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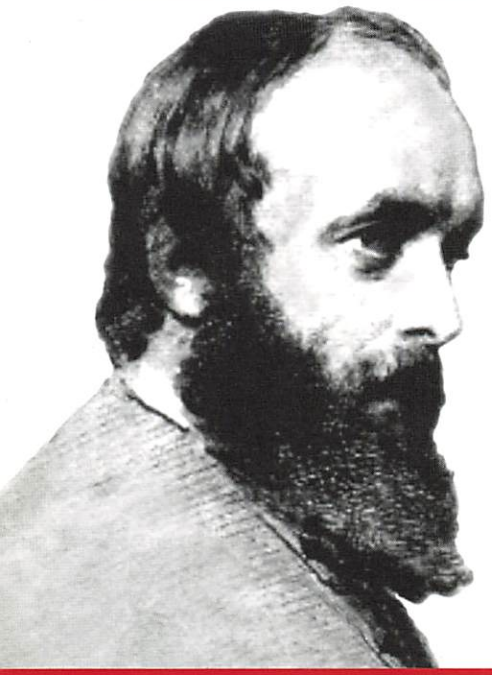

The 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, 1830-1903

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Patricia Morgan

Why are University Lecturers so Bad?
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Silent Heroes

Animals in War, Imperial War Museum until April 22nd 2007.

I'm only a cavalry charger
And I'm dying as fast as I can
For my body is riddled with bullets
They've potted both me and my man

Sandy Buchan, Aboyne

Most people wince at the sight of horses suffering on the battlefield and are glad they are no longer used except for ceremonial purposes. The use of cavalry lingered on into the twentieth century; remember the Polish cavalry's hopeless resistance against German tanks in 1939, but even the policy makers in the British Army thought that the cavalry should never be scrapped to make room for tanks.

This exhibition covers the various ways in which animals have been used in wars from the 19th century to the World Trade Centre, accompanied by an informative and lavishly illustrated book by Juliet Gardiner. Mules were essential for equipment and supply, their most indispensable contribution perhaps in the Jungle war in Burma; the British army still has one, Alfie. Pigeons, of course, have been used since medieval times; the Swiss Army continued to use them until 1995. In the Second World War they made invaluable contributions to organisations like MI6, MI9, and SOE. One of the films shows Gustave and Paddy receiving a special decoration. Dogs run messages, help in search and rescue operations, while sniffer dogs provide essential support for mine and bomb detection. Sea lions were trained to detect submarines in World War II and more recently dolphins have been used to search for mines. Other animals have now entered the fray: rats are much cheaper to train to detect landmines and pigs have a superior sense of smell to dogs.

The Dickin medal, named after Mrs Maria Dickin, the founder of the PDSA, is the animal VC, awarded to animals for courage and endurance in war. Of the 53 Dickin Medals awarded 18 were presented to dogs, 3 to horses, 1 to a cat, and 31 to pigeons; the exhibition pays tribute to several of them: Rats, who served in Northern Ireland, was given his own army service number. Judy, a dog who was a POW of the Japanese, used to threaten the guards when they were ill-treating the men. Simon, the only cat ever to be awarded the Dickin medal, was the ship's cat on the Amethyst which was involved in the Yangtze incident. He caught a rat a day even after he was wounded from shells in the bombardment during the ship's captivity.

Perhaps Voytek the Syrian bear, one of the rare breed capable of being tamed, was the most romantic animal warrior of all. He was adopted by Peter Prendys of the 22nd Company, Polish Army Service Corps (Artillery) in the Middle East as a starving cub and accompanied the troop everywhere. By some miracle the authorities were persuaded to let him sail with the men from Alexandria to Taranto. At Monte Cassino his giant paws came in useful to pack up boxes of ammunition; his picture holding a shell in his paws has appeared on all regimental insignia ever since.

Merrie Cave

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The government is as usual failing to further the interests, respect the wishes and protect the safety of ordinary British people. Who would have believed for most of the twentieth century that in the early years of the twenty-first, a distinguished Australian writer, Hal Colebatch, could show in detail that New York is far less criminal and far better policed than London? New Labour is soft on crime and tough on the ordinary citizen. The priorities of that enemy of the people, the Home Office, are such that the system fails to pursue, arrest and imprison muggers and burglars or to deport the violent but has time and resources enough to harass the peaceful and honest with trivial regulations. In this lawless world everyone is constrained by a demeaning political correctness that is backed up the menaces of the powerful.

As Patricia Morgan points out, indigenous East Enders who are the victims of racial aggression are never listened to. In fairness one should add that Sikh or Hindu victims of hatred or just plain hooliganism from the Muslim underclass are also unlikely to be heard. Sixty years ago the indigenous people lived in a stable and secure world held together by kinship, locality, reciprocity and a sense of a primordial common identity. Their world was destroyed by Labour politicians. First there were bureaucratic policies that ignored, denigrated and then destroyed these solidarities in the name of the rights and welfare of atomised and even deviant individuals. Then they were replaced by another community whose communalism and separatism were encouraged to the point of self-segregation. In 1991 there were wards in Tower Hamlets where there were hardly any Bangladeshis; in these same areas they will soon be in a majority. The Labour party has taken its revenge on the descendants of the dockers and porters who marched in support of Enoch Powell because they feared being displaced from their home areas.

As every Indian knows, the Muslim problem is not just a Western one, for as S V Raju points out, they were ever the marauders from the north-west and still are in Kashmir. In the last twenty years Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, and Benares have all been targeted by Muslim extremists equipped with bomb and gun. It is a violence that has spread to England with arson attacks on the temples of our own British Hindus, a manifestation of Antihindism carefully ignored by the media. The leftists do not care about these victims for the same reason they are indifferent to the tyranny and chaos in Zimbabwe described by Roy Langley — it cannot be fitted into their standard indignation mind-set.

Many of Labour's academic activists, like those described by Keith Walker, not only despise but insult ordinary working people with petulance and impunity in their university. They know they can bully them with shouts of 'racist' accompanied by obscenities because those in authority will be on their side out of political loyalty and social snobbery. If your politics are of the correct hue, even violence will be tolerated, though the vice-chancellor's main concern is always to avoid 'getting in the papers' and so it never gets reported. Meanwhile, as Christie Davies makes clear, standards of teaching have collapsed because universities care only about appearance, about spin and shine, and not how things really are. Most lecturers are ineffective but it looks good to be using PowerPoint, not to the students but to the administrators. Does it not sound like the parallel failures of the Health Service execrated by Theodore Dalrymple?

In such a world where crime, immigration, public taxes and private debt and spiralling Muslim extremism are, as Myles Harris shows, out of control, we might have hoped that a change of government to the Conservatives might bring about an improvement. It will not. Cameron simply pretends that all this isn't happening. As Churchill, said of another, Cameron is like an inverted Micawber, hoping that something will turn down. No doubt Patricia Morgan's East Enders have already added to Dr Harris's 'Rhymes of David Cameron' one that goes : Ravi Shankar, Kuwaiti tanker, Merchant banker, Gentleman ranker, David Cameron.

Ethnic Cleansing in East London

Patricia Morgan

When one of my old Labour Party acquaintances expressed anxiety over Islamic terrorism, I asked him why he had always been so keen on getting as many immigrants here as possible. A case of foreigner good: Brit bad, immigrants had all the desirable qualities and every one of them would be a great asset to this country. He told me that he had been 'trying to make the revolution'. So, while it had not been possible to storm Buckingham Palace and set up Soviets in Westminster, you could still change the population and supplant the hated 'other'. Ironically, it happened that the flesh and blood other was not made up of filthy capitalists or parasitic aristocrats, but the ordinary working class people we had grown up among, and for and with whom, socialism would create a new world. These people had become invisible and it is as if migrants were being invited into an empty land. Throughout the decades of mass immigration the claim has ever been that migrants just take the jobs we do not want or cannot fill. In the '60s and '70s it was also the houses; I recall teenagers in a civics class shouting at a teacher who was trying to counter their toe-curling racism by saying that the Caribbeans moving into their streets were simply occupying houses nobody wanted. 'We want them', 'we live in them', 'what's wrong with them?' the boys yelled.

What may have been wrong was that the indigenous population was not being divested of them fast enough in reparation for the sins of Empire. Labour MP Frank Dobson spoke to a mainly Bangladeshi audience in Tower Hamlets a few years ago and urged them to help themselves to benefits, education, services, housing and much, much more. All we had was rightfully theirs and we could never compensate enough for our past oppression. Dobson is one heir of that political alliance of the new left with minorities which became active in local politics from the mid 1970s. This alliance enabled white radicals to portray themselves as part of the international movement combating imperialism, with the world's black and brown people, the downtrodden proletariat. *The New East End* by Kate Gavron, Geoff Dench and Michael Young (Profile Books, £15.99) shows how life has changed over the last half century in the area of *Family and Kinship in East London,* since 1957. It is a dreadful story of dispossession.

It is particularly poignant that the Empire be invited home to East London, where national suffering was at its hardest in the Second World War and the place people thought of when contemplating the effort and the sacrifices being made by civilians. In the 1957 study the authors noted the confident linking of home territory, community loyalty and war service. Many streets had little memorials on the walls, listing the inhabitants killed in the war. Some of these memorials still exist; no longer proud remembrance but points of resistance to the invasion of the area and symbols of loss and betrayal. Ordinary people saw the welfare state as a reward for the efforts ordinary citizens made during the war, forging an extension of working class social insurance measures. But East Enders soon discovered that while they 'lived in a promised land, they might not be the chosen people'. The debt the left thought was owed to third world immigrants eclipsed any due to the indigenous working class.

Housing was the key to opening up the East End to outsiders. Traditionally, tenancy allocation had depended upon local interests and networks, where established tenants secured new tenancies for family members from landlords. Local government also took over a ladder principle where the more desirable properties went to the most deserving who had waited the longest. By the 1970s, legislation had created a statutory obligation to house the homeless. You could no longer work your way to the head of the queue by patience and good behaviour; a set of central and invariable rules would override your claim. Immigrants found that their 'need' shot them to the top of the list.

Cooperation between the local authorities and ethnic leaders led to blocks of flats being set aside for Bangladeshi occupation, along with a substantial proportion of new and renovated housing. Provision has come to depend upon housing associations and co-operatives, through which the local authorities collaborate with central government and local residents. Attuned to cultural sensitivities, these provide six-bedroomed houses for men with multiple wives and many children; despite angry rants to the media about housing requirements being ignored. Strong family connections, including ties to others in Bangladesh, are useful to demonstrate a need for housing that does not apply to existing citizens. These are hard-pressed to make any case for housing at all,

and are said to 'choose' to move out. Unless, that is, they resort to 'strategic single parenting'. Having a child unwed may be the only route for whites to the grail of council housing. Many engage in undisclosed cohabitation which they do not want to discuss in case they lose benefits; married couples live apart to maximise entitlements and families must make their offspring 'homeless' if they are to stand any chance of accommodation. Not only has there been decisive support for indigent outsiders, but antipathy to married, two-parent families.

The loss of local housing-control produced sink estates along with a crescendo of applications to enter the county. In one of the most rapid settlements ever to take place in Britain, wards of Tower Hamlets where Bangladeshi occupation was virtually nil in 1991 had 40 per cent or more in 2001, as population replacement spread to neighbouring boroughs like Newham and (now) Ilford and Barking. Bangladeshi children made up one third of primary school pupils in 1981 and two thirds by 2004, as extra resources were pumped into schools with names like Bangabandhu to help minority children.

Bangladeshi respondents in *The New East End* recount how nobody in London has to worry where the next meal is coming from, how if you do not have a job 'they give you money', how you 'can have somewhere to live, without any rent', how your 'children can go to school' and, even then, they still 'give you money'. Omitted from the text is a further observation that you are paid to have as many children as you like.

When means-tested welfare benefits increase with the number of children, they produce a very high worklessness rate. Nationally, the proportion of working age people living in workless households is highest for Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, at 27.4 per cent in 2004, compared with 10.9 per cent for whites (where lone motherhood is concentrated). Muslims have the highest male unemployment rate at 13 per cent; three times the rate for Christian men at 4 per cent. Add to this an 'inactivity' rate of 31 per cent. These men are purportedly ill or disabled, as are a high proportion of Bangladeshi women, who also draw disability benefits for various mental problems. Such disparities in benefit receipt by ethnic groups raise many questions about collusion and validation, and just how much assessment is possible through the burka and in the face of ethnic awareness and anti-discrimination strictures.

Poverty activists often harp on the dire poverty of Bangladeshis. Yet, 'being poor' in Britain allows them to live in considerable comfort and still send money back home where remittances fuel land and house price inflation. Dench's respondents described Bangladesh as a brutal place where landlords pull down houses when rent goes unpaid. There 'one part is starving and another part is having a feast,' and if you want to get on 'you have to be cruel to the poor...don't give them anything'. No wonder 'All young people have an aspiration to come to Britain,' where the 'advantages of a big community is that we can still live like in Bangladesh; it's like we don't lose anything'. The scale of support makes them believe that Britain must be incredibly rich and white people must all be well off.

With their habitat gone, there are many fewer whites in *family* households; the average number of children in a Bangladeshi household is more than seven times that in a white household. This helped increase the population of Tower Hamlets by 45 per cent in twenty years (national growth rate, 6 per cent). The decline in white children is steeper in Tower Hamlets than anywhere else in the country. White families are in direct competition with immigrants for scarce resources and services, especially housing and education. Those who remain often last only to the point of school transfer at eleven. Fewer children mean fewer relatives generally. Family ties no longer give white people access to those who control local resources, or links to jobs and housing. Men are no longer organised into socially useful lives as husbands and fathers, so the proportion of unwed births and lone parents among whites is also among the highest in the country, when these were lowest in the first half of the twentieth century.

A double victory for leftists and a double whammy for the white working class, who have seen their family structure smashed and their locality colonised. Highly educated 'yuppies' can move around freely, occupationally and geographically, and can take a high-minded view, since they are not in competition with anybody for local resources, not least because they are usually childless. Instead they can enjoy the sense of belonging to a 'vibrant' cosmopolitan community without any demands being made on them. It is like being on 'one big foreign holiday' as you eulogise — like Richard Morrison in *The Times* — about the cheap labour and wonderful restaurants.

The whites who oppose the rhetoric of need and rights and resent the loss of their locality are mocked as pathological inadequates who are incapable of living alongside people different from themselves. Use of the racist card both suggests that there is something wrong with the people who feel hostile and avoids the real issues. Promoting cohesion is only ever understood one way: combating white racism. No adjustment is ever demanded of newcomers who live inward-looking lives organised around a religious culture which grants little respect or merit to anyone else's. Unlike now,

immigrants had to work hard to get full admission to the nation where incorporation meant forging ties with the members of the national majority.

Middle class leftists do not learn from history and have instead been drawn by their sympathies into consolidating the rights of minorities against indigenous whites. By 1998, more whites were reporting themselves as victims of racial incidents than were reported as perpetrators. Harassment on estates has been defined by council officials in ways which effectively condones any behaviour by Bangladeshis as 'defensive', while white tenants are threatened with the loss of their home or delays in dealing with their claims. The fear of municipal victiminisation prevented some respondents speaking fully to the *New East End* researchers. In education, the bulk of conflict management is directed at white parents. As schools have become more Bangladeshi, most entrants and their parents do not speak English.

The *New East End* at last recognises how hostility to people perceived as strangers must be better understood before being dismissed as wicked or stupid. The measure of family ties was the strongest predictor of opposition to immigrants, and made this more a manifestation of social commitment than personal disposition. Family responsibility meant a more intimate level of concern for others and stronger group loyalty or stake in the area, while those people without local kin were, irrespective of age and place of birth, more able to ignore the population changes taking place. Older people are bewildered at how the welfare state has lost its original sense of reciprocity blaming 'those big-hearted ones' as much or more than migrants for both their plight and their prejudice. References to the war signified attachment to a mutualist model of society, and represented the broken pledges made to ordinary people, who now felt forgotten and forsaken as strangers in their own land.

These people have been disinherited and disenfranchised and go unrepresented in a way that contravenes the basic rules of our democracy. While an elected representative is supposed to represent all those in his area, many in Tower Hamlets make it clear that they are only there for the Bangladeshis who vote them in. Funds from the European Union to build a community centre are used to build a mosque instead. There are provisions for 'mother tongue' teaching to make immigrants feel at home. But when one non-Bangladeshi councillor entered a classroom to an abusive reception, he found the lesson devoted — not to Bengali — but to the development of Muslim identity around Arabic. The Muslim boys' secondary schools are bottom for the borough; not surprising because at least a third of lesson-time is devoted to memorising the Koran. The segregation and disadvantage imposed on pupils can be blamed on them being denied chances by white racism.

Unbelievably, Tower Hamlets borough council was awarded 'beacon' status by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2004 for its work on 'community cohesion'. The Government actually believes that valuable lessons can be learnt from the race relations model of a council where ward meetings have to be segregated because of the hostility on both sides. One of the commissioners on Ruth Kelly's Commission on Integration and Cohesion launched recently is even to be Prof Michael Keith who was ousted from the council in May when George Galloway's Respect Party took 12 seats.

Galloway's Islamofascism represents the growing identity of immigrants as members of the *ummah* or the worldwide community of Muslims. The old Bengali Islam, softened by local Hinduism and the Sufi tradition, is giving way to jihadist Iranian and Arab models. Its integration, not into mainstream British society, but into militant Islam, is increasingly accompanied by calls for autonomous Muslim areas governed by Sharia law. The mechanisms for government funding have already encouraged local councils to take in more immigrants than their boroughs could cope with and there is not the space for Banglatowns to expand at the same pace — whether in London or elsewhere. Yet, the influx continues, not least as spouses are brought in from the homeland — which sets integration back another generation. Many on the left still embrace untrammelled immigration and insist that the houses, education and benefits can always be found for the millions who would substantially improve their chances by coming here.

The implications for security, not just national cohesion, are terrifying. There is a growing drift into a welfare dependency shared with the lower reaches of the white population whose own lives are shrivelled by the rights culture. What opens up is the kind of prospect we see in the Middle East, where unoccupied, testosterone-fuelled young men, succoured on welfare, spend their time banging guns and making babies. Those antagonistic to their own people and society are eagerly fostering the emergence of a state within a state.

Yes, Mr Dobson, they came, they saw and they are taking it.

Patricia Morgan's latest book is Family Policy, Family Changes, Sweden, Italy and Britain Compared *(Civitas)*

The Rhyme of the Young Cameron

Myles Harris

The Conservative Party under Cameron resembles a ship being driven relentlessly onshore by a gale. Captain Cameron can hear the pounding of the surf, even hear the warning cries of watchers on the beach, but lacks the courage to turn the ship into wind and beat to sea. Instead he has decided to trim, working his way up and down the coast in the hope that the gale will blow itself out. The gale is made up of Muslim extremism, war in the Middle East, youth violence, drugs, private debt, a failing NHS, global warming, the Human Rights Act, Europe and immigration. In the last few years each has constituted its own separate gale, but now they are all combining in a single political hurricane.

As with all poorly officered ships, it is the petty squabbles that attract the most attention. During the Conservative Party Conference the passengers should have paid attention to the captain's address, but most have long ceased believing in anything the officers say. Besides they know that Captain Cameron is only the purser dressed as the captain. He is there to entertain, not to lead. So it was a dispute between the ship's cook and the ship's clown that seized their attention.

Boris Johnson, who markets himself as a political Dennis the Menace, 'Yah boo Dave Cameron', suggested that schoolchildren should, if they wanted, eat Big Macs for their school lunch instead of the organic lunches the celebrity cook Jamie Oliver suggested. There was a predictable furore with Boris hamming it to the cameras on Brighton sea-front and asking what all the fuss was about.

Conservative delegates, bored and dismayed by David Cameron — many of them must have wondered if they had signed up for a Liberal Democrat conference by mistake — flung themselves on the Boris episode like passengers scrambling for the lifeboats.

Suddenly Conservative blog sites were alive to the sound of Boris. Thank God, they gibbered, that somewhere on the ship the true heart of common sense Conservatism was still beating.

It isn't. Under Cameron common sense conservatism is as dead as the parrot in Monty Python's flying circus. Family values, low taxes, restraints on government spending, law and order, have been abandoned in favour of the Cheshire cat grin of Mr Cameron. If, as Anatole Kaletsky observed in *The Times*, Cameron sticks to his spending promises, the conservatives will have to raise, not lower, taxes.

Not that the other ship, 'The New Labour Project', launched brand new in 1997 as the political promise of the seas, is doing better. They are even closer inshore. In 2003 New Labour made the mistake of following the Americans into Iraq without any clear plan of what to do when they got there. The result is a huge swathe of Muslim opinion at home totally hostile to all things British and the makings among extremists of a 'Super IRA'. Labour has also failed the second great challenge of the 21st century, globalisation. Wealth is increasing, but, like the Britain during the Industrial Revolution, it is the rich who are getting richer and the poor poorer. Among the unskilled classes debt is steadily rising and real wages are falling. A non-tariff policy has put British workers in competition with their fellows in the Far East earning 50p an hour. Nor is the foreign competition always that far away. In many parts of London illiterate non-English speaking workers, often

> ***Labour has also failed the second great challenge of the 21st century, globalisation. Wealth is increasing, but, like the Britain during the Industrial Revolution, it is the rich who are getting richer and the poor poorer***

here illegally, earn around £2 an hour — or even less — upon which they pay no income tax. Labour has also failed the third challenge, how to manage labour markets in a highly mobile world. Immigration, barely controlled when Labour came to power in 1997, is now out of control and feeding on itself. Those who have managed to hide from deportation are now bringing in their families. Simple illegal immigration, although it still exists, has given way to more sophisticated forms of illegal entry via bogus colleges and work permit abuse. The latter methods take advantage of readily available fake passports, bogus bank accounts and even school certificates which are now produced on an industrial scale. So efficient is the passport forgery business that in three years the price of an illegal passport has fallen from £600 to £350.

On other fronts education is a disaster with falling literacy and numeracy, and manufacturing industry has fled. Our civil law has become the carrion of jackal lawyers. Even our right to a trial has been abandoned for reasons of public security. We now live almost entirely on the profits of cheap imported labour and

the proceeds of hedge funds. The latter are well named. In an economic crash they would be about as firm as a hedge to lean on. But Captain Blair, even though he has had to put down a couple of mutinies, has sensed the Labour Party is heading for the rocks and is trying to turn his ship away from disaster. Captain Cameron shows no such sense. At this year's Conservative Party conference he announced that he is going to head to the exact map reference Labour is trying to flee from, the 'centre ground' of politics.

It is the abode of sirens. Sirens that call on Britain to abandon the special relationship, withdraw from Iraq, draw ever closer to Europe and further erode our constitutional liberties. If Cameron anchors there he will find himself having to distance Britain from America and withdraw our troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. In consequence fundamentalists, relieved of some of the pressure confining them to those battlegrounds, and mistaking our withdrawal as weakness, will turn their attention to Britain's cities. A horrible but plausible scenario is that after a series of Islamist suicide bombings indigenous Muslims will be given extra privileges in Britain to 'compensate' them for our invasion of the Middle East. We may even see official sanction of a 'Muslim home', a mini state in one of our big cities. In it a limited variety of Sharia law will be allowed. Our few remaining grammar schools will be closed, thus re-enforcing the privilege of only the rich being able to afford an education (like Cameron), the NHS will return to its old, statist torpor and taxes will rise. A wealth tax is likely and green taxes will be imposed on air travel and cars. If we are lucky we might see tax relief on bicycle clips.

Labour has been quick to seize on this unspoken agenda. Hardly had the last strains of 'Land of Hope and Glory' died away at the Conservative Conference when Jack Straw — who, I suspect, hopes to take the helm of New Labour after Captain Blair steps down — popped up in Blackburn asking Muslim women to abandon the veil. He had the full support of a New Labour-directed BBC. Britain's ancient liberties, cried *Newsnight*, were in danger of being eroded by Muslim extremism. We must give up multiculturism in favour of 'interculturism'. In doing so Jack Straw laid in exactly the right course the passengers wanted. You could almost hear the collective sigh of pleasure below decks. Within 24 hours the BBC received 10,000 e-mails supporting him. At their peak, crowed *Newsnight*, they were coming in at 400 a minute. A staunch Tory voter sitting next to me said that she would, if Jack Straw and New Labour stuck to its guns over the Muslims, vote for them for the first time in her life.

With Labour sailing away from him on the subject of interculturism, all that Captain Cameron can do is to set course for the fabled Islands of Greenery. But they are even more dangerous than the sands of the Centre Ground. Hidden volcanoes lurk among these friendly looking islands. For a Green Policy to work, every nation in the world will have to sign up to it. The British might be prepared to accept £20 congestion charges and £30 a gallon petrol to save the planet, but not if they see their standard of living dropping while those of China and India, fuelled by vast amounts of dirty coal, rise. China is a major polluter, and would have to transfer its policy of judicially murdering economic speculators to killing those who use too much energy. It is not likely to do so unless it wants to go bankrupt. India would simply not enforce its laws on pollution. Most other countries outside Europe and America would simply cheat. In addition three billion of the world's population, the most illiterate three billion, earn less than $3 a day. A properly applied green policy would have to ensure that they remained mired in poverty — an unthinkable idea — if they were not to suddenly increase their use of carbon and devastate the climate.

When the next election comes, Conservative voters should shun Cameron. He wants power for power's sake. All he is offering in return is political life belts as useless as if they were filled with lead.

Myles Harris is a general practitioner

Own Your Own Health Policy

Theodore Dalrymple

Hi-tech and long life have made the provision of health care for the entire population a nightmare for the politicians and civil servants of all countries. The idea that universal health care, by rendering a population healthy, would be auto-limiting in its cost has proved not only fallacious but the very opposite of the truth. Health care is the most bottomless of bottomless pits, and no country has solved the problem to its own entire satisfaction, except, perhaps, Liechtenstein.

How then best to organise health care? For a long time, the British people were irrationally convinced that their National Health Service was the envy of the world — though I confess that, having travelled the world, I have never met anyone who envied it (perhaps I just met the wrong people). The myth of the enviable NHS consoled us, perhaps, for the loss of Empire. We might not rule the waves any longer, but at least we could get free hernia-repairs. Certainly, people vary in their experience of the NHS: for every horror story there is a heart-warming story of the most devoted and best care possible. My aged mother was treated excellently in her final illness, my aged uncle abominably. Is the NHS glass half-full or half-empty?

What I think is almost indisputable is that being ill in Britain is a more unpleasant experience than almost anywhere else in the developed world, or than it need be. To the inherent pains and discomforts of illness are added the humiliations of a system that always seems to be working at the very limits of its capacity, and often appears to be doing you a favour by treating you at all. Our treatment of cancer is notoriously backward by comparison with that of other comparable countries; a young Greek I know who was employed in England and developed a hernia found it easier, quicker and more convenient to obtain treatment in Greece than to wait interminably, like a character in a play by Beckett, in Britain. The inconveniences descend to the micro-level, as if no detail had been overlooked: unlike private hospitals, for example, NHS hospitals routinely employ trolleys for the distribution of equipment, laundry and so forth whose wheels make a noise like theatrical thunder-making machines. It is more important, it seems, that patients should know who is boss than that they should obtain some rest and peace and quiet.

What is the answer, if indeed there is one, to the problem? How do we arrange a health care system that is efficient, does not leave people unprotected, responds to our needs and is affordable? Is the answer to privatise it entirely, for example by handing over general practices to private companies, as has been done already in a few cases? One of the problems that we face is our almost total mistrust of the government (and not just this government, but any likely government to come). We do not trust it to carry out a privatisation that differs very greatly in its principles from that carried out in the Soviet Union after 1990: namely the allocation of resources and licences to trusted friends and cronies. We have, after all, seen many billions spent on the Health Service without a very appreciable improvement in the services offered to the public, though hosts of bureaucratic hangers-on have benefited enormously; and a government that thinks that what this country needs is a series of giant casinos is not to be trusted with anything much.

The public service and private enterprise now so interpenetrate each other that private enterprise is no longer enterprising, and the public service no longer serves. The distinction between licit and illicit payment from public funds has been almost eradicated: *de facto*, corruption has been legalised. Regulation is used, for example in the market for geriatric nursing homes, not as a means to ensure that services conform to minimum standards, but to drive out small operators at the expense of big ones, whose owners no doubt have powerful political contacts. We now know what the Project, as it was called, is: it is the establishment of corporatism.

This means that if, for example, the government decided to change the basis on which health care was funded, and adopted the German or Dutch model, according to which a small number of insurance companies compete in a regulated market, we would not and could not trust our regulators not to take personal advantage of their position. It pains me to say it, but there has been such a swift deterioration in the British character that the probity necessary for the regulation of a Dutch or German system is no longer to be looked for from it. Underlying all our problems is that of third-party payment for health services. The inefficiencies of the government when it is itself that third-party hardly need elaboration; the potential for illicit enrichment, as well as for continuing administrative bureaucracy, is

obvious when the third parties are insurance companies operating by government licence.

Is there any way to restore direct payment by patients of doctors and hospitals for services? Perhaps not for everyone, but there is a way by which the role of government in the business of health care might, over the long term, be reduced for substantial numbers of people. If every person could create a special bank account, whose money were earmarked for healthcare only, into which they were permitted, annually from birth, to put a sum of money tax-deductibly, that sum rising with age, the interest likewise to be tax-free, heritable for the same purposes by direct descendants, and with a small element of insurance against catastrophic medical emergency, then huge capital sums would soon accumulate, freeing the state of the necessity to provide for at least a substantial part of its population. Since the overwhelming majority of medical expenses occur at the end of life, in most cases the funds accumulated would be more than sufficient. There is no reason why similar arrangements could not be made for education.

The result would be services that responded directly to the demands of patients, and not to those of governments or insurance companies. It would also render individuals less dependent on huge organisations that cannot be trusted to have their best interests at hear. It would represent a cultural shift away from the administrative gigantism that renders much of modern life, despite its prosperity, so very intimidating.

Theodore Dalrymple is a psychiatrist

The Moral Imbecility of Liberalism

Colin Broughton

A day-old human infant is worth no more than a snail.
A severely brain-damaged human being is worth no more than a cabbage.
A human embryo cannot be harmed.
I came into existence some time after my birth.
Only persons have a right to life, not humans as such.
Dogs and pigs may be persons, and some humans are not.
Humans should consider breeding with chimpanzees.
To favour one's own family, friends and race over other people is not moral

The name Peter Singer is not one which rings a bell with most people, but Singer, who is the Ira DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton, the Ivy League university in the USA is, like many members of the liberal-left élites which rule us in our so-called democracy, an extremely important person in our lives, whether we are aware of it or not. He was described by the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* as 'by an order of magnitude the most famous professor' at Princeton's Center for Human Values. The liberal *New Yorker* magazine described him as 'the most influential living philosopher'. His thoughts are frequently to be found in *The Guardian*, and are to be discerned in the output of other opinion-forming vehicles of the liberal left such as the BBC. He is the favourite guru of many in the Animal Rights movement.

How does Singer come to the startling and chilling conclusions indicated at the head of this article, and what are the consequences of his influence? It is one of the great ironies and contradictions of left-liberalism that its championing of the individual so often leads to the degradation of the individual. This is because the liberal agenda generally involves the destruction of traditional attitudes and behaviour, including the idea that human beings are possessed of a unique dignity and status simply by virtue of being human. For example, traditional attitudes to crime hinge on viewing criminals as responsible individuals exercising free will and choice to carry out selfish and damaging acts. They do this in a social context in which left-liberalism has stripped crime of much of its social stigma and punishment because it thinks that criminals are the victims of the social and economic environment. The net result has been an exponential growth in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. Left-liberalism thinks it is on the side of right. In its effects, it is on the side of evil. Singer's views are moral philosophy's equivalent of this process.

Singer starts from the proposition that the idea that there is something special about human beings, something which sets them apart from and makes them superior to other animals, is a function of religious beliefs. These beliefs, which give a false worldview, are no longer held by most people, and the idea of the unique status of human beings must be discarded.

There are numerous objections to this suggestion. For example, it can be argued that reports of the death of religion have been greatly exaggerated. Whilst in the present anti-authority social climate in the West adherence to its organised forms has declined, most people still profess some kind of belief in God or the spiritual, although this may be shallow. In any case, although an assertion of the unique dignity of human beings as such may be supported by Christianity in particular, it is not necessarily dependent on religious belief. It also derives directly from our moral intuitions which are part of our genetic inheritance.

However, like liberals everywhere, Singer does not think much of our genetic inheritance. Whilst acknowledging that our basic moral impulses derive from our genetic make-up, he thinks that these should be ignored. He argues that our genes evolved under conditions which no longer apply. Our moral intuitions, which have led to behaviour that we have viewed as customary, natural and right, such as placing our duty to our family, our friends and our ethnic kin before our duty to others, suited the survival of our genes in those earlier conditions. But, now we live in different times, and morally, we need to move on. Our preference for our own kith and kin is arbitrary. Other people are equally deserving of our care and consideration, and we

like liberals everywhere, Singer does not think much of our genetic inheritance. Whilst acknowledging that our basic moral impulses derive from our genetic make-up, he thinks that these should be ignored

should give it to them without favouring what we might feel is our own. So, for example, according to Singer, when we die, we should leave our possessions not just to our nearest and dearest, our wives and children, or even donate it to the charitable foundations of our nation, or to reduce the National Debt, as people once used to do when Britain was a genuine community. We should leave it to everyone who is as badly off or worse off than our family or ethnic kin and do so even if it means the death of our own sick wives, the starvation of our children and the suffering of our nation. If we can hear our mother's screams as she drowns, we must nevertheless be prepared to ignore them and save some 'equally deserving' stranger from the water instead.

Singer's argument that nowadays, our moral intuitions are outdated because times have changed, may be criticised by observing that they haven't in reality changed that much. Singer seems to make the leftist's usual mistake in relying too much on the beneficence of the state or society. But these, especially leftist or supranational ones, are often the prime enemies of an individual's survival. Ask any citizen of China, or of the Soviet Union, or Pol Pot's Cambodia. Families and kin are the first line of defence against political and social forces, such as Singer's ethics, seeking to destroy individuals. More importantly, while genetically-based actions or attitudes are not necessarily moral simply because they are natural, according to Singer these intuitions are not moral *because* they are natural. But while they may sometimes mislead us, our moral intuitions are necessary for us to recognise what is right. They are the fountainhead of all our moral sentiments. Without them, we would have no moral sense at all and ethics would be, at best, an intellectual exercise of which no one would feel the need to take the slightest note. An attack on our moral intuitions is an attack on morality itself, and, since genetically-generated impulses cannot be divorced from ourselves as humans, an attack on the value of humanity.

Singer's attack on the value of human beings lowers them to the level of animals. Of course, Singer thinks he is raising the status of animals instead, but the net result is the same. Liberal ideas usually have the reverse effect to those intended. Singer thinks that because we now know that there is only a 1.6 per cent difference in DNA between ourselves and 'other chimpanzees' and that the great apes are thought capable of some functions (like lying and having a sense of humour) previously considered uniquely human, humans should consider mating with those closest to us, chimpanzees. Singer makes the mistake of assuming that percentage DNA differences matter. They don't. It is qualitativeness, the result of gene expression, that matters, both to humans and to chimpanzees, whatever the percentages. It is human and chimpanzee nature to take the similarities for granted and to concentrate on the differences. For humans, human beings have unique and superior value simply because they *are* human. But of course, Singer has already dismissed human nature as the source of ethics.

We all know that mating with chimpanzees and the other great apes will not stop there. Well intentioned destruction of traditional attitudes sends liberal-leftist thinkers down a well-travelled slimy slope to evil conclusions. Having made the concession that humans can and should mate with an ape, the argument against having sexual relations with other animals has already been lost. 'Reason' will find reasonable arguments for passing laws giving equal marital status to a man and his goat, while it will be illegal to make remarks about a lady and her Alsatian. People and their partners, of whatever species: fish, flesh or fowl, will be required to be welcomed in society on equal terms. Already, for many liberals who have taken Singer's lead, the only real barrier at the moment to humans mating

with the family labrador is the question of the animal's consent. But this will be overcome. On present form, in the end it will be agreed that a wag of the tail, wing or fin, or perhaps a purr or squawk, will suffice in this respect...

Having (as he thinks) disposed of the bases of traditional morality, Singer moves on to find a new one, a non-human universalised ethic based on Reason. Since the universe is devoid of meaning and purpose, any meaning and purpose that we see in it is the product of our own desires and preferences and not an objective fact about the world. There is no value inherent in the universe independent of the existence of beings which can feel and which prefer some states of affairs to others. Therefore the interests and preferences of ourselves and other feeling animals is the whole source of moral value. Moral choices should be made which seek to bring about a state of affairs which accords with the preferences of all, including feeling animals (whose interests, Singer argues, must be given equal

For humans, human beings have unique and superior value simply because they are human. But of course, Singer has already dismissed human nature as the source of ethics

consideration) who are affected by a given action and its consequences. Singer's 'preference utilitarianism', as this system is called, may be criticised on a number of counts. One of most important, the question as to why preferences, majority or not, are *ipse facto* supposed to be moral, is given no satisfactory answer by Singer. Another, related one is that, since moral choices are made on a majority basis, no consideration whatever is given to the individual. Is the individual then of no interest, morally speaking? Apparently not, in Singer's system.

For Singer, moral value is based on subjective considerations, grounded ultimately in the individual preferences of beings who can feel pleasure or pain. If we are not self-aware, and do not have the rational ability to foresee the consequences of our actions, we cannot have moral standing. We cannot then have rights, a moral property which belongs to those who do have this capacity. Singer's conclusions are both logical and appalling: Human foetuses and new-born babies up to a month of age or so are not rational, self-aware and future-oriented, and therefore cannot have rights. They are not 'persons'. On the other hand, some non-human animals, pigs and chimpanzees, for example, appear to be self-aware, rational and future-oriented. They *are* 'persons' and *do* have rights. So people are not necessarily persons but animals may be. Thus abortion is not in itself ever immoral, because a foetus does not possess the attribute of being forward-thinking and so on. Neither does a month-old baby, and one of them is worth no more than a snail. Both foetus and baby may be disposed of at will if that is the parent's preference. If an older human is not self-aware and capable of forward thinking — if for example one's mother is lying in a hospital on life-support having suffered a major stroke which has destroyed her mental functions, according to Singer she is worth no more than a cabbage. She can be killed if convenient to those affected.

Singer's moral imbecility, which demonstrates how liberalism can be responsible for results with which the Nazis would be familiar, may be viewed in various perspectives, but all of them in the end are a function of the liberal-left's ongoing 'Enlightenment'-inspired project to replace the traditional and the human with 'reason'. But in ethics, this attempt must fail, because the business of ethics is to humanise. It should go without saying that one cannot humanise and encourage human flourishing by trying to crush human love as a well-spring of moral value, but with liberals like Singer around, it seems it must be said. In any case Singer's reliance on reason is misplaced and contradictory. He tells us that human beings are not unique, but human reason *is* unique. It is of a different order from that of animals, and does indeed set us apart. Singer recognises this implicitly, because he thinks human beings, uniquely, can ignore their genetic impulses in favour of their reason.

Traditionalists do not deny reason, but have a healthy distrust of it, recognising that how we use it depends on our pre-existing emotional state, and that this fact is not often recognised by those who assert the supremacy of reason. Reason as the slave of the passions, as the philosopher David Hume put it, has been responsible for some of the most horrendous inhumanity in history. Traditionalists respect the wisdom of the ages, suitably amended to account for different conditions, which has its own 'reasoning': the selection of ideas and attitudes in an evolutionary process of adaption and survival in a process over time infinitely more refined, powerful, and in the end reasonable, than anything the liberal left is ever going to come up with.

The last word should go to Feodor Dostoevsky, who remarked, concerning a universe which has no meaning, that then, 'not only love, but every living force maintaining the life of the world would at once be dried up. Moreover, nothing would then be immoral, everything would be permissible, even cannibalism.' (*Brothers Karamazov)*

Colin Broughton worked in the Insurance industry

A Week on Planet Academia

Keith Walker

Recently I have found it difficult to grasp one thing, what planet I actually land on when I go to work in the mornings. I don't have psychotic episodes (very often!), I don't watch *Dr Who* and it's not that I have acquired access to any alien technology. All I need to do is land my 10 year old Ford Escort in the car park of a science department in one of the Oxbridge Universities. It's a department populated by aliens; the aliens from Roswell came from the planet Zeta 2 Reticuli, the planet these humanoids come from is far more bizarre. It is one populated by a bunch of financially very well-off left-wing scientists (most of whom strangely acquired their neo-Marxist fetishes at very expensive public schools). They look human, they speak a form of English and they are supposed to be some of the most intellectually gifted people in the country. One or two of them have even written studies on human consciousness. The problem is the world their consciousness inhabits does not resemble earth at all; it is quite surreal and it is sculpted by a disturbed left-wing ideology (although their thought patterns are not consistent enough to have an ideology) that I thought had gone out of fashion 20 or 30 years ago.

Before accidentally acquiring a PhD I started life on a council estate and uniquely in this department I have actually worked in a factory, rather than, in one instance, having parents who owned one. Occasionally I feel resentful at the way these left-wing heroes have hypocritically used the apparatus of a capitalist society to gain access to things which I would find very difficult to acquire. I admire the public school system and would send my own child to one if I had the money. I even have a sneaking admiration for the unintentional comedy that occurs when the old-time Islington left looks glum and introspective and attempts to psychoanalyse, but totally fails to grasp why the British working classes showed more interest in buying their council houses, eating out in restaurants and buying cheap air fares to warm interesting parts of the globe than revolutionary activity. You would think their adolescent attachment to a mixture of Marxism and Klingon mysticism might have passed and the occasional glimmer of reality might have intruded. When I first went to work in Oxbridge I at least expected academics with left-wing sympathies to have some kind of intellectually well-reasoned world view that they could express in good English. What I had not expected was to be confronted by a group of wealthy self-obsessed socialist geriatrics (some of whom are only in their early 20's, they just have weirder haircuts and they swear a lot more) intent on some sort of liberal neo-Marxist global domination. Otherwise hyper-intelligent people have retreated into some sort of fantasy left-wing mental theme planet. The remaining ideological framework is not a form of Marxism that I remember, and seems to consist of a mixture of a total hatred of the British working classes (the masses), relentless anti-American hysteria, and the total disregard of reality and history when it does not fit their own prejudices. Character assassination and bad language are used relentlessly to try and cover a total misunderstanding of how the vast majority of earth's population actually lives. All the conversations, comments and opinions here have been transcribed almost verbatim and are held by reputedly some of the most intelligent people in England. If this is how the hyper-intelligent think then David Cameron has a real problem and God save the planet from the thought processes of the 'masses', although I prefer the term 'earthlings'.

Monday.
The United States is the most evil country in the world, Oh, until we want to work there.

The Monday lunchtime conversation starts in its usual fashion: let's run down the United States and everything about it. It's the most perfidious, venal and evil country in the history of planet earth and the uneducated trailer trash American public especially have no right whatsoever to democratically elect a Republican president for two terms in a row. 'That's what happens when you let the masses choose a government.'

Apparently the decision as to who should be President of the United States of America should be left to a group of Oxbridge educated English adolescents (with well-off parents). I mention 'didn't we try something like that in1776 and lose?'

I was told 'that's just really trite and stupid you would say a **** stupid historically inaccurate thing like that'.

I point out that the struggle for national liberation in the United States did in fact end around 1776, did result

in the effective removal of the English aristocratic bourgeoisie political influence from the area, and did see its replacement by a form of flawed democracy.

A 30 year adolescent with a skinhead haircut and a PhD then starts chanting '**** b***, George Bush is a **** ****'. I mildly say 'at least he hasn't got Tourette's syndrome' the response to this by the man, a trained Neuroscientist, is 'that's so ****, ****, ignorant'.

One grey haired, fussy but polite female academic with the type of strained emotionally constipated expression coming from the mental confusion that occurs when you are the daughter of a wealthy American industrialist, then says 'But George Bush is a vile racist!'.

I am a bit naïve and so stupidly point out 'the last two Secretaries of State, Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice, looked ever so slightly black to me, why would a racist in his position promote two black people in a row to one of the most powerful positions in America' and I ask if anybody can remember the name of even one ever so slightly blackish (or even ever so slightly mildly suntanned) Secretary of State under Bill Clinton.

A left-wing public schoolboy (the skinhead) with the sense of right-on left-wing social superiority that comes from wealthy parents, an expensive education, but only limited peripheral contact with planet earth, then looks deadly serious and proceeds with a perfectly straight face to deliver a stupid tirade 'you don't really understand the political process, it's so easy to deconstruct George Bush's promotion of Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice, the appointment of these two is tokenism and was just done deliberately to in fact deconstruct the idea that the Republicans and Bush are racist and oppressive, Condoleeza Rice has no power whatsoever.'

I casually mention 'I thought the Republican party was formed as the liberal anti-slavery party in 1854', the response to this is the normal well-thought-out intellectually rigorous erudite response 'you're just the type of racist tosser who would say that'.

Our head of department, usually a sensible man whom I respect, then follows this up with something even more stupid: 'But Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell are not really black, when you look at them they have white features, they are mixed race'. My first reaction is to say 'I suppose Mahatma Gandhi was a Norwegian'. As he is my head of department and his signature pays my mortgage, I decide for several seconds to pretend to be sincere and act in a deferential and emphatic manner: 'So the white ancestral part of these two, somehow has differentially contributed in a genetic sense to them joining the Republican party and it's this white genetic part of their ancestry that has contributed to their acceptance and promotion.' He then says 'Well essentially yes!'.

On the way out of work I bump into my rabidly anti-American colleague. I ask him where he is going to work when his grant money runs out? With a total lack of irony says 'Harvard, I am not staying around here'.

Tuesday.

The United States again, its evil foreign policy and the need for a humane alternative superpower to run the world.

It's Tuesday lunchtime, I pretend to be busy and preoccupied with my sandwich, so I don't have to interact with the 'aliens'. I hear the usual 'Bush is a vile racist' then 'Bush is just very stupid, Kerry was an intellectual' (an intellectual who got lower marks at Yale than thickee Bush).

'Guantanamo Bay is a Gulag where thousands of innocent people have been murdered' (actually it's 3 deaths so far and they were suicides). 'if Bush hadn't have been president, 9/11 wouldn't have happened' (actually most of the planning was done during Clinton's presidency), 'Yes, and Bush doesn't understand that the United States is in serious decline. What the world really needs is a new superpower, one with a far more progressive and enlightened agenda, one that can dominate the globe and prevent the United States exerting what is essentially a racist, malign global dominance.' I make a very bad mistake and ask in retrospect what proves to be a really dumb question 'Which country is that then?'. I then start to suffer from a number of auditory hallucinations: 'China', 'I think the Chinese leadership will soon begin to exert the enlightened agenda that the world needs', 'I am surprised that people don't realise that Chinese notions of democratic accountability are different to ours, they need to exclude the masses or China will not be able to develop, into a superpower', 'some people think that China is an oppressive totalitarian regime that stifles dissent, I don't know how they can think that', 'Yes and I think that the United States needs to end their colonial attitudes towards Taiwan and let the Chinese deal with what is essentially an internal dispute.'

One of the cleaners heroically has an attack of common sense and says 'you mean invade the place and shoot anybody who doesn't toe the line, just like they did in Tiananmen Square'. This provokes an outburst of appalling snobbery 'you are not in a position to understand the Chinese perspective, people in this country have a Eurocentric perspective on Chinese affairs, I suppose you read the *Daily Mail*, the Chinese perspective is a collective one and the

views of the masses are inconsequential and it's racist not to respect that'. I compound my earlier mistake 'Isn't China the same country that murdered up to 70 million of its population, invaded Tibet, is likely to be the largest producer of carbon dioxide by 2008, and you lot are always having a go at the United States about the death penalty, but the Chinese execute around 3,000 people a year, most of whom don't even get a proper trial.'

'You really are a **** xenophobe, that's George Bush's fault, how's the BNP these days?'

In case I end up assaulting somebody I bite my tongue.

On the way home I feel depressed; I am a '**** xenophobe' because I didn't realise that George Bush is personally responsible for Chinese carbon dioxide emissions and the invasion of Tibet in 1959.

Wednesday

The British education system, our kids go to public school (which we forgot), that makes us really left-wing and uniquely able to understand selection in the state system.

On the way to work I decide to go deaf and dumb for an entire day and not interact with the 'aliens' at all. I expect to hear 'but George Bush is a vile racist' but the tearoom is strangely silent. Then a line of conversation starts that turns out to be even sillier than usual. These people were socialist public schoolchildren all right, you could tell this by the way they repeatedly told you that the present egalitarian comprehensive system is completely perfect. I just sat and listened.

'I think any return of educational selection would be a very regressive step.'

'Yes I think that encouraging people to send their children to public schools is quite appalling, it's the type of thing that the Tories would do.'

'I think it's actually quite selfish and undermines the state sector.'

'I think abolishing any form of selection is the only way to encourage working class entry into the professions' and then the standard 'I think some of these people are vile racists.'

'Some people think that selection still exists but it depends on whether you can buy a house in an expensive area with nice schools, I don't know how people can think that.'

Six grown adults forgot to mention that their own children went to expensive private schools.

An aging academic, (our previous head of department) tries to lamely entice me into the conversation: 'if the Tories get back in, the toffs will be running the country again and if they bring back educational selection it will be a disaster'. I try to deflect the question and bury my head in a book. 'David Cameron went to Eton you know.' I casually mention 'I suppose so but Blair went to Fettes, where did your children go to school Prof?'

'That is very naïve it's not the same thing' he says completely ignoring the second half of the question. It's a question to which I already know the answer. It's not the local comprehensive.

Later in the afternoon, I bump into one of the technicians 'that lot dinnertime', he says 'it's a different world I've never heard such intelligent people talk such rubbish in my entire life or swear so much. They have never had to live in the real world. I wish I had enough cash to send my kids to a private school, but I suppose if I did it I would be a fascist'.

Thursday.

Marrying a black woman makes you a racist.

It's quiet. Then our emotionally strained wealthy American academic (current location an ethnic-minority-free village in the English countryside) then starts 'I think Robert is a vile racist'. The technician responds 'I think that's unfair, Robert is married to a black woman and has two mixed race children.' The American insists 'I still think he is a racist, he said that the immigration system was in a mess, I don't know how with a black wife he can say that.' A debate on race starts in a surreal manner and then rapidly becomes unpleasant. I decide to keep out of the conversation and bury my head in a book called *Abducted, How people come to believe they were abducted by aliens.* It's a serious psychological/ neuroscience book about the psychological stress caused when people believe they have been abducted by aliens and I know exactly how they feel.

Academic 'The trouble with the masses is that they are unreconstructed **** racist tossers who don't realise that the good thing about mass immigration is that it drives down working peoples' wages and is really good for the economy, if they would embrace these changes there wouldn't be a problem.'

Technician 'Some of the masses are married to black people, for a start calling Robert a racist when he is married to a black woman is offensive and if you only earn £6 an hour stacking shelves then people telling you that your wages need to be driven down even further so that large corporations can make even larger profits is even more offensive and it plays right into the hands of extreme right wing parties like the BNP. It's a very strange view for people who say they are left wing. Have you ever stacked shelves in a supermarket for £6 an hour?'

Academic 'You are just a **** ****'

Technician 'Can you stop swearing please ?'

Academic '****, ****, ****.'

Technician 'Your parents own a factory, you went to the whitest most expensive private school in the country, how many ethnic minority pupils were there in your school, you went to Oxford University, hardly the most ethnically diverse place on earth, and your girlfriend is white, and with no sense of irony or pot calling the kettle black, you start screaming that a man who has married a black woman is an unreconstructed racist. Don't you think the boot should be on the other foot?'

Academic 'You **** tosser! I lived in Brixton for six months.' He then gets up, throws a chair across the tearoom and storms out. I say nothing because I can see what's coming. 'I think what the technician said was quite uncalled for', said the American academic.

Later on in the day, I bump into the technician. 'I have been called into the office, Tom (the skinhead) has made a complaint, said I was a racist and has accused me of deliberately provoking him, I have been told to keep quiet in the tearoom in future.'

'But he called you a racist tosser because you defended someone who married a black woman and threw a chair across the room, it's a joke.'

'The Professor said it was OK.'

When I drove home I updated my CV and applied for another job.

Friday

The most evil man on planet earth.

By Friday I am tired and I dread going to work. When I get there, I hide in my office. I sneak out quietly to make a cup of tea. The usual drivel is in full swing.

'I think he should be banned from TV, his views are so extreme', 'I think he is just a xenophobic arsehole', 'I am surprised that he isn't a member of the BNP', 'I think he is contributing to global warming', 'I think he is a vile racist', 'you would think that the BBC management would be more careful about allowing such views on TV, it's a disgrace'. Who were they talking about? Osama Bin Laden, Abu Hamza, John Prescott even? No, the greatest threat to western civilisation was Jeremy Clarkson. I must be one of the most politically misinformed men on planet earth. I thought he was just a funny guy who presented a programme about cars.

I laughed but by Friday night I was drunk.

Saturday

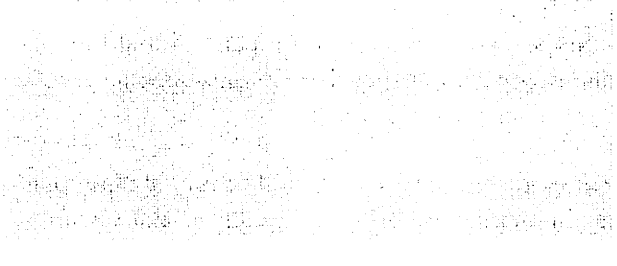
I live in a small house in an area populated by 'the inconsequential masses', 'earthlings' would be a more accurate description. During the day I talk to my neighbours; none screams, shouts and swears. I don't hear the F word once, not one of them blames George Bush for Chinese carbon dioxide production or calls my mixed race neighbours racists. Some of them are so ignorant they think Condoleeza Rice is a black woman. Not one of them considers Jeremy Clarkson to be the greatest threat to western civilisation. That must be because they are all 'thick unreconstructed racist tossers'.

All of these opinions are held by some of the reputedly most intelligent people in the country. In a number of respects their views although otherworldly are disturbing. If I was to admit openly to being a conservative voter, my life in the workplace would not be worth living. The problems would start by accusations that I was an unreconstructed racist even if I was married to a black woman. What is even more disturbing is that in a few years' time the junior acolytes of most of these clowns will be in senior managerial positions, and they will think it appropriate to use their positions funded by the British taxpayer to intimidate politically junior colleagues. There are thousands of people working in the public sector who feel like me especially after a few drinks. During the day they have to pretend to be left-wing, crudely anti-American and 'right on' about a huge range of issues. Anybody with an absence of these weirdo neo-Marxist sympathies, who wants to prosper in the university system or other chunks of the public sector, quickly learns to shut his mouth.

The real problem is this! What are 'the inconsequential masses', ordinary people or earthlings actually going to do when clowns with mindsets this deranged run the country?

Oh, I forgot, in a large number of public service institutions they probably do.

Keith Walker works in a Science Department of an Oxbridge University where these opinions were recorded over a short period of time.



Why are University Lecturers so Bad and Getting Worse?

Christie Davies

As an undergraduate I loved lectures. I would often go to four in a single morning taking notes continuously from 9 to 1. I still have my entire set of lecture notes in the neat red exercise books I took to lectures. I have offered them to the libraries in Cambridge but despite the distinction of the lecturers of that time no one wants even to consider them. Lectures today are so awful that no one prizes these tokens of a golden age. They were giants in those days. I can still remember the delivery of the best of them such as James Meade in economics, the Maxwell of Maxwell's calculus on analysis and the learned Edward Shils. In my second year exam I could hear Meade's lectures speaking into one ear and Pasinetti's into the other. All I had to do was to synthesise their two approaches, show how they differed and try to resolve the contradictions between them.

Of course a few of them were bad. Joan Robinson, a scholar with an international reputation, only ever gave one lecture to the undergraduates that was any good and that was when she was ill and Pasinetti stood in for her. She never prepared her lectures and rambled. During one lecture she insulted a blind student who was taking notes using a Braille typewriter. She thought he was tape-recording her and did not want anyone to know how little trouble she took with her lectures. F R Leavis traded on his fame by hiring a lecture hall and giving extra lectures for which he charged half a crown (perhaps £5 today?). He mumbled and made petulant remarks about his colleagues. His disciples sat in the front row and squeaked and bounced in delight at every insult. Until then I did not believe in levitation but these devotees rose in the air when they laughed, yet with their bodies still fixed in a sitting position. He lectured about Charles Dickens but I have no memory of what he said. Eric Idle, later a noted comedian, did an imitation of Leavis in the Footlights review, *My Girl Herbert,* with Leavis analysing the Cambridge telephone directory. When we took the show to the University of Southampton, the Professor of English laughed so much he fell out of his seat but still went on laughing.

Yet on the whole I have good and fond memories of those who lectured to me. They took pride in being lucid. The same can not be said of the buffoons who lecture today and the reasons for the decline are interesting. The main problem today's lecturers have is that they do not understand the difference between oral and written communication. Many of them read their lectures from a written text. They are incapable of speaking extempore from brief though systematic notes. Why do they bother to lecture at all? Why not just send the written text to each student as an email attachment or 'blackboard' it. The whole point of a lecture is that it is an oral form of communication that supplements and makes clear the things that students read in articles and books. When a lecturer reads out a written text, it shows that he or she is unable to use the most basic of rhetorical and pedagogical skills such as emphasis through tone, deliberate repetition using different formulations in case they didn't get it the first time, or calculated shifts between formal academic speech and informal demotic phrases where the latter simplify and explain the former. Because they have a written text they try to speak in long sentences with innumerable subordinate clauses — a kind of *Wissenschaftsenglisch*. I suppose it helps them to conceal that they have very little to say. It is quite impossible to speak such sentences. What is worse, because they have their nose in a written text, they fail to make eye contact with people in the audience or use gestures. They rarely change their facial expressions. How can you communicate orally without using eyes, hands, face? After such a lecture you feel: it was read; it wasn't well read; it wasn't worth reading.

Matters have been made even worse by the use of such technologies as, first, the overhead projector and then later computer presentations. The bore now puts up

a slab of text on a screen, reads it rapidly and switches to the next one. The students try to write it down and fail. Their notes are a shambles. Such methods should **only** be used for things visual — a picture, a molecule, a diagram, a caricature, a table. Even then lecturers use them badly. It is often better for explanatory purposes to draw a diagram in front of students or develop an equation slowly while the students watch. Then they can see *how* it happens, *how* it is put together, *how* it is done. I first learned this while teaching welfare economics to Australian engineers. They could never reproduce accurately the diagrams they had been shown in the lecture. Only when I drew them in class while explaining bit by bit what I was doing did they understand. Since they were male Australian engineers with corks on their hats to stop the flies from settling on their faces, I used obscene analogies as I drew. With a different audience I would, of course, have used a different set of analogous images. Teaching aids are partly a crutch for the orally crippled.

Why do they do this? In part it is because universities now train their lecturers and the trainers instil incompetence into new lecturers in order to meet government targets, notably the use of computers in teaching, as a surrogate for measuring outcomes. When the university in the Midlands at which I taught many years ago appointed a shrewd woman from industry to show lecturers how to communicate, I went to see her and offered to give a lecture to my colleagues called 'Throw away your overhead projector: the importance of narrative, rhetoric and humour in lecturing'. She was delighted and it was advertised. Then I had a phone call from her saying that a senior member of the administration had carpeted her and told her it must be cancelled. At that time projectors were 'key teaching aids' and her university had to look bang up to date for the government snoopers who might come round. In the end they compromised — she altered the publicity material by adding a paragraph saying that this was merely Dr Davies' personal view and not university policy. I gave the lecture, many of my colleagues came and they were appreciative. However, the senior suit sternly told those in charge of training that I must never be allowed to give it again, or indeed ever to speak at all about lecturing technique. I used to trundle in an old blackboard on wheels into my lecture hall and hurl his visual aids into a corner while telling the students what I thought of him, of other suits with no teaching experience who meddled and of how standards of teaching were declining to their detriment.

I would also explain to them carefully why I lectured in the way that I did and add that I knew that they were bright students in a good university and that if they did not understand me then it was my fault. I told them I would both be willing to go over something difficult again in a different way for all four hundred of them and that I would finish earlier so that those who were still baffled could cluster around and ask questions. In this way I got a very large voluntary enrolment for the course and thoroughly angered the suits. My aim was to teach well and the suits' aim was to look good in the eyes of the regulators. The two things are quite incompatible.

The matter came to the test when a group of academics from other universities came round to see how well we taught. They were a very decent bunch of colleagues who knew exactly what the real job demanded. They listened to us and they listened to our students and they gave us a score of excellent. Yet they had been instructed by the Teaching Quality nutters to look out for absurd things. The man who sat in on my lecture genuinely liked it and said so but also gave the game away. He said 'You didn't use any of the teaching aids we were told to look out for but then you didn't need to'. I thanked him, smiled and said nothing.

The universities have managed to conceal the

universities now train their lecturers and the trainers instil incompetence into new lecturers in order to meet government targets, notably the use of computers in teaching, as a surrogate for measuring outcomes

collapse in their quality of teaching by means of two dishonest tricks. The first is by using indices of measurement of the quality of teaching that avoid ever looking at outcomes and merely look at inputs in a highly formal way that they know will work to their advantage. They tell the world the amount of time and the number of meetings that went into approving a syllabus. They provide a formal justification for each module in terms of its aims and objectives and outcomes. No attempt is ever made to measure whether these have been properly attained — that would give the game away. They do not for example, store their students' examination papers for more than two years. They say they do not have the space. This is a lie. They wish to destroy the evidence. They wish to exclude the possibility that an independent panel might go through a sample of them over several years with great thoroughness.

Their other trick is steadily to lower their standards of examining so that it seems as if the students are doing better, even though they know less, are less numerate, less literate, less able to think analytically. More students pass, more get 'firsts', the ratio of upper to lower seconds rises inexorably. It is a swindle. If ordinary standards of commercial honesty were applied to the universities half of the vice-chancellors and

nearly all of the deans would be in jail. Academics have the cheek to sneer at capitalism yet among the former polytechnics there are institutions that make Enron look squeaky clean. I was lucky enough to teach for my entire career as a lecturer at pukka universities. It used to make me laugh when some polytechnic pygmy would tell me how his institution produced more 'value added' than mine, ie it took in students with worse A-levels and produced graduates with equally high or better classes of degree. The pygmy would not mention that these polytechnic degrees were worthless because their modes of examining were essentially corrupt and that employers knew this and routinely binned applications from their graduates without even reading them. The quality of teaching at these institutions was even lower than at the real universities and their modes of examining were designed to conceal this.

The slow decline in the quality of university teaching in the 1980s accelerated after the sleaze-ridden government of the bumbling John Major suddenly conferred university status on the polytechnics in 1992 in an attempt to conceal the fact that many, though in fairness by no means all, of their degrees were worthless. It was at this point that the dishonest formal modes of assessing teaching quality and corrupt methods of examining to conceal failure which had long been part of the way the polytechnics operated spread to the universities and rotted them. Decline became collapse.

Christie Davies taught students for nearly forty years. He is the author of The Strange Death of Moral Britain, 2004.

Of Terrorists and Terrorism in India

S V Raju

The only thing new about terrorism is the word itself. Indian history records repeated invasions through the northern passes by marauders who came, terrorised the populace, looted, plundered, raped and left with the loot and women for their harems. It was sporadic, an almost seasonal happening during the summer months when the Khyber and other northern Passes were free of snow. These marauding invaders were brutal and without pity; but nothing more sinister! The last of these raiders decided to settle down on the fertile plains of Hindustan. That is how the Mughal Empire came into being in the sixteenth century and ruled a large part of, what later came to be known as, India, for about two hundred years. This also led, another two hundred years later, to the partition of India in 1947.

A weakness in the Indian (read Hindu) psyche is our penchant to substitute form for substance; cling to illusions. We have the rather infuriating habit of describing the same phenomenon by different names. For many years the members of the Sri Lankan outfit Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, or more notoriously known by its acronym LTTE, were called 'freedom fighters', thereafter they were described as 'militants' and are now called 'terrorists' after a suicide bomber killed Rajiv Gandhi the son of Indira Gandhi. Nevertheless, even today, the present government in the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu refer to members of the LTTE as 'freedom fighters' because the LTTE is a movement of the Tamils for '*Eelam*' or homeland for the Tamils. Their forefathers migrated to Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) from south India as indentured labour to work in the tea plantations.

For the average Indian therefore, the words 'terrorist', 'extremist', 'militant', 'freedom fighter' are interchangeable. This explains not only the ambivalence of official policy towards this tribe but also the fact that within India we have multiple insurgencies, the nature of which perhaps would fit one or the other of these categories.

I define terrorism, however, as the 'contemporary name given to the modern permutation of warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence find objectionable'. Simply put, to seek to strike terror among the civilian population not directly involved in any kind of dispute or having enmity towards the attackers; to spread chaos and anarchy and destroy the state *irrespective of its religious colour.*

Terrorism in India has taken many forms depending on its nature and place of origin and it has been with us in one form or another since 1948. Since then more people have been killed by terrorists in India than anywhere else in the world. Current estimates put it at over 100,000 in the past fifty eight years. The Western

World took note of terrorism in India only after 9/11. That is a sore point not only with the governments of India, past and present, but also with the Indian intelligentsia.

We have as many as 25 terrorist outfits (maybe more) operating in various parts of India. The following list below does not include some terrorist organisations like those of the Sikhs demanding an independent state as these were ruthlessly crushed following the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards. Other than these, the nature and area of operation of these outfits are:

NORTH INDIA

Five Islamic Jihad groups in Jammu & Kashmir:
Lashkar-e-Toiba (Army of the Pure);
Jaish-e-Mohammed (Army of the Prophet);
Hizb-ul-Mujahiddeen (Party of Holy Warriors);
Harkat-ul-Mujahiddeen (Movement of Holy Warriors);
Al Badr (The Full Moon);
Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami;

Though largely confined to Kashmir, they have in recent years spread to many other parts of India right down to the city of Coimbatore in the deep south.

NORTH-EAST INDIA

Thirteen secessionist but largely secular groups in
Assam (3):
United Liberation Front of Asom better known as ULFA;
United Peoples Democratic Front;
Bodo Liberation Tigers;
Nagaland (2):
National Socialist Council of Nagalim — Isak-Muivah;
National Socialist Council of Nagalim — Khaplang;
Manipur (4):
United National Liberation Front;
People's Liberation Army;
People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak;
National Socialist Council of Nagalim — Isak-Muivah;
Tripura (2):
National Liberation Front of Tripura;
All Tripura Tiger Force;
Meghalaya (2):
Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council;
Achik National Volunteer Council;

EAST INDIA

Five communist offspring — Maoist (Naxal) and one anti-left but caste-based in:
Bihar (3);
Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist also known as People's War Group or PWG;
Maoist Communist Centre;
Ranvir Sena (Anti-Left Caste-based army of landlords);
Jharkhand (2):
People's War Group (Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist);
Maoist Communist Centre;
Orissa (1):
People's War Group (Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist);
Chattisgarh (2):
People's War Group (Communist Party of India, Marxist-Leninist);
Maoist Communist Centre;

SOUTH INDIA

One communist offspring – Maoist (Naxal) in Andhra Pradesh:
The People's War Group (PWG) (Communist Party of India — Marxist Leninist).

I shall focus on Islamic *Jihad* terrorism. The communist offspring, the Maoist-Naxalite groups, also threaten the integrity of the Indian Republic but they differ in two ways. They are not religion-oriented and are confined to the sub-continent which includes Nepal and Sri Lanka. Myanmar (Burma) and Red China are also involved.

Between 1948 and 2006, outside Kashmir and the north-east of India, other areas of the country were not even marginally affected by Islamic *Jihadi* violence. Apart from press and radio reports I do not recall any expressions of angry concern from public opinion over the killings in the Kashmir valley and in the north-eastern States of the Indian Union almost up to 1993. In a country the size of a continent these areas were too remote to bother those living in far away central and peninsular India. Of the 100,000 plus people killed, it is estimated that 40 per cent were in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, some 35 per cent in the north-east and the rest in other states of the Indian Union.

Beginning as a Pakistan-based movement demanding the accession of the former Princely state of Kashmir to Pakistan and not to India, the movement acquired religious overtones, when the Taliban, soon after their victory of over the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1989, turned their attention to Kashmir. It was around that time that Islamic terrorists warned India that they would carry their fight over Kashmir beyond its borders and into the many cities and towns in the heart of India. This warning was treated as *Jihadi* bombast by the Indian government and the people at large. However I believe that successive governments in India allowed the 'Kashmir Question' to fester,

bleeding India economically. But politicians on both sides of the border were not interested in a settlement, for keeping this dispute served their internal power play, and externally the two world powers found it in their interests to ensure that the Kashmir dispute was not resolved, particularly during the Cold War years. Suffice it to say the Taliban kept their word.

On March 12, 1993 a series of 13 bomb explosions blasts ripped through Bombay, or Mumbai as it is now called, and brought terrorism to our doorstep. The attacks were the most destructive and coordinated bomb explosions in the country's history, and are widely believed to be the retaliation by the underworld for the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh in December 1992. The explosion was organized by the criminal gang of Dawood Ibrahim from the safety of Dubai and later Pakistan where he continues to live under the protection of Pakistan's secret service, the ISI. Thereafter the *Jihadis* took over and have been active spreading death and destruction in various parts of the country. While, even today, it is an almost daily occurrence in Kashmir, major incidents in the rest of India include two of the more serious ones. On December 13, 2001 five gunmen stormed India's Parliament in New Delhi. All five were killed before they could enter the precincts, but had got too close for comfort. Had they succeeded it would have been a disaster of Himalayan proportions. On July 11, 2006, seven local trains in Mumbai were attacked with bombs in the rush hour when people were returning home from work, killing 197 commuters and injuring over 700.

Space does not permit a listing of the terror attacks on Indian cities since 1993. These include ones like Ahmedabad (A Hindu temple), Kolkata (or Calcutta — the US Consulate targeted), Varanasi (the Hindu holy city of Benaras) and Coimbatore (which has a sizable Muslim population). In fact, as one writer put it, India has lost more lives in terrorist attacks than in all the wars it has fought since Independence. The whole country is now the target of Islamic-fundamentalist, Pakistan-based terrorist outfits like the *Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed* and the *Hizbul Mujahidden.*

India is a parliamentary democracy with a (by and large) liberal constitution guaranteeing individual liberty and other basic fundamental freedoms. This is of great advantage to criminals and gangsters as much as to terrorists and has contributed to the general impression that India is a soft state with poor internal security arrangements and a creaking legal system which, more often than not, allows criminals to go scot free. The exchange of a much wanted terrorist incarcerated in a Kashmir jail for the passengers of an Indian Airlines commercial airliner hijacked in Kathmandu and flown into Kandahar in the then Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is often cited as an example of this softness. This terrorist safely ensconced in Pakistan is now considered to be among those who planned the attempted multiple blowing up of planes in mid-air over the Atlantic.

Mumbai, more than any other city in India, even Delhi, is the target of these modern-day Islamic fundamentalist marauders armed with the latest in explosives and communication gadgetry. There is much talk of taking stringent measures to tighten security. But the reality at the ground level gives no indication that this is happening. The two main political parties in the country, the Congress Party and the BJP, while agreed on the need for tightening security, are still not working together as they ought to when the country is under threat. Each terrorists strike signals the beginning of yet another blame game.

I was among those who a few years earlier opposed special laws that sought to curb terrorism on the ground that there were enough laws in the statute book to deal with this problem. But not any more. Modern technology and the use of highly sophisticated instruments to destroy and kill need special laws that, sadly, would impinge on certain freedoms which the Indian citizen enjoys to the envy of his neighbours in the sub-continent. There is a need for anti-terrorist legislation that is unambiguous, tough and ensures the conviction of terrorists. This is crucial because those facing trial for the 1993 bombings still await sentencing thirteen years on. The judgements are to be delivered this September. Trials have to be expeditious and punishment severe if India is no longer to be seen as a soft state.

India has the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia — around 140 million. They need to be pro-active in denouncing the misuse of their faith by a small minority of those professing their religion to maim, kill and destroy. There have been protests but these have not been sufficiently loud and emphatic.

And then there is Pakistan, the darling of the Western powers during the Cold War years. This is what Ashok Karnik, a writer known for his secular values, non-partisan, who does not belong to any political party and is a retired officer of an Indian Intelligence agency, has to say on the Pakistan factor:

> Pakistan has a short-term as well as long-term goal in India. It has a lot of scores to settle with India. Jammu and Kashmir remains an oozing wound. The creation of Bangladesh is remembered as the dismemberment of Pakistan by India. The goal of universalisation of Islam dovetails into Pakistan's

grievances against India. Pakistan-sponsored *jihad* against India is not Kashmir-centric but also aims at weakening the Indian state so that it can collapse under its own divisiveness. The *jihadi* network outside the Kashmir valley and attacks in far-flung areas of the country are proof of this design. Pakistan realizes that India cannot be defeated militarily. Its strategy is, therefore, to bleed India through a thousand cuts.

This article began with a reference to the marauders from the north. It ends with another quotation, from Will Durant, in *Our Oriental Heritage* (Simon & Schuster, 1935) showing Indian ambivalence and its easy acquiescence to misery and suffering:

> This is the secret of the political history of Modern India. Weakened by division, it succumbed to invaders; impoverished by invaders, it lost all power of resistance, and took refuge in supernatural consolations; it argued that both mastery and slavery were superficial delusions, and concluded that freedom of the body or the nation was hardly worth defending in so brief a life. The bitter lesson that may be drawn from this tragedy is that eternal vigilance is the price of civilization. A nation must love peace, but keep its powder dry.

Amen to that!

S V Raju is Editor of Freedom First, *a magazine published in Bombay.*

Letter from Zimbabwe

Roy Langley

Africa never ceases to surprise. The international media report Zimbabwe as near economic collapse, yet an underlying vitality remains which is reflected in a cheerful public which, despite economic disaster, is confident of ultimate recovery. Race relations are good, the result of a wide understanding that the living standards of all, bar politicians, have fallen. The latter are loathed like hyena.

Zimbabwe inherited a healthy economy in 1980 from the then Rhodesia. There were problems of obsolete equipment and a shortage of spares but industry and commerce were in relatively good shape. Productivity in most sectors was above that which existed before Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 and between 1965 and 1980 Rhodesia developed a near self-sufficient economy. There was no shortage of locally assembled vehicles and most goods, such as mechanical and electric equipment, canned foods, and pharmaceuticals, were domestically produced. A miracle of development was achieved in the teeth of Prime Minister Wilson's inspired sanctions. Little of this could have occurred without the willing cooperation of both African executives, who did exist despite BBC propaganda to the contrary, and the predominately African labour force. Employment stood at 80 per cent when Zimbabwe achieved 'Freedom'. Thus, a solid base for progress existed. Britain, the United States, UNIDO (United Nation Industrial Development Organisation) stepped in with financial aid and 'hands on' help. The results were dramatic: marked improvement in the output and quality of Zimbabwe-made products within twelve months and the appearance of many Zimbabwe-made goods on world markets, at competitive prices. This rosy picture lasted until the mid 1990's.

The early 1980's saw the falling out of the erstwhile friends, Mugabe and Nkomo, resulting in the massacre of thousands of Matabele men, women and children by Mugabe's elite Korean-trained Mahona brigade. The British government merely responded by giving Mugabe a knighthood. When Mugabe toyed with the idea of taking over the largely white-run commercial farming sector, he asked Britain to bear the cost. Britain agreed, subject to willing seller/willing buyer deals, fair compensation, and the right to ensure farms were not gifted to 'friends of government' rather than landless peasants. Mugabe objected to curbs of any sort but Britain refused to give way. Seven years ago he took his decision to kill the goose which laid the golden eggs, to dispossess the commercial farming sector, the lynchpin of the Zimbabwean economy. The decision has certainly proved fatal to the goose, commercial farmers, near fatal to the economy, and may yet prove fatal to Mugabe himself.

By the mid 1990's productivity in almost all sectors had risen to well above pre-independence levels. The infrastructure remained sound. Inflation niggled, largely a result of undue expenditure on prestige projects, but nothing comparable to the rundown elsewhere in Africa. Managements felt most of the difficulties were 'teething problems', would subside as the African middle classes gained experience and confidence. In thinking so, they unconsciously

parroted the cry of liberals in one African country after another since decolonisation in Africa began. Prosperity in Rhodesia was founded — far more than most people realised — on the agricultural sector in general and commercial farming in particular. The numbers it employed directly, their consumer spending power, and the foreign currency agriculture earned from its exports, were the ingredients that ensured the prosperity of commerce and industry alike. Manufacturers today agree productivity has fallen by at least 50 per cent, and often to as little as 20 per cent of capacity, with the average probably around 35 per cent; it is difficult to be exact. Records within the industry and from the CSO (Central Statistical Office) are not what they used to be. But one thing is beyond argument, the lowered productivity is directly related to foreign exchange shortfall. The cause of the exchange shortage is undoubtedly traceable to the destruction of commercial agriculture. The few farms which are operative stagger on. By no definition can they be called 'going concerns'. This does not worry the government. They blame Britain. An ex-commercial farmer, now employed in a bar, said that most livestock marketed now originates from cattle raised by African subsistence level farmers under rough conditions. Beef from such animals is not acceptable in overseas markets and the hides command less than half the price of a commercial hide — but cost the same to convert into leather. This plays hell with the profitability of domestic tanneries. Much the same thing is true in other areas of agriculture. A CSC (Cold Storage Commission) executive remarked 'Our once internationally admired organisation has been crippled, our exports have fallen to 20 per cent or less of normal. We have had to close some plants and operate others on a part time basis.'

A Veterinary Department official confessed, 'We struggle to contain contagions. But foreign exchange for the purchase of vaccines is in short supply. Foreign customers are not happy with this situation. Change for the better is unlikely.' A former financial expert to the farming industry said, 'The main source of foreign exchange used to be, and still is, agriculture. The government yaps about revival of the sector after having wilfully emasculated it. Recovery will take thirty years or more. I cannot see normality in my lifetime. Rumours about government offering commercial farmers a new dispensation merely calls for an expletive; besides, hundreds of commercial farmers have departed the country. They won't come back in a hurry.' Those with actual experience of farming agree governmental talk of restoring the national herd is nonsense. An insoluble problem, they say, is who owns what property. Miles upon miles of fencing have been taken down or stolen and will cost millions to replace. Even more serious, former spacious grazing paddocks — essential for livestock rotation — are now occupied by hundreds of 'newcomer' (code word for government-encouraged squatters) family groups, with no demarcation between them other than that one family lives here and another there. This is a certain recipe for legal dispute in the future.

Apart from agriculture, much else has gone to rack and ruin: Medical Aid Societies and hospitals are no longer able to meet their obligations. They are obliged to demand 'upfront' percentages of likely costs before patients are admitted for treatment. This can run into millions. Instances of suicide have arisen where pensioners, having paid into reputable aid schemes all their working lives, have found themselves unable to meet 'upfront' demands. Pensioner fatalities have also resulted from the consumption of dog and cat food. One of the saddest sights in Zimbabwe is to watch old people in a supermarket trying to decide what food they can afford. Voluntary organisations do try to help, as do some businesses, but there are limits to what can be achieved in this way.

Medical consumables are in short supply and increasingly subject to theft — by hospital staff for sale on the black market. Who can blame the staff when all are struggling to survive, when a loaf of bread costs Z$100 000 plus, when rent for a modest three bedroom home in a modest suburb is Z$25 million a month, about £70. Many parents cannot even afford to buy milk for their children.

Zimbabwe was one of the few countries in Africa in which water was safe to drink straight from the tap. This is no longer so

Most elderly people of British origin now in Zimbabwe retired at a time when a Rhodesian dollar was worth a pound and an average monthly pension was plus or minus R$1000. Today, the buying power of the Zimbabwe dollar has fallen to round Z$300 000 to the pound. A friend's pension started at a little more than R$1000 in 1978 and was worth about the same in sterling then. Today his pension is Z$ 324000, worth about £1.25, and he does not get it anyway. Zimbabwe stopped honouring external pensions years ago.

The legal system is in a shambles. Probate on a small estate not subject to death duties can take eighteen months to two years and more, by which time inflation reduces value to a fraction of the original. The police are corrupt. Crime dockets disappear fairly frequently. The only sure way to pass a driving test or settle a minor traffic offence is to place a bank note on the dashboard without either offering it or asking for a receipt. Again,

who can blame the examiner or the policeman? They, too, have to live.

Zimbabwe was one of the few countries in Africa in which water was safe to drink straight from the tap. This is no longer so. It is not true that the rising incidence of malaria in Zimbabwe (and other African countries) stems solely from mosquitoes having become immune to prophylactics. It may be true with a specific species of mosquito, but municipal anti-malarial routines became virtually extinct ten years ago. Those who have witnessed municipal employees ignore stagnant water down the road and energetically spray oil over a filtrated and chlorinated swimming pool, will understand perfectly!

At Independence in 1980 the minimum wage for a floor worker in Rhodesia was approx R$300 a month, equivalent to about the same figure in pounds sterling. Today the minimum wage runs into millions and is equivalent to about £60, a 500 per cent reduction in living standards. This says it all.

Strangely, however, even economic meltdown has its advantages. Relations between labour and management in Zimbabwe — across the whole of industry and commerce — are better than ever before. Employers admit they cannot afford to pay their labour enough. Employees accept this because they recognise everyone has been brought down, management included. They know unrealistic wage demands could result in company closure. Seventy per cent plus of the workforce is now out of employment and inflation has passed the 1000 per cent mark. This compared with 80 per cent in employment in Rhodesia after fifteen years of UN sanctions. Union leaders try to remain hard nosed, but also understand the dangers of intransigence — and so settle for, say, 120 per cent instead of 500 per cent. But even this can spell ruin for a company which has produced and sold its goods at one labour costing, and then has to meet a backdated pay award at a much higher rate.

Yet, the Zimbabwean people, those one meets in the street anyway, seem cheerful and confident Mugabe the tyrant will one day go the way of all flesh. An internal uprising is unlikely, however, and even less likely to succeed should it occur. Zimbabwe's political élite sojourned long in the democratic paradises of Soviet Russia and China and learned the techniques of suppression well. One senses in Zimbabwe a widespread nostalgia for the peace and prosperity of colonial days. The comment is often heard in Shona, Sindebele and English, 'It was better before.' If things are ever to change in Africa, the Western democracies need first to show more courage and integrity than they have in the past. They need to take sides openly, state the truth and stand by it. There should be no further aid without strings attached.

Roy Langley worked as an industrial chemist in Zimbabwe

Boris Mozhaev: One of Russia's Troublesome Writers 'In Residence'

David Holohan

Nothing can help
A heart still warm
With nightingale fever.

Osip Mandelstam

The question of free speech has been one of the most important issues of the twentieth century, and will continue to be so in the twenty-first. Leaving aside dictatorial regimes based on primitive, theistic notions, perhaps one of the greatest object lessons of how to quash and control dissidence and dissenters in recent history has been provided by the 'former' Soviet regime. One of the first things the Bolsheviks did when they came to power in 1917 was to seize absolute control over the media. Of course, there was censorship under the tsars, which perhaps gave the Bolsheviks something of a head-start in devising a mechanism for repression. However, like all mechanisms of this type, there were failures and break-downs in the system, both in tsarist and Soviet times: it is something of a wonder that Chernyshevsky's radical novel *What is to be done?* was legally published in Russia in 1863 — all due to a bureaucratic blunder, when each of two censors took it for granted that the other would ban the novel, but neither one actually did, and thus it slipped through the net. This novel radicalized a whole generation and Lenin claimed it was his favourite book as a young man.

The Soviet censorship colossus also failed from time to time. The general assumption abroad during the Soviet era was that if a writer had been banned

or exiled, as was Solzhenitsyn, then his works were worth reading, but if a writer was officially published and worked within the system, his or her writing was probably not worth reading. This was not so, especially given the faltering mechanism of Soviet censorship, which was only slightly more reliable than their tractors.

Boris Andreevich Mozhaev (1923-1996) started writing in the 1950s, and to the end of his career had to fight hard against the Soviet censorship machine to get his works published: often he had to wait twenty years or more for a work to appear in print. Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Soviet Union, but Mozhaev stayed and fought within the system. He became one of Solzhenitsyn's closest friends, having met him shortly after the astonishing publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), when, coincidentally, they discovered that they were near neighbours, living

Peasant Folk, *written between 1972 and 1980. The book describes the campaign for the full collectivization of agriculture, hastily and recklessly driven by Stalin, which cost the lives of millions of peasants and devastated agricultural production for decades.*

only yards apart in Riazan. Solzhenitsyn, a guarded, reclusive man, soon took to Mozhaev's forthright attitude, so uncharacteristic of Russians in the Soviet era, especially those who had learnt under Stalin to mistrust all strangers, and even many friends. He came to appreciate and value Mozhaev's generosity of spirit, his boundless energy, his intimate knowledge of rural life and its folklore, his earthy sense of humour, and his wonderful ear for language and dialect — all of which form the very heart of his writing. Solzhenitsyn and Mozhaev made several trips together around his native Riazan *oblast*, with Mozhaev acting as his guide, and later, in an affectionate memoir, Solzhenitsyn wrote, 'I took a keen interest in the situation of the Soviet village and in the history of the Russian peasantry — both recent and distant — and Boris lived and breathed all this, and knew it inside out.'

Just as the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day* brought its writer instant fame and recognition by a wide reading public — and caused alarm and suspicion amongst the authorities — so the publication of Mozhaev's story *Lively* (1966) brought him international recognition, though unfortunately not in the English-speaking world: although his works were translated into many languages, he was not translated into English, as was Solzhenitsyn. *Lively* describes the travails of a peasant man, Fyodor Kuzkin, who demands the right to leave the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) system. The request to leave the farm, which he was legally able to do — in theory — brings upon him spiteful reprisals perpetrated by local officials, who try to take away his home and his small plot of land. Mozhaev had completed the story in 1956, but no editor would stick his neck out and accept it for publication — a phenomenon that Mozhaev had to fight against all his writing career. An attempt was made to stage it in 1968 but the minister for culture herself banned it at the dress rehearsal. It was finally performed to great critical acclaim in the post-*glasnost* era, in 1989, and critics agreed that it was no less relevant and true to life than it was when initially conceived.

The Soviet system had cleverly contrived that editors, writers, and indeed all officials, operated on a self-censorship basis by rewarding the politically and ideologically faithful: they became a privileged group within the system, enjoying access to special shops, clubs, cars, services of every kind, and even houses in the countryside, so long as they toed the line. Should they dare step over the line, the privileges were removed. The secretary of the Writers' Union, Markov, one of the regime's literary 'big guns', was wheeled out to state publicly in *Pravda* that Mozhaev was nothing more than a 'slanderer of the Soviet countryside'; all journals and publishing houses were promptly closed to him. Mozhaev refused to comply with official demands to present a positive, rosy picture of rural Russia. He had written earlier works portraying devious officials and gross inefficiencies on the farm. However, the fact that Fyodor Kuzkin had been reduced by the state itself to the level of a pre-revolutionary serf, unable to leave his master's employ at will, was a damning indictment of the heartless, ruthless way Soviet leaders had treated the rural populace. Criticism of malpractice *within* the system was tolerated to a degree, but such a wholesale condemnation of the *kolkhoz* system was indeed radical. As with the stage version, the film based on his story also languished 'in the can' for twenty years, and it was not shown in cinemas until the *glasnost'* era.

By far Mozhaev's most powerful work is his novel *Peasant Folk*, written between 1972 and 1980. The book describes the campaign for the full collectivization of agriculture, hastily and recklessly driven by Stalin, which cost the lives of millions of peasants and devastated agricultural production for decades. Along with the terrible destruction of human life went an orgy of cultural vandalism, as churches and religious artefacts were destroyed during the concomitant anti-religious campaign. Right up to the *glasnost* period this terrible event was a taboo subject, lied about and glossed over in history textbooks. This act was a death blow to the traditional Russian peasant from which no

recovery could be made. All these issues, along with a vivid description of a peasant riot against the Bolshevik officials — always fiercely denied and suppressed in the media of the day and for decades later — combine to make Mozhaev's novel a most fascinating read. Mozhaev had collected historical materials for his novel from archives and oral interviews for over thirty years. He tried to get the first part of his novel published in one of the many literary journals, the usual publishing protocol during the Soviet era, but to no avail — no editor would touch such a 'hot topic'. When it eventually appeared in book form, Book I of the novel was placed under a critical silence so as not to draw attention to it. The far more audacious and out-spoken Book II was also refused publication by every major literary journal. In the wake of the tidal wave of liberalization brought about by Gorbachev's *glasnost*, Mozhaev managed to find a journal courageous enough to publish it, but the journal was a marginal, provincial publication with a small circulation, and hence a small readership.

Mozhaev not only describes the destructiveness and fanaticism of mindless officials and activists, but he also tries to unravel the complex causes of this mindset. He offers reasons as to why the typically Russian thinkers, like Bakunin, wanted to start to build a new society from *tabula rasa*, sweeping away centuries of culture and tradition, proclaiming, as Bakunin did, that 'The urge for destruction is also a creative urge!' Mozhaev ridicules the utopian dreaming of such men, whose vision of the future was of a perfectly fair, equitable society, in which private ownership and out-moded, traditional institutions, such as the family, would dissolve in an atmosphere of scientific enlightenment and logic. For Mozhaev, the chief culprits who inspired such Bolshevik dreaming were Western European utopian thinkers. The writing of early European socialists had penetrated the Tsarist censorship shield and found its way into radical circles, such as the Petrashevsky circle, which Dostoevsky himself had also attended. Such writing radicalized a whole generation in mid-nineteenth century Russia. However, Mozhaev condemns *all* utopian writers, from Plato's *Republic*, Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1602), Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* (1840), and the voluminous writings of Babeuf, Sismondi, Fourier, and many others. He draws parallels between these thinkers, whom he clearly sees as dangerous dreamers, and the policies of the Bolshevik activists during the campaign for collectivization. He condemns their irresistible desire to sweep everything away and start afresh, particularly their obsession with property and private ownership, inspired by Proudhon. Mozhaev also compares the Bolshevik assault on the peasantry with

Mozhaev not only describes the destructiveness and fanaticism of mindless officials and activists, but he also tries to unravel the complex causes of this mindset

Peter the Great's attempt to modernise and westernise Russia. He shows how Russian rulers, both pre- and post-revolutionary, had often wanted to solve the problems of Russia's backwardness at a stroke: typically, their reforms were based on *idées reçues*, all too hastily and unquestioningly lifted from the West, then grafted on to the body of Russia, with consequential organic rejection. In so doing, he condemns the very foundations of the Soviet regime and the cultural barbarism of its perpetrators.

Mozhaev still remains relatively unknown in the West, despite, or perhaps, because of, being such a thorn in the regime's side. Since his death, much has changed in Russia. Many of the reforms he advocated for Russian agricultural production have proven to be effective, but other things have not changed. True to the Russian tradition, Putin has realized the importance of controlling the media. Independent writers are no longer censored in the Soviet manner, but, as the recent murders of a number of journalists attest, writing in Russia is still a dangerous occupation. Even in the early months after the Russian Revolution of 1917, the poet Mandelstam had written of 'death as the penalty for poetic creation', and he had called it 'Nightingale Fever' — that inability of Russian poets and writers to stop 'singing' and proclaiming the truth. How far can we allow self-censorship, or that from higher authorities, to encroach on our freedom of speech? We should heed the lessons from the past and defend our right to speak and write what we believe is the truth.

David Holohan was formerly Head of Russian at the University of Surrey and is completing a life and works study of Mozhaev and translating him into English.

Plato: A Covert Conservative?

John Coleman

How right Lord Salisbury was to look towards the 20th century with the dark foreboding Andrew Roberts describes in his biography. The era of colonial empires was waning and the century of superpowers, as George Orwell predicted early in the century, was dawning. First there was the attempt by Germany to become the great European superpower, which caused the First World War. Then came Lenin and Stalin, followed by Hitler — appearing like a phoenix to create a new Germany out of the ashes — and then the Second World War.

The regimes of both Hitler and Stalin were based on grand social plans imposed by extensive social engineering, as was the French Revolution. This revolutionary zeal contrasts with the idea of incremental reform, which is based on getting a balance between existing society and long established social institutions to pave the way forward. There is little doubt that grand scale plans draw even good people into a vortex of increasing ruthlessness. As Disraeli once said:

> You can have a revolution on the basis of abstract ideals or by a return to ancient traditions. The trouble with the abstract ideals is people quickly start murdering each other over them.

As a result of the wars of the 20th century, Plato's *Republic* became tarred with the same brush as Hitler and Stalin and some of Plato's own remarks on the question of authority reinforce that impression. The aim of this essay is to show that this is the exact opposite of the truth.

In the first place, Plato's main intention was to oppose the tyrannies that were destroying the original ideals of the Greek city states, but as an old man he despaired of his ability to do so. More important, perhaps, is to notice how he thought the Republic would come into being, and his very method has added to the sense in some people's minds that his approach could lead to totalitarianism. But the modern secular power (not just America), shorn of its traditions, could become even more disastrous than the regimes of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The thinkers calling for a reasonable and open society by neglecting or denying Plato may be paving the way for something very like the world George Orwell saw coming in *1984*, characteristically expressed in Churchill's words:

> A day of doom will dawn for mankind if ever the conflicts between nations are superseded by rivalry between the continents of the world.

Karl Popper begins his study of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* with a quotation from Plato:

> The greatest principle of all is that nobody, whether male or female, should be without a leader. Nor should the mind of anybody be habituated to letting him do anything at all on his own initiative; neither out of zeal, nor even playfully. But in war and in the midst of peace — to his leader he shall direct his eyes and follow him faithfully. And even in the smallest matter he should stand under leadership. For example, he should get up, or move, or wash, or take his meals ... only if he has been told to do so. In a word he should teach his soul, by long habit, never to dream of acting independently, and to become incapable of it.

This, of course, is completely contrary to the temper and thinking of the modern world. JA Froude pointed out that freedom for him meant when a man has mastered his trade or subdued his lower nature. Surely some of this is implied in Plato's view. There is no doubt that he was trying to devise a way for fellow citizens to avoid the tyrannical regimes that had developed in fifth century Greece, and it therefore follows that a process of discerning would be needed to arrive at a state in which the Philosopher and the Guardians created an organisation which citizens would be ready to follow. Perhaps the analogy of an orchestra and its conductor is appropriate. The players in the orchestra achieve their potential — and their freedom — precisely to the extent that they obey exactly the instructions of a good conductor. The same is true of political and social organisations and it was the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's reason for writing in his book *The Sickness Unto Death*: 'Man's sickness is that he can't obey and the cure is to obey.' This surely is one more echo of Plato's instruction.

A few historical examples will reinforce the significance of this principle. Confucius in China followed the Platonic principle which led to the formation of a society run by Guardians and an Emperor, which like all things human ultimately failed but not until it lasted for some thousands of years. Augustus in Rome based his reform on making the ideas of Plato a reality on Earth and was able to 'bring Rome to the borders of Italy' and beyond, through client rulers. The Roman world outside Italy was not an 'empire' in the

true sense of the word, but rather an alliance, based on shared cultural influences and defence treaties. In a sense, it was a sort of ancient world NATO although the clientelism was more overt. His final advice to Tiberius before he died was to make sure that he sent guard dogs, not wolves to the outlying regions. The most striking example of all was the development of the monasteries, before inevitable corruption crept in. Is there much doubt that they carried the elements of civilisation through the Dark Ages and that they could never have done this unless they had based themselves on the Platonic principle of leadership? This of course could never have happened unless, as has been said, 'St Augustine baptised Plato'.

Augustine's *City of God* was written at a time when the Roman Empire was collapsing around him, and there was little hope of implementing it politically, but his faith was such that he wrote it and thereby paved the way not only for the monasteries but also the whole civilisation of the Middle Ages. With its guilds and apprentice system it embodies the Platonic principle and certainly is contrary to the spirit of the modern age whether in its *laissez faire* capitalist or socialist manifestations. Augustine was a rather mild character in many ways. He strongly disapproved of empires and tyrannical regimes; he showed great concern for the welfare of his son; he believed that his failure to achieve excellence in Greek was due to the over-strictness of his teacher when he was a boy. It was no contradiction that he believed in Plato's leadership principles and was against harshness of all kinds.

At the very heart of Augustine's *City of God* is not only the idea of his Kingdom of Heaven as presented in the Gospels but also Plato's Allegory of the Cave. The notion of the 'two cities' was in Augustine's mind. Those who belonged to the City of God lived in the world but were not of it. They would let their light of truth and justice shine in the world and not hide it under a bushel. However they would not think of turning their visions into a blueprint to be imposed on the city of earth.

So what are the main conclusions to be drawn from this view of Plato? First, I think it is a mistake if we make the assumption that *The Republic* was intended as a blueprint that can be superimposed like either socialism or free market-ism. It is a guide to the inevitable factors that will develop naturally in anything that can be called civilisation. A second mistake is the idea that humanity is inherently good, for surely the awfulness of the 20th and now the 21st century must be enough to dispel this notion. Before the war in Yugoslavia my son and his wife went there for holidays. When hostilities started two of his friends came over and I gave them room in my house. I remember one of them telling me how amazing it was that people who were good friends and neighbours became like wild beasts overnight. It seemed to me to confirm St Augustine's view that civilisation is only like a thin crust over a seething volcano.

The curious paradox in Christianity in Augustine's view was that this violent undercurrent in human nature could only be overcome by facing its reality (in oneself and others) and trusting in some kind of divine, transforming power. Perhaps that is the true meaning of the phrase 'born again'. And lastly I believe there is perhaps no better way for the over-sheltered modern to look again at Plato than by reading Stephen Hill's little book *The Power of Plato*, in which he concludes by referring to Raphael's painting 'The School of Athens' in which 'Plato is shown with his index finger indicating the heavens and Aristotle is shown pointing to the ground'.

If Plato or Socrates had witnessed the 'blueprints' imposed on certain societies in the last couple of centuries I believe they would have been shocked to think that our modern philosophers could have suggested that any of them were based on their ideas in *The Republic*.

The aim of the Republic was to get the best and most balanced of the citizenry into the highest positions and to shape their education with that in mind. How, they might ask, could such a questioning approach as theirs be the cause of such absolute tyrannies, the very thing that they saw all around them and which they were determined to oppose — Socrates eventually opposed it with his own life. There is another aspect to this which Froude referred to in his inaugural address to the students of St Andrew's University:

> It takes many generations to breed high qualities either of mind or body; but you have them, they are a fine capital to commence business with, and, as I said, Noblesse Oblige.

Have not most, if not all, successful civilisations set up education systems geared to producing good rulers and administrators? Our own public school system developed that ethos in the nineteenth century. That is why such schools still claim the title public, rather than merely private. The Middle Ages began in that way not overnight but with the guidance of the Church, with city-states in which each person found his own vocation. Over many generations the Platonic ideas of St Augustine were actually put into practice. Of course, when the sins which the Church of those days condemned, greed, lust for power, pride, crept in, the system of small states deteriorated and went the way of all human organisations.

John Coleman's book Froude Today *was published last year (New European)*

Britain's Policing Madness

Hal G P Colebatch

American and British criminologists have long been puzzled and angered that Britain seems to have learnt nothing from the experience of New York in reducing crime successfully. The big drop in all types of crime in New York in recent years has been attributed to the zero-tolerance policy associated with Mayor Giuliani. Britain, far from adopting a zero-tolerance approach, looks like adopting a policy of not prosecuting many serious crimes at all — reserving the full weight of the law for trivial regulatory matters and, significantly, for offences against political correctness.

London and British crime rates have been increasing for years. Recently total crime rates for London have been estimated at about seven times those of New York for a slightly smaller population, and some authorities suggest these figures have been minimised. England and Wales are now accounted by some estimates as the most dangerous places for crime in the developed world. New York and London have comparable populations (8 million and 7 million) and police budgets, though New York has about 40 per cent more police actually on the beat. British papers retail many incidents of British police, rather than preventing crime, being kept busy 'celebrating diversity' and prosecuting politically incorrect remarks and behaviour. There have also been numerous and well-publicised cases of people being prosecuted and jailed for defending themselves from criminal attacks. In Norfolk, where a number of incidents revealed professional criminal gangs robbing and terrorising isolated rural dwellers, police recently alerted all officers to a man still at large after having stolen four soft-porn magazines. The criminal's picture was sent to stations throughout the county, and the police released closed-circuit television footage of the crime and appealed to members of the public to ring a Crimestopper number if they knew the desperado's identity and could assist in bringing him to justice.

A storekeeper was knifed in the back as he tackled a gang of youths stealing wine from his Norwich store. He was arrested on two charges of assault. Shirley Best, owner of the Rolander fashion boutique, was ironing some garments when two youths broke in. They pressed the hot iron into her side and stole her watch, leaving her badly burnt. 'I was frightened to defend myself,' said Miss Best. 'I thought if I did anything I would be arrested.' In July 2002, a shopkeeper, Richard Barnes, confronted a teenage thief. The thief threw a punch at Mr Barnes, who responded with a single blow. Mr Barnes was arrested, tried before a jury, and eventually acquitted after a three-day trial in the Hull Crown Court. There have been doubts expressed that a right to self-defence still exists in British law. Following one homicidal home burglary, Dr Ian Stephen, an Honorary Lecturer (Forensic Psychology) at Glasgow Caledonian University, gave the following advice and comfort to householders:

> If you attack the burglar, or react in an 'over-the-top' manner ... you will inevitably end up on the receiving end of a prison sentence that will far outstrip that imposed on the intruder in your own home ... when individuals are confronted by intruders there are some actions they should follow. Direct contact should be avoided whenever possible. If unavoidable, the victim should adopt a state of active passivity ...

In 2002 a study found that 11 million crimes had been left out of British government figures, including hundreds of thousands of serious crimes including woundings, robberies, assaults and even murders as well as thefts. An official study published by the British Home Office in 2005 stated that one in four youths aged fourteen to seventeen has been classified as a serious or prolific offender — that is, had six or more minor offences, or one major offence, within the past twelve months. The study suggested there were 3.8 million active offenders overall, far more than the government had previously acknowledged, yet only one per cent of offences resulted in a court appearance. Charles Clarke, the Home Secretary, described the figures as 'appalling' and said: 'we have to drive down the idea that crime is acceptable', evidently a novel approach.

Rather than adopting the zero-tolerance policy that has worked in New York, the British government is moving in the opposite direction. The police have been told that instead of arresting a range of serious criminals, they can be let off with a caution. The Home Office has told police forces around the country that offences which may now be dealt with by a caution include burglary of a shop or office, threatening to kill actual bodily harm, and possession of Class A drugs such as heroin or cocaine, if police decide that would be the best approach. Other crimes including common assault, threatening behaviour, sex with an under-age girl or boy, and car theft, should normally be dealt with

by a caution, if the offenders admit their guilt but have no criminal record.

As Leader of the Opposition, Tony Blair ('tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime') had succeeded in watering down the previous Conservative government's proposals in the Crime Sentencing Act 1997 for a mandatory three-year prison sentence for home burglary (one of the most dangerous crimes, and one often extremely traumatic for the victims). In the seven years since the act came into force, almost none of the hundreds convicted of burglary for a third time had been given the allegedly mandatory three-year sentence. Burglars and muggers should be spared prison more often, courts have been told, and very recently sentencing authorities ordered a further 'raising of the custody threshold' to keep more offenders out of prison who would in the past have been given up to a year in jail.

'The Home Office is missing its target to achieve a set number of offenders brought to justice. But it seems they regard a caution as an offender brought to justice. This is a nod and a wink to police forces — deal with your cases by cautions and we will hit our target.' commented David Green of Civitas.

By the late 1990s Britain had a worse record than France, Germany or the United States. Andrew Lloyd Webber claimed the London crime rate was driving away theatre-goers and killing the West End. Actress Joan Collins, who had lived for many years in Belgravia, announced she was moving to New York, claiming that even in this expensive and fashionable district she felt continually threatened.

Policing policies in Britain have become more and more bizarre during the Blair government years. It plainly points not only towards soft treatment and tolerance for many serious crimes, but also in the direction of police-state political repression, not exactly in the traditional form, but in the interests of enforcing political correctness. Recently a ten-year-old boy was taken before district judge Jonathan Finestein, sitting in Salford Youth Court, for having called an eleven-year-old a 'Paki' and 'Bin Laden' at primary school. The matter had been investigated by the Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester being a particularly bad area for serious crime. The accused's mother said the two boys were now friends and played football together. An interesting aspect of this case was that the *Express*, in its report of the crime, did not dare print out the fatal word *Paki*, printing instead P**i, as if it were an unmentionable obscenity. Yet *Paki is* no more than a diminutive of *Pakistani*. To add to the oddness of this genteel sensitivity, the *Express's* proprietor, Richard Desmond, had made his initial fortune through hardcore pornography.

Countless cases over the last few years show Draconianism towards offenders against political correctness coupled with permissiveness or indifference towards real criminal activity. During elections for the European Parliament a seventy-eight-year-old war veteran put signs for the UK Independence Party on the wall of a derelict Liverpool building: 'Don't forget the 1945 war' and 'Free Speech for England'. He was arrested and charged with racially aggravated criminal damage — an offence with a maximum sentence of fourteen years in prison, similar to the maximum for military spying for an enemy power under the Official Secrets Act. The offence was deemed racially aggravated and therefore far worse than ordinary crimes. At about the same time it was decided not to prosecute Melita Norwood for the apparently minor peccadillo of having passed British nuclear weapons secrets to the Soviet Union over many years during the Cold War.

The treatment of Ms Norwood did not mean all old ladies were immune: Mrs Flo Smailes, a ninety-two-year-old widow, was threatened with eviction from a council bungalow in Macclesfield, Cheshire, which had been her home for thirty-four years, after being told by the council that an anonymous 'independent witness' had seen her committing racial harassment of her neighbours. She was also accused of pulling up their plants, although because of arthritis in the knees she was unable to bend over. There was no suggestion of a trial or any process of law. A council spokesman said: 'racial harassment is an offence regardless of age'. Mrs Smailes said, 'When I read the letter I felt on the fringe of a nervous breakdown ... I'm so frightened I don't want to go back home.'

Police were called in recently after a cartoon showing, as the BBC put it, 'the prophet Mohammed with a bomb in his turban' was put up in an office in Oldham. Manchester police said they were treating the incident 'extremely seriously'. A spokeswoman said 'We will not tolerate any acts of racial discrimination.' The report said 'extremists have been blamed'. Australian blogger Tim Blair asked: 'Extremists? Plural? It took more than one of these "extremists" to stick a cartoon on a noticeboard?' Police? For sticking up a cartoon? In a private office? In Leicester, Mrs Nancy Bennett had her display of china pigs seized by the police, because it was 'offensive' to the Muslim neighbours.

Even before the recent guidelines to local police forces suggesting many serious crimes be dealt with by a caution, the Sentencing Guidelines Council, chaired by the Lord Chief Justice, said teenage muggers should not be jailed. The Youth Justice Board at about the same time said young offenders should be kept in open conditions, including residential school

accommodation. Conservative spokesman Oliver Heald said, 'Mugging is one of the most serious crimes; it causes great distress and alarm to victims. The new guidelines send entirely the wrong message.' Earlier, in 2001, a new training manual for magistrates instructed them not to be prejudiced against black youths who had committed violent crimes, but instead to think of them as quirky Lenny Henry characters.

The official Sentencing Advisory Panel also proposed that muggers who used 'minimal violence' should be spared jail. London was worse for muggings than the worst areas of New York. Lambeth and Brixton were four times worse than Harlem; Westminster, which includes Downing Street and Buckingham Palace, had merely twice Harlem's rate of muggings. A survey by the United Nations at the end of 2002 showed England and Wales had the highest crime rate of the world's twenty largest nations, including not only the USA but also the proverbially violent societies of Russia and South Africa.

Countless cases over the last few years show Draconianism towards offenders against political correctness coupled with permissiveness or indifference towards real criminal activity

A Portuguese plumber, Jose de Silva, was sent to prison for having left a bag unattended at Birmingham airport while he went outside for a smoke. It was not clear from reports whether warnings not to leave bags unattended were given in any language. In Devizes in 2005 an eighty-year-old woman, Gwen Townsend, suffering from a heart condition, was locked in a cell and her heart medication confiscated after she snatched a drumstick out of the hand of a man who refused to stop banging a drum in a hall near her home. He turned out to be an off-duty policeman. It was forecast that running a win-a-goldfish stall at a village fete could in future attract a prison sentence. In November 2005, the government unveiled a bill which would threaten up to a year in jail to anyone handing a goldfish over to anyone under sixteen. Animal Welfare Minister Peter Bradshaw said: 'Although some children who win goldfish look after them very well, others flush them down the loo. That's not good.'

On May 20, 2005, more than 300 Muslims gathered in London to burn a cross in front of the US embassy. Not only were they not prosecuted for inciting racial or religious hatred, but the matter went almost entirely unreported in the media, one of the first substantial reports occurring in the *Pakistan Christian Post* of May 27. When asked to comment, a Metropolitan Police spokesman stated:

> The demonstrators informed us in advance of their intentions. It was a vocal but peaceful demonstration and there were no arrests. We were aware of an item being burned. But at this stage we have no intention of taking further action.

On the other hand, a young woman, Kate Lovelace, was beaten in the face with a police baton when demonstrating against Labour's anti-hunting legislation in Parliament Square in September 2004. She was one of several protesters who needed hospital treatment. Several police were arrested following an investigation by the Independent Police Complaint Commission. There was also evidence that police had vindictively threatened to arrest people, including Miss Lovelace and Mal Williams, the Master of the South Herefordshire Hunt, after they had complained to the commission. Williams and his kennelman, Steve Lenton, had both needed treatment for injuries — in Lenton's case, fifteen stitches for a head wound.

Robin Page, honorary director of the Countryside Restoration Trust and a District Councillor for thirty years made a speech which included the words: 'If there is a black, vegetarian, Muslim, asylum-seeking, one-legged lesbian lorry-driver present, then you may be offended at what I am going to say, as I want the same rights that you have already', and was arrested in his home and held in custody without access to legal counsel. Page was told after four months that no charges would be proceeded with, in a letter which contained the ominous words: 'If further evidence comes to our attention whereby your involvement is implicated, we will seek to initiate proceedings against you'. When a ninety-three-year-old Northampton widow, Ruby Barber, was burgled for the fourth time in eighteen months, one burglary being accompanied by assault, her son put barbed wire on top of her fence and roof to protect her. This prevented burglaries for a further eighteen months until the borough council ordered the wire be removed in case intruders injured themselves.

These are a few cases from a large collection of press cuttings from the last few years. Taken singly, some might seem mere aberrations. But in total they indicate a deep social and cultural pathology, with the adversary culture in an odd relationship with the government using the law to attack and intimidate on one hand and to allow criminality and chaos on the other.

Hal Colebatch is a lawyer living in Western Australia. This article was first published in Quadrant.

Conservative Classic – 24

Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness

Anthony Daniels

Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad's novella, is usually taken to be an anti-imperialist tract. Certainly, it neither disguises nor exaggerates the horrors of King Leopold's appropriation of nearly a million square miles of Africa. It describes not only the depopulation brought about by outright killing, overworking of employees, and the flight of whole tribes from the feared and fearful approach of the Belgians, but the atrocities committed by the Belgians to enforce their labour quotas. Conrad saw it all while he was in the Congo for six months in 1890.

But great novelists do not write merely political tracts. Conrad was a conservative in social matters, not a radical, and an admirer of the British as he knew them, as the bearers of certain qualities, such as reserve, honesty, fortitude, and a sense of irony. Goodness knows what he would make of them now. I think he would run a mile, and possibly return to Poland.

The key passage in the book is the description of what has gone wrong with Kurtz, the trading company's agent of the Central Station in the Congolese jungle. Kurtz is a highly intelligent man, possessed of great intellectual powers, who, moreover, is infused with great ideas of the future. His job is to furnish the trading company with as much ivory as possible, but his vision is much wider than that. According to reports, 'He is an emissary of pity and science and progress.' He is, however, completely isolated in the Central Station. The narrator of the story, Marlow, tells his interlocutors who are sitting in a boat on the Thames one evening, that Kurtz became a god-like figure in his region, who established and maintained his authority by the means he found convenient. These were of the utmost brutality and horror, notwithstanding Kurtz's high-flown rhetoric and plans for a glorious and civilised future: when Marlow arrives at Kurtz's station, he finds six poles topped with the heads of decapitated Africans, allegedly 'rebels'.

Marlow says:

> You can't understand. How could you? — with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums — how can you imagine what particular region of the first man's untrammelled feet may take him by the way of solitude – utter solitude without a policeman — by the way of silence — utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion?

This is a profoundly unromantic view of Man's nature, diametrically opposed to that of Rousseau. Far from being the source of his vices because he is fundamentally and by inherent nature good, society is, if not quite the originator of man's virtues, at least the guarantor of them. Without the supportive scaffolding of society, amongst which is prejudice, the fear of social disapproval and the prospect of punishment in the case of transgression, a man in a position of power is liable to become beastly, whatever his original ideas and however imbued with a desire to do good he might be.

In other words, *Heart of Darkness* is Conrad's account of Original Sin — a concept with deeply conservative (but not, alas, Conservative) implications. Take all kinds of social conventions away, and man becomes a brute, willing to adopt any method to achieve his ends. The twentieth century bore Conrad out to a degree that he would not have wished. Belgian colonialism in Africa was only one possible way of isolating men from the conventions that kept them civilised and ethical, to the extent that they ever are ethical.

Conrad, of course, was completely without religious belief. He believed that the universe was meaningless, in the sense that no providence was worked out in its operations. A man — and mankind — was therefore fundamentally alone in the universe. How, then, does the Conradian version of Original Sin arise?

It arises because of Man's fundamental nature, which is a biological given. Man will thus never be any different from what he is now, or from what people are, or were, in the geographical heart of darkness that is, or was then, the Congo. In the sense that man has inherited his nature, I suppose, Conrad would agree with the Darwinians and socio-biologists. But Conrad is mainly concerned to convey to us the fragility of civilisation, and tell us that we should beware of trying to liberate ourselves too much or too hastily from the accretions of the past that allow us to live a precariously civilised life. He would have been appalled by those art critics, for example, who use the word 'transgressive' automatically and unreflectingly as a term of praise.

For Conrad, the heart of darkness is like the Kingdom of God — it is within you. It is your neighbour and the policeman who keeps you civilised (how many references to the positive role of policemen, outside crime novels, can you find in modern literature?) This is not a message that we like to hear nowadays: we prefer to think, along with Mr Blair, that we were born with original Virtue, not with Original Sin.

Man's default setting, to use a computer term, is to evil. This is not to say man is inevitably evil, clearly not, but that virtue requires firm maintenance and does not maintain itself. Few or no individuals bear within themselves all the resources necessary to keep on the path of virtue; they need social guidance to do so. When it has gone, says Marlow, 'you must fall back on your own innate strength, your own capacity for faithfulness'. He continues:

> You may be too much of a fool to go wrong — too dull even to know that you are being assaulted by the forces of darkness... Or you may be such a thunderingly exalted creature as to be altogether deaf and blind to anything but heavenly sights and sounds.

But, he says dryly, most of us are neither one nor the other. Thus Conrad teaches us an obvious but uncongenial lesson (uncongenial, at any rate, to modern Man): that we need to fear retrogression at least as much as to hope for progress.

Reputations — 15

Samuel Beckett

Peter Mullen

The adulation for Samuel Beckett on his centenary is misplaced. I feel I should turn up at one of the countless revivals of his plays and declaim the Service of Exorcism from the *Rituale Romanum* — for Beckett has been one of the most malign influences on the life and culture of the last hundred years.

Let me admit straight away that Beckett writes like a dream, but the equation of beauty and truth does not always work: Satan is always at his most seductive when he puts on a pretty face. Beckett can be witty, but his wit is the deranged humour of irony tipped over into what is merely snide. He uses his wit to do dirt on humanity. I think this is why intellectuals idolise him so — because so many of them, too, are fashionable nihilists whose greatest compliment to human life is that it is pointless.

Here, from *Malone Dies*, is some typical Beckett snide: 'If I had the use of my body, I would throw it out of the window'. It is funny but only at the level of disrespect and tastelessness that pissing in an open grave is funny. It is humour in the service of Nothing, and contempt for the human condition. Beckett does not say he would throw *himself* out of the window, for characteristically, there is no self only *it*.

Is the much-vaunted humour really all that sharp? Only if you are creased at the sight of Billie Whitelaw mouthing platitudes and *non sequiturs* while up to her neck in sand. Or if you find hilarious four silent actors moving over and over again from the circumference to the centre of a circle. Or if you're impressionable enough to giggle at an Irishman playing pocket ludo with sixteen sucking stones. He's telling us life is meaningless *again*. It's all he ever tells us. And nihilism does not become true by repetition, only tedious. Beckett's long literary career and his posthumous acclaim is as the apostle of meaninglessness and fashionable despair. He wrote nothing but discouragement and the intellectuals gleefully cheered every line — but they were only cheering their own vacuity. You might describe his whole oeuvre as *Angst-chic*.

His most famous advertisement for nothingness, his play *Waiting for Godot*, was produced near the time of Simone Weil's spiritual masterpiece *Waiting For God*.

One detects a deliberate sneer. *Godot* is applauded as an imaginative acceptance of the human condition as meaningless. In it Beckett jibes that Christ was lucky: 'Where he was it was warm and dry and they crucified quick'. Lies. The Gospels tell us Christ hung on the Cross for at least three hours, but what are the Gospels to a bigoted ideological nihilist?

'Nothing is funnier than unhappiness,' Beckett chuckles. The man is a sadist. He spuriously invents his meaningless universe and then casts himself as hero for daring to live in it: 'I can't go on. I'll go on'. It's not courage, only self-indulgence.

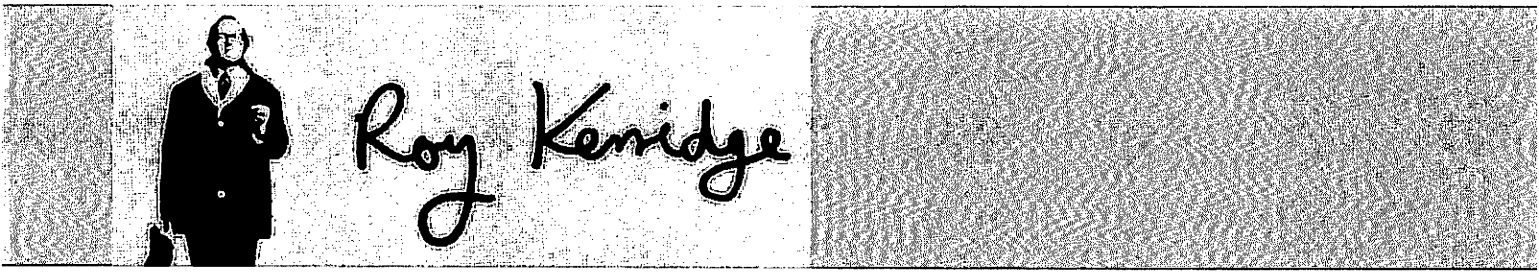
He bemoans the writer's predicament: 'The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no desire to express...' It's all baloney. Beckett himself never stops expressing. And he adds, 'With the obligation to express'. But in a meaningless world, Sam, who or what obliges us?

The Beckett groupies, and others like Sartre, Derrida, Foucault and Lacan, simply assume the gospel of meaninglessness, whereas many competent modern philosophers argue coherently for the innate reasonableness of the universe and for the persuasiveness of an Anthropic Principle which makes it almost impossible that the world as it is known to us should be an accident. But there is more to this matter than speculative metaphysics. In Beckett's sordid vision, metaphysics is not the only dead end. Where there is no meaning, there can be no morality. In a nihilistic universe, it is not only the purposes of God and his angels that are meaningless: so also would be our promises, our social contracts, our declarations of loyalty and love.

All worthless. But of course we do love, we do make and even keep promises sometimes; and by these actions we demonstrate that Beckett's world is not merely intellectually incredible, it is ethically perverse as well. And, of course, if the universe is really as meaningless as Beckett says it is, then the claim that Beckett's writing can be described as 'true' or even 'competent' is merely self-refuting nonsense.

On second thoughts, Samuel Beckett does not write like a dream. He writes like a nightmare.

The Rev'd Dr Peter Mullen is Rector of St Michael's, Cornhill in the City of London



Teenagers with a capital 'T' did not come into existence until the advent of rock and roll in the mid fifties. Before that there were merely adolescents. I was born in 1941 and did not get converted to Teenagery until I was sixteen. The first wave of rock and roll, Tommy Steele and Bill Haley, had passed me by, so I could be termed a second generation Teenager. All the same, I shared with the Teddy Boy pioneers the feeling that the over twenty twos were an alien people. Adults felt the same way and regarded us as aliens, almost as immigrants. Modern Teenagers now have parents and grandparents who share the same values and only the details of pop music, clothes and drugs are different. Do the callow modern youth realise what we pioneers have done for them?

In 1960 Teenagers all made the same decision at the same time — they were not going to obey their parents any more. The force of all the teenagers in the nation acting as one meant that ever since that time no young people have paid their parents anything for keep, nor have they come home at a parentally-set time. Meal times are no longer fixed, but fluid. Now in 2006 Teenagers and twenty-agers have all made a similar vow — not to grow up until they are thirty. Until that age, they expect to be supported, usually as students changing from course to course. Parental expectations, to judge by newspaper articles and letters, seem to have shrunk to a forlorn hope that one day their offspring will be self-supporting. Teenagers are ruefully expected to turn against their parents and to have hormones that 'kick in', whatever that means. Young people are seldom called 'rebels' anymore, if they do something unconventional. 'Rebel' is a word from the 'fifties and 'sixties, the days when middle-aged people behaved themselves. Now there is nothing to rebel against but rebellion itself. The 'Teenage History' film was a failure, and so was an exhibition of Teenage artefacts on the lines of an 'Our History' exhibit for black people. Teenage cultists feel no sense of solidarity with yesterday's cultists. In the heyday of such cults, each

one was a rebellion against the cult that went before it. Poor old parents were nothing to do with it — not even worth rebelling against.

Aren't you glad that not all children in their teens are teenagers?

Ø

A Mugger Writes: 'I'm sick and tired of reading headlines such as 'Pensioner kicked unconscious for three pounds. It's as if them writers think I know what's in every handbag before I start. How do you think I feel when I find I've been wasting all my time and energy for only three quid? I've been robbed!'

'Mind you, some things *do* get better, such as these new bright sodium lamp posts they're putting in. Talk about night becomes day! Now I can see the people I mug really clearly. In the old days you might pick on someone who could fight back, but not now. Thank you, Council — credit where it's due. Many thanks also to the police — they make the streets really safe for me and my friends, by never showing up.

Yours, A Mugger.'

Eternal Life

Without Roots is a remarkable book with an even more remarkable origin. It happened that Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) and Marcello Pera, President of the Italian Senate, quite without collusion, gave lectures on consecutive days on the subject of western values and Islamic terrorism. What they had to say was astonishingly similar.

Pera begins by saying that we are suffering from

> ...the form of self-censorship that goes under the name of Political correctness. And he adds that we are failing ...to obtain recognition of the Christian roots of Europe in the new and now defunct European Constitutional Treaty: the malaise of Europe, a rich continent that is unsure of its identity and its future and powerless to solve the resulting problems; and finally the West's boredom with its own principles and values at the very moment in which it has been targeted by a deadly war declared and conducted by Islamic fundamentalists.

Marcello Pera defies political correctness and says plainly what most commentators will not or dare not say. The Third World War is in full swing:

> Is there a war? I answer yes, there is a war, and I believe that the responsible thing to do is to recognise it and to say so, regardless of whether the politically correct thing to do is to keep our mouths shut.
>
> In Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ossetia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Palestinian Territories, Egypt, Morocco and much of the Islamic and Arab world, large groups of fundamentalists, radicals and extremists — the Taliban, Al Qa'eda, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Muslim Brothers, Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Armed Group and many more — have declared a holy war on the West. This is not my imagination. It is a message they have proclaimed, written, communicated, preached and circulated in black and white. Why should we not take note of it?

Pera sees the remedy to be the recovery of Christian principles and he quotes Pope Benedict to make his point,

> The identity of Europe would be incomprehensible without Christianity. You don't cut off the roots from which you were born.

And he adds,

> The only thing worse than living without roots is struggling to get by without a future.

But unfortunately,

> A foul wind is blowing through Europe. I am referring to the idea that all we have to do is wait and our troubles will disappear by themselves, so that we can afford to be lenient even with people who threaten us, and that in the end everything will work out for the best. This same wind blew through Munich in 1938. While the wind might sound like a sigh of relief, it is really a shortness of breath. It could turn out to be the death-rattle of a continent that no longer understands what principles to believe and consequently mixes everything together in a rhetorical hodgepodge.

Without Roots includes an exchange of letters between the Pope and Marcello Pera in which Pera asks,

> Why should Europe reject the very fact of war? Why should the same Church that once launched crusades refuse to see that a war has been declared against 'Jews and Crusaders', as Islamic terrorists say every day? Do the Church and Europe realise that their very existence is at stake, their civilisation has been targeted, their culture is under attack.

The Pope replies,

> Thank you for your remarkable lecture on relativism, which provides such a precise and thorough analysis of the basic problem of the West. There is a peculiar Western self-hatred that is nothing short of pathological. All it sees in its own history is the despicable and the destructive. It is no longer able to perceive what is great and pure. What Europe needs is a new self-acceptance that is critical and humble if it truly wishes to survive. Multiculturalism teaches us to approach the sacred things of others with respect, but we can only do this if we ourselves are not estranged from the sacred, from God.

Is this recovery of the sacred likely to happen? It must surely be in doubt when the prevailing intellectual tendency in the West is for secularism and relativism, for the view that any idea, any principle, any value is as good as another — and calls this flea market 'freedom'. The Pope reminds these intellectuals,

> The existence of values that cannot be modified by anyone is the true guarantee of our freedom and of human greatness. In this fact the Christian faith sees the mystery of the Creator and the condition of man who was made in God's image.

Pera the secularist and the Pope as the world's first Christian (and certainly its finest living theologian) are indeed singing from the same hymnsheet. Pera declares that

> Christianity is so consubstantial to the West that any surrender on its part would have devastating consequences.

And he concludes imploringly,

> Will the Church, the clergy and the faithful be able to and want to be purified of the relativism that has almost erased their identity and weakened their message and witness?

But we lack the resolve. We lack the conviction. It may be too late to avoid our destruction and demise. To reverse the ancient line: the day is far spent; the night is at hand.

Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam, is published by Basic Books

Peter Mullen

LETTERS

Sir,

The general theme of much of Paul Gottfried's Letter from Jerusalem (SR Autumn 2006) is that Israel is the victim and the Palestinians and their supporters are the attackers. He takes little account of the plight of the Palestinians, whose land has been taken, whose homes and villages have been destroyed; they too face 'an unrelenting problem' and 'a siege situation', but much worse than that faced by the Israelis. The Israelis regularly maintain a killing-ratio of four Palestinians killed to one Israeli killed.

The reference to the Wall ('about ten miles west of the Mediterranean') does not sufficiently describe the true situation. The Wall is being built mainly inside the Palestinian area, well to the east of the Green Line which designates the boundary of the area taken by the Israelis in 1967. The enclosed area between the Green Line and the line of the Wall is the good agricultural land and the source of much of the water. The Wall separates Palestinians from their farming land and water supply, their hospitals and schools. The building of the Wall and Barrier can only be deduced to be part of the Israelis 'Salami Tactics' to take still more land and water, and bring further oppression of the Palestinians. The building of the Wall has been condemned by the International Court of Justice (Only the USA's member of the court opposed the judgement) as well as UN Resolutions. The taking of land by 'Right of Conquest' is no longer accepted in International Law and, in relation to Israeli expansion, is condemned by the UN in Security Council Resolution 242.

The conflict over Palestine is wholly unique in world history; on no other occasion, before 1947 or since, have the countries of the world decided, in a nominally democratic process, that 55 percent of the land of one people should be given to other people of a certain race/religion. The Israeli oppression of the Palestinians is contrary to many hundreds of UN resolutions, as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention and, it is said, 29 of the 30 clauses of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is reported that UN resolutions critical of Israel and calling for a just peace comprise the majority of all resolutions ever passed by the UN.

Robert Harman
Sevenoaks

Sir,

Myles Harris was wrong to call his article about Tom Wolfe's Jefferson Lecture *Bonfire of the Darwinists*. It gives the impression that his article and Wolfe's lecture endorse what is known as 'creationism'; they do not. Both Harris and Wolfe accept the neo-Darwinist hypothesis but what both contest is the attempt to introduce Darwinism into the story of *Homo sapiens* or as Wolfe would have it, *Homo loquax*. This does not work. Herbert Spencer tried to do it and in our time so does Richard Dawkins. Spencer's 'survival of the fittest' boils down to a tautology, 'survival of the survivors'. As to Dawkins 'Memes', the only way in which the development of ideas resembles the mutation of genes is that both involve change. Spencer is rightly forgotten, but it is sad that Dawkins, a real scientist whose books are of great value, should have been misled – by vanity — into areas where he is at sea.

It remains true that mankind is a mammal, and specifically a great ape. 'The roots of politics are older than humanity' as Desmond Morris puts it in his introduction to Frans de Waal's *Chimpanzee Politics*. It is not strength and aggression alone that bring an individual chimpanzee to high status. He must also ingratiate himself with the right individuals and make the right alliances. Sounds familiar? It should. Among myriad human examples, few men can ever been as naturally dominant as Stalin was, yet he advanced in the Communist Party not by intimidation, but by making himself obliging.

Harris and Wolfe are right to point out the tremendous implications of the development of language. One day de Waal's work will be in the syllabus for students of anthropology and sociology. So will others like Jane Goodall, who was distressed to note that chimpanzees can be vindictive and sadistic in a very human way. Speech excused humanity from natural selection, substituting many different pressures. Humanity then did the same for the dog which has therefore moved far from the ancestral wolf. If we ignore the wolf we cannot fully understand the dog ; similarly, if we are to understand ourselves we cannot altogether ignore the ape.

Jonathan Guinness
Cirencester

Sir,

'Neo-Darwinism...an intellectual cult very much in fashion among the left, and one practised in the Nazi stud farms of the thirties' (*SR* Autumn 2006 Myles Harris) Not true. Sociobiology began in 1975, with E. O. Wilson's eponymous text, and is as hateful to the left as Neo-Nazism and the Neo-Cons. It's hated because it *appears* to condone determinism. It assumes that parts of our present behaviour are as much solutions to past problems as are parts of our present bodies they're evolutionary adaptations now 'hard-wired' into the brain, and may be just as ill-suited for modern city-life. It regards man, as a flawed creature, bearing the burden of himself into uncertain times, agrees with the Religions of the Book, and with Freud's suggestion that civilisation may demand a price, a suppression of parts of ourselves, that doctrinaire self-indulgence will end in tears. That's why the left hate it.

It has been a scientific commonplace, since Sir Julian Huxley's 'new synthesis' of the fifties, that man's own evolution has accelerated. That he adapts to changing circumstances through his behaviour and property, not through bodily change. And this gives him the edge. He can adapt in one generation, whereas a significant bodily change would take two hundred. Man didn't thicken his skin and grow fur before quitting the African plains-some 120,000 years ago. He just invented some clothes, and headed north.

To claim that this 'ends evolution' is arrogant coxcomb, the very mistake — of feeling ourselves apart and above the rest of creation — that has got us into our present mess. When Dr Harris prescribes antibiotics, he doesn't 'end evolution' for the pathogens. He merely throws them an evolutionary challenge adapt to this nastiness, or perish. And they *have* adapted which is why the doctor has to prescribe a million times more to do the job than thirty years ago. MRSA is not the end of evolution, but a timely reminder that pathogens are winning this particular round.

Wolfe's other pronouncements, are equally erroneous. Language did not begin 10,000 years ago with agriculture. (Although writing it down did, because there were lists to make.) And language did not give birth to religion (nor did religion 'kill' evolution, quite the reverse). There is clear evidence from 50,000 years ago-homo Neanderthalis, not Loquax, he who also bequeathed us the bow and arrow — for belief in a benign afterlife, for sacrament and for awe. All of which demands a language. Ideas demand the means to express them, and cannot survive without.

Tom Wolfe should thank the new biology. It has solved, and with mathematical beauty, one of philosophy's oldest problems — why altruism? For that, and speaking both as a philosopher and biologist, I'd put up with a deal of zealotry and nonsense.

Jonathan Tokeley
Bideford

ARTS AND BOOKS

The Spectre of Spengler?

David Ashton

Suicide of the West, Richard Koch & Chris Smith, Continuum, 2006, £14.99.
How the West was Lost. Alexander Boot, I B Tauris, 2006, £24.50.

A spectre is haunting Europe, but instead of the communism of Karl Marx it is the fatalism of Oswald Spengler. Since he conceived *Decline of the West* almost a century ago his masterwork, and even more its evocative yet often misunderstood title in English, have influenced many commentators when selecting aspects of 'decadence' as possible portents of the End. Perhaps the most notable among them was James Burnham, whose *Suicide of the West* (1964) remains a lucid analysis of the forces still 'devouring us from within' long after 'the voice of Moscow ceased to dictate' — just as *der Seher* predicted.

These books make substantial and absorbing additions to this genre. The first aptly quotes Spengler, along with more recent best-selling writers, and takes its title from Burnham while contesting his main thesis. The second names both these precursors among the observers of 'festering sores' on western civilisation, alongside Nietzsche, Weber and Ortega, in a profound, if prolix, personal protest. Richard Koch is a businessman and Lord Smith was a Labour 'culture, media and sport' minister, while Alexander Boot is a Russian-born philology graduate and cultural critic, whose verbal Kalashnikov spray is already familiar to *Salisbury Review* subscribers.

Nations, empires and civilizations are not imaginary entities, although unlike the individuals who compose them exact calendar dates cannot be given for their emergence and demise. Serious discussion of their 'rise' and similar symptoms or parallel processes, and any longevity prescriptions, nevertheless require agreement on definitions and historical fact. Koch and Smith identify six interlocking ideas that have distinguished 'the West' — the unique civilisation inherited by populations of European descent and mentality, which has outstripped all others in manifold achievements, and whose peoples previously felt pride and self-confidence. Differentiating us from 'most Japanese or Chinese, Arabs or Africans, Indians or Malaysians', these 'success factors' are given as 'Christianity, optimism, economic growth, liberalism and individualism'. But the authors contend that these key ideas, after sustained internal opposition, no longer inspire us, so that we are drifting towards 'collective suicide'. They document adverse developments under every heading in their list, stating, for instance, that western countries with maximum computer-accelerated 'individual liberty' exhibit a soaring incidence of envy, alienation, narcissism, aimlessness, suicidal depression, the victim mentality, and retreat into authoritarian sects. They fail, however, to disprove Spengler's prophecy about 'party leaders' towards whom the 'multitude continues to be unconditionally the passive object' by mentioning the pseudo-autonomy of revolting students, 'millionaire adolescent pop stars', punk fashion, designer drugs and the 'kaleidoscope of other global fads'.

Whereas Burnham diagnosed 'liberalism' as the 'ideology of western suicide', they devote much space to extolling its virtues and regretting its obscuration. To some extent, discordance in definition is involved, for their American predecessor was principally concerned with self-destructive attitudes among US 'liberals', or 'change agents' as ex-President Clinton would call them, reflected particularly in provider-statism and foreign-policy, rather than the pristine values of political freedom and individual dignity that primarily engage this 'libertarian' couple. Surely the peril of 'liberal democracy' lies in its 'egalitarian' baggage, which disregards biological reality and subverts superior statesmanship.

Both books emphasise the importance of Christianity in the formation of our distinctive western identity, with Koch and Smith praising its social benefits and Boot stressing its theistic dimension, which stimulated ineffable music and art. The paradox is that it appears as a religion of pacifism and surrender in response to aggression and plunder, of universal altruism above concern for kindred, of anxiety to condemn self rather than others, of guilt about property however hard-earned, of elevation of parasites above producers. Lingering in secular 'liberalism' long after liberals discarded its supernatural justification, surely this gospel has contributed to geo-strategic vulnerability, notably in reaction to militant Islam?

Koch and Smith reject fanciful expectations that

non-western societies could become intrinsically 'westernised'. They cite, innocent of irony, Orwell's observation that some notions are so stupid that only intellectuals can believe in them, offering Soviet communism as one example and American 'liberal imperialism' as another. Equally opposing 'Fortress West' (because we import raw materials) and worldwide 'Cosmopolitanism' (because cultural variation is deep-rooted), they opt for a Co-existence alternative whereby other countries slowly adopt whatever western ways attract them. However, they do not examine the full implications of their insistence that the planet itself could never sustain the attainment by Asians and Africans of our own level of affluence.

How the West was Lost traces our present misfortunes to a protracted and devastating conflict of 'modern' men (like Rousseau, Lenin, Eminem) against 'western' men motivated by spiritual and aristocratic values (like Rembrandt, Bach, Franco). Communists and liberals share the same aspiration of 'universal equality' although western survival depends on the fact that all men are created unequal, and that genius must be nurtured. 'Social pressure these days is vectored downwards, not upwards.' The fourth estate dominates the others. The author also points out that by atomising the vote into millions of particles, democracy renders each one meaningless. Political success depends on the ability to put faceless blocs of votes together, thereby promoting 'demagoguery, photogenic appearance, absence of constraining principles, or the ability to tell lies'. The taxpayer then finds, yet again, that the 'democratic state' is destroying his children's education and the armed forces that protect him, besides 'closing his local hospital or letting murderers go free'. These charges *matter*. An acquaintance who called this book 'a rambling rant' on account of several eccentric opinions, ranging from Chesterton's 'longing for genocide' to Hitler's 'pre-emptive' *Barbarossa,* missed its many insights and striking epigrams, and, especially its powerful indictment of 'glossocracy' or social control by verbal manipulation — 'propaganda' for political nihilists and 'advertising' for commercial philistines. As its practitioners do not require honour or a sense of high duty, their replacement hierarchy entails low-life tyranny. 'They fuse the markets and the subcultures into a uniform whole.' The pernicious impacts include vulgarised language, disguised sexual catastrophe, corruption of immature minds and restrictions on free speech.

Whereas Koch and Smith carefully repudiate 'racism', Boot rightly complains that society is being diluted 'with large numbers of people who are not Western culturally' and who are specially protected, while legislation against 'racism' conveys the message that 'no challenge to the state's authority will be tolerated'. What credible explanation exists for this 'battering-ram' other than his contention that it is designed to prevent a western resurrection? The official agenda driving the workshop for the nation's 'top people' at London's *Race Convention 2006* was enough to confirm this suspicion.

Both books scarcely touch the issue that overshadows the rest — *literal* suicide. There is a fatal disparity between the overall birth-rate and age-profile of most 'white' and 'non-white' populations. As an earlier work in the so-called 'suicide series', Patrick Buchanan's *Death of the West* (2002), has demonstrated, this demographic cataclysm encourages a disastrous invasion of our ancestral heartlands from poorer, less stable and environmentally deteriorating regions. In particular, we face the proliferation of large gangs of unemployable young males armed for crime or terrorism. The first signs of mayhem — once associated with Algerian fundamentalist fanatics, Brazilian convict syndicates and secret societies — are already evident in our derelict inner cities. As Spengler said, the great danger will be race war and underclass war combining to 'finish off the white world'.

Can *anything* be done? Past generations have seen jeremiads come and ago, but in our time dirt, decay and defeatism have been insulated and promoted by institutions, prohibitions and unprecedented media management. By concluding their data-rich and comparatively concise study with sermonic welfare waffle, Koch and Smith simply dress up as 'solutions' some of the worst 'problems'. Refurbished 'optimism, equality and tolerance' are no panacea for the self-immolation that leaves the gates open to the 'outer barbarian'.

Convinced that the monstrosities of the mass-consumption age are themselves ultimately perishable because of their innate worthlessness, Boot recommends that our scattered 'holdouts' privately preserve every trace of higher culture, patronise only its public expression, teach children timeless truths, and seed doubts in borderline minds. Why not also advise the ablest among our people to resist any temptation to forgo procreation, or to capitulate to money-power pollution, and instead to organise opposition and eventual 'counter-revolution' through gradual mastery of the technology and content of accessible communications networks? This western predicament is not an academic exercise over a fireside sherry, dear readers, because you and I, and our posterity if we have any, are inescapably involved.

The White Man's Burden

Peter Coleman

Empire and Superempire. Britain, America and the World, Bernard Porter, Yale University Press, 2006, £18.99.

An art exhibition has been touring Australia called 'Exiles and Emigrants' — a collection of 55 paintings from around the world depicting some of the millions who left Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria to settle in the Australian and other colonies. The note struck in almost all the paintings is close to despair. No hint of adventure nor any promise of a better life varies the mood, only gloom at leaving home. Typical is 'The Last of England' by Ford Madox Brown who portrays the pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner, with wife and child, miserably departing England for Melbourne, to live and die among the barbarians.

It would make a better illustration for the cover of Bernard Porter's imperial reflections, than the one he uses — a painting of the Zulu massacre of British troops in the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879. One of Porter's big themes is the unpopularity of the British Empire among ordinary Englishmen. If 'The Last of England' shows what people felt about the colonies of settlement, what on earth did they feel about Zululand or India or the Caribbean or sundry trading posts? Porter's answer is clear: indifference. That is why Britain so speedily decolonised itself after the War with scarcely a whimper. The question to ask, according to Porter, is not how Britain lost the Empire but how it lasted so long. He attributes it to luck, bluff and repression. All the rest is, to use his term, 'bullshit'. (Later in his book he finds a Blair-ite post-imperialist, global role for Britain.)

There was one caste or cadre that believed in the Empire — its upper-middle class rulers. Paternalist, high-minded, unimaginative, free of destabilising enthusiasms, bred and schooled for their mission, they despised settlers as hooligans, capitalists as mercenaries, and missionaries as non-U. They enjoyed ruling and did it well — although not always as well as they imagined. (They must share at least some of the blame for the blood-soaked partition of India and for Zimbabwe or Sierra Leone.)

So far these are familiar Porter themes. The fresh theme in the book is the depiction of the American super-empire that has replaced the British empire. He has little patience with American illusions that they are not and never have been an empire. They were a conquering empire from day one (as had been obvious to Britain, Spain, France and Mexico whose territories they absorbed) and is one now more than ever. Nor does he waste time on America's self-styled, self-serving 'exceptionalism'. The only thing exceptional about Americans is that they believe all that 'bull' (another of Porter's terms). But the new American super-empire differs from the British Empire in its extent (it is the sole hegemon, greater even than the Roman empire which only ruled the known world) and in its vision of a democratized, pacified and Americanised world, as mandated by God or History.

This vision is the key difference. It boils down to the Bush Doctrine or neo-conservatism. It is pre-emptive, unilateralist, militaristic and democratic. Pre-emptive because there is no sense in hanging around for the mushroom cloud before taking defensive action; unilateralist because you can't rely on dictators to help you spread democracy; militaristic because sometimes force is the only way to beat the Hitlers or Saddam Husseins of this world; and democratic because democracies do not make war on each other: a democratic world will be a peaceful world. It may be a coherent vision but it is no formula for success. In Iraq, where the neoconservative visionaries provided the arguments for the war, the pre-emption proved to be premature; the unilateralism a grave handicap; the reliance on force self-limiting; and the appeal to democracy illusory.

Porter remains ambiguous about the neo-conservatives. One moment he quotes Colin Powell: 'Those **** crazies'. (Porter apparently believes that anglo-saxonisms enliven his sleepy prose.) Believing in sudden regime-change rather than slow 'nation-building', these crazies imagine all that all you have to do is send in the marines and shoot the dictator, whereupon a grateful populace will immediately espouse parliamentary government, the rule of law, democratic capitalism and free trade. The old British colonial rulers would never have dreamt such fantasies, but the Americans do not have an hereditary cadre of rulers: they are a nation of capitalists and soldiers.

Yet there is another theme in Porter's book. Like the apostate neo-con Francis Fukuyama, Porter appears to see the Iraq project as doomed to failure. Yet he does not want to cut and run. Time and again he repeats his belief that, if the Americans and their allies 'stay the course', they still may triumph in the end.

For example, '... if the Americans are true to their rhetoric, and persevere, it could all work out, in spite of the suicide bombs, eventually'.

'It would be a wonderful thing' if the American neo-cons and ideologues were proved right in Iraq and Afghanistan ('not least, the sight of all those anti-imperialists and Old Europeans eating humble pie').

None of this is a confident prediction. (Porter doesn't do predictions.) In any case it was written last year. But it is a useful corrective to the New Realists and the lapsed neo-conservatives whose God has Failed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately Porter does not develop it. Instead he makes a detour back to Ramsay MacDonald (who declared in 1901 that 'the spirit of Imperialism cannot be condemned') and then takes up Tony Blair's reliance, in a series of speeches from Bangalore to Chicago, on Britain's imperial history as qualifying it to be still a global if no longer an imperial player — one that relies on diplomacy rather than force, humanitarianism than libertarianism, slow nation-building than revolutionary regime-change.

Unfortunately Porter selects from the various strands in his imperial history something that he calls 'an internationalist form of imperialism'. He wants to try once more the old League of Nations system of mandates, something akin to what Fukuyama advocates as 'realistic Wilsonianism'. There must be an anglo-saxon expression for this sort of stuff.

Views of Vichy

Ronald Payne

Bad Faith: A Forgotten History of Family, Fatherland and Vichy France, Carmen Callil, Random House, 2006, £17.
The Unfree French: Life under the Occcupation, Richard Vinen, Allen Lane, 2006, £24.

Henri, a Norman barman in Paris at a time when it was not suitable to talk of such things as the war, first brought home to me the petty unpleasantness of the Vichy regime, which controlled a large part of France after the defeat of 1940. As a butler to the ambitious old socialist, Pierre Laval, then a minister in the Vichy government, he experienced at first hand some its cruelties. After a quarrel with his boss the young servant was fired, a common enough happening in such circles. Then the minister ordered one of his underlings, Louis Darquier by name and commissioner in charge of deportations, to arrest the wretched Henri and have him sent into forced labour in the Nazi Fatherland. To switch the scene to an imaginary occupied Britain, it is as though some old Labour Party hack come to office under a long retired Great War general in the un-occupied zone north of the Humber sought out a monocled fascist crony to do a spot of dirty work in the provisional capital at Harrogate. After a tiff with his man Jeeves the minister had him sent off to a labour camp in the Germany. Almost too terrible to think of.

The horrors, betrayals and cruelties unearthed by Carmen Callil are of course far more devastating and on a far grander scale than the case history that I came upon by chance. The author of this fascinating and exciting book also stumbled across the trail of her villain accidentally. As a young and troubled Australian in post-war London she attended the funeral of her psychiatrist, Anne Darquier. At the time, Max Ophuls' film of the occupation of France, *The Sorrow and the Pity* had drawn attention to the iniquitous French minister, Louis Darquier. Noticing the name connection she discovered that newly buried Anne was indeed the abandoned daughter of the old reprobate. She began the detailed research that provided material for this remarkable book which chronicles the villainous life of Darquier, head of the Reich Central Security Office in France.

Born into a respectable bourgeois family in Cahors, Louis drifted into nationalist politics by way of the Jew-baiting street brawls common in Europe between the wars. After Hitler came to power in Germany he also attracted the helpful attention of Nazi agents willing to invest sums of money to help such a likely lad who might one day prove useful to them. During his stay in London and after his return to the Paris of the 1930s, Louis Darquier lived in continual near poverty, combining low life lodgings and high life drinking. Early in this period he met and married Myrtle Jones, an alcoholically disadvantaged girl from Tasmania travelling with the heavy baggage of romantic ideas above her station. In appearance she looked like a prototype for an early model Dame Edna Everage. Pretending to be an heiress from down under, she was fair game for Darquier, the adventurer in search of money, power and women. Photographs taken of him at the time show a podgy-faced dandy in a tight double breasted suit wearing a monocle and a hat at a jaunty angle. By the skilful insertion of the magic particule into his name he had transformed himself into quite the French aristocrat to be addressed as Baron Darquier de Pellepoix. Myrtle believed in aristo Louis at first sight; he was instantly taken in by Myrtle the heiress. They had conned each other. It was a marriage made in hell, though it lasted till the bitter end leaving their only child — the future psychiatrist — to pay the price.

The puppet regime created by Hitler after the fall of France in 1940 might have been fashioned specially to suit the life style and political ideas of Darquier and men like him. From the moment after the armistice that Marshal Petain, at the age of 84 made the extraordinary speech declaring, 'I offer to France the gift of my person', a new order started changing the old republic. Liberty, equality and freedom, the old watchwords, were instantly replaced with *travail, famille, patrie.*

From a suite in the spa Hotel du Parc in the provisional capital, the quiet town of Vichy, this antique soldier presided over a new regime. Many years earlier during a bitter quarrel Petain had been attacked by de Gaulle with the sneering jibe, 'old age is a shipwreck'. Now the master of the rump of France was nearly twenty years older still. The Colonel Petain, hero of France who saved Verdun, had once said, 'Two things I love most in this world are women and infantry.' Now as Marshal of France, he had no infantry unless the Germans said so, and he was too old to indulge his passion for women.

Although the regime professed dedication to Catholic family values and justified bossy social legislation by abolishing absinthe by decree, reducing the strength of pastis and forbidding advertising for other spirits, Vichy was awash with fornication and booze: lively parties and financial corruption. Such a nest of hypocrisy was an ideal milieu for Louis Darquier. The phoney Baron schemed his way into office by playing up his credentials as a fierce anti-Semite. When the German occupier demanded ever more ruthless action against French Jews, he and his cronies spread their net ever wider. Louis seemed to show not a gram of pity or sympathy for Jews and their weeping children rounded up in their thousands on his orders at Drancy and at the Vel d'Hiv in Paris.

Just one of the paradoxes staring out from the life story of Darquier is that this ambitious Jew-hating servant of the Nazi final solution was so inefficient in running his office. Natural laziness prevailed over his political enthusiasms. So all the work was left to others while he acquired a sleazy reputation for seducing office secretaries and with the aid of Myrtle his wife consuming huge quantities of champagne he never paid for. In one field of activity he showed surprising diligence. Louis used office and position to get his hands on the possessions of rich Jews, devoting much time and effort to grabbing paintings and works of art. Nor did his anti-Semitic sentiments prevent him from making deals and taking bribes from those he threatened to have arrested and sent to the gas ovens.

Bad Faith is a virtual one-woman inquisition against the loathsome phoney Baron. It reads like a savage novel with an anti-hero branded forever as the man who declared, 'they only gassed lice at Auschwitz'. This is an angry, finely written book to compel interest and understanding.

The Unfree French is a very different kind of book covering the same period of recent history. Equally enthralling, it rates Darquier as worthy of only one brief mention. The historian, Richard Vinen explores a much broader spectrum of the social and personal life of French people in the dark years after the fall of France. He is particularly good on the fate of prisoners of war. The unexpected speed of the total defeat of 1940 took the soldiers of what had been considered the most powerful army in the world completely by surprise. It also amazed the Wehrmacht and it took some time for the Germans to make arrangements to cope with hundreds of thousands of PoWs. For a while neither side was completely sure whether or not the war was over. Even among the sizeable French force evacuated to England from Dunkirk many decided to return home to life as prisoners in the offlags and stalags of the Reich. Their reasoning was that once France was out of the war, the English would make an accommodation and sign an armistice. The surrendering soldiers wrongly believed they would not stay long as prisoners of war.

Despite its title, I found Richard Vinen's book by far the best and most interesting work on this period that I have come across. A historian with expert knowledge of contemporary France, he is a witty and persuasive writer.

Communicate or Die

Jeremy Lewis

Conversation: A History of a Declining Art, Stephen Miller, Yale University Press, 2006, £15.

Conversation, it seems, is a complicated and contentious business, arousing far fiercer passions that idle gossips and dinner-party guests could ever imagine. The nineteenth-century American sage Oliver Wendell Holmes once declared that conversation is 'in its higher forms an artistic product' — but whether it is an admirable or desirable art form has long been a matter of debate. As is so often the case, the great divide is between Athenians and Spartans, between those who believe in the perfectibility of man and devotees of original sin.

Conversation was highly prized in ancient Athens, manifested most famously in Plato's *Symposium* and the Socratic dialogues: followers of the Athenian model include Cicero, Montaigne, Swift, Hume and Dr Johnson. For Athenians, conversation is, above all, a civilising force: provided its participants obey the rules — they must be prepared to listen as well as talk, keep their tempers in check, and refrain from riding private hobbyhorses to the exclusion of all else — it makes people more sociable, more tolerant, less belligerent and better informed. For Montaigne, it was 'the most fruitful and natural exercise of our mind' and 'the most delightful activity in our lives'; Swift thought it 'the greatest, the most lasting, and the most innocent, as

well as useful Pleasures of Life', while abominating those familiar figures who bang on about their illnesses, talk shop or constantly interrupt; Fielding was convinced that 'a true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation'; in more recent times, Michael Oakeshott has praised conversation as 'an unrehearsed intellectual adventure'. Some Athenians believed that the presence of women elevated the tone and quality of the proceedings — Swift thought them 'the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation' — while others, like Lord Shaftesbury, thought they had a deleterious effect, provoking insincerity and showing off among the men.

The Spartans, on the other hand, regarded conversation with deep suspicion, and the laconic man — the word derives from Laconia, a district of Sparta — was vastly preferable to the windbag or waffler. For the Spartans and their followers, conversation was synonymous with duplicity, insincerity, confidence tricks, frivolity, time-wasting and the exaltation of words over action. The Athenian model may have prevailed from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, but things began to change with the Romantics and the cult of solitude and reverie. It was felt that deep thoughts and heartfelt emotions were incompatible with incessant talk; the strong, silent Englishman and the brooding, insightful Germans were admired at the expense of jabbering Latins, and the lightweight, superficial French in particular. London clubs and coffee houses, famed for their lively conversation in the age of Johnson, became sepulchral places, the silence broken only by the rustle of newspapers being turned.

Since then, it would seem, the Spartan model has been generally preferred. Influential writers like Hemingway and Raymond Chandler glorified the monosyllabic hero; in the Sixties, the cult of 'authenticity' and talk of 'false consciousness' unnerved old-style conversationalists, who were made to feel insincere or duplicitous, while the elevation of inarticulacy made the meaningful grunt or four-letter word seem more eloquent than the well-turned phrase; in recent years, political correctness, the desire to be 'non-judgemental', passive participation in television discussions, texting, blogging and the internet have all taken their toll. The Americans, it appears, are less good at conversation than the Europeans because they are more liable to take an 'instrumental' approach, seeing it as a means to an end rather than an end in itself: in his celebrated manual of self-advancement, Dale Carnegie — the Mid-Western equivalent of Castiglione or Lord Chesterfield, perhaps — taught aspiring American businessmen the importance of memorising Christian names, an invaluable conversational technique, and one that their British equivalents never mastered.

The American author of this elegant and original slice of cultural history is an expert on the eighteenth century, and an unashamed if unfashionable Athenian. He points out that good talkers are not necessarily good conversationalists, citing Isaiah Berlin and Jonathan Miller as examples; suggests that the 'conversible world' never flourishes in dictatorships, approves the eighteenth-century equation of vigorous conversation with political freedoms, notes how the Abbé Prevost considered London coffee houses to be 'the seats of English liberty'; and rightly believes that academics tend to be poor practitioners, citing in evidence both Oliver Wendell Holmes ('All lecturers, all professors, all schoolmasters, have ruts and grooves in their minds into which their conversation is perpetually sliding.') and Fielding ('There is another sort of knowledge beyond the power of learning to bestow, and that is to be had by conversation. So necessary is this to understanding the characters of men, that none are more ignorant of them than those learned pedants, whose lives have been entirely consumed in colleges, and among books.')

Stephen Miller's ideal conversation is, I suspect, more elevated in tone and intention than most; a certain high-mindedness leads him to overlook the fact that the most enjoyable and frequently indulged conversations of all are exclusive, meaningless to the world at large, and prone to malice and frivolity, namely gossip and talking shop, accurately described by Sinclair Lewis as 'the purest and most rapturous form of conversation'. He rightly quotes Oliver Wendell Holmes's observation that 'conversation must have its partial truths, its embellished truths, its exaggerated truths ... one man who is a little too literal can spoil the talk for a whole tableful of men of *esprit*', but fails to point out that these congenial qualities, and the discounting thereof, cannot flourish in a 'global' world in which conversation is carried on in a simplified pidgin English, more akin to semaphore than to language as we know it: conversation must reach its nadir, alas, in well-meaning, brightly-smiling conclaves of international civil servants, where a kind of benevolent baby talk prevails and irony, ambiguity, exaggeration, *doubles entendres* and the small print of life waste themselves on the desert air. But these, like the claim that Raymond Asquith rather than his uncle was once the Prime Minister, are small quibbles indeed.

Before the Flood

Martin Dewhirst

Russian Conservatism and Its Critics: A Study in Political Culture, Richard Pipes, Yale University Press, 2005, £17.99.

If, fifteen years ago, this book had been published and read as widely as it deserves to be, not only the widespread euphoria about Russia's supposedly inevitable 'transition to democracy' but also the unhealthy optimism of all too many 'experts' on the former Soviet Union would have petered out long before Putin's 'vertical of power' had replaced Yeltsin's proclaimed preference for a certain amount of devolution of authority. In Britain, Putin, having been backed by people as different from one another as Yeltsin and Berezovsky and given the benefit of the doubt by many Western policy-makers (this 'former' KGB Lieutenant-Colonel from Western-looking St. Petersburg had, of course, to be regarded as innocent until proven guilty), was even considered, like the Romanian dictator Mr. Ceausescu earlier, to be a fit person to be wined and dined in Buckingham Palace in the presence of Her Majesty. Some simple-minded people still consider that initially Putin was Mr. Quite Nice, but somehow, rather surprisingly, became Mr. Nasty only fairly recently.

Richard Pipes's new, very compact, monograph is obviously the result of half a century's serious study of Russian history and Russian thought. The title is a little misleading, as he discusses only *some* of the critics of Russian conservatism — mainly the liberals and liberal conservatives, not the much better known nineteenth-century radical critics of Russian autocracy and absolutism. Even Herzen gets only a few mentions. This, of course, is a refreshing change and means that those who have read Isaiah Berlin, E H Carr and others on Russian revolutionary thinkers will make many important new discoveries while reading this volume. I, for instance, was particularly interested in the pages devoted to Nikita Panin, Pushkin and Rostislav Fadeev (a very intelligent and perceptive retired general whose thoughts provoked a book-length response called *Revolutionary Conservatism*). My main disappointment (apart from the absence of the Old Believer Avvakum and the paucity of information on Russian Messianism) is that there is not even a mention of the prophetic anti-revolutionary collection *Vekhi* (*Landmarks*), published a few years after the 1905 Revolution and — even more remarkable — a few years before the outbreak of the First World War. One cannot help wondering whether something as horrific as the October Revolution would still have happened even if Russia had enjoyed a longer period of peaceful development.

Naturally, the 'c' word occurs frequently in this study, but, as Pipes quickly explains early on to the uninitiated, in the United States (and elsewhere) conservatism 'means less government, whereas in Russia it means more government'. Indeed, the notion of 'separation of powers' seems even today to be deeply alien to most Russians and to Russian political culture. Perhaps the Slavophile Konstantin Aksakov was correct when he insisted that 'Russians were by nature apolitical. Their sense of freedom was inner, spiritual: indeed, true freedom can exist only there, "where the people have nothing to do with government"'. To many a Westerner, it is almost incomprehensible how the ruling cliques in Moscow can get away with their claims to be building a law-based state when they are so obviously opposed to judicial independence. And how can there be a market economy (rather than state capitalism) when private property rights are so frequently violated? (This is why the YUKOS case is of such seminal importance.) Those who are too busy to read the whole book should at least look up all the references in the entry on 'private property' in the excellent Index.

Another leitmotif is, of course, the eternal lack of balance between state and society in Russia. It is highly significant that the Index has numerous references to the state but *none* to society (except for a few within the entry for 'state'). The desire of so many (but not all) Russian conservatives for a strong state and a weak society appears to be based, even after the disastrous defeats in the Crimean War and the Russian-Japanese War, on the conviction that a strong state actually *requires* a weak, apolitical society. Perhaps this explains why, in 2006, the hundredth anniversary of the first Russian Constitution (although it deliberately wasn't officially given that appellation) and the first elected legislature was not celebrated on the scale that naïve foreigners might have expected. The current Russian Duma (parliament) seems to have no more autonomy than its four predecessors in the period just prior to the end of tsarist rule. Perhaps it is thought that even weak parliaments contributed — and contribute — to the breakdown of state authority in Russia?

A further point is that while Russia grew and grew in size, if not in maturity, it turned from a country into an empire, which, despite recent losses, it still is today. Or, as Pipes puts it, 'Russia was an empire before she had become a nation: which meant that her population lacked the spirit of communality that derives from living in a nation-state.' It has been confidently

predicted that ten years from now more than half the young men in the Russian army will come from a Muslim background. Many ethnic Russians dislike the North Caucasians, whether Muslim or, in North Ossetia, mainly Christian, but the idea of shedding any of these tiny 'Algerias' (and even more, of course, oil-rich Tatarstan and Bashkortostan) is anathema. Indeed, the ruling neo-Soviet cliques in Moscow have been and are being extraordinarily, and not unexpectedly, unhelpful about the post-Soviet authorities in Georgia and Moldova.

The Soviet period is hardly mentioned, even in passing, in this invaluable volume, but it greatly increases our understanding of what has happened in Russia since 1917. The final paragraph in Pipes's 'Conclusions' reads: 'The weakness of Russian society led inevitably to the growth and assertiveness of autocratic principles. Such, it turned out, was Russia's fate.'

Economics and Hitler

John Jolliffe

How Hitler Came to Power, Sara Moore, Authorhouse, 2006, £14.95, available from Waterstones.

As Andrew Roberts explains in his introduction, Sara Moore's ground-breaking account argues that the Treaty of Versailles was not, as Keynes, and others were to claim, too harsh on the Germans, but if anything not harsh enough. She shows that throughout the 1920s Germany was prepared to inflict unnecessary unemployment and suffering on her people and also to use the banking crisis of 1931 to reiterate her claim that the reparations inflicted on her were impossibly severe. Keynes was of course brilliantly articulate in expounding this view, which came to be largely accepted in England especially among those who had observed the post-war famine in Germany, but had failed to spot that in Belgium and Northern France it was even worse, partly because the retreating Germans in 1918 had driven off all the livestock they could. When *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* appeared in 1920, the Editor of *The Times* dismissed it as 'a piece of pro-German pacifism'. However the influential Bloomsbury bandwagon began to roll, even though — or perhaps because — the clique of aesthetes and intellectuals who propelled it were less concerned with political realism than with other causes like pacifism, free love and moral relativism, hardly ingredients for a practical political structure.

In spite of his brilliance Keynes appears never to have taken into account the wholesale destruction by the retreating Germans in 1918 of much of the heavy industry of North-Eastern France and Belgium, precisely so that it could not compete with Germany after the war. So on the French side were *les regions devastées*, and in Germany a completely intact, powerful industry capable of being swiftly converted back to peacetime production. No fighting had taken place on German soil, nor had any bombs fallen on it. By 1922 Germany was already the second biggest shipbuilder, and was soon to become the biggest exporting country in the world. Curiously enough, quite how she ended the war with twice as much gold in her bank vaults as in 1914 is nowhere explained.

Moore also advances an interesting theory about collusion between German big business and Stalin. There is evidence that Stalin instructed the Communists in the Reichstag to vote with the Right rather than with the Social Democrats. Whether this was in fact a *quid pro quo* for Krupp and others supplying Stalin with armaments, and with advice on collective farming, has not been proved, but the idea is at least plausible. And it is known that while German children and pensioners were dying of malnutrition Pan-German plutocrats were willing to pay a subsidy of fifty million gold marks for Soviet Russia to build new military industrial factories.

Hitler certainly depended on the line that the German economy was weak, and that only he had policies capable of strengthening it. In 1923 he joined Ludendorff on the platform at a gathering of 100,000 Nationalists to celebrate the anniversary of the German victory over the French at Sedan but in October his attempted coup in Bavaria failed, and he served a short prison sentence before emerging to publish *Mein Kampf*, a paean of praise for brutality, a vitriolic attack on the Jews, and a stress on the need to conquer the Slav underdogs and to gain *Lebensraum* for the German people.

Sara Moore has dug up a wide range of economic details, particularly on the international front, contributing to Hitler's rise, which has often been neglected in the past. Germany quickly became a crucial market for American cotton and wheat, while the unfortunate French were compelled to pay for the reconstruction of their industries out of higher taxation, following the German refusal to pay the reparations. Moore's industry in exploring these details, often in obscure places, is remarkable. Her conclusion is one of sympathy for the German middle class's terror of Russian Communism, especially in the light of Lenin's expressed desire to spread it everywhere, even as far away as in South America. She also finds fault with President Wilson's generous desire to help

Germany, only to find that she was by no means the weak and grateful country that he had imagined. She also underlines Lloyd George's general ignorance about Europe, not least about demography, which disqualified him from playing his part at the Peace Conference at all adequately. And she finds the Pan-Germans such as Krupp and Hugenberg infinitely to blame for poisoning German minds against the Weimar Republic, thus helping Hitler to get in, in spite of a huge popular German vote against rearmament in 1928, and a yearning for peaceful coexistence with her neighbours.

The title of this book makes an extravagant claim for its contents, which are largely concerned with economics. There were of course a number of other factors in Hitler's rise to power, including his diabolical skill at manipulating the various violent currents of political opinion in Germany, (and in increasing their violence) and his phenomenal success at rousing the rabble, not least by making full use of fraudulent propaganda. But in the field which she has chosen, to some extent neglected in the past, she provides much food for thought in this short but very well researched book.

A Political Philosopher?

Anthony O'Hear

A Political Philosophy: Arguments for Conservatism, Roger Scruton, Continuum, 2006, £16.

Perhaps not quite what it might seem from its title, Roger Scruton's new book is actually a collection of eleven separate essays, all given or published for specific occasions between 2000 and 2006. It is not a systematic treatise. And few of the essays engage with the matters which are at the forefront of the concerns of the leaders of to-day's Conservative Party, who will find nothing here about tax cuts, public services, the Iraq war, policing, or even about education. They will find a lot about marriage and sexual morality and a little about globalisation, which will not be to their taste, and quite a bit about the environment, which might be, at least in the sense of filling out just what a conservative attitude to the environment might amount to and how it might differ from that of most environmental campaigners. They will also find the material for a philosophy of belonging and of transcendence, which they will probably not even begin to understand. Or, if that is too harsh, they will probably not even begin to understand the relevance of that philosophy to modern politics.

That is a pity, because in his reflections on the nation and on religion Scruton provides the germs of a world-view which is in a deep sense conservative, which provides the backdrop from which practical policies might emerge and against which they might be judged, and which is also compelling. But, as already mentioned, the book does not amount to a systematic exposition of that world-view. So in highlighting what I take to be its core, I may be imposing a structure which is not the author's.

It seems to me that there are three key elements to Scruton's vision: a sense of belonging, a sense of the past and of the future which grows out of the sense of belonging, and a sense of human life as sacred and as guarded by absolute prohibitions which sanctify our inheritance by honouring the dead and protect both the living and the unborn. Even from this very brief account, it will be clear that Scruton sees the enemy (or at least one of the enemies) as the spirit of the Enlightenment, which de-sacralises the world and human life and (in his brilliant phrase) 'de-means' us, leaving the physical world a prey to all kinds of technological assault and the human world open to the inhumane calculus of the utilitarians, those who would import the ways and considerations of science into the moral sphere, and so legitimate practices such as abortion and euthanasia, while finding nothing objectionable in pornography.

Scruton's conservatism, as expounded here, is moral as well as political; indeed the sacralising motive which makes him politically conservative also makes him morally conservative. So he is opposed to abortion. He is in favour of marriage and against the heartless exploitation of others implicit in sexual seduction, a form of evil he sees as of a piece with the dismissal of humanity in the death camps. As I said, this is not a book which will commend itself to Cameronian conservatism, but if, as I do, we find Scruton's connexion of permissive and totalitarian attitudes strained, maybe because Don Giovanni seems to be a quite different character-type from Hitler or Stalin, we should at least understand why we do. On euthanasia, however, or at least on the ending of life in general, without being any less sensitive to the inhumanity of a purely utilitarian approach, Scruton is interestingly more nuanced: 'We need to recognise the value of timely death and the futility of living beyond the point where anyone will mourn our passing', (part of his point being that while science and the scientific attitude may in general lead us to de-value human life by taking an external attitude to it, scientific developments in medicine have led to a situation in which many people are enabled to go on living in an inhuman way).

Fundamental to Scruton's political conservatism is the nation, which he discusses in the first and

longest essay. A nation for him is neither a tribe nor a creed, nor is it characterised by the aggressive confrontationalism of nationalism. A nation is something which characteristically emerges as by an invisible hand, when a group of people, who may be racially or religiously diverse, share a sense of belonging to a place they conceive as a homeland; a nation will also share a history and a set of institutions. It will tolerate difference, it will be bound by the rule of law, and its rulers will be genuinely accountable. Scruton argues, plausibly enough, that nations in his sense, with their distinct traditions and homelands, cannot be forced together into transnational unions without destroying that which holds them together. Transnational federations (along with their commissioners and bureaucrats) will lack legitimacy and will tend to dissolve into anarchy. Supragovernmental quangoes may exercise power, but will lack accountability. Their edicts should be resisted by nation states when they trespass on matters like citizenship and internal law. The extension and abuse of asylum law — to a degree unimaginable to those who set it up half a century ago — pose a real threat to nations and to the affections of their citizens, who see what is theirs and what has been built up by them being lavished on new-comers who have no real wish to become citizens of the places to which they have come. Here, of course, Scruton's political philosophy would have direct practical implications, but ones our political leaders will face only unwillingly and too late.

But it is not only the cosmopolitan aspect of Enlightenment universalism which threatens the Scrutonian nation. Equally destructive are free trade and transnational corporations, which, unless controlled within nations, destroy local economies and traditions. As well as militating against nations, they are also destructive of the environment, so a genuinely conservative attitude will be suspicious of them from two angles, though how they and what is called globalisation are to be controlled is less clear. On the environment, a conservative will see his duty as being to enhance our inheritance, in the manner of a trustee, passing on to the unborn what the dead have left us. This is best done, in Scruton's view, by local action and by nation states, rather than by the self-dramatising and often mendacious activity of environmental activists, and certainly not by unaccountable international organisations pursuing questionable global agendas. One might argue here that the global nature of many environmental problems requires global or at least international action (as many sensible scientists suggest). But Scruton is surely right in emphasising the personal cost of conserving the environment, a cost we must all bear personally in the shape of less travel, less luxury and less waste if we are to honour our trusteeship. If we really want to preserve the environment we will, in Rilke's phrase, have to 'change our life' (just as if we want to abide by the personal demands made on us by marriage and sexual fidelity).There is surely a lesson here that we — and our politicians — need to learn and to practice.

It will be clear even from this brief and selective sketch of Scruton's political philosophy that what is being proposed is nothing less than a whole view of human life and the world, spiritual and moral as much as political, a point which is strongly reinforced in the final essay, on T S Eliot's conservatism. In line with Scruton's remarks on belonging, Eliot finds the timeless in the temporal moment of a prayer actually being offered, in the precise place of the chapel of Little Gidding, in the historically given tradition and spirit of Anglican communion:

> So, while the light falls
> On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
> History is now and England...

It is Scruton's merit to show how a vision like Eliot's does have political consequences (mainly in the sense that so much politics seems designed to destroy the conditions which make home and belonging possible), and also how a conservatism worthy of the name must derive from such a vision. Such a conservatism is not hostile to free trade and personal liberty *per se*, but will recognise the dangers posed by *laissez-faire*, either economic or social, as much as the dangers posed by socialism and internationalism. But what, one wonders, becomes of this conservatism without a religious dimension, or to put this another way, is there a conservatism available to those like Hume who would repudiate any religious under-pinning to their conservatism? This is the fundamental question raised by Scruton's book, and it would be fascinating to hear more from him on it.

Britain's Terror Network:

Mark Baillie

Londonistan: How Britain Is Creating A Terror State Within, Melanie Phillips, Gibson Square, London, 2006, £14.99.

This is a long overdue exposé of the way Britain has allowed and even encouraged the growth and export of Islamic rejectionism and jihadism while wilfully ignoring it. The story is frightening enough but the truly shocking thing is that there are no secrets or revelations here: it was all being done in the open and should have been known by our political and security leaders who

professed shock and surprise on 7 July 2005. That alone is a very good reason why you should buy this book, but every purchase is also a kick in the teeth for the pusillanimous UK publishing establishment that turned it down. It only saw the light of day because Roger Kimball's imprint Encounter published it in the USA where it sold very well and was then taken up by the courageous Gibson Square in the UK. It is a pity that they did not compile a better index: only people are cited, not events or subjects.

The growth of rejectionism and death-cult jihadism in the UK is meticulously explained, together with the failures to counter it and the many measures that encouraged it. Underlying all this is Phillips's analysis of the rot within British society, the self-loathing created by the Left, permeating education, academe, the civil service, the Church of England and government, all creating a moral vacuum for the rejectionists to thrive in plus plenty of ammunition.

A study of crusading judges determined to undermine our laws and our way of life is frightening in its details, although the argument is slightly over-egged in cases where the judges were enforcing bad laws over which they had no choice (as in some asylum cases based on the European Convention on Human Rights). Nonetheless, some of the political statements by judges show a crusading zeal that is unconstitutional and dangerous.

The final twist is that the government has cosied up to the rejectionists, giving the Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Muslim Council of Britain a seat at top table and giving a young student activist called Mockbul Ali a prominent role in the Foreign Office. This causes a double rot: it puts the rejectionists in charge of policy and it alienates all the many Muslims who espouse different forms of Islam and those who just want to get on with life, who are excluded by the left-wing racism of dealing with unelected and unaccountable 'community leaders'. This aspect is dealt with in more damning detail in a recent pamphlet from the think-tank Policy Exchange, by Martin Bright, 'When progressives treat with reactionaries.' As a result, the first recommendation from the government's Muslim focus group was to abolish Holocaust Memorial Day.

Underlying Phillips's thesis and uniting all its strands is anti-Semitism, not just the Islamists' but also within many institutions of society and politics where anti-Israeli trends have spilled over into anti-Judaism. At the heart of the rot is the cancer of anti-English socialism, permeating every institution and welcoming all immigrant waves as a new proletariat that could undermine Englishness. In fact, the growth and motivations of rejectionist Islam is very similar to the spread of Marxism in Western Europe after World War II, with all its shades of subversion from political-correctness to terrorism.

The only major flaw is Phillips's uncritical backing of Bush's so-called War on Terror. She even says that Blair and Bush did not lie about the existence of weapons of mass destruction and ignores the thoroughly mendacious 'dodgy dossier' which took us to war in Iraq: there were plenty of good moral reasons for doing away with Saddam Hussein and a reasonable diplomatic case based on the UN resolutions demanding inspection of weapons but these were not the reasons Blair cited. The reasons in the dodgy dossier were all false: the existence of strategic missiles (ready for action in 45 minutes): Iraq's attempts to purchase uranium yellowcake in Niger, based on a very poorly forged letter; and an analysis of the alleged weapons programme plagiarised from a 12-year-old doctoral thesis. To Phillips, however, those who criticise the Iraq war, Guantanamo and the programme of kidnap and torture called 'extraordinary rendition' are appeasers.

This is a terrible misrepresentation. A great many of us who are very keen to wage war on terrorism believe that this War on Terror is not only incompetent but counter-productive: this includes a huge number of soldiers with decades of experience of counter-terrorism (including, of course, Ulster) and the combined intelligence services of the United States (in the National Intelligence Estimate leaked at the end of September 2006) as well as the UK's (separately leaked around the same time).

This position, however, is not central to the book and can simply be ignored while retaining all the many good bits: MI5's abandoning of investigation into subversion; the Church's religious objections to the creation of Israel; nearly a million pounds spent on allowing Abu Hamza to block the public highway for his hateful rants in Finsbury Park; appeasement by Labour politicians with large Muslim electorates; the ideology of multi-culturalism that pushes immigrants into isolation and ghettos; the propaganda of victimhood; Ken Livingstone's promotion of Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

We get not just the details but also the trends and the ideologies. There are some flaws in some analyses and you may disagree with others but do not let anyone persuade you that this is a strident rant by a *Daily Mail* columnist: it is soberly written and thoroughly argued, showing how terrorism is not just about a bunch of killers but depends on a widespread social movement. There are a few good books about terrorism but this is one that is essential reading and essential reference.

By the Waters of Babylon

Frank Ellis

COBRA II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq, Michael Gordon and General Bernard Trainor, Atlantic Books, 2006, £25.

It is a good bet that in future years a huge number of monographs and articles will be devoted to the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Documents, currently classified, will become available to researchers and some of the leading players on both sides of the invasion will offer valuable insights. If Saddam Hussein escapes the executioner's block, one hopes that he will be tempted to spend some time writing his side of the American-Iraqi war. One study that will be essential reading for future researchers is *Iraqi Perspectives*, an analysis of Iraqi military decision-making based on the interrogation of senior Iraqi officials by US staff posing as historians. Submitted to President Bush in 2005, *Iraqi Perspectives* is still classified, along with much else. Inevitably, therefore, as new material enters the public domain, parts of *COBRA II* will need to be supplemented and amended. Nevertheless, the serious task of studying and analyzing the Iraqi war has to begin somewhere and Michael Gordon, chief military correspondent for the *New York Times*, and former Marine general Bernard Trainor have set a very high standard for future scholars.

According to Gordon and Trainor, the Clinton administration believed that Saddam was a 'manageable nuisance', whereas the Bush administration thought that Saddam was a major threat, one requiring a far more aggressive response than hitherto. The authors' position seems much closer to that of Clinton's team when they argue that: 'The Iraq War was a war of choice, not necessity.' In the aftermath of 9/11 the Bush administration now argued that there were compelling reasons for choosing war. The doctrine of pre-emption had to be abandoned in favour of prevention. The complicating factor was the use, or the threat of use, of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Cold War deterrence relied on the Soviet Union's knowing that the use of nuclear weapons would invite a counter strike. The same possibility still applies to North Korea and Communist China. The new danger for the US arises from the risk that WMD could be supplied by a state to non-state groups (terrorists), so rendering effective retaliation impossible. Where these weapons can be identified in the hands of terrorist groups or their suppliers, war was justified. Critics of the invasion will, of course, argue that these weapons were never discovered, may never have existed and, therefore, that claims to be acting in accordance with the established conventions and legal provisions of *jus ad bellum* are null and void. As far as the US was concerned there were other advantages in pursuing the option of war. 'For an administration that was determined to change the strategic equation in the Middle East', note the authors, 'and make Saddam an object lesson to other proliferators, Iraq was not a danger to avoid but a strategic opportunity'.

And Donald Rumsfeld — more than any other senior figure in the Bush administration — wanted to seize this strategic opportunity. Having read the defence study Operational Availability, Rumsfeld concluded that a revolution in military affairs, based on computerisation, precision weapons and the use of special operations troops, had indeed taken place; that it was now possible to achieve more with less. He sought to fashion a leaner, more flexible military machine than that which had been deployed in 1990-1991. Rumsfeld now rejected the existing plan for an invasion of Iraq (OPLAN 1003-98) mainly because it involved too many men and would take too long to build up material in the operational zone thereby providing clues as to the moment of attack. A minimal build up, Rumsfeld hoped, would keep the Iraqis guessing as to the time of the attack. When asked what he thought the ideal number for the task would be Rumsfeld gave a figure of 125,000 troops (OPLAN 1003-98 called for 500,000 troops). It is a measure of the gap that separated Rumsfeld's thinking from some of the planners that even in the early stages the planners were assuming that the post-war occupation would last ten years and require the deployment of many more troops. 'There was', as Trainor and Gordon observe, 'a gaping hole in the occupation annex of the plan'. This fundamental conceptual clash bedevilled planning and caused recrimination after the Saddam regime was toppled. Nor did the planners properly understand the ethnic rivalries that were bound to erupt once Saddam was out of the way —Yugoslavia was surely a dire warning.

One very serious intelligence failure stands out. In 1994, mindful of the 1991 rebellions, which occurred after the first Gulf War, the regime organised and equipped Fedayeen paramilitary forces, a parallel regime structure in towns and villages. The task of the Fedayeen was to put down any insurrection. They were well equipped, able to draw on stocks of AK-47s, heavy machine guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). The CIA and other agencies completely missed the significance of these paramilitary structures in Iraq, mainly because the CIA depended too much on satellite and SIGINT and, crucially, lacked good human

sources so that the full significance of the Fedayeen was realised far too late. 'Ultimately', observe Gordon and Trainor, 'the very force designed to counter an insurgency became the regime's stoutest defender and ultimately the core of the insurgency against the Americans'. 'As the quality of its (CIA) information on Iraq declined, its fears grew', which helped to convince the Bush administration that Saddam was indeed hiding WMD. Indeed, Saddam encouraged such speculation. Echoing Sun Tzu's advice, Saddam told his commanders that the better part of war was deceiving the enemy. He was probably more successful than he realised, which in turn made the Bush administration all the more alarmed by his ambitions — and all the more determined to get rid of him.

Overall, COBRA II is a judicious and scholarly contribution to military affairs, with many lessons for those concerned with the art of military planning and who must operate within the framework of tight political control. For all their detached approach to the American invasion and their criticism, the authors take obvious pride in the achievements of American arms. And why not?

Council or Union?

Charlotte Horsfield

A Democratic Europe: An Alternative to the European Union, Richard Body, New European Publications, 2006, £10 hardback.

> Unfortunately, it is the nature of governments to be acquisitive of power; and as the essence of democracy is the diffusion of power, there should be a constant tension between the governing and the governed. But the strength of this tension must depend upon how conscious the governed are about what is happening to them.

Richard Body introduces us to the subject of his latest book, a distillation of his ideas worked out over an active life spent in and around Parliament. He uses a blend of comment and historical record to set the scene before suggesting a cure for that bane of the European Union, the undemocratic nature of its institutions.

Body's time in Parliament spanned a period when his fellow MPs came to relinquish the responsibilities vested in them by the people. These they allowed to be transferred to supranational institutions imbued with powers beyond the control or influence of any electorate. During his Parliamentary career he did all he could not only to represent the interests of his constituents but also to comfort that unhappy band of people who came to be labelled 'eurosceptic'. Only a handful of MPs were prepared to take on this role, for euroscepticism has been an embarrassment to successive governments. Now we know why, for records released under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that Mr Heath, when negotiating Britain's entry, promised that this country would be a loyal member of the European Communities. More recently the Treaty on European Union has made loyalty a Treaty obligation under its common foreign and security policy, to be ensured by the Council.

Body explains the five characteristics of a nation state and the meaning of such concepts as 'sovereignty' and 'democracy'. Is it not ironic that only democracies may join the European club whilst the club itself flouts this basic rule? Perhaps it was for this reason that 'democracy' was not amongst the words defined in a report published by the House of Lords select committee on the European Communities before the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, even though other abstract concepts associated with the Treaty were explained in detail, despite 'democracy' being claimed as fundamental principles in the Treaty's Preamble. Body has now made good that omission.

He suggests ways of restoring democracy to the government of the European people and describes the work of the Council of Europe which despite involving forty-six nations operates effectively on an intergovernmental basis. It was through the Council of Europe that the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms came to be adopted. Initially the Convention was drafted by a Home Office official who set down what he saw were the rights of the British under the common law. The United Kingdom was amongst the first to sign the Convention and was the first to ratify it, but it was not incorporated into British law until recently because the common law had until then been considered sufficient protection of our liberties. Once Europe encroached into Home Affairs, with responsibility for such nationally sensitive issues as criminal justice, immigration and border controls, the incoming Government of 1997 decided to incorporate it into our domestic law. The Council of Europe has contributed more than the Human Rights Convention to the harmony of Europe. Working through eight directorates covering economic and social affairs, agreements are reached without coercion.

Body shows how the United Kingdom gave up four of five sovereign powers, retaining only the power to make war. Should that one remaining sovereign power be transferred to a supranational authority which decides to declare war, then all those subject to that authority would be bound by its decision. In 1973 the UK gave up not only its treaty making powers over trade, but over the fixing and collection of certain taxes, and over both the making and interpretation of its own

laws. All this has altered our behaviour as a nation for we must either obey the law or become criminals. The Council of Europe has no such powers.

Our position in the wider world is considered, giving first the arguments of those who favour federalism, and their understanding of history which leads them to believe that the growth in the size of human institutions is inevitable. They argue that as nation states cause wars there has to be a form of global government to achieve peaceful coexistence. But this argument is flawed for trends towards size are in retreat. When Monnet was planning the European project there were 51 states eligible to join the United Nations and now there are 191. There are even centrifugal forces at work within nations, including the United Kingdom. Nor do the arguments in favour of the economies of scale stand up, for in the global market place the small independent states are achieving the greatest prosperity, as is demonstrated by both Norway and Switzerland. Even cultural differences may coexist with free trade, and cultural assertiveness need not be matched by commercial chauvinism.

He explains the difference between a free trade area (such as between the USA and Canada) and a customs union. The European Union, as the Rome Treaty points out, is a customs union covering all trade in goods, and because of Community Preference, the benefits to the UK of Commonwealth Preference ended, for Heath took it upon himself to agree to M Pompidou's four terms of entry: to Britain's acceptance of the common agricultural policy; to support France over the unanimity rule; to end the status of the pound and submit to the common monetary policy; and to tie Britain to Europe as a European nation. These terms were not disclosed by Heath when he reported to Parliament but were sent by the French Embassy to a handful of MPs, one of whom asked Heath if they were true. He was told that 'discussions between statesmen are held in confidence'. A Foreign Office memorandum, released some thirty years later under the Freedom of Information Act, has confirmed the truth of this report.

As for the European single market, globalisation and the multinational company make a nonsense of the concept. Multinational companies can operate from inside or outside the realm of European law and can influence the lawmakers in Brussels by threatening to move elsewhere where employment law is not so restrictive. Nor is size always better. Body explains how in civic terms this is leading to social breakdown and to unruly behaviour. The silent majority becomes sullen and ceases to vote, knowing that the media is being controlled by an interventionist government. Political parties feel they have to respond to the emotions of the masses rather than to reason. With big government goes more power and patronage. Consensus amongst journalists can be assured by a government machine which feeds the right message to busy journalists who are constrained by time; and television, being a one way form of communication, gives the viewing public little practise in political debate, unlike the public meeting of previous times. The European Union tries to create a homogeneous area by legislation so that the migrant worker within the EU will be governed by the same body of law, equally alien to Greek or Swede, each having to abandon his own traditions. It is unrealistic to invoke a vision of democracy or expect the 732 members of the European Parliament to reflect the concerns of 400 million diverse people.

Body concludes that people have first to seek power in order to acquire it. 'Francis Bacon, who dedicated his life to self-advancement, described the task as climbing up a winding stair.' Bigger political units tempt the ambitious up the higher greasy pole. Such historical figures as Caligula and Charlemagne, Napoleon and Hitler have tried to unite Europe but they only succeeded in bringing misery to millions whilst squandering its wealth. The present experiment is taking place at a time of mass communication, mass transport, mass production and mass marketing, leading to a mass, homogenised society. But a reaction is setting in.

As a newly elected Conservative MP in 1955, the youthful Richard Body, along with five others, urged an unsympathetic Anthony Eden that Britain should be represented at Messina so that we could take part in drafting the Rome Treaty. Having shown enthusiasm for the project he was invited to Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. After an evening's entertainment, a Commissioner confided in him that separately the Six (five of which had lost empires) were powerless but together they would have greater power than ever. It was this revelation, that the European Communities were not about peace but about power, which led him to give up his practice at the Bar to devote more time to opposing Britain's membership. This he has done faithfully ever since.

Reach for your Gun

Angela Ellis-Jones

Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses, Theodore Dalrymple, Ivan R Dee, 2005, £18.99.

There can be no more important holiday reading than this book for the well-known politician who

proclaimed that 'I love my country as it is, not as it was'. Theodore Dalrymple, the pseudonym of a Birmingham prison doctor whose weekly column in *The Spectator* graphically charted the degradation of the Lumpenproletariat, also wrote longer essays for the *City Journal*, published by the Manhattan Institute. These brilliant essays are now made available to a British readership, and should be required reading for anyone who wishes to understand the state of British society. They will also be an invaluable resource for historians in the future.

This highly intelligent and perceptive conservative writer never hesitates to 'tell it like it is'. Drawing in places on the unbelievably dysfunctional and depraved lives of his patients, he portrays the moral bankruptcy of a society for which the liberal fetishes of choice and freedom are the only guides to action. He notes that 'Where a reputation for intolerance is more feared than a reputation for vice itself, all manner of evil may be expected to flourish'. The root of the problem lies in the massive *trahison des clercs* which gathered momentum throughout the last century:

> What is good for the bohemian sooner or later becomes good for the unskilled worker, the unemployed, the welfare recipient — the very people most in need of boundaries to make their lives tolerable or allow them hope of improvement. The result is moral, spiritual, and emotional squalor, engendering fleeting pleasure and 'prolonged suffering'.

There is no area in which this moral anarchy has been more pronounced than that of sexual morality. For the modern liberal, the fact that behaviour is 'transgressive' is something to celebrate rather than condemn. But the author shows quite clearly how 'The sexual revolution has been above all a change in moral sensibility, in the direction of a thorough coarsening of feeling, thought and behaviour'. One wonders why so few people can see this.

One group of people who are intellectually challenged on this front is the present government, which has done more than any other to encourage teenage promiscuity. Strange, this, coming from a party led by a man who claims to be a devout Christian, but perhaps it falls into place when it is seen as part of a campaign to obliterate all vestiges of the past, and of earlier and more wholesome ways of thinking and behaving. As Dalrymple reminds us, in both *Brave New World* and *1984*, 'people find themselves cut off from the past as a matter of deliberate policy. The revolution that brought about the Brave New World, says Mustapha Mond, was "accompanied by a campaign against the past" — the closing of museums, the blowing up of historical monuments, the banning of old books. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.'

An essay entitled 'The Barbarians at the Gates of Paris' shows that the problem of cultural amorality, social anarchy and high rates of crime is not confined to Britain; the essay presciently provides a complete explanation for last year's riots. These problems exist to a greater or lesser extent in all western democracies and suggest that there is some common structural feature in all those societies which encourages the *nostalgie de la boue* sensibility. In a couple of places the author identifies mass democracy — which is inherently non-judgemental — as the culprit:

> In a democratic age, only the behaviour of the authorities is subject to public criticism; that of the people themselves, never. This is a modern version of Rousseau's doctrine: if it weren't for the authorities, the people would be good.

A person's reaction to this book could serve as a litmus test of whether he is a conservative or a liberal. (What on earth does the phrase 'liberal conservative' mean? These are two diametrically opposed views of the world.) To detest the evil crudity, irresponsibility, and hedonism of modern Britain is precisely what it means to be a conservative. Yet the New Model Conservative Party seems to think that it is impossible to win an election in Britain by being conservative. If this is true, then it is yet another chilling implication of mass democracy.

Like another excellent book *The Strange Death of Moral Britain* (Christie Davies), it is unfortunate that a book by a British author making important points about the state of Britain should have been published in America. Very few bookshops stock either title. More accessible paperbacks should be published for the British market.

Caverns of Literary Exploration

Jeremy Buxton

Caverns of Magic: Caves in Myth and Imagination, Hal G P Colebatch, Cybereditions, 2006, £14 at amazon.co.uk

A fascinating essay by occasional *Salisbury Review* contributor Hal Colebatch, *Caverns of Magic——Caves in Myth and Imagination,* is far more than a survey of caves in human history and mythology. It takes the reader down many subterranean passages of literature where fine imaginative writing will be recalled or discovered, whetting the appetite for more. Colebatch reveals a lifelong fascination with the caves of his

native Western Australia that he first encountered as a child, and helped explore in later years, as well as for the great British myths of Arthur, Merlin, Glastonbury, and the whole magic of The Hollow Hills. As we absorb his enthusiasm for the mysterious and alarming beauty of cave systems drawn from both life and literature, we can agree with him that 'speleology tends to bridge the gap between the so-called two cultures of science and art'.

Colebatch knows his subject well and imparts his scholarship deftly. He describes the significance of caves in Arthurian and other traditional mythologies, the unique nature of sea caves and cave fauna along with legends of troglodyte outlaws; there is a succinct history of cave tourism and of speleology; and a scholarly dissertation on the fate of the cave-dwelling Neanderthals, illuminated by such differing fictional perspectives as William Golding's *The Inheritors* and Count Nikolai Tolstoy's Celtic saga of Merlin, *The Coming of the King*, which is, Colebatch says 'a great Mythopoetic achievement which, unlike some, actually delivers the experience of "otherness" that it promises'.

One of the book's themes is the role of the cave as a treasure house of natural wonders and fictional hoards, and it is full of nuggets from literary classics and those traditional adventure stories that are today banished from far too many school and public libraries. Thus we learn of the importance of caves in several adventures of W E Johns' famous aviator Biggles, along with a little known but deeply evocative and believable short story of a cave-dwelling menace by Conan Doyle. This welcome disdain for literary snobbery is part of an eclectic intellectual curiosity that points to the links between the Morlocks of H G Wells's *The Time Machine* and Tolkien's creations of Mordor and Gollum. H Rider Haggard, scorned by the past literary establishment and ignored today, is given recognition through some powerful quotations from both *She* and *King Solomon's Mines* that demonstrate his ability to create vivid description and enduring myth. The reader will also be re-introduced to works like John Masefield's *The Box of Delights*, and Richard Church's *The Cave*. Colebatch slyly points out that John Buchan's *Prester John*, published in 1910, 'anticipated the anti-Western policies of the World Council of Churches' with a distorted version of Christianity as a mainspring of anti-White terrorism in southern Africa.

Modern political correctness, using Aborigines as an excuse, not only prevents access to the 'burial cave' at Yanchep in Western Australia that Colebatch visited as a child (though the skeletons of Aboriginal women once apparently thrown into it alive through a hole in the roof have all long been removed), but also removes its name and location from reference books, a blotting-out of memory. The romantically lost Namban Caves, among the most spectacular and fossil-rich in the world, within a couple of hours' drive of the city of Perth, were discovered nearly a century ago by senior government officials who had them sealed for protection. Today their location is forgotten and their entrances buried under desert sands.

The book concludes not with a standard plea for conservation, but rather for the preservation of something 'beautiful, ancient, mysterious and unsafe', to be enjoyed without the nightmare of futuristic 'solitude vouchers' which Michael Wharton raged against. Colebatch remarks: 'Perhaps there has been little cave-poetry because people who live poetry do not need to write it.'

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Sir Henry Wood and the Musicians' Chapel

Andrew Earis

Each year, after the 'Last Night of the Proms', a special Service takes place in the City of London to commemorate the life of the founder of the Promenade Concerts, Sir Henry Wood. In the Musicians' Chapel of St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate, just opposite the Old Bailey, can be found the tomb of Sir Henry alongside which has built up a host of other musical treasures.

Wood, born in 1869, was familiar with St Sepulchre's from an early age as his father sang tenor in the choir for several years. From the age of ten he was allowed to practise on the organ, 'the magnificent Renatus Harris organ in St Sepulchre's, with its wonderful diapasons and ten stops on the pedals, filled me with wonder and admiration'. In his biography, Wood tells of the

> comic little person who used to blow for my practices...I fear I often had a little joke on him by pulling out the heavy reeds at the end of a Bach fugue. He would come rushing round — with only his trousers on — dripping with perspiration. 'Three men's job this mornin', sir! Werf more'n a bob a hour!'

As a boy Wood studied organ, piano and harmony with the new organist, Edwin M Lott. However, he describes how during the 'farcical' lessons, Lott would disappear down the nave 'to listen', and frequently ended up in the Viaduct Tavern next door!

Henry Wood died in August 1944, after conducting the Promenade concerts for a full fifty years. His ashes were brought to St Sepulchre's, where his musical life had begun, and in 1945 they were interred in St Stephen's Chapel (later to become the Musicans' Chapel). It is fitting that the ashes of Sir Henry Wood should rest in the church which he loved from his childhood. Beneath the beautiful window dedicated to his memory is a mural tablet which bears the inscription:

> This window is dedicated to the memory of
> Sir Henry Wood, C.H.,
> Founder and for fifty years Conductor of
> THE PROMENADE CONCERTS
> 1895-1944.
> He opened the door to a new world
> of sense and feeling to millions of
> his fellows. He gave life to Music
> and he brought Music to the People.
> His ashes rest beneath.

The following year, a memorial window, designed by Gerald E R Smith, was unveiled in St Stephen's Chapel by the Lord Mayor of London. The service featured the choirs of St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, as well as the BBC Singers and BBC Chorus, supported by the London Symphony Orchestra. Leslie Woodgate conducted the BBC Chorus in William Walton's new composition *Where does the uttered music go?*, a setting of words written especially for the occasion by Masefield. Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* was performed by an ensemble of soloists, including several who had sung in the first performance, conducted by Wood himself in 1938. In his address, the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral said that 'from then on St Sepulchre's would be a central shrine for music and musicians'.

On learning of Wood's death in August 1944, the well known singer, Miss Granger Kerr, suggested a 'Carnation' fund (Sir Henry Wood invariably wore a red or white carnation in his button-hole when conducting) to which admirers of the conductor might like to subscribe one or more 'carnations' towards a permanent memorial such as a conductor's rostrum in the proposed new Concert Hall, planned to succeed the Queen's Hall which had been destroyed in the war. When the project of a new Concert Hall fell through, she decided to give the sum of £250, subscribed for this 'carnation tribute' to open a fund for a Musicians' Chapel in St Sepulchre's Church. This fund was augmented by many other donations as well as by a collection taken at a recital given at St Sepulchre's by Kathleen Ferrier, with Gerald Moore at the piano, in September, 1952.

The dedication of the Memorial Chapel by the Dean of St Paul's, W R Matthews, took place on Sunday January 2nd, 1955. It was attended by a large gathering of musicians, mostly composed of members of the Incorporated Society of Musicians who were holding their annual conference in London. The orchestra, also composed of Society members, was conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, whilst the BBC Singers, conducted by Leslie Woodgate, performed *The House of the Mind*, composed specially for the occasion by Herbert Howells.

Everything in the Chapel — the chairs, furniture and

over one hundred embroidered kneelers — has been given by, or in memory of, a musician. Around Henry Wood's tomb are windows in memory of the Australian opera singer Dame Nellie Melba, author Walter Carroll and the composer John Ireland. Against the west wall of the Chapel is the Musician's Book of Remembrance in which are now inscribed the names of over two thousand professional musicians. 'For some there be who have no memorial: who have perished as though they had never been.' Some of the most famous names in English music are recorded in the Book. But there are many whose influence on their generations was no less significant — those who 'found out musical tunes', whether as composers, performers or teachers of the art of music.

The legacy of Henry Wood continues to this day. The Book is now maintained by the 'Friends of the Musicians' Chapel', who also organise an annual Commemoration service, with music provided by each of the London music colleges, in which new names are inscribed in the Book. A recent project has been carried out to digitise the complete Book of Remembrance and this can be found on the web at www.musicianschapel.org.uk. Each of the names in the book can be searched alphabetically, and images of the corresponding pages in the Book can be viewed. It is well worth a visit.

Alfred Sherman

Alfred Sherman provoked strong reactions in those who met and worked with or against him, ranging all the way from affectionate admiration, through grudging respect, to outright character-demolition. The workings and sheer energy of a powerful mind gave him no peace, even towards the end of his life. His actions followed where his thinking led him. He was fearless, indefatigable and impatient with the cultivated Englishman's readiness to split the difference between sense and nonsense, in order to avoid unpleasantness. But he would listen carefully to counter-argument from people he respected. He had to affect a thick skin in the face of personal attacks. I once asked him, in the mid-seventies, whether he minded being labelled a 'fanatic' by his Tory critics. He shrugged and smiled: 'A fanatic is a man who does not share your views'.

Sherman did not parade his 'hinterland' for its own sake. Indeed, he was contemptuous of those who, in such critical times, 'know everything and do nothing'. He was lucky indeed to find, in Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher, two politicians who were prepared to listen to unfashionable ideas from such an unconventional adviser.

Sherman could never have worked within Whitehall, where the outside adviser's line — especially at a time of discontinuity — is so narrow: between clubbable conformism and consequent ineffectiveness on one side, and powerless isolation on the other. He was unrealistic about the enormous pressures of prime ministerial office on the incumbent. He did not realise how easy it is for a strong adviser to be gradually seen as a burden — even a threat — by his embattled client; how it is sometimes necessary to take the pressure off, and renew it later, at a more propitious moment. It was often difficult to apply such tactics in the conditions of almost permanent crisis between 1979 and 1985. But in the end the adviser must learn how to 'play the fish' or the cast will break.

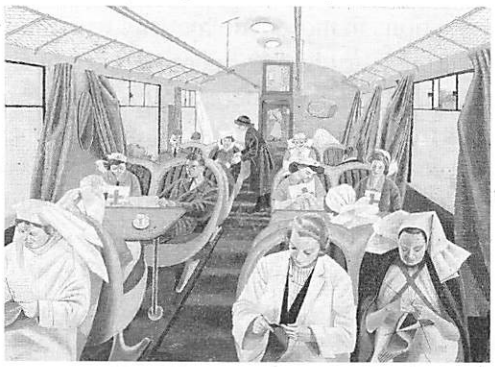
Alfred Sherman was an extraordinary political phenomenon. There had been colourful and controversial outsiders advising post-war governments and prime ministers before — Kaldor, Balogh, Rothschild, not to mention the many advisers in Number Ten since 1997. But Sherman's advice and influence were different. Instead of offering tactical advice to politicians who, *au fond*, had no idea what to do about Britain's sickness, he persuaded Joseph and, much later, Thatcher, that they would have only one chance, and that it would then be all or nothing. He was already setting the scene, years in advance and with no official position or backing, for a necessary revolution, eventually carried through with great difficulty by a government now widely accepted, for all its faults, as being the most effective since the war. It took many able people, and many years of unpopularity, to carry through such a transformation. But would it ever have started without Alfred Sherman? I think not. Without him, and to the great relief of the British establishment, 'wiser counsels would have prevailed'.

John Hoskyns

Modern British

Andrew Lambirth

For the last thirty years I have been interested in that group of British 20th century artists that includes such luminaries as Stanley Spencer, Graham Sutherland, Paul Nash and Henry Moore. My enthusiasm was first fired by a brilliant art teacher at school, a painter called Alan Clark who gave informal evening lectures on artists. From him I first heard of John Bratby, whom I was later to meet and write about, though I abandoned the Bratby biography I was commissioned to write, realizing that the discipline of biography was not my metier. I like to write about the art not the life, though it is usually necessary to give some personal outline to provide a context for the making of the art. Bratby led such a colourful life — and wrote it up himself so lavishly — that this was in danger of swamping his equally colourful but somewhat patchy art.



Standing by on Train 21 by Evelyn Dunbar

Sir John Rothenstein's volumes of *Modern English Painters* were a further inducement to study the period, but when I arrived at University in Nottingham to read art history, 20th century British was not on the syllabus, and there was no one to teach it. Nothing daunted, I pursued my interest on my own, and have learnt most over the intervening decades from spending increasing amounts of time looking at the art at first hand (unmediated by theory, thankfully), and talking to artists. Talking in the sense of chatting, but also in the more formal way of interviewing them. I shall always be grateful to *Artists and Illustrators Magazine* for encouraging me to seek out distinguished elderly artists to profile. In this way I published some of the last interviews with Edward Bawden, Cecil Collins, Richard Eurich and Ruskin Spear, and got to meet painters whose work I had long admired.

Modern British is now a boom area in terms of sales: auction records abound, and collectors seem determined to pay even more in the sale rooms than they are prepared to in commercial galleries. The world as we know has gone mad, and money and art have grown inextricably tangled. But my interest in the art has not been shaken, and if I can only rarely afford to buy the paintings by my favourite artists, I can at least collect books by them or about them or perhaps illustrated by them. That last category, the illustrated book, is however rapidly pricing itself beyond my means, as collectors and dealers snap up all remaining copies of prized items, in some cases to dismember them and sell on the separate lithographs once bound into the text.

Beautiful books are still being produced, however, though those that are hand-made with very limited print runs tend inevitably to be expensive. (We're talking a couple of hundred pounds a book here.) I have just been reading a sumptuous volume on Edward Bawden by Malcolm Yorke, with hundreds of beautifully-reproduced colour plates, some of them tipped-in. It's published by Simon Lawrence at his Fleece Press in Huddersfield. That was his 2005 project. This year he is producing a book on the graphic work of Barnett Freedman, a contemporary of Bawden, but sadly neglected. I can't wait to see what Simon Lawrence comes up with: it will be a pleasure to handle and look at, of that I have no doubt. And I hope to learn quite a bit about Barnett Freedman along the way.

Books come in all shapes and formats these days, from concertina fold-outs to boxed prints (I've even seen a bound brick posing as a book). Writers are likewise variously packaged and equally variously effective. We live in an age when academics are constrained to publish books in order to ensure continued tenure, and when it is fast becoming only the salaried who can afford to write books. Publishers welcome academic authors because they need not pay them, and academics need to write. They sometimes even choose subjects which you might wish to read about. The problem lies with the fact that very few of them can write at all interestingly. Dull subjects rendered duller are forgiveable; lively subjects rendered dull are not.

One artist who was part of the set that has long interested me is Evelyn Dunbar (1906-60). She was a contemporary of Ravilious, Spencer and John Nash, and a friend of Bawden and Barnett Freedman. She painted slowly and meticulously, and is best-known

for her work as a war artist. There has been very little written about her, and she is an unfamiliar figure even to specialists in the field. Now there is a book, entitled *Evelyn Dunbar: War and Country*, by Gill Clarke, published by Sansom & Company in large paperback at £24.95. Dr Gill Clarke is Director of the Centre for Biography and Education at the University of Southampton, and she has curated an exhibition of Dunbar's work at the St Barbe Museum & Art Gallery in Lymington. She is obviously keenly interested in this artist; the trouble is, her enthusiasm is not communicated through her book.

It might have helped if there were more illustrations. This book is uneasily sited between an art book and a biography and satisfies neither category. Nor is it interestingly-enough written to capture the reader's enthusiasm. The author frequently composes her paragraphs from a patchwork of quotes from other sources as if she doubts her own authority to write about the subject. There is much original material, from archives and new interviews, which is potentially fascinating if properly deployed. Lengthy quotes from Dunbar's letters to her friend, colleague and lover Charles Mahoney make us feel as if we are eaves-dropping, rather than bringing us closer to the subject. And Clarke's judgments are often odd. It's not helpful to compare Dunbar with Edward Bawden, an artist of a different order of achievement, and then mark her work down as 'less impressive'.

Academics often have trouble deciding where and at whom they are pitching their writing. *War and Country* feels and reads like a boring textbook, frequently disfigured as it is by a schoolmistressy habit of over-explaining. We do not need to be told that The Book of Job is 'one of the Old Testament wisdom books'. I wanted to be encouraged to take Dunbar seriously as an artist, to re-evaluate her, and warm to her paintings. I found instead that it was her work as an illustrator which appealed most, having an immediacy and charm which circumnavigated the ponderous prose in which the narrative of her art and life was encased. As a consequence I bought Dunbar and Mahoney's 1937 book *Gardeners' Choice*, which is here beside me as I write. It is absolutely charming, with full-page line drawings by Mahoney of 40 selected plants, and countless vignettes by Dunbar. These are full of life and humour and buoyant observation and show what sort of person Evelyn Dunbar was. I am grateful to Gill Clarke's book for making me look again at Dunbar's work; I just wish she'd done her subject justice and made the experience a more enjoyable one.

IN SHORT

The Use and Abuse of Terror: the Construction of a False Narrative on the Domestic Terror Threat, Peter Oborne, Centre for Policy Studies, 2006, £10.

Peter Oborne is a very angry man. He thinks that the war on terror has been hi-jacked by Tony Blair for his own narrow political purposes and used to promote or, at least, attempt to promote illiberal legislation. Oborne seems unsure whether this is being done to curry favour with populist newspapers or whether it is highly unpopular behaviour that is undermining trust in the government and the security services.

It is hard to disagree with Mr Oborne's main thesis: the hysterical, illiberal and senseless attempts to pile on legislation coupled with an apparently limitless incompetence displayed by the police, and even, the intelligence services, have frightened many people in this country more than the actual terrorist attacks. As Oborne does not say, we do have adequate legislation in this country to deal with the undoubted threat we are facing from external and internal foes (in this war they are hard to differentiate). What is lacking is the political will to implement it. There is no need to remove our last remaining liberties, just to make Tony Blair look tough.

There are problems with Oborne's opinions and attitudes: he is obsessed with the evils of Tony Blair. Doubtless the man *is* guilty of all the things he is accused of here, but Oborne should be more cautious about taking other politicians' accounts on trust, even if they show the Prime Minister in a bad light. Oborne is a fervent opponent of the Iraqi war and resentful of American superiority in the world. His attitudes lead him into misjudging the situation on several occasions: many of the attacks (for instance the ones in Kenya and Tanzania) happened some time before 9/11, let alone the Iraqi war. Nor is he particularly anxious to discuss the fact that the UK has been known by most of our allies, including the French security services, as Londonistan for much longer than the Iraqi war. While

the narrative Oborne deals with is every bit as suspect as he makes out, there is a background to it all, that awaits its many future analysts.

Helen Szamuely

The Wonga Coup, Adam Roberts, Profile Publishing, 2006, £9.99.

Real life is always stranger than fiction and the story behind this abortive coup in Equatorial Guinea proves to be more gripping than Frederick Forsyth's *Dogs of War* which was rumoured to have been based on a coup in which he took part. Adam Roberts takes you behind the sensational tabloid accounts of the time with their emphasis on the peripheral players like Mark Thatcher, Peter Mandelson and Lord Archer to the murky world of mercenaries, crooked American banks and the other ills which afflict Africa. Equatorial Guinea was known in colonial (Spanish) times as Death's waiting room and then as the Dachau of Africa. Its dictator Macias, probably a cannibal, ran a regime which even by African standards was a byword for brutality and corruption. A third of the population fled or were killed and thousands were massacred. If money was short he took hostages and when a Soviet plane crashed into a mountain, Macias refused to release any bodies until compensation was paid for damage to the mountain. It was no better under his nephew, Obiang. However with the discovery of oil in the early nineties greedy companies flocked to Equatorial Guinea in search of revenues of sixty million dollars a month

Simon Mann was an ex-SAS man prominent in Angola's civil war which was a battle ground for oil and diamonds where he ran Executive Outcomes, a private security firm with close links to semi-official counter-terrorism hit squads in South Africa. He subsequently took South African citizenship on condition that he would not take part in any more mercenary adventures. Equatorial Guinea proved to be irresistible and the plotters planned to install Severo Moto, an exiled politician living in Madrid. The plotters were not only indiscreet and arrogant but they believed that Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister, would support them. Those arrested in Zimbabwe were lucky; imprisonment in Equatorial Guinea was a lingering death sentence. What emerges most strikingly from this account is the lack of any pity or sympathy for ordinary Africans. Nowhere was it suggested that the vast oil revenues might be used to raise standards of living. Obiang was Rigg's Bank's largest client and stole oil revenues to stash in over sixty accounts. The bank was aware of the human rights problem but tried to hide the wealth in offshore corporations. The leaders of the coup had no sympathy for the black foot-soldiers, many of whom were imprisoned in Equatorial Guinea. Most nauseating of all when Obiang visited Washington in Condoleeza Rice greeted him: 'You are a good friend and we welcome you.' Perhaps the only positive outcome was that four African countries shared intelligence and South Africa has shown a willingness to crack down on mercenaries.

Merrie Cave

Penguin Special: The Life and Times of Allen Lane, Jeremy Lewis, Penguin, 2006, £9.99.

Occasionally somebody has a bright idea and is able to translate it into action and make a fortune. The story goes that Allen Lane needed something to read on Exeter station, only finding trash fiction in paperback, and dreamed up a series that would not cost more than a packet of cigarettes. Publishing in the thirties was a gentleman's occupation conducted in dingy Georgian houses with the work mainly done by underpaid spinster ladies. Most of his publishing colleagues never thought his idea would work and derided it until it became such a success. He had dared to suggest that there was a new market then met by Woolworths, the twopenny libraries and the chain stores. Lane was not discouraged for he did not find the Establishment, publishing or otherwise, congenial. He had not been to university and was not an intellectual but a shrewd businessman with a sixth sense of good 'sellers'. He grasped that Britain was experiencing a period of rapid and social cultural change, for education was expanding along with increased leisure, producing a hunger for affordable books which had hitherto been the preserve of the prosperous classes. Like the BBC (particularly the Third Programme) and the Sunday papers, Penguins became a national institution, an essential part of education for those of us growing up in the forties and fifties. The books were a godsend in the war enlivening tedious hours in air raid shelters and on slow trains. From the start Lane insisted on elegant design: 'good design is no more expensive than bad'. Of course Penguins and Pelicans were leftwards leaning but they only reflected the Butskellite consensus of the time. Jeremy Lewis's book is full of interest on every page and evokes the literary figures of past decades, the Lady Chatterley trial and the enormous influence of the books, notably their part in alerting the general public to the threat of Nazi Germany.

Merrie Cave

Demonstrable Failures

Fresh allegations of routine torture at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq made a brief appearance in the western media in September. Visitors to the jail reported screams 'lasting a long time' coming from the cell blocks where terrorist suspects were held. 'I heard shouting, like someone had a hot iron on their body, screams. The officer said they were just screaming by themselves. I was hearing the screams throughout the visit.' (*Daily Telegraph*)

In the rest of the jail the stench of excrement is described as overpowering. Inmates are being kept crammed four to six in cells measuring 15ft by 12ft and only allowed out for twenty minutes a day. The cells are smeared with filth. The air conditioning necessary in the heat and enjoyed by the guards in their own quarters, appears to have been deliberately switched off in the cell blocks. Rations, which used to include chicken and milk, have been restricted to rice and water.

Mass executions, which were suspended when the American took over the jail, have been resumed. In September twenty seven prisoners, twenty six men and one woman, were hanged on the same day. Such cruelty (though not as bad as under Sadaam Hussein when live prisoners were fed into industrial shredders) sparked world wide condemnation. There were widespread marches in the world's capitals, and religious leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope, added their voices to the protests.

Except there haven't been any protests, little news coverage and certainly not the months and months of reportage, especially on the BBC, that followed accusations of American abuses in Abu Ghraib. So why the silence? Control of the prison passed from the Americans to the Iraqi authorities in September. Before that, with the exception of the few well publicised incidents when the Americans first took over the jail after the invasion, prisoners at Abu Ghraib had been well treated by their US captors. So well that many prisoners, hearing the Americans were leaving and the Iraqis taking over, begged the Americans to take them with them.

Since the Americans are no longer directly involved this news story is of no value to the western liberal media. They are only interested in American acts of torture or human rights abuse. They defend this by saying that as only the Americans claim a superior moral culture they alone can be criticised. (This leads to the absurd conclusion that while the Americans are the only morally responsible people in the world they are, at the same time, uniquely wicked.)

Such a view has the advantage of avoiding criticising third world countries and thus seeming illiberal. If other countries ill treat their citizens it is because they are either the victims of American oppression or they do not know any better. It is why Iraqi torture in Abu Ghraib, like the horrific religious killings on the streets of Baghdad, are presented in the media as a failure of American policy. They are seldom condemned for what they are, the result of a widespread culture of gangsterism in the Middle East. The latter is a product of the grotesque failings of Arab, not American society.

Myles Harris

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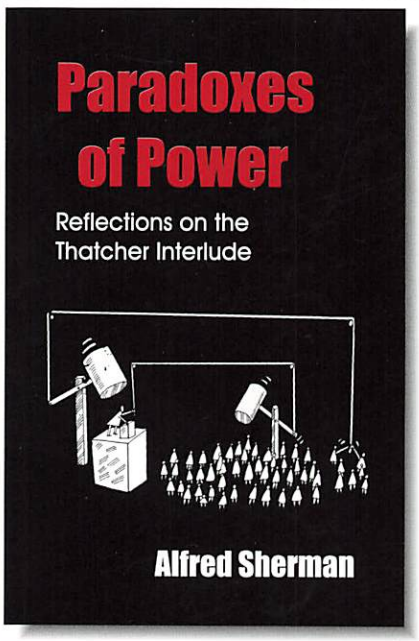
Sir Alfred Sherman 1919-2006

Sir Alfred Sherman,
Lady Thatcher and
Alexander Deane
at the launch of
Paradoxes of Power
Centre for Policy Studies,
27 July 2005.

In her speech, Lady Thatcher declared:
"We could never have defeated socialism if it hadn't been for Sir Alfred."



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"Alfred Sherman – the enfant terrible and éminence grise of the Conservative Party." *Times*

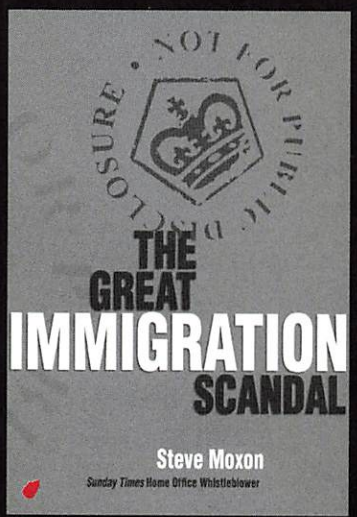
"Supplied much of the drive for Keith Joseph to turn back the tide of collectivism." *Guardian*

"Sherman made a crucial and beneficent contribution to modern Britain." *Independent*

This book examines the origins and development of 'Thatcherism', but concludes that the post-war consensus remains largely unscathed — 'we are back to where we started'.

ISBN 1845400143, 184 pp. (hbk.) ~~£17.95/$34.90~~ **£9.95**

Steve Moxon



Steve Moxon, *The Great Immigration Scanda*
ISBN 184540078X, 276pp. (pbk.), October 2006, ~~£8.95/$17.90~~ **£5.9**

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