' mission in North Africa. The lieutenant colonel's name was Alain de Boissieu, who had married General de Gaulle's daughter. Little could this confident super-patriot guess that within four years his father-in-law would pull the carpet out from under his boots by abandoning Algeria to its 'liberated' fate. After dinner we were offered, in the form of charades, a theatrical representation of decisive moments of French history, performed by young Algerian 'boy-scouts', specially trained by French instructors to show they could be

transformed, almost overnight, into enthusiastic French citizens. The show began with the recitation of '*Nos ancêtres, les Gaulois*' (our ancestors, the Gauls) — the ritual phrase long used at the beginning of French classroom textbooks — and it continued on with the Roman conquest, the weakling Merovingian kings, Charlemagne, and on through the Renaissance with the flamboyant François Premier and, inevitably, Louis XIV, *le Roi soleil*. I watched the pageant with mounting disbelief, wondering how simple-minded some French officers could be in thinking that they could thus imbue native Algerians with an admiration for a beyond-the-seas history that was in no sense theirs. What naiveté but at the same time what a robust self-confidence in the ups and downs, and above all in the great moments of French history!

Fifty years later hardly a trace of this self-confidence remains — even among the nostalgic super-patriots of the French Empire like the xenophobic rabble-rouser Jean-Marie Le Pen, who would like to have most persons of North or equatorial African origin sent 'home' from where they came, or his fellow European deputy and *souverainiste* (believer in French sovereignty), Philippe de Villiers, who never ceases to denounce the capitulations of successive

Paris governments to the increasingly stringent edicts (covering just about every form of human activity) emanating from the European Commission in Brussels. Theirs are essentially defensive attitudes and policies, even if, during the fateful referendum of last May, they seemed, with the help of the Socialist maverick, Laurent Fabius, to have scored a major victory — one which stripped France’s clumsy president, Jacques Chirac, of the tattered remnants of his waning prestige — ‘clumsy’ because Chirac could so easily have had the so-called ‘Constitution’ project massively approved by the National Assembly and the Senate, and have assured himself an easy victory in his cause. Today, however, the dominant winds of change in France are most of them blowing in a radically different direction, not far removed from national self-abasement. Typical was the uproar provoked last November, during the incendiary suburban riots in which thousands of cars were deliberately torched, when some left-wing demagogue drew the attention of his fellow deputies to the ‘scandalous’ fact that someone six months earlier had succeeded in sneaking a ‘subversive’ amendment into an educational bill in which it was recommended that French history textbooks should also emphasize the ‘positive’ achievements of France’s colonial undertakings overseas. Immediately there was a hue and cry raised by ‘anti-colonialist’ lobbies, like ‘SOS Racisme’ and half a dozen neo-communist or Trotskyist pressure groups, to have the amendment removed. The predictable result was not long in coming. Jacques Chirac — a waffling neo-socialist ‘capitulator’ ever since the July 14th Bastille Day celebrations of 2004, when he blandly declared that the Socialist-invented 35-hour work-week was an *acquits social* (a social reality) normally regarded as anathema by any consistent ‘conservative’ — had the controversial amendment removed and its legality tested by France’s Constitutional Council. Soon the intellectual momentum was unstoppable. A ‘Committee for the Memory of the Slave-trade’ was formed by the Guadeloupean novelist, Maryse Condé, with the active help of the veteran Martiniquais poet and novelist, Edouard Glissant. On January 30, members of the Committee were received at the Elysée Palace by President Jacques Chirac, who treated them to a grandiloquent speech (one of his best performances) in which he declared that ‘the greatness of a country is to assume all of its history. With its glorious pages, but also with its share of shadow. Our history is that of a great nation. Let us look at it with pride. It is thus that a people comes together, that it becomes more united and stronger.’

The French president denounced the slave-trade as a ‘crime against humanity’ — which it undoubtedly

was. He also congratulated France’s First Republic for having, as early as 1794, abolished the slave-trade in all French colonies. However, it had been reestablished in 1802 by the Consulate (by Napoleon), and not formally abolished until 1848, by France’s Second Republic, thanks to the tireless efforts of Victor Schoelcher (the equivalent of William Wilberforce in Britain). The natural, not to say, inevitable result of this inspired oratory was the creation of a new holiday — one destined to be celebrated henceforth on May 10, to mark France’s belated abolition of the slave-trade in 1848.

There is nothing exclusively French about this official recognition of the ‘sins’ of one’s national past. Americans, ever since Theodore Roosevelt, when the first ‘reservations’ were established, have honoured the memory of the Red Indians their white ancestors so often fought and slaughtered in the conviction — most pungently expressed by General George Custer — that ‘the only good Indian is a dead Indian.’ A bloody civil war was fought to put an end to the slavery of America’s black population, and more recently a ‘Martin Luther King Day’ was proclaimed to honour the victims of ‘racist’ discrimination. In Germany, ever since the establishment of the Federal Republic by Konrad Adenauer in 1949, the *Schuldfrage* — the question of whether or not the Germans as a whole should be held responsible for the innumerable crimes committed by Hitler’s Nazis and what form this ‘penance’ should take — continues to arouse lively debate among intellectuals and politicians. Here, as in Austria, it is even a crime, punishable by law, openly to express anti-Semitic sentiments and to doubt the existence of the Nazi death-camps at Auschwitz and elsewhere. In France itself it was none other than Jacques Chirac who, in a famous speech delivered in 1995 at the Vélodrome d’hiver (a bicycle stadium used by French policemen from 1941-1944 to round up French Jews bound for Nazi concentration camps), did something that his predecessor, François Mitterrand, had never agreed to do — by asserting the French State’s responsibility in condoning and even aiding the deportation of tens of thousands of French Jews during the years of the German occupation. The question remains, nevertheless, if the establishment of a ‘Memorial Day for Slavery’ really answers the basic question raised by the ‘positive’ achievements of French colonial rule in Africa, and whether this kind of ‘atonement’ for the sins of the past does not encourage the excesses of ‘victimization’. At least one French historian, Paul Thibaud, has resolutely denounced what he has called the ‘war of the memorials’ — with the Armenians (there are at least 500,000 in France) demanding official recognition of the Anatolian

'massacres' of the First World, French Jews demanding official recognition of the horrors of the Holocaust, and Frenchmen of North African origin demanding due 'reparation' for the colonialist 'oppression' to which their parents and grandparents were once subjected. 'We are worried', Thibaud wrote, 'by the effects of a memorial competition which tends to rip apart the fabric of the French body politic and to pit groups of historical victims against each other.'

In an article entitled 'Self-flagellation, a French malady', Ivan Rioufol, an editorialist, expressed similar reservations in *Le Figaro*. 'That a nation should forthrightly view its history is the most natural of things. Slavery and colonialism should be taught, just as are Saint-Bartholomew's Day, the Vendée genocide of the 1790s, the collaborationist zeal of Vichy. However, demands for repentance no longer merely seek to consolidate memories. They are used to exploit wounds and to inflict humiliations. A rejection of the common heritage often accompanies these denigrations.'

Recently Max Gallo, a prolific historian and biographer (including a four-volume life of Napoleon), pointed out in a book boldly titled *Fier d'être français* (Proud to be French), that 'for decades our elites have become the pedagogues of national renunciation' — even going as far as to declare that what was at stake was nothing less than the 'survival of the nation'. This, indeed, is the fundamental question: what happens to a country when, at the very highest level, it loses its self-respect? To cite a dramatic example: in 1979, when Iran's newly appointed prime minister, Shapour Bakhtiar, asked the French foreign minister, Jean François-Poncet, to do everything he could to keep the exiled Ayatollah Khomeiny from leaving his residence in France. 'Absolutely not!' was the immediate reaction of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. 'On the contrary, we must offer him a royal send-off.' An Air France plane was specially prepared to accommodate the irascible ayatollah and the forty to fifty imams who made up his imposing suite. When Khomeiny reached the plane and saw four Air France hostesses lined up by the staircase, he pointed an imperious finger and declared, 'They must all of them put on a *chador*!' The air hostesses, possessing a greater sense of national pride than the president of the French Republic, had the guts to refuse. Whereupon they were removed and replaced by four male Air France stewards!

Past history, worthy of being forgotten? Alas, no! For recently, in early March, during a state visit made to Saudi Arabia by President Jacques Chirac and a large retinue of French businessmen, Laurence Parisot, the recently elected head of the MEDEF (the French equivalent of the CBI — Confederation of British

Industries), turned up at the royal Murabba palace, veiled from head to foot. An example copied the next day (though less ostentatiously) by Chirac's wife. What fate awaits a once proud nation whose obsequious citizens lose all sense of self-respect? For this, alas, was not a fortuitous incident. It had been preceded, several months before, by a presidential decision to snub the bicentennial celebrations of Napoleon's most extraordinary victory — at Austerlitz in 1805. Whereas the French had previously honoured Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar, on June 18, by dispatching Admiral Philippe de Gaulle to Portsmouth on the aircraft-carrier bearing his illustrious father's name, Jacques Chirac chose to ignore the elaborate ceremonies organized by the enterprising Czechs by not allowing his Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, to travel to the memorable Moravian battlefield. It was explained by some that Jacques Chirac had always disliked Napoleon. It was explained by others that the French president had not wished to provoke a 'scandal' at a time when left-wingers were accusing Napoleon of having reintroduced the slave-trade, while a wretched scribbler named Claude Ribbe had just brought out a pamphlet comparing Bonaparte to Hitler and the Code Napoléon to the infamous Nuremberg Laws of 1938.

When Khomeiny reached the plane and saw four Air France hostesses lined up by the staircase, he pointed an imperious finger and declared, 'They must all of them put on a chador!'

Outraged (like many Frenchmen), the historian Simon Nora, who is also a member of the French Academy, seized his pen to denounce this craven capitulation to left-wing anti-colonial demagoguery, in an article sarcastically entitled 'A plea for the "natives" of Austerlitz'. 'Always', he wrote, 'this present-day mania for judging history solely in moral terms and for imposing on the past networks of interpretation that are only valid for the present... Things being what they are, why not go the whole hog? Yet another effort, citizen! Or rather, since the responsibility for this buffoonery extends to the highest authority of the State, may I permit myself respectfully to make this modest suggestion: "Monsieur le Président, since you like to please everybody, do not stop half-way. While you are at it, remove Napoleon from the Invalides in order to give him back to the Corsicans, and place there instead the tomb of the Unknown Slave."'

Curtis Cate, who has lived for fifty years in Paris, is the author of four biographies, the latest devoted to Friedrich Nietzsche

A Gender-Neutral Society?

Patricia Lança

Professor Mansfield thinks we are now living in what he calls a gender-neutral society, brought about by the campaigns of the radical feminists, especially in academia. They managed this, he says, by peaceful means; by ‘consciousness-raising’, by words rather than violent action. And they were astonishingly successful. Their adversaries caved in all around them and they managed to change practices by changing the language, making any kind of verbal ‘sexism’ — a word they themselves popularized — unacceptable among decent people. And the new dispensation was achieved with extraordinary rapidity, which Mansfield confesses causes him surprise and some puzzlement. He says he is still unable to explain feminists’ easy victory. So easy indeed, that manliness is now deprecated and men feminized. Not that the author calls the process of sensitization by that name. But many others have and there may be some truth in it.

In measured and often witty argument he examines the concept of manliness in his book (*Manliness*, Harvey C Mansfield, Yale University Press) in all its manifestations, practical and literary, historical and philosophical. No reader will be surprised at his citing Achilles or John Wayne; most will find the mention of Nietzsche less consensual, unless *über-menschism* can be construed as manliness. But Mansfield readily admits that not all manliness is commendable. However, its core characteristics certainly are and the feminists are mistaken to decry it. If only they were to accept society’s (and women’s) need of manliness in men they would lose nothing and strengthen their case. Mansfield’s ideas in this regard are generally unexceptionable. The trouble lies with the feminist framework he appears to accept. There are a number of points he might have questioned. First, while academia may be a gender-neutral space, it is doubtful that this is true of society as a whole. Or even desirable. Secondly, the accession of women to full citizenship (something feminists call ‘women’s liberation’) cannot really be ascribed to the last three or four decades of radical feminist activism. The realization of sexual equality, still uncompleted in many areas and especially on the domestic front, owed itself to other causes and would have come about regardless of the activities or arguments of people like Greer, Friedan, Butler and their ilk. It can even be argued that most women — and society as a whole — might today be better off without

the ranting of the radical feminists. The appearance of these figures was because new spaces had for a long time been opening up to women and those self-appointed spokeswomen for the female sex simply took advantage of their opportunities. Like the Bolsheviks in 1917 Russia the feminists assaulted a crumbling citadel and captured it with remarkable ease.

Mansfield, however, leaves the premises of radical feminism untouched. Refuting feminism is not his objective. He does not even talk about the ravages it has caused in terms of sexual harassment legislation, quarrels over quotas and affirmative action, the bitterness of the so-called culture wars, fatherless homes, mounting domestic violence, intellectual and moral obscurantism, the breaking down of civility and the coarsening of manners. What he wants is to put in a plea for men. He does so eloquently and with some elegance. But it is doubtful that he will get a hearing from either side. Instead of looking to biology, anthropology, history and economics for the sources of women’s subordination, without which it is impossible to find the right solutions, radical feminism has been largely based on the Marxist theory of class war, discredited notions about primitive communism and what Engels called ‘the overthrow of mother-right’ in those halcyon days when savages were noble and there was no class exploitation.

One of the curious things about this book is that its author, who is a Professor of Government at Harvard, in over 280 pages scarcely mentions economics. What he is concerned with are philosophical ideas. It is as though he had been dazzled by radical feminism’s forays into the dismal labyrinths of post-modernism and had decided that philosophy would be the area in which he was most likely to impress his word-drunk feminist readers. Of course, ideas are immensely important, but Mansfield’s mistake is to forget that ideas only gain influence in an appropriate environment. Ideas which don’t catch on because they are ahead of their time or out of context are quickly forgotten. Plato, in the IVth century BC, had a great deal to say about the role of women in the communist society described in *The Republic* — Mansfield gives Plato frequent mention. Before the scientific revolution of the XVIIth century and the Enlightenment of the XVIIIth century, Plato’s social projects could not but remain a dead letter. And although what came to be known as ‘the woman

question' began to come into the foreground in the nineteenth century it was not until the twentieth that matters really came to a head. It was the industrial revolution and accelerating technological advance that set the scene for women's emancipation which could not have taken place without them.

The radical feminists are quite mistaken in their theories about the patriarchy being the source of women's subordinate status. The unwelcome truth of the matter is that until modern technology could produce efficient means of contraception on the one hand and on the other multiple labour-saving devices, women and children — the human race, in fact — could not survive at all without the protection of the male sex. Radical feminists forget that young humans need their mothers because they have a very long childhood, required for learning language and other exclusively human skills. Men, as the necessary protectors of women, had manliness thrust upon them by Nature and this was reinforced by culture; their reward was honour and the status of leadership in the home and outside it. Some exercised their power magnanimously, others were tyrants. But women could not avoid dependence until technology freed females from annual childbirth and both sexes from back-breaking labour.

It is an extraordinary commentary on the obtuseness (not to say scientific illiteracy) of some female academics that they continue to mythologize patriarchy as an evil imposed from outside of nature, and insist that 'gender' is a social construction. Schools may no longer provide adequate teaching of biology or zoology but our television screens and newspaper columns are filled daily with studies of animal behaviour, the courting rituals of alpha males, programmes about genetics and the role of mitochondrial DNA in heredity, X and Y chromosomes, testosterone and the rest. Everything indicates that the males of mammalian species are hard-wired for masculinity (manliness). During 99.99 per cent of the human and pre-human past men had to go hunting and kill animals for food, and some of the attributes of manliness are associated with this activity — boldness, aggressiveness, stoicism, etc, while associated cultural traditions account for most of the rest. But feminists have preferred to learn from a crackpot male philosopher, Michel Foucault, who thought heterosexuality had been imposed on society by the bourgeoisie. They have made him one of their most significant intellectual icons. But this is not really surprising if they are misguided enough to dismiss science as a male enterprise: part of phallogocentrism condemned by Foucault.

However, rather than persist in beating that dead horse, it is more constructive to mention some of the many factors that brought about women's emancipation

and in which the radical feminists had no hand at all. The developments which helped to liberate women tended to make many masculine attributes redundant. The advent of the motor car at the end of the nineteenth century had far-reaching social repercussions. When the first members of the upper classes bought motor cars and reserved their horses for the hunt, it really was the beginning of the end of chivalry in every sense. It ushered in the possibility of freedom of movement for women as well as men, and with no muscular exertion. Not only could people travel, safely and dry: chaperones could be dispensed with. In southern Europe where the chaperone was ubiquitous and middle and upper-class women were not allowed to go out alone, a driving licence became a woman's access to freedom of movement and escape from the home. The Saudi Islamic fundamentalists know what they are doing when they ban women from driving cars. Simultaneous with the advent of the motor car was the condom. Whether or not the latter was first thought of as a prophylactic its use as a contraceptive soon became widespread and from that time onwards the size of families among the educated classes dropped dramatically. The path was opened for separating sex from reproduction and women were set for biological freedom.

Long before the First World War sent droves of women into the factories to replace men who had departed for the armed forces, growing mechanization during the previous century had lured working women into industry. The sewing machine needed female operatives at home and in the workplace. As capitalism developed so did its concomitant service industries. In offices everywhere the typewriter became ubiquitous and with it the female typist. Employers had been quick to see the advantages of lower-paid female labour and there were not enough men to fulfil the growing need for clerical workers. Women had never been absent from economic life; peasant women had always worked in the fields and villages, even though some of their tasks might have been lighter than those of men. With the advent of machinery, agriculture needed less manpower and the exodus of whole families to the towns provided expanding industry and commerce with the human beings needed as producers and consumers.

The long, slow movement towards female emancipation ran parallel with the growth of capitalism as did education to fill the need for a more educated workforce. None of these needs or their satisfaction grew at an even pace. As usual it was the political sphere that lagged behind and this was the arena where conflicting interests met and policies were hammered out. Hence there were women physicians before there were women members of parliament, women writers

before there were women cabinet ministers. Family law was one of the last bastions to give way but now, for good or ill, an entire generation of women has grown up into a world of easy divorce, contraception and abortion. The United Kingdom even got itself a woman prime minister and she was certainly no product of radical feminism. And now all over the developed world there are more women university graduates than men.

Why then the remarkable rancorousness of feminist discourse? Why does even a man as urbane as Mansfield make so much rueful mention of the domestic battle to get husbands to share the housework so that their wives might have careers? Why did Betty Freidan's unremarkable book *The Feminine Mystique* have such success that it is now regarded among feminists much as *The Communist Manifesto* among socialists? The answer is simple: the educated woman's boredom with housework. A glance at the pace of female emancipation in places like southern Europe, Latin America or India tells it all. It is much easier for an educated woman to combine marriage, motherhood and a career in poorer countries than in rich ones. Where there is still a large peasant population but the cities are approaching Western standards, there is no shortage of domestic servants to staff the more spacious southern or non-western homes of professional women and at much lower wages than those of the European or American nanny. Husbands have little to lose from their wives' pursuit of careers. No doubt this state of affairs will not last for ever, but while it does, the middle-class women it benefits will be freer to enter politics than their Anglo sisters. And with notably less

friction in the home with their men-folk. All this, of course, is to leave out the special case of Islam, but that is a different story.

There can be little doubt that modern life does indeed threaten traditional ideas of manliness. The multiple social and economic factors which were crucial to the emancipation of women have also been significant in creating a deficit of manliness in men. This is observably so where muscular aspects of manliness are concerned. Who needs muscle when you've got machines? Even the horny-handed sons of toil have mostly disappeared to be replaced by clean, neatly overalled technicians. There are, of course, still enclaves where brawn and endurance are needed, and the fork-lift truck and bulldozer are not always the complete answer. But even extractive industries, abattoirs, or fishing vessels are easier places to work in than they once were. As for the legions of office-workers, where is there scope here for old-style manliness? What scope does exist is on the streets and playing fields where much male aggression stubbornly persists to everybody's inconvenience.

Much as all normal women appreciate manly men, and normal men prefer womanly women, it really does seem time to get rid of these words, certainly of their use as nouns. What we want today is *character* in both sexes and this is something that western education systems have been remiss in developing. If educators, professors, school-teachers and those who run their institutions, can set about this task a good many of our troubles would be over.

Patricia Lança was a deputy in the Portuguese Parliament and is a writer of books and articles on social and political topics

Forward the Anglosphere?

Helen Szamuely

Two months ago the guru of the Anglosphere, James Bennett, President of the Anglosphere Institute and author of *The Anglosphere Challenge: Why the English-Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the Twenty-First Century*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) spoke at a meeting organized by the Bruges Group to an appreciative — largely appreciative — audience. There was a Conservative candidate for the European Parliament who announced in ringing tones that matters European were all going our way and Anglospheric ideas will win in Europe as they have always done. There must be an underground establishment where these people are bred.

Our main problem is trying to define some future role for this country. Involvement in the European Union has not been a success and neither has the EU itself. The alternative that is sneeringly produced by Europhiles is to be a 'slavish follower' of the United States. That is not satisfactory and the much-vaunted special relationship would not bear any close examination. It is a relatively new idea in history and has always depended on individual leaders. It worked well with Reagan and Thatcher not just because the two had similar outlooks but also because the lady was not backward about coming forward when Britain's interests were at stake. Despite appearances, it has fared considerably

less well with Bush and Blair, because Tony has not managed to use his undoubted influence in Washington wisely: obsessed as he is with the need to strengthen transnational governance and with American support for European integration which he believes would bolster up his position among his colleagues.

In 2003 Britain's cachet in the United States was excellent. Blair could have had almost anything he wanted. In fact, a Bill was introduced in the Senate that would have created a free-trade agreement between the two countries. Alas, Blair had to decline this, shamefacedly, I hope, pointing out that this country had no right to negotiate international trade agreements. What he did try to achieve was support for the European Constitution (a half-hearted one was given by the President and a considerably stronger one by State); that famous appeal to the UN before the Iraqi war, when Blair was quite clearly diddled by Chirac; and several pleas for America to sign up to Kyoto and the International Criminal Court. None of these were in either Britain's or America's interests.

Now the Blair-Bush era is coming to an end. What will happen then? So much depends on individuals that the future is unpredictable, especially as the situation is complicated by the difficulties over defence affairs.

The third possibility is the revival of the Commonwealth, discussed at length by many mostly in Britain. The Commonwealth does not play a big part in many countries' thinking. It belonged to a particular period in history as did the Common Market and the idea of European integration. It is, as some Anglospherists put it, a creature of the machine age. It was never a political success, though there were some useful economic and trading advantages. The big developed and developing countries of the Commonwealth have grown used to their separation from Britain. Some like Australia and, to some extent, India have become major powers in their own region. They have formed their own direct links with the United States and with each other. The idea of them going back to some arrangement whereby these links will be translated through Britain is moonshine but it gives people pleasant dreams of grandeur. For the insistence on the Commonwealth, despite all the inconsistencies and difficulties with many of its members, is another attempt to turn away from the United States and to create yet another rival, one that will restore the pre-eminent British position. Dream on. Certainly the Commonwealth links would be very useful within the Anglosphere in that they could provide a balance within these arrangements to the largest member, the United States.

Jim Bennett's research and analysis show that there are various links that depend on a common language and a commonality of economic, political and legal developments. The similarities far outnumber the

dissimilarities. The research of historians like Alan McFarlane and Hackett Fischer have shown that many of these 'exceptionalist' ideas, such as the importance of individual ownership of property and the existence of the nuclear family, go back into the early Middle Ages in England and maybe even further. On the other hand, many of the 'distinctly American' aspects that are so disliked by many people in this country are actually British. I think that America and Americans today are very similar to what Britain and the British were in the nineteenth century, displaying the same baffling combination of religiosity and emphasis on material well-being and development.

So where do we go from here? Links are being forged already through the internet and, in particular, the blogosphere, though at present there is a little too much navel-gazing in British politics. Nevertheless, this trend will continue and the links will become stronger. Bennett proposes the further creation of networks of institutions that would not consider the submerging of individual countries and their differences. There are some Anglospherists who talk of a union and constitution but there is little need for that. Free trade between the countries is merely a starting point. In any case, this should not be limited to the Anglospheric countries. (Or the Commonwealth ones for that matter, though there the logic is less clear.) Beyond that, Bennett proposes arrangements whereby citizens of the Anglosphere could travel, work and stay for various lengths of time in other Anglospheric countries without the present bureaucratic mess. (This may well cause problems as far as Britain is concerned, there being rather a large number of British subjects who consider themselves to be jihadists.)

What about defence? There is a commonality of interest between the several Anglospheric countries and an ability to work together swiftly and efficiently. The post-tsunami effort by America, Australia, India and Japan (an honorary member) showed that clearly and Britain's absence showed our difficulties. The Anglosphere is a project in development and depends largely on ideas. I am delighted that the Anglosphere Institute is beginning to grow and others will be established in the countries that are receptive to those ideas. The Anglospherist ideas of democracy, individuality, small government, free economy, the common law and openness to the world will slowly become successful. As ever, the question is where the originator of those ideas, Britain, will place herself.

Helen Szamuely is a researcher in the House of Lords

Letter from Jerusalem

Paul Gottfried

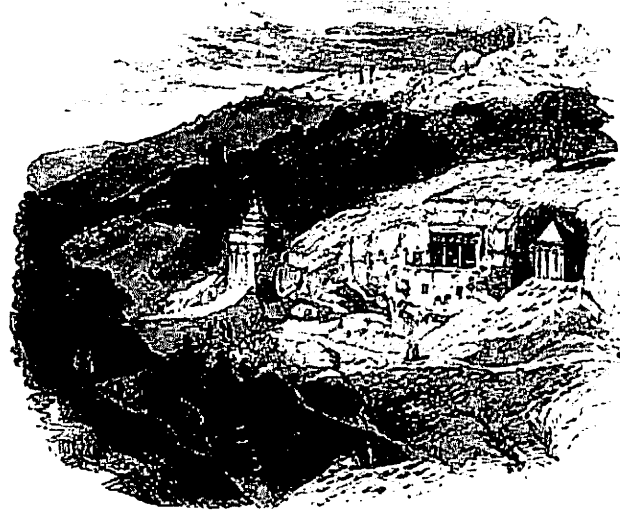
I spent most of last January touring Israel and here record some of my impressions. The Jewish population was markedly different from anything I had expected. The vast majority of Jews I did meet were Moroccan and Levantine, whereas most of the security police in the entrances to shopping malls and on the road between East Jerusalem and the Dead Sea are dark-skinned Jewish Ethiopians. These Falashim (which is their disparaging Ethiopian name) are usually polite to a fault but known to be tough on suspected terrorists. They are now moving into a vocational-ethnic niche that resembles that of the Irish police in the US.

Most of the Israeli Jewish population seems oblivious to Christian anti-Semitism and comes from societies that did not suffer in the Holocaust. They do not echo the fear found in Anti Defamation League publications; nor do they celebrate or lament Jewish marginality in the manner of New York literati. But they are inordinately fond of the American Religious Right, whose silliness they ignore because Robertson and Falwell are working night and day on behalf of Israel. They are also importing a predominantly Catholic workforce from Poland and the Philippines, to take the place of the West Bank Palestinians. A cheap labour source, the West Bankers now reside behind a long, impenetrable wall (*hachomah*), which the Israeli government put up about ten miles west of the Mediterranean. Inhabitants of the town of Netanya, north of Tel Aviv, where my brother and I stayed, expressed relief that the wall had gone up. Only last year suicide bombers had hiked from the West Bank, a distance of nine miles, to a by now reconstructed shopping mall, where they had blown up the shops and the customers. Note the Israelis make this point while emphasizing the obvious. It seems wise to keep those who threaten you at a safe distance and so high walls make for peaceful neighbours.

My niece who was spending the year in Israel, at a horse-breeding farm near Tel Aviv, was struck by the international work force at her communal settlement. Although originally a quasi-Marxist enterprise, this Moshav now includes seasonal European workers who look after the Arabian steeds and tend to the citrus groves. One of my niece's friends, a Polish guest worker, who conversed with us in a curious combination of Hebrew, Polish, and English, was intent on staying, but afterwards she informed us that Israeli security forces had sent the Pole home because 'his papers were not in order'. When my brother asked if anyone had objected, my niece explained that her bosses accepted this 'as part of life'. After all, 'security means that

you can't have people stay if their visa has expired'.

Two aspects of Israeli life struck me with particular force. One is the narrowness of the country's width, which in its populous central region extends about ten miles, between the Mediterranean and the wall; two is the approximately one million Israeli Palestinians who



coexist with Jews, Filipinos and European guest workers. Travelling north from Tel Aviv toward the Galilee we drove from one Arab Muslim village to the next; and none of the towns, with the possible exception of Nazareth, is known for religious or ethnic diversity. For the non-Muslim population, this concentration poses a security problem, given the fact that the Arab Muslims in Jerusalem support Hamas overwhelmingly. Although little love exists between the Jews and Israeli Palestinians, or so my interlocutors kept reminding me in Hebrew, French and English, the two sides have established a *modus vivendi*. One can see them eating, albeit at separate tables, in the same McDonalds (kosher) restaurants. Extended Arab

families frequent Moroccan Jewish eateries, where the food and language are essentially Arab. In Jerusalem, despite the generally tense relations between Orthodox Jews, many imported from the US, and East Jerusalem Arabs, the same kind of commercial coexistence prevails. The hotels, which cater heavily to Jewish tourists from the US and the former British Empire, reveal Palestinian, Filipino, and Jewish employees working side by side.

Military security in Israel, necessitated by West Bank Palestinians and concern about their Israeli cousins, drives other arrangements. It accounts for the omnipresent check-points and the helicopters flying overhead at the beach in Tel Aviv and at the excavation sites at Caesarea and Capernaum. The same pressure explains the apparently relaxed manner in which Israelis stretch their institutions, particularly the military, to include those unlike themselves. While they do not draft Palestinians, their army does include the Druze, who are deviationist Shiites, Bedouins, and Maronite Christians. Non-Orthodox Israelis will contrast the swarthy 'patriotic' Yemenites and Ethiopians, who serve in border units, to the Orthodox who have large families and often live on welfare but are exempt from military duty.

Since the Orthodox, who are often resettled from Western countries, are usually the most outspoken annexationists, a complaint made about them is that they exacerbate strife without bearing any responsibility for their actions, but this complaint

The siege situation in which the Israelis find themselves is the most critical side of their national existence. Not only are the effects of this problem unrelenting. It is also one that does not lend itself to any ready solution that will leave Israel in a relatively secure position.

does not apply to the 'modern Orthodox,' who wear Rabbinically-prescribed head coverings (*kipoth*) but also serve disproportionately in military operations. I never learned, by the way, whether the military responsibility that applies to young women and young men equally, affects the 'modern Orthodox' as well.

Living in a siege situation explains other things that I noticed in Israel. Unlike FOX and CNN, the average Israeli did not agonize over Ariel Sharon's failing health. Although admired for his military prowess and coalition building, Sharon was not thought to be indispensable for the peace process. If the Palestinians will recognize us and cease their violence, is the refrain, whoever will then be on hand will sign the resulting peace. Another consequence in Israel of being surrounded by enemies is a relatively laid-back approach to immigration. In Netanya 'Russian Jews'

have arrived in droves claiming that they are exercising the Jewish 'law of return'. These immigrants from the former Soviet Union look mostly like ethnic Russians, who might have discovered or invented a Jewish grandmother. Their inventiveness reminded me of ***The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian territories does not bode well for Israel. The victorious party is still committed to the destruction of its neighbour, but, perhaps even worse, is not able to establish its own functioning state***

some Americans, who in search of casino money on Indian reservation land, create Pequot relatives. Unlike the orthodox Rabbinate, who insist on checking up on someone's ancestors to determine his Jewish identity, most Israelis, who need more arms-bearing settlers, seem to care little about genealogy. But unfortunately for the Israelis, the Russian immigrants have brought with them unwelcome habits, particularly heavy drinking and malingering. Unlike other immigrant groups, the Russians may be hard for the Israelis to absorb.

The siege situation in which the Israelis find themselves is the most critical side of their national existence. Not only are the effects of this problem unrelenting. It is also one that does not lend itself to any ready solution that will leave Israel in a relatively secure position. The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian territories does not bode well for Israel. The victorious party is still committed to the destruction of its neighbour, but, perhaps even worse, is not able to establish its own functioning state. So far this invertebrate condition has been ascribed to temporary difficulties, like the cutting off of international funding, until Hamas renounces terrorism, and the opposition to Hamas posed by the formerly ruling party of Palestinian President Abbas. Meanwhile there is no political entity on the other side that is ready or able to subdue violence in its territory, and which can therefore enforce treaties. Such are the preconditions for a lasting peace even if a Palestinian government were willing to recognize Israel outright. This means for the Israelis that the present siege situation, marked by narrow borders and multiple check-points, will continue to be part of daily life. Those inhabitants who can relocate to better conditions in Europe, Canada or the US will continue to do so, and even the Russians of dubious Jewish parentage will depart if they can find better material opportunities elsewhere. This is the sad conclusion to which I am drawn about the long-range effects of Israel's beleaguered existence.

Paul Gottfried's latest book is The Strange Death of Marxism: The European in the New Millennium, University of Missouri Press.

The Price of Ermine

Measuring Value in Life Peerage Transactions

H E Taylor

The sale of honours, a ancient practice starting in the seventeenth century, first came to wider public attention during the First World War. The Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, finding himself cut off from Liberal party funds and dependent on Conservative support, determined to strengthen his personal political base. In 1917 he established the Lloyd George Political Fund, and set out to fill it with money raised by the sale of decorations and titles of honour.

In a cash-for-honours business the seller must take a proactive role in identifying and approaching likely leads and prospects. This aspect of the trade holds obvious risks for a principal, and creates a need for a layer of intermediary specialization — the middle-men, brokers, touts, bag-men and commission agents, who form the actual interface between buyers and sellers.

This role was filled for Lloyd George by J Maundy Gregory, a failed theatrical impresario, and wartime stringer for MI5. Gregory was a natural, who brought more to the job than cut-out and discretion. Ever conscious of an obligation to add value, and deeply committed to best practice, he introduced important elements of stability and transparency, which contributed to the functioning of an efficient market. He was also a deeply sinister individual, plausibly linked to at least two murders. Gregory operated under high overhead conditions, and was therefore vulnerable to periods of market illiquidity. The seeds of one such period were sown in 1922, with the proposed elevation of a notorious South African businessman, Sir Joseph Robinson. The octogenarian Robinson proved to be just too fruity a character for the King to stomach, and out of this controversy grew the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act of 1925.

The Act did not kill off the honours business. Gregory continued to operate, even after Lloyd George's fall, but the market environment was transformed. An activity hitherto merely scandalous was now criminal. Trade began to dry up. Before long Gregory was struggling, for his high cost base did not allow him to stand back from the market, and he was obliged to chase volume. At last, made incautious by necessity, he became ensnared in the provisions of the Act. The market consequences of the Gregory prosecution were

far-reaching. A blanket of extreme discretion blotted out the hard-won efficiencies of the Gregory years. Although not in any sense acting on an 'open outcry' basis, Gregory, in bringing together willing sellers and willing buyers, had introduced pricing transparency into the market. At the same time, leveraging his position as an exclusive agent, he ensured that trade was conducted within stable price bands, thus avoiding much of the volatility inherent in an illiquid market.

In fact, Gregory had established a tariff:

Barony	£80,000
Baronetcy	£40,000
Knighthood	£10,000

Sources for these figures have been taken from Gerald MacMillan's *Honours for Sale* (The Richards Press, 1954), Donald McCormick's *Murder by Perfection* (John Long, 1970), and Tom Cullen's *Maundy Gregory* (The Bodley Head, 1974). For the prices of knighthoods and baronetcies there is strong correlation between the sources. McCormick is clear that 'peerages went for as much as...£80,000'. In determining whether the tariff differentials are credible it is helpful to compare the benefits attached to the specific grades.

	Knight	Baronet	Baron
Lifetime honour	■		
Hereditary honour		■	■
Seat in legislature			■
Addressed as 'Sir X Y'	■	■	
Addressed as 'My Lord'			■
Children become 'Honourables'			■
Wife becomes 'Lady Y'	■	■	
Wife becomes 'The Lady Y'			■
Privilege of peerage (exemption from civil arrest)			■
Robes and coronet			■

There is a marked step change in social benefits accruing not merely to the honouree himself, but also to his dependents, once he enters the chamber of the

House of Lords. Both the quantity and the quality improve so the figure of £80,000 as the price of a Gregory barony is about right.

These tariff prices must be understood as median figures within bands, which allowed some variation to prevailing levels of supply and demand. Neither buyers nor sellers were left in the dark as to the general market level. Buyers had confidence that they were not paying over the odds, while sellers were assured that they were maximizing their returns. The whole thing was nicely judged.

However, with the elimination of responsible intermediaries an important source of impartial market information dries up, leaving buyers and sellers groping in the dark as adequate diligence is impossible to perform. This leads to hesitation, and a distorted market that is incapable of realizing its full potential. With a persistent demand for cash on the one hand, and for honours on the other, this state of affairs has serious implications for the functioning of the established socio-political system. The importance of helping today's market players make better-informed decisions cannot be overestimated, and in this context it may be useful to attempt the provision of a methodology aimed at measuring value in Life Peerage Transactions (LPTs). Our goal is a sustainable, fit for purpose, model, with specifications developed in accordance with best practice.

The starting point is the Gregory tariff, which reflects the most recent pre-criminalized period for which pricing information is publicly available. The first step is to estimate the value of £80,000 in today's money. There are a number of historical price indices to choose from, yielding a wide range of possible outcomes. Calculations should be based on an everyday service that is unchanged in its function and has enjoyed limited technological innovation: postal delivery. In 1922 the cost of posting a letter was 1.5d. In 2006 it is 30p, that is to say 72d. In other words a pound in 1922 was worth 48 times more than today's inflated descendant.

$$£80,000 \times 48 = £3,840,000$$

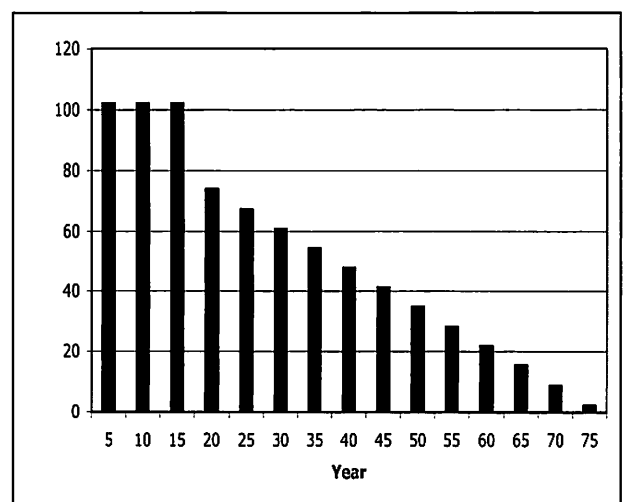
A peerage today should therefore retail for £3,840,000. On the other hand, the baronies sold by Lloyd George were hereditary. Today's equivalent expires with the holder. We should place a value on the hereditary element of a Lloyd George peerage and perhaps apply the differential between the life-of-holder knighthood and the hereditary baronetcy as outlined in the Gregory tariff. In this the latter is assessed at four times the value of the former. However, there is something about the ermine that recommends a more careful enquiry.

We start with the following assumptions in respect of a hereditary peerage purchased under the Gregory tariff:

Age of hereditary peer at creation:	55
Life expectancy:	70
Cost of peerage (2006 prices)	£3,840,000
Age of son at inheritance	40
Period of son's tenure	30 years
Age of grandson at inheritance:	40
Period of grandson's tenure:	30 years

The purchaser of a hereditary title is buying not merely for himself, but for his heirs. The duration of his interest may be assessed at 75 years, that is to say the life expectancy at purchase of his grandson. The purchaser assigns annual values to the title according to a sliding scale. The average annual value of the title is (£3.84 million/75 years), or £51,200. It is reasonable to suppose that for each of the years 1-15 the first holder values the title at 200% of this average, or £102,400 p.a. On his anticipated death in year 16 the purchaser's interest enters steep backwardation, falling to 75% of the assigned annual value, or £76,800. From then until the end of the term the assigned annual value tapers off until, after the expiry of purchaser's interest in year 75, the title is in the books at zero. The sum of the decreasing annual values of the title over years 16-75 is £2,304,000, which may be considered the hereditary premium. After stripping out this premium from the purchase price of £3,840,000, we are left with a residual value of £1,536,000, which is the Life Peerage Equivalent, or LPE.

The graph illustrates this methodology. (For reasons of clarity the assigned annual values have been aggregated into five year averages).



However the LPE derived by this method is not an absolute figure. Adjustments that suggest themselves

relate to life expectancy, as well as the age at which peerages are acquired. This is important when today's prospective peers are living longer and making money younger, factors which point to an extended term of enjoyment for life peerage buyers. Further work certainly remains to be done. However, all things being equal, the purchase of a life peerage for below £1,536,000 surely represents value for money for the purchaser. This is illustrated in the following example:

Value of life peerage	£1,536,000
Less donation	<u>£1,250,000</u>
Underpayment by buyer	£286,000

Another area of consideration is the extent to which an LPT forms part of a wider 'package' including, for example, government contracts. Then the buyer's estimated profit must be taken into account. In today's more sophisticated society, where the straightforward vanity buyer has largely withdrawn from the market, there is an obligation on the seller to think through all aspects of an LPT. Respect for good business practice allows us to decry any sloppiness on the part of the seller in failing to maximize his return on the deal. At the very least there is a clear case for closer liaison between government procurement agencies on the one hand, and the honours and appointments authorities on the other.

In making these judgements we should remember that the Labour Party is nothing less than 'the political arm of none other than the British people as a whole'. That is an asserted fact. (*New Labour, New Life for Britain*, 1997). It follows that loans and donations to this specific organization are to the benefit of the country as a whole. Should such contributions ever be made as part of an LPT, it is not, therefore, in the national interest that the transaction should show a significant net profit to the buyer. Any other result smacks of incompetence, a failure to grasp the essentials of the business that is quite at odds with

what the British people may expect from those set in governance above it.

In establishing the basic cash value of a life peerage, we open up the prospect of treating honours awarded *gratis* for political services as taxable benefits in kind. Apart from the obvious fiscal advantages, there are desirable social outcomes accruing from such a policy. By bringing honours awards within the scope of the taxation system, a greater number of time-served survivors of the party political machines will be encouraged to withdraw fully from public life when, for one reason or another, their House of Commons careers are brought to a close. We should recognize that further research may in due course lead to revisions to the variables suggested above. To make such adjustments easier we can express the proposed methodology in the form of an equation. Rather than pricing the hereditary element, this approach focuses on the front end of the transaction, and determines the value to the first holder of his anticipated life interest in a hereditary title.

$$P = [(cv)^x] + y$$

Where:

P = Price of life peerage.

a = Price of hereditary peerage (HP)

b = Total period of buyer's interest (years).

c = $a \div b$ or average assigned annual value of HP.

v = Enhanced valuation factor applied to average assigned annual values of HP for the period of first tenure.

x = Period of first tenure (years).

y = Quantum of 'government contract' to be recaptured in the LPT.

And: $(cv)^x \leq a$

H E Taylor is a commodity broker

Cut is the Branch...

Jonathan Tokeley

I never knew Ossie Clark. Oh yes, I know Hockney's portrait, and can put myself in the mind of the man who lounges in the afternoon quietude, his wife and their pot plant and their sunlit flat. I can appreciate his grace. I feel his contentment. I never met him, however, never gauged how his sunlight had darkened, and drifted into shadow. But I have met his murderer. In

fact, we shared the same cell for six months.

I didn't know for some time that he was Ossie's murderer. When I chose him I only knew he had the same sentence as myself, and that he was quiet. And quietness counts for a lot in Wormwood Scrubs.

I first saw him in the Psychiatric Ward, where they'd put me to acclimatize. Like many new convicts, I

was depressed. But luckily for me — or so they said — I was ‘high-profile’. I had an orange file, and the newspapers would report my harm, just as they’d reported my arrival. So there they stuck me, *sans* shoelaces and belt, and no projections anywhere to hook a towel. No means for suicide, but a haven of sorts until I could cope with life ‘on the Wings’.

Every day we’d form a ragged line, and queue for our food; the other depressives, the minor psychotics and as many of the murderers as could still walk. The real psychopaths were never let out, of course. Their cells had Perspex doors, like small square goldfish bowls, and they mostly seemed to lie on the floor, which was all they could manage under sedation. As for us, we’d wait until the green shutters rattled up — everything was painted green in that place, the colour of henbane leaves — and there’d be the steaming stainless cans from some distant kitchen, and young Diego behind them with his ladle. It was the high point of our day.

Well, it was until the fight, when a slobbish twenty-year old lunged for the ice-cream. Diego caught his hand, and briefly they wrestled, much to the guards’ amusement. They were content to let it ride. But then Diego called his assailant a ‘black bastard’, and the guards moved fast. Diego was hustled off, and that was the last he appeared.

Some months later I saw him in the yard. He was alone, drifting counter-clockwise with the flow. There’d been a tribunal, he told me, with two governors, and a full complement of warders. That he’d been mugged by a psychopath with a lust for vanilla was less onerous, in their view, than the ‘racism’ of his remark. The ‘bastard’ might have been literal, they agreed, but the ‘black’ offended them. ‘This prison will not tolerate racism’, they’d declared — discreetly disregarding their guards, who were still sporting BNP pins — and they’d given Diego a week ‘in segregation’, a bare cell with a bare mattress on the floor and no windows. Worse, they’d taken away his job and his privileges.

I liked Diego, I have to admit. He was gentle and intelligent, and sad, a far cry from the swaggerers and the shouters. I asked my Wing Officer, and he agreed. Diego was ‘above average’, he said, and a good choice for cell-mate. Of course, he’d no idea what Diego had done. He’d no access to the files. He only knew that Diego had six years — and if mine were anything to go by, he suggested, he’d earned them with a peccadillo. A hundred E’s, or some such. As for the sadness, he put that down to homesickness, for Diego was Sardinian. And so we paired up. Through that long breathless summer, the summer that Diana died, we sat in the heat of our cell, twenty three hours each day. We played backgammon. We talked Italian. We formed an alliance against the rest. For that’s how you get by

in these places.

But Diego was moody. The first half of the day he’d lie on his bunk, just staring at the wall. There was no anger in the man, just a huge silence. Eventually he began to talk, tantalizing snippets of his early history. His early promiscuity with drugs. His gradual abandonment. His attempts to earn the money he needed, and the slow degradation, to the point where he’d been selling himself behind Kings Cross. And how, in his worst time, he’d met an Englishman, who’d left his wife and turned homosexual, and how they’d lived together, and found some sort of repose.

Diego had loved the man, he said. He’d felt safe after all the dissolution. But after this he told me nothing more until, one day, he just handed me his newspaper cuttings, and asked me to keep them. I read them, and learned how, in a chemical stupor, a sort of induced madness, Diego had come to see his lover as the antichrist, had stabbed him forty-three times, and then lain beside him, watching through the long night, lest the devil should make an appearance. Eventually, just to make sure, he stove the head with a flower pot. Later on, he’d been wandering in the park, and seen the devil’s number in a telephone box — 999 upside down. And he’d rung the police.

And now the astonishing part. Diego’s lawyers argued that his prescription Prozac had interacted with the heroin — the LSD somehow went unmentioned — and induced a ‘short-term psychotic episode’. There were American precedents for this, lawsuits against the pharmaceuticals. Diego had played along, but now he regretted it. He said he’d have preferred the death penalty. Whether he was sincere about this — or sincere in the long term — we’ll never know. But a clever barrister had established a reputation, by commuting a murder indictment and mandatory life-sentence to manslaughter — to a laughable four years’ prison followed by deportation. And Diego had to live the rest, remembering that he’d killed what he’d loved, extinguished his last best hope.

I don’t know what’s happened to him now. His transfer came through without warning, and he was whisked away one autumn morning. He wrote me a single letter — ‘tu non hai idea come bene mi fare sentirla’ — and then there was silence. I daresay he’s been deported by now, and I daresay he’ll die early, from disease or his own hand. And I don’t think there’s anything to be said about it.

As for myself, I feel strangely blank. This was the first murderer I’d met, really met, and after the astonishment — for after all, I’d been given the same sentence for effectively buying two air-fares, and harming no-one — it all seemed strangely normal. There was no evil in Diego. Just a sense of being

completely adrift. And no sense of anything being blameable. Much easier if there had been, of course. There was just a resolute fecklessness, of the sort that will always pull red handles in a power-station. But that's common enough these days, and applied as much to Ossie as to Diego. When Ossie picked up Diego, picked him up as rough-pretty, and they started deep drugs together, they were pulling the red-handle. That was the last time they had a choice, and they made it in self-indulgence. That was their small besetting sin, which set the Gods on them. Everything else followed. It's squalid, but in modern terms it's blameless, and the prisons are full of blameless people. Most crime is caused by them, by their cash-flow cravings, and nothing anymore to discourage them, nothing for them to dread. And whose fault is that?

I suppose you could say it qualifies as a tragedy, in the strictest sense. There's the appropriate sense of hopelessness; of nothing that could have been done, after that first act; of one thing following from another, ineluctably — until there was only Zeus — of a punishment out of all proportion to the sin; and nothing to be learned or learnable. 'Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight, and burnèd is Apollo's laurel

bough, that sometime grew within this learned man', except that Ossie wasn't particularly wise, and if it hadn't been Ossie, it would have been someone else, but nobody worth remembering. And that, I suspect, is the only thing that's worth remembering. It made the papers because Ossie had been famous for a while.

Anyway, in a lapsed-Christian culture we should have less difficulty about such things. We should accept tragic waste. We've no real grounds to complain, after all. Christians may have wanted tragedy in their world-view — because it was clearly important — but they'd no justification for including it. There could be no tragedy in a world where everything was pre-ordained (except perhaps the problematic case of Judas). There were reasons for everything that happened — whether or not we could grasp them. But in the modern world there need be nothing — any more than there need have been for the Greeks. Only the bloody-minded Gods who played with them as we played with the ants. No, I'm afraid. There's nothing to be said, and no easy answers. Probably none at all. Just the futility.

Jonathan Tokeley was convicted of smuggling Egyptian antiquities. He is the author of Rescuing the Past

Conservative Classic — 23

R S Surtees: Hillingdon Hall

Richard Body

2006 marks the bicentenary of Surtees' birth, at least I think it does. His two biographers say he was born in 1805; and *The Field*, the magazine he founded, celebrated his bicentenary last year; and up in Durham, where he was born, they also celebrated the event. On his tombstone, 1804 is given as his date of birth. For those of us who enjoy re-reading his novels, the exact date scarcely matters.

A centenary, however, is the year when critics pass posthumous judgement; and so far what they have said has been very favourable. Of all the writers in the first half of the 19th century, he is now seen as perhaps the most perceptive, his minute descriptions of everyday life being invaluable to social historians. But he needs to be judged as a satirist and good satire is moulded by a hatred burning inside. Many over-sensitive souls saw themselves as his victims and often wrongly, and so his novels tended to be disparaged in his own lifetime by the very people for whom they were written. On the other hand, Thackeray and Dickens both thought well of him, which is surprising as one was a Liberal, the

other a Radical, while Surtees was a dehydrated Tory. Thackeray thought Surtees' novels 'the real thing' and literary detectives have decided that the idea for the *Pickwick Papers* came from Surtees' *Jorrocks' Jaunts and Jollities*.

If ever a typical squire existed, it was Surtees. Presiding over a modest estate in the heart of Durham's countryside, he farmed some of his acres, while rents from tenants enabled him to keep a pack of hounds, command a militia unit, act as a magistrate and serve his county as a Deputy Lieutenant. Novelists, as a tribe, disdain dirtying their hands in active politics, Disraeli being the one notable exception. Surtees may not have distinguished himself on the political stage, but he did stand as a Tory in Gateshead. The great debate about the Corn Laws was exciting hearts and fury of a kind that has long since disappeared from electioneering, and Surtees, an ardent protectionist, had little hope of winning the seat.

The great Lord Melbourne had threatened: 'To leave the whole agricultural interest without protection

I declare before God that I think it the wildest and maddest scheme that has ever entered into the imagination of men to conceive.' With all his heart, Surtees echoes those words. The Napoleonic wars were still fresh in the memory and now before Nelson's triumph at Trafalgar, foreign imports were not to be relied upon. The cynic may say there was a tinge of self-interest in his stance. But Surtees believed that the countryside was much more than the place where food came from; he hated the towns and especially the new cities like Liverpool and Manchester that were then expanding rapidly. Their grime and squalor made them unhealthy places, and solace was sought too much in gambling, drinking, with too little healthy recreation. The countryside was everything that the new towns were not; it was the natural habitat of his fellow men and women, so that was where he wished they could prosper.

Of course, he was wrong about the Corn Laws; from the time of their repeal in 1846 to 1880, farming flourished.

Hillingdon Hall, the last of the Jorrocks' trilogy, ranks as political satire at its best and funniest. Jorrocks abandons London and acquires a country estate. He has retired from fox-hunting, which

makes it the author's only novel where there is no mention of the sport. Jorrocks, however, is persuaded to take on a pack of beagles, and a page or two is devoted to a day he takes them out; finding a hare, they disappear over the hill, never to be seen again, with Jorrocks panting and puffing after them. It is a description that any beagler, past his prime will appreciate. Having mugged up on the latest jargon about pseudo-scientific farming (then much in vogue), he visits his tenants in turn to preach the new gospel, and simpletons though they seem, he is outwitted by them all.

Also outwitted is the Duke of Donkeyton, said to be modelled on the then Duke of Northumberland, a Whig grandee. Suspected of being a Tory, the Duke sets out to 'bring him over' by inviting him and Mrs Jorrocks to stay at his castle, an hilarious occasion. As that does not work, the Duke makes him a J P, and there is more hilarity when he sits on the bench. The constituency

has always been the Duke's preserve, and it is time his son the Marquis of Bray took his rightful place in the House among the Whigs.

Who will dare to stand against him for the Tories? Yes, of course, the Cockney interloper.

The Whigs, needless to say, are proved to be total humbugs, while Jorrocks talks downright common-sense. The Anti Corn Law League comes on the scene in the form of William Bowker, an old friend of Jorrocks', in *Handley Cross*. A lawyer's clerk, he is willing to do or say anything if the money is right, and the League offers him plenty of it, so he arrives to support Bray the Whig. Dickens made the Eatanswill election good reading, but readers of *Hillingdon Hall* usually find this one more entertaining. In politics, honesty pays, but wins just by a whisker, we conclude.

Anyone who dismisses Surtees' brand of politics as a relic of the past overlooks how modern Conservatism

has evolved.

Conservatives, whether in or out of any political party, are in a coalition.

It embraces Whigs, Asquithian Liberals, market fundamentalists and sundry others, all attaching themselves to the Tory nucleus.

Some of the latter's creed may indeed belong to a bygone age. As a Tory, Surtees believed

fervently that those who inherit wealth owed a duty to give their time unpaid to serve the public and to share their wealth with the poor by giving employment, unnecessary though the work may be. If the rich man had all his own money, he should not forget the people he left behind, and he too had a duty corresponding with this wealth. High taxation has today eroded that sense of duty, but Surtees would see it as no excuse. The many thousands who have made great fortunes since the Second World War would be victims of Surtees' satire as much as were Sir Moses Mainchance and Sir Harry Scattercash. A Conservative in the Tory mould has a sense of duty to his fellow men and to the country to which they both belong.

Hillingdon Hall and all the other books by Surtees have been published by the R S Surtees Society at Manor Farm, Nunney, near Frome, Somerset, BA11 4NJ. Its book list and other details are available on request. Michael Wharton was one of the Society's principal founders' and two of this journal's consulting editors are members of its committee.



Reputations — 14

Alfred Milner

Timothy Kidd

In the corner of Salehurst churchyard in Sussex there is a tomb of greyish stone, foursquare and with projecting buttresses, designed by the imperial architect Edwin Lutyens. It resembles a scaled-down version of Table Mountain, looking out over a field of Sussex corn. The name of Alfred Milner recalls the broad noon of the British Empire, numbered among its great proconsuls in Asia and Africa. Yet many of his achievements were in the field of public service at home, notably in finance and administration, and in the Cabinet during the most comfortless years of the Great War. After his death in 1925, his entry in the original *Dictionary of National Biography* was headed simply: 'Statesman'.

One would not expect the accomplishments of such a man to be recognized by the more limited commentators of our own day. A recent history of the Boer War portrays Milner as the moustachioed villain of the piece. The entry in the new version of the DNB — leaving aside the factual errors which mar that unfortunate publication — describes Milner as 'intractable and unsubtle,' and claims that 'his reputation has suffered from the South African phase of his career'. In reality, it was Alfred Milner who created South Africa as a modern state; his work in Egypt in the 1890's also, was vital in securing its economic foundations after decades of chaos and corruption. Milner was among the first of imperial rulers to promote the idea of 'trusteeship' for the governed territories, and of fellowship for the white Dominions. At home he was in favour of social reform and the inventor of progressive Estate Duties in the Liberal budget of 1894 (although he subsequently regretted the misuse of that form of taxation by a later Labour government). He was a frequent speaker at Toynbee Hall in the East End of London, and one of the original trustees of the Rhodes scholarships. In the Home Rule crisis of 1912-14, he supported Ulster's right to stay British and to stay free from domination by an alien Southern Irish state, a right which has been maintained to this day. In 1916, he agreed to serve under his old antagonist Lloyd George in the War Cabinet and became the second most powerful figure in government during the latter phase of the war. He supported the introduction of the convoy system at a time when Allied shipping was taking unsustainable losses from German submarines, and when Britain had

no more than six weeks of food remaining. During the last German military onslaught of March 1918, it was his personal intervention that brought about a unified command of the Allied armies on the Western Front. Milner was, as he wryly called himself, 'the emergency man'. Or as the young journalist Winston Churchill once described him, 'the man of no illusions'.

Alfred Milner was not born to high rank or privilege. From a London day-school, Milner won the top scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford in 1873. In his private diary, Milner wrote that he aimed to lead a life of 'public usefulness,' accepting that it would mean less in the way of personal wealth or happiness. Graduating with a double first, he won a fellowship at New College, but spent much of his time in London reading for the Bar. To earn extra money he took up journalism, and held the viewpoint of an advanced Liberal. But during the 1880's he became increasingly appalled by the weakness of Gladstone's government on imperial matters, whether in South Africa or the Sudan, and also disturbed by its appeasement of Irish Nationalism. His career began in earnest when he served in Lord Salisbury's second Tory government, embarking on a lifetime's work in civil administration. Milner believed in the role of the State but that it should serve the public rather than itself, and that it should be limited in size and purpose. Working in Cairo, he commented that the entire British administration, which stood between Egypt and reversion to bankruptcy, could be loaded into a Metropolitan tram-car. He also believed that government must be efficient. On a visit to Russia in early 1917, he saw that its vast bureaucracy was incapable of supplying either food to the cities or weapons to the army, although Russia was well-provided with both. Revolution broke out a few weeks later.

Milner was sent out to South Africa as High Commissioner in 1897. The discovery of immense gold-deposits on the Rand had transformed the economic position of the Boer republic of the Transvaal. But the wealth was created entirely by the Uitlanders — mostly British — who were denied all forms of representation, while being taxed and charged to pay for the forts and weaponry acquired specifically to hold them in subjection. A corrupt and incompetent Boer minority regime also allied itself with Britain's rivals and enemies in Europe.

The ultimate aim, as stated by Jan Smuts in 1899, was to take over the whole of Southern Africa, 'an Afrikaner republic stretching from Table Bay to the Zambezi'. Although Milner initially tried for a peaceful settlement, war broke out in the autumn of 1899 with the Boer ultimatum, and subsequent invasion of the Cape Colony and Natal. Despite the besieged towns and battlefield defeats, Milner remained steadfast. Reinforcements arrived in increasing numbers, and the Empire rallied, sending troops from Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as India — a response that strengthened his hopes for an eventual Imperial union. Within six months the Boer republics were defeated, but a ruthless guerrilla war continued. Milner recognized the military necessity of denying the guerrilla supply-lines, by farm-burning and by herding Boer women and children into 'concentration camps'. He deplored the loss of life, when many thousands died of epidemic disease, and devoted much of his time to improving conditions. When the Boer commandos finally surrendered, Milner set out to restore a shattered country. He recruited a group of brilliant and energetic young Oxford men — Milner's Kindergarten — to create the foundations of a new South Africa. This included rebuilding and restocking the Boer farms, providing education, transport and medical services, as well as regenerating the gold mines on which the whole economy depended. Although his primary concern was for the two white races, he did not neglect the needs of the native Africans. Shortage of labour in the mines led him to import indentured Chinese workers. Although this policy was economically successful, it caused an agitation in Britain ('Chinese slavery!') on the part of liberals that was even more virulent and ill-informed than that over the concentration camps. After some three years of unremitting toil, Milner decided to return home, his main work accomplished. Crowds lined the streets of Johannesburg, and when the great Boer general De la Rey heard of his departure he

drove to the Governor's mansion to express his high opinion. Other Boer commanders (and future Prime Ministers) Louis Botha and Jan Smuts acknowledged all that Milner had done to establish a prosperous and united South Africa.

Milner returned to England in the summer of 1905, and in the year following faced the kind of *revanche* endured by other victorious leaders in Britain's history — Marlborough and Wellington, Hastings and Clive. Ironically it was Winston Churchill, now Colonial Under-Secretary in the new Liberal government, who delivered in the House of Commons a speech of dismissal, in words that could have been turned against himself some forty years later: 'Having exercised great authority he now exercises no authority. Having held high employment he now has no employment. Having disposed of events which have shaped the course of history, he is now unable to deflect in the smallest degree the policy of the day...'

Milner took the setback with his usual calm. Although he had returned from South Africa a poorer man than when he left, he had refused all offers of public reward. Instead he accepted work in the City as a means of restoring his private finances. In 1921 on his retirement he married Lady Violet Cecil with whom he had formed an attachment in Cape Town during the South African War. They made a last visit to South Africa, where they were warmly greeted in Cape Province and Natal, but on that trip the bite of a tsetse fly caused the illness from which he died in England, a few months later. Lord Milner was commemorated in Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. His widow arranged for the publication of *The Milner Papers* (1933), and sustained his ideas on government and Empire in the independent conservative journal *The National Review* — comparable to the present-day *Salisbury Review* — which she edited for sixteen years. Lady Violet died in 1958, one of the last survivors of the Edwardian age of power and splendour.

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The Pope says he wants an end to aisle-dancing and numbskull jogging for Jesus choruses at the Mass. He did not quite put it like that, but he said church music should follow in the tradition of plainsong or 16th century polyphony. Pope Benedict's suggestion provoked a typical piece of institutionalised ignorance from the BBC. *The Sunday Programme* interviewed two contemporary church music composers and asked if they would agree that the Pope was preaching 'cultural authoritarianism'.

The two composers replied by uttering a string of *non sequiturs*. First that ordinary churchgoers in the Middle Ages never did sing plainsong, for they did not have access to the manuscripts and would be unable to read the notation. The Pope never claimed they could. Plainsong was sung in the cathedrals and monasteries by professional musicians to a very high standard. The congregation participated by listening and so ascending in heart and mind to the beauty and dignity of the plainsong chants. And, incidentally, the rise and fall of the plainsong chants exactly paralleled the Gothic arch — thus uniting in one audible-visual experience a single evocation of God's majesty,

This of course was not good enough for the BBC. It was dismissed as élitist. For the modern prejudice insists that all cultural expression has to be 'accessible' and 'inclusive'. This is because the dumbed down moderns cannot understand that one can participate fully by ears, heart and mind; and that it is far better to have appropriate music performed by a few on behalf of the many than to have the mob blaring tosh and musical doggerel, which is a form of blasphemy.

Over the years I have endured too much of the sort of tripe the Pope rightly wants to reject. Dirges such as *Bind us together, Lord*, like nothing so much as a plea for communal constipation. When I see the overhead projector in church and hear for the umpteenth time the twang of the liturgical guitar, I am not sanctified but angry. God is not adequately praised by these excrescences, only mocked. It is disgraceful to hear congregations repeat endlessly choruses so vacuous and mindless they were not worth singing once.

Make me a channel of your peace is so sentimental that syrup seems to drip from the rafters. For the severely mentally challenged 'worship group' at St Knees Up and All Change there's *I will sing, I will sing*

a song unto the Lord — the first line repeated thrice in case we didn't get it first time. The modern revisions of old favourites merely denature the traditional words and fall into farce. The great eventide hymn *The day thou gavest Lord has ended; the darkness falls at thy behest*, in *Hymns for Today's Church* — a book which can only be described as a parody of a hymnbook — is destroyed and replaced by *The day you gave us Lord has ended; the sun is sinking in the west*. While the original couplet teaches that day and night are created and ordered by the power of God — the darkness falls because He commands it — the modern version is merely banal. *The sun is sinking in the west*. It conjures up old cowboy films and Roy Rogers riding off into the sunset with his guitar. There would be a guitar somewhere but there is no theology in it. There is one hymn in that book with the deathless line *Lord be with me in my depression* which just makes me think it should be re-titled *Who would true valium see*.

The Pope did not say that we should sing only medieval plainchant and Tallis and Byrd — though that is how he was misrepresented and traduced by the BBC and those two de-composers. He said what we sing should be 'within the plainchant and polyphonic traditions'. There are plenty of good modern composers turning out decent polyphony and congregations have been singing in the plainchant tradition for centuries.

This is not 'élitist' or 'cultural authoritarianism'. I started to attend church as a boy in the 1950s at St Bartholomew's in the back streets of Leeds. And every Sunday morning we sang the Creed, the Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. To the setting by Merbecke. Simple. Moving. Uplifting. Highly appropriate. The ordinary working class congregation sang it without difficulty and loved it. And in the evening we came back to sing Psalm, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis to traditional chants from *The Parish Psalter*.

It is not a question of old versus new, but of good rather than bad. There is fine music from all eras suitable for singing and making a joyful noise unto the Lord. It is the idiot choruses and the rock and rubbish banalities which should be thrown out. Let us restore the beauty of holiness.

Peter Mullen



Roy Kenridge

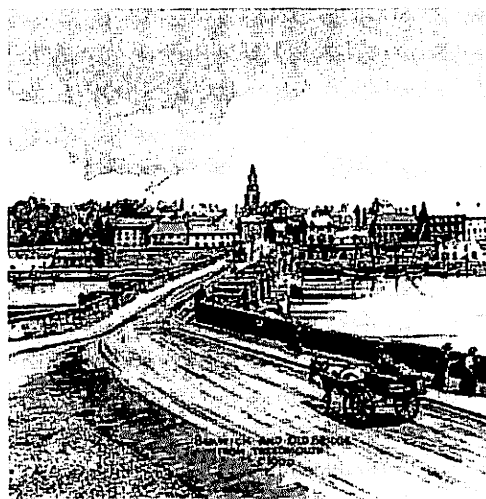
Excitedly I stared out of the window of the bus carrying me from Edinburgh in Scotland to Berwick on Tweed in England. Along the coast road at Dunbar, woods and fields rose and fell, to end suddenly at the edge of cliffs that dropped down to yellow sands and a blue sea. Still in Scotland, the bus skirted Coldingham Moor, in the old Scottish county of Berwick. Berwickshire the county was once part of the kingdom of Bernicia, later to combine with Deira to become Northumbria. You would expect my destination, Berwick on Tweed, to be the county town of Berwickshire. Instead, it has fallen on the English side of the Border, as the northernmost town of Northumberland. Berwickshire in Scotland has roughly the same boundary as the top part of Bernicia, lopped off from England by the latest (fifteenth century) fluctuation of the Border.

There was no dramatic change of scenery as the bus crossed the invisible Border near the villages of Clappers, Cumberland Bower and Conundrum. At Berwick on Tweed I alighted and after a long search found lodgings in the house of a Baptist family, with texts framed on every wall. Knowing that ship-building still went on at the Tweed estuary, I had expected to find a great, grim industrial town. How wrong I was! After a refreshing sleep, I set out to explore the bridge. In *Lavengro*, George Borrow describes the day when, as a boy, he first caught sight of the town, the River Tweed and the old stone bridge, from a hill. He lay down and wept at the sheer beauty of it all, and I don't blame him. Berwick's old bridge, built in 1643, is still in use, although a new one takes care of heavy traffic a little further upstream. In time, I came to look on the old bridge, with its fifteen arches, as a friend. Like its gigantic rival, Blackfriars Bridge in London, it has little niches jutting out at intervals along the rim. No doubt these were once used by people anxious to avoid donkeys laden with baskets of cockles, driven along by scolding old women.

Berwick proved to be a marvel, with its eighteenth

century houses built for merchants and sea captains, its steep High Street descending to the sea at the mouth of the Tweed, and its oddly-shaped Elizabethan ramparts now cloaked in grass. Mons Meg cannon, which we met at Edinburgh Castle, was once stationed here. The banks of Berwick — I mean, the commercial banks — are mostly Scottish. They are tall dignified buildings bursting with Scottish banknotes, legal tender in Berwick. Near the former Customs House, I discovered the sea walls and the city wall of Berwick, combined. Where once grim soldiers patrolled, keeping a strict look out for Scots or English, (depending on where the Border lay on that day), there is now a public

footpath with wonderful views. As in Chester, a visitor can walk round the whole town along the top of the medieval city wall. Rows of small houses line the wall in places, looking out to sea. Big blue-grey bumpy cobbles pave most of the wall-walkway, which is restored in some places and in others trails away in gaps where stones have been removed. What with cobbles, old-fashioned Victoria lamp posts and sea mist, the Walls at night time evoke a vintage



Sherlock Holmes film. From the old bridge, the high sea walls of Berwick look wonderfully romantic, each stone with a character of its own, defying the waves. It looks as if the houses of Berwick had been built on a platform hemmed round by the tides, the older houses jostling and crowding forward to see the water. I shall always remember the thrill of excitement I felt at so unexpectedly discovering the ancient walls, bridges and fragments of fort and castle at Berwick, a town seldom mentioned in guide books.

One day I fitted myself comfortably into a niche of the Old Bridge and admired the view of the River Tweed, flowing out past a lighthouse to the open sea. Suddenly looking down, I saw a pair of big grey seals swimming through the archways of the bridge. Playfully, one rolled over on its back and swam upside down, showing a silver stomach with black blotches.

Berwick is one of the few towns where seals can be encountered almost every day on a walk to the shops and back. They breed in great numbers at the nearby Farne Islands.

Below the soaring archways of the Royal Border Bridge, beneath the railway line that carried passengers from London to Edinburgh and back, there is a riverside wilderness of reeds and thistles. Here I loved to walk in the early morning, when herons and cormorants fished in the shallows, the great bridge looming over all. It was one of the first railway bridges to be made. Finally I would retrace my steps to the Old Bridge and cross over into Old Berwick. Once over the bridge, a steep cobbled lane led up among leaning old shops and cottages into the main street, with its Town Hall, church

and army barracks nearby. (George Borrow's father, the recruiting sergeant, had reported to these barracks). However, I would take my time in struggling up to the main street, for there was plenty to see on the way. Shops sold Berwick cockles in tins, there was a chip shop and a strange shop, always closed, with a window display of trusses, corsets and evangelical tracts. 'Ring for Information', a sign read, but no one ever answered. At last, steps and cobbles opened into the smartly paved main street with its fashionable shops and coffee houses. Across the street stood the Bus Station, a tantalising spot, where I would choose my destination for the day. There was one Enquiry Office for England, another for Scotland, separate but equal.

LETTERS

Sir,

I do not wish to step on the toes of Christie Davies, many of whose writings I have admired. As the son and relative of Austrian Jewish refugees, moreover, I feel kinship with the Central European Jews whom Professor Davies praises in his article 'Austria, Muslims and Denying the Holocaust'. Nonetheless, my sense of scholarly duty requires me to note several mistakes in his otherwise engaging exposition. There is no reason to assume any continuity between the censorship of the far Left and of the Nazis under the Austrian clerical fascists in the early 1930s, followed by the Anschluss, and the PC orgy in today's Austria. The Austrian government behaves like all other multicultural states in the current version of Western democracy. While the imprisonment of David Irving was every bit as despicable as Davies suggests, it did not evoke any discernible protests from the British government or from most of the international press. At the time of the hullabaloo, I noticed that the neoconservative *New York Press* published an editorial suggesting that Austria had been a trifle soft on a notorious Holocaust-denier. Whatever objections to Irving's imprisonment I did run into, raised the dubious point that by punishing Irving one would be causing a dangerous anti-Semitic backlash. The argument that historical disputes should not be settled by throwing one of the disputants into jail entered our public discussion (to which only left-liberals and neocons were invited) only quite marginally.

Although there have undoubtedly been Jewish patriots in England and Central Europe, Davies may be exaggerating the uniformly 'fierce loyalty' shown by Jewish citizens in both places. The majority of German Jews in the interwar period voted for the Left, a trend

that until recently has characterized British Jews as well. Fritz Haber, a Jewish convert to Protestantism and an outspoken German nationalist, was no more typical of German Jews than the feisty Conservative Alfred Sherman is of British Jews now or in the past. German and English Jews were also represented disproportionately in the Communist Party, a fact that probably contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism in the interwar period. Noting these facts does not provide a sufficient cause for the extent and depth of anti-Jewish feeling in the twenties and thirties. Nor am I suggesting that all Jews who voted for the Socialists or Communists necessarily hated the countries in which they lived. What I am implying is that Davies' picture of European Jews as fervent European nationalists needs heavy qualification.

Finally, unlike Davies, I have not encountered the raging or smirking Jew-haters in Austria whom he mentions. While I have spent considerable time in that country and speak and write German, I have not bumped into those whom Davies presents as typical of the Austrian mentality. Perhaps our experiences have been altogether different.

Paul Gottfried
Elizabethtown PA, USA

Sir,

Does the Holy Scripture of Roy Kerridge's 'Chosen People' (*SR* Summer 2006) support David Conway's view on another page that Ancient Israel was 'notably' tolerant?

According to those early records, that nation defined itself primarily by allegiance to its 'jealous god'

Yahweh. Hospitality to strangers was enjoined but admission of aliens into its 'congregation' was carefully regulated. Moses for instance murdered every Midianite except under-age girls, while Joshua initiated multiple genocides to dispossess other peoples and Samuel finalised the solution by dismembering their king. Disabled Israelites were kept from the administrative priesthood. Apostates, adulterers and homosexuals were stoned to death. Even amid the cosmopolitan climate of first century 'multiple Judaisms', hostility was directed against Samaritan mixed breeds, and then Christian missionaries led by Paul.

Racial identity, territorial occupation and spiritual faith are linked together throughout history. This has led to some cruelty but also much creativity, whereas multi-culturalised societies mean confusion, a multi-cultural *world* of nations offers a varied abundance of arts, religion and science — true riches compared to the flim-flam of 'free trade' and 'liberal democracy'.

Biblical accounts of Hebrew society may be inaccurate. It is doubtful that all human and animal species on our planet descend from Noah's Ark or that we are 'all guilty' of Adam's original sin, and that there is no salvation without the 'Bark' of Saint Peter (Mullen).

Marius N Timmerman
Dover

Sir,
Christie Davies' specific complaint about the *Protocols of Zion* needs some qualification. Scholars agree that this century old plagiary was adapted from a 19th century book by a Frenchman Joly. It has always been popular with some Arabs even before the emergence of a Jewish state, the idea of which oddly enough forms no part of its content. It chimes in with attacks on Jews found in the Koran and *Hadith* but the creation and policies of Israel gave it a new lease of life. In 1956 the Egyptian government issued a copy officially, and in 1970 it was the top non-fiction (*sic*) bestseller in the Lebanon.

In Arab imaginations, successful pro-Israel lobbying in the USA seems to 'fit' the picture of global influence described in the document, which lends it a sort of lurid credibility in the war-torn Middle East. International conflict between 'Zionism' and 'Islam' is intensifying dangerously. There are good and bad points on both sides, as Anatol Lieven explains in *America Right or Wrong*. Britain cannot please everyone but we should be try to be impartial yet constructive in a humanitarian sense.

A Thomson
Wakefield

ARTS AND BOOKS

'Conservatism' — Ancient and Post-modern David Ashton

After Blair: Conservatism beyond Thatcher, Kieron O'Hara, Icon Books, 2005, £12.99.

Arctic adventurer, celebrity cyclist and sartorial sensation, Dave Cameron hailed this book, from a Southampton University 'Intelligence, Agents and Multimedia' researcher, as 'part of the road map' for his party's 'recovery'. It might well have influenced the new young leader in replacing those qualities of 'Thatcherism' that people like with 'namby-pamby' aspects of liberalism that they detest, as Gordon Brown put it.

Author of two other interesting publications, *Trust — From Socrates to Spin* and *Plato and the Internet*, Kieron O'Hara could nevertheless have used an

alternative subtitle like *Pyrrhonism on Polling Day* because he looks back centuries before Margaret Thatcher. He traces 'conservatism' from Sextus Empiricus in the closing period of classic Hellas all the way to Michael Howard in the 'dog-whistle' nightfall of southern England. He analyses, among others, Montaigne, Hume and Burke, several Prime Ministers, and recent contributors from Michael Oakeshott to John Gray. His impressive documentation would certainly provide a useful guide for future excavations in long forgotten fields of Toryism, though his aim is more than archaeological, his 'Tomb Raider' scripts notwithstanding.

He searches those past resources for an ideological core, a simplified philosophy that can communicate 'good reasons' for present-day public support. He offers concise and perceptive comments on various matters, including the social importance of informal memory as transmitted by common law, workplace experience, religious ritual and professional responsibility. But his prime purpose is to extract, from accumulated

conservative thought and practice, a common thread of political 'scepticism', a disposition that realises the limitations on our knowledge and the frailty of our condition, and the wisdom of accepting existing customs and circumstances rather than risking disruptive minor innovations or imposing abstract visions of major transformation.

All well and good, except that in adapting this long-tested attitude for our immediate situation, O'Hara proposes 'changes' that seem quite radical, particularly in face of looming dangers to the very durability of our nation and civilisation (see, for example, Admiral Parry's detailed survey reported in the *Sunday Times*, 11 June 2006). Contending that the 'whole point' of a conservative's philosophy is that his private wishes about how society should be constituted and governed are 'explicitly understood to be irrelevant', he uses this condition of restraint, if not paralysis, to insinuate a wish-list of his own.

He argues that for successful re-election the Conservative Party must take votes from Labour by moving towards the 'centre', an admittedly problematic — and largely media-managed — concept. It is possible to be 'right' on some issues (say, tax-breaks for exporters) and 'left' on others (say, water-supply ownership), so that the 'centre' not only slides along a notional scale but also floats around like a raft. New Labour, which officially ditched CND and Clause IV, has nevertheless adopted other detrimental 'leftist totems' such as constitutional 'reform' and 'nuclear family' subversion. Its bureaucratic ambition has shifted from controlling the means of inefficient production to supervising the offspring of dysgenic reproduction.

Has 'Princess Tony' in office really inherited the 'Finchley Orb and Falklands Sceptre'? What are all these 'good things' that the 'Leader of the Opposition' says should not be opposed? O'Hara, who incidentally thinks that by the time a 'Conservative' enters No 10 we might anyhow be locked into the EU currency and constitution, has warned Cameron against turning 'right'.

He says 'gays, blacks and women' make up 60 per cent of the population, a spurious and irrelevant aggregate (ethnic 'homophobes' probably outnumber homosexuals). What about other hypothetical 'communities' — gifted teenagers, blue-eyed blondes, Christians, or the overlooked 'grey minority'? Old age pensioners cast an estimated quarter of the votes in 2005, and most would surely expect members of parliament competently to represent constituencies, not 'reflect' population categories as classified by New Left revolutionaries decades ago.

O'Hara identifies as crucially 'conservative' the

recognition that it is difficult or undesirable to resist or control the conditions underlying the 'natural order', which he then extends to the global 'forces' rapidly unleashed by technology, fashion, demography, etc. He argues that it is futile to stand in the way of 'great social changes'. Events must not be steered, nor even anticipated. Instead, conservatives must now render uninvited and unimpeded 'progress' palatable. We should simply go with the flow, even if it smells like sewage, or lie down under it even if it feels corrosive, with politicians perhaps offering a little perfume to the recalcitrants or possibly a dose of morphine for the worst reactionaries. Would he endorse comparable inertia or acquiescence if confronted by military attack, massive child debauchery or an acutely contagious pandemic?

Predictably he objects to the view, widely held, that 'uncontrolled immigration' threatens national values, and welcomes this 'progressive benchmark' with arguments frequently refuted:

We are currently living through a period of giant migrations, which our immigration laws are designed to prevent (or, rather, to deflect elsewhere). As Lord Salisbury [?!] would no doubt have reminded us, this is irresistibly reminiscent of King Cnut trying to hold back the tide, especially at a time when short-term labour shortages and the long-term aging of the population mean an *increase* in the demand . . . The attempt to restrict immigration, as with drugs, has created all sorts of criminal opportunities.

The unprecedented impacts of continual multi-ethnic mass-immigration on law, public expenditure, environmental health, and the shared values that underpin social co-operation, are demonstrable. In a troubled world riven increasingly by bitter, brutal and unmanageable cultural conflicts, why import them? We should indeed 'avoid extremes'.

Authentic conservatives cannot just 'accept' and 'conserve' existing damage but must seek repair. There is no question of restoring a 'golden age' but of learning from previous improvements of miserable situations. Legislative caution cannot justify supine complacency, and highly desirable, long overdue domestic deregulation could be balanced by improvements in external defence. The element of scepticism in traditional conservatism should not be isolated and inflated at the expense, and to the detriment, of its other elements, including attachment to the *polis* itself, and the primary duty to protect its cultural continuity and institutional stability from excessive disturbance or invasive destruction. Statecraft needs prudence, not disempowerment.

What about elections? Many factors of deterioration impinge on the programmes brandished before the

ballot and the actions taken afterwards, particularly now voters are offered what amounts to a single centre-ground 'party' and are encouraged to opt for the most entertaining of its top three personalities, and Cameron's mayoral 'primary' in our capital city copies *The X Factor* on telly. 'Charisma is the currency of politics today. A leader who lacks it cannot be redeemed by a clever manifesto,' wrote Michael Portillo when inviting Cameron to break his promises if their observance works against him and the reasons for them no longer apply. 'Voters have little concern for any party's promises for the good reason that they do not believe what they are promised.' In post-modern governance, it seems, even the showbiz fake becomes a sideshow farce.

An historically informed case for limited government is one thing, but self-limitation of the will to govern properly and to survive altogether is quite another. Readers should treat O'Hara's subtle thesis with — scepticism.

The man who mapped Australia Derek Turner

The Fever of Discovery: The Story of Matthew Flinders, Marion Body, New European Publications, London, 2006, £15.

In recent decades, an increasing number of Australians have been flirting with republicanism, and trying to forget the essentially Anglo-Celtic origins of 'the lucky country'. Although the republicans were defeated in the 1999 referendum on whether Australia should become a republic, demographic and related cultural pressures are likely to call this result into question again in the future — and in the meantime many of Australia's teachers, academics and Labor politicians are busily trying to turn Australia into Australasia.

For such people, the memory of Matthew Flinders and other old country pioneers is a nagging irritation. (As well as several statues and memorial stones in Australia, Flinders' name is applied to various species of Australian grass and trees, and to a range of mountains in South Australia.) This is decidedly ungrateful of them, as it was Flinders who popularized the name of their country and continent. Without him, they might have been called New Hollanders instead, and early 19th century Australian history might have been written by the French instead of the British. Perhaps they might even have had Jacques Chirac instead of the Queen as their head of state. One doubts

that this would have been an improvement.

Simultaneously with being a *bien-pensant* embarrassment in Australia, Flinders is obscure in the land of his birth. Here, he is just one explorer among many for even the most tub-thumping of imperialists, while for the Left their collective cultural amnesia is driven by a collective cultural guilt about an imperial past seen increasingly as not just a foreign country, but as a shameful one. It is a long time since British schoolchildren were really taught about the contributions to human knowledge made by their country's great navigators and explorers. Today, on the rare occasions when such persons as John Smith, James Cook and Flinders are mentioned at all, their activities are seen as mere overtures to a subsequent history of oppression, racism and other 'isms', *ad nauseam*. Lady Body's book is impeccably researched; it also benefits from conversations with Flinders' great granddaughter who inspired the author's interest.

Flinders was born near Spalding in March 1774, the son of a surgeon. In 1790, he joined the navy and sailed aboard the *Providence*, as a midshipman under Captain Bligh (of Bounty infamy), to Tahiti and then Jamaica. They returned through the Torres Trait, between Australia and New Guinea — Flinders' first glancing experience of a continent with which he was to become so intimately associated. After his return to England in 1793, he was re-posted to the *Bellepheron*, and played a courageous part in the 'Glorious First of June' battle of 1794. He then joined *HMS Reliance*, and set sail for New South Wales in February 1795.

No-one had charted the Australian coastline accurately, and no-one even knew that it was a single landmass. Upon arrival in the colony, Flinders and fellow crew member George Bass (another explorer who has fallen into the memory hole) conducted surveying along the coast, which had only been explored for 10 or 20 miles either side of the harbour at Port Jackson (now Sydney). They braved the climate, often hostile aborigines, disease, terrible food and sub-standard ships to carry out highly accurate surveys of the coastline and the adjoining countryside, and were the first Europeans to circumnavigate Tasmania, and climb that island's Mount Wellington.

He was back home in 1799, and set sail again for Botany Bay in 1801, in command of *HMS Investigator*, complete with his remarkable pet cat, Trim, whose habit of snatching meat from officers' forks cannot have always gone down well in the wardroom. His was the first ship to circumnavigate the whole continent, all the time making highly detailed maps, many of which were used for over 100 years after his death. In his spare time, he also experimented with magnetism, and devised the 'Flinders bar', a bar of iron mounted below

the ship's compass to avoid the problem of compass deviation. Modern ships still carry such bars.

He left for England in August, 1803, as a passenger aboard *HMS Porpoise*. After being shipwrecked on the Great Barrier Reef, he continued his journey aboard the *HMS Cumberland*. He decided to put in at Mauritius to pick up a better ship, so anchored at Port Louis in December 1803. (Although Britain and France were at war, there had been chivalrous agreement that scientific expeditions should not be interfered with.) But the governor thought Flinders a spy, and so began six-and-a-half years of tedious captivity.

He returned home at last in 1810. He and his wife settled in and around London — a peaceful existence interrupted by the birth of their daughter (from whom descended Sir Flinders Petrie, the eminent archaeologist — another kind of explorer, and a demonstration that genius and talent, like criminality, tends to run in families), and less happily by money shortages and difficulties in having his works published. By late 1813, he was suffering from kidney stones, and found it more difficult to sit at his desk to write. His work, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, was finally published on July 18th 1814 but he was already in a coma, and died early the following day, at the age of just 40. A productive life was cut tragically short.

Clearly Matthew Flinders was a considerable historical figure. Yet there are still too many Britons who can ask, as one Lincolnshire district councillor asked at a meeting to decide upon a suitable memorial for the explorer, 'Who is this geezer Matthew Flinders?' This comprehensive account will go some way to filling this knowledge gap, and help to preserve an outstanding record of courage and imagination in a Britain sorely lacking in such qualities and in such understated heroes.

Invertebrate Spain

Alfred Sherman

Ghosts of Spain, Giles Tremlett, Harper Collins, 2006, £16.99.

In 1936 Spain became briefly the touchstone of world politics; since then it has become a backwater, a centre of tourism, retirement homes and cuisine; per Montesquieu, *heureux le pays sans histoire*. This book by the *Guardian*'s Correspondent in Spain sensitively traces its evolution from the debris of the civil war and Franco dictatorship and its recent return to the front pages, signalling emerging conflicts.

Comment on Spanish affairs during its high season

was Marxist — or anti-Marxist, which came to much the same thing. Awareness of Spain's idiosyncracies was sacrificed on the altar of ideology. Yet they helped bring about the civil war in the first place, and constitute a continued threat to civil peace. The ethno-linguistic linguistic diversity of Spain lies at the root of its past, present and — dare I say future? — conflictivity. Ortega Y Gasset's designation, 'Invertebrate Spain', remains accurate.

Discordances are exemplified by the radical changes which have occurred since the book appeared. At the time of its publication, ETA terror and its ramifications demonstrated the intractability of the Basque question, which the author traces faithfully. Blaming ETA for the Madrid bombings cost Aznar his party's premiership, and left ETA bloody but unbowed. Simultaneously, Tremlett retails the conventional wisdom that Catalan ethno-linguistic nationalism would always stay within bounds dictated by the nations' businesslike mode. Since the book came out, the position has been reversed. ETA's belated decision to give up terrorism, which had been a reaction to the insensate brutalities of the Franco era, leaves the way open to a new adjustment in the Basque country, while a new movement in Catalonia from autonomism towards independence has caused a fluttering in the armed forces, the guardians of Spanish wholeness. From Spain, as from Africa, always something new.

In historical perspective, this is less surprising than British readers might think, or for that matter Tremlett, who is a good journalist but less of an historian. Though the Basques are a very old nation indeed, antedating all European ethnic history, they did not intrude into the political scene as Basques till modern times. During the height of the Moslem conquest, Basques constituted the majority of Christians in what was left of Spain. Many were assimilated to Leonese and Castilian culture and left their mark on Spanish languages as they emerged. They were Catholic par excellence and the backbone of the Carlista revolts. The Basque linguistic revival was a modern phenomenon, dating to the post-Napoleonic period when the religious hierarchy in the Basque country and Navarre decided that Spain was becoming too liberal, and that therefore the Basques should be protected behind a linguistic barrier. Designed to protect the Basques from Spanish liberalism, this developed a life of its own and brought the Basques into the Republican camp for the first time.

Catalan nationalism is equally modern. The language is rooted in both sides of the border, in Roussillon, the Pyrenees, parts of Aragon — where it coexists with Anti-Catalan feeling over the division of natural resources — Valencia, Murcia and the Balears. It is centuries older than Castilian, but only in

the Generalitat does it have ethnic or nationalistic overtones, and they date only to the last century. Gallego, which is basically the same as Portuguese and antedates the Moslem conquest, is purely linguistic. The Gallegos, from their over-populated minifundia, were the main source of manpower for settling Latin America, but gladly switched to Castilian on arrival there.

Echoes of Franco's rule are, as Tremlett discovers, both widespread and muted. The title, *Ghosts of Spain*, is apt. Recent history, the Republic, the War, the Dictatorship, are always on the edge of consciousness, threatening to intrude, silently counselling moderation. The Communists, whose ascendancy was a creation of the uprising and civil war, have shrunk back. The regionalists hold the balance between the two main parties, and exploit it for all they are worth. The Socialist Party surprised by its corruption and incompetence, though socialism is the same anywhere, but was given its second chance by its rivals' floundering, the unpopular Iraq war and misplaced responsibility for the Madrid bombings.

The author is right to elevate Don Quixote to importance as a symbol of Spanishness. Cervantes, of part-Jewish origin, never free from fear of the Inquisition which associated intellect with Jewishness and heterodoxy, created Quixote as the essence of Spanishness; who questions everything and everyone, yet reaches answers which take unacceptable directions, and which it can neither reject nor accept. It remains a country of contradictions and paradoxes, a perpetual source of surprise to Spain-watchers. They must learn to welcome it. It is a country where people feel strongly on a range of issues, which cut across lines of class and region.

Tremlett is lukewarm towards King Juan Carlos, and sees him as swimming with the tide. This is not my reading. I remember visiting Spain for the first time since the war shortly after Franco's death but before democratic institutions had been introduced. It then seemed as though things might go either way. The communists seemed ready for a second round, the Franquistas by and large favoured continuity. Characteristically, at a public meeting I attended in a small Aragonese town, Alcaniz, the chairman began with the request that speakers identify themselves, 'unless they preferred not to'. It was Juan Carlos who pushed and pulled behind the scenes, and more publicly when need be and harnessed the monarchy to democracy. If ever there were a case of the role of the individual in history, he exemplified it. Tremlett is one of the many commentators for whom this is one paradox too far. All the more reason to appreciate it.

A New Commonwealth?

Martin Dewhurst

The Dragons of Expectation: Reality and Delusion in the Course of History, Robert Conquest, Duckworth, 2005, £18.

I can think of only one Westerner who has done as much as Robert Conquest to enlighten readers about what the 'Soviet experience' was really like: George Orwell, whom Conquest greatly and rightly admires. Of his latest — but not, one hopes, his last — volume, the title is taken from an 1844 translation by Thomas Wright of the Poetic (or Elder) Edda: to judge from the extract used here, the 'dragons of expectation' may fly in from the West and/or from the East, and might be associated less with the dangers emanating from the Orient (including Russia) than with the complacent, very widespread nineteenth-century European view of the inevitability of 'progress' — a word that occurs only very rarely, thank goodness, in this book. However, writing nearly a century and a half after Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-1861), Conquest refuses to abandon all hope, despite his well-justified complaints, especially in Part 1 of this monograph, about, for instance, the dumbing-down of education in Britain and America, resulting in the occurrence of élites (or 'élites'?) that are in many ways far inferior to those of the past, as well as about the creation of those ghastly bureaucracies running the EU, UN and, not least in the UK, the world of the arts. Can we, indeed, be sure that our Western 'law-and-liberty' culture and civilization will prevail and be accepted by the rest of the world (China, Iran and Iraq are hardly mentioned in this book), and should we assume that most people everywhere really would, given the choice, prefer our pluralist, open society to a more monolithic, closed alternative?

Despite his criticisms of current tendencies in the West, Conquest not only defends traditional Western values but in Appendix B, the most provocative part of this work, goes over to the offensive and, tongue slightly in his cheek, presents us with 'an exercise in political and cultural science fiction', proposing the establishment of an international Consultative Council drawn from representatives of the English-speaking world (the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Pacific and Caribbean islands and Ireland) which would hold a Congress and set up various Committees — Foreign Affairs, Military, Economic, Social, Legal and Constitutional — with a small, non-bureaucratic

permanent staff. Countries like Norway and Gambia, should they so wish, could join the Association in due course. How seriously should this utopian idea be taken?

What this three-part book as a whole makes us more conscious of is that, for all their faults and depressing trends, the English-speaking parts of the world are still much better places for most of us to live in than is just about anywhere else on our planet. Regular readers of this journal are likely to agree with most of the thoughts and value judgements expressed in this slightly self-indulgent volume or, to put it less kindly, they are unlikely to find many really new ideas therein. This is why I think it ought — and perhaps is intended — to be read mainly by intelligent teenagers and the twenty-somethings who, on the whole, simply cannot comprehend or internalise what it was like to live in Nazi and Soviet times (Conquest assumes, possibly wrongly, that the Cold War is over). Part 1 gets to grips with and demolishes many of the tired leftist clichés of the second half of the twentieth century; Part 2 provides, on a mere 85 pages, an excellent survey of the Soviet period in Russian history, with well-deserved swipes and lunges at C P Snow, Simone de Beauvoir, J K Galbraith and others — people who thought they knew everything that mattered but who understood next to nothing; and discusses the place of literature in particular and of the arts and humanities in general in the world of today. I would like to quote a few of Conquest's words which older as well as younger readers might wish to contemplate.

But do the United States and the United Kingdom have anything much to learn from the European political or politico-academic theories and practices of the last three hundred years? I think not.

So let us note, and dismiss to the sphere of the unreadable, the silly-clever corners of academe, the surviving freak fashions — Derrida, Foucault, etc.

The world that Americans, and other Westerners full of goodwill, want to mount and ride, feed and pat, is not a sweet-tempered little pony but a huge vile-tempered mule.

... the combination of idiocy and paranoia found all over Brussels.

eating the menu instead of the meal — of those who like literary theory much more than literature.

All truly critical, as against technical, argument is either intuitive or hypothetical or partial. This cannot be compensated for by a study of the raw material, however exhaustive.

Hysteria is the product of frigidity, not of passion.

... a muddy puddle may pretend to any depth; a clear pool cannot.

Finally, Conquest the poet. This is the beginning of his Reconnaissance perhaps referring *inter alia* to Kant:

On a clear night, we may look up at the All
As if standing at the central
Point of a huge flash-freaked black opal

Lenin's Ideological Purge

David M Holohan

The Philosophy Steamer: Lenin and the Exile of the Intelligentsia, Lesley Chamberlain, Atlantic Books, 2006, £25.

The 'Philosophy Steamer' in the title refers to two German ships — the *Haken* and the *Preussen* — which, in 1922, carried off into enforced exile two groups of Russian intellectuals, hand-picked by Lenin, because he regarded them as being inimical to the new Bolshevik régime in Russia. Gorky had advised that killing former opponents of Bolshevism would 'lead to a moral blockade of Russia on the part of Socialist Europe' and it was advice which both Lenin and even Trotsky were willing to heed.

The intellectuals deported by Lenin were not people who fought against Bolshevism with the sword: their weapon of choice was the pen. Berdyaev, Frank, Lossky, Karsavin, and others were all prominent philosophers who occupied important and influential posts in Russian academe and frequently gave public lectures. Indeed, Berdyaev and Frank had been Marxists in their youth but in the eyes of the new Soviet regime this made them even more dangerous — they had once embraced the new rational vision on which the Soviet Union was founded and had rejected it for mysticism. These 'religious mystics' all offended Lenin's pathological hatred of religion and his mission to wipe out the church in Russia. He called such people 'obscurantists', 'shit' and 'scum'.

Foolishly, Lenin also deported those intellectuals who might have been of great use to the new regime: the economist Bulatov, the engineer Kozlov, and the specialist in railways, Efim Zubashov, and many other professionals, because they were independently minded. But Russia was not awash with such highly skilled professionals and could ill afford to dispense with their expertise in a country ravaged by revolutions and a civil war. However, many of those who did not abandon their homeland, either willingly or through coercion, were to die in Stalin's purges of the late 1930s in a paranoid atmosphere of rooting out of 'saboteurs' and 'enemies of the people'. The act of

putting away ‘troublesome elements’ beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union was a blueprint for the way the regime would deal with future dissidents such as Solzhenitsyn.

Chamberlain charts with meticulous detail the process by which the intellectuals were selected for deportation, arrested and interrogated, and she describes their journey to the West on the ships, and how they subsequently settled in Prague, Berlin and Paris. She recounts the travails of the expellees admirably, often with passion and pathos, as she takes us through their hardships, the often hostile reception with which they were met from the indigenous population, the difficulty they had in assimilating a foreign, alien culture and language, and their loneliness and pining for their homeland. A number of those who were deported were forced to do so alone, without their family. In this, the book has a modern resonance: it is a moving account of political refugees in exile.

Chamberlain’s descriptive skill and ability to empathise with the deportees make the book an informative read both for the general reader and the more specialist reader. A number of the intellectuals whose fate she charts are not exactly household names, even for well-informed Slavists, but her narrative is full of humanity as well as detail. She avoids the obvious pitfall of merely throwing at the reader a list of names of obscure Russian intellectuals by injecting a moving element of human interest into her account. There is also an element of ‘the happy ending’ — many of those who were deported along with their progeny went on to have brilliant careers in the West as writers and academics. Had Lenin not expelled people like Berdyaev, their work and thought would not have developed, published, and become widely known, because it ran counter to the ethos of the regime in Soviet Russia. Writers and philosophers more than any other people of creative genius were forced into a strait-jacket by the Bolsheviks — they either had to write to a prescribed formula or remain unpublished. At least abroad their talents could flourish. Chamberlain also makes interesting contrasts between the Russian communities in Prague, Berlin and Paris, each centre of resettlement being subtly different.

So Lenin’s ‘chosen intellectuals’ were lucky to escape with their lives. However, like some fine wines, Russians do not travel well. Chamberlain shows that many of the deportees brought Russia with them because they saw themselves as the guardians of a Russian cultural tradition which was being eradicated by the Bolsheviks. Early in the new regime the Bolsheviks changed the Russian orthography, but the deportees refused to abandon the old spelling until many years after their exile and continued to publish books abroad

with the old orthography. Few of the deportees and voluntary exiles integrated into their alien milieu and, true to their schismatic nature, many fell out with each other principally over differing attitudes to the new regime versus the old order: ‘Nabokov spoke of the “crude and irrational contempt that Russian émigrés had for the natives”.’ One notable exception was the outstanding intellectual Roman Jakobson, who left Russia voluntarily just before the expellees: he settled in Prague, learned Czech and studied Czech literature — activities which caused him to found the Prague School of Linguistics.

The émigrés were a voice of moral resistance to Western sympathisers of the Soviet regime: the exiled intelligentsia was speaking from an informed standpoint and many were outraged by those they regarded as ignorant of what was really going on in the Soviet Union — prominent figures such as H G Wells, Romain Rolland, and Eduard Herriot (not ‘Hérriot’). The Russians in exile were delighted when Gide came back from the USSR in a state of total disillusionment. Chamberlain notices that the very act of emigration seemed to push some of the deportees into an extreme position of Russian nationalism and anti-Westernism: they expressed their antipathy towards Peter the Great’s creation, his monumental ‘window on Europe’ — the city of St Petersburg — and some embraced the concept of Eurasianism — the idea that Russia has a unique role to play in spanning the East-West divide between Europe and Asia, and, not surprisingly, they revived the belief of Russia as the sole repository of Byzantine spirituality — the ‘Third Rome’. It is a pity that Chamberlain does not mention how these ideas are still burning questions in Russia today.

I have some minor quibbles. The vast majority of the website addresses given in the notes were broken links, i.e. they did not produce the information expected — a pity, since had they worked, they would have been a rich source of supplementary information. Of course, Chamberlain is not to blame for this as websites are not consistently maintained. There is also a certain amount of inconsistency over the translation and transliteration of proper nouns: the prison on ‘Shpalernaya Street’ is referred to as being on ‘Shpalerna Street’ later in the text, and she refers to ‘Vasilevsky Ostrov’ rather than ‘Vasilevsky Island’, when other names are translated, such as ‘Nikolaevsky Embankment’ and ‘Kabineteskaya Street’. Similarly ‘Alexandra Tolstoy’ becomes ‘Tolstaya’ in some passages. Such inconsistencies can be confusing and puzzling for readers who do not know Russian. She also describes Oswald Spengler and Eduard Bernstein as ‘Austrian’, when they were both German. She translates stanzas from two poems — one stanza from Mandelstam’s poem ‘Concert

at the Station', and a much longer extract from a long poem by Gumilyov, entitled 'The Lost Tram'. Neither translation is accurate, and the Gumilyov poem is particularly so. She bravely tries to make her translations scan and rhyme, but in so doing she has departed far too far from the original meaning of the poems, and why she lapses into Cockney vernacular in the translation of the Gumilyov poem is anybody's guess. The original is written in a non-literary, but standard, linguistic register. A more prosaic translation (in every sense) would have better preserved and conveyed the poet's imagery.

Chamberlain's mission statement comes late in her book, when she writes: 'I've tried to evoke that last Russian autumn in this book and to be one of its chroniclers. It was in the mid-1960s when Nabokov also wrote that the Russian emigration "still awaits a chronicler".' Has she fulfilled the role of chronicler? I think she has. Her book is full of detail and gives a real insight into the émigrés' world and the ideological and political atmosphere in which they lived with many human, touching stories of their trials and tribulations — and, of course, their successes.

Im Osten Nichts Neue (All Quiet on the Eastern Front)
Frank Ellis

Ivan's War: The Red Army 1939-1945, Catherine Merridale, Faber & Faber, 2005, £20 hb, £9.99 pb

Based on a selection of archive material and interviews, many of them very moving and powerful even for those who are hardened to reading the dreadful litany of suffering during The Second World War, *Ivan's War* attempts to portray the war on the Eastern front from the bottom up, from the point of the Soviet soldier, Ivan. Merridale begins her account with the Soviet attack on Finland, the winter war of 1939-1940, and then picks up the story with the German invasion on June 22nd 1941. From that Sunday morning in June she follows the trials of the Red Army and civilians through the Moscow battle of 1941, to Stalingrad (1942-1943) and Kursk (1943) and from there to the Red Army's final victory in Berlin in May 1945.

Merridale argues that Red Army performance in the winter war provided very little insight into how the Red Army would function after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. Now the German army derived a great deal of useful insight from the Finns and much of it held good for 1941-1943. Manifestations of poor

combat performance associated with morale and incompetence in the Finnish war such as the frequency of self-inflicted wounds, deserters and lack of initiative, clearly anticipate the same problems after 22nd June 1941. Again, one must question her assertion that the response to the German invasion was one of rapid evolution to the threat 'when there was a real crisis, an invasion that threatened to engulf and even to destroy the motherland, men's families, the homes and landscapes that they loved'. All the evidence shows that it took far too long for the Red Army to learn some of the basic lessons of modern warfare. There was no notion of, for example, *Auftragstaktik* in the Red Army, something which made the Wehrmacht and combat SS divisions so formidable. Why did it take until 1942 before the grotesquely incompetent Lev Mekhlis, one of Stalin's creatures, was removed? The sad truth is that it took too many disasters and too many soldiers' lives before anything resembling professional changes was made.

Merridale assumes in writing *Ivan's War* that while we know a great deal about the privations and suffering of Allied and German soldiers we know very little about what befell Soviet soldiers. This is not so. We know a great deal about the fate of Soviet soldiers and that millions of them and civilians died of hunger, cold and exhaustion; we know that the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* and other ad hoc terror squads executed Jews, commissars and partisans; we know that Stalin and too many incompetent Soviet generals had nothing but contempt for the lives of their men, sacrificing barely-trained recruits for minimal gain; we know that Soviet soldiers who had been captured by the Germans and managed to get back to their own lines were regarded with deep suspicion more or less for the rest of their lives, and that the Red Army and NKVD executed Soviet soldiers on any number of pretexts, and in very large numbers. Writing about the savage measures enacted by Stalin and others to deal with desertions, she says that 'all armies take measures of this sort to some extent...': true enough, but subject to the caveat that there was nothing remotely comparable to the cruel and vindictive provisions of Orders No 270 (16th August 1941) and No 227 (28th July 1942) in the American, Canadian and British Armies in World War Two. To suggest otherwise is totally to misconstrue the profound differences separating a totalitarian state from a liberal democracy and the way the two types of state waged war.

Censorship, Merridale argues, worked. Up to a point, but taken too far it was counter-productive. Soldiers who could read between the lines realised in the summer of 1942, despite official statements, that the Red Army was in full retreat. There are many

such examples in *Stalingradskaia epopeia* (2000), a very important collection of declassified NKVD documents, which is conspicuous by its absence from the bibliography. This mismatch between what the soldiers saw and experienced and what they read was corrosive of morale and undermined trust between officers and men. It bred utter contempt for commissars and other party hacks. Given the harsh censorship of anything to do with the war, which continued long after Stalin's death in 1953, the role of war literature and other memoirs assumes critical importance and here there are notable successes. Despite the censorship, Soviet writers, among them Grigorii Baklanov, Bulat Okudzhava, Vasilii Grossman and Viktor Astaf'ev found ways of circumventing the censors. Even now Baklanov's account of the period immediately before and after the German invasion, *July 1941* (1965), is one of the best. Baklanov pays great attention to the damage done to morale by the TASS communiqué of 13th June 1941, ignored by Merridale, which informs us that there was stockpiling of fuel. This apparently insignificant detail got past the censors to be published in *July 1941*, so pointing out to the alert reader that a number of people were not fooled by the Soviet version of 'peace in our time'.

Censorship mutilated a great many war novels but the Soviet censors did not have things all their own way. One of the bizarre and certainly unintended consequences of Soviet censorship, especially of historical studies, was that the literary treatment of certain themes, like the impact of collectivization on the rural way of life, the flight of young men and women to the cities and the general decay of rural life, was often much better covered by the village prose writers, the *derevenshchiki* as they were known, among them, Valentin Rasputin and Viktor Astaf'ev, than official scholarly journals dedicated to the task. Under the conditions of Soviet censorship war literature played the same role. Vasil' Bykov, the great Belorussian patriot and veteran, waged an unremitting literary partisan war against the Soviet censors over a forty year period. The essential themes in Bykov's works are fear, cold, hunger, isolation, treachery, collaboration, extreme moral pressure and often crushing loneliness. The party and its ideological bodyguards attacked Bykov not merely because he undermined the official myths about the war — plenty of other writers did that as well — but because they recognised that his portrayal of war often evoked a picture of man that was utterly hostile to the Marxist-Leninist construct of the New Soviet Man. When we compare some of the studies of partisan warfare and collaboration published since 1991 with Bykov's literary treatment of the same themes it is remarkable how closely Bykov's depiction of partisan

warfare correlates with these historical studies. The censors feared and hated Bykov not just because they recognised the destruction of party myths, but because they, too, recognised the truth.

The author conspicuously fails to cite any of the better-known authors in any detail. She is not prepared to trust war novels and other literary sources and dismisses memoirs outright as 'notoriously unreliable'. This is certainly true of writers such as Ivan Stadniuk and one Leonid Brezhnev but it would be a serious error to dismiss all war novels, literary sources and memoirs as unreliable. And even from Stadniuk and Brezhnev there are insights to be gained.

The degree of correspondence between war novels and archive and interview-based material on many of these points is not coincidental and suggests that while one must exercise caution, a basic rule for all source material, war literature, or some of it, can nevertheless offer a reliable picture of men at war. When Merridale writes that soldiers just stayed in their own worlds and fought for close comrades then she inadvertently highlights one of the universal responses of soldiers to war, in whatever army they serve, and one of the main conflicts between Soviet party critics and dissenting writers. Those Soviet-Russian writers who eschewed the big strategic picture — Baklanov, Bondarev, Okudzhava, Genatulin, Kazakevich and Bykov — concentrating instead on the life and fate of the tightly knit unit, the gun crew, *razvedchiki* or some lone partisan, were accused of Remarquism, an allusion to the German writer, Erich Maria Remarque. What enraged Soviet critics was the suggestion that Soviet soldiers in reacting to the war experience could have anything in common with Germans, Englishmen or Americans. Solzhenitsyn has much to say on the distinctive mentality of the *frontovik*, a state of mind that is demonstrably and immediately recognisable in Western responses to war (see, for example, Ernst Jünger, Alistair Maclean and Norman Mailer). Shchagov, in *First Circle* (1968), is a fine portrait of a Soviet veteran who having been through the war must now adapt to the new priorities of post-1945 Russia without the comradeship he took for granted in 'a province called the Front. A village called Foxhole'. Merridale quite rightly emphasises these small group experiences, but they were dealt with in literature long before the archives were opened and before she was able to visit Russia and freely interview veterans. A very good picture of the war experience, incomplete and fragmentary to be sure, can indeed be derived from Soviet-Russian war literature. Any scholar of the Russo-German war owes a massive debt not just to the big three — Bykov, Astaf'ev and Grossman — but to many others as well.

There are a number of errors in this book: Stalin's Order No 227 was issued on 28th July 1942 not the 30th July 1942. The counter-intelligence organisation SMERSH was founded on 21st April 1943 not the 13th May 1942. The immediate predecessor of the NKVD was not the VChK: it was the OGPU. Likewise, she refers to the KGB when she should be citing the FSB. Nor is she consistent in her use of National Socialism and Fascism when referring to the Germans. The two terms are not synonymous.

The strength of *Ivan's War* lies in the great amount of personal detail from the lives of Soviet soldiers. For the uninitiated this will be very valuable. For those of us who are not neophytes, the assessment is less favourable. *Ivan's War* is marred by too many dubious assertions about the nature of the Soviet state, a failure to grasp the nature of Soviet-style censorship, in war and in peace, and a complete failure to take into account the vast reservoir of insight available in Soviet-Russian war and memoir literature.

Challenge to Zionism

Paul Gottfried

Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History, Norman G. Finkelstein, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, \$22.50.

The author of *Beyond Chutzpah* has taken on powerful vested interests, which in his case may be acquired behaviour. Having begun his book-writing by dissecting Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, a faux study that sweepingly condemns all Germans during the Nazi period as 'eliminationist anti-Semites,' and then tackling the 'Holocaust industry,' Finkelstein now furiously goes after the American Zionist lobby. He targets the views pushed by AIPAC and by its oft-cited authors Joan Peters and Allan Dershowitz (in *From Time Immemorial* in 1984 and *The Case for Israel* in 2003) dealing with Israel's founding and subsequent stormy relations with the Palestinians. Relying for evidence on Israeli historian Benny Morris, Finkelstein argues that contrary to Peters-Dershowitz, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had settled in what is now Israeli-held territory before the arrival of waves of European Jews in the early twentieth century, that Jewish armies in 1947 and 1948 expelled considerable Arab populations, and that this flight of Arab settlers did not happen because Arab leaders told their followers, as explained by Dershowitz and Peters, to leave so they might later return with a triumphant

Arab army. Finkelstein cites evidence that the atrocities committed against Arab villages by the Israeli army during the War of Israeli Independence were more extensive than generally reported.

Finkelstein is also partly on target in noting the correlation between American Zionist themes and particular turning points in Israel's foreign relations. He stresses the links between the Holocaust industry and the laying of guilt trips on Western Christians and the need to rally support for the Israeli occupation of Arab land. He also relates the increasingly positive view of the Religious Right among neoconservatives to the annexationist Zionist positions taken by Dispensationalist Christians. Finkelstein, however, may overstate these connections. He ignores the fact that *Commentary*, *Midstream* and other Zionist publications continued to publish screeds on the New Testament contributions to modern Anti-Semitism long after the Religious Right had become ardently Zionist. Contrary to Finkelstein's assertions, the Anti-Defamation League has no trouble combining Jewish nationalism with non-stop attacks on Fundamentalist Christians. Moreover, the Holocaust Industry has flourished for reasons that go well beyond the need to divert attention from the Israeli occupation of Arab territory. Peter Novick and Finkelstein (in his own book on this subject) provide multiple causes for the Jewish cult of victimhood, which, quite relevantly, sprang up in a Christian society that had begun to beat up on itself.

Finkelstein also invents a Religious Right 'reeking of anti-Semitism' and because of his undisguised leftism, plays down the malevolence of black nationalists, who are invariably made to appear less sinister than American Zionists. One might also question Finkelstein's insistence that anti-Zionism in Europe has nothing to do with disliking Jews in general. Some European critics might be striking back at their Jewish population for their disproportionate support of the multicultural Left in the only way that is permissible in a politically correct society, by accusing Jews of endorsing a Western imperialist power in the Middle East. A polling of French conservatives carried out in 2004 by SOFRES would suggest a close correlation between dislike for Israel and negative feelings about the Jewish Left in France. Stronger anti-Jewish sentiments may well exist on the anti-Zionist left, which is louder and even scatological in voicing its hatred for the Jewish state. Although neoconservatives have tried to intimidate Israel's critics by playing up this link, it may be equally far-fetched to deny that it exists.

But these animadversions are not intended to challenge the larger points made by Finkelstein. Zionist

special pleaders have stirred up largely misplaced Christian guilt about the Holocaust to silence those whose positions they do not care to have discussed. In Germany where, as Finkelstein observes, national self-loathing and unquestioning support for Israel go hand in hand, this manipulation has been particularly blatant. But the problem here is figuring out whether special pleaders have created these national sentiments — or whether they are exploiting a mood that already permeates German society.

Do the Israelis have the range of choice for maintaining their security that Finkelstein apparently believes they do? Although their foreign apologists may be as dishonest and hysterical as Finkelstein suggests, Israelis nonetheless express legitimate fears about their neighbours. It is hard to see why the Israeli government should believe that Palestinian authorities would clamp down on violence against Israelis, if only a peace treaty were signed and observed by their side. There is no compelling reason for Israelis to believe that Abbas or by now Hamas would control Palestinian militants, who plan to take over Israeli territory and to drive out its Jewish inhabitants. Israelis also cannot help noticing the hate-filled rhetoric against them emanating from the Palestinian media and educational institutions. Although similarly jaundiced opinions come from some Orthodox circles in Israel, these sentiments are far less widespread than they are among the Palestinians in the population as a whole.

With due respect to Finkelstein's attempts to depict the Palestinians as the suffering just, I would have no desire to live under these putative victims, unless they are able to produce a religiously tolerant society under law. Having just returned from a trip to Israel, I was struck by the large number of Israeli Palestinians, mingling in restaurants and shopping centres with everyone else. Most of these Palestinians seemed well dressed and well fed and nothing in their demeanour would suggest trauma. Until disproved, I shall continue to doubt that Palestinians would deal equally well with Jewish minorities or (dare I to say) with a Muslim Palestinian majority. Like American Indians, Palestinians may have been historically sinned against more often than they were in a position to inflict suffering on their enemies. But this disparity in suffering does not render them, except in leftist hagiography, more suitable builders of an even minimally decent political society.

My critical points do not diminish my respect for the author. His maverick qualities as a Jewish leftist (and one whose parents spent the war years in Auschwitz) contrast favourably to the bullying of his adversary, the Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law at Harvard, whose fraudulent scholarship Finkelstein has unmasked.

Unlike Dershowitz one can read this author with profit, even while disagreeing with him.

Criminal ideologues

Blair Gibbs

A Land Fit For Criminals, David Fraser, Book Guild Publishing, 2006, £17.99.

Not all major policy positions taken by governments are explained. Some are never explained — even when they impact on the life of voters every day. Practical motivations remain undisclosed and some philosophies are never openly argued for — they just preside, out of public view and unchallenged, shaping the consensus and altering the policy decisions of successive Ministers. This is what David Fraser argues has happened in the Home Office over the last thirty years. An ideology hostile to prison has taken root, progressively warping the Government's response to rising crime, and in its complacency, directly contributing to it. The author argues that if we want to make the streets of Britain safe in the long term, the everyday victims of crime — tens of millions each year — must ultimately look to organise themselves and lobby for change; appealing over the heads of the unrepresentative 'experts' to the ineffective politicians who until now have rarely taken crime as seriously as the ordinary citizens their complacent policies have let down.

A Land Fit for Criminals is a comprehensive analysis of what has happened to law and order in Britain over the last few decades. The advantage of Fraser's book over similar work by Peter Hitchens is his first hand experience (he worked as a probation officer for 26 years), and his use of statistics — many from official sources (though some are now quite dated). The author argues that conventional approaches to cutting crime — catching the criminals and locking them up — not only works, but more worryingly, barely happens in Britain anymore.

The 'criminal justice élite' as Fraser labels them, which have resisted this conventional approach and undermined the institutions that support it include most probationers, criminologists and Home Office civil servants in place in their new Marsham Street offices, as well as growing numbers of senior policemen, magistrates and judges. They repeatedly declare that there are thousands of people in prison who shouldn't be there and the way to tackle overcrowding is to free up space by letting criminals out early — or not sending them there in the first place. But on all

levels — deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation — Fraser shows that prison cuts crime. The reason this argument is rarely heard, and certainly not from the prison reform lobby, is because the ‘experts’ regard a rising prison population as a sign of society’s failure and so can rarely find a good thing to say about it. Furthermore, the Home Office has simply refused to make the pro-prison argument for years because ultimately, it doesn’t believe it. Instead, its dogmatic enthusiasm for alternatives to prison, which it claims reduce offending (backed up by dodgy statistics), allows it to callously and routinely shrug off the thousands of parole board failures each year — like the recent murder of the Chelsea banker John Monckton — which are the inevitable consequence of a broken system infected by a cultural disdain for prison. The result of this anti-prison mentality and increased use of non-custodial sentences has been thirty years of rising crime and failed responses. The burgeoning criminal fraternity has repeatedly tested our resolve, and found it wanting. And just as any economist will tell you, if bad behaviour is rewarded, you will get more of it. Low detection rates, falling numbers of convictions and weak punishments have effectively ‘rewarded’ crime.

The main thrust of this book is an exercise in ideological demolition. The self-serving motivation of the criminal justice elite is exposed and ridiculed. As is the underlying ideology that has fed lies to the public day in and day out and has managed to persuade most politicians from standing up for the victims of crime. The exception was Michael Howard, who while he was Home Secretary did his best (toughening sentences and expanding the prison estate), but even he was thwarted in the end when the Treasury decided (mistakenly) that prison was too expensive. Fraser dismisses such concerns. Even with the tougher sentencing laws put in place by the last Conservative Government, we are still routinely imprisoning (when our inefficient police can catch them) only the most prolific and violent offenders, and these people cost a fortune. On a range of estimates, the total cost of crime is about £60 billion a year. Equivalent, if you like, to the cost of the entire schools budget. Our 139 prisons cost us a little over £2.7 billion. In other words, even for fiscal conservatives, prison is a bargain.

A Land Fit for Criminals shows that we run great risks if we think, despite all the evidence, that we can have a low prison population, while we still have a high crime rate, and not expect public safety to be jeopardised. Fraser argues that the only imperative in criminal justice policy is public safety, and that only prison can guarantee this. Much evidence suggests that when it is allowed to, prison works, and with

expansion and more investment in Britain it can be made to work better. What does not work, is a criminal justice system that attempts to replace prison with other forms of community punishment, solely on the back of ideological motives or misplaced sentimentalism.

The Spider's Web

AW Purdue

The European Question and the National Interest, Jeremy Black, Social Affairs Unit, 2006, £16.99.

The idea that Britain should have a foreign policy which furthers the national interest seems to have been long abandoned by ministers and the Foreign Office as crude, politically incorrect and possibly immoral. This attitude is common about Europe; Britain, it is alleged, should always give in and subordinate its interests to the common European good. We will reap rewards we are told, though they have not appeared yet and will presumably only be enjoyed in heaven rather than on earth. Whom should we blame for this, our politicians, the Foreign Office or the electorate? Jeremy Black is not afraid to be a heretic and brings his wide and deep knowledge of European history to advance his Euro-sceptic approach to Britain’s immersion in the quagmire that is the European Union.

Ministers and governments must, of course, take the prime responsibility. They have consistently lied to the British public about the real implications of membership of the EEC and its successor, the EU, and persistently under-played the loss of sovereignty, while disregarding the effects upon the interests of British fishermen, erstwhile Commonwealth allies, or taxpayers. The old saw about the role of the Foreign Office not representing Britain to foreigners but representing foreigners to Britain has become fact. Rather to its dismay, but appropriately, it now finds that British ambassadors are becoming sidelined by representatives of the European Union with rather grander residences and larger salaries. The British public must take some of the blame for, although it has disliked the process of loss of sovereignty, it has allowed itself to be cajoled and dissembled into reluctant acquiescence. Perhaps the party system is most culpable for, save for the 1975 referendum at which membership of the EEC was represented as little more than a free trade agreement, the electorate has rarely had an opportunity to express its views on the most important issue for Britain. Margaret Thatcher disliked referenda, John Major was too scared to hold one, and Tony Blair backed off holding one on the new EU constitution once it was certain the electorate

would vote against it.

Europe, as Black puts it, is 'a fake community' that seeks to destroy communities that actually exist. History is rearranged or ignored and those who hold fast to the real communities, nations, are told that they suffer from 'false consciousness' from which they must be purged so that they may be re-baptised or brain-washed and become faithful citizens of the European community. Europe, it is proclaimed, is our manifest destiny which, somewhat contradictorily, we may miss out on if we are obstinate and fail to catch the Euro-bus or Airbus.

How did a proud and independent nation, urged by its own governments, forswear its past and subordinate its laws and institutions to a Franco-German hegemony it had in the past struggled against so valiantly? There was a failure of nerve amongst the British elite as the Empire and Britain's great power status declined in the post-war world. The economic progress of western Europe temporarily exceeded that of Britain during the sixties and seventies and misleading lessons were extrapolated. No Empire and an uncertain relationship with the USA whose administrations yearned for a Europe with 'one telephone number', though in the event they came to realise that only one telephone number, Britain's, could be relied upon, hastened the politics of Europhilia. Anything was better than a 'Little England' for politicians used to comfortable seats at 'top tables'. Hotel Brussels, a home for failed or discredited politicians, came to exercise more power than Westminster. Rule by undemocratic centrist elites was embraced against all the traditions of England and Britain.

During the 1930s there was a strong groundswell in many European countries against 'parliamentarianism' and economic liberalism. This informed a far more universal acceptance of Germany's 'New Order' than EU apologists are prepared to admit. The 'myth' that the EU was born from a desire to avoid future wars is a half truth for the reality is that this desire was already present in the Europe of 1940-41. Only Nazi scorn for the rights of non-Germans, along with German defeats on the Eastern Front, made it ephemeral. Reborn in the 1940s and 1950s, the campaign for a united Europe was once more marked by a distaste for democratic accountability and the free market.

Clement Attlee told the House of Commons when rejecting Britain's involvement in the Treaty of Paris in 1951 that, 'we are not prepared to accept the principle that the most vital economic forces of the country should be handed over to an authority that is utterly undemocratic and is responsible to nobody'. His Labour successors reneged on this promise but the prime responsibility for handing British law, British

traditions and Britain's economic interests over to an unaccountable European élite is with the party that above all the British public should have been able to rely on, the Conservative Party.

A centrist admirer of the corporate state, Macmillan, was followed by the unlamented Europhile, Edward Heath, while Mrs Thatcher was out-manoeuvred, and John Major signed up to Maastricht. David Cameron and the Cameroons will prove no more reliable. Jeremy Black describes the European myth that the EU represents, a myth based upon 'anachronism, teleology and reification'. How do we escape from the spider's web of the European Union?

Hesperophobia, Rejectionism and Misunderstanding

Mark Baillie

From Rushdie to 7/7 — The Radicalisation of Islam in Britain, Anthony McRoy, Social Affairs Unit, London, £20.

The Muslim and the Microphone — Miscommunications in the War on Terror, S J Masty, Social Affairs Unit, London, £20.

The hissing, paranoid and self-righteous victim-culture whine of Britain's rejectionist Islamists is chronicled thoroughly, if depressingly, in *From Rushdie to 7/7* while *The Muslim and the Microphone* explains our failure to understand Muslims' widespread fear of the West: both show how we have provoked support for terrorists.

Anthony McRoy seems to deplore the UK's 'failure' to ban *The Satanic Verses* under 'incitement to religious hatred' (a crime in Ulster at the time): somehow, any private lack of respect is an incitement to something and proof of Islamophobia.

The neologism Islamophobia (founder: Jack Straw, when Home Secretary) is used by the Government to mean hatred of Islam, reprehensible indeed, but phobia means fear, which is perfectly reasonable. We did not set about hating, or having any view at all about, Islam: it was Muslim leaders in the UK who set about rejecting and attacking our tolerant ways and provoking a bemused and occasionally angry reaction.

My counter-neologism is Hesperophobia. This alleged Islamophobia is in reality a reaction of fear to the Hesperophobia or plain Rejectionism of some Muslims in this country, building efficiently on an existing victim culture in Britain. Welcomed only by the Left on arrival and being proselytised only by the

Left about their status and prospects here, it could hardly have been otherwise. Hesperophobia is not likely to catch on but I claim to be the first (on BBC Wales, 4pm, Friday 7 July 2006) to use Rejectionism™ in this European context (angry letters please). It is a liberatingly useful description of the internal threat: we can tar the Iqbal Sacranies, peaceful fundamentalists, apologists and terrorists all with one brush that does not denigrate Islam or Muslims, freeing us from the hisses of racism and Islamophobia, making us the victims.

Fundamental to these conflicts are the words themselves. To the English, respect usually means a form of tolerance verging on indifference as long as you do it quietly. To many other cultures, respect is the street notion of rispeck, of awe and obedience.

Indeed, the Rejectionists are not calling for religious tolerance, only rispeck for Islam: we are threatened to refrain from drawing the Prophet but I will give £50 cash to anyone who can find a member of the Muslim Council of Britain who believes Muslims should rispeck Hindu reincarnation or Christ as Messiah (the Koran says the prophet Issa was rescued from the cross and lived happily ever after).

Another flaw in McRoy's assessment is quoting twice the favourite disingenuous mantra of self-styled-moderates, using Sura 5:32: 'Whoever kills a person unjustly, it is as if they have killed the whole of humanity.' This sura is indeed very revealing if you actually quote the full verse (my italics, Yusufali translation): 'On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person — *unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land* — it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them Our messengers with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.'

It becomes yet more revealing when you look at the next verse, 5:33 (Yusufali): 'The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter.' Naturally, these very verses are favourites of the Jihadis.

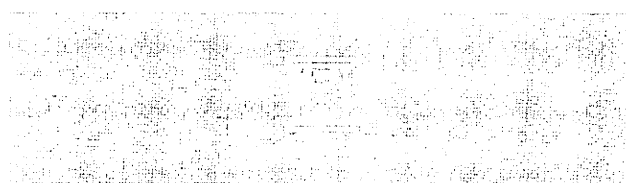
Overall, however, McCroy's details of the development of Rejectionism in the UK are fascinating: unfortunately, without an index it is worthless as a reference book. We have asked the publishers to post an index on-line and very much hope they do.

Whereas we can reasonably expect people in our country to respect our ways, we need also to understand

the ways of other people in other countries: S J Mastly describes Muslims' views of us: it matters not whether they are right or wrong, it matters that this is what they see. Our leaders, however, are doomed to see only through the narrow lens of their own beliefs and limited experiences. Anyway, they are fighting for votes at home, not for the hearts and minds of foreigners. With a series of anecdotes that turn into lessons, Mastly takes us into the minds of Afghans, Palestinians, Pakistanis, Indians and New Brits to see how they see us and to analyse how our behaviour could be altered and their perceptions might be changed. This book is an excellent example of how to know your enemy. It is what it says on the cover: 'essential reading for anyone interested in how our leaders can stop losing the War on Terror' — for anyone, that is, who wants to look beyond the kill-'em-all policy of spreading ersatz democracy by force.

You will not agree with all of it but even the contentious arguments are thought-provoking. For example, Mastly argues that the widespread belief that 9/11 was a Jewish plot to discredit Muslims is founded on a horrified rejection by decent Muslims of the notion that Muslims could have been involved in such evil. Therefore, a majority of Muslims could be persuaded to reject the Jihadis. This does not seem reassuring to me but it is interesting lateral thinking. Equally, you may not be convinced that Muslims are not motivated by hatred of Jews but by the actions of Jews in Israel but it is useful to think the question through: as with the 'clash of civilisations' theory that they hate us for what we are versus the theory that they hate us for what we do, I would go for both.

I can only agree, however, that Osama bin Laden has succeeded in making the West appear to be the beast he said it was, causing the UK and the USA in particular to abandon the rule of law and human rights, the qualities that gave us moral and practical ascendancy over Communism and Nazism in our previous wars, hot or cold. It only takes seconds to lose a reputation and it will take years to rebuild it: this book helps light the way forward.



Rockin' and rollin'

Helen Szamuely

Rock 'n' Roll, Tom Stoppard, Duke of York's Theatre

As I write the news comes that Syd Barrett, one of the founders of Pink Floyd and also one of the first victims of self-inflicted abuse to which rock stars are prone, has died. The causes seem to be unknown, though the surprising aspect of the story is that he has managed to live to the age of 60. The reason this is important is because Barrett is one of the main characters in Tom Stoppard's latest play *Rock 'n' Roll*, though apart from a brief and rather doubtful appearance at the beginning, he remains off-stage, the symbol of many things: individual opposition to a commonality (in this case a rock group that discards him because of his drug-induced mental collapse), the great god Pan, the victim of mindless modern journalism, above all, of rock music that, in this play, is the chosen weapon of struggle against totalitarianism. (In the past Stoppard used classical music and football in *Every Good Boy deserves a Favour* and *Professional Foul* for the same purpose.)

Now we come to the difficult part. What is Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll* about? Well, it is certainly not about rock 'n roll. The music played and discussed in it is rock music, from several decades after Bill Haley. But the title does allow the main character, Jan, to say ruefully, when his beloved and much treasured (too much treasured, as it turns out) collection of rock records is smashed up by the secret police in post-Prague Spring Czechoslovakia, 'It's only rock 'n roll.'

The play is about the dogged and desperate struggle waged by Czech dissidents against the Hussak government. These include the philosopher and rock-lover Jan getting gradually drawn into the struggle. It is also about the remarkable mental gymnastics performed by the old-time Communist, Max, Jan's professor in Cambridge, who insists in believing in an ideal that never really existed and has certainly been tarnished by reality. It is about materialism and the spirit clashing. Perhaps, the most moving moment of the play is Max's classicist wife, who is dying of cancer, tearfully and defiantly proclaiming her identity even though her body, the part that is so important, at least in theory, to her materialist husband, is being destroyed by the illness and attempted cure. There are many other themes: repeated and a rather unexpected clash between generations. Max's granddaughter takes

after her brilliant grandmother, not her dippy ex-flower child mother and makes very funny and sardonic comments about modern education. Her boyfriend manages to get under Max's skin by showing that he really knows the history of the Bolshevik regime and its many flaws from the very beginning. Together these two also make a stand against the empty, destructive modern journalism of Max's son-in-law and the latter's new wife.

Above all, the play is about the struggle between individuality and communitarianism. Jan maintains that it is not the dissidents who scare the Communist government but the underground rock groups and their fans, who do not care what the authorities think about them. Yet, as the play progresses, under pressure of events, he is drawn into the communal struggle — signs the Charter, protests against oppression. Max, the old-style Communist, on the other hand, believes in the community, despises individualism and loathes the very idea of individual freedom. Yet, the moment comes when he has to stand alone — his wife dies of cancer and, as one of the last remaining supporters of the Communist regime, his leaving the party creates a media furore. There are also, the inevitable Stoppardian twists and turns. Jan's passion for his records, we discover, has led him to an act of treachery, while Max sends what he describes as worthless information to his Czech controller in order to save Jan. It is hard to tell who acts well and who badly. Even the division between the different people in Czechoslovakia is not clear-cut. Jan's point that the organized dissidents and the Communist government feed off each other is never properly disputed.

A play for many seasons, then, and wonderfully well produced and acted. Rufus Sewell casts off his persona of the brooding darkling hero to play Jan through the many years and vicissitudes. Sinead Cusack excels as Eleanor, the strong-minded classicist and as her own dippy daughter, with a grown-up child, confused by the world yet oddly certain of some things. Brian Cox does very well with Max, who is the least changing character in the whole play, possibly as a symbol of complete subservience to an idea.

Gorky and Hare

Jonathan Tokeley

Enemies — Almeida Theatre

History eventually disproves ideology. The twentieth century has taught us this, if nothing else. The gulags, the gas-chambers and the killing-fields, these were *reductii ad horrorrem* for the grand Germanic theories. And their art has fared no better. Only our obsession with art as something set apart — art for art's sake, splendid in isolation and splendidly useless — has concealed the fact that, for most of the century, and for most of the world, art has stolidly supported ideology, and that this same art has now been pushed into limbo. Some parts may serve as a reminder, or a warning, but others have been hopelessly compromised.

Wagner's libretti cannot be played straight, least of all in Germany, where their myth should strike the strongest chord. They have to be presented in irony, subverted and almost ridiculed by modern stagecraft. Their theory has been discredited, and only the bewitching music remains, likewise the splendours of Nazi graphics. We may appreciate those splendid soldiers and workers, gazing sternly into a historicist future, but we can never rid them of their associations. The future may manage it, but not for us, and not yet.

The same considerations also apply to the art that has served Marx. We cannot appreciate it in good faith, and nor can it be presented, except as an augur — perhaps of the gullibility of artists and of intellectuals generally, of their cravings for the vicarious cruelties of power. George Watson posed the infamous question in the glory days of the *soixante-huitards* whether the intellectuals had really been duped: whether the doe-eyed admirers, who had visited Russia before the war, and came back psalming the new paradise, had known what was going on. Watson concluded that they had, but that had glossed over the horrors in their pursuit of the historicist dream.

This sentimentality, this vulgar mismatch of emotion to events, is another characteristic of the modern mind. The wrong emotions are displayed, or allowed to pass unchecked. Brutality is admired and appeased, the vicious and the unforgivable are forgiven. In every instance it is a sort of dissuasion of what we ought immediately to feel, and ought to cultivate.

Sir David Hare's revival of Gorky's *Enemies* at the Almeida in North London illustrates these observations. However much we appreciate Gorky,

and may wish him out of Chekhov's shadow, any sentimentalising performance of such a work will pose these questions, not so much of Gorky, but of the moderns who so assiduously ignore history, and still cling to the ideology, despite the mayhem and the slaughter. Are they really guilty of sentimentality, bad faith or just stupidity?

The play itself is transparent given our knowledge of subsequent history. It portrays some landowners soon after the first revolution of 1905, already jittery, and now confronted by Bolshevik agitators. Their professional manager's instinct is to meet the Bolsheviks head on, in full intemperance of will, but the landowner's response is more gentle and more confused. He tries to reach out for the common humanity he is sure of, but the workers seem imbued with some deep intransigence, as if they really believed in destiny, that they are on the winning side and can afford to wait.

Whatever the compromises, and whatever the individual virtues, the landowners will soon be stood against a wall and shot, and by these same Bolshevik agitators, imbued as they are with historicist cruelty. This knowledge should temper our response and give us a compassion beyond Gorky's.

Hare's is a performance offered in bad faith, from adaptation to stagecraft. The landowners, whom Hare insists on calling the bourgeoisie, although they are nothing of the sort, are presented, and played with a suppressed hysteria, as a typical bunch of Chekhovian eccentrics, misfits and pathologies, the merest clowns of history. Hare plays them for laughs and he must be aware of the benison that now attaches to the word 'socialism': that we moderns can only conceive it as benign and comforting. To have the landowners react in horror at Socialism, therefore, rather than to Bolshevism or Anarchism or, in a modern context, to Terrorism — and Hare claims the modern context, is just a manipulation. The audience may respond in laughter, but they are laughing at those who are trapped in the headlights, the doomed rabbits of history. This is a dishonesty induced in the audience by the playwright.

The same sentimentality applies also to the Bolsheviks. They are presented as dignified, aware of some higher and shining truth whereas, we, the moderns, know the horrors that follow from their smug certainty. Hare attempts to justify all this by citing the

'relevance' of the play to a modern understanding: that the same bourgeois fear of subversion and plots is still infecting us about Islam, that there is no real threat against the West. Our hysteria merely creates the semblance of one, that combines small and disparate clues into an overarching plot.

This is clearly nonsense so why has the theatre been packed with the *bien pensants* of Islington? Is it a sentimentality for the past? We have new horrors awaiting us, in Islam's schism and resurgence. Islington would do better to look beyond Marx. And so would Sir David Hare.

The Art of the Portrait

Andrew Lambirth



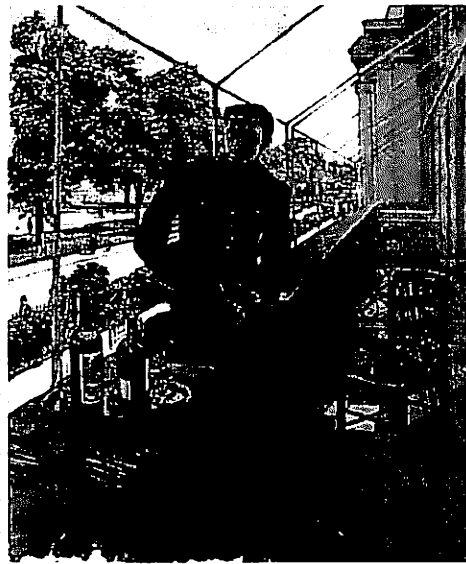
Rex Whistler (1905-44) is often regarded as one of England's great white hopes unfairly cut down in his prime. Like his contemporary, the exceptionally talented watercolourist Eric Ravilious (1903-42), he died on active duty during the Second World War (though not as a war artist), at a point in his career when the promise of youth seemed well-set to flower into a maturity to be reckoned with. Whistler was a decorator of genius, an uncannily versatile draughtsman whose book illustrations alone (particularly for *Gulliver's Travels*) qualify him for a secure place in history. He was a prodigious mural painter, whose designs on canvas for the Tate Gallery's restaurant, a narrative cycle entitled 'In Pursuit of Rare Meats' executed as early as 1926-7, won the accolade of 'the most amusing room in Europe'. If he hadn't been killed by a mortar blast on his very first day in battle, would he have gone on to be a truly great artist? Would Ravilious? Impossible to say with any certainty, but it may well be that both had already reached their peak. Post-war might just have been a great disappointment.

Whistler's gifts were unashamedly decorative; and he might be said to give the decorative a good name for once. He drew like an angel, much of it the product of imagination rather than observation of the world around him, and was an acknowledged master of architectural fantasy. He existed in a time-bubble, probably anchored somewhere in the 18th century during the age of the rococo, and had little or no interest in the developments of modern art or in what his contemporaries were up to. His friends were the Bright Young Things he'd met at 'the darling Slade', the likes of Oliver Messel and

Stephen Tennant, whose world overlapped with the strange terrain of the Sitwells. Whistler painted and drew for them, while Cecil Beaton (who said that Rex had a 'profile like an ivory cameo') took photographs of them.

If it all sounds too precious, there was a tougher side to it — the tensile strength of Whistler's line, its exactness and lack of sentiment. It wasn't all whimsy and caprice. Some of his most interesting images are the more prosaic ones — the early portrait of Lord

Berners which he acknowledged was too realistic to bring its subject much pleasure, the various self-portraits and especially 'The Master Cook' (1941), a posed portrait of Sergeant-Cook Isaacs, slightly uncomfortable in his buttoned whites. If he had pursued that side of his talent, and sharpened his scrutiny, he might have developed into a more substantial artist had he lived. But would his other side, the delicate elegiac strain, have survived successfully into the 1950s? It's unlikely, which makes what we have by him, a record of a long-vanished social group, a unique pre-war set, so valuable.



Self Portrait in Uniform, 1940

An excellent new exhibition of Whistler's work, the first major survey in 45 years, has been showing at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, accompanied by a useful catalogue written by Whistler-expert Stephen Calloway of the V&A. Whistler was both prolific and much in demand, and besides his murals at such splendid houses as Mottisfont Abbey and Plas Newydd in Anglesey, there were designs for the theatre, for opera, ballet and revues. Three rooms upstairs at the Museum offered ample space for a purview of his

career. In the first was a lithograph of Edith Sitwell, printed appropriately on green paper, adorning a bust of Pope with a wreath of bays. Next to it hung her portrait in a brocade dress, looking knowing and rather witchy. Nearby were a fine rococo bookplate for Osbert and the exquisitely-drawn profile of William Walton. The second room was dominated by a carpet coming down the centre of one wall like a waterfall, emblazoned with Whistler's design of Neptune and frolicking cohorts. A delightful conversation piece at The Daye House, one of Whistler's own favourites, shows what he could do with precisely-judged watercolour. In the third room was the magnificent (and justly famous) image of the Prince Regent awakening the spirit of Brighton, and various jeux d'esprit, including an amusing little picture in the style of Dali, with black ants stalking over a green face wearing a pince-nez.

He drew like an angel, much of it the product of imagination rather than observation of the world around him, and was an acknowledged master of architectural fantasy. He existed in a time-bubble, probably anchored somewhere in the 18th century during the age of the rococo.

Pure theatre as was so much of Whistler's work. But is there anything more to him than a lyric line and a considerable gift for historical pastiche? Perhaps the portraiture sounds a deeper and more sustained note. It's a great deal better at any rate than most of what today offers itself under the tattered banner of the portrait. With June come the great yearly events of Ascot and the Royal Academy Summer Show; also comes the BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery, now amazingly in its 17th year. I have not yet managed to bring myself to visit the NPG — the shock of looking through the catalogue has been sufficient to check my enthusiasm. The biographer and novelist Margaret Forster has contributed a sprightly essay to this small publication (£37.50 for 80 pages in paperback), drawing our attention to the self-portraits of Laura Knight and Gwen John (Forster has just written a novel about the latter), and Maggi Hambling's magisterial portrait of the scientist Dorothy Hodgkin. But she doesn't have anything much to say about contemporary portraits, except that they are stylistically diverse. Oh that they were.

As Miss La Creevey pointed out in *Nicholas Nickleby* 'There are only two styles of portrait painting; the serious and the smirk.' The BP entrants err unflinchingly towards the serious, with a bilious smirk or two hidden behind studiedly wooden expressions. It's currently fashionable to be photographic if you paint a portrait,

which is ludicrous because the camera can do the photographic better than the painter. The NPG is to blame — it buys more photographs these days than anything else, so artists, being a simple breed at heart, think they have to compete. They should concentrate on the painterly virtues to achieve a living portrait but it seems they would rather aim for the sterile purity of a frozen moment — the deathly stillness of the snap.

The BP Award is big business, with £25,000 as first prize plus the chance of a further commission to paint a celebrity. I wish I could say there were a decent number of artists in the show who tried to buck the trend, but miserably enough, there were only two, neither of them prize-winners. Robert Dukes with his tough, closely-observed study of the intimidating Rosie Sekers, and Darvish Fakhri with 'Sarah', offered something out of the ordinary. The rest, apart from Erin Raedeke's 'Self-Portrait with Pink Roses', which was at least aiming for individuality of expression even if it didn't actually achieve it, was depressingly dreadful stuff. But make up your own mind. The BP Award is on show at the NPG in London until 17 September, then it travels to Aberdeen Art Gallery (25 November 2006-3 February 2007) and the Royal West of England Academy, Bristol (31 March-20 May 2007). Are the judges suppressing the better quality entrants, or is most contemporary portraiture of this uniform crassness? I incline to the latter view.

If he hadn't been killed by a mortar blast on his very first day in battle, would he have gone on to be a truly great artist?

A summer exhibition in one of the capital's more adventurous art dealerships, Long & Ryle in John Islip Street, SW1, aimed to rediscover the glories of the contemporary portrait. There were fine things by such older masters as Jeffery Camp (born 1923) and Craigie Aitchison (born 1926), and such talented younger artists as Ramiro Fernandez Saus and James Lloyd, but the rot was in evidence even there. Stuart Pearson Wright, a painter of neurotic nastiness in fine detail, was among the invited artists. He apes the tradition of hallucinatory miniaturism popularised in Northern Europe in the late Middle Ages, and more recently re-visited by Lucian Freud in the earlier stages of his career. It may be the height of fashion, but this does not make it the slightest whit more acceptable. Today it is not just anachronistic but inappropriate and curiously limiting. It is certainly not life-enhancing or spiritually uplifting, as good art should be. 'Come back Rex Whistler, all is forgiven.'

Blind Faith

David Lee

Why are there so few original researched exhibitions mounted in regional museums? And should State-run galleries be allowed to behave like art dealers? These two questions are more closely related than you might think.

The purpose of publicly funded contemporary art galleries is educational not commercial. Many, like the Institute of Contemporary Art, are registered as charities, a status which, among other advantages, allows tax breaks. Charities usually exist to provide what they consider essential to well-being and which, regrettably (they believe), is not provided by anyone else. Gallery charities, however, are different to those like Oxfam, as nearly all their money derives not from individual generosity but from the taxpayer. If the ICA closed tomorrow it would not be missed except by its employees.

Wherever contemporary art is involved with publicly funded galleries, questionable overlaps occur between education and commerce, some of them suspicious and nearly all avoidable. Lack of any legal regulation of the visual arts, and the extreme secrecy in which the art industry's operations are conducted, inevitably fuel such suspicions. I met an exhibition curator recently at the ICA who reminded me of one of those earnest Christians eager to save you from perdition. She had been ruthlessly programmed with sophistry and proclaimed all the old chestnuts for justifying worthless stunts. Her hot air reminded me that in contemporary art there is now nothing resembling scholarship nor connoisseurship but merely sales patter and enthusiasm born of blind faith and an evangelical mission to proselytise.

A second surprise encounter was a very enjoyable historical exhibition in a regional museum. Why had I been surprised when Yorkshire Museum first announced that it would stage a show about the Emperor Constantine? I hadn't believed it would amount to much more than another scattering of potsherds and jagged fragments of inscription in a dusty case, certainly not a major collection of late Roman artefacts loaned from across Europe. I had assumed that historical scholarship in regional museums was more or less dead, because for years I had not encountered any evidence of it being alive. Beyond the patronisingly populist displays designed to appeal to infants so prevalent these days in regional museums, there is neither money nor time for more thoughtful projects, and staff must certainly be demoralized by the constant, unattainable need to justify the cost-effectiveness of scholarship. A museum

curator earns much less than the prattling cleavage in charge of PR in a regional museum.

Classical scholarship in particular is in serious decline. It has always had a musty, dandruff-on-the-collar aura. Rooms dense with limbless, noseless white sculptures depicting gods and heroes who mean nothing in our Tesco age are difficult to approach with enthusiasm, even for those with a knowledge of art. It takes devotion to the cause before marble sculptures stop looking the same and stylistic nuances reveal themselves. Antiquity, always a tricky recess of art history to teach, is now hardly taught at all except as a specialist option at a handful of the better universities. It is rare to find anything developed and structured about the classical world on show anywhere except the British Museum or the Ashmolean. Scholarship does exist in the larger regional museums, but potentially once-in-a-lifetime exhibitions like that currently in York cannot be mounted because, where Access is king, research is a low priority.

York must have been a bustling capital city in 306, a self-governing regional centre in the middle of which was a massive walled fortress capable of housing 4,500 infantry, 500 cavalry, auxiliaries and support staff. Flush with its battlements was a busy riverside entrepot, and beyond the imposing gateways spread an extramural community of local tribal souls eager to relieve legionaries of their denarius-a-day salary. We have little idea of either the scale or lavishness of its public buildings and residences but it must have been a colony fit for an Emperor. For nearly three years a century before Constantine's accession, the city was home to the exotic Imperial court of the African Septimius Severus (who also died near York in 211) and his Syrian wife Julia Domna, who, eager to continue her intellectual pursuits in this back of beyond, may have organised here a philosophical academy. They, and their psychopathic elder son Caracalla, were based here during seasonal skirmishes and protracted negotiations with the auld enemy.

The exhibition (which continues at Yorkshire Museum until October 29th) is based around what is assumed to be a marble head of Constantine. Twice lifesize, it was originally slotted into a large statue and was found somewhere near the centre of the fort. Its identification as Constantine is based more on hope than hard fact but the picture shown here is definitely Constantine. The York head is referred to by the show's

organisers as ‘a magnificent sculpture’, which quite plainly it is not. In its present badly dissolved condition, it is little more than a better class of rubble. For similar genuinely ‘magnificent’ sculptures look no further than the bronze head of Claudius fished out of the Alde in Suffolk and the bronze head of Hadrian found in the Thames by the City of London — both in the British Museum. These are truly ‘magnificent’ sculptures and strongly convey the impressiveness of sculptural decoration in Roman British cities.

The Constantine exhibition inevitably dwells on the spread of Christianity, whose free, theoretically unpersecuted practice begins with Constantine. Every available example of the Chi-Rho symbol, whether on coins, mosaics or the unique liturgical vessels of the Water Newton hoard, is brought in to illustrate the immediate visibility and celebration of what previously had been necessarily clandestine. Following his famous vision of the cross on the night before the do-or-die battle of Milvian Bridge in 312, Constantine allowed freedom of religious expression and was supportive of the Christian cause. His role in organising the early Christian church and encouraging the development of an agreed creed cannot be underestimated. The exhibition features an extensive assortment of fine objects which tend to be more fascinating as individual items than as illustrations of any curatorial thesis. The catalogue is informative with good illustrations making it a useful work of reference.



Moving swiftly from the divine to the pseudo-intellectually ridiculous let us turn to Tino Sehgal at the ICA. He is a 30-year-old British artist who lives in Berlin and is a hardy perennial of Biennales, Triennials, Documentas, Manifestas and other caravanserais of trick cyclists. His work at last year’s Venice Biennale attracted notice because it comprised security guards belligerently marching about the German pavilion like the Gestapo shouting ‘This is so contemporary contemporary contemporary’ — oddly enough in English. Sehgal is in the atrocious Tate Triennial where, somewhere unspecified in the permanent collection, a Sehgal-appointed interpreter performs *This is Propaganda*. This 2002 masterpiece was purchased last year by the ever-so-hard-up Tate and when a visitor enters the gallery the paid actor turns quickly to the wall and sings ‘This is propaganda, you know, you know’. Still in the dark despite having visited one of his exhibitions, the ICA explains what he does: ‘Sehgal comes from a background in choreography and political economy, which both play a fundamental role in his work... He views visual art as being completely interrelated with society and functioning

along identical economic conditions, namely the production and exchange of goods and commodities. He is interested in challenging these conditions by creating works that appear as the transformation of acts and the production of meaning through a transitory situation, rather than as a transformation of solid materials.’ (I suspect Tino might be ‘interested’ in a spot of ‘challenging’, although I am none the wiser for having read the explanation.)

Representing a country at the Venice Biennale and a show at the Tate hardly indicate someone in need of further exposure at public expense but the Sehgal is a pet project for the ICA. They gave him a one-man exhibition last year, before the Venice Biennale, and another this year. Next year — in what is the last of his present series of block bookings — he will have another one-man show. Last year the gallery was empty whereas this year visitors were chaperoned through the galleries and around the building by a string of guides, explaining what it was all about. As part of this year’s effort Sehgal was selling words for £25 each. When you bought one, the manager of the ICA shop whispered it to you. Each word is intended to be the owner’s secret and when all the words are sold, buyers will be asked to meet and speak the words in order — doubtless revealing an *aperçu* of life-altering profundity such as ‘This is contemporary propaganda innit innit’.

The ICA’s curator of exhibitions told me that she considered giving an artist exhibitions in three consecutive years to be an important act of faith, a demonstration of a long-term commitment. Sehgal’s German dealer must be laughing up his sleeve at the British taxpayer’s willingness to do his job for him in promoting his artist free of charge in the contemporary art centre of Europe over three years. A series of annual shows for the same artist at a publicly funded gallery is a misuse of public money. I find it astonishing that the ICA can be getting away with this without comment or criticism from anyone else, especially other artists.

Perhaps one of the reasons why regional museums can plan exhibitions like the one in York so infrequently is because State Art is obsessed with the contemporary to the exclusion of everything else. It is indefensible for the Arts Council to spend all its available visual art funds on only certain aspects of the contemporary, while spending nothing on the historical. The situation has also led to clever manipulation of the art market by a small number of dealers and collectors.

This article was originally published in The Jackdaw of which David Lee is the Editor

Fighting in Ulster

Mark Coalter

Ralph Lillford's *Painting the Troubles*, National Army Museum, 17 March to 23 September, 2006.

In August 1969 Harold Wilson's government, at the request of James Chichester-Clark's Stormont administration, dispatched the first units of the British Army to Northern Ireland. This momentous decision was precipitated by the ferocious communal rioting which erupted in Londonderry and Belfast; in the former waged between nationalists and the police, and in the latter by Protestants and Catholics in adjoining ghettos. The finite resources of the RUC had been stretched to breaking point and the Army's intervention provided some much needed relief and calm, albeit of a temporary nature. This deployment was initially perceived to be a relatively short-term engagement and few could foresee that the number of soldiers on active service would be dramatically increased over the next two and a half decades, at much cost in respect of money and human life. Even in today's so-called 'peaceful' environment the Army's presence in the Province has not been fully extinguished. This very important aspect of British military history has received significant attention in recent years from books and television documentaries examining the Army's contribution and sacrifice during the course of the Troubles, some of which are incisive, others predictably populist and wholly flawed. However, art exhibitions, another medium for portraying the past, have been in short supply. A lack of quality material may be one explanation, but the National Army Museum has attempted to redress this and is currently displaying the work of Ralph Lillford in an exhibition entitled *Painting the Troubles*.

Ralph Lillford visited Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, just as the worst years of the Troubles were unfolding. Interestingly, he 'found the experience and the imagery of urban military activity a powerful creative stimulus'. He was certainly no stranger to the military, having completed his national service in the mid-1950s with a tour in Suez. For Lillford, Northern Ireland had many professional frustrations. His work was occasionally interrupted by troops when on location — on the street — and at least once, his drawings were temporarily confiscated, the rationale being that they might be of use to terrorists. Despite these inconveniences, he was given access to various barracks and was able to capture the typical soldier's

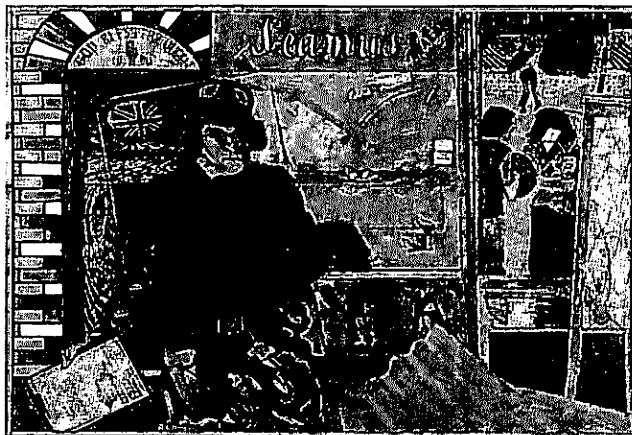
mundane routine when confined to base, along with the accompanying stresses and strains under which he/she operated when on patrol. In doing so, Lillford's perceptive eye has recorded a fascinating piece of history, which provides us with an insight into the early years of the Troubles.

Sending the Army to Belfast was one thing, providing soldiers with basic amenities and facilities quite another. For the lower ranks, living conditions could be on the basic side. Makeshift barracks were the norm and ranged from disused buildings, such as factories, to even churches. In *Soldiers in a Belfast Church* the spartan accommodation is obvious. Bunk beds rest against the walls of this (former?) place of worship and are decorated with pin-ups, the disarray complemented by miscellaneous detritus scattered around the room. A solitary lamp hanging from the ceiling, the wire of which is utilised as a clothesline, completes the effect. Other paintings of barracks show soldiers killing time by writing letters home or simply waiting to be sent out on patrol, their facial expressions resigned to performing their duties. An interesting contrast is with the Officers' Mess in Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co. Down, where Lillford portrays the upper ranks spending their time in more dignified pursuits and surroundings. Two lieutenants playing backgammon under the disinterested gaze of John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, seems a world apart from the basic conditions described above in Belfast.

The British Army, along with RUC, had the unenviable position of being placed in the middle of both feuding communities. Ironically, given subsequent events, the Army was initially welcomed by nationalists, who had no confidence in the ability of the Northern Ireland Government to restrain the loyalist hotheads from attacking Catholic ghettos. The more perceptive correctly identified that the Army's presence would irretrievably weaken Stormont. However, within a short time it was seen as much of a manifestation of the state as the Ulster security forces and became a target of republican terrorism. In *Seamus Dealer*, Lillford captures the Army's predicament. In what must surely be a fictitious scene, a soldier stands betwixt a loyalist door with a red, white and blue border displaying a Union flag and the message 'God Save the Queen' on the glass, whilst the adjoining shop is (presumably based on the proprietor's Irish name) owned by a Catholic. This has been vandalised and had IRA

graffiti sprayed on to the frontage. In the background, a youth throws stones and another aims a catapult at the shop. The soldier carries a riot shield and a list of organisations demarcated by religious affiliation, providing a snapshot of the bewildering array of tribal entities of which the Army had to be aware. Even though Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, one senses how alien its early 1970s political culture must have been to these uninitiated soldiers who mostly came from the mainland. This was probably exacerbated by the bloodshed of the early period of the Troubles and the imposition of direct rule from Westminster, which undoubtedly created a political and social vacuum that allowed fringe organisations to thrive when in normal conditions their memberships would simply have been dismissed as extremists and cranks.

Politics, in its pure sense, does not feature prominently in Lillford's work. There is an interesting, though somewhat naïve, view of the political situation in *Informers You Have Been Warned* where a wizard, embodying Ulster's politicians, is standing beside



a hooded paramilitary and a figure apparently representing both death and Christ. One can certainly read the message that Lillford is attempting to convey, in effect, that a wizard is required to resolve this intractable political problem. However, these sentiments are rather contemporaneous and proved (and still do) that they are not so easily reconcilable to reality. One interesting aspect of this painting is the message that appears on the gable wall, that 'Irishmen avenge their dead. Informers you have been warned' which unfortunately had as much resonance in the 1970s as it does today.

Ralph Lillford's work might not be as varied or dramatic as, for example, Sir William Orpen's who, as a war artist, observed the carnage of the Western Front during the First World War at first hand. However, this exhibition illuminates a period of history from an alternative and even human perspective, an era which only today, we are beginning to place in its proper context. The National Army Museum should be congratulated for its imagination in exhibiting Lillford's historically valuable work.

William Lloyd Webber

Andrew Earis



In the summer 2006 issue of *Salisbury Review*, Em Marshall wrote a detailed article on The Renaissance of English Music, describing the beginnings of a revival in the performance of English Romantic music of such composers like Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. She also talked about the range and number of high quality composers — from Bridge, Finzi and Dyson, to Ireland, Rubbra and Howells — and how each of these has a distinctive but also essentially 'English' voice. There are many more who have since been forgotten.

The family name Lloyd Webber needs little introduction. But few know the music of William Lloyd Webber, a composer whose tragic lack of self-belief caused him to hide much of his music away from the public, and much of which is only recently

being re-discovered and evaluated. Perhaps the first major breakthrough in disseminating his music to a wider audience was through the first recording of his only orchestral work, the symphonic tone poem *Aurora*, by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Lorin Maazel in 1986. In a subsequent review by Edward Greenfield of *The Guardian*, the work was described as 'skilfully and sumptuously scored...music as sensuous as any you will find from a British composer'.

By the age of fourteen William Lloyd Webber was already well known as an organ recitalist throughout London and further afield. In his early years he was fortunate to be taken around various organs in and around London by his father, which developed in young William an interest in the organ which bordered

on the obsessional. He won an organ scholarship to Mercer's School and subsequently to the Royal College of Music, where his teachers included, among others, Ralph Vaughan Williams. He gained his Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists at the age of nineteen.

Alongside his work as an organist, William Lloyd Webber began to compose works in a variety of styles. Several interesting compositions date from his early period including the *Fantasy Trio* of 1936. Throughout the war, he was Organist and Choirmaster at All Saints, Margaret Street. During the war he married Jean Hermione Johnstone, a violinist and pianist, and soon afterwards they had two sons: Andrew and Julian.

His most prolific years as a composer were yet to come. In the ten years from 1945 his output included the oratorio *St Francis of Assisi* (1948), the orchestral tone poem *Aurora* (1951) and the *Sonatina* for viola and piano (1951), alongside a number of other organ, choral and chamber works. Writing in a style firmly embedded in the Romanticism of such composers as Rachmaninoff, Sibelius and Franck, William Lloyd Webber became increasingly convinced that his music was 'out of step' with the prevailing climate of the time. Rather than compromise his approach, he virtually stopped composing, turning instead to academic music.

He taught at the Royal College of Music and in 1964 became Director of the London College of Music.

Shortly before his death in 1982, he resumed composition, and a sudden flourish of creativity produced the *Missa sanctae Mariae Magdalenae* (1979).

Perhaps William Lloyd Webber's greatest limitation was his modest personality. He was a shy and withdrawn character, disliking any form of self-promotion, and had no time for the forward approaches necessary for the furtherance of a composer's career. He was a man of few words and this was reflected in his music. 'Why', he would ask his pupils, 'write six pages when six bars will do?' Much of his music remained virtually undiscovered until recently when works that have lain unpublished and unperformed for many years have gradually come to light. His music has further been promoted through recent broadcasts, including a documentary on BBC Radio 4 entitled 'In the name of the Father' and a number of CD recordings are now available. A Festival in London to mark the 25th anniversary of his death is planned for the spring and summer of 2007. His carefully crafted works, notable for their colourful use of melody, deserve to be much more widely known by church musicians, congregations and concert lovers.

IN SHORT

Roy Kerridge's Britain, BTM Life Lite, PO Box 43892, London NW6 5WX info@btmlifelight.org

Only the Wanderer knows England's graces
And can see anew familiar faces

Roy Kerridge, master of the off-beat and unexpected, is a worthy successor to Defoe, Cobbett or Priestley, hardly ever in a car, mostly walking and only occasionally in a bus or train. Roy's eccentric but engaging charm shines brightly in our desert of tedious conformity. The late great Michael Wharton spoke of him as a genius, unnoticed of course and unsung in our politically correct swamp. His latest book — an extract appears on page 33 — was originally written with an American readership in mind but that should not put you off. Roy's rambles, even in a twenty mile radius, reveal illuminating details which the rest of us might miss. Both the countryside and the cities are 'equally wonderful'. 'Edinburgh, the town is sublime. Every time I go there I see something new whether

it is a secretive art gallery, an unexpected statue or a sudden vista of a rocky crag with a monument on top.....but the Festival should be avoided like the plague particularly its fringe and Alternative culture.'

He observes lorry drivers, New Age travellers, the tree protesters of Newbury or bed and breakfast landladies with the same astringent eye. Natural history, dialect and Celtic folk history are among his many interests. Fascinating details on these subjects and much history are painlessly embedded in the text. In Crossthwaite church he finds wonderful watercolour cartoons by a unnamed former vicar as well as a monument to Robert Southey. Did you know that John o' Groats was a Dutchman (Jan de Groot) who moved to Scotland in the fifteenth century? He ran a ferry to the Orkneys and minted the special coins needed for the fare (groots). This currency has long since disappeared but sometimes crops up in pantomimes. Kerridge draws our attention to the distinction between Anglo-Saxon and Norman

still visible in some places. The English upper classes are the spiritual descendants of Norman conquerors who loved hunting and preserved forests from the Anglo-Saxons who wanted to clear them. Their axe wielding instincts survives in the urban builder 'who cannot make an extension without smashing trees or a farmer who cannot see a tree without reaching for his chainsaw.' There is plenty of trenchant if depressing social commentary: 'Putting public housing into Town Hall hands has brought about the destruction of fine Victorian cities like Birmingham and Newcastle and its replacement with hideous concrete wastes.' 'Parents beware when your son or daughter with unholy but gleaming eyes tells you the name of an unusual or out of the way university for a first choice. Never mind their spurious reason — the varsity in question has a newly fashionable drug and music scene.' 'The English class system no longer has anything to do with money if it ever did.' George Borrow is one of his heroes and he was fascinated to discover Borrovian links wandering round a council house estate in Willenhall, north west of Birmingham. The spot reminded him of a description in Lavengro. He thinks the Scots preserve the English tradition of the stiff upper lip — 'if any Englishman has a stiff upper lip today he got it by glue sniffing'.

Merrie Cave

The Beginning of the End; the Crippling Disadvantage of a Happy Irish Childhood, Walter Ellis, Mainstream Publishing Limited (Edinburgh), 2006, £9.99.

Here is something refreshingly different to come out of the Ulster troubles. The title reveals a sardonic humour fairly unusual in Irish 'memoirs' which tend to dwell, often self indulgently, on unhappiness and deprivation. Now a journalist in New York with an impressive career behind him, Ellis enjoyed an ordinary childhood with loving parents who never abused him and took the family on seaside holidays. What was extraordinary was his disastrous friendship with his distant cousin Ronnie Bunting, who became chief of staff of the Irish Liberation Army, and who made Ellis's life a misery before going on to murder Airey Neave in 1979. Bunting's demonic but engaging personality nearly destroyed Ellis's happy adolescence for he was expelled from school and dropped out of two universities. Bunting once foisted Joe McCann, Ireland's most wanted man, on Ellis's mother for the weekend and gave Walter a suitcase to look after that turned out to contain over a hundred thousand pounds — the proceeds of an armed robbery. Later Ellis was arrested by Special Branch in England on suspicion of

plotting to assassinate William Whitelaw. This proved to be the last straw in his relationship with Bunting. As well as being an excellent read, this book highlights that neglected culture — Loyalist Protestantism. Ellis's reports of the Troubles are of course terrifying but also farcical — they also demonstrate the normality of ordinary life which defiantly continued against the backcloth of violence.

Merrie Cave

In Search of H V Morton, Michael Bartholomew, Methuen, 2006, £8.99.

H V Morton's 1927 *In Search of England* is one of the classic accounts of Britain in the 1920s, and one of the first great motoring books. Morton carved out a unique career as a roving newspaper correspondent, following up his England book by going in search of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and South Africa, wandering around the Mediterranean, occasionally revisiting old stamping grounds (*In Scotland Again, The Call of England*) and having Boys' Own style adventures like spending a night with the Thames river police. His easy, avuncular style, which combines potted history with road anecdotes, admirable pen-landscapes and sentimental ruminations, has charmed millions of people — including fans like Jan Morris — around the world for several generations.

But Michael Bartholomew is not content with letting redolent dogs lie. He has ploughed through Morton's published works and private life to uncover eyebrow-raising evidence of Morton's serial womanizing, mild anti-Semitism, sympathy for fascism, even while he was writing effective anti-Nazi propaganda tracts like *I, James Blunt* (although Bartholomew acquits him of treasonable tendencies) and 'tacit support' for apartheid (he lived in South Africa, and took no part in politics — damning indeed). He also manages to accuse Morton of being simultaneously a hard-boiled reporter and a sentimentalist whose mythical England never really existed. It is clear that Bartholomew really does not think very highly of his subject, and his book tends much more towards the hatchet-job end of the scale than the hagiographical.

Yet while Morton was clearly deeply flawed, he made a fragrant contribution to middlebrow 20th century literature — a contribution that hopefully will be appreciated long after his private peccadilloes have been swept back into oblivion, and that may help keep the English vision alive in a perilous future.

Derek Turner

Demonstrable Failures

Mass demonstrations halt deportations of the 'Manchester Three'

The order by the Attorney General to release the so called 'Manchester Three' who were facing extradition to the US at the end of July was welcomed all over Britain last night. The order comes as a result of a mass vigil outside the Home Office lasting six weeks by activists and supporters of the three men, who are accused of armed robbery at a Virginia petrol station. Following the attack they fled to Britain. Two of the accused have US passports, the third is a British citizen.

Two weeks ago there were angry confrontations in Grosvenor Square as marchers led by prominent MPs and liberal bishops attempted to reach the US embassy and present a petition. Banners with the slogans such as 'No more slave deportations to America' and 'The middle passage again?' were displayed.

'The Manchester Three' are Afro Caribbean and the move by the US to extradite them was widely regarded by human rights activists as an example of US racism. This is despite the fact that two are US citizens. A leading clergyman said, 'If these defendants, I hesitate to call them defendants, but freedom fighters against the intolerable imperialism of the US, were white, you can be sure Tony Blair would speedily revoke this bill. Anybody who seeks

sanctuary from the long arm of American injustice, be he a US citizen or not, is welcome here.'

A spokesman for 'Activists against US imperialism' said that no sovereign country can accept the idea of a foreign jurisdiction interfering in the legal system of another, even if the refugees were citizens of that country. If these men had done anything wrong, they should be tried in Britain. In any event it was intolerable that persons of colour should be surrendered to the US judicial system which was an instrument for racial persecution. Witness the disproportionate numbers of blacks in the US gulag.

Conservative critics of the 'Manchester Three' who pointed to the seriousness of their crime were vociferously attacked by the liberal press. 'The seriousness of a crime by a racial minority is only a reflection of the intolerable pressures the Afro American community in America is under' wrote a leading liberal correspondent. 'If you wake each morning to racial stereotyping, poverty, addiction and the subversion of your children by Murdoch TV, it is little wonder that you will be forced to undertake armed struggle.'

(The characters in this article are entirely fictitious, are there to illustrate a political point, and bear no relationship to any person living or dead.)

Myles Harris

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Jonathan Tokeley

Rescuing the Past

The Cultural Heritage Crusade

"a challenge to all those who believe that the treasures of Egypt are safe in the hands of officialdom" Roger Scruton

Jonathan Tokeley, *Rescuing the Past: The Cultural Heritage Crusade* 374 pp., April 2006, 1-84540-019-4 (cloth), £25.00 / \$49.99. £20.00

The author was contentiously convicted of 'smuggling' Egyptian antiquities in a landmark trial — one of a series which had devastating consequences for the antiquities market. The court verdict endorsed the claims of the *Cultural Heritage Crusade* that 'source countries' have an indefeasible right to ancient artefacts found in their soil. And past acquisitions, like the Elgin Marbles, should be returned. Archaeologists widely accept this, and also the need for government 'prohibitions' to prevent the looting of the sites.

But this makes Antiquity a plaything of the modern humbug — of national vanity, of anti-western dogma, of political correctness, and the academic's disdain for the very idea of profit. None of which will prevent the looting. The *Cultural Heritage Crusade*, in short, is not an answer to the problem. It may actually be the problem. This book is both a philosophical analysis and a demonstration — in one country, Egypt — of its horrific consequences.



Jonathan Tokeley read biology and then philosophy at Sidney Sussex, Cambridge. He worked on his PhD (in philosophical ethics) at UCL, and then trained himself as a restorer of antiquities.

"If even half of what Tokeley has to say is accurate, then Egypt should be used as a textbook example of how not to look after the past."

Noel Malcolm, *Sunday Telegraph*

"I doubt that anyone reading this book would not have their minds changed."

Professor John Haldane FRSE, Director, Centre for Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs, University of St Andrews



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