

The
Salisbury Review
The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



"They're going to reimburse us all in kind."

The Great Savings Hijack

**The Madness of
Crowds**
Theodore Dalrymple

**Scrambling for
the Seabed**
Russell Lewis

**Curse You Mr
Blair**
Christie Davies

**Monkey
Business**
Alexander Boot

**Poppies in
Helmand**
Charles Bennett

**A Eugenics
Revival?**
David Ashton

Winter 2008

Vol. 27 No.2

£4.99 ISSN 0265-4881



£4.99

0 2 6 5 4 8 8 1

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The Salisbury Review

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What do we owe animals? Eating our (non-human) friends is, after all, a complicated matter. Being conscious, members of other species endure suffering, and are aware of their existence — which implies that they can imagine a future. According to Darwin, non-human species possess these attributes in varying degrees, from strongly among close relatives of *Homo sapiens* (such as apes) to weakly among distant ones (such as plankton).

But should we infer from this that they deserve rights? Peter Singer believes so and he bases his morality on the principle of equal consideration of equal interests. Singer asserts that if a non-human can somehow be shown to have greater interests than a mentally retarded or immature human — such as a foetus, an infant, or a severely disabled person, greater sympathy should be directed at the non-human, if we are forced to choose. Singer's inference is logical, but his premise is obnoxious. It is an attempt to destabilise and overthrow the foundation on which our morality rests. This foundation is a belief in human exceptionalism. The distinctions between humans and non-human animals are differences not just of degree but of kind. Humans are acutely self-conscious; being members of a moral community, in which duty and practical reason are exchanged through reciprocity, we have moral experiences. Our advanced facility with language enables the creation of culture and art. We laugh, sing and grieve by inheriting rituals and innovating upon them. Other animals, even our closest relatives, are incapable of doing these things. If this is 'Speciesism', a term coined by Richard Ryder but popularized by Singer, let us rejoice in it.

If, then, we feel sympathy for animals, it is not fellow-feeling that motivates us but a combination of distaste for suffering in sentient beings, and our own ingrained piety. What we owe animals is therefore not some spurious form of justice — there is no logical link between interests and rights — but compassion. This should be granted not through rights (which animals cannot defend themselves), but limited protections — a mechanism for ring-fencing those incapable of bearing rights.

Alas, as Alexander Boot argues, Singer's Great Ape Project, which invokes utilitarian reasoning to grant our

near relatives rights, is soon to be enacted as law in Spain (the country of bull-fighting and donkey-throwing). There is no end of absurd impracticalities to consider but the real threat is moral. Utilitarianism is a kind of hollowing-out process: it reduces humanity to a checklist of competences and subtracts from us that which makes our species special. And it apportions merit to actions according to a crude felicific calculus that ought to have died with Jeremy Bentham. Singer's eminence says much more about the degraded, debased view of humanity gripping the Western imagination than it does about the man himself.

The resulting anxiety has many political offshoots. One is the embarrassing mess that has been made of wars fought in the name of the West. In Afghanistan today, as Charles Bennett explains, hopes for democracy and the rule of law — two principally Western inventions — are receding. Seven years after the Taleban were overthrown, corruption has flowered in tandem with a rampant narcotics trade.

Closer to home, civic society is virtually defined by the crisis of authority afflicting our most sacred institutions — whether it be the family as Patricia Morgan argues, the monarchy as A W Purdue notes, or our remaining few citadels of learning as Alistair Miller describes in his article on private schools. They fight for survival in the shadow of an unprecedented financial crisis (see the exceptionally clear explanation of the crisis by Eamonn Butler in one of our website specials). As Theodore Dalrymple explains, our parents knew that what you borrow now, you pay back later. A generation has grown up thinking otherwise, so that indebtedness is now the central economic fact of our times. Fiscal conservatism has never been more needed.

Is there salvation in science? Russell Lewis explains how, at the bottom of the seas, there lies a glimpse of our future resources. The deeper we dig, the more encouragement we find. It's just a question of who gets there first. Perhaps it will be those of best breeding. Stripped of superstition, eugenics is making a comeback, as David Ashton shows. Eliminating disabilities from potential victims should not be confused with victimising or eliminating humans with disabilities. If it is compassionate to treat illness, it is compassionate to prevent its occurrence. Science may soon allow this. There's hope yet.

Curse You, Mr Blair

Christie Davies

The party is over. The British economy had known 16 years of uninterrupted growth and low and stable unemployment and inflation. Now, unhappy days are here again — falling production and incomes and banks and the stock market collapsing. Soon we shall see a recession with massive unemployment.

It is tempting to blame Prime Minister Brown but he could hardly have foreseen the higher cost of imported oil and gas and the rise in food prices that first caused inflation and then inhibited interest rate cuts. Nor could he have foreseen that the reckless lending on mortgages in America to those who could never repay, to satisfy the political pressure from Carter and then Clinton for near-paupers and ethnic minorities to be able to own their own houses. America's stolen chickens have come home to roost, setting off crises that have hit banks all over Europe and in America as well as in Britain. It would be as unjust to blame Brown for the downturn as it was absurd to give him credit for a boom that began in the early 1990s under the Conservatives and continued because cheap Chinese imports had replaced the products of the old, trade-union burdened industries closed down by Mrs Thatcher. It also transferred our pollution and carbon dioxide emissions to China, where they have become greater. Mr Brown's virtues were entirely negative; he lacked the far-left recklessness of his Labour predecessors and the Bank of England was independent.

It is a measure of the trivialisation of British politics that the scribblers in the press tell us that Labour could still have won the next election under the well-spun, debonair, charming Mr Blair and can do so if his clone Milliband became leader but not with the dour Brown in charge. How could that change our bleak economic reality? Many of our present difficulties are the fault of the duplicitous Blair, the worst Prime Minister of the twentieth century who sacrificed Britain's interests to those of the European Union and George Bush. Brown has inherited the consequences of Blair's misjudgements much as the unfortunate Neville Chamberlain, another ex-Chancellor, was stuck with Baldwin's failure to rearm.

Now that our reserves of oil and gas are running out, as they were bound to do, importing them transfers our wealth to Russia and to the Muslims of the Middle East. We should ask, 'How many nuclear power stations did Mr Blair build?' Answer, none. He provided plans and promises but he was too afraid of the greenists and the environmental lobby to do what was right and not only

replace but expand immediately the number of nuclear based electricity generators. The supply of electricity from nuclear energy is continuous and reliable and is necessary not only to ensure regular energy supplies but for our very independence. France, Japan and Finland, who have no indigenous energy sources, have all gone nuclear without ill effect. Why not Britain? The answer is Blair. In addition, for appearances' sake, Blair recklessly signed international agreements to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions, even though he has deprived us of the only real means to get anywhere near these absurd targets; the latest one is 80 per cent less emissions. We are to return to the coal of the nineteenth century and the windmills, of an even earlier time. Not just recession but regression. When we are forced to build new nuclear plants, we will be forced to hire French contractors and nuclear engineers because we lost ours during the long gap when none were built and our educational system, ruined by egalitarianism, will not be able to produce replacements

We should have known Blair was a disaster when he yelled at us at the beginning that he stood for Education! Education! Education! What we got was not a more effective system producing numerate people with economically productive skills and a willingness to use them but a useless rabble with meaningless pieces of paper who contribute nothing. No wonder productivity levels are much higher in France and Germany than in Britain. Mr Blair's education spending was a double waste, not only was it a pointless squandering of tax-payers' money but also the locking out of the labour force of those conscripted or bribed into the educational system. Many of them could only have taken on unskilled jobs because they lack innate ability but, contrary to the absurd views of those who oppose selective schools and seek ever to raise the school leaving age, our service industries need a great deal of unskilled labour. At present much of this work is done by unwanted and often illegal immigrants. These simple jobs could be done as they were in the past by fifteen year olds who do not benefit from staying in school and those drifting on to worthless qualifications at our expense. A half of those who start apprenticeships never complete them because they are too demanding; idle schools produce idle 'prentices. The entire economy has been run on the basis of importing immigrants to replace an important part of our labour force. We are often told that immigrants 'do the jobs that the local people do not

want to do'. The indigenous drifters should have been forced to do them by the pressures of the market place and the immigrants should have stayed at home. Our obsessive egalitarians have also failed to notice that such a policy would also have reduced the income gap between rich and poor, since immigration always lowers the relative incomes of the unskilled in the country to which they go and leads the latter both to borrow more and to rely more heavily on welfare. House prices and rents soared, in part, because the extra immigrants had to be housed somewhere. The indigenous population either took on ever greater mortgage debts they could never repay or used the rise in the value of their houses as unstable collateral for excessive borrowing. Now the bubble has collapsed.

Blair talked nonsense about 'investing in people' but failed to see that it had an 'opportunity cost' in terms of reducing savings and investment elsewhere which would have truly benefited the economy. Take money away from taxpayers and they will borrow more heavily to maintain their standard of living, which is the cause of our present troubles. Take earnings away from companies and they will spend less on investment and training. No wonder productivity levels are low. Britain's long run of steady growth under Blair was based entirely on the industrious working excessively long hours; they were ever more intensively exploited in order to pay for tax-funded state spending.

Blair was ever happy to give away the wealth of the British people in order that he could prance on the international stage. He gave away a large part of our rebate from Europe and was unable to reform an EU system that takes from the honest and gives to the corrupt, that subsidizes French agriculture at our expense and has thwarted the development of food exporting countries outside the EU that could have reduced the surge in food prices. Blair took us into the Iraq war on the basis of fake documentation — how much did that cost the British economy? There is no such thing as a free war. Where is the Iraqi oil that would have kept fuel prices lower? Why did British firms not get a fair share of contracts for rebuilding Iraq? It is because Blair's relationship with Bush was based on his wish to look important on television as the monkey sitting on the American organ grinder's machine. He was unable to extract economic benefits from the Americans as the price of his support. He loved crusades and not just this one but the so called forgiveness of African debts. Why could the interest payments and the paying back not have been indefinitely but conditionally suspended? That would have relieved their burden but leave Britain with leverage — we rather than the Chinese could have been their favoured extractor of local minerals. But Blair cared nothing for his own people. He would sell

us down the river for a gesture and he did. In the good times he could get away with it but now the good times are gone and we are paying for his foolery.

Brown's Conservative successor will still be lumbered with all Blair's disasters. The task of educating fewer but better people will be obstructed by a self-interested and egalitarian bureaucracy. They will block the creation of elite technical and commercial universities that are open only to the most able and the most numerate and for whose graduates all loans would be cancelled provided they work in Britain. They will also prevent the creation of new highly selective grammar schools to feed these universities.

As unemployment rises, the crime rate will rise, much as it did during the trade cycles of the nineteenth century. During the downturn it is the least able and least reliable workers who will be laid off first. With time on their hands and lower incomes they will turn to burglary and theft. Be prepared for the new wave of break-ins, for seeing your car being dismantled outside your own house and being unable to intervene because you might lose your life, or for having your wallet snatched by someone who ought to be in the extra gaols Mr Blair failed to build. The present activities of the violent which are largely the result of too much alcohol and fights over who controls the drug trade will be placed in the service of acquisitive crime. The criminal classes have never gone away and the government figures on crime underestimate its prevalence. Now, though, there will be a crime wave so high that even the wildest of the civil servants' spinners will not be able to deny it. Many of the new criminals will be the children of today's immigrants for a high proportion of births in Britain are to foreign-born mothers. The parents may be hard working and willing to take on menial jobs but their children will have acquired idle habits and a belief in social mobility without effort from the educational system and arrogance from Blair's fondness for multi-culturalism. They will see theft as a revenge for their failures. Prepare not just for crime but for racial conflicts, the inevitable consequence of Blairism.

The coming recession will be a time not only of economic collapse but of social crisis. The British people will come to loathe the New Labour governments who ruined us. During a period when the world economy expanded and New Labour were able to be re-elected, they destroyed the social order that would have enabled the country to survive the recession, if not comfortably but at least peaceably, as it had done in past recessions. Curse you, Blair. You betrayed us.

Christie Davies is the author of The Strange Death of Moral Britain.

God and the Big Bang

Brian Ridley

There are three sorts of creationist: one who believes that creation has been comprehensively described by the sacred texts; one who believes that creation can be comprehensively described scientifically; and one who believes that both God and science are necessary to provide a comprehensive description. It is difficult to see how anyone can take the first belief seriously. Sacred texts describe a created world complete for all time, a static world, a world without change. But the evidence of change is everywhere, and where there is change we wonder about its cause. Volcanoes appear, mountains become eroded, fertile land becomes desert. Why? No sacred text, written centuries ago, can possibly be comprehensive. If there is a Creator, then the world is by no means a changeless one; it is one crying out for study. So the third option is the more coherent one if one wishes to understand what the Creator has created.

The second belief dispenses with God entirely. Francis Bacon long ago advised the first scientists to exclude God from the laboratory, and his excellent advice has been followed ever since. As a consequence we have a science absolutely decoupled from theology. Napoleon, wondering about the role of God in classical mechanics, was told by Laplace that there was no need for that hypothesis. Since then, geology has alerted us to an evolution of the earth over an immense, unimaginable period of time. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution describes how living forms have changed over that same immense, unimaginable time, to yield the flora and fauna of the present epoch. Astronomy has revealed that the universe itself is evolving and has been evolving over an even vaster period of time; and cosmology currently claims to provide a comprehensive description of this grand evolution, from the beginning to the present, in the Big Bang theory. Today, science's description of creation is embodied in the theories of Darwin and the Big Bang. But can God be dispensed with? Will there ever be a need for that hypothesis? The answers to these questions will be 'Yes' and 'No' respectively, only if a purely physico-chemical account of the origin of life and an intelligible account of the origin of the Big Bang can be given. Neither is available at the present time. Given the fact that life exists on our planet, Darwinian evolution provides an intelligible and rational explanation of what we observe today. Given the data that astronomy provides, the Big

Bang does the same. But neither theory explains what is given — the origin of life, the origin of matter.

Let us leave the problem of life to the molecular biologists in their attempts to discover replicating molecules in the laboratory equivalent of the notorious primeval soup, and ask whether the Big Bang continues to give us a satisfactory account of the cosmos as we experience it today. That experience becomes more technical each year. The unaided eye shows us the planets, the stars and some nebosity. Our increasingly sophisticated instruments record data from the furthest reaches of the universe across the whole electromagnetic spectrum, from radio waves to X-rays. Whatever emits radiation that we can detect constitutes the observable universe. What we infer from all these measurements is another matter. It must be drawn from the theories of fundamental physics.

It must be said that in the decades at the end of the twentieth century, fundamental physics appeared to be in danger of becoming a kind of mathematical theology, a discipline divorced from the rigour of empirical testing. It seemed to some of us who work in fields other than particle physics and cosmology that a divine madness had taken hold of the best minds in those fields. While the rest of the physics community potted on in its mundane attempts to understand the quantum world and its manifestation in condensed matter, ravings were heard preaching the existence of ten and more dimensions along with multiple universes, all in the absence of observational evidence. Regarding the elementary particles as tiny strings stimulated an impressive effusion of mathematical models that called for more than the homely four dimensions of space-time, and more than one unique universe. In the process some of the ideas of string theory may yet turn out to be relevant, but string theory's failure to propose any experiment whereby its claims could be verified or falsified makes it bear not a little resemblance to theology. Physics is an empirical science, a fact that is perhaps easily forgotten, given the non-intuitive properties of nature and hence the need for very sophisticated mathematics.

It is not enough to have mathematical laws — they must be mutually consistent. At the present time this is far from being the case. On the one hand we have quantum theory that, in spite of the utterly non-intuitive phenomena exhibited by atoms and sub-atomic particles

that it describes, and its demolition of our primitive classical ideas of dynamics, yields highly precise results that agree with observation. The accuracy can be as high as measuring the distance between London and New York to within the thickness of a human hair. On the other hand we have Einstein's general theory of relativity, which also agrees with observation and is the basis of our attempts to understand the large-scale properties of our universe. These two theories, quantum theory and general relativity, are nothing to do with one another, but both lay claim to generality. It is one of the urgent tasks of theoretical physics to reconcile them within an overarching theory. Such a theory would be called quantum gravity.

Without a theory of quantum gravity cosmology is inevitably hampered, but seriously so only in the case of a universe so small that quantum gravitational effects cannot be ignored. But there are plenty of large-scale phenomena that reveal mysteries that seem to have little to do with quantum effects, and it is with these that the Big Bang theory is most troubled.

What are these mysteries? Fortunately they can be understood in terms of elementary physics. Edwin Hubble showed that on the largest scale the light from distant galaxies was shifted toward the red end of the spectrum, the amount of shift being proportional to the distance. Interpreted in terms of classical physics as the Doppler shift — the lowering of frequency of the siren as the ambulance passes — it meant that galaxies were receding; interpreted in terms of general relativity, space itself was expanding, so that the distance between galaxies was forever growing. Enter the Big Bang. In the beginning, matter/energy, space and time were explosively created, with, in the Newtonian picture, the matter having the higher velocities becoming more distant with only gravity to slow down the expansion. There are then two scenarios. If the initial velocity is big enough, the expansion will go on forever, though always slowed down by gravity. If the velocity is too small, gravity will eventually halt the expansion and replace it with a contraction. In both cases gravity works against expansion. The rate of expansion should be gradually slowing down. The first mystery is associated with the discovery that the expansion is accelerating, albeit slowly. There is nothing in physics to account for this. It suggests the existence of a new force that opposes gravity. It has been called dark energy.

Stars in a galaxy like our Milky Way move in orbits around the centre of galactic mass like planets around the sun. Newton's inverse-square law of gravitation should describe the orbital motion accurately, but there are discrepancies. The discrepancies can be explained by assuming that the galaxy contains more

mass than is estimated from its visible components, but what this dark matter may be is not known. To say it may consist of WIMPs (Weakly-Interacting Matter Particles) scarcely helps.

The third mystery is associated with the cosmic background radiation (CBR). This radiation is in the microwave region of the electromagnetic spectrum and is incident on the earth from all directions. Its spectrum has exactly the form of radiation emitted by a body at a temperature of just 2.7 degrees above absolute zero. It is one of the triumphs of the Big Bang that the existence of such a radiation was predicted as a consequence of the capture of electrons by protons to form the earliest hydrogen atoms. In fact the CBR is the remnant of the X-rays emitted by that capture, but red-shifted into the microwave region. The mystery appears when the temperature of the radiation is measured as a function of direction of the incoming beams. In no matter what direction one looks the temperature is the same to better than one part in one hundred thousand. This means that thermal equilibrium has been established in locations too widely separated for heat to travel between them in the time available.

Enter inflation. To resolve the paradox, inflation theory postulates that a sudden huge expansion occurred shortly after the universe was born. Once this expansion was over, our universe consisted of locations that were once close together, close enough to share the same temperature, and hence the uniformity of the temperature of the CBR. This was a neat solution, but the mechanism of such a rapid expansion is problematic, to say the least. Moreover, one would expect such a sudden expansion to generate gravitational waves whose effects should have been seen, but there is no sign of this. The theory goes on to predict the existence in the blown up universe of random fluctuations of matter and energy, these being needed to initiate galaxy formation. This should be reflected in tiny temperature fluctuations, and these, in fact, are observed in the CBR. The magnitude of these fluctuations should exhibit the famous bell-curve distribution if they occurred in a truly random fashion, but there is some evidence that the actual curve is skewed, so that there are more cold spots than hot spots. This and other worries associated with the subtle properties of CBR are raising doubts about the Big Bang plus inflation in spite of the theory's many successes. Refinements of the measurement techniques may dissipate all these doubts. On the other hand they may ultimately force existing inflation theory to be modified or abandoned.

If the Big Bang has to leave the stage there are theories of cyclic universes waiting in the wings. The late Fred Hoyle, who derisively coined the term Big Bang in

the first place, has set forth, along with Burbidge and Narlikar, *A Different Approach to Cosmology*. In their book they describe a quasi-steady-state universe which is oscillatory and continues forever. Unlike the Big Bang theory, which has a one-off matter-creating event, in the quasi-steady-state universe matter creation is continuous. And there are other theories.

The good thing is that all theory is now being subjected to increasingly powerful experimental tests. Those physicists and engineers who view this cosmic drama professionally from afar can congratulate themselves for their technological innovations that make these crucial experiments possible. They have

provided the means for keeping physics honest, besides acting as a powerful incentive for cosmology to refrain from being a sort of mathematical theology. Naturally, they have nothing to say about God. Nevertheless, one can't help feeling that the need for 'that hypothesis' may not have totally disappeared. As Einstein remarked 'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.' Which made him a creationist of the third sort.

Brian Ridley is Emeritus Professor of Physics at Essex University

Flower Arranging in Helmand:

Counter-Narcotics in Helmand: large scale flower-arranging or a real solution?

Charles Bennett

Counter-narcotics efforts in Helmand have so far been a failure. Although some local success has been achieved elsewhere in the country, much of this has been temporary, and will continue to be so unless the underlying causes of the problem are dealt with. Law enforcement, including poppy eradication, does have a role but on its own can never succeed. The aims of attempts at eradication so far, and the difficulties associated with it, are often misunderstood and the results on the ground have often been minimal or even counter-productive.

In Helmand and some other parts of southern Afghanistan links have developed between the Taleban fighters and narcotics, initially in cross-border smuggling co-operation (especially with the Baluchis, who are the key to it) and more recently in Taleban 'tax-gathering', whether as a tithe of the crop, or from other parts of the processing and trading procedure. This means that the insurgency can, as things stand, be largely self-supporting financially as long as the opium poppy crop prospers.

However, even in Helmand to a large extent, and elsewhere entirely, the threat posed by the illegal narcotics trade is also from its involvement in the wholesale corruption of government officials and the police (including many of those notionally involved in Counter-Narcotics), rendering government ineffective, through its subversion of the entire economy and the stifling of any legitimate economic development, and also through the growth of the heroin and opium addiction problem in Afghanistan itself, as a by-product

of the huge export business.

In recent years a large proportion of the opium crop has been processed into heroin within Afghanistan, whereas in earlier years most was exported in its raw state. This does not give the poppy farmers an increased income but does mean that narco-criminals within Afghanistan can retain far more of the profit involved and grow even more powerful. This is even more significant as not only the drug-thugs and warlords benefit, but so too do the Taleban since they have become more directly involved in profiting from the narcotics business.

The corruption of government officials involved has not been tackled effectively at all. Many of those are well known and range from a step-brother of the President himself downwards, through the nominal head of the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics in Helmand (who himself grows opium, and has a daughter married to the son of a leading drug-dealer in the Province), to officials at low levels, and of course also involves many Afghan National Police officers at all levels. Some senior ANP officers who have tried to do their duty (notably at Kabul airport) have suffered for their pains. The CNPA (Counter-Narcotics Police), although some elements have a justifiably good reputation, is far from immune to this problem.

An anti-corruption drive is an essential part of any effective counter-narcotics campaign, with the sacking of those known to be involved and the charging and conviction of those who can be brought to court. A strengthening of the Counter-Narcotics Police and

Judiciary is therefore necessary and this would need greatly increased foreign involvement at an executive and not just at an advisory level in this area in the short term at least. Without this there is no prospect of success in counter-narcotics or in creating a credible and effective government, nor one that is capable of defeating the insurgency. As things stand, the credibility not only of the Afghan Government but of its western allies is fatally damaged by a failure to act, as foreigners are seen to be co-operating with officials and others well known for their criminal involvement.

There has been, and can be, no attempt to deal with the opium poppy problem through eradication alone.

The scale of the problem makes this impossible; between opium on the one hand and foreign aid on the other there is little else left of the Afghan economy. Eradication has been intended to introduce an element of risk into farmers' decisions to grow poppies, in the hope that when weighing up all the factors involved, they will gradually abandon the crop. Unfortunately in Helmand this has been anything but the case, production having roughly quadrupled since the invasion. The crop has increased so much that

sometimes it seems that the only limitation in its growth is the amount of arable land available: any further increase would probably require the use of window boxes in urban areas.

Eradication has been in effect sabotaged by corruption, and has come to be seen by much of Helmand's population as merely another way in which government officials and the police can extort more money from farmers. The rich and powerful are able to avoid or bribe their way out of being hit significantly and only those unable or unwilling to do so are the convenient scapegoats. This is notably the case with the Nad Ali District and the Marja Sub-District, where a large proportion of the Province's opium production comes from, and where Helmand's former police chief ('ARJ') (and his son, a member of parliament), hold sway. Although some reports were initially put out that 'ARJ's' crops had been seriously hit this year this does not seem to have been the case, although this has been pressed for by many people for the last two years at least. The western (mainly American) advisers to

the Poppy Eradication Force have done their best, but have no authority over the targeting of eradication: some locals, unable to believe that westerners could be present and not be in charge, decided that they must be involved with the corruption too.

Some improvement has occurred this year in Helmand, even with Governor-Led Eradication (locally organised efforts that have in previous years been a fraudulent farce) but not nearly enough either to change popular perception of the whole affair or to have a significant impact on the size of the crop or on farmers' future intentions. As in other ways, the new Governor has given ground for renewed hope in these matters,

and could achieve a lot if he is properly supported by his own Government and by the British and other westerners.

Because farmers are often in debt and dependent on a large cash crop to pay off either landlords or opium dealers (who advance loans for the crop), and in the absence of alternatives, those who do have their crops eradicated may be even more likely to plant again, as they will be even more in debt and see no other way of paying it off. Some are also under other

forms of pressure to plant

opium. Many Mullahs, who even if they do not actually plant the crop themselves (as some do) usually benefit from 'Zakat' (an Islamic tithe), derived from it, are known to defend its cultivation on spurious grounds rather than condemn it as Islamic law seems to demand of them: hardly any speak against it.

Thus religious objections, strong though they should be in what is meant to be a fiercely Islamic country, have no effect. The almost complete effectiveness of the Taleban ban on poppy growing for one of the years when they held power, in order to curry favour with the west so as to get UN recognition, was based on terror of the consequences of disobeying them, rather than on religious conviction on anyone's part. In any case, stocks that had been built up and the price rises that followed the shortage of supply caused by the ban meant that even more money than usual was made by Afghanistan overall in that year.

To have any positive effect Eradication must hit large growers and government officials disproportionately. It must also be done much more in those areas that



anti-poppy propaganda

are meant to be under government control, and combined with an appropriate follow up of agricultural development assistance. The timing of eradication, especially in irrigated areas, is also important, as if it is carried out at the right stage no re-planting of poppies is possible, but a second (food) crop can still usually be grown. As always, things come back to the security problem: government control and the removal of Taleban dominance (and that of other 'warlords' and drug-thugs) is necessary both so that eradication can take place on an effective scale and so that real agricultural development can be properly supported.

Without a real threat of eradication and the promotion of realistic alternative livelihoods most public information efforts in any form are of little value, difficult though this is for PR-obsessed westerners to accept. Public information efforts that may have some marginal effect include the publicizing of the increasing damage that drug addiction is causing inside Afghanistan, and an emphasis on the links between narcotics, insecurity, corruption, and lack of development.

Foreign aid must be visibly supplied to areas that are, or can commit themselves to being, opium-poppy free, and especially where these are adjacent to opium growing areas this must be plentiful enough to make a visible difference. This should be chiefly in the form of technical agricultural assistance, as opposed to mere handouts, to have any long term effect in providing a viable alternative to opium. This is difficult, but not as impossible as some superficial assessments suggest. Indeed, Helmand as a Province is in a far better position to flourish agriculturally than most other parts of Afghanistan, because of its rivers and fairly well developed irrigation system (courtesy of the USA in the 1950s, '60s and '70s). Afghans in general are aware of this so are unconvinced and angered by pleas from Helmand and Kandahar that opium is only grown because people cannot survive otherwise: elsewhere this is perhaps the case but it is not so in large areas of Helmand. There are crops that could be as profitable to farmers as opium, or even more so, such as saffron, and a range of market gardening crops, if the infrastructure and security situation permitted access to adequate markets. So far, woefully inadequate attention has been paid to the development of real alternative livelihoods for farmers: straightforward aid just provides seeds that can be sold and fertilizer that can be used on the poppies. Afghanistan may seem to have little promise as an agricultural area, with only a tiny proportion of arable land, but given the nature of the problem

There has been, and can be, no attempt to deal with the opium poppy problem through eradication alone. The scale of the problem makes this impossible; between opium on the one hand and foreign aid on the other there is little else left of the Afghan economy

agricultural development must be central to its solution, as well as to the development of a legitimate economy, since most areas, including Helmand, have few other resources. Afghanistan has produced most of its own food in the past and could again. There is little chance of other sectors of the economy providing alternatives in the short term, and where there is potential for non-agricultural development it will not have much impact on the rural poppy-growing population. Completely inadequate effort and imagination has been applied to this vital but less dramatic aspect of the poppy problem.

One of the 'red herrings' that regularly distracts attention from serious attempts to tackle the opium poppy problem is the fanciful idea that legalizing opium poppy production and buying the crop would solve both the illegal narcotics problem and the problems of low agricultural production and rural poverty simultaneously. Proponents of legalization have already done some harm in southern Afghanistan by giving the impression to many Afghans, with whom their workers have had contact, that legalization is only a matter of time.

The argument for legalization rests on various false assumptions and ignorance of the reality of the situation in Afghanistan. One is that there is a worldwide shortage of morphine: this seems to be based on the idea that if Africa and Asia used as much morphine as Europe and North America there would be one (which is true), and that the discrepancy in usage can be explained by a shortage of the drug. This is not true: financial, organizational, and other difficulties are involved. Another is that it would be possible to license growing of opium in Afghanistan and control production; given the largely lawless and corrupt nature of the country at present, this is clearly absurd. Afghan production is not even efficient enough to compete with existing highly organised legal morphine producers such as Australia and France: furthermore the price offered to legal (opium for morphine) farmers is lower than what is available to illegal producers on the heroin market.

Equally, just buying up all opium production for destruction would only encourage even larger harvests, much of which would still go to the illegal trade, inevitably leading to higher prices and profits as the competition reduced supply without reducing demand. It would also stop Afghanistan developing productive legal agriculture or even making some progress towards growing a significant proportion of its own food, leaving it permanently dependent both

on economic aid and on food imports.

Opium is banned under Islamic law, and under the Afghan Constitution. In spite of the approach taken by many Mullahs at local level, those Afghan religious figures who take a hard theological line reject even the production of morphine, which they also deem banned by Islamic law. Rulings against growing poppies by a handful of senior clerics seem to matter little anyway, compared with the allure of money, even to the religiously extreme Taleban.

Turkey, which was a large producer of illegal opium in the 1960s, does produce the crop legally, but that is a country with a fairly well established government and effective law enforcement. Pakistan, which also received US aid to destroy the illegal trade in the 1970s, managed to do so in spite of being fairly lawless in some regions and far from free of corruption. It is no longer a significant illegal producer at all, having been a major one: but it does not attempt to allow legal cultivation of opium poppies either. Afghanistan, contrary to popular belief, was not historically a significant producer but has become one in the last twenty or thirty years. The examples of Pakistan and Turkey at least show that although it is an extremely difficult thing to do, opium poppy cultivation can be stopped when there is a modicum of diverse economic growth. Some areas, such as Rajasthan in India, that do grow legal opium, suffer from a considerable illegal leakage and addiction locally, and have considered banning the crop altogether.

Although law enforcement and eradication have their role in the war against Afghan opium, real alternative

livelihoods for farmers, a viable economy and workable infrastructure overall and good governance in general are the keys to the poppy problem. The growing scale of addiction to opium, and increasingly to heroin, within Afghanistan itself is also a matter of concern, and is still further damaging an already shattered society and economy.

The timing of eradication, especially in irrigated areas, is also important, as if it is carried out at the right stage no re-planting of poppies is possible, but a second (food) crop can still usually be grown.

What is to be done? Effective but, above all, carefully targeted and timed eradication, co-ordinated with more, practical,

Alternative Livelihoods efforts that have a short and a long term impact, and, crucially, an effective anti-corruption drive. These can only take root within a growing economy offering prosperity and under a functioning government offering the rule of law, including a working land registry, which is itself vital to the provision of loans to individuals. At present the banking system is close to non-existent in many areas and efforts by NGOs to introduce micro-credit arrangements have made little progress. The legal system is inadequate and confused; much of the judiciary and most of the Police force is corrupt. Without improved security little can change, and this like everything else requires strong leadership from the Afghan Government, as well as the help of its allies. It remains to be seen whether this will be forthcoming, but the signs are not encouraging.

Charles Bennett is a former UDR Officer and ex-Zimbabwean Police Inspector who has since worked in Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan, in 2006-7 in Helmand as an International Adviser to the Poppy Elimination

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Scrambling for the Seabed

Russell Lewis

Seventy per cent of the earth's surface is water. Until recent times nobody much cared, except fishermen and wartime submariners, about what went on beneath the waves. Except for the shallows near the coast the seabed was regarded as Neptune's kingdom, mysterious and inaccessible, the lair of weird creatures occasionally washed ashore and the graveyard for wrecked ships. Lately there has been a sea change in awareness of the economic potential of Davy Jones's locker. Rocketing prices for oil, minerals and metals have come on the heels of major advances in the technology available for plumbing the ocean's depths. Hence today's awakened global interest in fathoming and exploiting its treasures.

Of course we are not exactly starting from scratch. Already around a third of the world's crude oil and half its natural gas are produced offshore. Over 90 per cent of De Beers' billions of pounds-worth of diamonds come from mining southern Africa's coastal waters. Thousands of square miles of the ocean floor, especially in the Eastern Pacific, are littered with nodules containing manganese, copper, nickel and cobalt and even silver and gold. Even more promising are the crystalline chimneys and vents from mid-ocean ridges, some of them as much as fifteen storeys high, formed by the leaching of metals from nearby rocks by the superheated leaks from live volcanoes on the ocean bottom. There are also methane hydrates down there which are supposed to hold twice the energy stored in carbon-based fossil fuels, though environmentalists are predictably eager to warn that methane is a greenhouse gas, the use of which will hasten the pending disasters

they attribute to climate change.

The first wave of excitement about these undersea riches arrived in the seventies, but it receded as prices of metals and other hard commodities went on the slide. The oil companies hung in there but even they lost heart — remember when crude was ten dollars a barrel? However in the present climate of rising commodity prices the ocean seabed is a bit of territory

of which almost every nation wants a share. Last July the Russians sent a mini-submarine to plant a titanium flag on the North Pole. This was to stake their claim to it, along with about half the Arctic floor, an area of 460,000 square miles — roughly the size of western Europe. This claim was based on their belief that the Arctic is an extension of the North Russian coastal shelf. Yet behind it lay Putin and Co's apparently genuine and fervent belief that they deserved to be compensated with a chunk of the Arctic for the loss of so much of the old Soviet empire. A more convincing motive, though, was their belief, which is widely shared, that a quarter of the world's undiscovered oil and gas reserves lie under the Arctic's frozen wastes.



Not surprisingly the other Arctic powers — the USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark and Greenland — have not taken kindly to this claim and have been busy preparing theirs.

We British have not been backward in coming forward. Under the Law of the Sea Treaty territorial claims have to be lodged by May 13 2009. Under its rules it is possible to take possession of seabed territory where there is enough continental shelf from the relevant country's coastline up to 350 miles. That is

what lies behind Britain's bid for a huge area around the tiny isle of Rockall in the mid-Atlantic and its further stake-outs based on Ascension Island, South Georgia and the Falklands. Britain is also making a joint claim with Spain, France and Ireland for a 31,000 square mile area of the ocean bed in the Bay of Biscay. Yet this looks small beer in comparison with the government's attempt to gain possession of oil, gas and mineral rights over 386,000 square miles of the seabed off the Antarctic Peninsula. Some would say that this is a bit rich coming from Britain, a leading signatory of the 1959 treaty meant to preserve the icy continent as a permanent wilderness. Fortunately we are not alone for Australia and New Zealand have already made submissions and Chile and Argentina have reopened their mothballed polar bases.

To obtain legal possession of the seabed around an island it is essential that the said island remains permanently above sea level. This is why the Japanese have been so busy planting coral and otherwise building up two uninhabited rocky outcrops 1060 miles southwest of Tokyo — they don't want these small but crucial islets of theirs to be drowned along with the territorial ambitions based on them by the rising tide. Apparently the Chinese have scoffed that these Japanese claims do not hold water. These examples illustrate the conflicts of interest over seabed possession that we can expect in the future including, some between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh whose mutual maritime borders are still not agreed.

Many will think that, real as these differences are between the nations over seabed territory, at least there is in place an international treaty signed by 130 nations which provides the apparatus for their peaceful settlement. Unfortunately the prospect is far more complex and less tranquil than that bland summary of the situation suggests. Although most countries have signed and ratified the Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST), so far the USA, the world's only superpower, has not.

The matter first came to a head a quarter of a century ago. President Ronald Reagan had expressed opposition to the Law of the Sea Treaty before he was elected in 1980. When the draft treaty came up for his signature in 1982 he rejected it and sacked the staff responsible for its negotiation. He identified a large number of changes needed before he would accept. These were not accepted in subsequent negotiations and he refused to sign what he considered to be a defective accord. However in 1983 he directed the US government to abide by the non-deep-seabed provisions of the Convention and encouraged other countries to do the same. His reasons for non-acceptance were:

1. the lack of American influence within the decision-

making bodies of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). This he found particularly galling given that America would be saddled with 25 per cent of the subscriptions, which many of the existing members had failed to pay.

2. the treaty imposed extensive limitations on exploiting the deep seabed, such as the requirement that a company seeking a licence to operate was required to pay not only for one strip of territory but for another of equal size to be handed over to the ISA's supranational mining company, known as the 'Enterprise'
3. there were mandatory technology transfers to the ISA and developing countries.
4. the competitive advantage given to the 'Enterprise'.
5. the imposition of financial burdens on deep seabed mining operations, which really amounted to taxation without representation.
6. the potential of the ISA to impose regulatory burdens on the American mining industry

In 1994 the Clinton administration negotiated an agreement with many, but not all, of the then known parties of LOST, which its proponents claimed met all of President Reagan's objections to the seabed provisions of the treaty. In fact it did not. In 2004 and 2005 ratification of the treaty, though now surprisingly supported by the George W Bush administration, was blocked by Republicans in the Senate. Last year the ratification proposal was back again and supported by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as well as by Vice-President Cheney. It appears that Bush was persuaded against his better judgment, by the Pentagon. However, some of America's military top brass are rather blind or bemused by administration lawyers about the dangers posed by the minefields of UN-sponsored law. They of all people ought to know that, in the present era of terrorism, security objections to the treaty are more pertinent than ever. Indeed it was drafted well before the threats from Islamofascism. As former US ambassador to the UN Jeanne Kirkpatrick (since deceased) put it, the Law of the Sea Treaty threatened America's sovereignty not only on the high seas but also in the air and outer space. That could affect space exploration. More immediately the US admirals' idea that LOST would be in the service's interest by codifying international law about freedom of navigation is incredibly naïve, since the treaty was negotiated in a diplomatic context openly hostile to US military and economic might and dedicated to reducing US advantages.

Specifically it could prohibit any American effort to interdict and board vessels suspected of ties to terrorism or carrying weapons of mass destruction. Collecting

intelligence by submarine in territorial waters would also be forbidden under LOST. According to Article 19 of the treaty defining innocent passage within a territorial sea, launching or landing aircraft could be prohibited. Using any electronic device other than navigational radar could be considered an act of propaganda or an act aimed at collecting information. Again LOST's requirement of international cooperation about whales could lead to prohibition of certain active submarine sonars. Besides, if America ratifies LOST it will have to agree to compulsory dispute resolution by the Law of the Sea tribunal, the judges of which would invariably be anti-American. The environmental provisions of LOST might also be used to sue the United States over its greenhouse gas emissions and force costly and draconian reductions in the use of energy blamed for global warming. To court such hassle by ratifying LOST would be foolish because unnecessary. If all that is sought by the US admirals is recognition of navigation rights, then these are safeguarded under the 1958 Law of the Sea Treaty, except that the subsequent development of that Law has made the situation worse. The establishment of the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone for instance has led China to claim that foreign ships and planes now have to obtain permission before entering its 200 mile EEZ, though of course the US does not agree.

The claim that revisions in LOST put forward in 2004 meet President Reagan's original objections are thus totally misleading. In any case the notion that redrafting a few articles of the treaty would provide the fix needed to make it acceptable to America (and, as I shall indicate, also to Britain even though we have signed on the dotted line) is even more perverse. For the objections to LOST were not so much about specific articles of it but rather about its very infrastructure and orientation. This is best understood by examining its origins. One of the principal pioneers of LOST — Elizabeth Ann Borgese — was not only an admirer of Karl Marx but an active advocate of the Marxist-inspired New International Economic Order. She was a socialist who ran the World Federalists of Canada, and an advocate of world government. It was essentially the ideas of this UN environmental prize-winner which were embodied in the ultimate seabed treaty. It was she who rooted for recognition of the oceans as 'the common heritage of mankind' and for creating an international seabed authority to charge US and other mining companies for the right to mine the ocean floor. She appears to have invented the phrase 'sustainable development' as a more acceptable

Under the Law of the Sea Treaty territorial claims have to be lodged by May 13 2009. Under its rules it is possible to take possession of seabed territory where there is enough continental shelf from the relevant country's coastline up to 350 miles.

slogan than 'socialism' and called for the eradication of poverty through the redistribution of wealth from the West to the Third world. She saw international control of the seabed and of course its taxing and the compulsory pooling of the technology of the advanced nations as the means of attaining that aim.

The Law of the Sea Treaty is thus deeply flawed. It has created a bureaucracy which has shown little evidence of competence for its task. Born in 1994, it was not until 2000 that the Authority's Assembly issued regulations on prospecting and exploring for polymetallic nodules. It was not until 2001 that it entered into the first 15-year contracts to explore for them. This is the sum of its legislative achievements to date. There seem to be no limitations either on the fees charged or on the Authority's expenditure. Indeed its budget doubled in only three years. There are no ethical guidelines and no staff with the job of ensuring that application 'fees' paid to the ISA are not stolen. There is no monitoring of ISA bureaucrats and employees to ensure that they do not accept bribes. There is no provision for oversight of financial disclosure by ISA bureaucrats. Many of the members of the ISA have failed to pay their 'dues' and in August 2006 51 members of ISA were officially 'in arrears'. Such behaviour is rather similar to that found in the parent body, the United Nations Organisation.

As if to underline these anxieties there was a sensational scandal which rocked the ISA only last year. A dramatic case was brought by a former employee of ISA, Sam-Thambia, against

the Secretary General of ISA involving allegations of sexual harassment and pornography. One side alleged 'distortions and fabrications'. The other side alleged 'mismanagement and irregularities'. This corruption case has been taken before a UN Administrative tribunal. (See 'Scandal Rocks the UN Sea Treaty Organisation' by Cliff Kincaid in *Accuracy in Media* October 16 2007). It is of course a serious matter that doubts should be cast on the integrity of officials from the only UN body with unregulated powers to impose a global tax, especially when they are entitled under various treaty provisions to distribute some of these funds to Third World countries and 'National Liberation Movements' such as what was formerly PLO, now called 'Palestine', or Robert Mugabe's 'Patriotic Front' in Zimbabwe.

It is easy to shrug these off as America's problems, but Britain's security is very closely bound up with them. (The humiliation of Britain and its Munich-style stance over Iran's imprisoning Royal Navy sailors in

April last year was a timely reminder of how little clout this country possesses on its own. I understand that the Americans were asked not to interfere). America's adherence to ISA with its hefty 25 per cent contribution to its revenue, may be crucial to the functioning of the organisation, which currently has a cash flow problem. As one notable critic, Cliff Kincaid, put it: 'Senate ratification of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) could serve as a financial bailout of a failing and dysfunctional UN bureaucracy.' Senator Edward Meese, who was counsellor to the President and attorney general in the Reagan Administration, has written: 'America's adherence to the treaty would entail history's biggest transfer of wealth and transfer of sovereignty. LOST vests in the new international treaty the power to regulate seven-tenths of the world's surface area, to impose production quotas for deep sea mining, oil production and other harvesting; and to regulate ocean research and exploration. LOST creates a multinational court system to render and enforce its judgments.' That sums up what is at stake in the long run very well.

The Republican candidate John McCain, a former supporter of LOST, has recently said that he will not support it in its present form. The Democrats are generally pro-UN. Barack Obama has been keen to exhibit himself as a 'globalist', but not as a supporter of free trade. He is what's better described as a 'social globalist' eager to increase governmental overseas aid to the Third World.

Some of the above remarks may seem unfair to ISA, which appears to be a harmless institution, intended to provide for the peaceful settlement of competing claims on the ocean bed, which has recently become more valuable than in the past. Many have the same sort of goodwill towards the United Nations, ISA's parent body, which at its birth was optimistically dubbed 'the last best hope for mankind'. The actual performance of the UN, though, has fallen well short of such promise. As Mark Steyn (no admirer) put it: 'the UN is a shamefully squalid organisation whose corruption is almost impossible to exaggerate'.

The United Nations is a corrupt body but ISA, which is potentially far more out of control, has rightly been dubbed 'the UN on steroids'. It is preposterous that the world's nations have allowed such a sloppy and out-of-date organisation as ISA to grow into its present role of Gosplanner of the oceans and global monopolist lording it over more than two thirds of the earth's surface. This matter will have to be addressed before it encourages serious conflicts and large-scale injustice

and damage to the world's economic order.

Of more immediate concern, is what has been happening almost everywhere at the national level. A system of seabed ownership has evolved, not through deliberate policy or collective intent, but through thoughtless drift. It is one created by national governments claiming and seizing vast areas of continental shelf and/or exclusive economic zones. This development has enormously enlarged the extent of the public domain, all over the planet. This enormity was described and its consequences thoroughly considered in an excellent IEA pamphlet, *Markets Under the Sea?* by Professor D R Denman, published in 1984. His conclusions are today more compelling than ever:

It is preposterous that the world's nations have allowed such a sloppy and out-of-date organisation as ISA to grow into its present role of Gosplanner of the oceans and global monopolist lording it over more than two thirds of the earth's surface.

The designated area of the UK continental shelf is twice as large as the area of our dry land. As things stand all this real estate belongs to the Crown. This state of affairs is in itself objectionable because it has created a large shift in the balance of public and private power. How odd it is, at a time when privatisation is widely regarded as the key to progress after decades of damage through socialism, to have foisted on ourselves an economy in which most of our natural resources are nationalised. At present there is only a tiny, restricted regime of individual property rights in the UK seabed. Leases are granted for some parts of it located in territorial waters. Exploration and production licences have been issued for the continental shelf for North Sea oil by the state monopoly on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Those who obtain these licences are arbitrarily selected at the government's discretion. The leases of sections of the seabed are usually limited to a fixed term but may lapse when no longer required.

How much better if the freehold of most of this vast underwater estate were auctioned off and the market in the properties thus released made every bit as free and transferable as that on dry land. Such a policy could lift the Exchequer out of the hole which Labour's decade of public waste has dug. Thus it could be a bonanza for any British government which is strapped for cash — the likely condition of any British government for some time ahead. Indeed, for the governing elite, the attraction of seabed privatisation is that doing the right thing long term would also be a quick fix.

Russell Lewis was a journalist with the Daily Mail and is the author of several books including Tony Benn: A Critical Biography.

Is there a Eugenics revival?

David Ashton

Eugenics is about improving the biological endowment of our own species. Anciently anticipated by Plato, seriously developed by Galton, and currently 'updated' by academics such as Richard Lynn and John Glad, its previous history as an applied science has been somewhat chequered, as is likewise the case with psychiatry and penology. It has long been castigated in an extensive professional, if often prejudicial literature, while popular journalists muddle it up with euthanasia and war crime issues.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Human Rights (Art.3) forbids 'eugenic' practices. This prohibition has been explained by reference to enforced pregnancy, selective sterilisation and racial segregation, but its ideological sting is clearly in the eugenic *objective* rather than any compulsion.

When the successful screening out of a breast-cancer gene by pre-implantation diagnosis from a family lineage in Britain was reported earlier this year, press comment promptly and predictably raised 'fears' about babies being 'designed for intelligence or looks' — brains and beauty, perish the thought! And what if our DNA could be modified, without fuss or foeticide, to enable our descendants to perform better, physically, mentally and socially? Such questions are returning to public controversy — with a vengeance, as biotech innovation threatens to leapfrog bioethical regulation.

Steve Jones, co-editor of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution*, wrote therein that 'as the means of making "eugenic" decisions have improved, the interest in applying them to the betterment of the human race has almost disappeared'. This he found 'most encouraging'. Faced with world conditions, and the prospect that foreign governments might adopt in due course a social engineering project along such lines, not all freedom-loving westerners will share his satisfaction.

No doubt political espousal during the last century accounts for much automatic aversion, mainly because of Hitler. Sample these pronouncements before his death in 1945: 'The ultimate creative power of a civilisation resides in the innate qualities of the people which make it.' Initially, the stream of 'feeble-minded and insane' that constitutes 'a national and race danger' should be sealed off. Eventually, a 'higher social-biologic type, or a superman' should be created, raising the average person to the height of Aristotle or

Goethe, and above that ridge 'new peaks will rise'. In fact, the first quotation comes from an Anglican Bishop (E W Barnes), the next from a Liberal Minister in the United Kingdom (Winston Churchill), and the last from a Communist Commissar in the Soviet Union (Leon Trotsky).

Never as simple as it sounds, what precisely is so terrible about eugenics?

The entire subject needs rational reconsideration in view of irreversible developments in biology. On one hand, knowledge of the complexity of linked and recessive genes has emphasised the practical problems of permanent large-scale 'cleansing' of some inheritable afflictions from a population, a process originally called 'racial hygiene' — which, incidentally, had no 'gas chamber' entailments. On the other, research is corroborating the importance of heredity relative to environment with regard to various aspects of disease susceptibility, brain function and violent criminality. Gene therapy for existing patients has been welcomed, but future offspring are another matter.

Although counselling partners about inherited risks to their prospective progeny is rarely challenged, the usual avoidance option provokes acute ethical debate, and rightly so. Abortion at any stage entails the removal not only of detectable 'defects' but also of their 'voiceless' carriers. Hence the US paradox of a judicially endorsed 'rights' agenda which, by protecting individual 'personhood' and therefore diverse procreative choice, denies human beings of a constitutional right to life until after they are born. Consequently 'handicapped' adults ask if they are to be categorised as unwanted survivors and an inferior sub-human nuisance. This is not a silly question.

Galtonian eugenics, however, seeks not to victimise and eliminate humans with disabilities, but on the contrary to eliminate disabilities from their potential victims. Why should this be abhorrent, on principle, especially to Christians? Medical fact or metaphorical fiction, the gospel miracles present the cure of disease and deformity as a good thing. Cripples were invited to walk, not put in a claim for bed mobility, and the deaf were healed, not granted children who shared their silent 'community culture'. Why is it compassionate to 'treat' cystic fibrosis or hereditary chorea, for example, but wrong to prevent its occurrence? Removing the personal pain as well as the social cost of incurable illness has always featured in eugenic advocacy, along

with mitigating the adverse effects of natural selection, indiscriminate warfare and incorrigible stupidity.

Robert Whelan (*Civitas*) has summarised the cumulative impacts from the accelerating disintegration of marriage as 'poorer health, lower incomes, more benefit dependency, increased drug and alcohol abuse, and growing crime and anti-social behaviour. Unfortunately no one in government seems to care enough to do anything about it.' Less widely recognised, or admitted, are the dysgenic factors in this process, and in the rise of youth gangs as a substitute for homes with fathers.

Why then should any idea of increasing the relative numbers of people with gifts for problem-solving and cultural creativity, while reducing the proportion of 'problem people' and criminals, provoke hostility? Is this evidence merely of resentment against privilege, or of pathological infatuation with deviance and dependency?

Four centuries ago Tommaso Campanella imagined a *City of the Sun*, where mates officially chosen to produce the best offspring laughed at us 'who exhibit a studious care for our breed of horses and dogs, but neglect the breeding of humans'. Science has escalated since then, and opponents of eugenics focus their alarm on a reproductive ethos that has gone from the stud-farm pedigree analogy to industrialised 'sex' and its molecular commodities.

The next step, hitherto considered impossibly microscopic, is direct intervention to remove harmful and to introduce beneficial genetic material, and thereby transform the 'germ-line' itself. This is one measure advocated by enthusiasts of an emerging movement for multiple synthetic 'enhancements' (www.extopy.org & www.transhumanism.org). The future some of them depict resembles either a bewildering sci-fi fantasy or a caricature of immortally perfect 'glorified bodies' promised to religious believers in the 'general resurrection'. Untroubled, the eminent bioethicist John Harris thinks a newly manufactured species may 'entirely replace humankind'.

Transhumanists are anxious to disarm critics by disavowing old-fashioned Galtonian 'racism' or 'class

snobbery', of course, but the danger of unprecedented caste conflict lurks within their own proposals.

Eugenics and transhumanism raise disturbing questions, yet the fiercest opposition significantly appears driven less by commitment to life, liberty and the 'pursuit of holiness' than hatred of excellence itself. Lesbians may order semen from anonymous donors, but for heterosexual women to acquire it from advertised high-IQ alpha-males is 'invidious'; sterilising 'parents' convicted of gross cruelty to successive children is 'objectionable' and funding graduates to support families larger than those of the underclass is 'offensive'.

All sorts of government interference in our lives and all kinds of faustian experiments continue unabated, but the one thing absolutely intolerable to the prevalent mentality is any deliberate improvement of the hereditary potential of generations yet unborn. Nothing better illustrates the malignant vapidness of this country's dominant 'equality and diversity' cliché than institutionalised decadence alongside laboratory anarchy.

The ethnic and personal 'eugenic' control-centres, once suggested by the Christian anthropologist Teilhard de Chardin to ensure civilized harmony and evolutionary progress for our densely populated and networked ecosystem, now seem more dated than deplorable. What we might consider instead perhaps are international accords to reduce without coercion the worst effects of differential fertility and to regulate haphazard explosions of destabilising techno-panaceas. This precautionary path will not be smooth; US pressure for a global cloning ban, for instance, has been denounced as 'a particularly offensive form of Christian proselytising'. But the slope may not prove quite so slippery either.

We should in the words of 'humanitarian eugenicist' Marian Van Court leave a legacy of 'good health, high intelligence *and noble character*'. Loving and responsible parenthood must remain paramount. There would be little advantage in escaping the state-sponsored breeding-programme of a Dr Mengele only to be swept inside the post-human menagerie of a Dr Moreau.

A Roman Catholic opinion, before papal objections to eugenics and 'other evils' such as artificial insemination and contraception were clarified by encyclical.

Sir Francis Galton claimed that as Eugenics strengthens the sense of social duty in so many important particulars, it should find a welcome home in every tolerant religion... 'Eugenic belief extends the functions of philanthropy to future generations, it renders its actions more pervading than hitherto, by dealing with families and societies in their entirety, and it enforces the importance of the marriage covenant by directing serious attention to the probable quality of the future offspring'... The object of Eugenics, then, the physical and mental good and improvement of the race of mankind, is part of the object of Charity, the chief and noblest of the Christian virtues. If the spiritual good of mankind be added to the list of objects, the end of Eugenics would be identical with that for which the Catholic Church exists and works... [Awards could be bestowed on couples who] provide the nation with a healthy stock[and] if it were shown to be for the common good that certain habitual criminals should be prevented from propagating their kind, I do not think that the Church would stand in the way of such an enactment.

From Rev Thomas Slater SJ, Questions of Moral Theology (NY, 1915)

Combating Terrorists – Lessons from the Dhofar War

Ian Gordon

Fighting for four years in a successful asymmetric war against communist guerrillas in the tribal mountains of Dhofar in southern Oman, followed by three years in post-conflict development there, provided me and many others in the British forces with clear lessons on what does and does not work. The enduring truths of these lessons are succinctly captured in the Chinese General Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, written 25 centuries ago. But those lessons of just over 30 years ago, like those of 2,500 years ago, built up with such effort and confirmed with such success, have been quickly forgotten in our current campaigns, as I have witnessed first-hand in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sun Tzu famously said, 'If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.' The popular phrase 'a war against terror' suggests that we think 'terror' is the enemy. It is not. Terror is a sadly common tactic of war. In asymmetric warfare it is usually resorted to first by the weaker side. It was used successfully in the 1770's by the weaker 13 Colonies to goad all-powerful England into responses that became greater acts of terror. And the expression 'Shock and Awe' suggests an intention to terrorise the Iraqis. So, if we say our enemy is 'terror' we clearly don't know our enemy, and we have failed Sun Tzu's most famous axiom.

Suicidal terrorists, and their families and supporters, are driven by enormously strong, desperate and passionate beliefs in the righteousness and justice of their cause. They must believe that the end justifies their extreme means. So, our enemy is not the tactic of terror. Nor is it a country, or a people, or a religion, or a person or group of persons. Our enemy is some, probably simple, beliefs that drive every violent act against us, just as the 13 colonies believed that England was treating them unjustly and the only way to get justice was to fight for it in any way they could. Our overarching aim, therefore, should be directed at identifying what it is our enemies hate about us. Then we must strive to change the beliefs and convictions of them, and those who give them succour and support. To win this war of ideology, every strategy and tactic that we apply must further this aim.

This does not imply some softly-softly approach. We

must defend against the immediate terrorist threats, often aggressively. Success in these battles is vital to protect lives. However, even aggressive defence is still merely defence: No matter how successful, it will not defeat terrorists strongly driven by belief and ideology. And winning such battles will be a pyrrhic victory if their conduct erodes our moral stance, for that will lose us the war. War is an ideological contest for moral superiority using physical force. The moral component is more than just a 'hearts and minds' campaign. It is a campaign that needs to be at the heart of every political, social, economic, psychological and military policy and plan and in the mind of every participant.

People tend to eventually move to the side that shows itself, in all its action and policies, to be morally right. Caleb Carr's book *Lessons of Terror* suggests that historical statistics show that the side which most alienates the people always seems to lose. In his very first chapter Sun Tzu emphasises this when the third point he makes is that the art of war is governed by five 'constant factors', the first of which he lists as 'The Moral Law [that] causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.'

Perhaps it is the terrorists who seem the most regardless of their lives and undismayed by any danger. They obviously believe that they have the 'moral law' on their side. Changing that is the ideological war we face.

Western responses to the terrorist attacks of 11th September haven't won many ideological battles, despite our initial success removing the ideologically unpopular Taliban. Afghanistan offered a golden opportunity to show our 'moral law' but, instead, our effort was littered with immoral 'collateral damage'. In the early days it would have been possible to win ideological kudos by using the awesome US military power as a force for good to win the peace by energetically rebuilding Afghanistan, using military assets. Instead we have left the bulk of the work to well-meaning NGOs while the military have wasted energy 'hunting' a man, chasing terrorists and, too often, killing innocent people in the process.

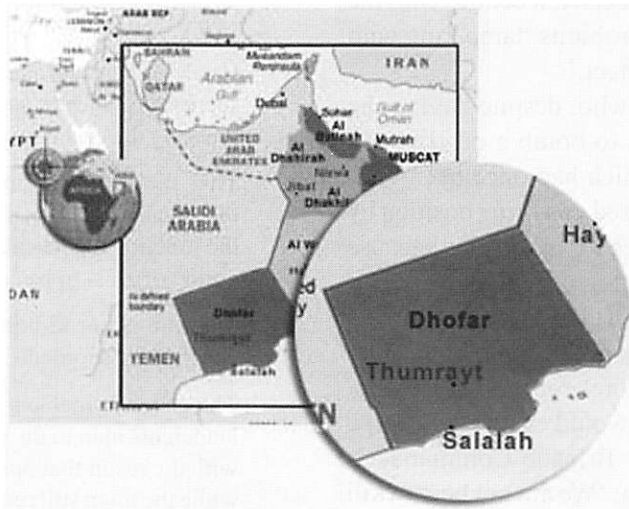
NGOs can represent the West's ideology incoherently.

Their independent agendas prevent them being co-ordinated as a tool to impose peace between fractious tribes. Exacting compliance with government policy as the price for development in each tribal area isn't acceptable to them. Instead tribal factions can play one NGO off against the other to obtain their ends, rather than the other way around. And they can undermine the authority of the government if they usurp its roles.

In contrast, the awesome logistical, organisational and economic power of Coalition military muscle, operating under command of the legally elected Government, could have been used to make a huge impact quickly in any tribal area that complied with government policy. Playing tribes off against each other slowly reduces the power of warlords and tribes. The age-old feuds and rivalries end once the power of tribal allegiances is broken and replaced by allegiance to a powerful central Afghan government. That would bring a lasting peace to Afghanistan. Initially, it is a military, not a civilian task, because it is the final part of winning an asymmetric war. Once the solid foundation of a safe, secure infrastructure has been established by military power, normal peacetime civil government departments, assisted by NGOs, can continue governing and developing in peace.

This is not theory. This was the single most powerful policy for bringing peace to the feuding tribes in Dhofar in the early 1970s. Though smaller in scale, the situation of tribal culture there was very similar to Afghanistan. In Dhofar the military worked together with all the other embryonic government agencies and were co-ordinated under the direction of the Sultan. The military provided the essential humanitarian, logistical, medical, veterinary, engineering and organisational 'muscle' to win the war and develop Dhofar to secure the subsequent peace. It worked because this military power was all under the direct command of the Sultan, irrespective of whether the troops were British, Jordanian or Iranian. This, crucially, is not the case in Afghanistan. Instead of the victorious military power helping to rebuild Afghanistan, the images of the aftermath of initial military operations were of al-Qaeda suspects being led in chains and hoods to interrogation at Camp X-ray. Attempts at legal and military justifications notwithstanding, such

treatment is morally unjustifiable. Even militarily it is counterproductive; prisoners treated in this way rarely produce prompt and accurate information. Faced with such treatment the terrorists and their supporters will never change their minds and cross over to our side. This is losing the ideological war and flouts the principle advocated by Sun Tzu: 'The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.' If we are truly civilised in the West, and claim any moral standing, we should at least match up to standards that were advocated 25 centuries ago.



In Dhofar, the good treatment of prisoners greatly helped encourage the undecided to forsake their communist ideology and declare for the government. The surrendered guerrillas also proved vital as guides and fighters on our side, immensely improving our ability to operate at lower risk and greater effectiveness: none of which they could have done dead. As Sun Tzu says 'We shall be unable to turn natural advantages

to account unless we make use of local guides.' While the relatives and families of any guerrilla we killed would become our blood enemies, each guerrilla that declared for us would probably influence his relatives and tribe to support us. So the war was really won not by any clever operations or smart equipment, but by the steady increase in the numbers of enemy and civilians changing their beliefs. How was that change achieved?

Sun Tzu said, 'Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.' We went to considerable lengths, and some personal risk, to avoid at all costs hurting civilians. Our propaganda made clear that we offered a better, fairer and more just system of government than that offered by the communists. This clear focus helped to ensure we didn't chase short-term results at the risk of our position on the 'moral high ground.' We wanted Dhofaris alive to join us in the great project of securing and developing their homeland. And this was clearly expressed in our mission which was 'to secure Dhofar for civil development'.

This is winning the ideological war. It requires every military action to be morally right. In Dhofar, wise leadership set the moral tone and insisted that the laws of war apply, irrespective of whether the enemy

broke them. Because terrorists aren't signatories to the Geneva Conventions it is tempting, but legally wrong, to allow those combating terrorists to flout the Conventions. Some advocate fighting terror with terror using some errant logic called 'fighting fire with fire', despite all the evidence that fire is better extinguished with water.

An example was my proposal to place, in a cave used by guerrillas to store their 82 mm mortar bombs, one 'doctored' so that it would explode in the enemy mortar tube when they tried to fire it. The Brigadier vetoed my plan because, technically, it contravenes the Geneva Conventions which prohibits 'tampering with munitions to enhance their effect.'

Then there was the officer who, despite having the agreement of the local tribes to bomb a derelict and deserted cluster of hovels which had once been their village and which was being used as a firing position by the guerrillas, was reprimanded for his actions because we were strictly prohibited from damaging civilian settlements of any type — even though it was deserted and there was no risk of 'collateral damage'. And when I objected that flashing torches and 'challenging' people moving in an ambush would ensure the escape of the guerrillas, the Dhofar Brigade Commander's response was fatherly but firm; 'We are not here to kill people, we are here to win them over.'

These examples illustrate that, even without the self-styled watchdogs of the media at their shoulder, an army can wage war with moral rectitude. The results suggest such behaviour is, in fact, a prerequisite of lasting success in asymmetric warfare.

The cumulative effect of good treatment of prisoners, a warm welcome to surrendered enemy personnel, strict compliance with moral rules of behaviour and avoiding at all possible cost, injury to civilians or their property helped to secure the moral high ground and to win the competition for government. This was exactly what Sun Tzu advocated:

The consummate leader cultivates the moral law and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.

Sir William Blackstone in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* expressed the corner-stone of Justice more simply 'It is better that ten guilty men go free than one innocent man be punished.' And so too is it better, and morally right, that ten terrorists should escape rather than one innocent civilian die in so-called 'collateral damage'. The key to the moral high ground is decency and development. People treated justly and with good prospects have something to lose. They are unlikely to succumb to suicide.

Attacking Iraq was a distraction from the main aim. It provided considerable grist to the propaganda mill of the terrorists. There were more strategically clever options, including really developing Afghanistan. As Sun Tzu points out, there are smarter ways than a direct attack. It is worth repeating in full the first 6 points in his chapter called 'Attack by Stratagem':

1. In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to capture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, company or detachment entire than to destroy them.
2. Hence, to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.
3. Thus the highest form of generalship is to baulk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.
4. The rule is not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided.
5. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants, with the result that one third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege.
6. Therefore, the skilful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field. This is the method of attacking by stratagem.

It was the stratagem used in Dhofar. It is not weakness to fail to kill every guerrilla in an ambush. As Sun Tzu points out 'When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.'

We gave them outlets. Eventually almost all of them surrendered to the government, causing the collapse and defeat of the enemy without the need for a costly, decisive battle. I like to think that Sun Tzu would have approved.

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The Madness of Crowds

Theodore Dalrymple

No doubt there is no root cause of anything, unless it be God or the Big Bang. As Haitian peasants say, whose wisdom comes from experience, behind mountains, more mountains. Yet the search for root causes continues, in the sense of the first explanatory principles that will satisfactorily account for a group of phenomena.

And certainly the credit crunch is a group of phenomena. What, ultimately, accounts for it? My own favoured explanation is a lack of virtue in the population, particularly the virtues of prudence, providence, self-control and modesty.

There are those who say that the crisis was fomented by Mr Clinton's enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act, passed in 1977 under the Carter administration. Until this act was passed, banks and mortgage lenders assessed potential borrowers solely according to their creditworthiness, that is to say their likely ability to repay their loans. The fact that they did so was reflected by the precisely equal default rates among white, black and Hispanic borrowers.

The problem, according to the humanitarian social engineers, was that assessment on creditworthiness alone meant widely disparate levels of banking among the ethnic and social groups. The act prohibited banks, in effect, from lending according to creditworthiness alone. They had to become socially inclusive along the non-racial racial lines that we know so well.

Now I am not sufficiently expert to know whether this was the root cause of the credit crisis, or merely a contributory factor to it. I have seen it written that a half of all the bad loans made by American banks and mortgage companies were made in order to comply with the act, but whether this is so or not, or whether, if it is so, it was enough by itself to cause the crisis (opinions differ on this), I do not know.

Be that as it may, it is clearly not the root cause of our own particular crisis situation which is, if anything, worse than the American one. Here, we needed no Community Reinvestment Act to go stark mad; we did it all by ourselves. And, like all pyramid schemes, it was highly profitable for a time. Those who got in and out at the right time made a killing, as the expression goes; but those who did not are now caught in a pincer movement (to change the metaphor slightly) of rising interest rates and falling asset values.

The banks lent improvidently and people borrowed improvidently. Interest rates would never rise, but house prices would always do so, and with the end of history supposedly came also the end of the economic cycle. Henceforth all would be boom and bust was forever banished. I remember reading an economic panjandrum to the effect that we had now entered a virtuous economic circle, or perhaps ever-upward spiral would be a better term for it, leading to the sunny uplands of limitless and painless consumption. Caution was thrown to the winds.

Mr Brown, who managed somehow to unite in his policy dourness with frivolity, joined the party. It is all very well for him now to address the United Nations, telling the notoriously ascetic delegates of poor countries in New York that the age of financial irresponsibility is now over; but as he very well knows (or at least, as one hopes that he very well knows) he owes his current position entirely to the financial irresponsibility that he has so assiduously indulged in for the last several years.

It is true that the British economy expanded under his direction, but it is not very difficult to live better for a time if you borrow enough money and spend it. Alas, the bill comes in. The vaunted investment in public services was really a means of propping up the standard of living of the extra people employed in them. For all his supposed mastery, and his possession of a safe pair of hands (though that, of course, did not prevent him from dropping a golden brick when he sold the nation's gold reserves at an extremely low price, against the better advice of his officials), Mr Brown's economic thought was as primitive as that of certain people who opened shops in the Pacific Islands where I once worked. Using a bank loan to stock their store, they subsequently were unable to distinguish between profit and turnover, and were mortified to discover that the store had soon to close down after they had spent the receipts of their sales on consumer items that they had always wanted. They were rich, but only for a day.

But, as the late Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko (a much underestimated thinker) used to say, it takes two to be corrupt. Where credit is concerned it also takes two — at least — to be improvident. The banks could only lend money to those prepared to borrow who, like the

lilies of the field, spared no thought for the morrow. And there is no doubt that the people of Britain were prepared to go deeply into debt for trifles light as air, presumably on the theory that the economic cycle was at an end.

La Fontaine saw it all years ago, in *La cigale et le fourmi*.

The cicada having sung
During the long summer's length,
When the north wind sang
Found herself bereft of strength.

The cicada approaches the ant, begging for something to eat; but the ant asks the cicada what she did during the summer. She tells him that she had sung for his pleasure. The cicada replies:

So you sang? That did me entrance.
Very well: now you can dance.

I don't suppose they drum La Fontaine these days into the heads of bankers and their borrowers; he is too old-fashioned. We can now only hope that there is no justice in the world, for if there were justice in the world no punishment of the government would be too condign, and no misery for the population that elected it too great, to be unjust.

One further thought, that is almost comforting in the circumstances: if Charles Mackay's book, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* is anything to go by (and I think it is), this will not be the last pyramid scheme crisis to affect mankind.

Theodore Dalrymple's most recent book is In Praise of Prejudice (Encounter Books).

Rates or Taxes – the Zero

Option

Vivian Linacre

Following the 2010 general election, the new Conservative government introduced the Municipal Finance Bill which, though revolutionary, was so simple that it passed through all the parliamentary stages with very little debate and duly received the Royal Assent within three months of its First Reading, to become the Municipal Finance (Consolidation) Act 2011.

For half a century, fierce controversy surrounded the old rating system. It was politically regressive; determined at the individual level by notional property valuations regardless of household income — and always more or less obsolete — and at the national level by periodic revaluations which made rich local authorities richer and the poor poorer. Business rates did as much as town planning to drain the life-blood out of our town and city centres by encouraging out-of-town development, while nobody could agree on a substitute for domestic rates. They were disastrously replaced by the Community Charge or poll tax which was disastrously replaced by the council tax, which had to be alleviated by widespread reliefs and allowances — and could eventually have been replaced, even more disastrously, by some form of local income tax. But

for the sudden scrapping of the whole bureaucratic juggernaut, the wrangling and demonstrations could have continued indefinitely.

Yet the end proved something of an anti-climax. That is so often the case, like the abolition of slavery or of capital punishment — the suggested reform is first greeted with outrage and dismissed as unthinkable, then fought over for generations as the nation is divided by the issue, with martyrs and irreconcilable factions on both sides, until the reactionaries are shocked into silence by a *fait accompli* and the new regime is put into operation, while almost everybody wonders why so much of our lives had been wasted arguing about it.

Accordingly, in 2012, while the country was distracted by the Olympic Games and the referenda on Scottish Independence and on withdrawal from the EU, Town Halls dismantled and cleared out their ramshackle rating and council tax machinery, and in 2013 the modern era of local authority financing was at long last established. There was trouble with the trades unions, of course, because of the thousands of job losses among council employees and in HM Revenue, but the media and public could not get very excited over that.

Administratively there was no great upheaval. For every year since the 1960's the major spending departments — principally Defence, Education, Health, Home Office and Social Security — have embarked on their ritual round of negotiations, led by the respective Cabinet Ministers (although most of the in-fighting is conducted by the corresponding teams of civil servants), each claiming as large a slice as possible of the cake that the Chancellor has baked. The only difference under the new municipal finance regime was that the club had a new member, represented by the Minister for Local Government, pitching and parlaying with the rest for the highest attainable share. Until half a century earlier there had been such a Ministry of Cabinet rank (often tied with Housing), so resurrecting it was a fairly straightforward administrative exercise. (Compared to the fabrication of 'Defra' or the *mélange* of Culture, Media and Sport, it was child's play.)

The immediate benefit of this innovation was sheer transparency. Politicians, the media and the public at large were for the first time made fully conscious of the actual global cost of local Government. The popular superstition that local government services were largely covered by council tax and business rates was shattered. They were all confronted by the stark fact that the Exchequer had for ages been doling out more than 80 per cent of local authorities' budgets by block grants and all manner of subsidies and subventions; that the whole dispute, the propaganda and the riots had all been about less than 20 per cent of what councils spent. Both central and local government had always suppressed this fundamental truth, in order to minimize the apparent cost and to sustain the self-importance of councillors and the illusion of local democracy. (This deception could prove counter-productive: the illusion that council tax and business rates covered total expenditure sometimes created the impression that staff pension funds accounted for three or four times their actual proportion of council budgets.)

Most of local authorities' finance from the Exchequer — the block grants and subsidies — was specifically allocated, so councils always had little real control over their budgets. Where they did enjoy absolute control, however, was over civic and bureaucratic profligacy and waste, which was so difficult to detect or even to notice owing to this colossal fudging of the sheer scale of central government funding. Since 2013, therefore, the Ministry of Local Government has simply taken its slice of the national cake and divided it among local authorities throughout the UK. The portions for local authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are transferred wholesale to Holyrood, Cardiff and Stormont for them to distribute retail, having made whatever adjustments are necessary to reflect their

respective domestic economic policies.

The Ministry's apportionment among local authorities nation-wide was worked out according to a formula; basically *per capita* but subject to numerous modifications and allowances taking into account geographic, demographic and economic factors like regional development grants. This formula was kept under constant review and adjusted annually. Consequently, just as the whole country knows its precise budget for local government, so does each local authority and just as transparently. Of course, behind the scenes as well as quite brazenly, every council has been lobbying the Ministry for a larger share, that's the nature of politics and competition is healthy. In the same way that the Ministers in Cabinet fight the Treasury for the largest possible share, so local authorities fight the Minister and so, in due course, do the various spending departments of every council fight internally.

Three considerations were vital. First, everything is out in the open — the figures are known. Second, each council, having been presented with a fixed sum, is then very largely free to determine how it is spent. Third, that freedom is subject to the need for the electorate's approval. For the Act required that each year every authority must call a General Public Meeting (or series of Meetings) at which not only the Accounts and Report for last year but also a Budget for the coming year are presented, debated and approved, qualified or amended. Yes, there are numerous budgetary constraints, but the principles are clear. Yes, too, most commitments undertaken by councils extend from one year to the next and many extend through two or more years; so there are various transitional provisions. Essential functions and special projects are underwritten for as far ahead as necessary, but — as with any large company — these ongoing activities do not disrupt production of annual accounts or preparation of budgets. Again, the principle is clear: within those constraints and while providing for those essential functions and special projects, budgetary control is exercised by Ministerial prescription at the outset and by popular mandate in the final event.

The Town Meetings were packed and vociferous. Everybody realizes that if they approve a new Civic Centre costing £10 millions, that's £10 millions less for rubbish collection and recycling; while £1 million on refurbishing the Councillors' Lounge means £1 million less for a dossers' shelter. So local democracy, previously apathetic, had become rampant. Voting at the last municipal elections across the country exceeded general election levels. Major employers were regularly giving advice. Businessmen and women were serving as non-voting Committee Members.

Local quangos have been abolished and Ratepayers' Associations have gained control of many councils, defeating the political parties controlled from London. The transformation of local democracy has in turn had a revitalizing effect on national politics. Voters have acquired the habit of taking decisions. Active participation at municipal level — the rediscovery that councillors are accountable to the electorate — has led to revitalization of parliamentary constituency associations. Equally spectacular has been the increase in prosperity resulting from growth in industrial investment and commercial expansion thanks to elimination of liability for rates.

The direct savings to the public — businesses and households — from abolition of domestic and business rates amounts to tens of billions of pounds annually, in addition to the billions of pounds saved by officialdom in costs of administration locally and nationally — and in addition also to the vast, unquantifiable savings in professional fees (valuation surveyors, lawyers and accountants) as well as corporate, executive and private time and expense.

Of course, allocating a share of the Treasury's cake meant baking a correspondingly bigger cake, which meant increased national taxation. But the net increase directly attributable, after crediting the huge savings, was a fraction of the gross amount of business rates and council tax paid in the last full year of the old regime. (The estimates are still being worked out by the Office of National Statistics, and are bound to be contested,

but will certainly be less than 60 per cent.) Besides, that net increase in national taxation was a tiny fraction of the massive, incalculable benefits to democracy, the economy and sheer efficiency in administration.

For every business was relieved at a stroke, of a seemingly permanent handicap. Furthermore, every home and every business was relieved of a crippling preoccupation, which had always impaired companies' performance and families' wellbeing.

In the interests of security...of fairness and social justice ...of health and safety...to comply with EU regulations... the State is forever adding to restrictions and the burdens of bureaucracy, increasing its power over the people. The notion of abolishing a centuries-old form of taxation was anathema. Vision and courage were required of the new administration, after thirteen years of socialist rule, to lump business rates and council tax together under the single heading 'local government finance', and to answer the question 'But how will you replace them?' with 'We won't!'

There are other areas which are overdue for clearance, where again *The Zero Option* could well be exercised. Why not get rid of National Insurance Contributions, which have nothing to do with insurance but are retained merely to disguise the real rate of income tax — that impose a tax on employment and, yet again, support armies of bureaucrats and parasitical professionals? So many candidates are ripe for the chop.

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Monkey Business

Alexander Boot

On 24 June, 2008, the Spanish parliament kindly reminded us that universal suffrage isn't free of congenital defects. On that day this august body passed a resolution granting human rights to apes. Specifically it committed the country to the dictates of the Great Ape Project (GAP) founded in 1993 by the 'philosophers' Peter Singer, professor of 'bioethics' at Princeton, and Paola Cavalieri. Since the resolution has cross-party support it will pass into law in a few months. The apes currently residing in Spain will then enjoy the legal rights to life, liberty and freedom from torture.

This historic moment, according to Pedro Pozas, the Spanish director of GAP, '...will doubtless be remembered as a key moment in the defence of our evolutionary comrades.' 'We are seeking to break the species barrier — we are just the point of the spear,'

he added. Presumably, the shaft of that weapon is the UN Declaration on Apes to be adopted soon. It states that all primates, including man, are 'members of the community of equals' who aren't to be deprived of their liberty without due process. The detention of great apes who haven't been convicted of any crime should be permitted only where it's in their own interests or is necessary to protect the public. In such cases apes must have a right of appeal to a judicial tribunal, either directly or through an advocate.

One wonders how the framers of this document see the ensuing practicalities. For instance, where trial by jury is part of due process, who would be the ape's peers to sit in judgment? Surely they'd have to be other apes (Chelsea FC supporters may be narrowly disqualified). Then how would the jury follow the proceedings and then communicate their verdict?

How would the defendants confer with counsel? Be sworn in? Give testimony? Launch a 'direct appeal'? And if convicted for, say, murder, how would they be punished? As the death penalty isn't an option, it would have to be incarceration in, for example, the same zoo in which all 315 Spanish apes are kept already, with no due process anywhere in sight. Illogically, the Spanish resolution states that there they can remain, although the conditions must improve, presumably in line with human prisons equipped with colour TVs and sports facilities. However, it will become illegal to keep apes in circuses, or for the purposes of television commercials and filming. Our 'comrades' will thus enjoy greater protection than, say, Kate Moss or the troupe of Barnum & Bailey. And in general, apes will acquire weightier rights than humans, for ours are counterbalanced by responsibilities and theirs demonstrably are not. Our right to the state's protection, for example, is contingent upon our allegiance to it (*protectio trahit subjectionem*). Since an ape cannot pledge such allegiance the balance is clearly in its favour.

Of course anything perpetrated in one EU country tends to spread to all others, unless it's the kind of vote José Manuel Barroso doesn't like. So how long before our Synod will argue that British subjects of

simian descent are entitled to become bishops in the Church of England? And how long before the good vicar of St Bartholomew's decries speciesism and blesses a marriage between an ape and a human?

If you think this is far-fetched, consider the track record of Peter Singer, the 'mind' behind GAP. In 2001 he allowed that humans and animals can have 'mutually satisfying' sexual relations because 'we are animals, indeed more specifically, we are great apes'. Therefore such sex 'ceases to be an offence to our status and dignity as human beings'. Singer denies humans the rights which he extends to animals. He maintains that the right to life is grounded in the ability to plan one's future. Since the unborn, infants and disabled lack such ability, he justifies abortion, selective infanticide and euthanasia. However, even though apes aren't known for prudent foresight, Singer doesn't advocate their cull. So his is a kind of affirmative action: he wants apes to have rights that aren't just equal but superior to ours.

Now his ideas have been acted upon by the parliament

of a country whose chosen recreation is watching bulls first tortured and then slaughtered publicly. So why such touching concern for the rights of apes? On the surface of it this sounds illogical – but only until we've reminded ourselves that the logic of modernity always operates on two levels, the first ostensible, the second real. Ostensibly, the Spanish parliament acted not only illogically but insanely. But the real animus behind its resolution was in no way constructive: they don't care about animal, or for that matter, human rights. Their true desideratum is destruction — of the last vestiges of the Western, which is to say

Judaeo-Christian, worldview. And anthropocentricity, the unique status of man created in God's image, has been essential to that tradition ever since Genesis 1:28. So it has to go.

That's why Darwinism, a half-baked theory flogged by hard-boiled touts, is the surrogate gospel of modernity. Never mind that it has been invalidated by just about every modern science from physics to biochemistry, from palaeontology to genetics, from microbiology to mathematics. All these sciences offer infinitely more support to Genesis than to the *Origin of Species*, but the issue is decided by political passion, not empirical evidence or indeed our own senses. Any other such

hypothesis would have been discarded long ago, even if it had ten times the amount of evidence *pro*, and one tenth *contra*. But Darwinism, which takes metaphysics out of the human equation, reducing man to the level of animals, has transcended science. It has become a matter of fervent faith: there's no God but Darwin and the likes of Dawkins, Wolpert and Singer are his prophets.

Apes are the angels of this religion. Doubtless as a result of frank self-assessment, the Darwinist prophets preach that apes are practically human, linked with *Homo sapiens* by some intermediary ape-man. Yet after a century and a half of their strident sermons we still have seen no convincing evidence that such a creature has ever existed. While there are fossilised remains galore of both apes and humans, fossil records show no complete skeleton of an ape-man, nor even a significant portion of it.

Yet we can't deny that, say, chimpanzees look similar to humans. And it isn't just the appearance: humans and chimps share 99 per cent of their active genetic



material (the genetic distance between them is a mere 0.386). Although all decent people deplore unnecessary cruelty to animals, this makes medical experiments on apes so necessary: by responding, say, to drugs like humans and unlike other animals they save human lives. Though no such experiments are conducted in Spain, the legislators banned them just in case. Yet the QED expressions on their faces are premature. For physical likeness between apes and humans creates problems for their ilk.

Modern biology cannot explain why, given such proximity, apes still look rather different from humans. Anything near the same closeness produces virtual twins in other animals. For example, even though they are 20-30 times further apart, some species of squirrels or frogs are practically indistinguishable. Moreover, in other species such genetic and biochemical likeness pre-supposes the possibility of mating so dear to Singer's heart. After all, we know numerous examples of cross-breeding not only among different species within one genus, but even different genera or sub-families within one family, where the biochemical compositions are quite different and the genetic distances are tens of times greater than those between humans and chimpanzees. And yet these two putative twins cannot produce common progeny, for all the highly publicised scoops in the press some years ago. A mating experiment is under way, we were told, and soon a 'pithecanthropus' will be produced, proving that Darwin was right all along. The experiment failed — so do they acknowledge Darwin was wrong all along?

Other failing experiments tried to prove the intelligence of apes, allegedly so much superior to other animals', if ever so slightly inferior to man's. It's only when primatologists untainted by evolutionary afflatus got involved that any such claims were disproved. A conclusion has been reached that 'primates do not differ from other mammals as much as primatologists believed in the past'. In fact, many scientists place chimpanzees lower on the intelligence scale than some other mammals, such as dolphins and elephants. Much has been made of the fact that apes can use a few primitive tools. After all, Engels, another demiurge of modernity, more or less equated this ability with humanity. Yet apes aren't the only non-humans who can do this. For example, the Galapagos woodpecker (*Cactospiza pallida*) grips a cactus thorn in its beak to pluck insects out of tree bark. (It'll peck its way to full human rights if it isn't careful.) Some birds of prey attack ostrich nests by dropping stones from a great height. And eagles drop turtles onto stones to break the

shells. In fact, Aeschylus is said to have been killed when one such turtle-lover mistook his bald pate for a stone. And there are many other illustrations of some animals being equal, often superior, to primates.

For example elephants and wild dogs bury their dead, while apes do not. The primatologist Jane Goodall shows that chimpanzees have no concept of death. Female chimps carry their dead young with them, and other siblings in the same litter continue to play with the corpse when it's already in the late stages of decomposition. Also, unlike whales who look after their aged and sick, apes attack their defenceless old. 'It is wrong', writes Goodall, 'to draw direct parallels between the behaviour of apes and humans.' Here I must disagree. For moral judgement, which Goodall sees as the principal difference between the two species, is fast disappearing from the behaviour of our modern masses. In fact, violent attacks on old people have become the norm in Western cities. This points at what the ape really is, with the theological explanation yet

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again much more plausible than the pseudoscientific twaddle.

Augustine refers to the devil as 'the ape of God'.

To him the devil possesses

some caricature similarity to the Creator in that he can perform some miracles, seduce people by his spirituality and so forth. In that context, the ape is a caricature of man, the ghastly portrait in man's attic. Created in the image and likeness of God, man towers over animal; he is, in Shakespeare's words, its paragon. Yet the further people step away from God, the more they fall prey to shameful passions and vices, the less they resemble God. And then the portrait grows more and more awful, the caricature becomes more grotesque until it looks just like a chimpanzee. The ape was thus created as a reminder: it shows what humans will look and be like when they lose God's likeness — and with it their humanity. The Spanish resolution is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

On second thoughts, perhaps there is a silver lining there somewhere. Eventually, if the Spanish are consistent, apes will be granted full voting rights. Assuming that their voting pattern will have to remain somewhat random, they'll probably do better than the current electorate. They certainly couldn't do any worse.

Alexander Boot is the author of How the West was Lost (Tauris).

Private Schools: a last bastion of Civilization

Alistair Miller

The debate about private education has recently taken an unexpected turn with the demand from the Charity Commission that independent schools demonstrate a clear 'public benefit' to justify their charitable status. As a result some famous public schools are engaged in an undignified scramble to sponsor academies, offer new bursaries and share facilities in order to prove their social credentials. Dr Seldon, the trail-blazing Master of Wellington College, sums up the general feeling when he complains that for too long the independent sector has carried on 'in splendid isolation' from the state sector of education. But perhaps it is the independent sector's splendid isolation from the world of state education that now constitutes its greatest public benefit?

My experience of teaching in state and private sectors is that there is now a profound difference in the educations on offer and this has nothing to do with class sizes, resources or even selective intake. In the independent sector, something remains of the idea of a liberal education; that the purpose of education is to educate, civilise and form the person, his character and his sensibilities — intellectual, moral, aesthetic, physical — in the image of an ideal of what an adult human being can be. And it is keeping alive the idea of education in the traditional sense — an idea that has nearly vanished from the state sector. The independent sector therefore performs a service of inestimable public benefit. The real justification then for private education is that the state sector is fast ceasing to provide education at all.

Although the curriculum is superficially the same in all schools, this masks a host of differences, which taken together amount to a whole cultural divide. One of the most important — curious that it is so rarely remarked on — is that in the independent sector, most pupils in preparatory schools follow their own 'Common Entrance' syllabus until the age of thirteen when they transfer to their senior schools. There they

are increasingly likely to take international GCSEs as they progress to AS and A level courses. The National Curriculum can be bypassed altogether.

The transfer at thirteen is important and brings with it certain crucial benefits denied to state schools. It delays by two years the need for external examinations, so when pupils in prep schools are tested, it is across the whole range of subjects; the crude distortions and pressures arising from SATs testing at eleven are thus avoided. Teaching by subject specialists can begin much earlier — at eight or nine instead of eleven as in state schools, so there is a much earlier and more sustained emphasis on subject disciplines by teachers who really know their subject.

Though the Common Entrance syllabus is advertised as 'broadly in line' with the National Curriculum, there are significant differences in both content and emphasis. Most pupils in prep schools study Latin and French formally from a young age; history is chronological and knowledge-based, with much more time allocated to it than in state primaries (now down to half an hour a week); and Religious Studies is founded on key episodes

and stories from the Bible.

Teaching methods in independent schools remain firmly didactic, the object being to transmit a body of knowledge from teacher to pupil, and to initiate him into the modes of thinking and imagining that can only be developed through the disciplined study of subject disciplines within a particular cultural tradition which in this country is predominately Western and Christian. A pupil emerging from the system at sixteen or eighteen could possess the makings of an educated, cultivated adult.

The other great difference is in the emphasis traditionally placed in the independent sector on the formation of the whole person. The celebrated public school ethos, with its team games, muscular Christianity and cultivation of the old Stoic virtues is easy to ridicule, but we have in it at least an education with an

ideal of what it is to be human; and it stands in direct line of succession to the classical humanist visions of Ancient Greece and Rome. In state education, there is much talk of social and emotional development and 'achieving', but very little cultivation of perseverance, self-discipline and service to others.

In the state sector, the philosophy of education could not be more different. There education now has one overriding political aim: *equality*. And once this is understood, everything else follows: the progressive 'child-centred' pedagogy, the cult of the independent learner and the whole 'discourse' of equal opportunities, empowerment, inclusion, diversity and multiculturalism that pervades state education.

The godfather of 'child-centred' education is John Dewey, who more than anyone gave the progressive vision political force and philosophical justification. Dewey's conception of education is based on a vision of society that is radically democratic and classless; it involves the complete repudiation of culture in the traditional humanist sense. For Dewey, humanist culture is deeply elitist, the possession of a leisured class divorced from the practical needs and interests of the mass of men. His is a vision of a new society in which men are liberated from mindless mechanical labour to find fulfilment in work, ends are shared, and value is measured in terms of contribution to the social good. Dewey's vision is of a socialist utopia. His child-centred pedagogy — that children should learn not through 'amassing information' but through relevant practical experience and activity — follows naturally from his social vision, the logical corollary of the belief that meaning and value are derived through work.

Though the dream of a new society, a final solution, might now be regarded as a harmless fantasy, the destruction in the name of this dream of a cultural inheritance is only too real and it is here that we see the legacy of John Dewey. It would no longer be possible in the state sector to conceive even the possibility of education in its formative sense, education as initiation into a culture or tradition (any culture or tradition, let alone Western civilization), because to do so would be to assume norms, values and standards of judgement and discrimination; and this is to imply in turn that some things are better than others, that some people might be more cultivated than others, and that human society itself is necessarily hierarchical and exclusive. In other words, all the things are implied that are most deeply resented by educationalists inspired by Dewey's egalitarian dream.

However the educational establishment have a

second line of argument to justify their position. Not only is the transmission of humanist culture elitist, exclusive and undemocratic, but the didactic teaching necessarily associated with it runs counter to the way children learn. In departments of education across the country, student teachers imbibe the mantra '*children are not empty vessels*' — they do not learn by having knowledge poured into them; rather children learn by *constructing knowledge* for themselves in meaningful situations. Both political ideology and 'learning theory' are enlisted to support the progressive argument.

It just does not follow from the truism that knowledge is constructed in the mind that meaningful learning can only result from spontaneous discovery or practical experience. If this were so, we would still be in the Stone Age. Most of what we learn is necessarily communicated through language — something apparent every time a teacher tells a class a story. Michael Oakeshott hit the mark in his essay *The study of 'politics' in a university* when he speaks of the character of school education: 'It is learning to speak before one has anything significant to say; and what is taught must have the qualities of being able to be

learned without necessarily being understood, and of not being positively hurtful or nonsensical when learned in this way.' He compounds the heresy when he continues:

'school education is without specific orientation; it is not yet concerned with individual talents and aptitudes ... At school, we are, quite properly, not permitted to follow our inclinations'. In the space of a few words, the foundations of progressive education are demolished. Oakeshott has articulated the pedagogy that necessarily underlies a liberal education — in fact *any* education in the formative sense.

The evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker argues in *How the Mind Works* that constructivist pedagogy runs against everything that is known of the evolution of language and the human mind. Nevertheless, the constructivist theory of learning, together with its close relative the cult of the independent learner, goes unquestioned in the education world. It is constantly reinforced by inspectors, teacher trainers and a small army of consultants who travel from school to school to promote the virtues of independent learning, 'active' learning, collaborative learning, problem solving, the creative classroom, the thinking classroom, higher-order thinking, pupil self-assessment, transferable thinking skills, learning styles, multiple intelligences and 'brain-based learning' — anything that does not require the disciplined acquisition of knowledge.

In one such presentation I recently attended, the

speaker, a former head teacher turned inspector, managed to plumb new depths of crassness. After explaining that outstanding teachers do not take on the role of expert — ‘the sage on the stage’ — but instead ask ‘open-ended’ questions which encourage higher-level and creative thinking, he declared that ‘when you are looking for the right answer, you are not thinking’. How children should ever develop the coherent body of knowledge and skill necessary to become expert at anything (or for that matter truly independent or creative) is a question that usually evokes genuine puzzlement on the part of such trainers, consultants or ‘facilitators’.

It is difficult for outsiders to understand the relentless and intense pressure for progressive education within the educational world. Those who regard the National Curriculum as a bastion of traditional subject disciplines forget that the primary aim is not to educate, cultivate or transmit a coherent and disciplined body of knowledge to the pupil, but to produce young research historians, geographers, scientists, journalists and so forth with the requisite skills. Moreover the subject disciplines themselves have suffered a double attrition: a progressive watering down of content to make them accessible to all and a progressive divorce of the subjects themselves from their parent disciplines

so that all interpretations, opinions and perspectives are accorded equal weight and validity. They have become divorced from the very cultural tradition that would enable them to develop objective and coherent standards of judgement and discrimination.

In his classic *A History of Education in Antiquity*, Henri Marrou noted that whereas education in the classical world aimed to form the adult, education in the modern world aims to develop the child; and this sums up the cultural difference between private and state education very well. But without initiation into a cultural tradition, and without an ideal of what it is to be human, what is there to develop in the child? As Oakeshott writes in *The Voice of Liberal Learning*, ‘a man is his culture, and what he is he has had to learn to become’. Deprived of the rich inheritance of the past, pupils in state schools are left hopelessly without bearings.

That is why parents, if they can find the money and if they have any sense, will continue to pay for private education in this country; and the more isolated it is from state education, the better.

Alistair Miller currently teaches in the independent sector.

The Sanctity of Ethnicity

Tom Stacey

The experience of no single ethnicity mirrors another’s. The British homeland experience, for instance, contains an historical legacy of conquest and complex assimilation. Many a Welshman today risks his life fighting for Britain in Helmand yet sheds an ethnic tear at the singing of Land of My Fathers when the Welsh meet the English on the rugby field, and not only because his tune is better. For a hundred reasons the old cultural and linguistic stand-off has turned to mutual fertilisation. That said, no Government in Westminster can ignore the ethnic factor in the United Kingdom’s constituent territories. In one of them, Hibernian Celts and Scots-Irish were covertly at war until the other day for four decades (or, arguably, twice that number of centuries). Latterly, of course, pushy politicians of the SNP and Plaid Cymru are mongering ethnic resentment out of the available grievances.

In the big world, challenged ethnicity — genetic, linguistic, religious-cum-cultural — is everywhere. The violence is today, or has lately been: Shi’a, Sunni,

and Kurd in Iraq, in Afghanistan Pushtun (who comprise the Taleban), Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazzaras; in Palestine, Chechnya, Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Tibet and Burma, and a great scatter of little places: South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabagh, Fiji ... most appallingly in recent history in Rwanda, and disgracefully in the Yugoslavia Woodrow Wilson cobbled together after the First World War, of which stubborn blood has now made seven self-determined states. Can we not all add to such a global list?

Woodrow Wilson, incidentally, is wrongly credited with first giving voice, in 1917, to the concept of ‘self-determination’, since actually Fichte defined the notion a full century earlier, but at the end of the Great War that phrase had a ring to it — for Europe if not yet for its colonial empires. The ‘self’ intended was implicitly ethnic. Simultaneously, Lenin was about to implement his policy of overtly recognizing ‘nationalities’ across that vast stretch of Asia comprising the Russian empire he had inherited from the Tsars. Marxist dialectic may have upheld the horizontal solidarity of the world’s

proletariat, yet when it came to handling real colonised people the vertical bond of ethnicity was what you faced. Each bit of the Tsarist empire was provided its ethnic and administrative identity. When Stalin later came to violate the bond of race with place by deporting *en masse* such ethnic groups as the Crimean Tatars, he was to rue it. Souls were in torment and the cry went up.

Wilson's sound-bite doctrine persisted into the United Nations Organisation's foundational Article 1 in 1945. Stalin was to have the nerve to demand a seat (and a vote) in the General Assembly for fifteen of the USSR's 'autonomous republics'. He didn't succeed; yet if far from autonomous then, half a century later every one of them was genuinely autonomous. In 1989-91, after three quarters of a century, fake ethnic power (and often dreadful collective tyranny) was suddenly turning into to real ethnic power. And today, however many Russians were settled in those ex-Soviet colonial territories at their independence in 1991 (Kazakhs, for instance, were a minority in Kazakhstan), each of the new Asian republics have ensured a substantial indigenous majority. Two of them, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, from the wells of their resentment, have all but thrown their settler Russians out.

Political autonomy is by no means an invariable concomitant of an ethnic reality. In modern Russia's Asian sphere, for example, the Yakuts of Siberia have no more wish to withdraw from the Russian Federation than the Sindhis from Pakistan. Yet Yakut they insist on remaining, and speaking, with their poetic heritage and their reindeer lore. Likewise Uganda's twenty-nine recognised ethnicities will defend their languages and legends, groves and springs, if necessary with their blood. Why? For no less a reason than to state their being, to count their lives worth living ... yet also for most to release in themselves a measure of loyalty to the mother state they have inherited from another's empire. President Museveni of Uganda, no obvious traditionalist, has seen fit to restore the Kabakaship of Buganda and its institutions, esoteric and exoteric, and similar tribal monarchies, invariably to popular approval.

We can only say that political power may come to be a facet of ethnic need, and emphatically so where tyranny prevails over a substantial ethnic minority (as in East Timor), or when an imposed symbiosis becomes unmanageable (as in Cyprus). Let us note in passing (and with an eye on Europe), that federations of indigenous cultural and territorial identities don't ever

prosper or in the end survive when imposed or ordained from above. I think of the swiftly defunct West Indies Federation, or Malaysia-Singapore.

The evidence grows that the nearer Europe approaches full federation the more hopeless the project will appear. People are quick to sense betrayal in the dissolution of the mysteriously precious us-ness of linguistic, territorial and historical inheritance. In the votes against the EU's proffered constitution in France and Holland I see the member nations sensing a looming 'Belgianisation' of the entire European edifice. That was Trotsky's pejorative term for absence of any meaningful allegiance, the shrivelling of the citizen's idea of historical and national grandeur to that of the petit-commerçant, the I'm-all-right-Jackery (which Trotsky characterised as Belgian) invading the springs of national uniqueness. In the end, nationhood as a living ethnos won't be gainsaid.

In our own time, wherever history has swept away the monarchies and the panoplies that used to enshrine a mystique of continuity, supreme authority and ethnic identity become approximately synonymous: presidents become passing monarchs, as in France or Germany or the USA, each with its slightly uncomfortable formula. (France is into its fifth republic.) By contrast, wherever constitutional monarchies have held on or come back, how effective in the popular heart is the monarchical function of 'wholing' a given people's collective allegiance in its very distance from the passing show of politics and the swings of parties.

Here lies a truth of the human condition: by token of that same authority by which kingdoms outlive republics, works of art outlive cultures, justice outlives laws, religions outlive ideologies — including, I wouldn't be surprised, the ideology of one-adult one-ballot paper as the ultimate formula of governance.

People's readiness to go along with the substitution of true power by symbolic authority is characteristic of the protean factor of ethnicity. Regiments will accept the Monarch as Colonel-in-Chief, not the Prime Minister or President whose power the monarch once had. A comparatively protean characteristic of ethnicities 'confident in the soul' is the degree to which new blood is accepted — the degree and the speed. In this context, note the swiftness by which the apparent outsider becomes the exemplar of ethnic aspiration: half-Spanish De Valera, independent Ireland's first president; half-Irish O'Higgins, Chile's liberator from Spanish rule; Corsica's Napulio, half Europe's emperor in the name of France; the Italian Sephardi

today, however many Russians were settled in those ex-Soviet colonial territories at their independence in 1991 (Kazakhs, for instance, were a minority in Kazakhstan), each of the new Asian republics have ensured a substantial indigenous majority... Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, from the wells of their resentment, have all but thrown their settler Russians out.

D'Israeli, fulfiller of Britain's imperial mission; the Albanian Mustafa Kemal, the Ata — father — of the modern Turks. And most recently Nicolas Sarkozy, Hungarian-Jewish, elected to champion France's right to be French.

Such speed of assimilation at the pinnacle says one thing. In the lumpen mass, too sudden the surge for communal assimilation and ethnic confidence buckles: the host community hunches into suspicion and seclusion and the assimilees get their ghetto. Today's fraught debates across Western Europe, sticky with fudge and half-truth on diversity, asylum-seeking, people-smuggling and economic migration, tell of belated recognition of the essential us in the story of Man under threat.

I daresay the reshaping of the protean us has been going on since Neanderthal man gave way to Aurignacian 40,000 or 30,000 years ago, or Pict to Celt a good deal more recently: a story of the domination by a given ethnicity-cum-culture upon another and/or the allure of a given territory's economic opening. There ensues willing or enforced assimilation, or else confrontation and sometimes devastation. Sooner or later the weaker element disappears, by mergence, persecution, massacre or flight. The colonisation of the Americas and Australasia by immigrants from Europe was soon to mean despair for the indigenous beyond all those fatal shores. That despair is still present.

Ethnic Africans were carried outside Africa as slaves: in the west by white men, supplying the Americas, and in the east (for a thousand or two years) by Arabs, supplying the Middle East. Barack Obama is not a slave's descendent but a white man in a conveniently black skin.

European powers have broken in upon the existing ethnic commonalities by facilitating or engineering various other vast migrations. I think, for example, of seasonal Chinese migrants to Malaya who got trapped by the Japanese invasion of 1942, and settled; of East Indian labour and their traders brought into East Africa or South Africa, and into the Caribbean and Melanesia; and then settling. The spur of such migratory intrusion was economic for colonial productivity and commerce. Often it promised the material betterment of the migrant. Ethnic integration was usually negligible between migrants and natives, or between one migrant community or another. At the removal of the colonial hand, the pain of the ethnic challenge flared: glance where one chooses — to Uganda, Guyana, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, besides those I have already cited like Fiji.

The intrusion upon the indigenous in every such instance was too numerous, and the difference too sharp, for assimilation or mutual mergence. This has meant in many newly independent states that national allegiance is flawed or fractured: the meaningful 'us' is sectarian. There was to be little of any sophisticated hybridity; intermarriage is seldom risked, and almost always a third tongue, as a rule the former colonial power's, provides the bridging lingua franca. Innumerable formulae of symbiosis are essayed: some founder; others pass in and out of manageability (the suffering of the weaker minorities often escaping the world's attention); yet others endure uneasy compromise. By the record of history, the weaker element in the end will die away or go away. That's pain. All this evidences, I contend, the centripetal urge as an ineradicable constituent of any given society. It is unrelenting.

Meanwhile on the global scale we are to be aware of the inexorability of the 'domination and allure' of the mastering culture, which for better or for worse, in today's world, is ours. Much of today's world is mesmerized by the liberal democracies of the North Atlantic, and peripherally Australia and New Zealand. Our handful of Western states exemplify the dominant culture; we are the engine of the supposed global villagehood. The focal regions of attraction for the migrant are thus prevaillingly white, culturally sourced by Judaeo-Christian and Hellenic influences, technocratically primed, capital-fuelled and using the English language. The majority of those who migrate today, legally or illegally, come to settle and at length to integrate. They seek to share in our relative stability, equity, and freedom from want. Immigrants arriving in London today have any one of 81 ethnic communities to attach to. But they will have wilfully placed their inherited ethnicity in mortal jeopardy. In the reality, sooner or later, it will be the host community that all will have joined.

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Conservative Classic – 33

Flora Thompson

Lark Rise to Candleford, Penguin Modern Classics

Merrie Cave

When Flora Thompson was at her first job at the Post Office she read the letters of a gipsy woman who offered to tell her fortune in return: 'You're going to be loved, loved by people you've never seen and never will see.' Indeed the publication of the first of the trilogy, *Lark Rise*, in 1939, a semi-autobiographical description of life in an obscure Oxfordshire hamlet in the 1880's, struck a chord with many people who had experienced that vanished rural life and who could attest to its authenticity. The television series shown earlier this year although badly flawed will have brought new readers.

This minor classic sprang from unlikely beginnings. Indeed when her books appeared, people could not believe that they could have been written by Timms the stonemason's girl. Flora Jane Timms, the Laura in the books, was one of ten children from Juniper Hill near Brackley. Her father was the only inhabitant of the hamlet who was not an agricultural labourer but he was not an easy character, resentful that his family had apparently come down in the world. Her mother had much wider horizons than the other cottage women. She had been a nursemaid and her time in service had instilled superior manners and a good knowledge of old verses and rhymes. There were a few books in the house apart from the Bible. Above all Emma Timms had the wisdom to realize that Flora would never flourish in service for she was captivated by books and writing. She placed her daughter in the Post Office at Fringford when she was fourteen.

My brother and I used to make up verses and write stories and diaries from our earliest years, and I have never left off writing essays for the pleasure of writing. No one saw them; there was no one likely to be interested.

Being a letter carrier as part of her Post Office duties enabled her to enjoy her love of solitude and the countryside and to get to know every stick and stone in the district. In 1897 she went to work in Surrey and began her life-long programme of self-education from the free libraries and the cheap boxes in second-hand book shops. After her marriage to John Thompson, another Post Office Clerk, her literary ambitions

were crowded out by family responsibilities, and her husband's family from the new white collar class were philistines who despised both her love of reading and her rural origins. However she secretly entered an essay on Jane Austen for a prize in a woman's paper, which she won. Later she wrote essays and stories for various women's magazines and other publications, the earnings from which enabled her to send her children to good day schools. She also started a postal association for literary aspirants; the surviving criticisms of her fellow members' work amply demonstrate her abilities as a teacher and editor. Not until 1937 did she at last write about her childhood memories. 'Old Queenie', the character based on the old beekeeper and lace maker, was published in *The Lady* and 'May Day' in the *Fortnightly Review*. These pieces aroused such enthusiasm that she was encouraged to send them to Oxford University Press who immediately asked her to expand them into a book:

Queenie's income fell far short of even the half of the pound she dreamed of, for her husband, Twister, was what was known in the hamlet as a 'slack-twisted sort o' chap, one who, whatever he died on, 'uldn't kill hisself wi' hard work'.

But in old age Queenie had him well in hand. He knew that he had to produce at least a few shillings on Saturday night, or when Sunday dinner time came, Queenie would spread the bare cloth on the table and they would just have to sit down and look at each other; there would be no food.

Forty five years before she had served him with a dish even less to his taste. He had got drunk and beaten her cruelly with the strap with which he used to keep up his trousers. Poor Queenie had gone to bed sobbing; but she was not too overcome to think, and she decided to try an old country cure for such offences.

The next morning when he came to dress, his strap was missing. Probably already ashamed of himself, he said nothing, but hitched up his trousers with string and slunk off to work, leaving Queenie apparently still asleep.

At night, when he came home to tea, a handsome pie was placed before him, baked a beautiful golden-

brown and with a pastry tulip on the top; such a pie as must have seemed to him to illustrate the old saying: 'A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you beat 'em the better they be'.

'You cut it, Tom,' said a smiling Queenie. 'I made it a-purpose for you. Come, don't ee' be afraid on it. 'Tis all for you.' And she turned her back and pretended to be hunting for something in the cupboard.

Tom cut it; then recoiled, for, curled up inside, was the leather strap with which he had beaten his wife.' 'A just went as white as a ghoo-st, an got up an' went out', said Queenie all those years later. 'But it cured 'en, for's not so much as laid a finger on me from that day to this!'

Not much has been written about the lives of the rural poor, so Thompson's books are particularly valuable because she was one of them. They also describe the hamlet, village and market town of that era. Her accounts are free of sentimentality, unlike many other 'country' books which were written by detached middle class bystanders. H J Massingham wrote of 'Flora Thompson's mission to represent "the end of a self-sufficient country England living by the land"'. We are shown a picture of a peasant class 'which is still a peasantry in everything but the one thing that makes it so — the holding of land and stock'. The Industrial Revolution and the Enclosures between them destroyed country life and the Agricultural depression in the last quarter of the 19th century accelerated this trend. G M Trevelyan remarked that there was no effort made to preserve the rural way of life. Other European countries valued an independent peasantry as a stabilising feature of the social order and set up tariffs to the cheap American imports. 'An even more important consequence has been the general divorce of Englishmen from life in contact with nature, which in all previous ages had helped to form the mind and the imagination of the island race'. (Trevelyan) However in Thompson's books there are a few glimpses of pre-enclosure England. 'Old Sally's grandfather built her house 'before the open heathland had been cut up into fenced fields. Some of the old people had descended from the original squatters and still owned the ancestral cottage and strip of land. 'Most of them although landless still kept the cottage pig, fed their families on whole grain bread which they baked themselves. The community was largely self-supporting. Every household grew its own vegetables, produced its own eggs and cured its own bacon. Jams and jellies, wines and pickles were made at home as a matter of course.



Most gardens had a row of beehives.'

Thompson makes sharp observations about the changes in the countryside. Already when she was a child some graciousness and tasteful possessions in the homes of older generations had gone. Solid hand-made furniture was replaced by the cheap and ugly products of the early machine age. Almanacs were exchanged for samplers, novelettes for the Bible or Richardson: 'the newer generation did not value such things; it preferred the products of its own day, and, gradually, the hamlet was being stripped of such relics'. She described her childhood as harsh and restricted but could clearly see that when poverty was abolished, it would not be the only thing which would disappear: 'I fear that much of the salt of the earth will be lost in the process of transforming the old sturdy independent type of farm labourer into the proletariat.'

In spite of grinding poverty she observed how most people seemed happier. Nerves were unknown except to show bravado: 'Aint she got a nerve.'

There was a great deal of outdoor singing in those days; even the doctor and parson on their rounds hummed a tune between their teeth. People were poorer and had not the comforts, amusements or knowledge we have today; but they were happier. Which seems to suggest that happiness depends more upon the state of mind — and body, perhaps — than upon circumstances and events.

Nevertheless old age could bring misery if you were unlucky. Old couples lived in daily fear of the workhouse unless they had children to support them, so the Old Age Pensions Act transformed their lives. When they first went to the Post Office to draw the pension 'tears of gratitude would pour down their faces and there were flowers from their gardens and apples for the girl who merely handed them the money.'

Her work in the post office brought Thompson into contact with the kind of people among whom her subsequent life would be spent, the newly emerging class between the middle and working classes, who were moving into the new suburbs outside small towns. Their families were much smaller, only one or two children, sometimes none; their homes were tasteless although the women wore themselves out keeping them tidy. Keeping up appearances and subscribing to fashions was their main interest for they would only open a book if it was one that everybody was reading. Spiritual health was replaced by material improvement.

Change came slowly if surely and right into the early years of this century many of the old village

ways of living remained and those who cherished the old customs were much as country people had been for generations. A little better educated, a little more democratic, a little more prosperous than their parents had been, but still the same unpretentious, warm-hearted people with just enough malice to give point to their wit and a growing sense of injustice which was making them begin to inquire when they would come to enjoy a fair share of the fruits of the

earth they tilled.

In his review of G B Edwards's *Ebenezer Le Page* (Conservative Classic Spring 2008) Keith Jacka remarks that only G B Edwards and Patrick White have adequately recorded the huge social changes which accompanied the passing of the agricultural era. I think that Flora Thompson has achieved this also.



Roy Kenridge

Like many others, I was terrified by the news that mad scientists had invented a Hadron Collider gadget that could cause the whole universe to be sucked into a black hole. Like Frankenstein before them, these scientists lived in the Alps. Apparently they used an abandoned railway tunnel as a cave. In the event, when switched on, the Collider released a cloud of helium gas into the hitherto pure mountain air, and collapsed.

I once had a friend in Brighton who sold balloons filled with this gas. As a joke, he would squirt the helium into people's mouths to make them talk in a funny way. So now — thanks to science — the poor Swiss, instead of yodelling, quack like Donald Duck.

They may reflect that this is a small price to pay for advancing scientific knowledge. Few people seem to feel that scientists need restraining in any way. Admittedly, the scientists do not purposely wish to destroy the universe, only to 'recreate' a Big Bang that never happened. The English, like awed children in school feel secure in the delusion that 'clever people' know everything. But I thought better of the Swiss.

The whole thing reminds me of an episode in the *Little Panda* cartoon strip which I enjoyed as a boy in the nineteen fifties. It appeared translated from the Dutch in *The Evening News*. Innocent Little Panda naively trusts a rascally fox, George Goodfellow, who purports to be a scientist. Goodfellow has taken over a disused lighthouse, and terrifies the locals with skull and crossbone notices proclaiming: 'Danger, Scientific Experiments. Keep out.'

I have spent all my money inventing a Dematerialising Machine,' he proclaims. As proof, he shows Panda that he has no money, then leads the cub to a room at the top of the lighthouse.

'But there's nothing there', the Panda points out.

'Obviously it's invisible, as it's made of dematerialised material' is the answer.

Panda proclaims this marvel to the world, and the Mayor and some others go up to see it. Only the fox returns, to tell Panda casually, 'Oh, they dematerialised. Affecting to be an absent minded scholar, he buries himself in a book entitled *How to do card tricks*.

'I know!' cries the Panda, 'Why don't you invent a materialising machine to bring them back?'

'What a brilliant idea. You are a genius! The fox replies. 'Unfortunately it will cost seventy billion pounds. Go out and get the money.

Having kidnapped another VIP or two, by means of a trap door leading to a cell below, the fox actually does receive a large cheque from the crocodile Prime Minister to bring them back. With a great deal of talk about 'the pure light of science', the fox sits up all night in a locked room, rocking in a noisy chair to create the illusion of an inventor at work.

At this point, my whole family combine to shut me up, as they cannot abide my endless retelling of interminable Little Panda cartoons. But you get the gist — whether a Hadron Collider or a Goodfellow Rematerialiser, the object of the experiment is to create huge wealth for scientists.

Erratum

In the Autumn issue of *The Salisbury Review* one of the paragraphs appeared in a mangled form obscuring my meaning. It should have read like this: 'Trinidad and its brother country Guyana are in an awkward position. Land, business and private wealth are in the hands of Indians, but political power and wealth are in the hands of Negroes. South Africa and the American state of Mississippi are in a similar case, if you read 'white people' for Indian. In such a set-up, resentments are inevitable, and the Naipaul brothers' books are full of them.'

Reputations — 22

Martin Luther King: A Badly Flawed Hero

Paul Gottfried

On January 15, the American media, politicians of all stripes and public educators fall into rapturous tones describing the black leader whose birthday is then being celebrated, namely, Martin Luther King (1929-1968). King's birthday is the only national holiday devoted to an individual American whose public observance has been commanded by Congress, and in 1983 this honour was accorded, with more or less bipartisan support. The same tribute is no longer extended to the founder of our country George Washington, or to our sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln, who is still widely honoured for ending black slavery. Washington and Lincoln both now share a generic President's Day that is wedged in between their two birthdays in February. The gallant Southern leader Robert E Lee, whose birthday coincides with King's and who after 1983 was to be co-celebrated in Southern states along with the black civil rights leader, has now fallen upon exceedingly hard times. Lee has become a non-person or even worse, someone identified with the institution of slavery, although there is nothing to suggest that this Christian gentleman favoured that institution or that he led the Confederate forces in Virginia for any reason other than the one he gave upon turning down an invitation to command the Union army, which was to protect his ancestral state against invasion.

There is a very clear relation to be drawn between these two recent developments, as my friend Sam Francis delighted in pointing out. The replacement of Lee and Washington, who were related through Washington's wife Mary, by King as the centre of a public cult signalled a true 'iconic revolution' in our country. Nor was this revolution in consciousness likely to end with the congressional enshrinement of King or with the public acknowledgement of his birthday. Every January 15 there now takes place an orgy of guilt-tripping and pseudo-Christian penance, one that seems to become shriller and more robotised with the passing of time. There is also in the US a relation between the downplaying of Christmas, which is being reduced here no less than in Britain to a 'holiday season,' and King's birthday in mid-January, which is followed by Black History Month. What the new liturgical season highlights is King's martyrdom in 1968, when he was assassinated while leading a

garbage employees' strike in Memphis, Tennessee, and the need for national atonement for our country's long embedded white racism. This penance, which is a post-Christian form of Lent, goes on through Black History Month and is then resumed for another putative victim group during Women's Month. Although the establishment right (that is, GOP operatives and neoconservative journalists) and the Left disagree on how this sacral calendar is to be observed, they all see eye-to-eye on its contents.

The dispute here resembles nothing so much as the councils of the early Church that were devoted to clarifying the nature of Christ. Instead of the strife released over whether the concept of homoousia or that of homoiousia properly described the nexus between the first two members of the Trinity, we now have a more timely question: Did Martin Luther King, by his suffering and death, release our country from further atonement for racism or must this atonement become even more frenzied because of how his 'unfinished mission for racial justice' ended? Although the Heritage Foundation last year proclaimed King to be a 'Christian theologian' as well as a 'great conservative thinker,' the reality is exactly the opposite: this now beatified figure was a self-proclaimed social radical, who provided the god figure of a post-Christian religion, albeit one that is parasitic on Christian narratives. He is living proof of the continuity between Christian images and a now victorious leftist ideology.

Lest I be accused of being unfair to my subject, let me stress that he was not really responsible for this glorification. As far as I know, King could never have imagined how he would be used after his death, any more than Karl Marx could have imagined that his ideas would be cited to justify Soviet tyranny. He might even have had the decency to blush if he had heard our 'conservative' presidential candidate John McCain apologizing last spring in Memphis for having not supported the King public holiday soon enough. McCain characterized this failure as 'the single biggest mistake in my political life'.

Moreover, there is much about King's life that should command our respect, and particularly his personal courage. During his crusade against segregation in the Deep South and in his fight for black voting rights in the same region, he stood up against threats to his life.

These went on from his participation in the boycott of segregated public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 down to his voting rights march in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Throughout this period, and actually down to his violent death, King had to deal with hostile opponents, who threatened danger to him and his family. Not surprisingly, he was arrested and put in jail in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, for his violation of municipal ordinances. But King also made clear that while he was breaking laws that he found to be unjust, he was also willing to pay the penalty. And in his 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail,' penned in 1963, he shows as an ordained Protestant minister at least some acquaintance with theological sources that could be cited, however selectively, to legitimate his stand.

There is also much to object to about racial segregation. In its heyday it was extended to a plethora of public and private institutions, and, from what I recall, Jim Crow made few exceptions for worthy black would-be users of libraries and decent state universities. And it was Southern whites who could have cleaned up this act for generations, before it became a *cause célèbre* for the Left and government social engineers. While no one comes in second to me in lamenting the effects of the Civil Rights revolution and especially its excesses, it would be foolish to deny that it began with a just cause. The same is of course equally true of other political disasters such as the French Revolution.

As someone whose family suffered grievously under the treaties ending World War One and later under the Nazi regime, it seems to me that complaints about the first were justified even if vicious people later exploited them. And there is no need to believe that by criticizing civil rights activists, one is expressing approval for what they sometimes correctly brought to public attention. Forcing some elderly black lady to sit in the back of a bus because of her skin colour is not only degrading. It also provided a moral excuse to get federal bureaucrats and judges into the never-ending enterprise of reconstructing American society, an experiment that has now been extended to every aspect of our communal and commercial lives.

I would even surmise that had the issue of racial segregation not become a major national moral concern, with considerable media assistance, King and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, would not have been able to move as easily as they did, with broad national endorsement, into mobilizing black voters. Our Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965, with disproportionate support from the Republican Party, to ensure federal supervision of areas in the South in which blacks had been kept or

were suspected of having been kept from voting. Such steps contributed considerably toward moving our electorate toward the social Left, where about 99% of the black electorate can now be found. The leftward lunge in our presidential politics, represented by the election of long-time black nationalist and social leftist Barack Obama, has been made possible by the changes accompanying the civil rights revolution, namely a large black electorate on the left, which supports with few exceptions Obama, and a white population that has been relentlessly instilled with a sense of racial guilt. Quite possibly, if the South had voluntarily desegregated its institutions, or had displayed more flexibility about race relations, some of this radicalization could have been avoided. By creating an eyesore, Southern whites contributed to the storm that later erupted.

It is not hard to show King was a badly flawed public figure. But one can no longer do that in the US without being suspected of being a 'rightwing extremist,' and usually in the neoconservative press. King's frequent acts of plagiarism, extending from his doctoral dissertation to his renowned 'I Have a Dream' Speech, delivered at the Washington Mall on August 28, 1963, have long been matters of record. One diligent scholar, Theodore Pappas, has devoted an entire work, *Plagiarism and the Cultural Wars*, to identifying King's borrowed sources. Pappas proves to what extent King as an orator and author engaged in 'voice-dubbing' and 'textual borrowing,' as the mainstream media have referred to his frequent verbal thefts.

He was also a notorious philanderer who was not above using his pastoral activities to 'counsel' young, voluptuous women. Some of his own advisors complained that his amorous activities got in the way of his political activities, although in his defence it might be argued that he had plenty of time for both. His connection to Communist friends, and most notoriously from 1957 onward, to veteran CP activist Stanley Levison, and the pop Marxist phrases that laced his political commentary suggest that King was something other than the 'Christian' idealist whom the GOP have discovered in his biography.

It is questionable whether King would have had anything but contempt for those 'conservative' publicists who have tried to turn him into an advocate of free market economics, meritocracy, and warlike American patriotism. King already in the 1950s had called for government-introduced racial quotas in employment; he was also demonstrably a socialist with Marxist overtones in economics, and he famously denounced the Vietnam War as a struggle that hurt blacks by delaying their quest for equality. Although

King had indeed just grievances, at least in the beginning of his career, his politics quickly descended into those of his disciple Jesse Jackson.

But my purpose is not to run him down. It is rather to stress his unsuitability for the role into which he was thrust after his death. I still recall standing in line to buy stamps in a post office in 1983 when a mother was explaining to her son who was looking

at a newly minted stamp: 'No, that's not the famous Martin Luther. It's a monk who was born five-hundred years ago, somewhere in Europe.' This woman had, if anything, understated King's rising value, which was not to replace the father of the Protestant Reformation but Luther's own saviour. For this is certainly what King has become in today's American political culture, a martyred deity.

ETERNAL LIFE



Professor Michael Reiss, an education officer in the Royal Society, suggested recently that so-called *creationism* should be taught in schools alongside normal science, to show that it is not comparable to the scientific method. For this mild suggestion Professor Reiss has had to resign. There has been so much confused discussion of the whole issue of science and religion that we should try to see the wood for the trees.

It must be made plain that creationism has nothing to do with the Bible. *The Book of Genesis* does say that God made the world in six days and that he rested on the seventh. Only the dumbest exponent of literal-mindedness thinks that story refers to seven days of twenty-four hours apiece. The writers of *Genesis* themselves did not mean seven days — literally. They were inspired poets giving us an imaginative story of the creation.

But there are other sorts of crass fundamentalists outside the Bible belt. We find many of them among today's scientists. They set up experiments such as the Large Hadron Collider which they hope will tell us how the universe began — literally. I call these scientists fundamentalists. A moment's reflection shows that we, who are but part of the whole, can never explain entirely the whole of which we are a part. Scientists claim their method is objective but it is the opposite, for they stand within the system which they are trying to explain. A little modesty might lead these scientists to say: *When we tell you about the Big Bang, we are offering you a modern creation myth to put alongside the creation myth in The Book of Genesis.*

Many people in the media have never read any classical literature and so they don't know what a myth is. Loch Ness Monster: Fact or Myth? That's the extent of their misconception. A myth is not something which is untrue but something which helps us get a picture of a reality that is beyond our understanding. And *necessarily* beyond our understanding because it would be preposterous to suggest that finite beings can comprehend infinities.

Still these scientists persist fanatically with their grandiose claims. Professor Stephen Hawking in his pot-boiler *A Brief History of Time* suggested that physicists were close to producing a unified field theory, an equation which would be the explanation of everything. As he put it graphically, 'Then we shall know the mind of God'. There is nothing new in such arrogance. Hundreds of years before the coming of Christ, Jeremiah the Prophet had to tell the hubris-soaked know-all of his own day that the potter shapes the clay: the clay does not shape the potter.

The scientists are always approaching this unified field theory, but it turns out to be like the horizon. When you reach where it was, it's somewhere beyond. In a recent book fascinatingly entitled *Not Even Wrong* — a phrase borrowed from the great physicist Wolfgang Pauli — Professor Peter Woit tells us that there has been no significant progress in theoretical physics for at least thirty years:

Without any new experimental data to provide clues as to which direction to take in order to make further progress, the field has stagnated and worked itself a long way down a blind alley.

The theory of everything is as far away as ever.

We should use the good understanding which science has provided when it sticks within its own discipline and doesn't attempt theology. Modern physics informs us that if gravitational force had been a bit stronger or weaker than it actually is, if the strong nuclear force had been slightly different, same with the weak nuclear force — then there wouldn't have been anything at all. Modern science says very categorically that there are precise conditions for the existence of the material universe. Why — unless it looks as if the universe was designed? The renowned astronomer Fred Hoyle put this very colourfully:

As believe that the universe came into being accidentally, you might as well try believing that a hurricane could blow through a scrap yard and leave behind a perfectly formed Jumbo jet.

The papers and the airwaves have been full of the dispute between intelligent design and the theory of evolution and this issue that has generated only fog and misunderstanding. Charles Darwin produced a theory to account for the development of the various species on earth, which was a staggering achievement. Charles Darwin never tried to do what Richard Dawkins does — to claim that the theory of evolution removes the need for creation. Darwinism says nothing about the beginning. It nowhere offers an explanation of how something came out of nothing; of how mental activity and consciousness arose out of inanimate matter.

Atheistic materialism is not science but an ideology, a prejudice. We must do battle with these ideological atheists who hate Christianity and who are misrepresenting real science in order to discredit our faith. We must tell them that science arose out of Christianity — out of the witness of the New Testament which says that God is the Logos, the Word, the rational principle. The great mathematician A N Whitehead — who collaborated with Bertrand Russell on the three volume work *Principia Mathematica* — said:

There can be but one explanation for the origins

of science and that is in the Christian idea of the rationality of God.

The supposed opposition of science and religion is a modern misconception. It is not being driven by true believers nor true scientists, but a destructive sideshow erected by bigots and ideologues on both sides of the fence. In current scientific understanding of the atom we are asked to picture the single atom as something the size of St Paul's cathedral. If St Paul's were the atom, then the only matter inside it would amount to a few specks of dust: the rest would be empty space. That, say the quantum physicists, is what the atom is like, roughly: a very few electrons moving at immense speed in what is largely empty space.

One of these physicists explained what follows from this discovery. If you take all the matter in the solar system, the sun, the planets, the moons and the asteroids, the amount of visible, tangible matter in the whole would be about the size of a tennis ball. Oddly — or not so oddly — the 14th century mystic Mother Julian of Norwich once asked God how big the universe really is. And, in her vision, God put into her hand a single apple.

Peter Mullen

LETTERS

Sir

It surprised me that Christie Davies ('Death by Degrees', *SR*, Autumn 2008) should have marred an otherwise fine analysis by his attack on the continuous assessment system which he calls 'a dishonest method of diluting standards.'

I cannot speak from any direct experience of British universities. Yet I can claim some personal acquaintance with Australian universities, and in particular some familiarity with the syndrome which prevailed at these universities' arts departments in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. (Continuous assessment became frequent there around 1980.)

This pre-1980 syndrome placed the entire weight of appraisal upon how the arts undergraduate performed in his end-of-academic-year examinations. It led, for all save a handful of exceptional students, to one outcome: namely, complete loafing followed by belated and largely fraudulent swotting.

The average student — having spent the preceding nine or ten months eschewing lectures; eschewing tutorials; undertaking extracurricular political crusades of unvaried infantilism; disdaining to open a textbook; and usually soused, antipodean drinking habits being what they have always been — suddenly realised the looming threat of exams. He would then try to make up, through last-minute cramming sessions, the ground that his pedagogues had

vainly expected him to cover during his course. Such emergency measures were largely futile as learning experiences. Any success attained in examinations via such methods was so factitious that it amounted to cheating, although, admittedly, cheating of a more circumspect kind than are the elaborate swindles that Dr Davies rightly deplores.

There is no evidence (certainly Dr Davies provides no evidence) of any connection between continuous assessment and the fake-essay rackets cited in this piece. My own undergraduate years at Sydney University were wholly given over to continuous assessment. If what Dr Davies says were correct, then fraud should have abounded. It did not. Indeed (and despite the total absence, back then, of those computer-based anti-plagiarism methods so widespread now), I cannot remember *one solitary example* of fraud being attempted, let alone being rewarded. Academics had no need even to warn students of plagiarism's consequences. Everyone accepted that the plagiarist would be considered an outcast, as is the child-molester today.

The appalling problems of today's university culture are overwhelmingly moral. They would remain even if continuous assessment were everywhere abolished. Almost certainly such abolition would make them worse, if the Australian case is any guide.

R J Stove, Melbourne

ARTS AND BOOKS

The New Model Family

Patricia Morgan

Second Thoughts on the Family, Anastasia de Waal, Civitas, 2008, £8.99.

A *Spectator* headline recently declared how: 'Not even science fiction foresaw the end of fathers' as the Human Fertilization and Embryology Bill excised the 'need of a child for a father' from the law on assisted reproduction. This was perhaps forgetful of how the counter-cultural movement precisely envisaged a fully sexually emancipated world where no communally reared child knew its own father. Back in 1971, the Gay Liberation Front Manifesto began with the statement that its primary and 'long term goal' was

...to rid society of the gender role system which is at the root of our oppression. This can only be achieved by the *abolition* of the family unit ...Children must be liberated from the present condition of having their role in life defined by biological accident...

Bringing the official deconstruction of the conjugal family to full fruition is one of the big achievements of New Labour. Insisting that the existing law was 'unjustifiable, discriminatory and vindictive', MP Ewan Harris claimed 'The evidence suggests children do very well brought up by lesbian couples and solo parents, so good riddance,' and duplicitously insisted how this matter of adult rights promoted 'what is best for children'. The *actual* evidence is that children with solo parents have, on average, worse outcomes compared to those reared in a stable two parent family. There is no reliable evidence for lesbians.

Scientific standards are not the least among the casualties of New Labour, to whom the word 'research' is an abracadabra to clear the way. Following in this trend of trashing all that has been learnt in the past few centuries about the drawbacks of trying to move from personal opinion, superstition and self-deception to generalized knowledge, Anastasia de Waal interviewed 27 worthies for Civitas's *Second Thoughts on the Family* about 'what priorities should be for the family'. Only Fay Weldon's observation that the left's abolition of the family '...has been an experiment that failed — and the fact that it was an experiment which has never been put to the electorate'

has any veracity. Otherwise, the assembly of know-nothings — including the editor of the *Marie Claire* (the magazine for 'empowered' women), the problem page editor of the *Sun*, broadcasters, do-gooders, psycho-therapists and others — blather on vacuously in the wilderness.

Because he believed that it was an investment that would pay off handsomely, Gordon Brown threw billions at the booming underclass. Unfortunately, there is simply *no* evidence that extra money makes one iota of difference to child development once a subsistence level is passed. This may be skirted by recasting poverty as any defect of circumstance — as with Anthony Giddens' (New Labour's court sociologist's) gobbledygook that 'there is a generic phenomenon of what poverty is, including family difficulties, this is why the standardizing term 'social exclusion' is used.'

Seemingly having just dropped in from planet Tharg, Anastasia de Waal buys the excruciating line that Labour's disapproval of couples in the benefit system is a reaction to 'conservative moralizing' and support for marriage (a word she and her contributors can hardly bring themselves to mention without choking on their skinny lattes). It's all the fault of the ways in which the nasty party 'strove to bolster the family unit with marriage at the centre' in the Thatcher years and encouraged 'interdependence in the family to displace dependence on the state'. The reality was that Kenneth Clarke started removing tax relief for married couples as an 'anomaly'; benefits for lone parents grew as those for families generally were reduced and the tax burden passed on to couples with children. With the poll tax, couples paid double since interdependence was a 'consumer choice' and — going by the rhetoric accompanying its introduction — lone adults were the epitome of virtue. Tory times saw a massive increase in welfare, much of it accounted for by the rise of benefit-dependent lone parents.

In the guise of neutrality on family matters, policies in Tory times were heavily influenced by loud pressure groups. Under New Labour the abolitionists and exponents of 'alternative' lifestyles moved into government. The immense discrimination in the benefits system against couples has, ironically, sabotaged Utopian aspirations to end child poverty, since poor two-parent families (always the poverty majority at any one time) are increasing. A lone parent working a few hours a week is well over the poverty

line; making nonsense of de Waal's assertion that: 'child poverty is currently concentrated in single-parent families'. It is surpassed by Polly Toynbee's lunatic claim that 'All the new freedom that has been granted to women is the freedom to starve' and how 'the rotten system means women can't rear children alone properly'.

With marriage edited out of public discourse, the New Labour model family is found in the FACS (Families and Children) population studies, where a 'couple family' is 'headed by one natural or adoptive parent' and a 'partner' who is 'The person with whom the mother shares a home'. Anthony Giddens denies that the two parent married family ever existed; it being nothing but 'an idealized version of the 1950s family that never was'.

Nevertheless, there is vague unease among Civitas's respondents that what is happening is not exactly in the best interests of the young. In steps de Waal to square the circle. We must not 'dictate' family structure, but *truly* separate adult relationships from parenting and stop talking about lone parents and family breakdown — because the family will remain intact when the household splits. Men will move around parenting children in different households, or the children will move from one home (and school?) to another to get their dollop of Dad and Mum. Duncan Fisher of the Fatherhood Institute wants the state to automatically provide two homes per child, and double count child poverty. Otherwise: 'notions that the child can only be in one residence ... doesn't bring in the child's perspective enough.'

I have heard this rubbish many times — from fathers' rightists to feminists to New Labour's multifarious 'outreach' arms. As the wonder solution, peripatetic parenting is on a par with the original feminist fairy dell where everybody spontaneously 'cared' as need be for any and every proximate child. Such 'multi-partnered fertility' is feral reproduction and something outside the kind of institutionalized family structures distinctive of human society. It is a recipe for immense conflict and, as Theodore Dalrymple recently reported on these pages, men will stay in prison rather than face the trouble and strife. Another 'co-resident partner' around in the child(ren)'s home, surprise, surprise, sends the previous one running, as does a new 'partnership' for the father — especially one with new children. Is it imagined that all the 'multi-partnering' has no effect on the capacity to 'parent'? That children do not vote with their feet? That daughters do not compete with their young mothers for the same men? That miserable teenagers in homes filled with conflict and change do not get out of it by getting pregnant and continuing the cycle?

What actually matters is a live-in working father. But item number 2 on de Waal's family policy wish list is 'parenting equality'. She claims that men have higher earnings because these 'disable' them from leaving the workforce to change the nappies; enforcing a continuation of traditional roles that ordinary people are desperate to escape. Therefore, what is wanted is a 30 hour working week, more childcare and flexible work arrangements. In contrast, present Tory proposals for tax allowances for married couples raise the terrible prospect that people might resort to a division of labour and go for father's breadwinning rather than his caring. Good old Scandinavia is the (moth eaten) 'model of emancipation', what with its 'exemplary childcare'.

However Norway and Finland *now* give parents choice of whether they spend childcare money at home or on a nursery. Sweden is being dragged in the same direction. It has tried for decades to achieve identical sex roles (even redesigning the public lavatories) and failed. Forcing parental leave on men is a vote loser.

Having belatedly realized how New Labour has been, at least, going in the right direction, de Waal for Civitas applauds its 'good record on the family'. (While *Second Thoughts...* might be a *mea culpa* for previously challenging establishment policy, it uncannily works as a caricature — albeit leaden.) As 'inappropriate and ineffective', support for marriage only goes to show how the Tory leopard cannot change its 'moralising reputation.' That cohabiters split up —well, it's the poverty: the same reason they can't afford the wedding party; ignoring the one in two in higher income groups who also split up before the child's fifth birthday. Making a commitment to a future together — rather than living day by day with one foot out the door — profoundly alters how people, especially men, think and behave. A tax allowance signals recognition for mutual support and interdependence and does not apply to those who freely choose not to make a commitment. This does not mean that unwed couples have to suffer discrimination in the benefits system; something which only follows for those who cannot distinguish tax allowances from welfare payments.

Anthony Giddens is wheeled on by de Waal to insist how you cannot champion marriage whilst attacking state intervention, because 'Institutions such as marriage are very much state phenomena'. This fails to see how marriage gives people a protected sphere in which to develop their own lives, where the minimal state guarantees this in the same way that it enforces contracts and upholds property rights. Otherwise, why not a world where nobody has deeds to their house (a piece of paper) and everybody squats anywhere possible? It is as the family fragments into 'all shapes and sizes', that the state has to try and provide

compensatory and remedial services to raise children from the 'exclusion' imposed by the 'family diversity' it has itself cultivated. Air-head left-wing sociologists like Giddens may be excused. That de Waal seems to understand as little of elementary social philosophy as she does of empirical standards — arguing for the demise of the very civil society her organisation purports to support — is a terrible comment on the legacy of New Labour as much as the level of public debate.

China at the Door

Jonathan Story

China: A Wolf in the World? George Walden, Gibson Square, 2008, £14.99.

There are many books now hitting the stands about China, each peddling its own version of China as a country in transformation to becoming, variously, an 800 pound gorilla on the world stage, a member of the democratic family of nations, an economic and ecological basket case, or a world leader in hi tech industries. The value of George Walden's book is to remind us that for centuries westerners have looked at China through western prisms, found what they wanted, extrapolated their illusions to a future which inevitably disappoints. This is a luxury, Walden says, that we cannot afford, now that the communist party of China has decided that China must join the world, without having repudiated Mao — the founder of the People's Republic.

Walden was originally a Russian specialist, but when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office decided that it needed Mandarin speakers to find out more about what was happening behind the bamboo curtain, it sent Walden to Hong Kong to learn the language. At the British Embassy in Peking he witnessed first hand the events of the Cultural Revolution, launched in 1966 by the Great Helmsman to eradicate any vestige of China's inheritance in a vain attempt to purge China of its past. When Mao finally passed on in 1976, communist China was isolated, an impoverished backwater, befriended by the likes of Marshall Mobutu, Enver Hoxha and the Khmer Rouge. As Jung Chang has shown in *Mao: The Unknown Story* — a book banned in China — the founder of the People's Republic was responsible for the deaths of 70 or more million of his fellow countrymen and women, not counting the lives devastated by his efforts to abolish the family, the millions languishing in the forced labour camps scattered around China, or the 400 million of China's population of 900 million

living in extreme poverty.

Walden rightly argues that the China we observe springs from this experience, and particularly the disasters accompanying the Cultural Revolution, just as much as modern Europe has been shaped by the defeat of Hitler. Treasures from the past were destroyed, all learning — other than what could be culled from the Great Helmsman's *Little Red Book* — was decried as bourgeois, the young were turned against their elders, the shouting of slogans substituted for debate, and the country turned into a cultural wasteland. Business people who first went to China in the late 1970s, as Deng Xiaoping moved to open China's door, recount the avid interest displayed by the Chinese in all things foreign. In my view, it was this eagerness to learn about things foreign among a generation of young Chinese that was the unexpected result of Mao's madness. Deng opened the door for the people of China to learn about the rest of the world in a way they had never ever done before. China has not looked back.

Mao's appalling record did not prevent legions of fellow-travellers from Europe drooling over his alleged successes. Jean-Paul Sartre opined that China was a quarry where the New Model Man was being created, and Alberto Moravia acclaimed Mao as ridding the country of the weight of its past. Mao's *Little Red Book* featured on US university campuses in the 1960s, and was widely cited during the student movements across Europe. Their intellectual heirs now decry China as a neo-liberal hell, whose exports threaten the livelihoods of western workers, and whose corporate hunger for world minerals has driven global prices sky-high.

They have a point. Growth is the CCP policy to escape the fate of the Soviet Union. As Deng stated in his famous trip to Guangdong, a couple of months after the USSR was wound up, 'it is glorious to get rich'. Party members took him at his word, and got down to the serious task of doing what they consider bourgeois regimes have always done. As Walden points out, 90 per cent of the richest Chinese are offspring of government cadres. He could have added that there are 70 million shareholders, and the same number of party members. Marx is still taught in Chinese universities, and the message conveyed is that the CCP exploits the Chinese masses for the benefit of the country.

Will Hutton, in his book *The Writing on the Wall*, thinks this cannot continue, and like other westerners before, is no shrinking violet when it comes to dispensing advice to the Chinese. They need democracy, the rule of law, a free press and a social market economy, with the emphasis heavily on the social and rather less on the market. Only by espousing the values of the Enlightenment will the future presently in store for China be avoided.

The trouble with this type of thinking is that many Chinese consider that the European Enlightenment has had its hour in China, and been found wanting. What is not European enlightenment, if not Marxism and all its works? The rhetorical question may be asked. Mao's permanent war on the Chinese people, in this view, was nothing more than an 'enlightened' laboratory experiment. European and US fellow travellers recognized this, but did so from the comfort of countries where all those deplorable bourgeois freedoms could be enjoyed to the full.

Walden rightly advises us to be cautious about projecting western thought patterns and expectations on such an ancient culture. In all probability, he says, we are likely to see more of the same authoritarian leadership in a strong state under the guidance of a single party. The title of his book ends on a question mark to indicate that the future is wide open. The title is derived from a book by Jiang Rong, a democrat, who hopes that the Chinese will stop behaving like sheep, and assert themselves more fearlessly in the world. Walden does not say they will, but in a country made by Mao into a cultural wasteland, anything becomes possible.

The leadership know this only too well. What to do about the moral wasteland of post-Mao China has become a subject for discussions in the Politburo, and has led to a serious effort to revive those elements of Confucianism which are compatible with continued CCP leadership. The new teaching was visible in the opening ceremony of the Beijing Games, where China's past was celebrated without any mention of the terrible times of trouble (*luan*), which in the regime's book began to come to an end in the late 1970s.

And this is Walden's main point. The official verdict on Mao's record, delivered by the new collective leadership in 1982, held that Mao was 70 per cent right, and 30 per cent wrong. Despite recurrent attempts to have an open discussion about the Mao years, no CCP leader has done to Mao what Khrushchev did to Stalin. At the XXth Party Congress in February 1956, Khrushchev denounced his former boss for his own 'cult of personality', and for hounding party members during the great purges of the 1930s. The communist movement never recovered.

Until full light is shed on Mao, the tyrant who created the People's Republic, we cannot be sure which path China takes. No leader has dared to do so for fear of shaking the regime to its foundations. The coming to terms by the Chinese with the regime's own past is Walden's key to China's future, not western prescriptions predicated on western preconceptions of what is right and wrong for the Middle Kingdom.

A Road to Damascus

Christie Davies

There is a God: How the world's most notorious atheist changed his mind, Antony Flew, HarperOne, 2007, £15.99.

Antony Flew has written a book about his rationalist's pilgrimage from atheism to deism that is both instructive and charming. The charm resides in the autobiographical section, the story of Flew the man, which sets the evolution of his views about God in the context of the story of his life; at times it has the quality of Cardinal Newman's *Apologia pro sua vita*. Flew really should write an autobiography that tells us more about himself and about the way his changing views on politics and economics fit into that life.

Tony Flew was never the world's most 'notorious' atheist, merely the subtlest and best informed. He took his atheism seriously; he knew thoroughly the theses of those who did believe in God and he engaged with them. Professor Flew really did wrestle with an angel until the breaking of the day. He even took part in well-attended public debates with the believers; he did not dismiss them as trivial and foolish in the way that a truly notorious atheist would have done. When it comes to notoriety, Flew can not even begin to compete with the weasel Dawkins, just as Dawkins can not match Flew for philosophical insight. Dawkins really does have blind faith, as blind as his watchmaker.

In his atheist days Flew would take apart the philosophical arguments of the true believers relentlessly. My favourite was Flew's treatment of Pascal's wager. Pascal had argued that you should bet on the existence of God and lead a pious life because if you won you would gain a glorious and infinite afterlife, if you lost, well it wouldn't make any difference. You would be no worse off than someone who had bet the other way. Flew pointed out that Pascal had over-simplified his wager. What if God did exist but hated Roman Catholics and would impose horrid penalties in the after-life on anyone who had subscribed to the beliefs of that Church? It is not an unreasonable view to take; it is widely held in Ulster and among the Southern Baptists, one of America's largest and most successful and fervent denominations.

But Flew is now a deist. He once believed with Topsy that 'I spects I grow'd. Don't think nobody never made me', but he has now gone topsy-turvy and thinks the world has a Creator who deliberately made the universe, life and most importantly us. Flew's God is

that of Aristotle for he writes, 'God created the world so as to bring into being a race of rational creatures.' He now shares David Conway's view that 'it is possible to learn of the existence and nature of this Aristotelian God by the exercise of unaided human reason'. Flew has come to this conclusion partly on probability grounds. The random chances of the universe coming into existence with a bang, of the conditions being just right for life to be possible, of inanimate matter producing living creatures, of a shift from reproduction by mere division to sexual reproduction allowing greater genetic diversity and thus the operation of natural selection are exceptionally small. To assume the existence of God provides a more likely and a more elegant explanation.

I cannot see why any of this would matter, if we as human beings were not here to think about it. But this renders Flew's deism an unsatisfactory half-way house. Flew's God is the pointless Great Architect of the Universe of the Freemasons and of the irreligious founding fathers of America, such as the deist Benjamin Franklin or the strange Thomas Jefferson who tried to rewrite the Bible by removing all supernatural references. Flew's God is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Pascal but that of the philosophers. Surely if we recognise the existence of a being who has deliberately set up a universe to create rational beings, then we must assume he takes an interest in us and talks to us. To know of the existence of God, as Flew postulates, should lead to knowing God. Indeed in an appendix Flew enters into a dialogue with the Bishop of Durham, the New Testament scholar N T Wright, on 'The Self-Revelation of God in Human History: a dialogue on Jesus', which makes a great deal of sense. Flew is being nudged in the direction of theism, of being forced to link his abstract argument for the existence of God with the human condition. Yet there are dangers here. What if the dialogue in the appendix had been with a Muslim fundamentalist? If the only alternative on offer were submission to Allah, would not a sensible person consider that it were better to conclude that the universe has no meaning whatsoever?

What is odd about Flew's change of mind is that he waited until 2004. He is right to see himself as a restless seeker after truth committed 'to following the argument wherever it leads' but what happened in or shortly before 2004 to tip the balance? His case seems to (but can not) depend on a marginal increment of certainty brought about by advances in science and philosophy around that time, yet the core arguments have long been in place.

Flew has changed his mind before. He once subscribed to Marxism but now is a fervent upholder

of the free market. He formerly thought that 'all human choices are determined entirely by physical causes' but now accepts individual autonomy and responsibility. Yet these older beliefs of his, like his former atheism, make no sense at all. Marxism is obviously wrong for empirical reasons. Flew deserves our respect for giving them up and for giving good reasons for doing so but how could he have been so foolish as to believe them in the first place? Marxism, determinism and atheism are the three pillars of the progressive world-view. Can it be that after he had long abandoned the first two, the rationale for the third collapsed and brought Flew to accept the existence of his Creator?

Flew's problem is that he wants certainty; the certainty of Marxism has been replaced in his mind by an utter belief in the virtues of the free market and the certainty of atheism by the certainty of deism. His later views are far sounder than his unfortunate early ones but you always want to say to him 'up to a point, Professor Flew, up to a point'. Flew, like St John the Divine before him, does not understand that there is much virtue in being luke-warm. But enough. Let us rejoice that the lost sheep has returned, if not to the fold, at least to the secure pastures of the uplands and also permit ourselves a degree of gleeful *schadenfreude* at the rage and chagrin of the remaining atheists when they learned of Flew's change of mind.

This is a truly wonderful book. HarperOne's grasp of the different varieties of English, of indexing and of distribution is not all it should be but that does not detract from the fascination of Flew's odyssey, a journey of integrity, achievement and courage.

The Evil that Walks Invisible

Penelope Tremayne

Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond, David Runciman, Princeton University Press, 2008, £17.95.

The title of this book is catchy just now; probably quite a few of its buyers will have prepared or hoped for an exposé of present political leaders' habits. But the author has been scrupulous to throw no brickbats in any direction. He is a political historian, and writes as such about politics in the word's basic meaning, of people's relations with each other rather than just dishonesty in the House of Commons, resisting all temptations to draw comparisons with today's public figures and procedures. For this he deserves congratulation.

His focus is on the perceived need to divide hypocrisy as generally understood into two categories: 'simulation'

and 'dissimulation' as Francis Bacon defined them; simulation being 'when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be that which he is not' while dissimulation is only 'when a man lets fall signs and arguments, that he is not that he is'. Though both involve lying the first, he points out, is much the worse, because it is deliberate deception for its own sake, whereas the other (which Runciman slightly confusingly refers to as 'first, because it is less far gone in iniquity) may be merely a way of getting oneself out of a hole. Simulation does the greater damage, because after a time the simulator begins to believe in his own false character and ceases to know when he is lying. Runciman follows this trail, through many other writers' views. The obvious importance of the point may cast light today on an educational change of great significance which has taken place. Up to a generation ago children were regularly taught that lying to other people is wrong, and lying to oneself is worse because it leads to not knowing right from wrong any more. Now they learn that there is no real difference anyway. Here perhaps is a glimpse into why socialism when put into practice does not work. It was developed out of the twin illusions that all men are good and that all men are equal. The five senses as well as the intelligence and power of observation of any but an idiot contradict both of these; but the prospects offered were so alluring that millions upon millions since have deceived themselves to the point of accepting belief in those two myths as a moral essential. (Runciman writes 'There is little doubt that Orwell really believed in what he said about the possibilities for a kind of "honest" socialism.')

One or two comments that have appeared suggest that Runciman means that hypocrisy in politics is justified, because you will never get to the top without it. But that is not what he is saying. Resolutely leaving out his own opinions, he is telling us, with meticulous checkings and re-checkings, a little of what the most distinguished among British and in due course American political philosophers have said on the subject. Sometimes it is hard work for an ordinary reader to keep following him through the thickets ('hypocrisy cannot be simply opposed by anti-hypocrisy; sometimes anti-hypocrisy needs to be opposed with hypocrisy instead. There are no fixed lines to be drawn in this battle.') Perhaps too many sentences begin 'On the other hand', 'In other words', 'To put it another way'. But that comes of being even-handed and unmanipulative about all the sources he uses. And all of them, along their own routes, are saying the same thing: that hypocrisy is bad and to be kept down to a minimum; but that no-one can really avoid using it on occasions, either in public affairs or in the ordinary contacts of civilised life. Consider lying for instance to avoid hurt feelings or

unwelcome invitations. Runciman deals very skilfully with many grave tangles, and shows us how they have been handled by sages and politicians across 400 years of history.

Political Hypocrisy is a scholars' book. It may therefore seem surprising that David Cameron recommended it to his colleagues as holiday homework; sun, sand and sea all tend to fuddle the mind, alcohol or no, but partly for that reason I find the thought of it very encouraging. It suggests that he knows he has a team behind him with good minds and the will to get on with a job.

The Saviour of Europe

Tom Burkard

Warsaw 1920: Lenin's Failed Conquest of Europe, Adam Zamoyski, Harper Press, 2008, £14.99.

The West owes the Poles a huge debt. Three times in the 20th century they braved overwhelming odds to fight tyrants, and twice they succeeded. Yet while nearly everyone knows about their doomed resistance to the Wehrmacht and the improbable triumph of Solidarity, few have even heard of the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, let alone understand its significance. Until I first visited Poland in 1993, I knew nothing of it. I was by no means ignorant of Western efforts to support the White Russians after 1918; I had even helped restore the torpedo boat whose commander, Lt Gus Agar, had received an anonymous VC for sinking the Bolshevik cruiser Oleg. And my knowledge of Polish history, admittedly, not extensive, extended beyond Sobieski's immortal charge, which raised the siege of Vienna and broke the power of the Ottomans.

My Polish visit also reflected an ancestral debt. When I volunteered to help Radek Sikorski restore his manor at Chobielin, I explained that my Bavarian great-great-grandfather had, as a 15-year-old boy, been left for dead by Cossacks on the long retreat from Moscow. Clad in nothing but his underwear, which by that time was no doubt too disgusting to interest even the rapacious Cossacks, he struggled through the snow to the nearest cottage, where he was nursed back to health and given clothes to make his journey home.

Radek only gave me the bare outlines of the Red Army's rout on the banks of the Vistula, and recommended that I read Norman Davies *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919-20*, which was first published in 1972. I never managed to find a copy, but Adam Zamoyski's book on the subject came out this February. I had already read his account

of the Grande Armée's retreat from Moscow in 1812, demonstrating his extraordinary talents as a historian and a writer.

Zamoyski makes good use of original documents from all sides of the conflict — ones which illuminate the problems faced by politicians, generals and ordinary soldiers — and weaves them into a compelling narrative. It is hard to underestimate the difficulties the Poles faced. They had only just achieved independence after 123 years of partition between Germany, Russia and Austria, and the machinery of their new government had no time to bed in. Pilsudski's position was by no means secure; as an amateur general, he was distrusted by other generals, and Polish politics was riven with bitterly opposed factions. Territorial disputes with their German, Lithuanian and Ukrainian neighbours were complicated by the mixed ethnic composition in many of the Polish territories. Polish industries produced no armaments at all, and the army was handicapped by the variations in drill, tactics, weapons, ammunition and orders of battle, a legacy of the partitioning powers, whose armies Poland's officers and men had previously served.

Politically, the Poles were isolated. Pilsudski's Polish legions had fought for the Central Powers until 1917, so he was distrusted by the Entente. The White Russians were almost as much of a threat as the Bolsheviks, they wanted to re-partition Poland. Pilsudski's only allies were the Ukrainians, whom he had defeated the previous year, but when Polish armies liberated Kiev from the Red Army in April 1920, the Soviets were quick to portray this as an act of aggression. When the Soviets counter-attacked, the only assistance the Poles received from the West was the advice of General Weygand.

In any case, the Entente powers were hamstrung by their own fear of red revolt. Sending aid to forces fighting the Soviets was politically sensitive, as the anonymous award of the VC to Lt Agar demonstrates. When Curzon and Churchill arranged a shipment of arms to the struggling Polish forces in July 1920, the plan collapsed when the TUC threatened a general strike. Nor was the Bolshevik cause without influential supporters in Britain, many of whom regarded the Poles as reactionary priest-ridden peasants. Communism had found less support in Poland than in the salons of Bloomsbury Square. One should remember that the egregious crimes of Lenin and Stalin were still in the future, and honest men and women could be forgiven for dreaming that communism would bring about a more just society.

After Poland's initial successes, the Soviet counter-attack gathered pace. Unlike the Great War, this was a war of movement, the last war where cavalry played a major role. Polish attempts to create static defences

against the Russian onslaught met with limited success: the lines were just too long and weakly defended. By the time the Russians reached the Vistula, some of the Polish units were beginning to crumble, with their barefoot soldiers heading for home to prepare for another era of foreign rule.

At the time, Pilsudski's daring flanking manoeuvre seemed like a madman's last gamble. Even though the Soviets obtained a copy of the plan, it was dismissed as a ploy. Yet it worked perfectly, and the Soviets were utterly routed, with their dreams of European conquest laid to rest for another generation. The significance of the 'miracle on the Vistula' was not lost on the Soviets, who were quite open about their war aim to extend the revolution to Paris and London. Had Pilsudski's gamble failed, there would have been little to stop them short of the Rhine. Germany was already teetering on the brink of revolution, and there is every likelihood that workers in other countries, especially Italy, would have welcomed the Red Army.

Zamoyski's account of the Polish-Soviet War is the stuff of Hollywood blockbusters, except that the good guys, in the estimation of our cultural czars, lost. This alone is not quite enough to explain why it has been virtually air-brushed from the collective consciousness of the West. I suspect that it is largely because of Roosevelt's betrayal of the Poles at Yalta, and Churchill's acquiescence. Fortunately, good popular historians like Adam Zamoyski are resurrecting the discipline from the successive batterings it has had from Marxists and post-modernists. Their appeal stems from their rejection of the world-view of our bien-pensants, and their ability to weld original sources into a coherent narrative. Most of them display a generosity of spirit which seemingly disappeared with Lytton Strachey. In *Warsaw 1920*, Zamoyski gives Russian heroes such as Marshall Budyenny their due. We may not always agree with his judgements — in his latest book, Zamoyski attacks the Vienna system, which was largely successful in preserving the peace in Europe for a century — but we can only applaud their success in circumventing those who would blacken or ignore the achievements of Dead White European Males.

Kings and Queens

A W Purdue

The Monarchy and the British Nation, 1780 to the Present, ed Andrzej Olechnowicz, Cambridge University Press, 2007, £55.

Until the 1980s, Andrzej Olechnowicz comments in the first essay in this collection, 'academic

historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries largely ignored the British monarchy as an object of research'. Much depends, of course, on what exactly is meant by 'academic' in this context for it would be inconceivable not to term writers like Elizabeth Longford or Philip Ziegler as 'scholarly' and there were many fine biographies of individual monarchs. If, however, we limit the term to 'those working in universities', particularly to those with a sociological or political science bent, and to books which analyse the institution and its history, then the statement is largely true. The 1960s and 1970s in particular were a time when the historical zeitgeist was all about the history of the 'common people' or the working-classes and a 'committed' study of the Boilermakers' Union or the radical inclinations of cobblers was a much surer path to advancement than 'Kings and Queens'. How things have changed! Rather than ignored the monarchy is under the academic microscope.

The new interest in the modern monarchy came about for a number of reasons. One was a growing realisation that the simplistic narrative of its modern development, much dependent on Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution* (1867), was inadequate. For Bagehot, a republic had emerged under the cloak of monarchy; the political power of the sovereign had largely gone and, while prime minister, cabinet and parliament were the efficient part of the constitution, the monarchy as the dignified part was left with ceremonial and symbolic functions. At the most it exerted influence. As David Craig argues in 'Bagehot's republicanism', Bagehot was a republican who thought the British were not yet advanced or rational enough for a republic. His monarchy was perhaps an extreme version of that described in Jonathan Parry's essay, 'Whig Monarchy, Whig Nation: Crown, politics and representativeness 1800-2000'. Yet Bagehot was wrong about the role of the monarchy in his own time and as Michael Bentley demonstrates in his penetrating essay, 'Power and authority in the late Victorian and Edwardian Court', Victoria and Edward VII continued to exercise considerable political authority long after the publication of *The English Constitution*.

But to concentrate too much on the ability of monarchs to dismiss administrations, thwart ministers or make policy is to repeat Bagehot's greater error, to fail to see that his distinction between the 'efficient' and the 'dignified' does little justice to the complex nature of the relationship between monarchy and nation. Political power is not the only type of power, civil society is as important as the state while symbols, rites and ceremonies are not mere baubles but are strands of nationhood and social cohesion.

The changing focus of historical research has

made historians more aware of the importance of monarchy and has cast light on different aspects of its development. Jeffrey Richards's essay on 'The monarchy and film 1900-1906' shows how, 'Far from undermining the monarchy, the mass media have helped to perpetuate and transform the institution.' Clarissa Campbell Ord writes on 'Feminisation of the Monarchy' and it is true that the transition from ruler to the embodiment of national values has been more difficult for kings than queens and that monarchy and matriarchy go well together. Monarchy's capacity for renewal has been seen as the 'invention of tradition' but can better be considered as the embellishment and adaptation of traditions. After the 2002 Jubilee, one can well imagine some future broadcaster wondering 'When did the tradition of having a long-haired guitarist on the roof of Buckingham Palace during royal celebrations first begin?'

Bagehot's most important insight was his appreciation of the importance of 'a family on the throne'. The great advantage of a royal family is that it is inclusive of generations: George V could appeal as a stern, rather irascible but kindly father figure while his eldest son was a dashing and modern Prince Charming. During the period 1910-53, the projection of the family monarchy depended upon the royal family embodying the public values of the day. Phillip Williamson sees 'family values' of domestic tranquillity and marital fidelity as crucial to the popularity in this period; when Edward VIII offended against them he had to go. This period can be seen, however, as a fairly unusual one in the history of the monarchy and it can be argued that the royal family and the monarchy have survived the breakdown of the happy family image. The 'Royal Soap Opera' is usually used as a pejorative term but, as Jeffrey Richards points out, the romances, the quarrels and even the scandals of royalty provide a virtual family for an increasingly atomised society.

As ever, rocks lie ahead. We think in terms of a British monarchy but how will it fare if devolution results in Scottish independence? Will there be a return to multiple kingdoms, a union of crowns? James Loughlin considers the history of the monarchy and Ireland under the Union, a more complex relationship than it is usually considered.

Andrzej Olechnowicz strikes an inapposite note in the final essay, 'A jealous hatred'. There seems no good reason to wonder why 'a majority of the British people who were neither wealthy, nor privileged, nor leisured identified with and enthusiastically supported a monarchy which appears to be all three?' Almost all societies have been unequal and people usually reserve their jealousies for those just above them. Attacks upon the monarchy for its wealth or its cost are centuries

old and it's usually well-to do middle-class radicals who make them. They are probably less indicative of popular feeling than the resentment at MP's expenses and perks.

It is perhaps the 'efficient' part of the constitution that is the most trouble today. Prime minister, cabinet and parliament have passed many of their powers to the European Union, fewer and fewer people belong to political parties and most politicians are regarded as careerists and opportunists. An important role of the monarchy is to limit the pretensions of the political class.

Heady Stuff

James Docherty

The Kingdom of Infinite Space, Raymond Tallis, Atlantic Books, 2008, £19.99.

The book-jacket says 'Tallis reveals the head as a place of continuous, vital activity and of extraordinary sophistication.' This will hardly come as a surprise to most readers but, to be fair, the book contains much information which is less widely known. For example, we learn that the head produces a quart of mucus a day and 30,000 litres of saliva in a lifetime. Dr Tallis is good on secretions. I must have forgotten that our tears may contain manganese and it was news to me that in the USA wax is removed from ears 150,000 times per week by 'experts'. (How do we know that? And what about those gifted amateurs who favour the paperclip method?)

The author says that Amazon offered him 837 books on the brain and that he will not add to their number. He confines himself to other parts of the head, their structures and functions but this is not much of a restriction. Of course, the head is involved in breathing, seeing, hearing, eating, blushing, sweating and kissing and he tells us something of the mechanisms of those activities. However, the book is not just a layman's guide to anatomy and physiology: Tallis is more ambitious. An account of the process of speaking leads him to speech. Speech he says 'is fashioned out of exhaled air, exquisitely sculptured by the lips, the tongue, the palate, the throat, working together in marvelously rapid synergy, to fashion plosives and labials, the stopped and the unstopped open vowels and closed consonants. These sounds are linked into utterances of bottomless complexity in which we at once discern meaning and intent.' He goes on to mention Cro-Magnon Man, words, linguistics, semantic syntax and so on. As he says, 'We have entered dizzying territory.' The chapter on eating leads him to discuss,

inter alia, table manners and the Eucharist. The nose reminds him that 'snot' is of Old Friesian origin and traces the usages of 'snotty' including one by Dorothy Parker, but not, oddly enough, the English name for a midshipman. On sweating, he recalls (but garbles) the Victorian adage that 'horses sweat, men perspire but young ladies "feel the heat"'.

There are references to the author's mother, Mrs Mary Tallis, and to his career and there are five 'Philosophical Digressions'. In each of these, after a brief mention of the head he deals with the mind. This gives scope to discuss the Self, the Soul and theories of consciousness. There are quotations from Descartes, Husserl, Sartre, Lichtenburg, Bergson, Gabriel Marcel, Nietzsche, Brentano and others. The first of many quotations in the book is on the cover: 'Tallis has a range of expertise that would leave Jonathan Miller gasping.' Many authors are cited throughout the book: everyone is there from Mark Twain to Maurice Bowra, from Alexander Pope to Pablo Picasso. Sometimes one has the feeling that these gems are there to display the author's erudition, maybe to make poor Dr Miller gasp even more. Simple statements have to be endorsed by 'in the words of'. The author tells us that he is an admirer of the late Frankie Howerd and perhaps he should have listened to the great comedian. Facing a pompous interviewer on TV, Frankie struck an attitude of mock-seriousness and said solemnly 'There is an expression — you may perhaps have heard it — that "it never rains but it pours".' A lesson for us all...

Tallis wears his learning lightly. The style is jaunty, even jokey. There are bits of playful, if pointless alliteration: 'a broom cupboard in Bromley, a mansion in Mansfield' and he uses slightly dated slang, such as 'bonce' and 'yuckiness'. At the end, however, one feels uncertain about the purpose of the book and for whom it is intended. We are left as bemused as the rustics of Auburn:

And still they gazed and still the wonder grew,
that one small head could carry all he knew.

(Yes, Goldsmith is trotted out too, in Chapter 15.)

Overheated

Russell Lewis

An Appeal to Reason: a cool look at global warming. Nigel Lawson, Duckworth Overlook. £9.99, 2008.

It says something about the cowardly state of mind of some of Britain's literary elite that this *tour de force* by one of the most accomplished writers in British

public life had to go to New York to find a publisher. But then I recalled that huge pressure was put on Warburgs in the 1940s not to publish George Orwell's *Animal Farm* because it might damage Britain's relations with Stalin. At least Lawson has fared better than that, though he was understandably irritated by a disgracefully snide (and inaccurate) review in the *Economist* (which has surrendered completely to the global warming lobby).

This slim volume is a sustained polemic, which puts across forcefully and elegantly all the really telling points against the new religion of climate alarmism. What, among other things, makes it special is that it is fully documented with evidence, mostly taken from the enemy's preferred sources like the Hadley Centre. This is vital for those who are arguing the case against the global warmers who are constantly trying to undermine the data which cast doubt on their own position. Climate sceptics can rely on Lawson's sources, which are rock solid.

He does an admirably deft demolition of the global warmers' claim that the science is settled. For example, he shows how the ground-based measurements of temperature are exaggerated by the urban heat island effect — London is generally warmer than Dorking — so that the ground station readings are higher than the far more reliable satellite measurements. Again world temperatures have not marched steadily upwards in line with the growth of carbon dioxide as the greenhouse theory says they should. They have fluctuated considerably, rising fastest in the period of small CO₂ growth from 1920 to 1940. The constant claim of the warmers that recent times have been unprecedentedly hot are simply false, even for the past century when the hottest year was 1934. On a historic time scale it was warmer a thousand years ago and also in Roman times.

There was an attempt by the American Professor Michael Mann to disprove the historical record and replace it with a hockey stick pattern of flat temperatures until a sudden jump in modern times. This was grasped gratefully by the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which reproduced it in its 2001 report all of five times. It was subsequently shown to be a complete fraud and the latest IPCC report has dropped it without a word of apology. The global warming theory is of course largely based on computer scenarios though these have so far proved incapable of predicting backwards except by fudging (changing the assumptions until the result comes out right because the programmers already know the answers).

Lawson is particularly scornful about the economic flaws in the global warmers' case. A real howler is found in the predictions of growth for the next century

by the IPCC which are based on current exchange rates rather than on purchasing power parity. No doubt they fail to put this right because it reduced the forecast growth of CO₂ and weakened their case. He ridicules the IPCC's calculation of the economic threat to the planet a century hence if no mitigating action is taken. All this actually amounts to, on the IPCC's own assumptions, is that living standards in the developing world will be 'only' 8.5 times as high as they are today instead of 9.5 times.

What is especially absurd about the IPCC's calculation of the cost of climate change (even assuming that it actually happens) is that it does not allow for humans adapting to it. Yet 'the capacity to adapt is arguably the most fundamental characteristic of mankind'. As Lawson wittily puts it: 'To assess the cost of climate change in the absence of adaptation is about as sensible as assessing the risk of catching pneumonia in London on the assumption that we all go out and about in the cold and rain in our bathing costumes'.

He regards the Stern report on the economic consequences of global warming with something approaching contempt. To calculate how valuable an investment or cost undertaken for the benefit of someone in the future, an annual percentage deduction must be made reaching into the relevant period ahead, which we call the discount rate. Stern's use of a 1 per cent or, at most, 2 per cent discount rate to calculate the cost of mitigating the damage caused by CO₂ growth would be considered much too low by the mass of mainstream economists. Unfortunately for Stern, if a realistic discount rate were adopted his case would collapse completely.

After all, what is the point of making substantial sacrifices today to reduce an infinitesimal economic loss to our great great grandchildren, who will be vastly better off than we are?

This book is about as well-reasoned a rejection of the global warming case as one could wish for. We must all hope that reason will prevail but we can't rely on it. Al Gore and Co rely not on reason but fear, the dread of unknown forces, which may destroy us all. If we wish to combat these alarmists, we must not only show that they are wrong but do an equally effective job of frightening people. They must be brought to realize that the global warmers' evil gospel is not only wrongheaded but dangerous. For this purpose a degree of fantasy is permissible. For example, Al Gore claims that we are near a tipping-point and that if we don't do as he says we may plunge into irreversible catastrophe. Well, suppose that we are on the brink of catastrophe, not indeed because of global warming but on account of global cooling. Note that it's already a bit cooler than it was ten years ago and some already

claim that the recent decline in sunspots is extremely ominous. So, if we order the Kyoto menu we may not only be impoverishing ourselves but hastening the onset of a new ice age. After all, that very scare was in the ascendant only a generation ago and the leading scaremongers included some of the prominent global-warming celebrities of today like Sir James Lovelock.

Don't forget that some of the environmental radicals really are a bit sinister. In America there have already been moves in some quarters to make denial of global warming a crime. The Czech President Vaclav Klaus said not long ago that it was not the planet that was under threat but our freedom menaced by over-intrusive government.

However, enough of warnings and gloom. I am optimistic enough to believe that the global warmers are intellectually, at least, in retreat. The more people read and go along with the message of Lawson's book, the sooner that retreat will turn into a rout.

A New Look at Tito

Keith Miles

Titova skrivnostna leta v Moskvi, 1935-1940 (Tito's mysterious years in Moscow 1935-1940), Silvin Eiletz, Mohorjeva založba, Celovec, Austria, 2008, 28.90 Euro.

It is interesting to ask if Dictators are created or are made that way. This impressively researched book, a must for students of Communism, Yugoslavia and the Cold War goes a long way to answering the question in Tito's case. It is also a handbook of documents that illustrate the complete involvement of communists in the 'Soviet project'. The author, Dr Silvin Eiletz, is a distinguished historian of Russian history who was born in Slovenia and studied in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. He also made a number of study visits to the Soviet Union in the period 1969-1972 and once the Russian state archives became open he was able to research the period of Tito's life in Moscow when he was a Comintern agent and member of the NKVD.

Tito's history and time in Moscow have been written about before from many angles including his time as an NKVD secret policeman in Moscow. This has provoked controversy sometimes on the basis that the reports are unsubstantiated or biased. The result has been that largely Tito's own explanations have been accepted. Misha Glenny in his well written and

authoritative book *The Balkans* says 'his qualities helped him escape the attention of the NKVD'; and 'he was among the few senior communist activists left alive by the... Soviet police'. We know why. He was one of them. What this book makes clear through the copies of original documents is that Tito was a committed and fanatical believer in the Bolshevik revolution.

His reporting on his Yugoslav colleagues was a high risk strategy, but it showed complete loyalty to Stalin. Tito had after all become a member of the Russian Communist Party in 1918, and only became a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia later in 1920. Although he eventually became a member of the Politburo of the Yugoslav Central Committee he was not really in the Yugoslav communist leadership. After the Yugoslav communists 'evacuated' to Moscow in 1935 he became a Comintern official and an NKVD officer. It is clear that he 'climbed over the dead bodies' of his colleagues whom he had denounced to become Stalin's anointed leader of the Communists in Yugoslavia in 1937. The book's detailed documentation shows not just how Tito was committed to Bolshevism but the extent to which he had learned from Stalin's methods. The collaborationist policy of Tito with the Soviets led directly to the deals he set up to work with the Germans if the Allies had launched an attack across the Adriatic, the massacres of anti-communists in the second half of 1945, the imprisonment and execution of capitalists, and the purging of his own colleagues in the so-called Stalinist de-Stalinisation of the 1950s.

We know that the West's self-interest kept Tito detached from the Soviet Bloc. Later on from 1961 it suited the West to encourage the Non-aligned Movement in order to prevent key nations such as India, Indonesia, Ghana, and Egypt falling under Soviet domination, and perhaps dragging other African and Asian nations with them. Obviously Tito at the end of WWII had the good luck to have his crimes put to one side. He also received massive amounts of military and financial aid which was not greatly publicised to ensure no local embarrassment. Details of the massive military aid are emerging in former Yugoslavia; for example 47,000 Thompson sub-machine guns plus numerous tanks and artillery.

Tito's shift from Stalin meant that he had to liberalise both the economic system and the rights of citizens to travel abroad for work. He could no longer pursue Stalinist methods. Was Tito a psychopath like Stalin? Probably not. Once Tito accepted economic and diplomatic help from the West he had largely to abandon his Stalinist methods and become an old fashioned dictator. Of course the years of Stalinist terror of 1945 to about 1955 lived on in the minds

of most of the population so that he did no need to practise mass murder and torture any longer more. Prison without trial was enough of a threat.

Western support ensured that his crimes were not publicised and enabled left wing groups and even some left wing moderates to make him a working class hero while top world politicians paid court to him. They still do look on him as a 'good socialist'. Perhaps this book will help put the record straight especially if it can be translated into English. Tito learnt the brutal lessons of Communist power and applied them. In this sense there is a thread that flows from Stalin to Tito as a 'son of Stalin' and perhaps these same lessons of cruelty were also learned by Milosevic, Karadzic and Mladic.

Pinafores and Patriarchy

Edward Short

Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914, Anthony Fletcher, Yale University Press, 2007, £25.

'England' Lady Violet Bonham Carter observed back in the 1940s, 'is seen plain in its children. Other nations may have studied children more scientifically, they may even understand them better, but the English *are* children.' I suspect that this is still the case today. Certainly, Lady Violet is right when she says that: 'Of Englishmen at least it is true that they never entirely "put away childish things"... they keep something of the authentic quality of childhood all through their lives.' One can cite any number of examples to corroborate her point: the preoccupation Englishmen have with their schooldays; their attachment to games; their love of sport, their delight in hobbies. Then, again, one can cite the example of Pitt on his deathbed, confessing: 'I think I could eat one of Bellamy's veal pies.' Or Dr Johnson at Versailles when he was sixty-six, recording in his travel diary: 'I ran a race in the rain this day, and beat Baretto.' Or this description of Swinburne when he was past his riotous prime and living abstemiously in Putney: 'The first impression he made on me... was that of a very great gentleman indeed... Not of an *old* gentleman, either. Sparse and straggling though the grey hair was... there was yet about him something... of a beautifully well-bred child.' That was how Max Beerbohm recalled his first meeting with the poet whose 'sheer joyous power of song' fled with his capacity for strong drink. However, what is remarkable about English juvenility is how comparatively neglected it has been by serious

historians. Of course, there are exceptions. John Brewer included a ground-breaking essay on how the Georgians treated their children in *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1997). Linda Pollock has written a number of useful books on the relationship between parents and children. And all the old and new Oxford histories of England include interesting snippets about children through the centuries. Still, this is a subject that still cries out for more comprehensive treatment.

In his own youth, Beerbohm wrote an incisive essay about childhood called 'A Cloud of Pinafores' (1899) in which he argued that the cult of childhood, adopted by the Georgians after Rousseau, later sentimentalized and stultified children. Contrasting the early Victorian with the contemporary approach to the nursery, Beerbohm wrote:

When children came into the scheme of a novel, they were, with few exceptions, prigs like Little Nell and Paul Dombey; dreary abstractions, foredoomed to the earliest of death-beds. In fact, real children were pariahs. That, you will say, was horrible and inhuman... It was. But I am inclined to think that, for the children themselves, it was a far more wholesome state of things... Childhood has no alien responsibilities, it is free from all the bitterness of knowledge and of memory, is careless and hopeful. So that, if the nursery be turned into a free republic and be rid of its old gloom and vigilant authority, it must be the scene of absolute happiness, and its children, when the time comes for them to leave it, will be appalled by the serious side of life. Finding no pleasure in a freedom which they have always had, incapable of that self-control which long discipline produces, they will become neurotic, ineffectual men and women.

This may not be entirely persuasive — freedom could never provide the denizens of nurseries 'absolute happiness' — but at least it recognizes that the modern, permissive approach to bringing up children produces not only unbalanced children but incompetent adults. Nonetheless, culpable though the Edwardians might have been of many pedagogical sins, they were paragons of enlightenment compared to their twenty-first century successors. After all, they did not indoctrinate their charges in the shibboleths of political correctness; drill them in the libels of anti-Western multiculturalism; corrupt them with sex education that only promotes promiscuity, disease, and despair; and immerse them in a popular culture expressly designed to exploit and degrade them.

Readers interested in gaining some historical perspective into how we arrived at our own pretty pass with respect to the rearing of children will not find much insight in Anthony Fletcher's *Growing Up*

in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914. Although drawn from an impressive body of research, it is slackly organized and atrociously written. Here is a characteristic passage. ‘There are two important respects in which the schooling of the seventeenth century set the pattern of educational practice to 1914 and beyond: it was gender segregated and it was based on a remote classical tongue, which held no intrinsic interest for most boys and which there was no good reason for them to learn. Yet Latin became the badge of class privilege... Latin beaten into boys was becoming by 1660, the crucial foundation of a whole class and gender system... a revised basis for English patriarchy. It was the male elite’s secret language, a language that could be displayed as a mark of learning, of superiority and of difference.’ That Latin taught the English how to write their own language obviously does not signify with a man capable of writing sentences like these. In another passage, the ineffable Fletcher tries to describe Gladstone’s schooldays. ‘In due course, Keate had taken to William. The headmaster with his pathological love of wielding the birch was always a brooding presence... Thereafter, absorbing school gossip and experiencing the regular spectacle of observing fellows suffer at the block, the vagaries of Keate’s temper and his ferocity with the birch sometimes preyed on his mind.’ Latin may not hold ‘intrinsic interest’ for all boys but it does teach them to mind things like subjects, verbs, and participles, steer clear of cliché, avoid repetition, and think with some modicum of logical coherence.

Former Professor of History at the Universities of Sheffield, Durham, and Essex, Director of the Victoria County History at London University and author of a book entitled *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500 – 1800*, Fletcher admits in his preface that in preparing his latest book for publication he relied heavily on Dr Helen Berry, a research assistant with the University of Essex. This industrious woman obviously went to great pains to supply the professor with copious materials for what could have been a wonderful book. She mined various manuscript collections in England and the US, visited several record offices, and put together a comprehensive bibliography of useful primary and secondary sources. The quality of her research is evident on nearly every page of this otherwise disappointing book. Here her researches vividly describe the freedom experienced by Clare Howard, the youngest of an Edwardian family of six girls and four boys, when governesses and their lessons were cast aside. Of course, Clare adored the summers the family spent in Brighton but even at home she prized the world outside the schoolroom.

At home white cotton pinafores were ‘regulation

day time wear’ for the schoolroom girls, a ‘badge of childhood I much resented,’ Clare remembered. But the morning highlight at Bark Hart [the family home in Orpington, Kent] was the full freedom outside in the grounds, which her mother insisted upon each day. Freedom from elder sisters issuing reprimands about her drawers or her petticoat showing, ‘the freedom of a large garden — trees to climb, birds nesting and going to the farm where there was the interest of a new calf to see or piglings or stolen hen’s nests to search.’

Reading this, one can see how Beerbohm could put himself in the shoes of children and equate freedom from the schoolroom with ‘absolute happiness.’ Nevertheless, this passage also shows that if Fletcher had spent more time doing justice to Dr Berry’s superb researches and less to uttering dreary inanities like these

The construction of femininity was an insistent preoccupation for men throughout the three hundred years covered by this book, since patriarchal society was seen to rest most crucially on the ideological subordination of women

his book would have been immeasurably better. Readers can only hope that Dr Berry will reclaim her researches and write a book of her own. To that end, she might wish to consult two items absent from her bibliography: *Lantern Slides; The Diaries and Letters of Violet Bonham Carter 1904-1914* edited by Mark Bonham Carter and Mark Pottle (1996) and *The Gates of Memory* by Geoffrey Keynes (1981), both of which shed interesting light on the Edwardian experience of childhood. In the meantime, we can all rejoice in the good sense of La Rochefoucauld, who knew that ‘Childishness follows us all the days of our life. If anybody seems wise it is only because his follies are in keeping with his age and circumstances’



FILM

Is Batman Serious? The Dark Knight, Directed by Christopher Nolan Marc Sidwell

It's hard to acknowledge, but sometimes a major summer blockbuster isn't a work of art: it's just a movie. Yet the reviewers who saw *The Dark Knight*, the latest release in the Batman franchise, were apparently convinced they were watching Dostoevsky with some black, armoured rubber thrown in for decoration. Marc Lee explained to *Telegraph* readers that 'This is clever, sophisticated entertainment — far more intellectually engaging than a film featuring a grown man in a bat-hat has any right to be'. Over at the *Independent*, Anthony Quinn raved that the direction 'touches on areas of psychological dread and doubt that hardly seem containable within a blockbuster'. Although he did add, 'Art and entertainment feel locked in a deadly struggle', which seems closer to the mark.

Let it be freely admitted: quantities of money and skill must be spent to produce a film that vacuums 14-to-25-year-olds into multiplexes in unprecedented numbers, pins them to their seats — with one hand on their girlfriends and the other clutching their Jumbo Cokes — and then leaves them, two-and-a-half-hours later, with a vague sense that they've been walloped over the head with a hammer painted black. But apparently it needs to be reiterated that such a film is unlikely to also qualify as a profound aesthetic experience.

Hannah Arendt was wrong to say that mass culture is an oxymoron, and that there could only ever be mass entertainment. Our age has produced works for a mass audience of real merit, from Herriman's *Krazy Kat* to the finer moments of Pixar to Matt Groening's unmatched *Simpsons*. But critics, given the chance to help us pick out the rare gems from the populist mire, have ended up on all fours with the rest, chowing down on any old muck.

Of course, the studios know how to lull the supposed cognoscenti, garnishing their cynical productions with the promise of higher things. *The Dark Knight* is directed by Christopher Nolan, whose *Memento* is fondly, if not accurately, remembered by the reviewers as a bold, arthouse thriller with profound incidental

meditations on identity, memory and guilt. In truth that film was a slick con, concealing its intellectual limits behind the gimmick of playing fast and loose with time.

The Dark Knight isn't allowed to hide behind Nolan's trademark timeplay. Undoubtedly slick, it is technically imperfect and an aesthetic failure. Critics had no excuse for leaping aboard so shamelessly just because of the director's name. This is 90 per cent a loud, stupid Hollywood product, in which the nasty trend of torture porn begins to make its way from the locked cellar of the horror genre into the mainstream, Maggie Gyllenhaal and Christian Bale give robotic performances that make Schwarzenegger seem like De Niro, and Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman debase their talents for a couple more fat cheques.

I wanted to review the film because Andrew Klavan in the *Wall Street Journal* had described it as a paean to the courage of George Bush, while Cosmo Landesman in the *Sunday Times* felt it showed a Batman 'consumed with liberal guilt and self-loathing'. I was intrigued. Which of them was right? Is Batman a secret neocon? Now I know: in this film, that pretends to moral seriousness but refrains from anything but the appearance of serious thinking, intellectual consistency is a pipe dream. Klavan and Landesman could each find what they wanted because there is nothing to find.

And then there is Heath Ledger's Joker, stealing what there is of the show. Ledger seems guaranteed a posthumous Oscar for his performance, but his makeup designer deserves it more than he does. Ledger is mostly adequate, although he waggles his tongue too much, and doesn't match the monstrous camp Jack Nicholson brought to the role. But in his most impressive screen moments, Ledger's contribution is negligible. His best scenes are in medium shot, where the hair and makeup design combine with their settings to reveal a flash of film-making flair. This is never more true than in the sequence where the Joker leaves a hospital dressed in a nurse's uniform while it explodes behind him. It is a cleverly-conceived and stylishly-composed image of carnivalesque inhumanity. But while Ledger the actor will claim the success, he is almost irrelevant to its power.

Such moments are all too rare. Anyone with a mind to cultivate does not have the time to spare for a hundred and fifty minutes of eyeball-pounding trash that provides perhaps five minutes of any serious quality. There is more genuine philosophical darkness in the original *Toy Story* than in this shallow piece

of sadistic baloney. If you want unsparing heroism on film, rent *Black Hawk Down*. If you want to see characters wrestling with moral conundrums watch the re-release of Powell and Pressburger's *A Matter of Life and Death*. If we do not judge popular art against the highest standards, we are only patronising it.

The Dark Knight is not art, and for all its record-breaking receipts it is barely even entertainment. It is pruriently cruel and intellectually superficial. So

much the worse that our critics should endorse a film that degrades its audience, and so much worse still that grown-ups who should know better have sat through this twaddle and come out feeling they should be impressed, and nervously telling one another, 'wasn't it dark?'. It is further proof of our wholesale inability to tell good from bad in the dim light of our crepuscular age. Dark? Not yet, but as Bob Dylan says, it's getting there.

Unknown Region Ahead

Nigel Jarrett



O Thou Transcendent — a life of Ralph Vaughan Williams, by Tony Palmer (Isolde Films TPDVD106).

The arrival on DVD of Tony Palmer's film about Ralph Vaughan Williams is much welcomed, as it was first shown on television early on New Year's Day when any sensible music lover, a reveller by definition, was waking with a hangover. The timing probably said more about the edginess of programme-schedulers in deferring to viewer frivolity than it did about marking the 50th anniversary of RVW's death this year as early as possible. Palmer's film is a celebration with that inevitable tone of defensiveness that marks so many attitudes to English (or British) music.

Mark Anthony Turnage enjoyed RVW's work as a student but kept quiet about it. Michael Tippett admitted to having made a youthful mis-judgement in dismissing him. Stanford — no great figure by any standard — told the young RVW that he was writing rubbish (RVW, that is). Andre Previn recalls that concert promoters regarded RVW's music as 'the kiss of death'. Some members of RVW's family wondered why the young man was pursuing such a fruitless path. And the composer himself seemed to have expressed an undying ambivalence towards his career.

On the other hand, the critic and musicologist Michael Kennedy, one of RVW's biographers, fell for the music from the beginning and couldn't listen to the *Sea Symphony* for a long while after the composer's death, so vividly did it remind him of the man he revered. He is joined by Neil Tennant and Richard Thompson in a rather fatuous attempt to call almost anyone in support of RVW, even from the ranks of commercially popular art. Needless to say, neither

Tennant nor Thompson offers anything constructive and simply illustrates RVW's reach, which was known already. With Classic FM relentlessly banging away in support of a few RVW favourites, this is no surprise. One is often tempted to rush out and rescue the knackered lark.

We travel far into Palmer's neatly stitched biopic before learning anything that has not been related elsewhere, including the under-stated depiction of RVW's first wife, Adeline, as a psychosomatic drain on her husband's powers of devotion and the possible reason for the anger of the *Fourth Symphony*. Ken Russell would salivate at that as a starter for a film about the composer. We cover acres of land and sea in a helicopter. Imagined larks, fit and well, ascend before the rising sun. Back-lit performers, including a demonic Tamas Vasary, perform the music in gobbets. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with tongue in cheek, falls short of suggesting that the agnostic RVW should be canonised for his editorship of the *English Hymnal*, in spite of the slightly dodgy hymns he wrote himself. There is much on folk song, mysticism and doubt about the hereafter.

All this is in the music, once the listener's seat has shifted. But what of the musical structures themselves, product of a church upbringing, the sought-out teaching of Max Bruch and Ravel (three years RVW's junior), the incorporation of the spirit of folk melody in rose-tinted views of an English landscape in which people often lived like the animals they tended and backs were broken in the fields? We are talking about form, and in British music discussion of form is bad form.

Palmer's film avoids technical matters, and once the self-consciousness is done with it is content to dwell on RVW's spreading bleakness, beside which biographer

Stephen Johnson's 'left-wing socialist' with his courage and humanitarianism takes us even further away from a consideration of what the music is made of. There is an unmistakable sense of tradition and conservatism only slightly modified in what appears to have been a cloying, not to say claustrophobic, atmosphere. One can say this without denying the power of such works as the *Sea* and *Pastoral* symphonies and, indeed, of the whole symphonic canon, surely RVW's greatest achievement, especially when it displays what Arnold Whittall has called 'the propulsive ambiguity of diatonic and modal interactions', a formal progress just a few degrees up from the lateral but richly productive graphic works painted with broad and stabbing strokes. Johnson describes RVW as 'misunderstood' and 'under-estimated'. The film only hints at why this should be and towards the end we get RVW's own self-deprecating admission of 'incompetence'. He probably didn't understand himself either, and the Great War, in which he served as an ambulance man, must have made mankind appear to be a barrel of mucky goods.

Some defend RVW because he slightly embarrasses them. The same with Elgar. Each appears to be serving something about which they feel uneasy: a mythical pastoral tradition in the first case — despite its interpretation as representing for RVW a vanished Eden — pompous empire and monarchy in the second. They believe that music is being detained for too long and too

often on its way to a higher function, spiritual quests and strong personal feelings notwithstanding. And all this in a climate created by critic Oscar Schmitz, who in 1904 notoriously described England as 'das Land ohne Musik'. He meant a country in which few if any composers matched their Continental counterparts or led music along a pioneering path. It is incredible to think that RVW was thought to be too modern. But then, Delius in the 1920s was once dismissed for his 'incomprehensible peculiarity'.

RVW's trail became too grimly personal for his music to strike out very often with a life of its own, like Debussy's or Stravinsky's, for examples. But he is not an insignificant world figure. In the large pond of English music, he made substantial revisions which were noticed elsewhere and in encouraging amateur music-making, especially choral singing, did much to continue what tradition our so-called music-forsaken island already possessed (though in other places, such as the Welsh valleys, it was doing very well). In any case, one's devotion to a composer is always personal, whatever the view of historians about his place in the pantheon. These are often secret pleasures. Kennedy's almost laconic recollections would be strongly assertive if push came to shove. RVW has long meant much to many and this more or less thorough, non-controversial film may well bring a few doubters round, but it cannot make claims for virtues that are not present.

J M W Turner and Modernism

Andrew Wilton

Last Summer, the Tate at Millbank, Tate Britain, as it is now called, asked David Hockney to choose watercolours for a temporary exhibition. It was intended to fill gaps on the Clore Gallery's walls created by the mass loan of major paintings to a touring exhibition in the United States.

Hockney had plenty to choose from. When Turner died in 1851 his will was contested by members of his family affronted that he had left them out, and in 1856 the Court of Chancery decreed that, contrary to his wishes, the family should get his fortune of £140,000, putting paid to his cherished scheme to build a home for indigent painters, and awarding all that he had retained of his life's work to the National Gallery. Turner's idea was that a hundred of his finished pictures should be displayed in rotation in a dedicated room in Trafalgar

Square. He made no provision for unfinished canvases. From the various drafts of his will his intentions for the works on paper are not entirely clear; but in 1856 everything was allotted to the National Gallery, regardless of condition or state of finish.

By accident, then, the nation acquired, in what was misleadingly called the Turner Bequest, a uniquely exhaustive record of the life's work and working processes of an artist who, since his death, has been consistently regarded as one of Europe's greatest landscape painters. Almost any selection from such a vast array of work will be fascinating. It was interesting, then, to see what Hockney came up with. He chose a group from the long series of wash studies known as 'colour beginnings': preliminary exercises in which Turner thought through the general chromatic layout of

his more important watercolours. These watercolours were invariably topographical in nature. For Turner, a view of, say, Coventry, Florence or Lake Lucerne could become a profound meditation on human existence and the world human beings inhabit. It might involve many figures invented to narrate and exemplify the economic life of the place, the relationships between the social classes, the impact of geography and climate on human lives, all observed with a novelist's eye for detail.

Such many-layered themes required a thorough working-out of the pictorial structures that would embody them. Turner made his colour beginnings as a way of clarifying his own intentions, laying down firm foundations of balanced blocks of colour, deploying compositional emphases and voids. Rarely do these studies include more than a fleeting indication of the swarming detail of the finished view. They may consist of handsome sweeps of bright blue and ochre in inventive combinations, but there is little point in looking at them as though they were complete in themselves — most are far too slight. What is extremely informative is to place study alongside finished work, in order to divine something of the processes whereby Turner arrived at his remarkable solutions.

The Tate curators added to the show a number of finished views, which supplied something of this perspective. But Hockney's display consisted of two uninterrupted walls of colour beginnings, intended to be admired as complete and self-sufficient works of art. Hockney is an intelligent and imaginative artist; how did he come to regard these by and large slight and scrappy, if colourful, images as being worthy of an admiration verging on adoration?

The history of Turner's critical reception is instructive. In the mid-nineteenth century, Ruskin lauded him as the supreme observer of nature and recorder of its physical and spiritual truths, explicitly linking him with the Pre-Raphaelites who sprang up just as Turner's life was closing (he died in 1851). The vicissitudes of his later reputation have been charted by Sam Smiles in a recent book: *J M W Turner: The Making of a Modern Artist* (Manchester University Press, 2007). Each generation

has sought to find its own Turner in the resources of the Bequest; and as the twentieth century dawned the Tate Gallery, founded in 1897 as the National Gallery of British Art, which in the ensuing decades acquired custodianship of most of the Bequest, was able to trawl the as yet unexplored unfinished canvases and boxes of drawings to construct new interpretations of his achievement.

Fresh ideas were fed into this process from an early date: after Ruskin's apostle of Truth in Nature, the Aesthetic movement found a more formalist Turner, while the French-leaning Tate officials of the 1910s and 1920s could see him as an Impressionist. Modernism, with its fetishisation of revolution and that ultimate revolutionary gesture in painting, abstraction, encouraged an interpretation of the unfinished works

as more profound than those intended for exhibition or engraving.

The Tate now went to the lengths of creating two different types of gallery: those for Old Masters, and those for the Moderns. Turner's work was divided into two and hung in the separate spaces accordingly.

The process of adoption was accelerated, as Smiles recounts, by the

need of the Arts Council after the Second World War to promote British culture on the world stage. For the exhibitions sent by the Council to the Dominions and many other places, works of the most 'progressive' appearance were deliberately chosen. And in 1966 Lawrence Gowing, a Euston Road School painter who was at that time a Keeper at the Tate, mounted a large Turner show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which was, as Smiles puts it, 'a seminal, even notorious contribution to the assertion of Turner's modernity'. Here, two currents merged.

The 1960s saw the flowering of what Americans saw, and consciously promoted, as their first internationally important native school of painting: Abstract Impressionism. The movement, led by Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and others, specialised for the most part in very large canvases enlivened by largely random splashes of paint ('gestural painting') or large areas of unmodulated colour ('colour field painting'). Rothko



A Beginning?

favoured big upright canvases on which two large areas of colour hover, usually a higher tone over a lower one, giving an intimation of landscape structure that has perhaps helped many people to 'relate' to them as quasi-representational, though it was part of the boast of this school that representation had been decisively eliminated. Many people find Rothko's splendidly vacant works an aid to transcendental meditation, and that seems quite right.

One of the watercolours that Gowing chose for New York was a sketchbook sheet in which a pale pink wash occupies the upper part of the sheet, above a darker, lead-grey strip in the lower third. It is the kind of lay-in that all watercolour artists were taught to apply preparatory to painting a landscape: slight to the point of being virtually meaningless, though one can, of course, enjoy it as a sample of well-laid washes. Although this was a genuinely 'abstract' sheet, Gowing, ironically, interpreted it as a landscape using the title *The Pink Sky*, and gave it a colour plate in his catalogue. When Rothko saw this, he famously said that he would like to sue Turner for breach of copyright.

Gowing made much of what he called Turner's 'growing disdain for petty details', a popular misunderstanding to this day. The modernisers, formalists who despised both representation and 'anecdotal' content, sought to jettison wholesale the aspects of Turner's art that didn't conform to their construction of him as a proto-modern. One of the most insistent on this point was Kenneth Clark, who dismissed out of hand the 'storms and avalanches' that he found 'preposterous' and 'too artificial for modern taste': they were 'vulgarisation in the bad sense'. At the same time he claimed that Turner was 'a genius of the first order'. To make that claim while ignoring, or denigrating, nearly all the work on which Turner himself would have based his reputation seems perverse at the very least.

A classic instance of the confusion occurred when at the Royal Academy's large Turner Bicentenary exhibition of 1974-5 I took the then President, Sir Thomas Monnington, round the show. A finished watercolour and its colour beginning had been hung together. Monnington was incredulous that the latter was slightly earlier than the drawing for which it was a preparation. Although an artist aware of the processes of painting, he could not escape the assumption that the broader, looser work must be much later in date — ie more conceptually and technically 'advanced' — than the highly wrought finished picture. When I organised another large Turner exhibition in 2001, the director of the Swiss museum in which it was shown, while complimenting me on my discerning selection

of works, actually removed from the display finished pictures that disturbed his preconception of Turner as an 'abstract' artist: he did not want to learn the truth, perhaps because, fifty years after Clark, he found Turner's finished works embarrassing.

Some of the late finished paintings, misty views of Venice, or *Rain, steam and speed — the great Western Railway* of 1884, and the two 'Deluge' pictures, *Shade an Darkness* and *Light and Colour*, in their visionary way go beyond anything anyone had done before and are extraordinary for their (or any other) time. Nevertheless, these works are in essence descriptive of the observed world; light and colour are physical phenomena, not abstractions, and Turner never intended to reduce them to that status (incomprehensible at the time) by stripping them of their meaning as salient elements in the environment of human life. The bulk of the 'proto-modern' works are either powerful studies that are clearly descriptive of sea, clouds, waves and so on, entirely explicable in terms of Romantic nature-painting, or are the unfinished canvases and colour-beginnings that Turner had never intended to be 'read' in any context at all.

In other arts, the dismissive selectiveness of Modernism has been largely eroded by time and public experience. We no longer belittle Elgar, Lutyens or Kipling. But the Modernist grip on Turner's reputation is still strong. People frequently explain to me that Turner is great because 'he is so modern'. Art, according to the dogma, should pursue a clear trajectory from the old-fashioned to the modern, so Turner's career must embody that movement. So his early work is considered dull and 'traditional' when in fact he was an originator from the outset. Some of his most astoundingly original contributions to the history of art are the large watercolour studies he made in Snowdonia in 1799 when he was 24. Turner's 'academicism' — and he was a passionate believer in the Royal Academy, his 'mother' as he called it — is out of favour with progressive opinion and it is suppressed. For all his current and enduring celebrity, he is the victim of a deliberate distortion of his purposes in the interest of a bogus reading of history. The spectacle of David Hockney finding priceless aesthetic wisdom in Turner's throw-away trial-runs might console the artist's shade — or it might not.

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IN SHORT

Politics & Apocalypse, Robert Hamerton-Kelly (ed), Michigan State UP, 2008, \$19.95.

Recently introduced by Roger Scruton to *Prospect* readers, Professor René Girard argues that social conflicts are rooted in ‘mimetic rivalry’, i.e. competitive imitation by persons, countries and cultures. Despite over-extensive application, his theory offers fresh insights into the nature of violence, including Islamic terrorism. He also offers an original re-interpretation of the ritual of redemption central to the divine scapegoat myth in Christianity. Religious believers should find these challenging chapters, from this pioneering historian, and seven writers influenced by him, especially pertinent at a time when Catholic thinkers are joining Protestants in discerning scriptural signs in the collapse of civilization. The main value of this particular book, however, is its specific critique of Eric Voegelin, Leo Strauss and Carl Schmitt, the terrible trio of ‘undemocratic’ politics, from a Girardian standpoint.

David Ashton

Flying the Flag: British Victories over our European partners, John Taylor, Writers’ Print Shop, 2007, £30 hb, £20 pb.

We need reminding more and more what British means, how our history is evolutionary not revolutionary and how our patriotism is or was so different from European (and now Scottish) nationalism: love of country rather than hatred, envy or resentment of other countries. Monsieur Chauvin was, of course, French. This is an internal social problem as well as an international political one as we become subsumed into the post-democratic mandarinism of the EU, so QC and gifted amateur historian John Taylor wanted a list of British victories over what are now called our European partners, that dangerous euphemism for rivals. He could not find one so he made his own. Oozing charm from every pore.

If, like me, you are bit vague about the Battle of Kentish Knock, the Capture of Havana or the Battle of the Herrings, you need this thorough but succinct and lively guide. If, like me, you think you know a bit about El Alamein or the Lines of Torres Vedras, you will learn or be reminded of details of context and action.

Taylor opens with a sensitive and sensible essay on patriotism and his sensitivity is reflected in the absence of any alleged successes against our American

cousins in their War of Independence (not that there were many but he includes two good naval victories against the French, the real enemy). He also excludes individual World War I land battles, all subsumed into Armistice Day, a commemoration of sacrifice but not a celebration. His description of the low shenanigans of the Versailles Treaty shows that the armistice barely counts as a victory, just a lull while Germany’s resentment could be restoked.

There are bound to be mistakes of fact or interpretation here and there: if you want full history, there is a thorough bibliography. This and the indices mean you can use it any way you want, selecting the battles of your favourite regiment or ship or selecting the ones that you feel changed the course of history. Use it as a calendar reminder, a reference book or a spine-stiffener for yooof and federasts (it is heavy enough to thump them with).

Best of all, *Flying the Flag* is the ideal Christmas present. The recipient will immediately dip in and get hooked, rather than putting it aside with the rest, and it can be used at any time, in whole or in part, throughout the year and every year. No batteries needed.

Mark Baillie

Brother Tariq — The Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan, Caroline Fourest (trans. Wieder & Atherton), Social Affairs Unit, London, 2008, £15.95.

Islamism is the drive to introduce Islam into the public sphere, giving authority to its laws and protecting it from criticism (the term is used by its proponents too, not just its victims, whatever David Cameron might say). Those who make this a violent struggle are jihadis and most of them are bolstered by the Islamist body of thought on politics and theology (like Marx and the Red Brigades, roughly). One of the principal theorists of Islamism (a new fundamentalism also known, deceptively, as Modernism) was Hasan al-Bana, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Tariq Ramadan, the sultry darling of talk-shows, quangos, St. Anthony’s Oxford and the Archbishop of Canterbury, is his grandson: it might seem unfair to tar him by association but Ramadan’s words and actions show what his programme is and this book lays those out in great detail, better than any other (mainly in French, his own main language).

Revolution is revolutionary, even if Ramadan’s protests of peaceful methods are true: he explicitly

advocates a new, Islamist, order in society, economics and politics, and Fourest explains it in his own words and those of his admirers. He demands that we give Islam a special status in our society, nagging about 'space', understanding, recognition, victimhood, deeper knowledge, dialogue and good old Islamophobia: all we want (and deserve) is to ignore it. Dialogue alone is already recognition of special status.

To fear this revolution is not speculative scare-mongering: leaving aside terrorism, political Islamism in the UK has already undermined our freedom of speech (both in law and through self-censorship), the rule of law, electoral law (the introduction of postal voting and its subsequent inevitable fraud), education (PE and science exemptions) and the social consensus, carried out by a tiny number of people among the tiny (although geographically concentrated) 1.5 to two per cent of the population professing Islam.

Muslims already have more rights here than in any Muslim country and have equal rights before the law and the State but the standard Islamist battlecry is equality which, like respect and honour, has a different meaning from ours, translating as special status.

Political schemes to deal with the Muslim Question still involve giving Islamists, entryists and fellow-travellers more money and influence as long as they label themselves moderates, like Tariq Ramadan. The latest cross-party wheeze is a £7 million effort to promote moderate Islam, although no-one has identified *one* that actively promotes theological moderation, let alone a strand that can answer the very sound theological positions of the Islamists, both political and jihadi.

Paul Goodman, the Conservative Shadow for the Orwellian-sounding Minister for Social Cohesion welcomes this appeasement by saying we 'should make Britain a warm home for mainstream Islam,' when we should make it simply an equal home for any resident who abides by our laws and customs. He is accepting that we should play by Islamist rules.

He further fuels his optimism with fake history: 'Muslims, like other religious communities, should root out support for separatism and extremism within their communities.' This is not only fallacious, it cannot appeal to everyday peaceful Muslims: no-one asks me to root out drunkenness in my community and I would not know where to begin.

We do not need to lose our spine to save our necks: politically we are fighting a tiny number of self-appointed spokesmen (such as Ramadan or the vaingloriously self-styled Muslim Council of Britain) who are immensely skilled in propaganda but represent no-one. Indeed, it is only our own leaders' fear, confusion and political correctness that have given them power.

This analysis stands with *Londonistan*, by Melanie Phillips, and *The Islamist*, by Ed Husain, as an essential manual and reference for understanding the threat. The strongest recommendation for this well-sourced study comes not from its fans but from Ramadan himself who calls it 'a mendacious construct produced by a profoundly dishonest spirit.' If it upsets him that much, it must be good.

Mark Baillie

Singled out: How Two Million Survived without Men after the First World War, Virginia Nicholson, Penguin, 2008, £8.99.

Any woman tempted to self-pity with her lot or a feminist ranting about some real or imagined slight should read this book. Younger generations will have very little conception of how the slaughter in the trenches left two million 'surplus women' who would never marry. Older generations will remember those 'khaki' photographs on mantelpieces, the rigorous standards of our teachers, the selfless nurses and other women who transformed the public services. This very readable and well researched book describes how this tragedy was turned into a triumph of emancipation for women between the wars and makes the activities of the women libbers of the 60's and 70's look rather second rate.

It was not easy. There was much prejudice after the war when survivors returned and women were accused of taking the men's jobs. Before the war marriage was the only career for middle class women unless money was short. If you were unmarried, you were expected to stay at home and look after your parents, many of whom, particularly the women, were professional invalids. 'The war revolutionized the industrial position of women — it found them serfs and left them free.'

The slaughter of around a million men and the pre-war emigration to the colonies left a void which these women eagerly filled. They were assisted by the Sex Disqualification Removal Act 1919 which made it possible to enter professions from which they had been previously excluded. Women seized the opportunity to become explorers, engineers, archaeologists, as well as teachers, nurses, journalists and civil servants. Nicholson gives many interesting case histories, often based on personal interviews, of some eminent women, but also others less well known but no less important. Gertrude MacClean and Emily Faulder started Universal Aunts which gave much needed employment to those without qualifications. Una Dillon bought a dilapidated bookshop in Bloomsbury and turned it round. Beatrice Gordon Holmes, 'success is the most satisfying thing in the world' started in the City and

ended up with her own company. Caroline Haslett made it her mission in life to transform domestic chores through the use of electricity and founded the Electrical Association for Women. Florence White, from a working class background, set up the National Spinsters' Pensions Association to fight for the right to pensions of unmarried working women. Many of these women often lived on the poverty line and they were obliged to support their relatives. By 1940 White's campaign ensured that spinsters over sixty would get 10 shillings a week.

Merrie Cave

The Plan – Twelve Months to Renew Britain, Douglas Carswell and Daniel Hannan, Available from <http://stores.lulu.com/renewbritain>, 2008.

It is always pleasant to find that somewhere in the Conservative Party there is sign of intellectual life. This paper by an MP and an MEP demonstrates that very effectively. Messrs Carswell and Hannan have come up with an excellent plan of how to restore faith in politics by restoring political power to the people.

The authors acknowledge that none of their proposals can be put into practice without this country either coming out of the European Union or the latter dissolving under the pressure of its own internal contradictions. Having achieved that we need to look to what is happening inside our country. The idea advocated by some eurosceptics that all we need to do is to leave the EU and everything will be fine is completely fatuous. I disagree with some of the details of the proposals in *The Plan* but that is not really a problem — in real politics, as opposed to the shadow boxing we do now, it is possible to support the same

general principles and argue about details.

There are solutions proposed to the present contempt for Parliament — make it stronger but also scrap many of the functions it deals with now that are none of its business; to the sorry state of our health and education — remove from politicians, regulators and the various state employees who are the providers; to the terrifying lack of law and order — fewer laws, more order and accountable police forces; and to the feeling that somehow we have lost control of the political process — People's Bills and local referendums.

There is much more and, very helpfully, the authors provide a list of Acts they want repealed (sunset clauses are a big part of their plan) and what they would like introduced in the first 12 months of a Conservative government, basing their thinking on the Republican Contract with America, published in 1996.

Why do I get the feeling that these two politicians are crying in the wilderness? Could it be the sight of Tories whooping with joy because the most extreme left-wing President has just been elected (though not nearly by a landslide) in the United States, a man who has promised higher taxation, redistribution of wealth, tinkering with the Constitution in the name of 'fairness', greater protectionism and the abolition of secret ballot in the unions? Or is it the paper produced as part of the Conservatives' 'Plan for Change' (get it?) on how to deal with the financial crisis that promises more regulations and the creation of at least one more quango to oversee the Treasury and, presumably, the elected Chancellor of the Exchequer? Just the sort of thing, as Carswell and Hannan have indicated, to destroy people's faith in politics even further.

Helen Szamuely

The Salisbury Review

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Published quarterly in September, December, March & June, volume commencing with September issue.

Annual subscription rates: £20, Europe/surface rest of world £22.

Airmail rest of world: £27, Single issues £4.99.

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Printed in the UK by The Warwick Printing Company Ltd.

Typesetting — DASH

Design — Jessica Chaney

Web site: <http://www.salisburyreview.co.uk>



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