

The  
**Salisbury Review**  
The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



**Led in Chains to Brussels**

*David Heathcoat-Amory*

**Christian Soldier**

*Amol Rajan*

**Workless, white and middle-aged**

*Jane Kelly*

**Adopting Sense**

*Patricia Morgan*

**Human Battery Farms**

*Alice Coleman*

**Franco**

*Jonathan Guinness*

**Winter 2009**

Vol. 28 No.2

£4.99 ISSN 0265-4881



0 2 6 5 4 8 8 1

**£4.99**

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# The Salisbury Review

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If there is one word to describe the state of contemporary Britain it is 'corrupt.' But modern British corruption is not of the traditional financial variety, which is the secret and illicit transfer of money to secure position, privilege or legal permission: it is far more serious and damaging than that.

Our modern British corruption is intellectual, moral and, in a loose sense, spiritual. In the last decade or two it has been thoroughly legalised; indeed, in much of the public service it is now obligatory, at least for those who want to get on.

We now have more educational and defence bureaucrats than teachers and active servicemen. Senior doctors spend more and more of their time on administrative tasks that they know to be futile, while junior doctors are proletarianised by blind adherence to the European Working Time Directive that turns them into shift workers and patients into parcels to be handed from one shift to the next.

Universities are the means by which the figures for youth unemployment are massaged downwards, the unfortunate students being conned into paying for their own unemployment, in return for which they receive an education that is of neither vocational nor intellectual value.

Propagandistic statistical manipulation is now routine and almost the principal concern of both government and high officialdom, not least among chief constables, who are not policemen, but spin-policemen. Despite a vast governmental apparatus, no one knows how many illegal immigrants there are in the country; for years the unemployment statistics have been squeezed downward by the preposterous but officially-sanctioned pretence that there are more invalids in Britain now than after the First World War. Even if a government minister were to tell the truth about something he would not be believed — *ex officio*, as it were.

Official measures of improvement and deterioration are changed so often that it is impossible to make comparisons any longer: precisely the purpose of the constant changes, of course. Government ministers constantly mistake wishes for fact. An investment is a current expenditure that will bring some future economic return; but the payment of current salaries for bureaucratic drones, and for the endless

proliferation of quangos, is what in brave new Britain has passed for investment over the last ten years. The bill for this intellectual dishonesty has now come in.

Immense expenditure on social services has done nothing to relieve the squalor in which so many British children are forced to live, though such expenditure has no doubt paid the mortgages and secured the old ages of many workers in social services, particularly those in the higher reaches thereof. Government social policy, reduced to its essentials has been this: to foster as far as possible the conditions in which social pathology is bound to flourish, and then erect vast bureaucracies of supposed care and amelioration to deal with the consequences.

The criminal justice system is itself one of the major causes of crime in a country that sixty years ago was among the most law-abiding that the world had ever known and is now the most crime-ridden in Western Europe. The training of large numbers of lawyers has necessitated absurdly lenient sentences, for otherwise there would not be enough work for the surplus lawyers to perform. Of course, the necessity to employ surplus graduates explains a great deal about modern Britain; no improvement can be expected until the universities are forced to contract rather than expand.

The whole political class is now seen as corrupt by the vast majority of the population, but it should not be forgotten that a great part of the population itself is now deeply corrupt, from the recipients of welfare to those who distribute it, from all the nominally private consultancy firms that advise government to the vast numbers of people employed by the government who make no distinction between activity and work.

Corruption explains the attraction of the European Union to politicians of all parties. It is a pension fund and guarantee of further employment for them once they become unelectable. Mr Cameron's backsliding on a referendum about the Lisbon Treaty is in effect putting us on notice that he will be little different from his egregious predecessors.

It will not be easy to reverse the effects of place-seeking by ambitious and militant mediocrity, but that is now the task before us.

# Led in Chains to Brussels

David Heathcoat-Amory

In only one country were the people allowed to vote on the Lisbon Treaty, and they voted no. So the Irish were made to try again. Under intense financial and political pressure they then voted yes. Now the European leaders have privately resolved to end these referendums: the public simply can't be trusted. At this point, the European Union passed into a post democratic age.

Europe was the continent where democracy was born. Many wars have been fought to obtain and defend self-government. British history is a struggle to replace arbitrary power with a system that is dispersed and accountable. It is extraordinary that free parliaments should put this process into reverse and transfer power to an external jurisdiction over which they have only spasmodic control. And because it has been done without popular consent, the end result is a Europe without the people. The EU is legally all-powerful, but politically it is an empty vessel, which resonates to its own voice.

This is equally corrosive for national democracy. Most general elections are fought under the banner of change, indeed that is the point of elections. But if powers are increasingly removed from national parliaments to the EU, then change becomes impossible. Disillusionment with politics becomes widespread and extremist parties thrive.

The Conservative Party has a commitment to cut red tape, unnecessary regulations and restrictive employment laws. Yet most of these are entrenched in EU directives. Any promise to remove them must therefore be heavily qualified. But electors do not like manifesto promises where, 'terms and conditions apply'. They believe, or hope, that they are electing a parliament whose proclaimed sovereignty is genuine, at least over internal matters. It is gratifying that the Conservative Party leadership is now aware of this and making appropriate plans.

The same applies to many other areas of domestic policy. The Lisbon Treaty takes the EU decisively into criminal justice, immigration and asylum matters. Any safeguards obtained by the British government are flimsy and temporary. If a British government decides to 'opt in' to such directives it is binding on future governments.

The EU plan was to replace democratic control at national level with a new democracy at European level.

This fantasy was stillborn. The European Parliament is not a real parliament because there is no European demos on which to found it. There have been seven European Parliament elections since the first in 1979. In each and every one, the pan-EU turnout has fallen. This is despite the parliament being given more powers in each treaty change, which were supposed to ignite public interest. Turnout reached a new low of 43 per cent in June 2009, even though voting was compulsory in four member states. The picture is simple: more powers, less consent. The democratic deficit in Europe is getting wider.

This was admitted in a candid document published by EU heads of government eight years ago, the Laeken Declaration. The EU was too complex, too bureaucratic, and must be brought, 'closer to its citizens'. A European Convention was convened, presided over by the imperious figure of ex-president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, whose very name is an attempt to connect modern Europe to an older past.

It went wrong almost immediately. Instead of simplicity we got a 300 page European Constitution, which no one outside actually read. More democracy was defined as meaning more Europe. And instead of an EU closer to its citizens we got more powers transferred upwards, away from member states.

To understand how this happened one needs to grasp the essential dynamic of the EU: it behaves like a giant interest group whose main interest is itself. All organisations tend to accumulate power if unchecked, but this is more marked in the EU than anywhere else. Most people who work there are self-selected believers in European integration. They take their mission from the treaty requirement to create an, 'ever closer union'.

At institutional level there is no separation of powers. All have an interest in more laws, more staff, more receipts, and there is no countervailing power to stop this. The European Commission is something unique in the world: an independent civil service. It combines executive, legislative and quasi-judicial powers, and it has a monopoly to initiate or repeal legislation. The Council of Ministers can therefore only dispose of what the Commission proposes. And with majority voting now the norm it is almost impossible to defy the consensus. The European Court of Justice arbitrates between EU and states' rights but is itself an EU institution with the same vested interest in

centralisation.

This concentration of power magnifies the influence of the 55,000 lobbyists who work in Brussels. It is so much easier to influence the European Commission than to trail round 27 national governments and parliaments. The Convention held a day for 'engagement with civic society', which turned out to be a succession of lobby groups many of which were actually funded by the EU. So Brussels was consulting itself.

The Convention, so boldly launched, quickly fell victim to this culture of mutually reinforcing centralisation. The resulting European Constitution was rejected by the voters of France and Holland, but all the new policies and powers without exception are included in the Treaty of Lisbon. The means by which this was done will forever stain the hands of those who forced it through.

The conclusion must be that reform of the EU will never come from within, either from its institutions or from those who take jobs there. It will only happen when a member state, or better a group of them, challenges the EU to return powers, respect self-government and relinquish its self-proclaimed legal supremacy.

That is the road that David Cameron must tread. His welcome demand for social and employment legislation to be returned is itself a renegotiation. If this falters or fails, a national referendum must decide the matter. Such a leader will be alone in Brussels, but not in Europe; and he will carry with him the hope of millions in searching for a democratic Europe, 'closer to its citizens'.

*David Heathcoat-Amory is the MP for Wells*

# Death of a Christian Soldier

Amol Rajan

**O**n a remote hillside near the village of Great Brington, in Northamptonshire, deep within England's rural innards, there lies a 13th-century church, the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin. It is one of England's finest. The gentle slant of its foundation accentuates the skyward thrust of its tower, so that an apparent over-eagerness to reach towards heaven becomes one of two abiding characteristics to its outward appearance. The other is its colour. It is a kind of shining mustard, so that as the sun goes down over the surrounding hills, the mustard fades but the glimmer defiantly remains, giving the stones first a pinkish hue, and then a remarkable terracotta.

It was here this year that I came with Bill Bellamy on a still, sunny afternoon. Over an hour we toured the church, first the graveyard outside, and then the extraordinary detail and architecture inside, away from the spring breeze. Bill, an extended relation of mine, had lived just yards away and visited the church for a quarter of a century. He illuminated every last inch of the exquisite, archaic interior with a level of intimate knowledge that conveyed and inspired reverence and affection in equal measure. A stained-glass window here, a baptismal font there, a dusty slab covering some buried artefact just beyond the precipice: I suppose it was an hour in which I came closer than I

ever have before, and possibly ever will, to knowing God. Certainly, it was an hour in which I came closer than I thought possible to Bill, and not least because, twelve days later, he was dead.

Lionel Gale 'Bill' Bellamy was born in Northampton in 1923, the son of a dressmaker, Olive, and a salesman, Ronald, who had served in the trenches during the First World War and became a POW in North Africa in the Second. Bill himself attended Blackfriars (Dominican) boarding school in Laxton, where he attended Mass at 6am before embarking on a four mile run each morning. Academically strong, head prefect and captain of rugby, his ambitions for a place at Oxbridge never matured, so certain was it that he would be called up to service on his 18th birthday.

When, just past his 20th birthday, he landed with the 8th Royal Irish Hussars on 'Gold' beach three days after D-day, he was unsure whether to wear his tin helmet or not, and tried to halt his echelon of 15 vehicles, only to be told 'Not on my beach, sonny' by an irate field marshal. Within days of landing, the death of several of his regiment's officers left him in charge of a troop of Cromwell tanks. This he led, under heavy and persistent fire from German troops, through Belgium, Holland and Germany, and eventually into the heart of Berlin.

In October of that same year, while advancing toward

the southern Dutch hamlet of Doornhoek, Bill came under heavy artillery fire from German troops. He led his own men through dense woods in almost complete darkness, to find the enemy firing from three cottages, so that machine gun bullets addled his tank. In his magical book, *Troop Leader*, (compiled from a combat diary that he was expressly forbidden from keeping), Bill recounts how almost the only thing that punctuated the darkness that night were the particles of molten lead, many of which found comfortable residence on his face. Having only just avoided running over a Teller mine, and with his bedding having been set alight, Bill got his burning tank and men to safety before over-running enemy positions, allowing his country's infantrymen to push through. For this endeavour, Field Marshal Montgomery personally presented him with the Military Cross the following year.

He was there when the Russians took Berlin. He was so there, in fact, that as one of the first British officers into the occupied city he found himself in Hitler's bunker, and stole a few scraps of paper signed by the Führer (including a request for cheese, which Bill later showed me). Among the most moving sections of *Troop Leader*, dutifully retold in his *Independent* obituary, was the exhausted victory procession through liberated French, Belgian, and Dutch towns the previous winter. As church bells rang, it seemed, he said, to rain sweets and fruit, as exhilarated locals gave their thanks. And yet on either side of the road lay the scattered bodies of the enemy, their cadavers conveying the utter pity of war. On Christmas day of 1944, Bill went into a church to pray alone. There, initially unbeknown to him, sat a German soldier with similarly Catholic sentiments. They looked at each other, motionless, for nearly a minute. Then the German ran out.

All this Bill experienced with no ears. They had been blown out by a shell during his first tour. He had hearing aids of a sort, but back then they were ineffective. This handicap didn't stop him being a fearless campaigner for charitable causes in later life, or an effective businessman. He made a good income as director of a footwear manufacturer, and he was chairman of the Mayday Trust in Rugby, which helps vulnerable adults. He was also a major supporter of the Cynthia Spencer Hospice in Northampton, named after Diana Spencer's grandmother (the family home, Althorp, is a mile from Great Brington).

His German enemies would have described him as *stabil gebaut*, of middling height and width. By the time I knew him he had pale, watery eyes, assertive cheekbones, and an effortlessly avuncular disposition. All these effects seemed gently enhanced by the protrusion, from within his ears, of modern hearing

aids. The curious thing about them was that if you went close enough — to hug him, say — you could hear a tinny rattle inside the ear drum, as if a copper kettle were being heated within him. And you could hear him breathe: long, deep gasps, as if he savoured air, knowing it was precious. It's funny to think now that, when I hugged him a few months back, knowing it would be the last time I saw him (he'd fought off cancer a few years back, but when it returned, it ravished him), almost the last impression I had was of a man who sounded like a benevolent Darth Vader.

The Domesday Book records a priest of a Saxon church in Great Brington, and though the baptismal font may be the only remnant of the first church on the site (which was wooden, and burned to the ground by warring factions shortly after being built), the rest of the building is close to eight centuries old.

Every which way I looked that March afternoon, the centuries themselves seemed to speak, with a soft resilience befitting their most loyal living servant. The font, made of Purbeck stone, was ornamented in a distinctive dog-tooth moulding. It was placed next to the Devil's door, which for eight hundred years has been opened only during the sacrament of baptism, to allow evil spirits to depart. The pedestal itself dates from 1270, and the font's decoration is replicated in the gabled arch of an external tomb. Outside, a solemn churchyard cross, eroded but proudly erect, stands on its own green, a common memorial to all those buried in its vicinity.

Of similar age are the exquisitely carved poppy heads (from the French *puppis*, meaning figurehead), also known as bench ends. In all there are 181 of these intricate wooden details, like so many chess pieces, some of them showing traces of stencilled red fleur-de-lis, indicating the red rose sympathies of Sir Edward Grey during the War of the Roses. Twenty-four of the poppy heads indicate significant family shields. There is a Chantry chapel, shut off from the rest of the church by a par close screen, and an upper gallery supported on corbels, from which musicians will have performed.

But one feature exhilarated more than any other. In an enclave adjacent to the altar, I helped Bill move a slab of flooring to reveal a dusty stone — a memorial stone, one half of which had three stars and alternating stripes. As I later discovered, in 1532 the Mayor of Northampton was one Lawrence Washington, upon whose death in 1583/4 his son Robert inherited former church lands and, according to the records, 'some pecuniary embarrassments'. These financial concerns — most likely indebtedness — led to his sons, Robert and Lawrence, emigrating to Great Brington, where their great friend, the 1st Lord Spencer, resided. He was of similar age and virility (the younger Lawrence and Robert sired 27 children between them). To these two

Washingtons is the memorial stone which Bill revealed dedicated. They too prayed in this church, under these arches, by these windows and their grandfather, Mayor Lawrence, was the great-great-great-grandfather of George Washington, American President. The last time I had beheld the stars and stripes was when I was reporting from Chicago's Grant Park, on the election of Barack Obama, just FOUR months previously. This, I suppose, is what is meant by globalisation.

Through such intricate relations did the Parish church reveal its meaning — which is to say, were the voices of Great Brington through the ages heard. The sheer depth of detail, itself a symptom of the dedication of worshippers, transmitted something immutable about what a common place of worship is, and can be. A repository of all the best hopes of those who attended it over centuries, this church was a monument to the common affections, and common humility, of its pious members. It was a pit stop for fellow travellers, in which the horizontal relations of humanity were supplanted with a vertical relation of humility — a relation, moreover, which though it imposed hierarchy, intimated devotion rather than servility.

That March afternoon, when a frail but determined Bill took my girlfriend and me round on a kind of magical mystery tour, it felt as though a supremely informed guide were leading two willing students. It was an enchanted time that seemed to capture, as the best obituaries can capture, a momentary confluence between history and the eternal present. And because of the church's age — that is, because of its relation to time — it conveyed, firmly and irrefutably, two precious insights, both of which derive chiefly from the conservative imagination. First, we have duties to the dead; and second, religion — a system of thought that gives meaning to life through transcendence — can answer to enduring human needs in a way that no political ideology or scientific discovery can. In a place of worship, such as that hilltop in Great Brington, it is possible not to know transcendence, but to know its possibility, which for most

of us is enough to be getting on with.

In his book *The West and the Rest*, there is a chapter in which Roger Scruton interrogates the idea of the social contract and its homologue, kinship:

... This is what relations of kinship mean: you and I are descended from a common source, and owe our membership to the fact that our common ancestor is also a member. All tribal ceremonies in which membership is at stake — marriages, funerals, births, initiations — are also attended by the dead, who in turn are the guardians of those unborn. And the consolation of tribal membership resides partly in this union with absent generations, through which the fear of death is allayed and the individual granted the supreme endorsement of existing as a limb of the eternal organism.



Photo: Maddy Aldis-Evans

In that union with absent generations resides a form of solidarity that gives fuller meaning to the word 'justice', in that it conveys obligations to those whose physical presence is not a necessary condition of

them exciting our sympathies. It was Burke, of course, who in *An Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs*, said human life is at its deepest when we experience 'a partnership not only between those who are living and those who are dead, but between those who are living and those who are dead, and those who are to be born'. T S Eliot's entire career was an adjunct to this observation. He translated it, in *Little Gidding*:

And what the dead had no speech for, when living  
They can tell you, being dead: the communication  
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the  
language of the Living

Remembering the dead seems only the beginning of our duties. 'Remember me!', screams the ghost of Hamlet's father as he leaves the stage (though, ironically, it is only Hamlet's mis-remembering of this as 'Revenge me!' which makes Elsinore's tragedy possible). Dante's Siena-born woman pleads similarly:

Ricorditi di me che son la Pia

Siena mi fe', disfecemi Maremma  
Remember me who am la Pia; Siena made me,  
Maremma unmade me

*Purgatorio, V*

But to remember alone is not enough. Our chief duty to the dead is to continue their work. Just as those buried beneath the church at Great Brington, and those who had carved its poppy heads and painted its walls, speak to each modern visitor, so too Bill, now lying in solidarity in his own grave, part of the furniture of Great Brington, makes demands on me, as one who has profited from his example, and from his spirit.

Here was I, an Indian immigrant, born in Calcutta, discovering a hallowed England with a man whose entire life was dedicated to an idea of justice that I salute. Growing up in Tooting in the 1990s, one wasn't often obliged to think of two world wars: Bill was the first veteran I ever met. And yet in Great Brington, three generations, and two Englands, old and new, were reconciled, synthesised, united. To know Bill was to feel the gentle pull of obligation, and the soft pressure of his example, which illuminates our own (my own) insufficiency.

And who could walk through that parish church, and not see the glimmer of hope in a dying man when he beheld the Virgin mother, in a monument whose texture owed so much to his generous devotion and deny him the satisfactions of faith? Not the owner of a compassionate heart, surely. I do not believe in God, but I do believe that anti-theism is to religion as the candlesnuffer is to the candle. Faith may be deluded, but in the right vehicle it can be a harmless delusion, and a consoling one. Great Brington didn't convince of God's verity, but it did convince me of His virtue.

Shortly before I went up to visit him for the last time, I had received a letter from Bill. We had lately built up

a correspondence, and though he was very ill, I was told that he delighted in writing to what he (correctly) saw as a new fan. Across the top of his last letter, he had scrawled:

PLEASE EXCUSE MY WRITING BUT CAN'T SIT  
AT MY COMPUTER VERY EASILY AT PRESENT.

And below, in the body of it, he had written the following:

I suppose, looking back over the past, let us say, 75 years, I was brought up to serve Country, Queen (King of course before 1953!) and Faith. My father always said that officer's sons don't cry, always keep clean and smart, volunteer for anything which may help Queen and Country — and so on. I believed what he said and have tried to follow his example. I have enjoyed every minute of it and, although I feel deep down that I could have done more, I still have a feeling of some achievement. In my life, the key has always been my faith and it is that which is supporting me, happily, in this rather difficult period in my life. I am very happy always.

These words, which move me to tears, are in a literal sense a voice from beyond the grave. They are proof that the living rent the earth but never possess it. Bill is gone, but even when (especially when) six feet under, the demands he makes on us are merely minor exchanges for the sacrifices he and his generation undertook. We owe them, as we owe all generations, though we owe them, a generation of soldiers, something more. And from such debt we take consolation, resting assured that we will one day be ancestors to those who revere us, and with whom we share kinship despite our seeming differences. Bill is gone, but his example endures, his work goes on, and his faith shall never die. I commend his spirit to the living.

*Amol Rajan is Assistant Comment Editor of the Independent.*

## Changes to our website

Those of our readers who use the internet will notice our web site is being changed.

You will still be able to subscribe online for the paper edition but in the next few weeks we will be adding improvements. It will be possible to buy a year's online-only subscription for £10. Fully subscribed readers of the paper magazine will be able to read the entire contents of the latest edition, at no extra charge, as soon as it is published. Links will be set up to web sites similar to ours, and we will be offering free access to previous editions. We also plan a comments section and a 'letters to the editor' page.

Subscribers whose email addresses we don't yet have will need to obtain their login details by sending us their email using a special form on the site.

We would like to thank Bernard Lowe for his sterling work over the years in providing us with a web site without which the magazine may not have survived.

# Time to Cancel the Olympics

George Hughes

Under Gordon Brown's disastrous stewardship the British economy has sunk so far and so fast that we can no longer afford to host the 2012 Olympic Games. No one is going to lend us the money for the investors have worked out that they can never be repaid. We are no longer trusted. We are as broke and discredited as a Scottish bank. England has a financial reputation somewhere down there with Iceland, Mozambique and Caledonia.

The Olympic Games are a great money loser particularly for conceited, corrupt and incompetent little countries. It took decades for Montréal to pay off the debts it incurred after the Francophone Québec Olympics. Not even the Gay Pride parade of naked Greek athletes covered in gold dust, at the crowds in Athens, enabled the Greeks to make a profit on their Olympics. The Greeks probably lost and never recovered 6 per cent of their GNP. Fortunately for them they never had to pay compensation to all the illegal and uninsured migrant workers from Albania and Pakistan who were killed through Greek negligence and procrastination followed by recklessness when the facilities were being constructed. We are far too honourable to do anything like that; anyone breaking the rules would be instantly prosecuted by Baroness Scotland. Given how much money Britain lost over the Millennium Dome, what chance have we got of emerging from the Olympics without total bankruptcy? Time to get out while we can.

There is no shame in doing so. Italy was due to host the games in 1908 but pulled out when in April 1906

Vesuvius erupted, destroying most of Naples and causing some hundreds of pounds worth of damage. There was not enough money in Italy both to rescue Naples and to fund the Rome Olympics, so the games were transferred to London and were held there in 1908. It was a diplomatic disaster for Britain. The American team deliberately insulted King Edward VII and in some cases the Irish insisted on fielding their own teams despite being part of the UK; it was a prelude to the later dissolution of the Union.

Now in 2009 it is time for the 2012 Olympic Games to transfer to Rome. The Italians will be happy to return our gesture of 1906 when we were the economically stronger country of the two. Now the situation is reversed for with the collapse of the pound sterling, Italy is much richer, particularly when you allow for the fact that most of Italy's GNP is generated on the black market and never appears on the books. True the Italians are badly in debt but they can go on borrowing long after our credit rating has collapsed, because their Euro-denominated government bonds are underwritten by Germany as part of the Euro-package. The world still believes in the power and commercial strength of the Reich. *Am Deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen.* Once more the masterly Germans will prop up Rome. In fairness the Italians will make a better fist of it than we ever could. They have style, confidence, effervescence, all the qualities we lack. Come to our rescue, Berlusconi, as we did to Italy in 1906.

*George Hughes is a former university lecturer.*

## Postal Strike

London has had intermittent postal strikes since the late summer. A backlog has built up and we have not been receiving all our mail.

Subscribers who were due to renew in the Autumn will still receive a Winter magazine because their cheque may still be in the post, or they may have delayed sending it. However there is now a truce and normal post will resume until after Christmas.

Please get in touch if you have not received a magazine or have any other problem with your subscription. If it is convenient to you, you could avoid the post by using a credit card through PayPal on our website.

# The Psychology of Housing

Alice Coleman

Psychologists blame parents for their children's problems but overlook an even stronger influence — the design of the home. The mid-19th-century crime peak arose from tenement buildings, a steady fall of crime to a record low accompanied the great spread of late Victorian single-family houses. Yet the 20th century reverted to tenements in unprecedented numbers and crime has soared in parallel as well as becoming vastly more vicious. The leader of the new tenement psychology was Le Corbusier, whose 1923 book, *Vers Une Architecture*, introduced the Modern Movement. He argued that throwing people together in blocks of flats would create communities — an idea which won global support. Its validity went unchecked and Labour's 1948 planning control facilitated its enforcement, as the popular semi-detached house was dismissed as out-dated and up to 90,000 Victorian houses were demolished annually for comprehensive redevelopment with flats.

The first scientific report on the psychology of flats was Oscar Newman's 1972 study of New York's 4000 council blocks: *Defensible Space*. As there were only six types, he plotted antisocial incidents on their floor plans and identified eight design features that attracted the most crime. By modifying a few he produced a crime decrease and I urged the 1970s Labour government to heed his discovery but in vain. They dismissed it as an American problem. To investigate its UK relevance my research team surveyed all 4099 blocks in two London boroughs and confirmed Newman's findings, adding much more beside. British blocks were highly varied and had to be mapped on site, revealing 16 deleterious features, each affecting private, housing-trust and council blocks alike. These flaws are 'variables', each with a range of 'values'. Thus, 'number of storeys' is a variable, with the actual number in a block as its value. Values are either harmless or harmful, separated by a 'threshold value'. The number of harmful variables in a block was termed its 'disadvantage score' and zero-scoring blocks were crime-free while those with the worst crime scored 15 or 16. Crime statistics were not at first available for individual blocks so I used visible signs of social breakdown: litter, graffiti, vandal damage and pollution by urine and faeces. These seemed weaker than crime data but brought a bonus, as their separate lines of evidence all told the same story. So did the crime figures later provided by the Metropolitan research police. The survey

included 4127 one-family houses. The older ones showed a decrease in litter, etc, up to World War II, as builders evolved their designs in response to market preferences, but the newer, planning-controlled ones had up to 12 Modernist features and more problems. Well designed houses were not merely harmless but actively beneficial.

In 1988 Margaret Thatcher read my report, *Utopia on Trial*, and funded me to redesign seven misery estates. A city and a housing trust commissioned two more. Threshold values and disadvantage scores identified the defective variables and the extent of change needed, so my method, Design Improvement Care for the Environment (DICE), was fully systematic and the anti-social activities disappeared amazingly quickly. A few small black spots were the very places where local authorities had rejected my redesign. So I advocated building no more flats, modifying existing blocks and demolishing those that were too obtuse for modification. Modernist design does not subvert adults but undermines child-rearing. Strong parents find it difficult, and weak ones impossible, to exercise proper control, so each year adds more unruly children. Every type of mental disorder was significantly worse in flats than in houses.

Flats create anonymity, not community. Numerous people sharing a building cannot all know each other, or tell whether strangers are trustworthy, so they do not invite them in to become better acquainted. One misery estate had overhead walkways admitting 2160 families to each block. Another had 70 flats per corridor. The highest block crated up 27 dwelling layers. And two-storey maisonettes catered for large families, producing packs of rowdy children. Only criminals profit from anonymity. The first DICE modification removed overhead walkways and immediately cut the burglary rate by 55 per cent. But few blocks satisfy the threshold values of only 12 flats and only six accessible from the same entrance. Six families can get to know each other and form a mini-community. So DICE built extra entrances to serve small self-contained sub-sections. Tower blocks may have the threshold value of four flats per floor, but their other features are hard to improve. They can be 'top-downed' to turn the bottom two storeys into houses, or the lower part can be made a separate walk-up block. Some councils restrict families with children to lower floors, but if these are not

separated off, the youngsters still ride the lifts to daub the upper floors with graffiti and intimidate the tenants.

Modernism urges ultra-privacy, but intervisibility is needed to foster acquaintanceship. Newman found external corridors, with public surveillance from the street, had fewer burglaries, but many blocks have no street side, so DICE built extra roads, often just linking the heads of two closes. Tenants condemn windowless internal corridors as 'prison-like'. DICE created fenced and gated gardens for ground-floor flats, which proved better than communal entrances only. Yet individual entrances without gardens were the worst as housebreakers can easily slip into their porches and children just bang on the door or window for their friends to come out and then move on. When they had to walk up the garden path they waited for the door to open and parents could learn who they were. They then spoke to them elsewhere and found them polite and responsive once they were no longer anonymous.

Modernism provides easy getaways for criminals through its 'streets in the sky' concept with many linked corridors, staircases, lifts, overhead walkways, ramps and exits. Crime is least with only one exit and one staircase. Lifts may be needed but their frequent breakdown forces tenants to become high-rise mountaineers and imprisons older ones who cannot manage that. Delinquents prefer to ride, so lift blocks have more problems. Laundry rooms are vandalized and high shops close because of burglaries, shop-lifting and lack of passing trade. Burglars' escape routes are also fire-safety routes. Fire experts opposed dividing the corridors and wanted grilles in the partitions to diffuse poisonous fumes to the next section too. DICE chose vertical vents to disperse fumes harmlessly above the roofs, and shortened the corridors further by recessing fire-doors at the landing end and enclosing the inner end as a porch for the last flat. Similar end porches were built across external corridors to prevent criminals swinging out round the partition wall and defeating the division into smaller sections.

Social breakdown occurs least where people have responsibility for controlling their home and environment. DICE developed Newman's 'spatial organization' concept to define the buffer zones between private space indoors and public space open to all more precisely.

*Semi-private* buffer zones belong to individual households but are visible to others. Front gardens help form communities, as people out working in them chat with passers-by. Back gardens allow activities that develop children's individuality and prevent delinquency. *Semi-public* buffers are shared by different households and not beneficial. The sharers should be as few as possible, as in the small self-contained sections. Each block or section should have

a perimeter wall with just one access point to prevent outsiders cutting across its grounds. In one block thus enclosed, ground-floor tenants removed the window boards they had installed for fear of burglary and restored daylight. Front-garden fences for downstairs flats form part of the perimeter and the approach to the common entrance should be gated.

DICE surveyed 960 estate play areas and found older children stole from younger ones and drew them into delinquent sub-cultures. Parks have safer play areas, with adults about, but those in estates are vandalized and nearby blocks are badly affected. So no play areas! '*Confused space*' is worse. Green spaces allow anyone to reach and break into ground-floor flats and prove to be the strongest factor in increasing crime. DICE built 234 houses on greens and crime plummeted. Also confusing are under-block shops which bring in the public so entrances need to be relocated at the rear, with front gardens added. Under-block garages cannot be seen from the flats and usually have a diversity of doors, showing that the originals have been damaged by burglars and had to be replaced. Many garages are abandoned to rubbish and rats. When I enlarged small flats by adding two rooms made from the garages below, the tenants liked having their cars in view opposite. And they were glad to lose their lifts as a vandal had raised one with its door open and ripped a child's legs off.

Flats were formerly alien to British culture and the benefits of houses contributed to our national character, so DICE makes ground-floor flats as much like real houses as possible, with 12 vital designs. Resident, neighbour and public surveillance sort out whether others should be acquaintances, friends, or experts on specific problems. Residents can see anything untoward outside and deal with it, assured of community support.

*House facades* need a downstairs room with a large bay window for seeing up and down the road, not tiny, high, recessed or even absent windows. Houses with both a front door and garage door should be double-fronted to include a room. Upstairs windows do not serve. In one notorious case, 26 Americans watched a murder below, but anonymity had robbed them of coping ability. Sightlines from ground-floor windows should not be obstructed by shrubs, porches or garages, nor by jutting flanks of skewed adjoining houses. One architect asked to design facades parallel to the road, complained they were too 'bland', but attractiveness should not depend on a crooked layout.

*Frontage features.* Gardens should be 5m deep to let cars be parked straight in. Slanted parking may lead to fence removal but fences and gates are vital barriers that train children to keep out of others' property and not sit on their doorsteps or knock and run away. Fences

are ideally 900mm (3ft) high, to safeguard surveillance. A good design is a low brick base to keep litter out and railings to admit light for plants and give a view of cars coming round corners, with no need to leave a strip of property outside the fence. High hedges conceal house-breakers but trees with high branches usefully soak up carbon dioxide. Sturdy 900mm side fences minimize neighbour disputes. Modernist frontages can be self-contradictory. One estate had six-foot front walls blocking surveillance and gateless gaps inviting intruders in. Others have no fencing, so dogs and children trespass and end gardens have short-cut paths worn bare across them. Tenants given fenced gardens can produce stunning attractiveness.

The safest *layout* is an 'island site' with front-gardens facing roads on all four sides and back gardens abutting each other in the interior. The pernicious Radburn layout of one row's front facing the next row's back has nil surveillance. Cars are in distant garage courts. Street-parking or in-garden parking offends Modernists but is safer and more convenient.

Houses should face through roads, not closes where children play on 'shared surfaces' without footpaths — a Modernist fetish precluding kerb drill. A housing officer told how his three-year-old kept to the path when they lived on a road but ran out into any road after moving to a close. This illustrates how the fashion for closes raised our child pedestrian deaths and injuries to the worst in Europe. They also block access to places a few yards beyond their heads; the long way round needs the car. Through roads save mileage and help reduce traffic jams. Islands can be offset to make T-Junctions that check speed.

Contradicting its shared-surface tenet, Modernism may separate vehicle roads behind houses from pedestrian paths in front — again eliminating kerb drill. There should be front roads with paths on both sides. Rear roads and back gates increase burglaries, nearly 70 per cent of which are effected from the rear. A burglar in a police car on TV identified island sites as hardest to burgle and houses with back gates as easiest. Island sites have corner houses with front gardens round two sides but modernist layouts have end houses which expose back-garden side walls for criminals to scramble over.

Some rows of houses have many alleys leading from vehicles at the back to pedestrian access at the front. People may be cornered by attackers there and they also function as escape routes. In one estate, alleys created 19 exits and foiled police chases. DICE enclosed them inside house gardens, and there ensued an exciting episode with cooperation by the tenants' chairman, a helicopter and the police, who successfully snagged the scoundrels.

Vehicle-pedestrian separation does not keep children off the rear roads, where they can damage cars

unobserved, steal from them and take them joyriding, perhaps killing themselves or others. Parking in front allows better control and helps save children from delinquency. DICE avoids harmful rear alleys, greens and high blank walls that offer no escape from attackers. Modernists justify such walls as blocking vehicle pollution but it is better to retain surveillance along main roads by setting front gardens back behind parallel service roads. DICE extends back gardens across rear alleys and builds houses on garage court sites. Modernist estates of houses waste land in green space. A builder was told to leave half his site in grass, though there were already 52 public green areas in his village. Greens are our fastest growing land use and bring crime, not the alleged 'spiritual refreshment'. They also make new houses more expensive. So the twelfth recommendation is *gardens, not greens*.

Someone suggested that DICE would be just as illusory as Modernism but there is a fundamental difference. Modernism was untested speculation by people trying to make a name for themselves, but DICE is based on multiple strands of hard scientific evidence. Margaret Thatcher would have spread DICE principles universally but Labour seems wilfully ignorant and one of its methods of increasing crime has been raising the proportion of flats in new dwellings to 55 per cent. As flats come to outnumber houses, they even undermine house-dwellers' coping ability, and several people admonishing tearaways outside their homes have been killed. It is good that London's Mayor, Boris Johnson, favours houses with gardens.

Architects are not all tarred with the same brush. I was impressed by one who was delighted to modify a bad estate he had designed originally. 'I never wanted to design it that way,' he said, 'but I had to.' I had been asked to record signs of social breakdown before he started work and also six months after completion. He had cut out 45 per cent of the design defects and reduced the breakdown scores by 47 per cent — a remarkable extra testimony to the close influence of design. It was a pity that if he had known the DICE principles, he could have remedied significantly more defects at no extra cost.

Design improvement is an achievable route to social improvement and much easier than trying to improve the psychology of parents, which is almost impossible in badly designed homes but often happens spontaneously when the design burden is lifted. I hope that architects and planners will select socially stabilizing designs and also help home-seekers avoid defects that cause problems. Above all, we need surplus houses to afford genuine choice, leaving unchosen designs to be discontinued.

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# Franco – Father of Spanish Democracy?

Jonathan Guinness

‘That, after nearly forty years of Francoism, democracy came to Spain peacefully astounded Europe.’ Thus Sir Raymond Carr in his seminal work *Spain 1808-1975*. Yet it came as no surprise at all to observers within Spain itself. The notary of Cadaques, in Catalonia, said to me not long before the dictator’s death: ‘Do you know what will happen when Franco goes? Nothing will happen.’ *No pasará nada*. And virtually nothing did. Then the country moved very smoothly towards its present status as a democratic and respected member of the European Union. Observers within Spain were in a better position than ‘Europe’ to notice that the country had changed fundamentally on Franco’s 36-year watch.

Much of the credit for Spain’s trouble-free passage from authoritarianism to democracy certainly belongs to Franco’s successor as Head of State, King Juan Carlos. However, without Franco there would be no Juan Carlos. It was Franco who chose him as a boy of nine and saw to his education in the traditions of Army and Church. Juan Carlos was the son of Don Juan, the generally accepted Pretender to the throne, and it cannot have been altogether easy to persuade the Pretender to release the boy thereby, in effect, giving up his own claim. However, as Franco will have been aware, royalty does not think in terms of individual power, but as a family. When it came to the point, Franco knew that the Pretender would agree, and he in turn kept faith. There were other claimants to the throne, many of Franco’s own supporters would have preferred a republic, but he stuck firmly to the course he had set. Juan Carlos does not repudiate his debt to Franco. ‘To this day,’ John Hooper tells us, the King ‘will not permit anyone to speak ill of the old dictator in his presence.’ Paul Preston records in an admiring biography of Juan Carlos that the King refers to Franco — ‘bizarrely’, he cannot help adding — as a second father.

From Preston this is a remarkable admission, even with the qualification. This writer, who regards Franco as not even a Fascist but ‘something far worse’, has for years devoted his formidable ability to denigrating the Caudillo, most notably in his hostile biography *Franco*. However, while as we know no historian can be quite

free of bias, the degree of Preston’s partisanship is revealed by the very title of his more recent work, *We Saw Spain Die, Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War*. The writers referred to are all on the anti-Franco side in the war, and the ‘Spain’ they ‘saw die’ is the flawed Republic of the ‘thirties which ended as a prototype of the ‘Peoples Democracies’ Stalin would later impose on Eastern Europe, complete with NKVD and gulags. (The real Spain, far from dying, would in due course load Preston, not undeservedly, with academic honours.)

The Republic had started in 1931 when King Alfonso XIII left Spain under a cloud. It was welcomed at first by most people, but Spaniards hated each other too much to allow it to establish an even playing field. The middle class liberals and moderate leftists who first shaped it tried to make the country conform to their ideas, which were essentially those of the Madrid talking classes. Some of those ideas were bound to antagonize important interests, and there was no question of the founders of the Republic being in any way disinterested or free of bias.

The Republic was strongly anti-clerical. The Spanish Church had a grim history and was far from perfect, also the country certainly no longer consisted exclusively of believers; but the fact remains that as Lawrence J Pinnie puts it ‘The political stance of the Republic on religion excited Catholic sentiment throughout the nation: three-quarters of the population viewed government anticlerical actions as persecution.’ The Republic’s vindictive closing of Church schools also diminished the only real achievement by the Republic, namely the spread of education. Then again, there was a good case for the Republic’s desire to achieve land reform by breaking up big estates, but in the event it could achieve little towards this and its actions were accompanied by a blatant measure of class discrimination, namely the expropriation without appeal of the estates of the ‘grandees’ or upper aristocracy. True, there were not many grandees; but this showed that equal rights for everyone were strictly for the birds. Again, there was the question of the Army, over-officered and under-trained. Manuel Azana, future President of the Republic, brought in reforms as War

Minister which, by a supreme irony, probably increased the army's efficiency and thus helped Franco to win the Civil War. They were however introduced in a spirit of hostility and were deeply resented. Finally, there was the question of the regions, notably Catalonia and the Basque Country, to which the Republic devolved certain rights. That trouble goes right back, to the centralization which Philip V, grandson of Louis XIV, imposed on the country from 1714 when he came to the throne as a result of the War of the Spanish Succession. The centralized government of the Bourbons became the orthodoxy of the Spanish State and in particular of Castile and most of the Spanish army, becoming the obstacle to regionalism.

If all these problems had not been enough, there was the increasing threat of social revolution every bit as violent as that in Russia. Spain's trade unions and working class parties were divided between Marxist Socialists and Bakuninist Anarchists, but revolutionism steadily increased in both camps. Communists were at first few, the revolutionary impetus was entirely native to Spain although the Soviet revolution acted as encouragement and inspiration. After the Left won the general election of 1936, the country degenerated into a real revolutionary situation with church burnings and widespread violence in the streets. This deteriorated further in the Republican zone after the military rising. Stalin, with the help both of party apparatchiks and international radical chic, achieved organisational control of the Republic from May 1937 and when he did so it was at the expense of the indigenous revolutionaries. Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* is an account of this process in one important region.

All this boiled over in July 1936 when a part of the army, eventually to be led by General Francisco Franco, revolted and started a brutal civil war. They were reacting to a growing amount of revolutionary violence culminating in the assassination by the police of a rightwing politician. The war was made worse by the intervention of the Fascist powers on the side of the rebels and Stalin's Russia on that of the Republic, but its basic cause was entirely Spanish. The country's hatreds had reached a pitch where no system could have been agreed by everyone. Realising this, Spaniards had for some time been talking about an 'iron surgeon' who might solve their country's problems. Some had seen Miguel Primo de Rivera, the soldier who became Dictator of Spain in the 1920s, as a possible iron surgeon. But Primo had come to power on the

back of a monarchy that was already discredited. Talking of iron surgeons is easy when it is just part of café chatter. The cataclysm of a Civil War produced the real thing, and in its first years it was not pretty. However, Gerald Brenan, who detested Franco, could note in 1950: 'In a country where .... the real force in all political movements is given by envy and hatred .... democracy with its Queensberry rules becomes unworkable, because the moment politics ceases to be a mere game, the issues become too serious. For this reason I would think well of any government which, while leaving the social pattern much as it is, made a real and sustained effort to increase production.'

Franco's government, from 1957 onwards, would succeed in doing exactly this. When he died in 1975, the distribution of income was much the same as it

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had been in 1936, but both haves and have-nots were very much richer and more prosperous. This could not have happened without the general European boom in the 1960s, but Franco had been shrewd enough in 1957 to replace the protectionist

economics ministers with 'technocrats' connected with the secular religious order Opus Dei. The new ministers were Alberto Ullastres Calvo and Mariano Navarro Rubio. They freed trade and encouraged tourism, exploiting the general European boom of the 1960s to bring wealth into the country both from tourism and from the remittances of the many emigrants.

Though in law a one-party State, Franco's regime was never monolithic. Its ruling party was not, as was the case with Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany, a single instrument under the undisputed control of a charismatic Leader. Franco cobbled together his National Movement, as it was called, during the Civil War from elements with differing aims which were only united in opposing the Republic. One element of the Movement was the frankly fascist Falange or 'Phalanx', led by Primo's son Jose Antonio — who was, however, in a Republican prison and soon afterwards executed — and its smaller rival the National Syndicalists or JONS. Other elements were Renovacion Espanola — the Alfonsine Monarchists — and the Traditionalists who supported the Carlist branch of the Bourbons. Hence the clumsy official title of the Movement the 'Falange Espanola Tradicionalista y de las JONS'. The whole Movement naturally respected the army, which had started the original revolt. It also favoured restoring its privileges to the Catholic Church, which had been first penalised, then viciously persecuted, by the Republic, and it insisted,

less happily, on a unified Spain in which devolution in Catalonia and the Basque country was abolished.

But it did the trick. From start to finish, Franco succeeded in handling his disparate collection by playing off one group against another, always getting his way. He invariably played his cards very close to his chest, but his eventual choice of Juan Carlos as successor indicates that he was at bottom a Monarchist and, like most monarchists, an Alfonsine one. By the time of his death the basic 'families' of which the Movement consisted were still there; the Army, the Church, the 'technocrats' of Opus Dei, the different types of monarchist, and the Falange proper which still

served as the Movement's 'left wing', though during the Civil War Franco had stamped none too gently on such tendencies. Then, under Juan Carlos, a new generation of socialist and conservative politicians established a genuine democracy, using the fact that Franco's rule had turned Spain, in John Hooper's words, from 'one of the raciest countries in the world into one of the most tedious'. Not a bad achievement, considering what had gone before; racy countries tend not to be the most comfortable to live in.

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# Whatever Happened to the Idea of a University?

Brian Ridley

In the mid-19th century, young British Protestants could be decently educated to become gentlemen and vicars at Oxford and Cambridge and Trinity College, Dublin. Not so for the Catholics. J H Newman, an ex-Oxford don and newly converted to the Catholic faith, set about remedying this by attempting to establish a Catholic University in Ireland. The attempt ultimately succeeded in the teeth of opposition from senior Irish bishops, and Newman became the University's Rector. The trouble for the bishops was the predominantly secular nature of the University that was advocated and eventually set out in his famous book *The Idea of a University* (1873). First of all, Newman argued, the name University implies universality, and hence a University was to disseminate Universal Knowledge — theology, the sciences, the humanities — all that there was. But not for utilitarian purposes — there were plenty of other sorts of college for that. His grand idea was of a liberal, as distinct from a servile, education, in which knowledge would be taught for its own sake. Newman's vision of a liberal education resonated throughout the British Isles and formed the basis of the new universities, institutions that were to be distinct from technical colleges. The creation of new knowledge could be left to the Royal Society and the British Academy of Sciences.

Twentieth-century wars and the explosion of scientific knowledge put paid to much of Newman's concept of a University, though lip service to the liberal dream is still piously uttered. Government and corporations bribed Universities to include the creation

of knowledge in science and engineering within its curriculum, arguing with Sir Francis Bacon, the founding philosopher of science, that science should be exploited for the good of mankind. But mixing teaching with research brought on now familiar problems. As Newman himself had pointed out long ago: 'He, too, who spends his day in dispensing existing knowledge to all comers is unlikely to have either the leisure or energy to acquire new. The commonsense of mankind has associated the search after truth with seclusion and quiet.' Very true. Nevertheless, by the latter part of the 20th century the generation of knowledge had become a vital part of what a University was seen to be. Its purpose now was to Generate, Disseminate and Preserve knowledge — GDP for short. The Idea of a University had become an uneasy balance between the liberal and Baconian visions.

That a balance was ever maintained was largely due to the idea of sabbaticals, which allowed the academic staff access to that seclusion and quiet that Newman advocated. But in many places that balance has become very tenuous. The Newman-Baconian GDP is now interpreted otherwise by vice-chancellors exhibiting a schizophrenia between their first academic love, which has made them professors, and the vision of a Chief Executive Officer of a going concern. If a nation can have a GDP, so can a University. After all, the Roman collegium meant a corporation. And so a lowering metamorphosis has come about, aided and abetted by politicians who have little sympathy for what a University

is about, but can recognize a business when they see it and certainly know what GDP is. Thus, the daylight view of GDP — the Generation, Dissemination and Preservation of Knowledge — has largely been displaced by the night view of GDP — Gross Domestic Product.

Today's academics, imbued with enthusiasm for their subject, wanting to learn more about that subject, wanting to add to it, wanting to share their enjoyment of it with their students, find themselves not in a University but in a commercial concern, with its strata of managers and middle managers whose task it appears in practice to be the stifling of as much academic activity as possible. Here is the scholar, bedecked with degrees earned in his youth, who knows all there is to know about his speciality. He converses with his peers across the globe, he knows all the problems, all the nuances, all the certainties of his subject. He is the very man to pass on his knowledge to younger minds. He represents the epitome of what the daylight view of GDP is about, and he is appraised, accordingly, by his peers.

But today's appraisal, based on the ethos of the night view of GDP, is different. His scholarship, research and teaching comes under the heading 'Professional Performance'; under the heading 'Research', what matters is the research income generated and not the quality of his publications; under the heading 'Education', what matters is the introduction of variety and innovative methods, not what he has to say. And on top of that there are management skills, the production of patents, the number of consultancies, the appearance on TV, the interviews on the radio. No doubt our scholar would tick the right boxes regarding departmental jobs, attending committee meetings, and even score for the odd appearance on TV's 'Come Dancing'. But his view — the daylight view — is that it is the quality of the knowledge generated, transmitted and recorded that matters, not how the University presents its image to the public as a successful business enterprise with innovative teaching methods.

It is, of course, indisputable that not all academics are world shakers of international renown, and are yet paid out of the public purse. While it would be ludicrous for university managers to apply their dark view appraisals to a Russell or a Dirac, it is only proper that the public be satisfied that our academics are not slacking, and how else can this be done without a regular appraisal? But surely such an appraisal should be carried out under the guidance of the daylight view of GDP, since the values therein are the ones that the public believe that Universities should be about. But it is the dark view of GDP — the view that regards the University as a business — that

prevails. This ethos deflects the energies of academics away from scholarship and research and from teaching their knowledge to their students in a style that is natural to them and not in a style designed by committee. The infatuation with league tables, the huge amount of time spent on internal appraisals and to government inspired 'Research Assessment Exercises' and the 'Quality Assurance Agency', all products of a lack of trust in academics to get on with the job they know best, all of this is profoundly inhibiting. Established scholars and researchers, nauseated by an irrelevant bureaucracy, can't wait to retire and get on with what they want to do as well as they can outside the university. Young scholars and researchers, newly appointed, find that creativity and talent is appreciated only insofar as it contributes to the dark view of GDP.

And on top of it all, our government, having destroyed our state education system by its anti-elitist policies, decrees that our universities be instruments of social engineering. As a result, the traditional first year of a three-year degree course has had to be transformed into a remedial year, with the inevitable result that the standard of the degree has had to be lowered. Markers of essays, pathetically grateful

to come across rare evidence of an acquaintance with the rules of grammar, however fleetingly, are bound to mark high as a consequence, whatever the burden of the text, and 2.1s become 1sts and 2.2s become 2.1s. The gratitude of teachers of mathematics, physics and engineering, also pathetic, is boundless when they discover some familiarity with elementary mathematics in one of their first-year students. A four-year undergraduate course is obviously necessary, but it would be absurdly optimistic to suppose it would ever be funded.

It may be piously hoped that the daylight view of GDP survives in our older Universities. Elsewhere, the dark view is endemic, and in an institution where that is true, can it then be said to be a proper University? Certainly, not one that Newman would recognize. In today's university there is no longer the idea of teaching the universality of knowledge, no longer the idea of a liberal education — knowledge for its own sake, no longer the governance by those who teach and do research. The University that was Newman's vision no longer exists. The Mechanics Institutes throughout England were transformed into Universities, not by the government, but by local ambitions, spurred by the daylight view of GDP. Now funded by the government, their autonomy a myth, their ethos the night view of GDP, what name should be given them? Not Universities, that's certain.

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# What is to be Done?

Richard Packer

Given the probability of a Conservative government by the middle of next year, inevitably the intentions of the leading Conservatives and notably of David Cameron are coming under increasing scrutiny. Our public finances are in deficit on a scale hitherto unknown outside major wars. At the same time we are mired in an unpopular minor war with increasing casualty rates. The commanding general suggests it could, on present policies, last for forty years or so; the intentions of an incoming government have rarely been more significant.

In a recent edition of the *Daily Telegraph* it was suggested that current Conservative thinking was that the Cabinet would be housed in one large open-plan office, junior Ministers would have 'job-based' titles such as 'Minister for Obesity', while Permanent Secretaries would be labelled 'Chief Executives'. The intention was to focus departments on 'delivery' rather than 'process'. It is claimed that such measures might reduce the risk of departmental turf wars. No doubt all this reflects briefing from Conservative sources though whether the briefing and/or reporting are accurate is another matter. I fully recognise that governments need policies on minor matters as well as major and because these particular ideas have been reported does not, even if true, in any way imply that policies on major issues such as the fiscal deficit do not exist. Nevertheless I was made uneasy and it is worth explaining why.

Politicians of all parties are fond — too fond — of tinkering with the structure of government. The present government has been a serial offender so much so that I would place a large bet that even most experienced political observers could not give the full name of the departments responsible for, say, nursery education or meals on wheels. Most such tinkering is a waste of time and money. The basic truth which needs to be constantly borne in mind while considering any restructuring is that the costs of dislocation are certain while the perceived benefits might or might not occur. The certain costs include those flowing from redundancies (with the people released frequently soon re-employed after pocketing redundancy payments), promotions, new accommodation, new writing paper, new notices, new logos and the rest of it plus the unexpected grit that reorganisations always put in some parts of the system with which they are concerned.

Often underlying such tinkering lies a feeling among governments that, somehow, their efforts are less appreciated than they deserve. This they attribute either to poor 'presentation' or to their being somehow thwarted. If they are thwarted then it 'must' be the civil servants who are doing the thwarting. This is rarely true. Tony Benn's memoirs include claims that his civil servants acted against his wishes in the 1970s so his policies were not properly implemented. The truth, however, as the history of the 1970s shows, is that Benn's prescriptions for a left-wing industrial policy were not supported by the Cabinet and in particular by the Prime Minister of the day. If Benn was unhappy with the attitude of his departmental advisers this was essentially because they had correctly perceived where the balance of view in government lay, and sought to mitigate the adverse consequences of proposing policies which would be dismissed as impractical by the vast majority of Ministers.

Contrast this with the position of Norman Tebbit when at the Department of Trade and Industry. He was every bit as ideologically committed as Benn but was energetic, did his homework, listened to advice, came to his own view and normally proposed policies which were acceptable to his colleagues. His officials almost certainly disagreed with him every bit as much as had Benn's. Yet he was a success and has never claimed that he was 'thwarted' by officials. Herein lies the key. Policies should be made by Ministers after they have properly considered such observations and objections as civil servants might make. All policies will be unpopular with some and the changes desperately needed now, notably serious reductions in public expenditure and (at the right time) tax increases, will be unpopular with almost all. Putting them into effect will require courage and resilience as the flood of complaint washes over the government. Prior political positioning might slightly lessen the wave of criticism that is certain to flow, but not by much.

The difficulty with proposing structural adjustments to government like those mentioned is that they become an end in themselves and if they, or something like them, are put in place there is a tendency to claim that something real has been achieved. In other words fiddling with structure requires time and effort including the time and effort of senior Ministers. This reduces the time and effort they can apply to the major

issues with which they are faced.

An incoming government will need to make major changes in many areas of policy including but by no means limited to (1) public expenditure (2) tax (3) Afghanistan (4) welfare expenditure and dependency and (5) immigration, in all of which present arrangements are deficient. The Conservatives should identify the changes in these and other areas which they regard as essential. Some will need to be brought into effect at once on taking office while

some could best be tested against civil service advice before final decisions are made. This is an enormous task requiring reflection and determination in equal, major measure. Against this the precise structure of government is a small matter. History shows that effective Ministers can work satisfactorily in a wide range of structures. Weak Ministers are ineffective in any structure.

*Sir Richard Packer was Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.*

## The History Museum

Ralph Berry

The Left hates history. It gets in the way. They bring up their JCBs, manned by the tribal Hobsbawms, to shovel away the obstacles to their projections. They have reduced the British Empire, for example, to a shameful episode for which the British must pay penance for all time. They tried to block the Polish memorial in London to Katyn — because the proposed date assigned the massacre to the Soviets, not the Nazis. As for the abolition of the slave trade, and then of slavery: why did not the British pay compensation to the liberated slaves? Wherever history solidifies into books, or even myth, there can be found a Leftist version at odds with the hitherto received version. That goes for quite recent history, such as the governments of Margaret Thatcher.

But there is now a museum of cultural history that daily challenges the Left. It is the record of TV sitcoms, and old movies, available to anyone with digital TV. This museum did not exist forty years ago. TV then appeared in an existential present. If you missed a programme, you missed it. ITV was contractually bound never to repeat a drama. Worse, many recordings were destroyed, simply to save on videos. Some of the masterpieces of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore have disappeared forever. But now a spacious past has opened up. TV, as Jonathan Miller once said, is a great open-ended vacuum. It needs its past, and recycles it ceaselessly. Our past has returned to us, and we recognize it in a kind of daze. This is the way we were.

'The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.' Set aside the sideburns and the flared trousers, and the 1970s come back with the shock of the new. Was it really true that *The Sweeney* was once contemporary, gritty drama? Where the police could

beat villains into a pulp, with not a thought for their human rights? The recent success of *Life on Mars* is all about the gap between past and present, and the extent to which public mores have changed. The programme's subtext is a wide sympathy for the bad old days — notwithstanding the derision ostensibly aimed at the Neanderthal attitudes of the police, in their pre-social engineering past.

*Are You Being Served?* was and is much loved. It is an elegy to hierarchy, and set in the real-time present, the 1980s, it celebrates a set of attitudes which were already passing away. The Department Store world of Grace Brothers is based on rank and seniority, greatly mocked and as greatly honoured — in the observance, as well as the breach. The pivotal figure is Captain Peacock (Frank Thornton), who retains the convention of his military rank, and keeps in order the subordinate colleagues of the shop floor. Immaculately turned out, always with a buttonhole, he would endorse the classic exchange in Alan Bennett's *Forty Years On*:

*Franklin* Have you ever thought, Head Master, that your standards might perhaps be a little out of date?

*Head Master* Of course they're out of date. Standards always are out of date. That is what makes them standards.

Above Captain Peacock is the executive manager; above him is the Olympian world of the Board, symbolized in Young Mr Grace. *Are You Being Served?* combines a Prussian awareness of authority with a wholly English affection for its comedy. It is impossible to imagine a department store revival that would work in the same way today.

Classic drama, once a flagship, has virtually disappeared from TV. For the substance of later TV drama, I offer a couple of series that have had no successor. *Sharpe* was created and filmed in the early-mid 1990s. Sharpe (Sean Bean, a superb casting) is a private soldier, rough and uneducated, who through sheer courage and resourcefulness wins promotion after promotion, ending at Waterloo as a major. The French get regularly beaten up in his adventures. *Hornblower* is the obvious naval successor to *Sharpe*, filmed during the early years of Blair but conceived in the mid-1990s. Its hero (Ioan Gryffydd) is a gentleman, whose primary value is duty. His commanding officer, Captain Pellew, is played most sympathetically by Robert Lindsay who has left his radical parts behind. My point is that *Sharpe* and *Hornblower* celebrate masculinity, honour, courage, and duty. They return regularly on the repeat channels. And there has been nothing like them since. The values the two heroes embody are not in favour with today's programme-makers.

In comedy, one notices in the re-runs the greater freedom of past scriptwriters. In *Blackadder II*, for example, the Protestant fundamentalist is allowed to say 'cold is God's way of telling us to burn more Catholics'. Rowan Atkinson fought to have this kind of jest preserved from the legislative zeal of the Labour Government. He had some success — professional comedians are regarded as fairly safe from prosecution — but the looming shadow of hate-crime has not disappeared from the screen. The suffixes *-phobia*, *-phobic* do the work of argument. Who distinguishes between hate, strong dislike, trenchant criticism, and bad-taste jokes? In the past, no one. It was not an issue. It is now.

Political correctness is censorship. The first martyr was the late Benny Hill, said to have been the world's most popular TV comedian in his heyday. He was removed, at a stroke, from ITV, and even now is not much seen in the repeats. His crime was sexism, a deep failing tolerated in Muslims but anathema to the rulers of the airwaves. The same order of thin-lipped, Customs-officer disapproval applies to comic treatment of homosexuals. Mr Humphrey (John Inman), the outrageously camp follower of Grace Brothers, was never outed. He thus incurred the wrath of those who thought it a duty to come out. But his camp act was wildly funny, and extremely successful in American tours. *Up Pompeii* (1970) featured a handbag-carrying Ancient Brit. For the beau ideal of old-style camp, I refer readers to the film *Up The Chastity Belt* (1970), where the late Hugh Paddick (himself gay) served up a gay Robin Hood for our permanent delight. They don't do gays like that today.

The coming of Blair saw a paradigm shift in language, as in much else. Restraints were relaxed, and then abandoned. A widespread coarsening took over. Of an award-nominated novel, a critic remarked 'If you know the meaning of one word, you've already read one-tenth of the book.' TV now celebrates the dominance of that word. A small but significant detail: a running gag in *Blackadder* is Baldrick's addiction to dung-eating. *Dung* is the word used. Its present-day replacement is everywhere, but the *Blackadder* scriptwriters, Richard Curtis and Ben Elton, never crossed that line. The hallmark of the *Blackadder* scripts is their linguistic fastidiousness.

More generally, speech of any kind is increasingly taxing, on the evidence of TV and film drama. Words don't much matter. Viewers of the widely-hailed TV series *The Wire* are advised to use the box-set subtitles. They may otherwise lose half the dialogue, Baltimore being one of the least penetrable of American accents. There may be something to Anatole Kaletsky's suggestion that the global movie audience 'apparently wants fewer words in films so that they are easier and cheaper to translate.' (*The Times*, 4 February 1999) A simple experiment: watch any film of 40 years ago, British or American. You will hear every word. Now try a contemporary film, especially a thriller. Much of it is designedly inaudible. Muttered asides, expletives, throwaway lines fill up the spaces where speech used to be. The lips move, sounds come out, feelings are conveyed; but the transference of meaning from one mind to another, by way of words, is abandoned. Language has become filler. The tactical goal is 'authenticity', the strategic goal the subordination of language to image. Method acting has become Method script-writing.

Sex is a subject best avoided, but there is something to be said about courtship. On film and TV, couples engaged on their pre-docking manoeuvres did so through symbolic accessories. In *The Big Sleep*, the bookstore proprietress (Dorothy Malone) takes off her spectacles. That is an intensely erotic moment, but the camera does not follow Humphrey Bogart into her bedroom. Cigarettes used to have the sexual charge of nitro-glycerine, as in *Now, Voyager*. In a famous scene, Paul Henreid lights two cigarettes simultaneously, then hands one to Bette Davis. That is a combustible moment. Alan Bennett had another evocative line, of a brief encounter during the Blitz: 'I first saw her face in the flickering light of a post-coital Craven A.' And now cigarettes belong to the ashtray of history. Smokers, once a triumphalist majority, are exiled to the doorway of their place of employment, there to enjoy a furtive puff. Only the history museum can remind us of the smokers' day in the sun.

The best of the museum is that the curators have little control. They can exclude but not tamper with the originals. And the never-ending need to fill space means that everything comes back, sooner or later. *It returns in its original form.* The past doesn't translate, and is totally resistant to updating. A few years ago a director made an exact-replica remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho*. He followed the exact shots that the great man had made for his classic film, but with a new cast. I watched it for ten minutes, then gave up. *Everything* was false. Present-day actors implied different values and attitudes. They simply could not have said and done the things which were laid down in the original. A A Gill has said that period drama always tells us more about the period in which the film is made than that in which the film is set. He's right. *Pride and Prejudice* exists in a state of perpetual revolution, and the latest Elizabeth Bennet is perceptibly different from the last one (as is Mr Darcy). She is today's admired young actress. Period drama made some time ago has a double patina of age. In (say) the *Romeo and Juliet* of 1936, one takes in the absurdly over-age Mercutio (John Barrymore) and the English-gentleman Romeo (Leslie Howard). Those were the stars of that era, and stars carry the era's values on their backs.

The best of the old sitcoms return viewers to an idyllic past, the great good place. It is an Avalon, where even in HMP Slade (*Porridge*) there is no profanity and no real

violence. Or it is Maplin's Holiday Camp, that golden world where they fleet the time carelessly. Where, but in *Hi-de-Hi!*, could we find Macmillan's England? TV offers the national audience a running plebiscite on the past, and the poll result is: we like it.

'Under New Labour, only the future is certain; the past keeps changing' said Paul Flynn, MP. An ironist on the Labour benches is a rarity, and the more welcome for it. His point is central, that history is the new politics. All the more reason to cherish a museum that is largely free of its curators, and consists of material that is totally resistant to tampering. We can see for ourselves. Rex Harrison's Professor Higgins may be a sexist monster, but his charisma burns the screen, fifty years on. He will not reappear in today's films. He does not have to. We have him on record.

Beyond him opens up an entire era, and the conventional judgments made on it. The most despised decade of British cultural history has been the 1950s, destined to be overthrown by the 1960s — whose leaders are still with us. 'I was brought up in the '50s,' said Simon Gray. 'Probably the only courteous decade in the history of this country.' That quiet revaluation may be at the heart of the knowledge the history museum now grants us.

*Ralph Berry spent most of his teaching career in Canada. He has written extensively on Shakespeare.*

## Adopting Sense

Patricia Morgan

When I was in a maternity ward over 20 years ago, a highly aggressive mother who — we would now say — had 'learning difficulties', threatened nurses with broken bottles and screamed at her own newborn as a 'greedy little bitch' when it had the audacity to feed. Rumours were that the baby was the result of rape by her brother (with 'learning difficulties'). He and his companions monopolised the urine soaked, ash and bottle strewn 'visitors' room'; drinking and fighting. One day a hippy young woman came to take mother and baby to their new council accommodation. The 'family', if such it was, could not be separated, lest the sky fall in. Hippy women from social services would call from time to time to check that things were satisfactory.

So, it was with an overwhelming sense of *déjà vu* that I watched the case from Doncaster unfold, along with

all the responses of the great and the good. Two brothers aged 10 and 11 terrorised a council estate and — while in care — battered, tortured and sexually assaulted other children. Doncaster social services, ranked among the worst in the UK, were taken over by the government in March after seven children known to them had died since 2004. The knee jerk diagnosis — if the social services did not have to spend their meagre budgets on crisis management, think of all that preventive work they could do. As Theodore Dalrymple has remarked: 'It is amazing how anything can be turned these days into a pay claim.'

More sensibly, there was the advocacy of adoption, this time from Martin Narey of Barnardo's. There always is after some child-related atrocity. This may be followed by some temporary scrabbling around to find permanent homes for a few more care children, whence everything fades away to business as usual. Not that there is anything

wrong with adoption. Its outcomes are dramatically better than for similar children left in their birth homes or in the care of the state, even allowing for more genetic disabilities. This applies to late adopted children as well, even given that they have come from backgrounds of alcoholism, psychosis, mental deficiency, cruelty and neglect and have spent long periods in and out of care. The majority — from here and abroad — turn out remarkably well, even if they have suffered nutritional deficiencies, lacked stimulation, affection and opportunities for attachments, as well as having learned behaviour necessary for survival in institutions or on the streets.

That ordinary folks are so much better at bringing up children than the ‘experts’ might be one reason social workers hate middle class people so much (one of my acquaintance wanted to guillotine them). Holding class war sentiments and sensing that middle class parents are rivals, if not betters, may help to account for cases like those raised by Christopher Booker in the *Sunday Telegraph*, where social workers intervene and even remove children from homes whose deficiencies would hardly appear on their radar if this was a ‘multi-partnered fertility’ troupe on an estate.

If social work were evidence based — which it is not — then adoption would be the first rather than the last choice for care children. If a child has been in the system for six months and the family shows little or no sign of change, it is pointless trying to return it home, and hopeless after 18 months. The ‘family’ is likely to have changed beyond recognition anyway, given its transient relationships and the arrivals and departures of ‘partners’ and ‘parent figures’. The continuous turbulence means that social workers’ assessments and plans can be out of date in weeks, let alone months. Adoption should also be put as a positive choice to all young single mothers. Adoption need not be ‘closed’, so that they could receive news of their child’s welfare or progress. Knowing that it is in good hands and getting on fine, they can carry on ‘partying’.

From their beginning in the 1948 Children Act, the statutory social services were based on the premise that children would seldom, if ever, need alternative homes. Care is just to see children through some transitory family difficulties, or part of a plan for the ‘rehabilitation’ of the family. Added to this has been the pop psychology that makes adoption seem hopeless anyway. Human beings supposedly ‘bond’ like ducks in a way that is irrevocable and unrepeatable and early experience has long and irreversible effects. This all reached its zenith in the 1960s with the doctrine associated with John Bowlby and the Tavistock Clinic school of psychoanalysis, that separation from the mother, or early lack of ‘mothering’, had lasting and far reaching consequences; crippling the capacity to make relationships, causing criminality and even turning people into psychopaths. It reinforced

the reticence about removing children from destructive homes since they would be doomed anyway and encouraged repeated attempts at restoration. Not much has been added since, apart from the soft Marxism and a big dose of political correctness.

A result has ever been children bouncing back and forth between repeated abuse and neglect and many care homes. Remember Maria Colwell; battered to death by her alcoholic stepfather in 1973 after being returned to her mother (with ten children by four different men)? Remember Jane Rowe’s and Lydia Lambert’s *Children Who Wait*, about the thousands stockpiled in the system; waiting for that nebulous reunion with a parent they had never known or who had forgotten they existed, or was too mentally or physically incapable or drugged or violent or imprisoned ever to care for them?

The following 1975 Act made adoption easier. Then came the backlash against the ‘permanence principle’ for causing ‘confrontation’ rather than ‘conciliation’ between social worker and ‘client’. The 1989 Children Act tightened up the law on care proceedings by applying more due process, but ushered in the ‘partnership with parents’ principle in place of permanence for children. Since this reaffirmed family preservation, social workers felt they had a duty to avoid antagonising the family of origin. While the best interests of the child are supposedly primary, in practice the rights of the birth mother have had priority. Adoption again trailed away.

In 1999, we had Victoria Climbié lying smashed and bound in a cold bath in a plastic bag. Tony Blair unleashed another of his starry eyed objectives; this time to increase adoptions by 40 per cent. It was rumoured that he had even seen (maybe read) my book that was part of the upsurge in interest in adoption at the time. Predictably, social services tail-gunned the children waiting in the system for a conclusion to their interminable adoption procedures. Then, adoption trailed off again; which is where we are and with cases like that of Baby P, killed at home in 2007, and the lads from Doncaster.

Apart from Martin Narey’s call for more adoption, what else is on the table? Hope springs eternal that some magical ‘early intervention’ will be the wand to create cuddly ‘parenting skills’. Ed Balls urges us to try ‘to see if we can get to the root of what’s gone wrong’. Not that difficult, whether in the Doncaster case or that of the mother on my ward all those years ago: feral breeding, alcoholism, drug addiction, very low IQ, and a tendency to violent rages. Unfortunately, a diagnosis is not a prophylactic. Moreover, there may never be a ‘fix’ in many cases, or not until neurological interventions or genetic manipulation reach levels well beyond our present knowledge.

Other politicians and experts have waded in to advocate

intervention with 'vulnerable' mothers before the baby is born. There is the Family Nurse partnership, where first-time teenage mothers are visited from 16 weeks into the pregnancy until the child's second birthday; providing a range of support and guidance as well as tips on how to return to work or education. So far 2,000 have been involved in pilot schemes at a cost of £30m. Iain Duncan Smith has joined calls for a nationwide 'roll-out', although the programme is on test and therefore remains unproven. The costs would be astronomical and where all the trained personnel are going to come from is mysterious. A naive optimism prevails over the potential and motivation of all mothers to get it right. Even if such projects were viable, affordable and successful, they would be bailing out a tub that is filling ever faster with the increasing momentum of social disintegration.

Many people now talking up such early intervention projects claim just to know that, if only they were given enough resources, they could perfect child development. How often have I heard this, over and over again? Nothing has ever delivered on the promises. Duncan Smith recently co-wrote a report with Labour MP Graham Allen (a man given to ludicrously utopian educational aspirations), to persuade both main parties to commit to early intervention in their manifestos. What ever happened to Sure Start as the means to transform the children of the underclass? Conveniently forgotten? Remember the claims about £7 coming back for every pound spent because of some misread project in the US? Now 'a study' in America is appealed to, to suggest that spending on early intervention costs the taxpayer up to 17 times less than keeping somebody in the criminal justice system. As these figures just grow, Graham Allen insists that every pound spent helping in the early days is worth £100 later on!

The mummy of them all comes from the charity Action for Children and the New Economics Foundation (*Backing the Future*); slavered over by Melanie Reid in the *Times*. Over the period from 2010 to 2020, 'sufficient targeted interventions' in early life would cost an extra £191bn, while the saving would be £460bn. Funded through a bond scheme, the net return would be £269bn. Within nine years, the savings promise to break even with the cumulative costs. A second wave of 'help' between 2020-30 would involve 'new' universal childcare and funded parental leave — as if this had never been thought of before. Success is 'proved' — somewhere in Europe. Net returns are now £486 bn; what with all those happier children, less prisoners, less vandalism, 'community benefits', and savings to the economy. If we do not pay up, we are threatened with a bill in 2030 of £4 trillion.

Another programme already here on earth and favoured by Duncan Smith is Save the Family, a charity

in Wales that takes mothers and children into care so they can be supported together. I assume this means adolescent girls already in care or being taken away from adverse environments. Or is it really being suggested that mothers-to-be are taken into care on a mass scale? On what criteria? By what procedure? What of the 'false positives', where children will as likely turn out well enough anyway? What is suggested looks like a horrendous extension of the powers of a monster state; its healing hands 'reaching out' in our best interests. As much as I admire Duncan Smith, is it sensible to be going up the therapeutic route on such a scale, what with his other proposals for warding off divorce (or taking out the sting) with counselling fests. After so many expensive failures, how it is possible to still assume that the state's minions have all the requisite knowledge and control to mould individuals to any given specifications anyway?

The resurgence of references to the overwhelming influence of early experience is also very worrying. In a recent article Duncan Smith insisted that:

...the most critical time...is in the first three years: the brain develops at its fastest, setting the intellectual scope for the rest of childhood. ...what happens before a child enters the nursery or school outweighs all that takes place subsequently. It is in these first three years that a child's future is shaped and, in some senses, predicted.

Not quite. Human beings are far more adaptable and to much later ages. Because children usually stay in the same environment, it is too easily assumed that early experience is all determining. The brain might grow fast in babies, but it is also scaled down and re-organised in adolescence. Some terrible environments may impede neurological development. As Professor Frank Furedi once commented, this is unlikely to happen unless you hit the baby on the head with the frying pan and lock it in a dark cupboard. The condition of a child mouldering in a Romanian orphanage or a social isolate left with the dogs, is too easily equated with baby missing some Little Einstein playscheme. One wonders how human beings could ever have survived — let alone prospered — down the ages with so much 'trauma' and 'deprivation' around, let alone Mongol armies, Ice Ages and the Black Death.

This ever re-cycling infant experience dogma has, over the decades, played a leading part in denying so many children a second, and successful, chance with adoptive parents. These are the people at the grass roots who can accomplish what will ever elude the state to accomplish, whatever its powers and resources and dreams about reaching down and working miracles in the early years.

*Patricia Morgan's latest book was The War Between the State and the Family, Institute of Economic Affairs.*

# Lying in Gdańsk about Danzig

Christie Davies

The meeting of European leaders in Gdańsk, the Danzig where World War II broke out, to mark the passing of seventy years since that fateful 1st September 1939 when the war began, produced twisted speeches from Vladimir Putin and from our own Foreign Secretary, David Miliband. Let me add immediately that I am not equating Miliband with Putin. Putin is far more intelligent.

David Miliband used the occasion to talk up the European Union which he said was founded in 1951 'to make war unthinkable'. The EU, he claimed, was the source and origin of peace and security in Europe and in consequence we should all support it without demur. We heard this lie before from that corrupt French President, Jacques Chirac. He told Blair that, if Britain did not agree to further outrageous concessions of power to a centralized EU, his baby son Leo would live to experience a new war between the quarrelsome European nation states. So thoroughly has EU-think come to dominate our masters' minds that Miliband is now admonishing others by parroting this absurd French admonition. Miliband continued 'extremists like the BNP oppose what Europe stands for', thus slyly and dishonestly smearing all the reasonable and moderate parties and people who are solidly against the wretched European Union. There is, said Miliband, 'no conflict between pride in country and wanting to be part of European co-operation'. This piece of nonsense was addressed as much to the Poles as to the British, for they are the other main nation which has strong anti-EU political movements. It is disgraceful that our Foreign Secretary should have used this historic meeting to make these cheap points.

Miliband's father, Adolphe, later Ralph, who had come to Britain as a refugee from Belgium, wrote in his diary in 1940,

The Englishman is a rabid nationalist. They are perhaps the most nationalist people in the world... When you hear the English talk of this war you sometimes almost want them to lose it to show them how things are.

It is bizarre that anyone should have wished to have preserved thoughts of this kind about the country that had accepted and protected him. Father Miliband was quite unable to see that the British people's willingness to go on fighting under desperate circumstances was a product of that confident nationalism that so horrified

him. Neither Miliband could ever understand that the national identity and the respect for liberty and democracy of the British people are indissolubly tied together in a single tradition. We instinctively thought and think of the bestial behaviour of the Nazis or the Soviets or the Taliban as being 'thoroughly un-British'. By contrast nobody feels any loyalty to Europe with its silly flag and remote institutions or would ever be willing to fight for it. It is not ours and it does not embody our liberties. British nationalism alone binds us together and is the vehicle of our values. This is something that socialists do not want to see. I suspect that for many centre-left socialists today their new utopia is the European Union, for it embodies a rejection of the nation. In spite of the failure of the League of Nations, in the 1930s the Labour Party still sought disarmament and even voted to abolish the RAF (that would have done wonders in the Battle of Britain). Given Miliband's support for the war against Islamic terror in Afghanistan, I am sure he cannot hold such views but he does seem to have some naïve ideas about the origins of the Second World War. He fails to see that when it comes to defending ourselves against external aggression of even sorting out minor local disputes within Europe, the European Union is as useless as the old League of Nations. It was the Americans who brought about a settlement in war-torn Yugoslavia after the nations of the EU had failed dismally. One can easily imagine an officer in a 'European army' dithering in the way those of the UN 'peace-keeping' force did in Srebrenica in 1995, when they permitted the massacre of 8,000 Bosnians rather than intervene. The officers and troops on the spot were Dutch and the overall commander French. What language did they use if they had to communicate? Even before the massacre, the Dutch looked on as women were raped and children were killed, while their commander worried about whether his 'terms of engagement' permitted him to do anything.

That there has been peace in Western Europe since the Second World War has been entirely thanks to the gung-ho, patriotic Americans with their warrior spirit and their willingness to spend money on their armed forces and to intervene militarily in the defence of peace and liberty. How strong would NATO have been without them?

The cunning Mr Putin is manoeuvring cleverly to diminish the fact that the aggression that began

World War II was a joint enterprise involving the Soviets as well as the Nazis. Under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact the Soviets invaded Poland shortly after the Nazis and occupied the eastern part of that country which had been allotted to them. The Soviets took over the Baltic States, imposed puppet governments, enslaved their peoples and committed atrocities as bad as those of the Nazis. During the war Estonia lost 17 per cent of its population, the same proportion as Poland and a greater proportion than died in the pre-war Soviet Union. In his speech in Gdańsk Putin stressed the heavy Soviet losses in the war but he did not mention that many of those who died were killed by their own Soviet government. The war against Finland was equally an act of Soviet aggression as was the annexation of the Romanian province of Bessarabia (now Moldova). Putin can no longer deny the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which has been condemned by the Russian Parliament, but he did put a deceitful gloss on it in Gdańsk. He bracketed it with the Munich agreement and what he termed other attempts by the West to appease Hitler and calm him down. The Munich agreement was a peace treaty that failed. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was an alliance. In 1939-41 the Soviets actively helped the Nazi war effort by providing them with war materials and also ports for ships and submarine to enable the Germans to evade the British naval blockade. When the Luftwaffe bombed London during the Battle of Britain it was flying on Soviet petrol. Before that the French communist party had on Soviet instructions sought to impede France's ability to resist a Nazi invasion through agitation and sabotage in the French armaments factories. The Nazis were conscious of the communists' importance and when the French government banned the Communist newspaper *L'Humanité* they printed it for them in Germany. The French communists remained collaborators until the invasion of the Soviet Union.

In contrast to the help given to the Nazis by the Soviets, the Neville Chamberlain of Munich was rearming to resist Nazi Germany, particularly after March 1939 when Germany had broken the Munich agreement and occupied the whole of Bohemia and Moravia. There is no comparison between Soviet villainy and British naivety. Putin has only told half the truth and surrounded it with a lie.

Munich happened because Britain lacked the armed forces to stop the Nazis, in part because of the Labour Party's resistance to rearmament. The other reason was that it was impossible for Britain and France to ally with the Soviets, who in the event of a joint operation to save the Czechs would have had to come through Poland and, of course, would never have left again.

The Poles would have fought to keep them out, as Pilsudski had in 1920 when Lenin's forces invaded Poland, and the Nazis would have used this as an excuse to invade from the other side. The Germans would have easily defeated the Soviet army much as they did in 1941-2 when the Soviet forces performed worse than the Tsarist army in World War I. Nearly all their best Russian generals had been purged and murdered by Stalin and in 1940 the Soviet army had serious problems even in overcoming tiny Finland.

There is a second lie underpinning Putin's supposedly 'moderate' speech in Gdańsk and one that was endlessly repeated by leftists during the Cold War — that the Soviet Union only expanded westwards in 1939-40 better to defend itself against Nazi Germany by having 'buffer territory' between itself and a possible German invader. If that were the case, why were the Soviets so surprised and unprepared when the attack came? Why were there not already effective defences in place in these newly annexed territories? Most important of all why did they persecute and massacre the peoples of the Baltic States in 1940; hardly the way to gain friends and ensure your own security. When Britain occupied Iceland and the Faeroes in 1940, it was careful to respect the rights of the local people and to let them run their own affairs. They gave us no trouble and after World War II many Faroese wanted to quit Denmark and enjoy British protection. By contrast when the Soviet army retreated from the Baltic States in fear of the German advance in 1941, the local people formed partisan groups in the forests and ambushed the departing Soviet columns. The Lithuanians began shooting at the Soviet troops well before the Germans arrived. The Finns had been invaded in November 1939 when they went to war rather than accede to the Soviet demands permitted under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the same demands that had led on to the conquest of the Baltic states. The Finns were forced to concede in 1940 but when the Germans invaded Russia in 1941, hardly unsurprisingly, the Finns again went to war with the Soviet Union in the Continuation War of 1941-44, acting as an ally of Germany. Had Finland not been invaded, that country would have tried to remain neutral throughout as would the Baltic States. The Soviets lost against the Germans in 1941-2 for the same reason that the Nazis were to lose the war subsequently, namely their abominable treatment of subject peoples. Two and a half million Indians volunteered to fight for the British Empire in World War II. How many Estonians, Latvians or Lithuanians willingly fought for Russia?

In the end the Russians won on the Eastern front because they appealed to that very force that Miliband's father was denigrating in England — nationalism.

Russians were not willing to fight for the Soviet Union. We know that from the KGB files for the period 1938-41, opened to researchers under Yeltsin, which record the anti-Soviet songs and graffiti of those years. Ordinary people knew that the war against Finland was wrong and they felt sorry for the peasants of Eastern Poland, now Western Ukraine, because they knew they were going to lose their land through collectivisation. The Soviet government in desperation returned to the symbols and institutions of old pre-revolutionary Russia including the Orthodox Church. People will fight for a nation but never for a mere aggregate justified by a contemptible ideology.

But, say the feeble pink progressives, the ones who preach against xenophobia, 'shouldn't we forget these old conflicts'. How can we, when they were paraded this year in Gdańsk by the foreign ministers of Europe and lied about? These events are a central and recent

part of the history of our NATO allies Poland and the Baltic States. If the Poles, the Estonians, the Latvians and the Lithuanians want Soviet crimes remembered and kept vivid, what right have we to object? We did little to help them in the years of tyranny and illegal occupation. Are we now to ignore their claims for the recognition of past injustice? The leftists' real objection is not that I have dragged up the past, but that I have told the truth about it. I have denounced the crimes and aggressions of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany equally, and shown that the pact between them was an alliance against Britain, a country whose virtuous nationalism was justified by events. We should uphold that nationalism just as vigorously today.

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

## I had that Theodore Dalrymple in my cab the other day

**T**axi drivers, on the whole, are not highly regarded by the intelligentsia. Indeed, they are viewed rather as a necessary evil, consequent upon the intelligentsia's purely rational desire to avoid all the unpleasantness and inconvenience of public transport. As a natural result of their membership of the petit bourgeois class, taxi drivers hold predictably regressive social views; however polite and accommodating they might be to individuals, their opinion of humanity in general is usually a low one, and they do not hold out much hope of radical human improvement by the schemes so beloved of the intelligentsia. It follows that they are mean-spirited and unimaginative. The worst thing about them, perhaps, is that they read the *Daily Mail*.

There is one exception, or papal dispensation, that a small sub-group of the intelligentsia is prepared to grant to an equally small sub-group of taxi drivers: namely, to those who conduct journalists in remote foreign lands, about which they know nothing, from the airport to the capital's one five-star hotel where they will hole up (mostly with their compeers in the bar) for the brief duration of their stay.

Much of what passes for analysis in our newspapers of the delicate situation and dramatic social upheaval now reigning in a part of the world to which we had previously never devoted a moment's thought, and probably couldn't find on a map, is actually the opinion

of such taxi drivers somewhat elaborated with a potted history taken from a guide-book. In this situation, taxi-drivers go straight from being intellectual pariahs and ignoramuses to being well-informed oracles of wisdom, without having passed through any intermediate stages. I know, because I have, in my short period as a foreign correspondent, used the technique myself, not altogether without success, if success is measured by a colourfully readable and seemingly authoritative end-product.

Indeed, on one occasion, a taxi-driver taught me something valuable about the expressive possibilities of basic English. I was trying to catch a taxi in Singapore, but no driver would take me. A leper of old could not have been more cruelly shunned. Then I moved about three feet to my left and a taxi took me at once. It turned out that I had been standing in the wrong place; it was not permitted for taxis to take people standing where I had been standing before. As the taxi driver put it, 'Singapore velly, velly law.' A brilliant four-word encapsulation of the glories and miseries of an entire society, quite beyond the powers of any intellectual I had ever met!

However, my purpose here is not to praise either the political insight of taxi-drivers in general or the economy of the language in which they express it, but rather to draw attention to an extraordinary fact: that it is a truth universally acknowledged that London

taxi-drivers are the best in the world. This fact is extraordinary because excellence is not the first word that comes to mind when describing contemporary British life. It is difficult to think of anything else in Britain that is the best in the world. We have trouble enough trying to keep up with mediocrity. But there is another curious thing about the excellence of London taxi-drivers, an excellence that has been so long-lasting that it is now traditional: it was brought about, and is maintained, by regulation.

Now it sometimes seems as if the debate between radical free-marketeers and socialists consists of a shouting match between those who believe, on the one hand, that if only everyone were free to pursue his own economic ends without the interference of any authority a state of general human happiness would result, either soon or eventually; and those who believe, on the other hand, that if only the authorities put in place the right regulations covering every eventuality, the same state of general human happiness would likewise emerge. Control everything or control nothing, seems to be terms of the debate. I am reminded of what the Russian Minister of Justice, Ivan Shcheglovitov, said in 1915:

The paralytics in the government are struggling...  
with the epileptics of the revolution.

An interesting and important question is why the regulation of London taxi-drivers is so successful. The answer is that the regulation concerns itself directly, and only, with matters that are of the most obvious relevance to maintaining the standard of what is being regulated. The regulation poses no bar to the entry of anyone to the ranks, save that of knowledge of the geography of London, of which it demands a standard so exacting that it probably represents the greatest mass-feat of memory in human history. In addition there are minor, but obviously relevant, tests of character: when a candidate for the test of the Knowledge said good morning to the examiners, they told him in no uncertain terms to shut up. He lost his temper with them, and thereupon failed the exam: they told him afterwards that they were testing his reaction to a rude customer. He learnt his lesson.

The regulatory test is so obviously relevant to the task to be performed that it is an absolute model of what regulation should be. I have heard free-marketeers say, on grounds of principle, that anyone should be allowed to drive a London taxi, and that market forces would weed out the bad ones: but I do not think this is so, since each customer takes each taxi-driver on average only once. The assurance that regulation gives to customers that a black-cab driver knows his way about London is very comforting; it also gives taxi-drivers a well-merited pride in their work and self-respect. With

regard to the free-marketeers' objection on principle, I would return Lord Falkland's famous dictum that when it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change. There is little enough in the world that is excellent that we should not target it for the chimera of mere intellectual consistency.

Unfortunately, a growing proportion of regulation is not like that of London taxi-drivers: it has no obvious or intrinsic connection with the improvement or maintenance of standards of what is being regulated. Its purpose, rather, is to provide jobs, money and power for regulators, to give them something to do. Here is a (small) example.

A friend of mine, recently retired from medical practice after nearly thirty-five years of blamelessness, decided he would like to do locums from time to time. He registered with several agencies, each of which demanded a certificate from the Criminal Records Bureau to the effect that he was not a criminal. Regulations required that each of the agencies had to have an original certificate: a copy would not do, even a day after the first one was granted. Naturally, each certificate cost enough to make the total sum not entirely trivial; furthermore, the process had to be repeated every year; and when he went away on holiday for three months, an international police certificate, attesting to his lawabidingness in every jurisdiction in the world, was demanded.

Not only is there an assumption that everyone is a criminal until he can prove his innocence; not only is no regard paid to the unnecessary expense and effort involved; not only is there no thought given to the statistical likelihood of a doctor of sixty years old without a criminal record becoming criminal over a twelve month period; but in any case the whole process implies that the General Medical Council, which is informed automatically when a doctor commits a criminal offence, is not doing its job. Furthermore, no thought is given to the possibility (actually the certainty) that the Criminal Records Bureau will give some criminals a clean record, and some upstanding citizens a criminal record.

The conclusion is clear and inescapable. The real function of all this activity is to raise funds towards the payment of regulators who would otherwise be without a job and, as unemployed people with many years of general education, would become politically dangerous. The regulatory activity has nothing whatever to do with its ostensible purpose, ensuring that the public is served by good doctors: indeed, in so far as it lowers morale and makes people deeply cynical, it is likely to have quite the opposite effect. There is no way better to destroy a man's character, even at a late stage in his life, than to make him

participate in processes that he knows to be useless or harmful. His willingness to participate in them in order to be allowed to continue to work turns him into something of a time-server, and time-servers are tame and easily manipulated.

The question, then, is not regulation or no regulation,

but what is the regulation for? Is it to serve the public or the regulators? There are no prizes for guessing which is now much the more prevalent.

*Theodore Dalrymple's latest book is Second Opinion, Monday Books.*

# Almost Forgiven for writing for the Daily Mail

Jane Kelly

Even the convivial if somewhat belligerent atmosphere of the Coach and Horses in Soho couldn't cheer up my friend. Normally a jovial Geordie who likes a drink, she stared into her pint with gloom; about to be made redundant from her job at Shell Oil, after twenty-five years service. Her whole department, technical IT, is being 'outsourced' to India. At forty five she will get a good pay off, probably pay off her mortgage, but it is unlikely that she will ever get another job. My own experience over the last four years, and that of my friends, tells me that it will be a miracle if she ever works again as there are no jobs now, at least in London, for middle-aged white people. Ageing trooper Arleen Phillips, too old at sixty six to appear on TV, may have just been employed as Gordon Brown's new 'Dance Czar,' but there aren't many posts like that around.

I am a freelance writer and only wanted a small job to keep me going while I was writing a book, but this quest quickly became an epic journey, a job in itself, which

is still continuing. I started looking near my home in Acton, west London, applying to my local café where there are frequently notices asking for staff. The Polish manageress looked at me disapprovingly saying she had 'a pile of CVs *this* high'. She has had a high turnover of staff, but I note they have all been young Poles and she hasn't contacted me since.

In the local Morrison's supermarket I enquired about shelf-stacking. I was told they didn't need anyone. All the ones I have seen have been swarthy young men. I asked about other jobs but again they didn't need anyone. Yet when I spoke to the young men on fruit and veg they hardly had a word of English, so I suspect they had only recently arrived in this country. I asked a young woman in a sari about a line of cat

food and she couldn't speak enough English to reply. Yet she has a job and I don't and foreign workers are being supplied to the store as regularly as the cabbages on the shelves. I applied to our local hospital shop the day after an advert went in the window. A young Sri Lankan told me he already had two people trying out for the position, both from his home-land.

Menial jobs have always been the staple of writers, artists, students and hard-up housewives, but not any more. At the Acton Care Centre the boss told me straight, 'we only employ people from the third world.' She said that they all send money back to feed their families. She was glad to do them a favour but not me, or perhaps she found it easier to ask them to do twelve hour shifts for rock bottom wages.

I intended to write a few letters about that as it seemed

*The panel was headed by a rather hatchet faced deputy head who told me straight away, 'I can just about forgive you for the fact that you once worked at the Daily Mail.' She then asked me what I thought about the 'Islamophobia' apparently pouring out of the British press?*

blatantly discriminatory but a few days later the government changed the law forcing care-homes to employ people from within the EU. That means young Rumanians will get the jobs,

big deal for people like me, middle-aged, middle-class British women. No one shouts up for us although I believe that we must be the least likely workers in the land to find employment.

Over long months, sending at least ten e-mails a day, the only people interested in me were Cats Protection who asked if I could 'socialise kittens', my ideal job, but sadly unpaid.

Interviews are as unlikely as appearing in a Hollywood film, although I once nearly got one for a job as a doctor's receptionist. The surgery is presumably still a haven for white middle-aged, and even middle-class women, where their experience of life still has some value — ie the last refuge of the British battle-axe. On the day they emailed me to say

they had found someone else as they needed someone immediately — but I felt that just to be offered an interview was an achievement.

Early this summer government minister Phil Woolas proposed a cap on immigration because unemployment is rising so fast. Not long after that men on oil rigs went on strike demanding to be given jobs in their own country before strangers. Sadly for them, nothing makes Labour politicians more nervous and squeamish than the sight of the proletariat embracing old fashioned xenophobia. Even Ken Clarke, who likes to pose as someone as non PC and transgressive as a packet of Capstan Full Strength, quickly chimed in that the matter of jobs was all about Europe not about mass immigration.

According to recent figures 3.8 million foreigners are working in the UK but over half of them are from outside the EU. But it seems we cannot stop it – not because of European law, but because of the ideology which insists that immigration is a moral imperative.

I fear that, even without the economic downturn, the religion of ‘diversity,’ is against me and other white British job seekers. In my quest to get work I applied to be a ‘host’ at the Museum of London. The application form was peppered with the word ‘diversity.’ I know from experience that if you are white and see that word you might as well forget it — but in this case as a history graduate with some teaching experience I felt I was ideally suited to the job. They wanted to know my sexual orientation, obviously very important for working in a museum, and preferred candidates to have a second language in ‘Punjabi or Polish’. I have some Polish after living there for a year, and ticked most of their boxes which were extremely varied. The only thing I didn’t have was ‘call centre experience,’ and I draw the line at that. As usual, no interview. When I rang up to ask if there was any chance of being considered, an Asian lad put me through to an Asian woman in Human Resources who couldn’t give an answer as her English was so poor.

Feeling completely reckless I e-mailed to ask whether being white and middle-aged went against me? I received a rather spiteful reply telling me that I was ‘way below the standard required’ to be one of their guides.

I also contacted the Wallace Collection, one of my favourite galleries in London. I offered to work as a guide or in the gift shop. No reply. When I last went in I noticed they’d got a pretty young Japanese girl serving out souvenirs. ‘She might have lived here all her life,’ said a friend. No, she was helpful but had limited English. Many are the enemies ranged against us ladies of a certain age who still need to make a living. This war about diversity, often fought out in

language, goes back a long way, even to the old battle lines drawn up during the cold war, of left versus right, Marxist against bourgeois.

This came back to me strongly when I attended my first job interview in four years, at a school in east London where many of the girls are Muslim. I had applied to be an ‘academic mentor’ to the sixth form girls wanting to go to Oxbridge. This post had been filled by one of their own students, something they do increasingly as most of the girls live at home with their parents and don’t expect much pay. At the interview I was up against a Muslim girl who looked about eighteen and a middle-aged Indian woman in a sari. The panel was headed by a rather hatchet faced deputy head who told me straight away, ‘I can just about forgive you for the fact that you once worked at the *Daily Mail*.’ She then asked me what I thought about the ‘Islamophobia’ apparently pouring out of the British press?

In the circumstances I thought the interview went quite well, the two other teachers present seemed quite friendly but later the deputy left me a message on my mobile telling me that I hadn’t got the job as another candidate, ‘was more experienced and did a better interview’. I felt gutted, eviscerated and it came to me briefly that I would never have the confidence to do another interview.

A friend came to my rescue by saying I had been ‘unlucky’ to have the deputy there, and she told me that when the school drama group were putting on a production of Brecht’s *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, the deputy had insisted that they remove the word ‘Caucasian’ from the title, in case non-Caucasians in the audience were offended.

There had also been some discussion about the word chalk, implying as it does white. My friend, who is a keen theatre goer, had pointed out that there is already another play called *The Circle*, by W Somerset Maugham, so the social conscience of the deputy head and her long term agenda had to be satisfied with *The Chalk Circle*.

That bit of information put things into perspective for me; I am living in an England where being mere English is almost a crime and my interview technique probably wasn’t the reason I didn’t get the job. My self-confidence is shredded but still in place, just, so I will live to fight another day. I have now finished the book but I am still job-hunting. It has become an obsession with me — a matter of honour to be allowed to earn a living in my own country in my own native city.

*Jane Kelly was a staff writer on the Daily Mail and the author of Inside (Social Affairs Unit) reviewed by Roy Kerridge (SR Autumn 2009).*

# Conservative Classic – 37

## *The Wind in the Willows*

Myles Harris

**K**enneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*, the story of the defeat of the Stoats and the Weasels by the down to earth animals of the River Bank, was intended as a children's bedtime story. But now, in the early 21st century, 101 years after publication, conservatives will recognise it as an epic for our times. For centuries Britain has been the scene of a struggle between commons and rulers. So far the commons have been successful, but from the inception of New Labour's catastrophic rule, freedom has been slowly bleeding to death. Reading *Wind in the Willows* at a time when the Stoats and Weasels, far from being defeated, now rule, and are trying to ensure they do so forever, is unbearably poignant.

The story opens on a scene of prelapsarian conservatism. Mole, awake from his winter hibernation, is spring cleaning his tiny home when he feels the call of spring, throws down his brush and burrows up to sunshine and open countryside through which runs a river that

whispers ...a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

But there is danger. In the distance is the Wild Wood, where the Stoats and Weasels lurk.

It is on this timeless stage that Graham assembles his characters; self-effacing Mole, impatient but good natured Rat, wise Badger — who, defying the Stoats and Weasels, lives in the Wild Wood — the dangerous and unpredictable Otter, and Toad the lovable braggart. This being a conservative England there are no intellectuals, Nobody wants change. Badger has a study but if he ever read books they have been replaced by the wisdom of experience. He now takes long afternoon naps in it with a cloth over his face. Ratty hopes the river bank will remain as it is and worries that talking about problems only creates them. Otter says little but when the Stoats and the Weasels are mentioned bares a line of sharp white teeth. For the Mole the world is sufficient as it is.

It is then that Toad, a prey to sudden fancies, enters the

picture. This being a century ago Toad's latest craze is caravanning, and he persuades Rat and Mole to join him on an expedition. On the second day a huge red motorcar emitting a pooping sound bowls the caravan into a ditch and vanishes over the horizon. Toad, sitting dazedly in the road, repeats the sound 'poop, poop!' as if in a post epileptic twilight state. He has found the secret to happiness. Abandoning his friends at the roadside, he returns to Toad Hall and orders a large, red motorcar. Nothing can keep him off the road. In the language of the modern therapist, he is self actualising;

Toad the terror, the traffic-queller, the Lord of the lone trail, before whom all must give way or be smitten into nothingness and everlasting night....

Within months his smashes and rows with the police become the talk of the River. In the Wild Wood, the rabbits, known to have secret links with the Stoats and the Weasels, begin to talk behind their whiskers. Badger calls a meeting.

The hour has come. He declares. Whose hour? asks Rat. Whose hour? Why, Toad's hour..! replies Badger.

Toad is subjected to what doctors would call 'a brief psychiatric intervention'. The wise Badger retires with the wretched miscreant to the library. He tells Toad he is faced with disgrace and bankruptcy. If he does not reform and give up his furious driving the Stoats and the Weasels in the Wild Wood will take over. Outside the door his friends Rat and Mole wait as the voice of the great Mr Badger, soon punctuated with the sobs of a repentant Toad, penetrate the walls.

That, says Rat. Will do no good — I know Toad.

And so it proves. Toad emerges crestfallen, his friends anxiously waiting for a declaration that he has changed his ways. But there is reckless glint in his eye. Suddenly he looks up and says;

Oh yes, yes, in there! I'd have said anything in there. You are so eloquent dear Badger, and so moving, and



so convincing and put all your points so frightfully well — you can do anything you like with me in there and you know it. But I've been searching my mind since, and going over things in it, and I find I am not a bit sorry or repentant really, so it is no earthly good saying I am; now is it?

Toad is returned to his room to be guarded by Ratty. But he deceives his honest friend by pretending to be at the point of death and asks him to step out and fetch a lawyer so he can put his affairs in order. While Ratty is away Toad escapes, steals the first large red car he comes across, crashes it and ends up in jail. He receives an English sentence: A year for stealing the car, three years for furious driving, and for the most serious offence, insulting the police, fifteen years — the cheek was, after all, pretty bad. Gnarled warders lay hands on him and he is locked up

...in the remotest dungeon of the best-guarded keep of the stoutest castle in all the length and breadth of Merry England.

Toad throws himself on a pile of filthy straw and gives himself up to despair. But he is lucky. The warder has a pretty daughter who takes pity on him. While she will have none of his boasting she helps him to escape dressed as a washerwoman. Toad steals a train, abandons it as the forces of law and order close in, and slips away to the river.

Once home Toad is dismayed to find Toad Hall in the hands of the Stoats and the Weasels. He is fired at by a Ferret when he tries to walk up his drive and his boat is sunk by a Stoat. Once again he is in despair. Once again his friends rise to his defence. Toad Hall is probed for its weaknesses, a secret passage — the gift of Toad's ancestors known only to Badger — found and a plan concocted. A few days later Badger, Ratty, Mole and Toad, fully armed, differences sunk in a common purpose, assemble silently beneath the banquetting hall of Toad Hall. Above them the Stoats and the Weasels are celebrating.

The noise, as they emerged from the passage, was simply deafening. At last, as the cheering and hammering slowly subsided, a voice could be made out saying, 'Well, I do not propose to detain you much longer' — (great applause) — 'but before I resume my seat' — (renewed cheering) — 'I should like to say one word about our kind host, Mr. Toad. We all know Toad!' — (great laughter) — 'GOOD Toad, MODEST Toad, HONEST Toad!' (shrieks of merriment).

'Only just let me get at him!' muttered Toad, grinding his teeth.

'Hold hard a minute!' said the Badger, restraining him with difficulty. 'Get ready, all of you!'

Badger drew himself up, took a firm grip of his stick with both paws, glanced around at his comrades and

cried: "The hour has come! Follow me!"

Well might the terrified weasels dive under tables and spring madly up at the windows. Well might the ferrets rush wildly for the fireplace and get hopelessly jammed in the chimney...!

Victory is not enough to redeem Toad. Rat discovers him writing songs of self praise for his part in the recapture of Toad Hall. Toad begs to sing just one song at a party he has been told to give to thank the River Bankers for helping.

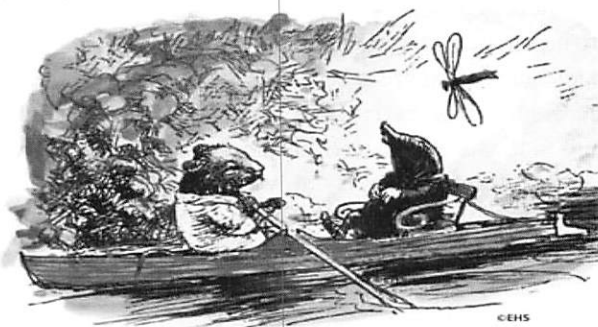
"No, not ONE little song," replied the Rat firmly, though his heart bled as he noticed the poor trembling lip of the disappointed Toad. It's no good Toady; you know well your songs are all conceit and boasting and vanity; and your speeches are all self praise and — and — well, gross exaggeration and — and "And gas", put in Badger in his common way.

Toad retires to his study to think about his friends. Being a traditional conservative he realises he values their friendship more than he does fame or fortune. He becomes a modest Toad, shaking his head when praised for his valour in the battle.

And so paradise is regained...

Sometimes, in the course of long summer evenings, the friends would take a stroll together in the Wild Wood, now successfully tamed so far as they were concerned; and it was pleasing to see how respectfully they were greeted by the inhabitants, and how the mother-weasels would bring their young ones to the mouths of their holes, and say, pointing, 'Look, baby! There goes the great Mr Toad! And that's the gallant Water Rat, a terrible fighter, walking along o' him! And yonder comes the famous Mr Mole, of whom you so often have heard your father tell!' But when their infants were fractious and quite beyond control, they would quiet them by telling how, if they didn't hush them and not fret them, the terrible grey Badger would up and get them. This was a base libel on Badger, who, though he cared little about Society, was rather fond of children; but it never failed to have its full effect.

Wasn't it Mrs Thatcher, like Badger, who had little time for the word Society? She too drove the stoats and weasels of socialism back to the wild wood. But we have let them back.



# Reputations – 26

Graham Greene

Edward Short

Graham Greene opened his autobiography, *A Sort of Life* (1971) with a memorable sentence: 'If I had known it, the whole future must have lain all the time along those Berkhamsted streets.' This was incisive self-knowledge, for the tortures he suffered as the son of the headmaster of Berkhamsted School left psychological wounds that never healed. In one of his letters, he described encountering one of his erstwhile tormentors.

Another queer encounter just before I came away. A man came up to me in the Cold Storage shop where I was buying drinks—a tall foxy faced rather heavy man, who introduced himself as Wheeler. Wheeler was at school with me and belonged to the bad period. We were in the junior school together and then in the same house... The real misery of that time began when he was suborned onto the side of my great enemy, Carter... What a lot began with Wheeler and Carter — suspicion, mental pain, loneliness, this damned desire to be successful that comes from a sense of inferiority, and here he was back again, after thirty-five years, in a shop in Kuala Lumpur, rather flash, an ardent polo player. And instead of saying 'What hell you made my life 30 years ago,' one arranged to meet for drinks!

At Berkhamsted School, he recalled being subjected to 'a system of mental torture' so traumatic that he actually tried to kill himself, most spectacularly by playing Russian roulette. 'I had left civilization behind and entered a savage country of strange customs and inexplicable cruelties,' he wrote. 'Was my father not the headmaster? I was like the son of a quisling in a country under occupation.'

For a man who grew up to abominate domesticity and delight in spying this was the ideal boyhood. On leaving Berkhamsted, he became a cosmopolitan nomad and to stave off manic depression he travelled with manic frequency. For years, he filed reports for MI6, Britain's secret services. Evelyn Waugh once speculated: 'I think he is a secret agent on our side and all his buttering up of the Russians is "cover".' Still, that Greene was fascinated by treachery and practised it himself with serial abandon is undeniable. Roman Catholicism appealed to him because it helped him to make sense of his own and the world's manifold treacheries.

Greene was excellent at showing how the struggles

of individuals play out against the world. Pinkie, the whisky priest, Scobie, Harry Lime, Bendrix, Sarah, Fowler and Querry suffer their woes in history's *mêlée*. This is why Greene always took exception to critics calling the world of his books *Greenland*: his world, he insisted, was *the* world, not some fictional construct, like Trollope's Barchester or Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha. 'During the First World War,' Greene told Allain, 'I was old enough to realize what was happening. My father was always reading the paper to find out how many Old Boys had been killed in the course of the week. Then we lived through the Second World War, and I think we were all strongly impressed with the sense of chaos. After that, revolutions, guerrilla warfare... disorder rather than evil fate. Upheavals in South America, *coups d'état*, terrorism. We're part of the world, aren't we? We're affected by this sort of life. We're at the heart of the disorder.' This was true, though, Greene often allowed himself to become muddled by the very disorder that he captured so clearly in his books.

In 1926, after leaving Balliol, Greene fell in love with Vivienne Dayrell-Browning, who introduced Greene to the Catholic faith that he would keep for the rest of his life. Greene married Vivienne in 1927. When Greene confided in his young bride that 'What I long for is a quite original marriage,' she could scarcely have imagined the dance that he would eventually lead her.

In 1929, Greene published his first novel, *The Man Within*, which sold 13,000 copies, an astounding amount for a first novel by an unknown author who was only twenty-five. 'And the funniest part of the absurd, joyful situation,' Greene wrote his brother, 'is that the book is quite terribly second-rate.... How is the world fooled?' The world's applause inspired ambivalent feelings in Greene. When he received the Hawthornden Prize in 1942 for *The Power and the Glory*, he wrote to his mother: 'I suppose at the bottom of every human mind is the rather degraded love of success. One feels ashamed of one's own pleasure.'

Greene's letters confirm his critical acumen. On what he regarded as Waugh's best novel, he wrote: 'I can't think of anyone in England who would have the faintest idea of what *Brideshead* is about' — which remains true today, despite the huge success of John Mortimer's 1980 screen adaptation. In another letter he writes:

‘Started rereading *David Copperfield*. My goodness, the first two chapters are perfect. I don’t believe there’s been anything better in the novel — and that includes Proust and Tolstoy. One dreads the moment of failure, for Dickens always sooner or later fails.’ In yet another, he admits, ‘Yesterday I went to the film of *Ulysses* — a deadly bore in spite of the verbal shocks... One came out depressed with a headache. I had tried to read the book in preparation and found it a big bore like the film — really one of the most overrated classics.’ In addition to these shrewd criticisms, Greene’s letters remind us of the many authors he generously helped, including Muriel Spark and Flann O’Brien, who, in their separate ways, cut their teeth on his studies in damnation.

After his auspicious debut, Greene wrote a total of 22 novels, 3 books of short stories, a biography of the Second Earl of Rochester, 4 plays, and 3 books of travel. His greatest novels, *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), and *The End of the Affair* (1951) all treat Catholic themes. Trying to understand Greene’s work without reference to the Catholic faith is like trying to understand the novels of Surtees without reference to fox hunting. His Catholicism was central to his imagination and indeed to his understanding of himself and his relation to others. This can be seen not only in his great novels but in his short stories, especially ‘A Little Place Off The Edgware Road’ and ‘A Visit to Morin,’ as well as in his letters. When a Russian friend’s husband committed suicide, Greene wrote ‘I don’t believe myself that death is everything, or rather my faith tells me that death is not the end of everything and when my faith wavers I tell myself that I am wrong. One can’t believe 365 days a year... There is a mystery which we won’t be able to solve as long as we live. Personally even when I doubt I go on praying... Why not try at night talking to your husband and telling him all you think. Who knows whether he mightn’t be able to hear you and now with a mind unclouded.’ The point is often made, mockingly, that Greene was a character in a Graham Greene novel, but here one sees that there was a truth to that which was anything but risible.

Greene also wrote a series of brilliant ‘entertainments’ or lighter novels, often thrillers, many of which, like *The Stamboul Train* (1932) and *The Third Man* (1949) were successfully adapted for film. In all of his fiction, moral failure takes centre stage. As he remarked in one of his essays: ‘Goodness has only once found a perfect incarnation in a human body and never will again, but evil can always find a home there. Human nature is not black and white but black and grey.’ The brilliance with which Greene captured this moral chiaroscuro will

always win him readers.

Before the war, Greene bought an elegant old house on Clapham Common, owned previously by Zachary Macaulay. When it was bombed during the Blitz, his wife’s extensive antique collection was demolished, though his own library was miraculously spared. He treated the house’s loss with tell-tale resignation. ‘Oddly enough,’ he wrote a friend, ‘it leaves one feeling very carefree.’ The bombing of the house (which would make a pivotal reappearance in *The End of the Affair*) marked the collapse of Greene’s marriage, though he never divorced his wife.

His first mistress was Dorothy Glover, an English stage designer who shared Greene’s passion for Victorian detective fiction. Glover was followed by Catherine Walston, an American Catholic from Rye, New York and wife of a British Labour politician, whose fondness for travel, drink, sex and theology matched Greene’s own. Then Greene met the Swedish actress Anita Björk, whose youth and beauty flattered the aging Lothario. For the last thirty-two years of his life, first in Antibes and Capri and then in Vevey, Greene’s last mistress was Yvonne Cloetta, a married Frenchwoman, whom Selina Hastings, Evelyn Waugh’s biographer, described as ‘a brightly coloured Barbie doll... a glamorous bourgeoisie ... smart, sexy, practical and tough’.

His mistresses cannot be left out of any assessment of Greene because he was convinced that they were vital to his work. In a letter to Walston, for example, he tried to coax her into leaving her husband, Lord Walston, the British Labour politician, by promising, ‘I would tell the truth to you always,’ though he also had one of his narrators say: ‘In human relations kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths.’ For Greene, treachery was more than a theme: it was a way of life.

In *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961), Greene wrote a novel about the erosion of faith in a leper colony. Evelyn Waugh, to whom Greene wrote some of his warmest letters, excoriated what he saw as the incoherence of the book. ‘God forbid I should pry into the secrets of your soul,’ Waugh wrote his friend. ‘It is simply your public performance which grieves me.’ After this sad, unsatisfactory novel, Greene never returned to Catholic themes. *The Honorary Consul* (1972) and *The Human Factor* (1978) cover ground that Greene had already explored in earlier novels and show the extent to which self-parody exercised his deteriorating talents.

In many quarters, Greene is still regarded as something of a radical. But his fondness for rogues like Fidel Castro and Omar Torrijos was always more social than political. He enjoyed the bonhomie of despots like other men enjoy the bonhomie of dive bars. One thing he did share with radicals was anti-Americanism,

though his own strain of this now worldwide virus was unusual. Yes, he found fault with America's policies in Vietnam, Central America, Kuwait and Iraq along predictably liberal lines. But he also hated not only Nixon, Reagan and Bush but Kennedy and Carter. For years he baited Americans by claiming that Shirley Temple was 'a complete totsy'. And he declared that if he had his choice between living in America or Soviet Russia he would opt for the latter, though the idea of the fastidious novelist enduring the bleak austerities of Soviet collectivism is laughable. After deciding to live abroad for tax reasons, he bought himself a villa on Capri and a house overlooking Lake Geneva; on the few occasions that he visited London, he would only stay at the Ritz. Greene was a long-time friend and defender of Kim Philby, whose double crosses betrayed thousands of state secrets and killed dozens of agents. And he probably would have agreed with Waugh that 'Of course the Americans are cowards. They are almost all the descendants of wretches who deserted their legitimate monarchs for fear of military service.' However whereas Waugh understood and

valued certain aspects of America — particularly its once exemplary system of Catholic education, which now, alas, is vanished — Greene knew little or nothing of the country. His animus against America was an animus against his very livelihood, something he shares with many confused liberals who batten on the capitalism they denounce. That Greene did not appear to recognize that he was a member of this disreputable club was one of his blind spots.

In her memorable essay *The Leaning Tower*, Virginia Woolf made the same criticism of Auden: he was too intent on biting the hand that fed him. In a poem called *At the Graveside of Henry James*, Auden made an appeal to the great novelist that could almost have been an appeal for Graham Greene:

Master of nuance and scruple  
 Pray for me and for all writers, living and dead  
 Because there are many whose works  
 Are in better taste than their lives, because there is  
no end  
 To the vanity of our calling, make intercession  
 For the treason of all clerks.

## ETERNAL LIFE



Pope Benedict surprised the Archbishop of Canterbury by making an audacious and generous offer to traditional Anglicans. He is offering us full communion with Rome while agreeing that we may retain our traditional Church of England forms of worship, our *King James Bible* and *Book of Common Prayer*. Even Anglican priests who are married will be made welcome. Let us recall the background to this sensational development:

In the 1950s the Church of England was, like the rest of the country, enjoying the post-war boom. Church attendances were up along with christenings and weddings; vocations to the priesthood likewise. In the working-class Leeds parish where I grew up, there were three of us offering ourselves for ordination. There were three parties in the Church of England: High, Low and Broad. The one thing they held in common was that they all worshipped using the *King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Then came the 1960s and everything changed. Bishop John Robinson wrote his iconoclastic bestseller *Honest to God* which he advertised in *The Observer* newspaper by saying, *Our image of God must go*. In his book he also derided the traditional morality of the Ten Commandments and argued instead for something

he called *situation ethics* which meant making moral decisions on the hoof according to the principle of love. This quickly became known as *the new morality* — just as quickly described by traditionalists as *the old immorality in a miniskirt*. It really amounted to doing what you liked. Of course it suited the swinging sixties — *let it all hang out* — generation very well and chimed in nicely with the Beatles' song *All you need is love*.

There followed books of radical theology which went way beyond *Honest to God*. There was Paul van Buren's *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* and Thomas J J Altizer's *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*. A group of British theologians published a title *Objections to Christian Belief*. The mood had changed suddenly from the confident faith of the 1950s to the widespread feeling that the cat was out of the bag and that no truly modern person, in the age of satirical television programmes and the lifting of the *Lady Chatterley* ban, could be a traditional Christian believer. As the conservative poet Philip Larkin put it ruefully:

Sexual intercourse began in 1963 (which was rather late for me)  
 Between the end of the Chatterley ban and the Beatles first LP

Close on the theological revolution came the liturgical innovations. *The King James Bible* and the *Book of Common Prayer* were sidelined and replaced at first by the booklets *Series one, two and three* and then by the clapped-out, tin-eared doggerel of the *Alternative Service Book*. The radical bishops and synod described the publication of the *ASB* in 1980 as *the greatest publishing event in 400 years*. Twenty years later, the same hierarchy, Hitler-style, actually banned the *ASB* and gave us instead the even worse book *Common Worship*. Even this excrescence is barely relevant today as many parsons download any liturgical trash they happen to fancy and print out ephemeral service sheets. One result of all this is that no one under fifty now knows any prayers by heart.

The church has now embraced the secular agenda: the so-called *progressive* sexual and social policies, feminism, anti-sexism, anti-racism, idealistic internationalism and the dogma of universal human rights. The Church of England has effectually resigned. As T E Hulme said, *No institution is ever defeated until it is penetrated by the ideas of its enemies*. We have imbibed the notions and policies of the secularists whose consistently declared aim is the obliteration of Christianity from public life. One interesting sidelight is that the modernising bishops of the 1960s and 70s were engaged in enthusiastic negotiations for unity with Rome. But when it became a choice between that unity and ordaining women to the priesthood, feminism triumphed over ecumenism and the so-earnest, so-sincere, talks with Rome were at an end. This was the key moment in the secularisation of the Church of England. The contemporary secular commitment to anti-sexism trumped the authority of ecclesiastical order.

Our church is now governed by the theological and liturgical iconoclasts, by people who, in the traditional sense, are really unbelieving: feminised multiculturalists who see the Christianity they promised at their appointment to defend as an impediment to that supposed wider understanding based on the contradictory alliance between world religions and secular humanism. Any traditionalist in today's secular and faithless church will be persecuted by the apostate hierarchy which now rules us.

It is against this background then that we must understand the Pope's offer. He is opening his doors to disaffected traditional Anglicans and saying, in effect, *Look, here you can return to a believing church, to a church which has not overturned its own doctrines nor adopted the secular moral and social orthodoxies*. What will be the outcome of this extraordinary gesture? It is widely reported that perhaps 1000 traditional priests will leave, many taking their parishioners with

them. No wonder the Archdruid of Canterbury has been going around with a face like a wet week for the powers of the bishops have been shaken and the modernising Synod is brought low.

Friends and colleagues are urging me to take up the Pope's offer and, at a stroke, relieve myself of the burden of having to accept the authority of modernised ecclesiastical superiors with whom I do not have a single thing in common. Moreover, they tell me that, if I do take up the Pope's offer, I shall be able to avail myself of all the traditional forms and doctrines in which I was brought up, to which I was ordained priest thirty-nine years ago and which I love. So what shall I do? The Pope is offering me all those beautiful and sacred teachings, unsullied by the poisonous deposits of modernised, debunked Anglicanism. Isn't this just what I crave? Shouldn't I be grateful to the Holy Father and accept his generous hospitality without further delay? I would surely then escape from the nastiness of the modern bishops and the creepy non-believing political clique which runs the General Synod.

When all these good things are offered to me by the Bishop of Rome, I hope I do not sound ungracious when I reply, *But I have these things already*. I believe that I was validly ordained. Whatever the hierarchy of the collapsed Church of England commands, I can refuse. I have the scriptures, the *King James Bible* and the *Prayer Book*. I have the Sacraments. I have the ancient creeds. I have the glorious teachings of St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, St Anselm. I don't spend one moment of my time attending to the pronouncements of the failed modern Church of England. I study our ancient and traditional sources. I luxuriate in the superior richness of the great Anglican divines: Donne, Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, William Law. And the outstanding Christian men of letters who formed our English life and literature: Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, T S Eliot, C H Sisson. I worship to the music of Tallis, Palestrina, Byrd, Victoria, Mozart, Haydn and Vaughan Williams. I am by no means deprived. Of course to our debased hierarchy all this stuff is only so much elitism and irrelevance. I know that we are better sustained by those superb English Christians than the modern bishops and the synod.

It is not comfortable being a traditionalist serving under the modern authorities. But I'm not in it for comfort. I don't shirk a fight. Half my life has been spent in vigorous opposition to the begetters of our current decadence since 1980 when I co-edited with David Martin the book *No Alternative* against the *Alternative Service Book*. And I am not fighting some solitary battle. I have an informed, devout and affectionate congregation. When C H Sisson was faced with the problem of what traditionalists ought to do,

He said:

What then is the position of the theological rump in our now lay, secularised clerisy? There are three possibilities. They can stay and fight their corner, struggling for an intelligibility which might come again, and will come, if it is the truth they are concerned with. They can sit on pillars in some recess of the national structure, waiting for better times. Or they can let their taste for having an ecclesiastical club carry them into one or other of those international

gangs of opinion — that which has its headquarters in Rome or that which has a shadowy international meeting-place in Canterbury. In any case it will be a political choice that is being made. For my part, I shall prefer those who stay and fight their corner, content to be merely the Church in a place.

That is my position too. I will stay and fight my corner. St Michael's is this church in this place.

*Peter Mullen*

## LETTERS

Sir,

Michael Gove wants to *close* 'failing schools' and Russell Lewis (*SR*, Autumn 2009) wants vouchers introduced so that 'failing schools' *fold*. What if the major reason for 'failure' is a disproportionate number of disruptive and relatively stupid pupils? What then happens to them and the staff? Why not instead increase the number of teachers in problem schools as a pedagogic and disciplinary measure?

As a retired graduate teacher, still in contact with teachers and children, who worked over 30 years in six quite different secondary schools in three LEAs, and remains sympathetic to 'right-wing' opinions on the curriculum, I will admit that Lewis knows what he is talking about when I read his practical answers to my questions.

*David Ashton*  
Norfolk

Sir,

Jerome di Costanzo's 'liberal conservative' autopsy on Le Pen's NF, and his warning about regarding France as a 'white country with some Celto-Christian roots,' amounts to an attack on patriots who only 40 years ago would have been mainstream, and whose one common position throughout has been legitimate opposition to the Islamist immigration catastrophe and the compulsory multi-racialism that 'liberals' still promote and 'conservatives' failed to prevent.

Determined to deride the fissiparity of such 'extremists', he gets his facts wrong. He says the BNP went through many mutations from the original BUF:

Mosley founded only one post-war organisation — 'beyond fascism' — called Union Movement. Entirely separate in origin, policies and personalities, the BNP developed independently from successive groups united solely by their hostility to Mosley and his united Europe proposals.

As the BNP and similar parties abroad gain in popularity, they will be cunningly neutered or banned outright at 'liberal' behest, so the extirpation of the 'white' and 'Christian' civilisation of France, Britain and other countries can proceed apace, despite a few mumbles of euphemistic regret under the dying breath of ever-circumspect 'conservatives'.

Di Costanzo's 'autopsy' celebrates the failure of western politicians who at least tried, however clumsily against great odds, to prevent cultural suicide. Who will 'celebrate' the 'autopsy' for our entire civilisation, Muslims or Chinese?

Alfred C Akers  
Surrey

### BBC Watch

Readers who are enraged by the BBC are invited to send examples of the following:

1. Hatred of anything English
2. Anti-white racism
3. Americanophobia
4. Obsession with climate change

We are particularly looking for biased reporting.



## Roy Kenridge

### Behind the Scenes in the World of Books

**B**oris Johnson, Mayor of London, imagines that his greatest rival for the post had been Ken Livingstone. He little knows that a formidable contestant, the Reverend James Blackman, might have caused his downfall. What called the Rev James to pull out of the election? Part of the story can now be told.

I have known James since he was a small boy, the son of Trinidadian immigrants. Now he has grown into a tall super confident young Pentecostal minister with a plummy voice and executive spectacles. One day he 'phoned me up and offered me a job as a ghost writer.

'I want my story to be published in time to coincide with my Mayoral campaign', he explained eagerly. 'The publicity will help the campaign.'

I felt dubious but he persuaded me to meet him in a West End hotel. I knew more about James's parents than he did; in fact I knew too much, so I felt able to turn out a fast 'autobiography'. In the hotel lobby James greeted me enthusiastically, and introduced me to his literary agent, Tod Bollard. Tod was a short chipper Cockney, grey-bearded and bespectacled. He wore a brown leather jacket and an Alpine hat. We sat in the lounge where Tod and James exchanged uneasy glances.

'I'll have a large coffee!' I suddenly announced, to their enormous relief. They didn't look very rich. Over coffee, Tod quizzed me to see if I were a 'real writer', then appeared to be satisfied.

'A West Indian feller sent me an interesting manuscript,' he told me, 'It's called "How to make your blackness pay". I'll read you a few lines:'

'When I got promotion at work, a jealous white colleague told me I'd only got the job because I was black and filled the quota. I started to get angry, but then I thought: he's right! Being black can be an asset if you play it right. So the idea for this black self-help book was born.'

Tod Bollard continued, 'I sent the manuscript back to the West Indian, rejecting it out of hand. Of course I kept a photocopy for my own purposes. See, this West Indian bloke was a nobody while James here has a high profile, appearing on television and advising the Archbishop of Canterbury. So I thought this book, *Make your Blackness Pay* was an ideal vehicle for

James here. It can launch him on his mayoral career. The face on the cover smiling out at the punters, must be the face of James. Of course, *you* can do the actual writing.

'I want my book to appeal to black and white alike!' raved James. 'I want it to sweep Black America.'

At this last remark, Tod gave him a sharp look and seemed to be wondering if he had backed the right horse. Meanwhile I leafed through the book I was expected to rewrite and didn't like what I saw.

'How to trick Whitey,' 'How to play on white guilt.' How could such a book turn opportunist James into a Mayor?

'Scuse me a mo', muttered Tod, and hurriedly left the room. 'This is your chance!' Rev James cried in excitement. 'He's expecting you to name your fee.'

'If it's more than six quid, he'll never be able to afford it,' I mused

'Don't be silly, with my picture on the pack as seen on television, he'll sell the deal to a publisher and get the money that way'

I decided to get out of this mess by demanding more money than any publisher I know could possibly possess.

'Ten thousand pounds up front!' I shouted on Tod's return. I sounded just like a real writer (as seen on television).

To my surprise, Tod seemed amazed that I had asked for so little. Again he seemed to be wondering if I were a real writer.

'I've got one other candidate to interview', he told me, 'when I've made up my mind, I'll call you back.'

He left, just as Rev James's mobile phone rang.

'Is that you dear? Yes, I know dear, but the meeting's only just over. I'll be leaving right away, dear. I should be back at Walthamstow within the hour.'

And he too was off. Inspired, I went home and wrote a long letter to the Rev James's wife Karla, telling her just what her husband was up to.

And so the Reverend James never became Mayor of London.

*(Some names have been changed to protect the ridiculous.)*

# ARTS AND BOOKS

## The Cost of 'Peace'

Clifford Smyth

**Aftermath: The Omagh Bombing and the Families' Pursuit of Justice**, Ruth Dudley Edwards, Harvill Secker, 2009, £12.99.

*Aftermath* strikes the reader not as a commentary on past evil, but as a sobering study with contemporary relevance. This book should be required reading on any 'conflict resolution' course. It is an informative, but nonetheless grim, read.

The author handles the story of the victims of this outrage with great sensitivity and humanity and has carefully chosen her words so as to avoid inflicting further hurt on the grieving. Dudley Edwards conveys both the emotions and the frustrations of the bereaved, as they cried out for justice. Such moments are poignant and raw. Their search for the truth proved both to be bewildering and vain but the conclusion forced upon us is that the 'peace process' and justice are incompatible. There are telling and affecting aspects to *Aftermath*: pen portraits of the innocents who are about to die, the graphic account of the effects of the bomb on Saturday shoppers, and the scenes of despair and desolation in the makeshift mortuary. This is also a book about how terrorist murderers are recycled as celebrity politicians. And there are many accomplices to help the killers achieve this goal.

Exploiting ambush tactics in its use of surprise, ruthlessness and deception, the Omagh bomb exploded at 3.04 pm on Saturday the 15th of August 1998, murdering 31 people and injuring hundreds more. The Belfast Agreement had been signed that Easter and a fragile 'peace process', backed by the London and Dublin governments and endorsed by President Clinton, had rapidly built up an irresistible momentum. British government and people had lowered their guard in expectation of increasing stability. The gang of Real IRA killers that planned and carried out this atrocity is well known. It is an astonishing aspect of this terrible story that the mass-murderers are not serving life sentences for their crime. The Omagh bombing is symbolic of that prolonged period of tit-for-tat violence that alienated Ulster from mainland Britain. This horrendous event shares characteristics

with the Provisionals' long campaign, and yet there are respects in which it differs from the Provisionals' 'armed struggle'.

The Omagh outrage was a terror attack by an alleged 'breakaway' group of dissidents. Sinn Fein/IRA had previously abandoned the armed struggle and grabbed the ballot box for cynical strategic reasons. The IRA had embraced the peace process and the democratic path, on its own terms. The Provisionals had not decommissioned their commitment to revolutionary dogma: 'Our strategy must be the perfect blending of politics and violence (political action and military force) at the most opportune time and under the most favourable circumstances' (*Ant Oglach — Official Journal of the Irish Republican Army*, 1967).

Before the Omagh attack the Real IRA had launched a series of bomb attacks from across the border targeting Protestant towns. According to RUC sources, the Real IRA deliberately placed the car bomb outside 'Kells', a Protestant business. The Omagh explosion had unforeseen consequences: two thirds of those murdered were Roman Catholics, differentiating this bombing from Provisional IRA outrages in which the majority of those killed were Protestants. This bombing was an established Provisional IRA tactic and not an act of 'mindless violence'. The explosive device targeted the unionist population, in an assault that was a logical extension of the Provisional IRA's prolonged campaign of ethnic cleansing. Up to 1971 the population had been stable, but after that year people shifted into segregated zones or fled Northern Ireland, the outcome of an elaborate IRA plan published earlier. Pressure from the Dublin government, reaction from Roman Catholics and the intense media interest combined to ensure that the Real IRA declared a cessation of its campaign. Past atrocities had not stopped the Provos in their tracks.

During the period of the new Assembly, the era of David Trimble, I was a speechwriter for a minor unionist party. Oliver Gibson was a DUP MLA whose niece Edith had perished in the blast. I listened incredulously as this politician asserted that the Irish government had secretly offered the Real IRA a 'no jail deal' for their ceasefire. Years later, this failure to sentence any of the murder gang to prison terms tends to confirm the assembly member's suspicions. Though few realized it at the time, British security contacts had offered the 'generals' of the Provisional IRA an understanding that there would be no prosecutions in

exchange for 'political progress'.

In the immediate aftershock of the bomb, the hunt for the murderers was white hot. Against this background, the alleged Provisional IRA commander, Martin McGuinness, stated that he could not help bring the bombers to justice as it was against his 'code'. This was the callous put-down by a Sinn Fein leader who could be a future First Minister of Northern Ireland's devolved Executive. The exchange between the father of murder victim James Barker (aged 12) and Martin McGuinness was recorded in one of *Aftermath's* copious footnotes. This was no throwaway remark. Martin McGuinness's 'code' is brutal, summed up in the Irish Republican axiom, 'all informers will be shot', a code of secrecy uniting members of that many-headed hydra, the Irish revolutionary movement. Over a century ago, their strategy was defined as that of a constitutional movement within the law secretly supported by a criminal organisation outside the law.

Dudley Edwards describes the almost unbearable pilgrimage undertaken by the relatives as they attempted to get justice. Only a handful of the courageous bereaved would stay the course, resulting in groundbreaking civil actions against four Real IRA suspects. Others, like Godfrey Wilson, who lost his daughter Lorraine, had already reached the grim conclusion that London and Dublin put politics before justice. Victor Barker, tenacious in his demands for justice, wrote well-argued and touching letters to the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair. One concluded as follows: 'It is clear to me, beyond doubt, that Sinn Fein and the IRA are inextricably linked. Whilst it has been alleged that the Real IRA and Continuity IRA are breakaway groups, they are all intimately known to each other. I think that it is notable that neither Mr Adams or Mr McGuinness have volunteered any help, after our approaches to them, in respect of the Omagh investigation'.

This book is afforded added contemporary relevance by the current furore over Libyan-sponsored terrorism and questions are now being asked about the British state's response to international terrorism. The release from a Scottish prison of Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi, convicted of the Lockerbie mass murder, caused international uproar. A spotlight was thrown upon the dubious morality of Gordon Brown's government and its alleged quest for access to Libyan oilfields.

Col Gadaffi's arms shipments to the Provisional IRA in the 1980s are also being featured; relatives of murder victims are seeking redress. Two-page spread reports in the newspapers identified atrocities, including Omagh, where semtex explosive was the active ingredient. Also cited was the massacre at the Act of Remembrance in Enniskillen on the 8th of November 1987. Eleven

people were murdered but no one was ever convicted of the crime, providing an ominous precedent for the Omagh outrage. *Aftermath* is given added immediacy by a resurgence of Irish Republican activity in South Armagh, Lurgan and Londonderry. Lord Bew, Professor of Politics at Queen's University, rightly describes the current mood of the population in Ulster as 'jumpy'. One 600lb bomb, planted near Forkhill and successfully defused by the security forces, was compared by the media to the 1998 Omagh bomb.

During the years of unrest in Northern Ireland, the region was quarantined at Westminster. The bi-partisan approach to the crisis was reinforced by New Labour's political boycott of Ulster where the Labour Party has persistently refused to field candidates for election to either a local assembly or Westminster. Pleas from working-class socialists and equal citizenship campaigners have been ignored. Ian Paisley convinced unionist voters that unionism could divide and still win. This was a delusion. Ian Paisley's version of the Belfast Agreement has been shaped by Irish nationalism's key demands: power-sharing, a potentially aggressive Irish dimension and the devolution of policing and justice. Ulster's security is provided by a community police service. When PSNI police personnel recently encountered armed Republicans manning an illegal road block at Meigh in South Armagh, the police withdrew.

The discerning reader will ask whether *Aftermath* describes not only a dark past but an even blacker future. What if Sinn Fein/IRA have outflanked the Union with the ballot box, leaving 'dissidents' (*sic*) with armalites to prepare some future ambush? Would the army return to Ulster in such circumstances? *Aftermath* should be required reading for anyone who values this United Kingdom, because this book helps to explain how Ulster has been shunted to the edge.

## The First Conservative PM?

Nigel Jones

**Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I**, Stephen Alford, Yale UP, 2008. £25.00.

That corrupt old rascal Robert Walpole is usually credited with being our first Prime Minister, and so he was, in the sense that he led the Government and was the first PM to live in Downing Street. In all but title, however, the honour surely belongs to the subject of this informative and brilliantly realised biography: William Cecil, better known by the title he took from

his birthplace and the magnificent palace he built there as Lord Burghley.

For it was Cecil, bureaucrat supreme, and not the far more famous swaggering sea-dogs and be-ruffed courtiers such as Raleigh, Drake, Leicester and Essex who created, defined, and held the Elizabethan state together — sometimes in spite of, and even against the will of, the Queen herself. In restoring his subject to this central role Stephen Alford has paid a fine tribute to Burghley's shade, and gone a long way towards explaining how the most successful state machine in British history functioned and held its own against a world of enemies. Elizabethan England, in its sinister thumbscrew, informer and rack aspects, as well as in its splendid power and glory, was the work of Burghley more than any other single man — or woman.

Cecil was born at Bourne in Lincolnshire in 1520. Elizabeth's monstrous father, Henry VIII was at the dawn of his reign and the religious trouble and strife that would dominate Cecil's life still lay in the future. The Cecils — a family of the lower gentry hailing from the Welsh Marches — were men on the make. Although William's grandfather had reputedly kept an inn, he managed to wangle a post as Yeoman of the Guard to Henry VII, and William's own father put William — his only son — through the rigours of Grammar School in Grantham and Stamford and Cambridge University.

Taught at Cambridge by the great Reformation scholars John Cheke and Roger Ascham, Cecil became a firm — indeed extreme — Protestant. However, it was at Cambridge that he committed the first and almost only known act of rash indiscretion in his long and carefully controlled life: he eloped with John Cheke's sister Mary, an act which caused him to leave Cambridge after six years without a degree. Mary died after giving birth to Cecil's eldest son Thomas, but he swiftly remarried, again to a woman of intellect, Mildred Cooke, a true daughter of the New Learning.

The Cecils were already known at the Tudor Court, and young William found no difficulty in gaining a place as private secretary in the household of Edward, Duke of Somerset, Protector and power behind the throne of the boy King Edward VI. On Somerset's fall, after a brief hiccup during which he spent three months in the Tower, Cecil smoothly transferred his loyalty to the new strong man, John Dudley, later Duke of Northumberland, who knighted him, though he seems to have had his doubts about Dudley's doomed attempt to put his daughter-in-law Lady Jane Grey on the throne on Edward's death in place of the true heiress, Mary Tudor.

Cecil had quickly learned how to master the slippery — and often downright murderous ropes — of Tudor politics and his behaviour during the nine-day crisis

over the disputed succession probably represented his moment of greatest personal danger. That he not only survived but prospered, is tribute to his own skills in the dark arts of dissimulation and concealment that were to mask so much of his career. While ostensibly remaining loyal to Northumberland, he lost no time in intriguing against him in favour of Mary, who, the ultimate realist saw, would win the struggle for the throne. Yet again he slithered closer to the centre of power as an efficient servant to Cardinal Pole, the *eminence grise* behind Mary's throne.

Despite his ardent Protestantism, Cecil's ultimate loyalty was to himself first and the state second, though he seems to have squared what was left of his conscience during Mary's ultra-Catholic reign by secretly having Protestant literature printed on his estate. He greeted Mary's and Pole's almost simultaneous deaths with scarcely concealed glee, and lost no time, chameleon like, in re-emerging in his Protestant colours as a loyal subject of the woman he would serve for the rest of his days: Elizabeth I.

One of the major strengths of Alford's book is his skill at combining a stunning narration of Cecil's life with an expert grasp of how Tudor governance worked. Cecil, despite his presence at the battle of Pinkie against the Scots early in his life, was the ultimate desk warrior, and Alford tells us much about that desk — and the reams of paperwork that passed across it. From the moment that he asserted his authority in the clearest way possible by physically presenting the oath at the new Queen's coronation in 1559, there was no doubt that Cecil — at 40 in the prime of life — was the embodiment of the new state he was to dominate for the next four decades.

Unlike many courtiers who enjoyed a flirtatious relationship with the skittish Virgin Queen, Cecil's dealings with her were as father to daughter. She took his advice; acted upon his counsel, and followed his lead — even when it conflicted with her own tastes and judgement. Having suffered a spell in the Tower herself, Elizabeth favoured a moderate religious settlement, allowing Catholics freedom of conscience. She did not want, she famously declared, 'To make windows into men's souls'. It was Cecil who sternly insisted on a firmly Protestant policy at home and abroad.

Abroad, this entailed resisting several Spanish attempts at invasion — culminating in the scattering of the Armada; and cautious support for Protestant co-religionists in France and Holland. At home, it required the construction of England's first surveillance state. Although Cecil's Protestant ally, Francis Walsingham, ran the secret service, its ultimate boss was Cecil. He did not flinch from the panoply of unlovely

repression which the Tudor war on terror demanded: horrendous torture in the Tower; spies, secret inks; *agents provocateurs* — known in Elizabeth slang as ‘projectors’ — base betrayals; and finally the block itself.

The most famous victim of this policy, of course, was Mary, Queen of Scots. As a woman with an arguably stronger legitimate claim to the throne than Elizabeth, Burghley rightly saw her as a mortal danger to his power and the Queen’s life. He determined on her death, and ruthlessly brought it about — though it must be said that Mary helped the process along by her own reckless support for the many hare-brained Catholic plots — some surely provoked by Burghley to trap her — to assassinate Elizabeth.

When it came to the axe’s crunch, Burghley again defied his mistress’s wrath by ordering Mary’s execution while Elizabeth still dithered. He got away with it as only he could. Elizabeth showed her gratitude by attending the old man’s deathbed and feeding him ‘With her own princely hand, as a careful nurse’. She knew how much she owed him. Old Burghley, as careful as ever, had ensured that his work would continue beyond his grave: having groomed his second son, the hunchbacked Robert, a chip off the old block, to succeed him as Chief Minister and continue his policies.

He did not know it, but he had done what he had failed to convince the Queen to do: founded a dynasty. From then till today, the Cecils have always been one of our principal noble houses, never far from the seat of power, and rendering the state — in Othello’s modest words — some service. That tradition reached its glorious climax in the career of the Marquess of Salisbury, a Cecil who followed faithfully in his forefather’s footsteps, and became the exemplar both for this magazine and for British conservatism in its finest hour. Burghley would have been proud of him.

## A Dazzling Collection

John Jolliffe

**Isaiah Berlin, *Enlightening: Letters 1946-60***, ed Henry Hardy, Chatto & Windus, 2009, £35.

The brilliance of Isaiah Berlin’s intellect hits the reader between the eyes from the first page, but to begin to understand his intriguing character one must remember that he was a Jewish refugee from Riga, who had lived through the revolution in Russia as a small child and at the age of eleven mercifully made his way, with his parents, to England, not knowing a single word

of English or a single person outside his immediate family. But unlike most refugees, he was educated at St Paul’s and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The result of all this was a feeling of insecurity and a desire to be accepted and approved; hence both a craving and a capacity for affection and friendship, sometimes for striking but dubious characters like Berenson, Bob Boothby and Bowra, to go no further down the alphabet. He also had plenty of time for some who deserved to be disregarded; for example his comment on Thomas Balogh, who he found ‘remote from anything to do with truth or disinterestedness ... and I like him genuinely’. Why? one asks oneself. Other comments about individuals are more measured. About George Weidenfeld, for instance, ‘I like him very much, full of life, full of imagination, though he seems to me to have an incorrigible taste for the bogus.’

He was also far more modest than many with only a fraction of his gifts. To a request from a publisher he replied (in what may have been merely a polite excuse) ‘it is a great compliment that you should think me qualified to write about the Romantic tradition; but really I am not. I have very little visual sensibility’. And he could be wonderfully even-handed. He said of Le Maistre that he was ‘an anticipator of much of the anti-rationalism that is most horrifying in the present, and said a great deal that is romantically violent, disagreeable but extremely true, and which liberals lose by averting their faces from it’. But it was the importance to him of friendship that stands out. When Bowra dedicated his book *Heroic Poetry* to him, he replied

As you know, I take a low view of myself and all I do, and friendship means more to me — and always has — than anything else at all, any evidence of it props me up for a little. And this great and handsome gift is like a vast inheritance with immense guarantees of security which, I suppose, is of all things what I lack most.

Bowra was a famously dull writer, whatever his personal exuberance, and this sort of gushing tribute underlines Berlin’s craving. He could also express gratitude at the same exalted pitch. Thanking his hosts for a visit to Harvard, he could write ‘... a sweet, tranquil oasis in what, in spite of all my beliefs, intentions, doctrines, seems to me my feckless, pillar to post, over-hurrying, ill managed, exhausting yet not sufficiently productive life’. Again, he admitted his shortcomings. ‘I write, as I talk, in an undisciplined, confused, almost irresponsible fashion.’ His self-denigration extended even further: ‘One writes too much professionally to leave one energy for private exercises, because I am too sporadic (and he might have added, too prolific) a writer and the emotional

rapport ... is too precarious and undependable and frustrating'. Yet, luckily for his correspondents, and even more so for the rest of us, it did not of course stop him. Among many other cameo portraits is a hilarious one of Sir Roger Makins, Ambassador in Washington at a time when Berlin was a frequent visitor there: 'Not fascinating, but a cow exuding common sense like milk ... immensely sane, sage, safe and understanding all one says ... genuine, businesslike and less austerity-utility than Sir O Franks.' (What a contrast to some of his recent successors...) And in 1959, of Christopher Hill, a Marxist tutor, and later Master, of Balliol, 'a total rift with him because in his book on Lenin he said things which he knew not to be true ... makes personal relationships, for me at any rate, intolerable.' His addiction to music, especially to Verdi and Rossini, among others, was a huge comfort to him, and his reverence for Toscanini showed his admirable judgment. His comment on Peter Pears is also valuable, 'the embarrassing degree of sentimentality ... deeply and sincerely in love with his own unbeautiful voice'. More surprising is his verdict on Wagner: 'I detest him so much that I have avoided knowing more than a minimum about his musical and poetical practice ... probably a sad commentary on my own vast deficiencies', though as a member of the board of Covent Garden he had to grin and bear a production of *Tristan*. His anti-French prejudice is also interesting. Writing to the great marine biologist Miriam Rothschild he asked 'Why did the Rothschild family set up its centre in Paris? It does not really suit the genius of our race: too dry, calculable, inhuman, self-centred ...'

Given the exhilarating fireworks of his conversation, and of these letters, could one ask for more? Well, yes. One strange element, given his attachment to liberty, was his constant refusal to use his influence to protest, as many lesser intellectuals did, on behalf of those who were being tyrannically deprived of it. It was this unwillingness to get involved, rather than any underlying moral flabbiness beneath the benevolent exterior, that made him enemies. When asked to sign a protest against some outrage, he would either answer (hypocritically?) that he *had* no influence, or perhaps more truthfully claim that by protesting he might endanger his friends or relations in Russia, as happened on one occasion. The other oddity was his fanatical attachment to Zionism, compared with which he felt no particular loyalty to England, which had given him a secure home and livelihood, and a warm welcome into its highest academic and social circles. When a friend pointed out to him that his blind refusal to find any fault in Israel did his cause more harm than good, he said he didn't care what other people thought; all

that mattered was his umbilical attachment to it. His intellectual and moral antennae, at other times so sensitive and so benevolent, were simply switched off, like an electric light. The only time he seems to have expressed any disappointment was immediately after the Suez Affair (when unlike most of his liberal colleagues he had supported the attack on Nasser):

Now, and now only, is the moment for a grand and generous gesture by Israel. Why cannot Ben Gurion announce that he is willing to pay for the resettlement of the Gaza refugees? That he has not got the money but will attempt to raise it somehow. And also offer to take in 40 or 50,000 of them. The effect on world opinion would be immense.

It was, of course, not forthcoming. It is difficult to argue with Einstein's verdict: 'The man is really highly intelligent and a kind of spectator in God's big but mostly not very attractive theatre.' An even more two-edged compliment was paid to him by Sir Lewis Namier, who wrote to him in his Germanic way (in spite of not being German) saying 'How intelligent you must be to understand all you write.' Berlin seems (though one cannot be sure) to have accepted this as free from irony.

His rare and perceptive talent was for essay writing, in which, with Orwell and the early Lytton Strachey, he was pre-eminent in the Twentieth century England. His letter to the Warden of All Souls re-applying for a five-year research fellowship in 1955 records a formidable list of good intentions to write longer books, and also of minor tasks accomplished.

He was a man of words, not of deeds. These letters show on every page how penetrating, endearing and not least how funny a communicator he was. Exalted friends ranging from Chaim Weitzman to Joe Alsop and Clarissa Eden, from Judge Frankfurter to Stravinsky, as well as a host of numerous little known acquaintances, all must have been stimulated and rejuvenated on receipt of one of these gems. When he was given a knighthood (in the days when it was a more notable distinction) envious inferiors commented that it was for services to conversation. This book proves that he also deserved it for letter-writing.



## Besides The Seaside...

Nigel Jarrett

**New Aldeburgh Anthology**, Ed Ariane Banks and Jonathan Reekie, foreword by Ronald Blythe, Aldeburgh Music/The Boydell Press, 2009, £35.

Tending the flame of Benjamin Britten through his association with Aldeburgh and its environs has brought inexhaustible writings about the place and new admirers continue to find sustenance in both his music and the sky-domed place that inspired it. *New Aldeburgh Anthology* is not a promotional exercise for Britten *per se* but his domicile there means that he often crops up. Even those selections that pre-date him or otherwise don't mention him at all inevitably cluster around his name and the added significance it brought to the Suffolk coastal town.

The book, heavily-laden with words and images, takes its cue from Ronald Blythe's classic *Aldeburgh Anthology* of 1972, which itself had the Aldeburgh Festival of Britten and Peter Pears at its core. The festival's alteration of name to Aldeburgh Music since then, scarcely radical, expresses the idea of change as modest but inevitable, like the erosion of the coastline and the gradual destruction of the house at Slaughden illustrated in Julian Tennyson's 1939 piece *The Suffolk Sea*, reprinted by the Alastair Press two decades ago.

Pears, very much the other twin pillar of Aldeburgh's musical community, is recalled by the pianist Roger Vignoles, who tells the story of how an anonymous chorister at a performance of J S Bach's St Matthew Passion (an Aldeburgh fixture) said of the tenor Robert Tear that 'he sounded as though he'd been up all night listening to Peter Pears', a mildly sarcastic quip that Vignoles turns into a compliment, such has been Pears's influence, even on his equals and betters. Of course that high, non-*Helden* tenor is not to everyone's liking, though critical commentary of it and of everything else to do with Aldeburgh Music and the Britten canon in the book's 340-odd pages is, not unexpectedly, absent. As a redoubt, Aldeburgh Music is well nigh impregnable, not least to the flurry of peevish Britten detractors who surfaced a couple of years ago for no good reason.

Among items lifted from the original anthology is Pears's article on John Dowland, concluding with praise for Julian Bream, whose 'modern colour-and-dynamic technique' reveals and sustains the 'rich and subtle counterpoint' of a composer whom only a 'fool'

of a singer would call simple. That's a musician's observation. Bream, like Rostropovich, Henze, Imogen Holst and innumerable other celebrities, established or maintained Aldeburgh's pedigree.

Not simple, then, but clear and well-defined, like the Suffolk landscape itself and the town within it, even when described sniffily by Virginia Woolf ('That miserable, dull sea village') or intriguingly by poet Lavinia Greenlaw quoting George Crabbe ('At the same time the same dull views to see'), the latter contradicted by sixteen, year-round images from the Aldeburgh webcam of a place altered by the seasons almost beyond recognition.

Among other poets contributing is Blake Morrison, whose *On Sizewell Beach* describes a depressing but evocative place, where one 'rain-glossed' Saturday in April the writer's young daughter is almost struck by a reckless car-driver, partly because her equally reckless father had gone to retrieve a notebook with its jottings for a poem about nuclear catastrophe. 'Almost', because they had been spared a dreamt-of other life 'where the worst has already happened and/ we are made to dwell for ever on its shore.'

It sounds like the predicament of the eponymous Peter Grimes, in the best-known of Britten's aqueous operas. Bill Brandt's black-and-white photographs might easily be backcloths to a contemporary version of it, the anonymous fishermen in the 1930 photograph of Shingle Street residents being no less than Grimes's heirs and familiars. Shingle Street is the small lane from Hollesley that turns sharply around the fields until it reaches the sluice. 'As you cross the bridge and go over the marsh,' writes Tim Miller, 'you enter a different country.'

A relentlessly brutal one it can be, too, forever under diluvian threat from all sides. How frail Britten always looked in such an environment, whether pictured with librettist Eric Crozier at work on *Billy Budd* — more water — in 1949 or on the beach alone ten years later, wearing a sensible 'cardy' and socks inside his sandals. Still, and again like the luckless protagonist in the first scene of act one of *Peter Grimes*, he could say, 'I am native, rooted here.'

Thus, it is for others to proclaim the place — among many more, Matthew Fort on East Anglian seafood; Norman Scarfe on Victorian Aldeburgh; Herbert Lomas on night fishing; William Taylor on summers in Thorpeness; and Aaron Copland on a visit to Snape. Britten himself is quoted only when receiving a couple of honours and awards, including the freedom of the borough of Aldeburgh, an acceptance speech also reproduced in Paul Kildea's *Britten on Music* (OUP, 2003), which everywhere illustrates the composer's intelligence, gratitude and humility.

Such a visually resonant locale has always attracted artists, not just those long associated with the composer himself, such as John Piper and Sidney Nolan, but ones new to the anthology, including Damien Hirst, Maggi Hambling (*Summer Wave at Slaughden*); sculptor Laurence Edwards (the minatory *Creek Men* on Snape marshes); and Bettina Furnée and Simon Frazer (*Lost on the Beach*, in which a helium balloon bearing the words HOLD SWAY was flown from a crumbling searchlight emplacement at Bawdsey in 2005. Britten, to whom an idea was something ultimately swallowed up by its complex exegesis and transformation, would have been tolerant, if not taken, by the conceptual.)

These contemporary views, and Pears's trumpeting of Dowland, suggest that, unlike many other institutions, Aldeburgh Music has not stood prey to ossification and navel-gazing. The appointment of Thomas Ades as festival director in 1999 was an antidote to any such likelihood. He stayed until 2008, his tenure, according to Tom Service, resulting in individual programmes and 'whole visions of musical possibility' that resounded with the spirit of discovery and adventure.

Therefore, a tradition is maintained. In a foreword, Ronald Blythe describes how for the festival founders 'the excitement was in the present', despite many immediately post-war obstacles, some of them literal. Throughout the compilation, he writes, there drifts the music, the witty lectures, the gossip, the bitter wind, the familiar voices saying, 'Come in!'

Blythe believes a more satisfyingly representative crowd of East Anglian apologists would be hard to find. He should know. On the opera stage as on the streets of Aldeburgh, Britten's people and their spectral ancestors come and go beside a sea, in Crabbe's words, 'lulled by Zephyrs and roused by storms'. It can also be pretty mercurial and full of surprise and interest away from the coast, which is slowly but certainly in retreat, unlike Aldeburgh's music making.

## The Seldon Story

Dennis O'Keeffe

**Arthur Seldon: A Life For Liberty**, Colin Robinson, with an Introduction by Patrick Minford, Profile Books, 2009, £19.99

Two related achievements mark Seldon's contribution to the defence of the free society. First is his central part in reviving the classical tradition of political economy, in the face of crippling Keynesian orthodoxy. He did this via his own extensive writings, and also through his encouragement of others, ranging from

famous scholars like Milton Friedman, to other writers, virtually unknown, whom he saw as promising. Second is his part in establishing the Institute of Economic Affairs, together with Ralph Harris, and their financial backer, Anthony Fisher. Under Seldon's inspired editorial leadership, the IEA created a formidable stream of anti-socialist literature and provided a forum for some outstanding lectures.

Robinson wanders persuasively over Seldon's life and views. He stresses the self-help tradition among the poor Jewish population of Arthur's childhood in the East End, and the reverence for academic achievement. Other than a brief adolescent flirtation with socialism, all Seldon's writing and editing centred on the incomparable enhancement of human welfare that markets achieve given their proper head. Seldon believed that free markets bring freedom and affluence by way of the exit option they give us. Our ability to force providers, by choosing one product rather than another, to compete for our custom, is the key to the affluence of the free societies. For Seldon, the state should supply only those goods and services which the market cannot sufficiently provide, such as the maintenance of law and order and national defence. It is economically inefficient for medicine, education and social security to be entrusted largely to public finance. Seldon even proffered some rough figures on the magnitude of the state's proper contribution. The ideal state should produce no more than 20 per cent national output or even as little as 10 per cent. The economic benefits of such a contraction would dwarf the achievements of the Thatcher governments in the 1980s. The necessary reforms would face monumental resistance, of course, as Margaret Thatcher's did.

Against all apparent odds, the IEA has flourished. Courage, determination, and a sense of indebtedness to intellectual forebears, a willingness to develop new perspectives were qualities at work in the IEA's endeavours. Interestingly, much the same values were involved as those crucial to Britain's pioneering of economic modernity between the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth.

In the battle which will rage as we try to repair the damage done to our society under Labour, the work done by the IEA should be at the core of the necessary thinking and the requisite policies. We must achieve the Thatcher *status quo ante* and then surpass it.

Is there anything missing in Seldon's thinking? What is present in the sceptical Seldon, as in Milton Friedman, is a certain economic reductionism. This was unlike the religious minded Harris. Economic problems inhere in the scarcities of nature. Their solutions arise from the human capacity for lawful, voluntary action. Freedom, not economy, is our fundamental medium.

A free society, eighteenth century Great Britain, generated the market economy. Such an economy is only secondarily a *source* of freedom. Primarily it is a *consequence* of the latter.

Arthur did not fully grasp that his place was not just among the great economists who, like him, have defended freedom since the days of Adam Smith. The Seldon voice was part of a wider orchestration of liberty. The Seldon message is the clearly presented *economic* version of the anti-totalitarian outlook articulated by Koestler, Orwell, Camus and other non-economists. The common cause which these writers made with opinion of the Seldon, Hayek and Friedman kind, is often overlooked because they were ignorant of economics. Orwell did not realise that the melancholy longing which pervades *1984*, is for the vanished *capitalism* of the 1930s. Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* is likewise a biting critique of the over-mighty state and yet as late as the early 1950s he was still hailing the move to a planned economy as the next vital stage in social evolution. Nor does Camus' masterly indictment of Communism in *The Rebel* have any sense of the crucial economic dimensions involved.

Yet these disparate men, some economists, some not, are condemning the same danger. It is the hypertrophy of the state which threatens civilisation still. It was behind the Holocaust, the Gulag and the Cultural Revolution. What Seldon and Harris knew, which Orwell and Koestler did not, is that the market economy not only articulates human freedom but supplies its incomparable defence. Indeed the overall critique of Nazi and Communist despotism would have been far better if all the leading writers involved had had some training in economics.

Seldon's masterpiece, *Capitalism*, was unfairly ignored by academia. In it he describes his affectionate conceit as a young man that he would one day go back to the East End and take his pals for a ride in his car. It gave him great pleasure that with the development of the market, they all had their own cars. No one was better placed to write this fine tribute to Arthur Seldon than Colin Robinson, himself a distinguished economist. The text also includes affectionate commentaries by some of Arthur's colleagues.



## An End to Prohibition

James Docherty

**The Phoney War on Drugs**, Kathy Gyngell, Centre for Policy Studies, 2009, £10.

Britain has the worst drug problem in Europe. There are more than ten 'Problem drug users' per 1000 of the population, compared with 3.2 in Holland and 4.5 in Sweden; there are 45 drug deaths per million of the population each year. The government spends £1.5 billion a year on its drug policy but enforcement of the law is weak. After forty years of what Kathy Gyngell calls the 'phoney war on drugs', there are more PDUs than ever.

Until 1997, the general aim was to suppress the use of drugs by punishing those who sold or consumed them. This policy was ineffective: the trade increased from year to year. The new Labour government tacitly accepted this failure and tried a different approach. If PDUs could not be changed then, at least, much of the harm they caused could be mitigated. Since many robberies are a means of getting money to buy drugs, then giving addicts a free supply of a drug, which would reduce their need to steal, would bring about 'harm reduction'. The drug was methadone, which is itself addictive. This was rather like weaning a whisky addict off his favourite tippie by supplying him with free gin. One might just as well have supplied heroin addicts with free heroin but such a *reductio ad absurdum* might have been hard to sell to newspapers and their readers. For the past decade or so, thousands of addicts have collected their daily dose of methadone. Many continue to take other drugs as well. The harm reduction approach has failed; people still steal to finance their habit and now 147,000 are established in state-sponsored addiction.

This study gives a useful review of these problems and of the failure of successive governments to solve them. The author describes the situations in Sweden and in Holland where there are fewer PDUs. In those countries the avowed aim is abstinence, not just allowing addicts to drift along in the same state in the hope of reducing the number of crimes they might commit. There the laws are more strictly enforced. British commitment to enforcement has become uncertain and conviction seldom leads to a maximum sentence. Again in Holland and Sweden there are comprehensive systems of treatment. Holland has 17 regional centres and 200 local units whose aim is abstinence from drug use.

Gyngell proposes that the British government should make more efforts to prevent imports of drugs, should implement the laws against their misuse more vigorously and establish clinics in which the objective is abstinence rather than more 'harm reduction. Would it work in a larger country like Britain? And could we afford it? After forty years of the phoney war we now have more PDUs than ever. Even in the 'enlightened lands' of whom Gyngell approves, there is still a substantial minority of drug-misusers. Perhaps the question should not be 'can the war be won?' but 'should it be fought at all?'

Politicians have felt obliged for years to sound tough. 'We won't be soft on drugs', said Gordon Brown to his conference in 2007, but they do not admit that their efforts have failed. They are afraid even to consider the alternative to the war on drugs: to make heroin and cocaine legal like other harmful substances such as alcohol and tobacco, which are sold, controlled and taxed. Gyngell seems to share their fear.

There have been many serious papers over the years explaining the case for legalisation and control, but successive governments have avoided any public discussion of them. In 2001 Chris Mullen presided over a Parliamentary Select Committee on drugs policy. In his *A View from the Hills*, he says that the officials from the anti-drugs apparatus seemed to be in a state of denial.

In the real world a huge debate is going on. Even senior police officers are arguing that the so-called war is lost and that the only way to defeat the criminals is to collapse the black market by ending prohibition. It was clear that they had given no thought to it whatever, presumably on the assumption that this was territory on which politicians fear to tread. The poor woman from the home office was distraught. When I suggested that she go away and provide us with a paper rebutting the arguments for decriminalisation her forehead actually touched the table.

In 2003, the No 10 Strategy Unit produced a 105 page critique of the drug policy. The report was suppressed by the government but was eventually leaked to the press in 2005. It concluded that a prohibition cannot prevent the production and trafficking of drugs, prohibition cannot prevent the use of drugs and that prohibition creates acquisitive crime. The report was an indictment of a policy that enjoys broad support among politicians but cannot withstand public scrutiny.

People fear that if drugs were no longer illegal, their consumption would increase: we would be all taking them, but this is unlikely. In any case at present anyone who wants drugs can buy them and yet only about 300,000 people in a population of sixty million do so.

Alcohol is freely available and heavily promoted but only a small minority are alcoholics or binge drinkers. In an ideal world, heroin and whisky would not exist and people would not indulge in harmful and anti-social behaviour, but politicians should face reality and accept the failings of human nature. It is pointless to discuss the tactics and strategy of a war which cannot be won. The billions spent on this futile task would be better spent on persuading the young of the dangers of drugs.

## Safeguarding the Nation

John Parfitt

**The Story of the Modern Royal Navy**, John Roberts, Seaforth Publishing, 2009, £30.

Do not mistake this magnificent history of the Royal Navy's last fifty years for just a coffee-table book. It is much more, beautifully produced, written and illustrated by historian Captain John Roberts and should be read by anyone interested in the modern navy. Its old-fashioned style takes us chronologically with masses of detail: if it happened any time since 1957 and mattered you will find it, along with who went where, why, and what they did. As well as the Falklands our navy has done many good things in those years almost unnoticed at home: we do not hear enough about them.

But it is terrifying. Apart from its short Epilogue it walks delicately Agag-like around the torments of a fine service half-strangled by neglect. Former CDS Admiral Lord Boyce does dip his toe in, writing of 'industrial and economic decline' and 'painful periods of adjustment' and the book remarks the serial defence reviews which have plagued it with shortages of men and ships. But instead of savaging the perpetrators it has an air of 'not wanting to make too much trouble' and away from its excellent narrative sometimes sails rather close to accepting the 'declinist' theories of the *alleskaput* school of smug complacency pioneered by the likes of Correlli Barnett. We must watch out or tribute could become tragedy.

I work with a seafarers' charity and people often ask me about the sea. Today, many of them are totally sea-blind. Ships fought their way across the Atlantic with their fathers' skimpy wartime diet and they may have recited Kipling's *Big Steamers* at school, but now they can get all manner of goodies and gadgets with no idea of how tough life would be if the trade behind their comfortable existence were to be cut off. Just like

our national leaders who seem to think the sea is just for surfing or sailing their yachts.

People don't connect with it the way they used to. All our city seaports: London, Liverpool, Manchester with its canal and many more, killed by containerisation which unloads its giant floating warehouses miles away from where we can see them. It is seventy years since Priestley could write about getting off a tram in the centre of Bristol straight on to a ship bound for America and now we employ foreign merchant seamen because they're cheap so even the fools of our families no longer go to sea. The Royal Navy is like the Church of England: grey coloured with its own funny flag, speaking a strange language and run by people we don't often see. We like having it around just in case but hope it doesn't ask us for money. So it hangs on, overworked, undermanned and under-equipped.

We have forgotten how we became rich over centuries making and trading things world-wide, and dismantling the Victorian imperial structures has not changed our interests a jot. Saturated European markets, rising wealth in the East, Arctic opening and new-found undersea resources make our global interests more important than ever and we must look after them. The Victorians didn't do it single-handed and neither can we, but keeping the trade routes safe still depends on the willingness of seafaring powers to survey, patrol and police them with real ships. And that includes us.

In the '90s after the Soviet collapse the MOD assessed the fleet needed for those essential tasks and published its maritime doctrine in a book anyone can buy. It was a fair if wordy statement of what was needed and we had just about enough ships and men to do it. 15 years on, the ships and men have been cut by 40 per cent. To do the same work: try that on the medical or educational establishment or even stress-test it like bankers.

That gulf between our policies and the means to enforce them is alarming. The declinists tell us to abandon our world interests and set off down the road to polished penury. Just like Venice: once important, nice place, great artefacts and nice coffee-table books too, no industry, mass tourism, population decamped and pity about the drains. Forget such inanities: more 'industrial and economic decline' is not for the world's fifth largest economy with its Security Council seat, four of the world's top ten universities and people fighting to get in. Captain Roberts has given us a masterly look at the past but what about the future?

We need to renew not only the navy's ships but skills and infrastructure eroded by years of salami-slicing, and we also need coherent industrial policies since 'production of something to trade with' is needed for

a maritime power, as the American sailor-historian Mahan reminded us over a century ago. Without them all the warships in the world steaming up and down the Channel all day would just be icing for a non-existent cake. Even today there's money and talent around, too much of both going to waste. Governments must stop treating their defence, diplomatic and security budgets as piggy-banks to be raided when the begging-bowls pose for TV cameras in Downing Street. That way people get killed losing wars. If we can take all the bright people now wasting their talents playing money games or in a bloated public sector and put them to regenerating and protecting our seaborne trade, they might surprise us. Admiral Boyce's 'periods of adjustment' might turn out to be less painful than he fears.

If we don't do those things we risk a threat almost as dangerous as any enemy's guns. It's from our friends and it's called Being Ignored. If that happens there might not be much Safeguarding the Nation for historians to write about in fifty years' time. When can we start please?

## The Eye of the Beholder

Andrew Wilton

**Beauty**, Roger Scruton, Oxford University Press, 2009, £10.99.

This elegantly produced little book is on the face of it a cool philosophical appraisal of the idea of Beauty. Although we apply it to a very wide range of phenomena, it is not a property of objects or actions, nor a metaphor by means of which we convey ideas associated with objects and actions. Attempts to pin it down conceptually go back, famously, to Plato and most of the great philosophers have devoted space, sometimes a great deal of space, to teasing out its significance: Aquinas to relating Beauty to the nature of God, Kant fitting it (with some difficulty) into the moral order. The eighteenth century, beginning with Shaftesbury, and continuing with Kames, Burke, Hume and Hutcheson (Celts seem to have been particularly interested in the question) evolved an elaborate conceptual structure involving the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque. This structure consciously included nature and the visual arts, including gardening. Unsurprisingly, the Marxists and the Positivists had little time for Beauty; Russell was particularly scornful.

Yet, as Scruton argues, the concept of Beauty is central to our view of the world, and we ignore it

at our peril. Although his cool philosophical tone is scrupulously maintained, his account of the place of Beauty in present-day culture is delivered, as it were, through politely gritted teeth. As Paul Johnson has remarked, Einstein's relativism presaged the onset of relativism in all aspects of life, and it is particularly virulent in the domains of morals and aesthetics. Scruton would say that the parallel is no accident: aesthetics are, in the end, a reflection of morality. Even the most modest of aesthetic endeavours, like laying the table, have moral overtones; we may recall Lionel Trilling's dictum that 'manners are morals in microcosm'.

The loss of a sense of decorum in small matters as well as large during the last fifty years constitutes what Scruton calls a 'Flight from Beauty'. His disgust at over-large, brutalist buildings; undisciplined and trivial yet massively publicised 'Art'; the deliberate fouling of great stage works — Shakespeare, Mozart, Wagner — by directors claiming to give them modern 'relevance'; the ascendancy of violence and pornography in popular entertainment; kitsch in all its manifestations from Disney onwards: all these things he sees as attacks on our civilisation, and indeed on the fundamentals of our existence as human beings with a spiritual dimension to our identities.

There is of course a problem here. If Beauty is a universal, accessible to the perceptions of far Eastern cultures, and of philosophical importance in the fifth century BC, its correlatives must have varied enormously over time and space; how can we say with any confidence, as we move into the twenty-first century, that what is now perceived (by at least some) as aesthetically valuable is not yet another manifestation of Beauty? Despite the obvious relevance of notions of beauty to the civilisations of China and Japan, Scruton confines his argument mostly to European culture. He notes that in recent decades beauty has become something of a boo-word, a development he regards as inherently dangerous. Even so, he seems to have no difficulty with Cubism, the movement that, in the hands of Picasso, made crudeness of execution and ugliness of form aesthetically respectable. It is Duchamp's 'Fountain' — a urinal exhibited as art — that he rightly places as the 'Source' of the conceptual movement, and equally rightly accepts as an excellent joke that has only become distasteful because its message has been perverted into a doctrine of the arts establishment. As he made clear in *The Aesthetics of Music*, Scruton is sceptical of much of what the Second Viennese School achieved, but here he gives Schoenberg, no less than T S Eliot and Matisse, credit for trying to 'protect an endangered aesthetic ideal from the corruptions of popular culture'. Whether Matthew Arnold would have

considered their efforts satisfactory is an interesting question.

The fact is that even the classics of early twentieth-century Modernism remain difficult for most of us, unassimilated into a common language: we don't whistle Webern in the street; Malevich's black square speaks only to the initiated (or the self-deluding). Certainly for Scruton many of the aesthetic judgements of his (and my) youth seem to have undergone little modification. He is dismissive, for instance, of 'Millet and the Pre-Raphaelites' (surely he means Millais? — neither name is in the index) as mere purveyors of 'kitsch'. The misprint is significant: his failure to recognise one of the most powerful of nineteenth-century aesthetic developments springs, I think, from the Modernist, or French, view of art history, promulgated in Britain a hundred years ago by Roger Fry and Clive Bell, according to which British art is virtually negligible. And it fails to note the link between the Pre-Raphaelites and the Victorian novel, hardly a negligible medium, but one that doesn't get a mention here. (Beauty in the Novel would be a fascinating subject in itself.)

There is no obligation on the part of a philosopher to cite all the historical figures that a reviewer — or anyone else — deems worth noting; but in an argument of this kind, which savours delightfully of the undergraduate late-night discussion, examples are part of the pleasure, and it would be satisfying to know that Scruton's immensely wide field of reference is, like his awareness of new works of philosophy, constantly modified by exploration and reconsideration. But in the main his judgments are sure: he gives *Winterreise* star billing, and offers a characteristically penetrating analysis of Barber's Adagio for Strings to illustrate the point that the meaning of music is inherent in its sounds, and not in some extrinsic intention. He nails Boucher perfectly, though I don't think one can say that the picture of Louise O'Murphy draped naked on a sofa is 'in no sense identical with any real human being'. It's the fact that this is a particular girl's bottom that gives the picture its frisson — and Scruton adduces the *Sun's* page 3 girls to make just that point. But the point about pornography overtaking eroticism, and the erotic overtaking the personal, is well taken.

This is the core of Scruton's argument: that the awareness of Beauty is a necessary expression of what it means to be fully human, to love and to relate to other people and objects; it is not a contingent and purely subjective matter, but the foundation of a view of the world that is in essence rational and necessary. Without a clear understanding of what constitutes beauty, we cannot exercise judgement, and we cannot live emotionally honest lives. This proposition might

have been self-evident in the past; now it must be argued for and, despite his barely concealed passion, we may think that Scruton is almost too gentlemanly in its defence.

## A Mysterious Way

Peter Mullen

**God is Back: How the Global Rise of Faith is Changing the World**, John Micklethwait & Adrian Wooldridge, Penguin, 2009, £25.

**Atheist Delusions: the Christian Revolution and Its fashionable Enemies**, David Bentley Hart, Yale University Press, 2009, £19.99.

So God is back? I didn't know he had been away. I do know that we have been lectured for decades on the inevitability of secularisation. For more than 200 years 'progressive' western intellectuals have been telling us that religion is withering on the vine and that it's only a matter of time before it dies away altogether: that, as Nietzsche said, 'God is dead' and any recollection of him persists only evanescently, like the last fading smile of some cosmic Cheshire cat. When I was studying for the priesthood in the 1960s, the fashion was for secular versions of Christianity and we were inundated with paperback books from radical theologians, with strange titles. The most controversial of these books was *Honest to God* by John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, who coined the slogan 'Our image of God must go'.

While Christianity has declined in Western Europe over the last forty years, in most other parts of the world the faith has prospered and increased. There are now more than one billion Roman Catholics worldwide. Protestant Pentecostalism is all the rage in South and Central America and in sub-Saharan Africa and its traditional values of thrift and cleanliness-next-to-godliness are changing millions of lives for the better, providing an exit route from the scourges of crime, drugs and prostitution. The authors claim that religion is increasing so quickly in China that by the middle of the century Christianity and Islam will claim more adherents in that country than anywhere else in the world.

'Even leftist intellectuals are finding God — at least as a subject. Mike Davis, a Marxist sociologist, has decided that, for the moment, Marx has yielded the historical stage to Mohammad and the Holy Ghost. If God died in the cities of the industrial revolution, he has risen again in the post-industrial cities of the developing world.' Why, except for western Europe,

is religion flourishing? The authors explain that this is because '...consumer capitalism is eating its own children by undermining the culture of discipline and self-restraint, as the affluent children of the 1960s turned on, tuned in and dropped out. Capitalism needs to be supported by old-fashioned bourgeois virtue if it is to succeed — and the obvious place to find such virtue is in the churches.'

Secular welfarism is the god that failed. 'You cannot solve the problem of poverty simply by giving poor people more money. You need to teach them habits of self-respect and discipline.' The decline of religion has gone hand in hand with the demoralisation of society. The Victorian voluntary societies encouraged the old civic virtues of honesty, family life and self-respect. Modern secular welfarism has destroyed the conventional family and all the alternative forms of cohabitation have failed to provide social cohesion. On all these crucial issues, 'secularists are allowed to express their moral views in the public square while religious people are excluded'.

This is a fascinating and exciting book — not so much for its authors' opinions but for the many startling facts they reveal. Scratch any secular veneer, they say, and you will find religion just beneath the surface: 'The New York elite may be one of the least religious groups in the country, but look beneath the surface of the secular city and you find a religious heart beating. The Times Square church in the heart of neon-lit capitalism has 8000 congregants a week...'

David Bentley Hart's book is in a higher intellectual league. He demonstrates that since the Enlightenment there has been a systematic programme of lies about the Christian faith and its achievements. These enemies of the faith used to think that Christianity would die out with the progress of modernity. When they discovered that the faith shows remarkable persistence, their lies and calumnies became ever more strident and preposterous. Fortunately we have some stout defenders of the faith; Bishop Tom Wright of Durham has produced the finest study of the Resurrection of Christ seen in a hundred years. Richard Swinburne and Alister McGrath are teaching the reasonableness of Christianity — a claim that goes back to the great medieval theologians Anselm and Aquinas, and beyond them to the Fathers of the first four centuries. David Martin has demonstrated that, far from withering on the vine, the Christian faith is thriving and prospering on four continents.

Hart disposes of the lie that Christians in the so-called Dark Ages destroyed all the classical and pagan manuscripts, including the science of ancient Greece: 'In fact we possess, largely intact, Greek texts of all of Aristotle's extant works thanks largely to the scholars

of the Byzantine East. Early in the 6th century Boethius undertook to shore up such fragments as he could against the ruin of the West by producing translations of all of Plato and Aristotle and preparing manuals of music, mathematics, geometry and astronomy. Syriac-speaking Christians provided an invaluable caste of scholars and physicians and through them the achievements of Greek and Roman antiquity passed into Islamic culture. After the Caliphate was moved to Baghdad in AD 762 a grand library and academy called the House of Wisdom was established and administered principally by Syrian Christians. Not only did medieval Christians not burn pagan texts, the literary remains of Rome were hoarded and jealously guarded in monastic libraries even as the western Roman world was disintegrating’.

The enemies of Christianity not only make up history in their own image but their minds are not as good as the major Christian thinkers. They are content to paddle about in the shallows and they are reluctant to do real philosophical and historical work. Hart mentions Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code* as ‘surely the most lucrative novel ever written by a borderline illiterate’. Christians urgently need to face down the enemies of the faith, along with the equal obligation to inform ourselves about Christian history and philosophy and not to receive these precious things through the distorting lens of its enemies. David Hart speaks lovingly and with profound knowledge of Christian origins and denounces the achievements of modern culture as ‘a massive retreat from reason to superstition and the gestation of especially pitiless forms of nihilism’.

## Animal Sympathies

### Celia Haddon

**Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals**, Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce, University of Chicago Press, 2009, hbk \$36, pbk \$17.

A lame young female elephant is knocked down by a boisterous teenage male, so an older female chases him off. The older elephant then returns to the injured one and touches the sore leg with her trunk. Is this a caring gesture by fellow animal, who recognises pain in others and wants to help? Or is it merely a pro-social response by a living automaton that performs it while neither feeling, thinking nor even having mental consciousness of any kind?

Cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff and philosopher Jessica Pierce have examined whether animals, particularly group-living mammals, have empathy for

those within the same species, behave altruistically towards them, and have a way of life with a *mores* or code of behaviour within their group. Thus the title *Wild Justice* and, to my mind, the more useful subtitle *The Moral Lives of Animals*. Their book is part of a growing scientific and philosophical literature about how animals live and feel and learn and is well worth buying for its reference list alone. The authors quote Darwin: ‘Any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense of conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well-developed, or nearly as well-developed, as in man.’ Darwin was here introducing the idea that there was an evolutionary continuum between animals and mankind.

While Victorians were upset by the idea that man might in some ways be like monkeys, some contemporary scientists seem equally uncomfortable with the other side of evolutionary continuum, that animals might in some ways be like humans. They cling to the idea (found in religions too) that humans are uniquely superior. Because consciousness in animals is very difficult to prove beyond doubt, some respectable scientists believe that only humans are conscious and that this is because they have language. Animals, they say, are like human drivers — doing complicated things but unconsciously.

Of course, if animals have emotions like ours, are conscious in some ways like we are, and can learn from life’s experiences, then much of the research work on rats, cats and rabbits, let alone monkeys, must make any decent human being feel uncomfortable. When a rat in a Skinner box is given electric shocks on one side of the floor, it learns how to avoid the torture inflicted by its human caretakers by jumping to the other side but, in science-speak, it is being *conditioned* into *stimulus-response behaviour*. Science-speak makes it sound so much better.

Bekoff and Pierce will no doubt be criticised for using the ordinary language of mankind, the kind ordinary people can understand, rather than the scientific language which so often distances our ethical feelings from our unjust practice. *Wild Justice* is clearly written and surprisingly persuasive, taking into account much of the research of the last ten years into the way animals learn, think and feel. This research suggests animals do show, sometimes in a minimal or primitive way, many of the abilities thought to be found only in humans. Not only apes, but also elephants, killer whales and even magpies, seem able to recognise themselves in mirrors, a self recognition not found in human babies under the age of 18 months. There has also been much work on theory of mind, the ability to

attribute mental states to others and to oneself. Animals like chimpanzees appear to have some of this ability. For instance they can tell the difference between a human that knows where the food is, from a human who is only guessing.

So if evolution is a continuum, why should not animals show an early form of morality, argue the authors. They admit that moral customs will vary between species and will be applied only within a species — wolves cannot afford to be altruistic to the deer they hunt. Bekoff and Pierce define morality as ‘interrelated other-regarding behaviours that cultivate and regulate complex interactions within social groups.’ They then examine three main clusters of animal behaviour — co-operation including altruism and trust, empathy including compassion and helping, and justice including fair play and a desire for equity.

Ideas of a struggle for existence with animals competing desperately against each other, is misleading. Co-operation and altruism is rife in the animal world. Most mammals and birds must altruistically feed and care for their young (sometimes dying in the effort it takes) if they are to reproduce at all. Social animals like wolves must hunt co-operatively in order to bring down large prey. And, unlike the model of dominance and punishment put forward by outdated TV dog trainers like Cesar Millan, wolves in the same pack altruistically feed one another’s young, play together and respect an individual’s possession of food. Altruism and co-operation, not conflict, benefit the individuals within the pack.

Altruism, however, can go further. Generalised altruism, spontaneous help to others with no reward, used to be thought uniquely human. However, not only do chimpanzees show generalised altruism by helping not just another chimpanzees but also humans, but so do rats. This species, routinely used for painful experiments in laboratories, will help unfamiliar rats not just those in their group. If empathy is the ability to feel what others feel (not necessarily to imagine oneself in another’s place) animals have it too. Again rats (in yet another horrible experiment) show stress responses if they see another rat being decapitated in front of their eyes. Moreover neurologists have discovered mirror nerve cells in the brain of humans, that fire up when an animal performs a particular action and *when it sees another animal doing the same thing*. Mirror neurons are found in monkeys too. Another kind of brain cell, spindle cells, processes social emotions including love. These are found not just in humans but in apes (not monkeys) and even in whales and dolphins. Human and at least some animals share a common brain wiring.

Finally, we come to the idea of justice and fair play. The latter is found, most obviously, in play

behaviour. Mock fights, chases, and mounting in dogs are regulated by special signals such as the play bow and by self-handicapping so that big dogs will hold back making sure they do not injure small ones. A sense of injustice may also be felt by some animals. When a capuchin monkey was given a grape in return for token while the next monkey was given only a bit of cucumber, the short-changed monkey showed the outrage of an animal that felt it was unfair.

Of course, animals can’t think symbolically and set up elaborate codes of conduct such as are found in the Torah, the New Testament or the Hadith. The authors don’t claim that. They merely hypothesise that there is an animal precursor of the justice that we so highly prize, and so rarely practice least of all to animals, in our modern society. Were we more open-minded, we could perhaps learn from animal *mores* — not least how to rear happy healthy young humans rather than feral yobs.

## The Wall Collapses

AW Purdue

**Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire,** Victor Sebestyen, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009, £25.

‘Why did no-one see it coming?’ asked Her Majesty. She was talking about the economic recession of 2008-9; the same question may be asked about the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989. The many kremlinologists and experts on East-Central Europe failed to forecast the collapse of the House that Stalin built. At the beginning of 1989 it was still standing and, although the dilapidation was obvious, there seemed little reason to believe that the regimes which ruled Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany would have fallen by the end of the year. As a year of revolution, 1989 can only be compared to 1848. Then, when revolutions occurred in country after country, Karl Marx believed that, ‘a spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism’. In 1989 the spectre that haunted the Communist regimes of Europe was that of ‘liberal-capitalism’.

Stalin’s empire lasted for more than forty years and outlived him by 36 years. It was as if a divided Europe was frozen in the postures and dispositions of the end of World War II. It seems incredible today that twenty years ago, not only was Berlin divided by its grotesque wall, but that it was garrisoned by the forces of the victorious powers of 1945. Nothing,

however, seemed more certain to most observers at the beginning of 1989 than that the ramshackle and restless Soviet empire was set to survive into the immediate future. The cement that bound it together had been provided by the brute force of the victorious Red Army in 1945 and the events of 1953, 1956 and 1968 had proved that the Soviet Union was prepared to use it to maintain control of its satellites. Further reinforcement came from the nature of the regimes; every form of socialism has an ineluctable propensity to totalitarianism, even if this is a goal that can never be fully achieved, and every career, every institution, and most lives became dependent on the state and the party; opposition might no longer by the 1980s lead to execution or harsh imprisonment but it meant impoverishment and becoming almost a non-person. There was little threat from the western powers which, in the immediate aftermath of World War II were not prepared to risk another war for the sake of East-Central Europe and, were, later, understandably not going to fight a nuclear war in support of uprisings in the Warsaw Pact countries. The siren Voice of America or the BBC Overseas Service might encourage unrest but containment had given way to tacit acceptance that the Soviet sphere would not be disturbed.

Victor Sebestyen in this incisive study of the sudden collapse of the Soviet Empire does not point to one single cause but instead describes a concatenation of causes, events and mistakes, some common to all the People's Republics, others particular to individual states. The Achilles heel of Communist Europe was always the internal contradictions of socialism. As early as 1947 the Soviet Union's refusal to allow its satraps to benefit from the Truman Doctrine demonstrated a fear of the superiority of capitalist economies and, though some observers were beguiled by the supposed achievements of the East-Central European Communist states in imposing rapid industrialisation on the Soviet model — the CIA believed that the Soviet and East European economies were growing right up to the minute they imploded — it was apparent by the 1980s that these states' command economies were incapable of delivering modern consumer goods to their populations. The governments were increasingly dependent on loans from western banks to help them to fill their shops and maintain the sullen acquiescence of their populations. For many states the interest on these loans took up a greater and greater percentage of their national incomes. Their situation was hopeless in the long term but not disastrous in the short term for the bankers might continue to bale out these economic zombies and Sebestyen does not see economic failure as sufficient in itself to explain the remarkable events of 1989.

Another important development was the loss of faith by the clerisy, the Communist ministers and party officials themselves. Both within the Soviet Union and in the subordinate states; the nostrums of Marxist-Leninism were mouthed rather than believed and membership of the Party became a necessary path to advancement rather than an intellectual commitment. Along with loss of faith came loss of confidence as western technological superiority and productive power became evident and western culture became more accessible and attractive to influential sections of the populations. Mikhail Gorbachev, who succeeded Konstantin Chernenko in 1985 as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, was not one of those who had ceased to believe in Marxist-Leninism. He wanted to reform and modernise the Soviet system and to restructure it without altering the fundamentals and he believed at first in maintaining Soviet control over the East European states via continued Communist governments. The latter, he determined within two years, was not a viable option, but the decision to tell the satellite regimes that they were on their own and could not count on Soviet forces to maintain their rule was, in the end, to lead to the fall of Communism in Russia itself.

The constructive partnership between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher did play an important part in the shaping of the environment for the relatively bloodless revolution. However, accounts which dwell on the forthright anti-Communism of the pair and on Reagan's upping of the ante in the armaments' competition are only half of the story and Sebestyen gives a much more nuanced account of the roles of the formidable duo. Both appreciated the dangers of the paranoia of the geriatric Soviet leadership which preceded Gorbachev and worked with the new leader in the interests of an understanding with a liberalised Soviet Union and modified East European regimes. They did not anticipate the sudden collapse of the Soviet Empire, still less that of the Soviet Union. Reagan's successor, George Bush, seems to have been horrified by its rapidity, while both Thatcher and President Mitterand were deeply disturbed by the prospect of a united Germany.

The empire was by the 1980s no monolith. Czechoslovakia was by far the most sophisticated society within the bloc. Any false hopes for an acceptable and liberal Communist state had been dispelled by the crushing of the Dubcek initiative of 1968 and resistance shouldered by intellectuals, students and rock musicians combined the irony of *Good Soldier Svejk* with the music of Frank Zappa and the Velvet Underground. In Poland the main opposition came from the disillusioned workforce of

the shipyards, which found a charismatic if erratic leader in Lech Walesa, and from nationalism and Catholicism. There were broad distinctions between Central Europe, where in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, the regimes had mellowed into inefficient bureaucracies prepared to protect themselves by brutal force only when endangered, and Eastern Europe where Bulgaria resembled the dictatorships of the 1940s and 1950s and Romania, much admired in the West for its opposition to Soviet master in the late 1960s, was a nightmare regime ruled by a hideous, malevolent and half-mad old couple and their sycophants; the German Democratic Republic was *sui generis*, a state where one half of the population provided information to the Stasi about the other half which might include their own spouses, a grim warning of a future where in supposed liberal societies like Britain, CCTV cameras and computer files would make the Stasi's miles of paper records look primitive.

As Sebestyen so vividly describes, they all came crashing down within a few months. Some had velvet revolutions, others more bloody revolutions. Mother Russia had lost patience with her brood and refused to intervene to protect the monsters she had created. The Soviet Union itself would soon go the same way. The West was triumphant and the end of history was hailed, for now there was a world safe only for liberal-democracy. One possible cause of the whole debacle in which an impregnable fortress turned out to be made of cardboard should give triumphalists pause for thought. The Soviet Union had committed 100,000 troops to prop up a shaky socialist government in Afghanistan and, after losing thousands of soldiers, was forced to withdraw from what had become a 'bleeding wound'. It was this venture that did much to destroy the Soviet leadership's confidence in its Marxist destiny and its will to protect its satellites and finally the Soviet Union itself.

## Satanic Consequences

Harry Cummins

**From Fatwa to Jihad: The Rushdie Affair and its Legacy**, Kenan Malik, Atlantic Books, 2009, £16.99.

*From Fatwa to Jihad* is an attack on Britain's policy of multiculturalism. In the author's view multiculturalism made the terrorism we have seen since 7 July 2005 inevitable. Malik blames 'the New Left' for formulating the doctrine and 'the New Right' — the government of Mrs Thatcher — for imposing it in response to the urban ethnic violence of the 1980s. This giving in

to violence led naturally to more violence, to more 'multicultural' concessions — especially during and after the Rushdie affair — and ultimately (though the author does not make the case well) to the coercive deployment of Jihadi terrorism.

Malik notes that 'the aim' of Mrs Thatcher's policy of separate development, as Sir George Young in the wake of the Brixton riot put it ... was to 'back the good guys, the sensible moderate responsible leaders of ethnic groups. If they are seen to deliver to get financial support from central government for urban projects then that reinforces their standing and credibility in the community.... Racism now meant not the denial of equal rights but the denial of the right to be different. Black people, ... should not be forced to accept British values or to adopt a British identity. This challenged the very notion of common values drawing on the ideas of the 'New Left' that had emerged in the 1960s ... Whereas the Old Left talked of class and sought to raise class consciousness, the New Left talked of culture and sought to strengthen cultural identity ...

Malik is a product both of the Old Left and the New. Born in India to a Muslim father and a Hindu mother, though without faith himself, the author grew up in Britain 'smoking dope, chucking bricks at the National Front' and devoting himself to punk rock and the (New Left) Socialist Workers' Party. Such a biography has proved as inevitable an *entrée* to the new establishment as a novitiate in Eton and the Guards would once have bestowed membership of the old. Malik is a documentary maker for Channel 4, 'a regular presenter on Radio 4' and the author of *The Meaning of Race and Man, Beast and Zombie*. He is famous for insisting that Britain must consent to totally unlimited immigration for the rest of history. (*Let 'Em All In!* is his most recent film for Channel 4). 'But if it was racism that drew me into politics' he writes 'it was politics that made me see beyond the narrow confines of racism. I came to learn that ... a person's ... ethnicity or culture was no guide to the validity of his or her political beliefs.' In this respect he is defiantly of the 'Old Left'.

The title of *From Fatwa to Jihad* refers first to the death sentence the Ayatollah Khomeini enjoined Muslims to impose on Salman Rushdie in 1989 and second to the death sentence Muslims living in Britain imposed on 7/7 on dozens of its ancient Christian natives sixteen years later. It is Malik's account of why Muslim immigration has had a deleterious effect not only on infidel life expectancy in the UK but on the ancient indigenous group's rights to due process (which did not survive the intruders' apocalyptic terrorism) and freedom of speech (for which the British fought for centuries but which our uninvited guests seem not to want except for themselves).

Malik's argues that while the Muslim is like the grey squirrel, an adorable beast which every society must learn to tolerate whether it wants them or not, problems might be avoided if one aspirates the teeth and claws of this introduced carnivore by making it submit in advance to the 'universal values' of its Western host. Instead, he complains, the official protection and promotion of the species' more atavistic tendencies (killing off the local natives) has seen 'Islamism' emboldened by 'New Left multiculturalism'. Malik is on shaky ground of course when he defends the right of Third Worlders to colonise indigenous Westerners against their will and then insists that the same group must submit to the local culture.

In any case he opposes 'diversity' for emotional and not for intellectual reasons. For Malik as for Trevor Phillips the doctrine is a poison, a Circe-like draught, that robs us of our shared humanity and causes us to sleepwalk into segregation — Hindu cows here, Christian dogs there, Muslim Old Spot porkers somewhere else in Circe's cursed and diverse menagerie. Despite his Marxist background Malik fails to see that the problem to which multiculturalism gives rise is not *separation* but what Marx once called 'contradiction'. 'Multiculturalism' is in fact a 'contradiction' in terms since as cultures are mutually exclusive they can only 'co-exist' as can wolves and sheep or anteaters and ants. Leave man in his naturally diverse state and 'man is a wolf to man' noted Thomas Hobbes. 'Democracy requires therefore first homogeneity' the philosopher Carl Schmitt insisted.

'Contradiction' is in fact an endemic problem in Malik's work: He tells us for instance that after a series of 'race riots' in Bradford in the 1980s (though only Muslims took part and Islamic property was as carefully spared as that of the Sikhs, Hindus, and black and white Christians was destroyed) the terrified council announced that 'every section of the 'multicultural multiracial city' had 'an equal right to maintain its own identity, culture, language, religion and customs'. This model was then imposed on other northern cities by other Islamic rioters. The Muslim violence that followed the publication of *The Satanic Verses* and the ensuing terrorism has led to a pre-emptive Western culture of self-censorship and appeasement.

Turning his own chronology on its head he infers from this that the multiculturalists' moral relativism — a purely 'Western' disease — infected young Muslims with a yen for the sort of coercive violence never before seen in Islam. It erupted because the new 'anything goes' environment they found in Britain 'un-moored' (or un-Moored) Muslims from traditional Islam which had always been peaceful. Elsewhere Malik complains

that 'Multiculturalists ... pushed second generation Britons of migrant stock back into the traditional cultures they had rejected'. But now he changes tack and says that the blame for 'Islamism' lies squarely with the West and its 'blurring of traditional moral lines, the increasing disenchantment with politics and politicians ... A traditional Muslim would be as appalled by the rituals of radical Islam as the Catholic worshipper was by the New Age-ishness of charismatic Christianity'.

As proof that Islamic 'extremism' has a purely Western origin and nature Malik notes that: 'Muslim activists particularly in Europe call upon modern Western legal concepts such as group rights to demand official recognition for their identity and state support for their communities. When Muslim organisations make a case for the introduction of sharia law into Western jurisprudence they talk of pluralism and minority rights notions that would have been meaningless to Muhammad'.

This is rather like saying that because Hitler cynically played on the Christian pacifism of Neville Chamberlain Hitler was a product not of German militarism but British pacifism. Malik would no doubt tell us furthermore that there had never been an indication of aggressiveness or militarism in German history until Christian pacifism raised its ugly head.

That the 'sensitivity' to Islam he describes is a fig leaf for the craven 'dhimmitude' that we have seen for centuries in the wake of jihad invasions seems not to occur to him. Like Mao, Muhammad taught that power only ever grows from the barrel of a gun, or in his case from the scabbard of a sword. The Arabs who conquered Zoroastrian Iran, Hindu India, and Christian North Africa, Egypt and Spain in the first millennium may have formed smaller percentages of the local population than the endlessly multiplying Muslims that have invaded modern Europe but like them they possessed a complete monopoly of violence and hence of state power. Malik's narrative shows that just as patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel, violence is the first of a Muslim. So why should the Muslims who know how feared they are submit to Malik's 'universal values' anyway?



# Studios and Weathervanes

Andrew Lambirth



Where is an artist without his studio? In a garret, you may respond, but the days of artists starving in garrets are long gone. Even forty years ago, art students did not expect to make a living from their work. If they were lucky, teaching would enable them to buy a little time to paint. In those days, only a handful of artists could support themselves entirely on sales. Now students are taught not how to draw but how to present themselves, and how to market their mostly feeble and unoriginal efforts. A gullible public determined to be up-to-the minute will buy these jejune effusions for thousands, without noticing that so many of the so-called stars of yesteryear re-sell in the auctions rooms for just hundreds, sometimes tens of pounds. The market is crazy, but the market dictates — the poor old artist just makes the product.

If you have the money (or an understanding bank manager) and you want to design a studio suited exactly and expertly to your requirements, there's no one better to consult than the architect M J Long. She is the artists' architect, and her new book, simply called *Artists' Studios* (Black Dog Publishing, £24.95), offers chapter and verse of her past achievements. I have visited a number of the studios discussed here, most recently Frank Auerbach's hideaway in Mornington Crescent. Auerbach has worked in this 16 foot cube since 1954, and by the time Long came to modernize it in 1990, the original floor had rotted away and Auerbach was standing on 'structural paint', the thick deposit of paint scraped off his pictures and discarded during his process of constantly re-working an image. It's nearly 20 years since Long did her renovation, and the studio could probably do with another face-lift, but Auerbach is too busy painting to vacate the premises.

Other studios featured in this book belong to Peter Blake, who has created his own museum around his working areas, David Inshaw — who lives and works in a converted chapel in Devizes, and on whose career I am currently writing a monograph — and the London house and studio of the late lamented R B Kitaj. One of the pleasures of this book is to read Long's commentary, which is a highly personal and enjoyable memoir. Her latest project is to re-model the famous Porthmeor studios in St Ives, which have been in continuous use by painters and fishermen since the 1880s. Among illustrious recent tenants have been Ben Nicholson,

Patrick Heron, Karl Weschke and Sandra Blow. Now in urgent need of repair, these historic studios are receiving the care and loving attention they deserve.

My old friend Maggi Hambling (born 1945), who works both in London and Suffolk, maintains what sometimes feels like a plethora of studios for her various activities as painter and sculptor. She also has a thing about herons. In the book I helped her write (its full title is *Maggi Hambling: The Works, and Conversations with Andrew Lambirth*, published by Unicorn Press in hardback and glorious colour, at the unbeatable price of £40), she tells the story of her first encounter with the species as a child. It was an electrifying experience. 'I can see it now: at the far side of a field. Slowly stepping along was this enormous exotic creature from another world. I couldn't believe it was real, let alone English.' Later she included a heron in one of her remarkable series of Max Wall paintings (1982). Later still, in 1993, she made an etching of a heron cogitating, a masterly study of crest, beak and ruffled feathers, all suggested form rather than stated, and very effective. Being Hambling, and thus drawn to doing impossible things (especially before breakfast), she decided to translate this pre-eminently two-dimensional image into three dimensions. Small task.

In fact she has been making a weathervane in the shape of a nine-foot-high heron, based on that etching. Weathervanes are, so to speak, in the air. I have been to the Whitechapel Gallery several times since it re-opened earlier this year, and on each occasion I forget to look at the roof. (When I'm arriving, I'm intent on seeing the exhibitions within, when I'm leaving, I've done so much concentrated looking I tend to get me home as fast as public transport permits.) But I am reliably informed that somewhere on the Whitechapel's roof is a brand-new weathervane, specially commissioned from the Canadian artist Rodney Graham (born 1949). Why a Canadian, you may ask, and not an artist of the home-grown variety? Best to ask the director of the gallery, Iwona Blaswick, who might well say something along the lines of 'art is international, and oversteps the bounds of mere nationality'. Well, there's something in that, but I would have preferred an English artist for the job. I wonder if any were considered?

The commission has been marked by a slim but handsome hardback, designed to look like one of that

popular series called *Britain in Pictures*, published in the 1940s by Collins, under the general editorship of W J Turner. *British Weathervanes* by R Graham has exactly the same format and extent, but contains essays by such contemporary notables as Miss Blaswick, Candy Stobbs and John Slyce. It also features several depictions of the Whitechapel weathervane, which is made out of copper, 58 inches high and depicts the great humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam riding a horse, but seated backwards and reading a book. The texts keep referring to Erasmus' famous book, *The Praise of Folly*, which he wrote in a week in 1509 for the amusement of Thomas More with whom he was staying in Chelsea. The blurb on my old Penguin copy reminds me that this satirical classic 'ranges from light-hearted jibes to vehement denunciation of the theologians and churchmen, monastic life and the condition of the Church, and then seriously expounds the virtues of the Christian way of life'. Sounds rather like Peter Mullen's new book, *The*

*Secular Terrorist*, another damned (or should that be blessed?) good read.

Weathervanes do have a particular fascination in this country, obsessed as we are with our changeable weather and trying to guess what will happen next. Along with tapping the barometer, consulting the weathervane (if you're lucky enough to have one near you) must be one of the great (and useless) rituals of meteorological prognostication. The previous owners of the house I live in were called Fox, so when they first saw a fox weathervane on the barn of this house, they took it as a favourable omen and moved in. I feel like asking the local blacksmith to make me a lamb to chase it, which could then be sited on the roof of the shed which forms my library. Or should I commission one of my artist friends to design something more original? A mobile sculpture that can be 'hugged and embraced by the strumpet wind', as Shakespeare so memorably puts it? I won't be asking any Canadians.

## Macmillan's St John Passion

Robert Hugill



James Macmillan's *St John Passion* which was premiered last year by the London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis has recently had a long discussion thread on one of the musical bulletin boards. The discussion centred not on the nature of the work, or its excellence, but on whether it was anti-Semitic. What was worrying was some of people on the board were prepared to discuss the work's possible anti-Semitism, whilst being completely ignorant of the work itself and its libretto. This is all the more surprising as those contributing to the bulletin board are professionals involved in classical choral music, and discussion usually covers topics like the correct pronunciation of Latin in the Mozart Requiem or how to handle unruly teenagers in a school choir.

The discussions were not all intemperate and various people raised valid and interesting points. A number of important issues became apparent to me. The most worrying was that people were happy to discuss whether Macmillan's work was anti-Semitic purely on the basis that they had heard that it set the text of the St John Passion. When they discovered that Macmillan used the text of the Good Friday Reproaches as well, this only inflamed the discussion. Without actually reading the libretto, never mind listening to the work, some people were prepared to decide what they thought about its putative anti-Semitism. This might be just understandable,

a brand new work but MacMillan's *St John Passion* is a known quantity; it has already been premiered and a recording of the occasion issued on the LSO Label. Now I have heard Macmillan's *St John Passion*, and whatever I thought of the work's musical strengths, which are many, the concept of it being anti-Semitic never occurred to me. The context of Macmillan's work was that he was using traditional sacred texts to create a dramatic concert work. His intention was to create a piece which was devotional and dramatic.

To understand the way a composer's intention can affect a work consider three very different composers, J S Bach, Richard Wagner and John Adams, all of whom have written works over which the stigma of anti-Semitism has hung: J S Bach was probably no more (and no less) anti-Semitic than the rest of his contemporaries. His setting of the *St John Passion* was performed in a religious context and, as such, he set the text complete. This means that the music for *The Jews* is highly coloured and dramatic. Bach's intentions do not seem to have been to create a work which encouraged anti-Semitism; instead he created a dramatic work which concentrates on our reactions to Christ's persecution. Whilst the work is not explicitly anti-Semitic, it does rather exclude non-Christians. Whereas Handel's Biblical oratorios were written as entertainments for the theatre (albeit in concert, not staged), Bach's Passions were written explicitly for

use in Lutheran services and make few concessions to openness or inclusion.

Wagner on the other hand is well known to be anti-Semitic. His portrait of the character Sixtus Beckmesser in his opera *Die Meistersinger* is probably a caricature of a Jewish music critic who had offended Wagner. Wagner's own libretto for the opera presents Beckmesser as a highly coloured comic character, but it is the cast of Wagner's music for the character which has suggested that Beckmesser is a Jewish caricature. Incidentally the jury is still out on this issue. Wagner made the first draft of the libretto before he knew Hanslick (the critic in question) and Hanslick's own reaction to both the libretto and the final opera seems to have been entirely positive. In the end is our perception of Wagner's music. Does Beckmesser sound like a nasty caricature of a Jew?

Harvard-educated John Adams lives in a West Coast American liberal milieu and his opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, had intended to treat the subject matter in a balanced manner. The libretto for the work was written by Alice Goodman, a Jew who converted to Christianity and is now an Anglican vicar, but it was this balance which caused the problems. Though the work makes it clear that the killing of Kinghoffer was an awful and desperate act, Adams and Goodman were concerned to understand the Palestinian terrorists and present them as people rather than bogeymen. This very balance has caused immense problems with Richard Taruskin recently arguing that the work catered to the 'anti-American, anti-Semitic, anti-bourgeois' prejudices of its European audiences.

Before we get too smug and think that such ill-considered critical reaction could not happen in the UK, consider the treatment of Adams's opera. It was originally a joint commission with Glyndebourne, but after the premiere the work was quietly dropped from the schedules. It was left to the BBC to premiere the work, in concert, and Channel 4 to commission Penny Woolcock's film. Similarly, Nicholas Maw's opera, *The Rising of the Moon*, which dealt with the Irish Troubles in the 19th century in comic fashion, was first performed at Glyndebourne in 1970. Critics were frankly contemptuous, the work's premiere coincided with a resurgence of troubles in Northern Ireland and it was then quietly ignored in the UK. So silence can be as devastating as intemperance.

In Macmillan's case he was setting religious texts with which he was familiar from his devotions. Both the *St John Passion* and the *Good Friday Reproaches* are regularly used in churches in the week leading up to Easter. It is here that context matters. In a religious situation the texts are taken in the context for which they are intended. Move the texts out of the church and into the concert hall, and unfortunately they can have entirely different resonances.

When it comes to religious issues, non-specialists

often tend to latch on to details which the participants do not see as being germane to the issue at hand. A prime example of this is the way the British press treated the announcement by Pope Benedict, that he was relaxing the rules on the use of the *Tridentine Mass*. This great liturgy was the cornerstone of the Roman Catholic Church from 1570 to 1962; it is the liturgy which inspired some of the greatest Western sacred music. But the press chose not to mention this, instead they tried to manufacture a controversy around the fact that the text (in church Latin) prays for the conversion of the Jews.

When it comes to prejudice, people's antennae are remarkably sensitive. I can only witness anti-Semitism from the outside but it helps to rework such problematic situations into terms which are more meaningful to your own situation. So instead of anti-Semitism, consider these issues in terms of prejudice against religion, race, gender, sexuality or nationality, it helps to focus your ideas on what you do and don't find objectionable.

Must we exercise self-censorship in dealing with existing texts, particularly ancient and traditional ones? If you set a text in a sober and non-sensational way, should a composer have to worry about its repercussions? To say no is to argue for the rights of an artist to say what they want, to say yes is to argue that the composer lives in the world and needs to take account of this. Real life is, of course, somewhere in between. John Adams has gone on record describing his shock at the extreme critical reaction to *The Death of Klinghoffer*.

To quietly, discreetly tinker with a text to make it acceptable would seem to be an acceptable middle course but when does quiet tinkering turn into unacceptable censorship and bowdlerisation? Surely we have a right to consider works of art as a whole. The libretto for Mozart's *Magic Flute* contains a great deal of misogyny and racism, but to ignore it is to misplace the work. Mozart's divine music should not be considered in isolation, to reveal the full complexity of the opera we need to know about the 'Bernard Manning' element of the libretto as well.

As a composer I want to be able to deal with any issue in any way I want. I realise that in the real world, you must take account of people's views and attitudes. You can't address a difficult subject and then be surprised that people take exception to your work. But composers have the right to expect their works to be assessed in a rational manner and not prejudged on the basis of little or no information. This is very true of historical works, where the creators are no longer around to comment on and explain their work. Art has a right to be taken seriously and we need to try and understand the artist's intentions before rushing in with condemnation.

# IN SHORT

**Hitler's Private Library**, Timothy W Ryback, Bodley Head, 2009, £18.99.

Not long ago several prominent public figures in Britain confessed to citing famous authors they had never properly read. On top of more important failings, the leading personality in Nazi Germany was almost as bad. Although with a gifted orator's ear and artist's eye for style, he could recite memorised portions of Schopenhauer and Shakespeare, he was less profoundly acquainted with any major *Denker und Dichter* than contemporary admirers claimed, notwithstanding his enforced re-education opportunity in Landsberg prison. It is already well established that in boyhood Hitler enjoyed 'cowboy' adventures, and later became interested in fashionable 'esoterica'. Apparently *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a favourite novel. When in power, his collection prominently featured numerous military and architectural publications. Always a 'voracious' and often nocturnal reader, he was 'discriminating' in the unfortunate autodidactic sense that, from his early thirties, he used intellectual non-fiction selectively to reinforce and polish rather than to chip bits off the 'granite foundation' of a *Weltanschauung* shaped originally from writers like Lagarde, Fichte, Chamberlain and Treitschke.

Historians seeking a precise explanation of his peculiarly hypochondriac psychology and ruthless ideological obsessions may find eloquent clues in his reading preferences, ascertained from analysis of his speeches and writings, his recorded book borrowings and recommendations, conversations and observations of acquaintances, but especially from passages personally underscored or copiously annotated. Gathering a small and not fully representative number of texts, which survived from a 16,300-volume library, this author examines lines with significant marks, and relates particular pages to successive historical events, thereby supplementing previous work by Maser, Oechsner, Gassert and Mattern. This book throws no light on novel theories, for example, that Hitler was galvanised by perusing Ibsen as much as by watching Wagner, but is a modest, perceptive and well-illustrated addition to objective studies of That Man.

David Ashton

**Churchill's Wizards: the British genius for deception**, Nicholas Rankin, Faber, 2009, pb. £9.99

*Churchill's Wizards* brings to life the assortment of fascinating characters whose skill and talent was indispensable in the deception strategy used so successfully by British intelligence during the Second World War. We have long known from various memoirs published and indiscretions dropped in the years since the war that a number of the well-known authors, artists, and filmmakers of the day became important members of British intelligence, but Rankin marshals the examples and anecdotes here, in one place, part history and part amusement. Rankin isn't just a well-versed military gossip, though, but also a scholar — for example, I had not known that *camouflage* and *propaganda* did not enter the English lexicon until after the First World War (and of course, each played a vital role in the work of the Wizards).

There is certainly much 'fun' here — Rankin makes much of the inspiration for the work of the deception makers found in boys' adventure stories. But, plainly, the work of the Wizards was more than a game. As a result of phantom Allied divisions 'created' by such deception, Rommel kept 21 divisions in reserve for a vital two months, until their commitment to the field was too late.

Rankin's account of 'Operation Mincemeat' (the story behind the fine film, *The Man Who Never Was*) is well rendered — not easy with such a well known episode. The Mulberry Harbours of D-Day and PLUTO ('pipelines under the ocean') both also appear as Rankin makes the case that this pattern of deception 'changed the course of history.'

My criticism, though small, is the length. It's a doorstop. The desire to tell everything one knows is understandable, but the leisure reader is often mired in details and ancillary events that make the narrative lag. And as almost every review has noted, the book has more acronyms than a health and safety manual.

Still, it provides an indispensable perspective on the events it describes. It also appears at an interesting time, as free societies debate the line between the necessity for national security and the right of the people to keep an eye on their government. *Churchill's Wizards* effectively argues that in wartime, the balance shifts to the former.

Deborah Brezina

**Brussels Laid Bare:** Marta Andreassen, 2009, St Edward's Press, £10.

The shenanigans and complete amorality that Marta Andreassen describes in this account of her brief stint as the European Union's Chief Accountant; the deviousness, the threats, the audacious mendacity she experienced from her colleagues and superiors would, if presented in the form of a drama series, be dismissed by most viewers as being unrealistic. Of course, one could argue that just about everything about the European Union, currently this country's legal government, is unrealistic.

Marta Andreassen, an experienced accountant with transnational organizations and their lax view of what constitutes strict accounting principles, applied for the job of the European Commission Budget Execution Director in 2001, believing that things must have changed since the departure of the Santer Commission surrounded by various scandals, financial and personal. She also, at that stage, believed that she could do some good for the European Union. She was swiftly disabused on both scores as she descended deeper into the maelstrom of internal politicking and found herself cajoled, abused and threatened for trying to do her job with a modicum of honesty.

This book is alternatively horrifying and hilariously funny. It should be read by those who believe that the EU and its institutions can somehow be reformed (the leadership of the Conservative party among others) and those who think the whole structure is rotten from top to bottom. Especially it should be read by those who want to be confirmed in their view of Neil Kinnock and others.

Ms Andreassen is now a UKIP MEP and will, we hope, use her knowledge of where the bodies are buried to some advantage.

*Helen Szamuely*

**The Snows of Yesteryear, Portraits for an Autobiography,** Gregor von Rezzori, New York Review of Books, 2009, £9.99.

Those who value the re-discovery of the literary heritage of Eastern Europe will enjoy this book re-issued with an introduction by John Banville. Gregor von Rezzori was a novelist who is best known for his *Memoirs of an anti-Semite*, a sharp dissection of anti-semitism and its environment and highly amusing in spite of the seriousness of its message. As a young man he was attracted to Jewish culture but had to keep his friendships secret. His father was fiercely anti-semitic: '...was furious when I was in love with

a Jewish girl; he would have killed me if I had had the idea of marrying her.'

The Rezzoris were an aristocratic family from Sicily who had moved north to work for the Hapsburgs. He was born in Czernowitz, (Bukovina) (now Chernovtsy in the Ukraine) where his father, an architectural historian, managed the Orthodox monasteries in the region. After 1918 Bukovina became part of Romania, but the Hapsburg ethos.... did not disappear entirely: ... 'we considered ourselves as former Austrians in a province with a predominantly Austrian colouring, like those British colonials who remained in India after the end of the Raj'. With the Second World War any vestiges of this world vanished completely but by this time, von Rezzori had seen the rise of Nazism in Vienna, experienced Berlin in wartime, afterwards moving to Paris and working as a screen writer.

John Banville compares *The Snows of Yesteryear* with two outstanding autobiographies of the twentieth century, Nabokov's *Invitation of a Memory* and Harold Nicholson's *Some People*. Von Rezzori uses five characters he had known in his youth: his Nanny, Cassandra, his governess and his immediate family to describe his early years and to evoke powerfully his lost domain. Both his parents were unhappy and unhappily married resenting that their early dreams of becoming a chemist and a pediatrician were unfulfilled. His father's obsession for hunting 'was an escape and shelter from the reminder of a truer and unrealized vocation', like his mother's longing for parties and balls. His governess, 'Bunchy' came from Stettin in Pomerania but had wider experiences of the world — she had been a friend of Mark Twain when she was living in New York. The young Rezzori enjoyed her civilising influence and kept in touch for many years.

*Merrie Cave*

**The Game Cook,** Norman Tebbit, J R Books, 2009, £14.99.

We do not normally review cookery books but must make an exception for this one. There really is no stopping the man. Not only does he remain active in politics, periodically discomfiting the Conservative Party as well as putting a well-aimed boot into the Government, Lord Tebbit, aka. the Chingford skinhead has written an excellent and easy to follow book about the cooking of game.

He can, as he points out, shoot game, skin and prepare the meat, then cook it; he also enjoys eating it. He used to share cooking tasks with his wife but that has not been possible for the last twenty-five years: Margaret Tebbit has been unable to do much since that night

in Brighton when the IRA tried to murder the entire British Cabinet. So it is Norman who does the cooking and Margaret contributes helpful advice.

The book is beautifully illustrated by Debby Mason and the recipes are cleverly discussed with all sorts of helpful suggestions on methods and additions. Even people who are a little scared of cooking game will find something in it worth recreating in the kitchen and quite a lot that is just fun to read. Clearly, the Tebbits often entertain hungry teenagers because most recipes have a note about doubling or tripling amounts if instead of four people with moderate appetites one finds oneself cooking for two ravenous adolescents. There are many other endearing details: what kind of gravy does one

make with which bird? Which two mustards should one use with the cream when one is cooking rabbit (preferably the wild variety which is not the same as hare)? Which fruits taste best with pigeon breast?

Game has become easier to buy (for those of us who do not shoot themselves and have no space for plucking, hanging and drawing them). Farmers' markets, specialist butchers, even supermarkets stock venison, grouse, partridge, pigeon, rabbit (though I would be careful about buying those rather strange looking pieces one sees in supermarket freezers and on counters). All I can say is, arm yourself with *The Game Book* and start cooking. You will not regret it.

Helen Szamuely

## ERRATUM

We regret that in Ian Crowther's review of *Gray's Anatomy* (Autumn 2009) a section was omitted from the fifth paragraph, which should have read as follows: 'Not one utopian scheme to give human beings a desired makeover but an infinite number is the preferred agenda of our own progressives. George Santanyana, the Spanish-born philosopher who spent most of his life in America, was a trenchant critic of liberal freedom as the freedom of inordinacy. In his essay on *Santayana's Alternative*, Gray illuminates a moral outlook which, sharing with the ancients the belief that 'human nature was in most essential respects knowable and fixed', rejected the liberal notion that it 'is a fiction.....'

In Jeremy Worman's review on the *Art of Fiction*, the chapter headings quoted should have been in inverted commas not italics.

## 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.com>

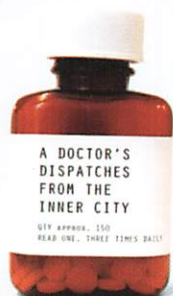
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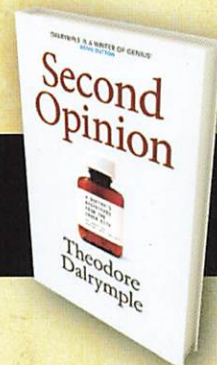
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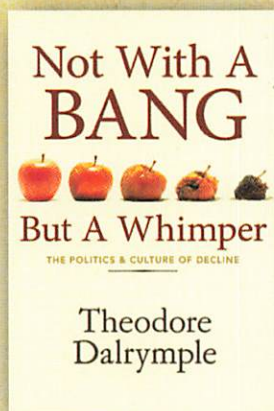
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