The
Salisbury Review
The quarterly magazine of conservative thought

"I can assure you if you jump, you'll land on top of someone and hurt them."

Trashing the Euro
Christopher Arkell

Fresh Doubts on Darwin
Brian Ridley

In Carey Street
Robert Crowcroft

The General Meddling Council
Theodore Dalrymple

Women on Top
Stephen Baskerville

Global Warmists
Ruth Dudley Edwards

£4.99 ISSN 0265-4881
0 2 6 5 4 8 8 1

Summer 2010
Vol. 28 No.4

£4.99

Contents

3 Editorial

Articles

4 Democracy and Debtonomics
Robert Crowcroft
6 The Flight of the PIGS
Christopher Arkell
8 The General Meddling Council
Theodore Dalrymple
10 More Doubts about Darwin
Brian Ridley
13 Haiti's Thirst for Education
David O'Regan
15 Dr Seldon's Brave New World
Alistair Miller
17 Natural Selection
Myles Harris
19 Talking Chinese
Donald Briggs
21 Harvesting the Dragon's Teeth
Margaret Brown
23 Women on Top
Stephen Baskerville
26 French Conservativism: Accès Interdit
Jerome di Constanzo
29 Putting Down Granny
Elspeth Chowdharay Best

Columns

25 The BBC Watch
30 Conservative Classic — 39
Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*
32 Roy Kerridge
33 Eternal Life
Peter Mullen
34 Reputations — 28
Nesta Webster

36 Letters

Arts & Books

37 Ruth Dudley Edwards
on Global Warming
38 Anthony Daniels
on Intellectuals
40 Christie Davies
on Dr Johnson
41 John Jolliffe
on Gladstone on Gladstone
43 Kenneth Minogue
on British History
44 Alexander Boot
on Burke
45 Penelope Tremayne
on the Levant
47 Mervyn Matthews
on the Guilty
48 Patricia Morgan
on Minorityism
49 David Edelsten
on Parsonages
50 Harry Cummings
on Khomeini
51 Film: Jane Kelly
on *A Prophet*
53 Art: Andrew Lambirth
on the Crucifixion
54 Music: Nicholas Dixon
on English composers

57 In Short

Subscribe to the Salisbury Review

There are several ways to pay:

1. Paypal from our website: www.salisburyreview.com (Select Subscriptions at the top and then click on Subscribe Now).
2. Credit card using either of these telephone numbers: 020 7226 7791 or 01908 281601
3. Standing Order
4. Cheque to 33 Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JW

The Salisbury Review

Managing Editor: Merrie Cave
Consulting Editors: Roger Scruton
Lord Charles Cecil, Myles Harris,
Mark Baillie, Christie Davies,
Literary Editor: Ian Crowther

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

Web site: http://www.salisburyreview.com

There was one word conspicuous by its absence during the election campaign, and it wasn't the economy, stupid. Granted, politicians did play down the scale of the spreading cuts which would be needed to tackle the country's budget deficit; but that's democracy for you: voters are as averse to being told the unvarnished truth as their 'wannabe' rulers are to telling it.

It was nonetheless dinned into our heads, by politicians and commentators alike, that the challenge facing a new government was reducible to an economic question, namely, where and when the cuts should come, and how big they should be. Such discussion may finally have had a narcoleptic effect, lulling people into believing that everything hinged on prescribing the right economic medicine, in just the right doses.

However, as Dr Johnson almost said, the thought of a hung parliament 'concentrates the mind wonderfully'. On May 7th, we woke up to the truth that solving the nation's debt problem is as much about politics as economics. And this would be so even if one party had secured an overall parliamentary majority. But it took the baleful prospect of a hung parliament to bring home to people the indispensability of 'strong and stable' government, which a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition may or may not supply.

The word conspicuous by its absence during the campaign was 'authority': the political and moral authority a government (of whatever complexion) needs to govern. The idea has taken root in our society that government — and authority — is barely necessary; and even that the claim of a government to govern is probably an infringement of human rights. Instead, we have been taught to see the State as legitimate only in so far as it serves our material betterment: it is the great, impartial provider, distributing entitlements regardless of whether we are really entitled to them or of the demoralising effects which such indiscriminate largesse produces. Without any guiding moral or intellectual principles, this grinning Leviathan of a state, swollen to gargantuan proportions by the demands of its ever-expanding clientele, has abdicated its authority under the value-free philosophy upon which it prides itself.

This literally bankrupt mode of governance is especially feeble in the face of the economic hardship that is inseparable from recession. Suddenly it loses its only claim to legitimacy. For if there is one thing certain about our new curate's egg of a government, it is that it will have to impose its will on all sorts of people and groups — public sector workers, welfare claimants, local authorities, trade union bosses — who are likely to strike or take to the streets in violent protest rather than accept the sacrifices being asked of them.

A government being run on conservative principles (if it is not too chimerical in current electoral circumstances to imagine such an entity) would be more disposed to make the harsh political choices that are often necessary, and never more so than at a time of economic retrenchment. Moreover, not wanting any part of our present culture of moral neutrality, Conservatives in government have a principled basis on which to make public policy decisions. True conservatives do not shrink, as one fears liberals or Liberal Democrats do, from using the authority of the State to encourage some forms of behaviour and discourage others.

A Conservative-led government would indeed seek to repair our 'broken society'. It would shore up Burke's 'little platoons' in which people pursue public as well as private interests. It would alter our welfare system in a way that strengthens rather than weakens families. In short, Conservatives should not be afraid to use the State to rehabilitate traditional social values from the ravages of our 'anything goes' society.

Nor is this altogether the quixotic undertaking it might at first appear, since in a period of austerity we can expect the civic virtues of duty, social responsibility, self-restraint and public-spiritness to be at a premium. As David Cameron's Government sets about reining in the profligacy of the Blair and Brown years, it will need to nurture these virtues. In future, it's the polity, stupid.

Democracy, Debtonomics and High Politics

Robert Crowcroft

With an election as inspiring as George W Bush's hanging chads, we can recall that the last two years have given us some penetrating insights into the true character of public life in modern Britain. The problem they have revealed is not one about economics, but about democracy itself. Despite the volume of evidence, few commentators have even begun to diagnose the problem. The problems facing us, whether the national debt, the size of the public sector, or the television debates that reduced politics to an episode of *Britain's Got Talent,* are too often observed in isolation.

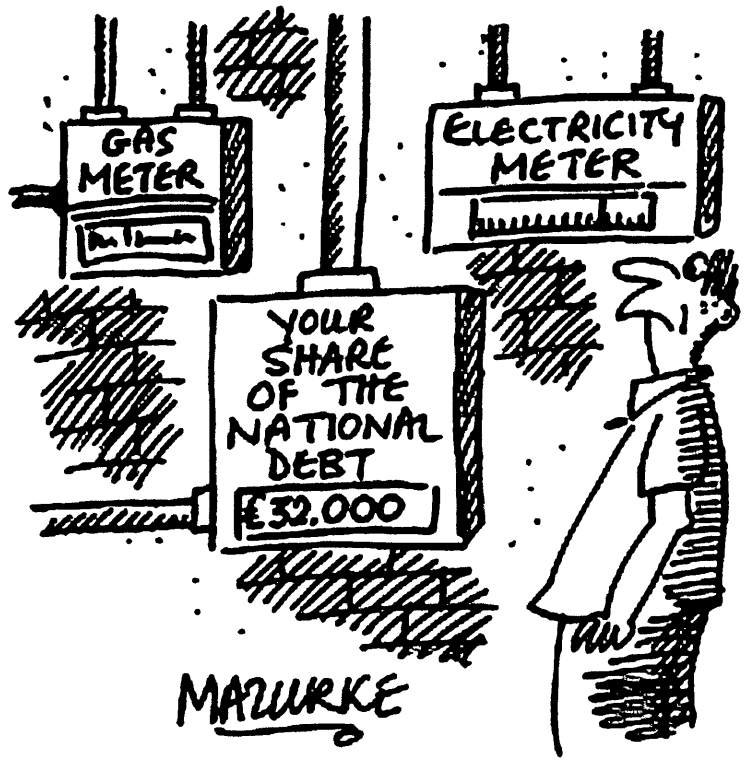
The political parties have been roundly condemned for not being truthful with the public about the scale of the necessary spending reductions. That is unquestionably true. Phoney wars are being carried out by the main parties, and relatively slight differences polarised for effect, over peripheral issues. The financial figures argued over on television are peanuts compared to the real numbers. But — and here is the frightening thing — who can really blame the politicians for not telling us? These people are embarked upon a career. Telling hard truths is often a sure way to failure, and particularly now. Like all men, politicians have the thirst for power that Augustine labelled the *libido dominandi*; and, unlike most of us, they have a real chance of fulfilling their ambitions. An aversion to hearing the truth goes to the heart of the modern condition and it is high time we started being honest about exactly what got us into this mess. The politicians took decisions that wrecked the British economy and saddled us with debt that may yet see us go to the International Monetary Fund. The client state was expanded remorselessly and the private sector was made the scapegoat for it all. While the conclusions I reach are wholly pessimistic, and no solution is offered, the big question as to *why* remains.

It is deceptively simple; these things were all popular. *We, the people, did it.* The country voted Labour into office three times; the current crisis is merely a continuation of a trend begun in the 1940s, and held to ever since by governments whether Labour or Conservative. Britain is a competitive, democratic polity. Those who wish to get into office, and stay there, must dispense goods and services to those below. If that means hitting the 'copy' button on the Xerox machine and printing off a bucket load of fifty pound notes to be tossed to the populace, so be it. Lord Salisbury predicted that this would happen, and he has been proved correct. What do you do when those fifty pounds have all been spent? You invent a rationale to print some more. The Tory historian Maurice Cowling, founder of the 'high politics' school that looked to remorseless ambition as the driving force of political behaviour, may have died in 2005 but his ideas have never been more relevant as our governors have joined with the people in a Faustian pact to debase the nation. All the politicians were doing is responding to the democratic imperative.

What has been created over the last thirty years would best be termed debtonomics, but it is at least as much a political matter as an economic one. Before the 1980s, capitalism and free markets had *never* really operated for any length of time in a world dominated by mass democracy. The free market economics of the nineteenth century did not coincide with democracy in the true sense; because the franchise was restricted, governments were not weighed down by the need to appease and bribe public opinion as they are today. In the twentieth century, when mass democracy became a reality, free markets were shaken by two World Wars and then 'managed' and 'planned' by Keynesianism. After 1945, politicians in Britain sought to buy the support of the electorate through a host of welfare benefits, by attempting to control industry, employment, and prices, and by debasing the currency through inflation in order to avoid confronting the public with tough decisions. It was only when this stopped working that the market was unleashed — but still principally as an alternative means of generating the money to satisfy the public.

The blunt truth is that this critique applies to the economic policies of Thatcher and Reagan too. Their governments sought to find a new way to finance the choking welfare state and astute politicians like Blair and Clinton recognised the uses to which the market could be put. One consequence of the great financial unshackling was the gradual, but progressively easier,

availability of credit. Through this, living beyond our means, and encouraging that as a way of life, became institutionalised. We see here, then, the inextricable modern connection between politicians, economic policy, and the people. The governors and the governed both constantly demanded of, and provided to, each other. Difficult decisions were always put off for another day. Even at the height of the boom years, Labour was borrowing ever-higher sums to finance public sector 'investment' and the individual citizen was helped, by deregulation, to be indebted up to their eyeballs. It didn't matter as long as the people were happy and able to indulge their materialism. Want an extension on the house? Why scrimp and save when you can borrow the money for it? Tack that on to all the debt from half a dozen credit cards, three cars — bought on credit — endless re-mortgages of the house, and all kinds of consumer goods bought on identical arrangements. When you can't pay it back, simply pick up the telephone and call one of the 'consolidation' companies that were endlessly advertising on television during the good times, with a Svengali-like sixth sense for opportunity at the hands of the poor saps — and which will be doing even better now that things have gone wrong. The problem is at root about democratic society itself, not Fred Goodwin, though it is hardly surprising that the country is unwilling to acknowledge it. What we have lost is a brake to restrain our appetites. And our rulers, being politicians, not saints, eagerly obliged.



None of that is to disparage the importance of credit. Anti-capitalists and Keynesians are just as wrong in 2010 as they were in 1989, 1929, or 1917, but it is the sheer ease with which this debt was available, and its extent that lies at the root of our systemic debtonomics. From what we have seen so far, the so-called 'solutions' to the crisis appear to be about reflating the bubble! On Budget day 2009, the news channel I was watching interviewed several people on the government's proposed schemes. One woman said that the state would have to subsidise a new car by even more than the proposed two thousand pounds if she was to sign up for the scrappage scheme, while a young man who had been out of work for more than a year claimed that, to persuade him to agree to a *guaranteed* scheme for a job, or even turn up for *free* training opportunities, the state would have to offer some kind of *additional* 'incentive'. So who can blame the politicians for being wary?

It is the duty of wise leaders to discover a way to tell us hard truths. Such is the test of true statesmanship. For too long, basic economic logic was wilfully disregarded by politicians determined to hold on to power. Now the chickens have come home to roost, and statesmanship is needed. But how likely is the challenge to be met successfully, and not recur when *demos* is so demanding? The economic systems by which we have lived for thirty years need to be put on to the rack, and, equally, we must acknowledge that they were *political* projects devoted to buying support by selling fantasies of Shangri-La, or at least a bigger back garden. When fantasies come true they invariably disappoint, and this particular one was made a reality by debtonomics. Forget economics, and the debate over what to spend and where. The real issue is the debilitating effect on political decision-making of mass democracy. And that can't simply be 'cut'. John Calvin wrote that 'Human affairs have scarcely ever been so happily constituted as that the better course pleased the greater number. Hence the private vices of the multitude have generally resulted in public error.' How right he was.

Robert Crowcroft is a Lecturer in History at Leeds University

The Flight of the PIGS

Christopher Arkell

So the PIGS are still flying, after all. With new-fledged wings of 'blest paper credit' (as Alexander Pope called the loans of the South Sea Bubble 1720's), the states of Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain (plus Ireland) are back up in the air, a fleet of freshly-inflated Hindenburgs eager to take further hordes of pension-fund investors for a ride round the European Bay. €750bn, comprising collective guarantees of European Union member states totalling €500bn plus €250bn from the International Monetary Fund, was the sum considered necessary by EU heads of state to discourage dealers in government bonds and investors from shooting the Euro down in flames.

The ironies are many, not least the date on which this arrangement was finally agreed — Europe Day, May 9th. This commemorates the 1950 founding of the European Coal and Steel Community, the forerunner of the EU. Sixty years later, the EU produces insignificant amounts of coal and steel, despite the vastness of the institutions which were initially supposed to support free trade in these materials. Financial market commentators give less than sixty months for the EU to run out of credit altogether, despite the size of the guarantees now given to its weaker members.

Another irony is that the guarantees have been put in place to forestall a rash of bank failures in the still prosperous regions of the EU. German, French and Benelux banks have been buying Greek and Portuguese state bonds for several years on the understanding that because they were denominated in Euros and were sovereign government instruments approved by the European Central Bank, there was no risk of a decline in value. Everyone in EU financial circles knew that the Greek and Portuguese state finances were in terrible shape, but because these countries' bonds were being mixed in with high quality instruments, such as the German and Dutch state bonds, the risk of default and loss of capital value appeared so small it could be insured. The same assumption underlay the admixture of worthless 'trailer-trash' loans with good, reliable

To prop up EU banks, EU states which share the Euro (and some whose currencies were fixed for a while to the Euro, like Latvia and Hungary) must also be propped up. This is because the PIGS have no currency independence, either to devalue or to increase interest rates. The EU's €500bn collective guarantee is, really a transfer of wealth from Germany, Holland and France to Greece and Portugal, so that these countries can transfer it back again to German, Dutch and French banks in the form of repayments of capital borrowings and the interest on them.

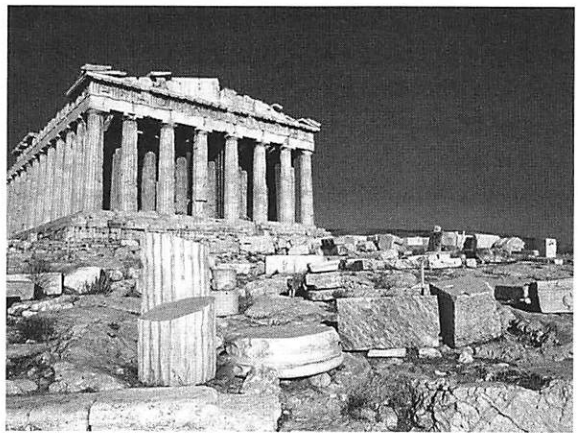
A further irony is that none of the above was supposed to happen because the Euro was designed by Germany to imitate the Deutschmark, with the European Central Bank ('ECB') replacing the Bundesbank as guardian of financial rectitude. The ECB was not supposed to increase the money supply beyond the general growth rate in the EU. It was not to allow any but marginal variations in interest rates between the government-issued bonds of member states. The very last thing it was supposed to do was to buy Eurozone government bonds, and junk-status ones at that, not for their market worth (not a lot) but at their nominal redemption value. Such purchases are the most dangerous way to increase money supply and have been loudly and despairingly criticised by the Bundesbank's representative on the ECB's council, Axel Weber, who condemned them 'even in this exceptional situation' (May 11th, *Frankfurter Algemeine Zeitung*).

German tax-payers have ended up guaranteeing the debts of the Greek and Portuguese governments to the banks, largely German ones. The PIGS have a further three years' worth of finance to support their government deficits, complicated in the cases of Spain and Ireland because the private sectors in both countries are cripplingly indebted largely to their state banks and national treasuries. José Manuel Barroso, the EU Commission President and former Maoist revolutionary, cries up the great victory that the EU has just won over its financial market enemies, and Michel Barnier, the EU's Internal Market Commissioner, threatens to impose such heavy EU-level regulations on bond market traders that EU-member state debts will in future be immune from the trading pressures which have hit Greek and Portuguese state bonds recently.

The EU has thus created a huge increase in Euro money supply; such an action is one of the essential badges of sovereign statehood as significant as the defence of a country's external borders and the policing of its internal order. The supply of money is not simply the issuance of notes and coin into everyday circulation. Money is also supplied when debt (mortgages, loans, government bonds) is created. For about 40 years from the Bretton Woods Agreement

in 1944, the creation of money by means of debt was strictly controlled by national central banks. From the mid 1980s, this control grew weak as banks devised forms of debt instruments which were outside state bank control. These instruments created debts built on debts which appeared to be self-cancelling if one believed the mathematical models which purported to show that the risk of defaults could be insured against, and this risk itself be turned into further tradeable debt instruments.

Great fun while it lasted. And it lasted for so many years because governments — for example Blair's here and Clinton's and Bush's in the USA — encouraged it. They were receiving, as tax income, portions of the money created by the banks from their debt instruments. Far from being self-cancelling, financial instruments such as call and put options have a 'real-money' cost, that can be measured in the grandeur of the atriums their chief executives demanded and in the size of the bonuses they paid themselves. Such costs were accounted for as profits on the debts traded, but when all the counter-parties to the trades are eliminated, what was declared as profit was simply the encashment into circulating money of debts that the banks had created themselves in the first place.



Individuals imitated the banks, too. They cashed the nominal rise in the value of their homes into spending money by means of mortgages. When they ran out of income, they simply re-mortgaged some more nominal profit. However, the underlying asset remained the same — a home — just as economically unproductive when valued at, for example, £1m as when it was just £500,000. But the mortgage had risen from, let's say, £200,000 to £600,000. They could appear to afford to do so because the rate of interest charged on the mortgage dropped. A £600,000 loan in 2007 cost to service less than a £200,000 in 1997, and by 2007 it was not necessary to pay any capital back at all!

The last two years have shown this was all nonsense. Once the trailer-trash borrowers stopped paying their 'sub-prime' loans, the debt instruments comprising the loans went bad. Each debt instrument was supporting an inverted pyramid of other loans built upon it. And all these loans had been insured for premiums which assumed that the likelihood of the underlying loans going bad was very small. The extinction of Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers, and the near death of banks such as Lloyds, Royal Bank of Scotland, Allied Irish, or Bank of Ireland eliminated some of the money supply which the banks created for themselves over the last two decades — but not all of it. The UK government's investment in RBS, Lloyds, Bradford & Bingley, and Northern Rock is simply the replacement of 'novelty' commercial bank-created money with old-fashioned state-created money. The same holds true for the unimaginable amounts of money created by the USA Treasury to prop up America's financial casualties. Now comes the EU — ever behind the times where innovation is concerned — with its own version of the American sub-prime mortgage.

Last year the amount of the contraction of the world's debt money supply was estimated to be about $4 trillion. This estimate would cancel all the bad debts built on sub-prime mortgages, corporate bonds and the rubbish issued by governments such as Latvia and Hungary. The losses booked by banks and eliminated by bank and financial institution failures around the world have so far been about $2 trillion. The balance has been effectively re-nationalised, largely by the US, the UK and EU governments through their various investments in banks such as Lloyds and RBS, and the additional guarantees they have issued. To this $2 trillion, the EU, and IMF, have now added €750bn, or approximately $1 trillion at current exchange rates. This debt money can be taken out of the global financial system in two ways; either by devaluing the currencies in which it is issued, or by default. Since it is overwhelmingly concentrated in US$ and Euro denominated instruments, that requires either inflation or default, either in the US$ or the Euro.

The Chinese, Japanese and Saudis hold the vast bulk of US$ denominated debt instruments (government and commercial). The equivalent Euro instruments are held largely in Europe (including countries which are neither in the Euro nor the EU, such as Switzerland and Russia). The Chinese, Japanese and Saudis have rejected — after long consideration and immense diplomatic persuasion applied by the European Commission — the notion of an array of currencies anchored on the Euro to replace the US$ as the world's reserve currency.

The conclusion is obvious. PIGS don't, after all, fly.

Christopher Arkell is an accountant

The General Meddling Council

Theodore Dalrymple

Fresh from wrecking the teaching profession by interminable inspections (today 16 per cent of children leave school functionally illiterate, compared with 6 per cent in 1974), Big Government has now turned on doctors. New regulations require the General Medical Council to carry out an annual round of bureaucratic tasks to prove doctors' fitness to practice. Critics doubt this will improve the quality of medical care. Theodore Dalrymple investigates...

Not long ago I attended a meeting of about 150 medical students from around the country, and found the experience reassuring in two respects.

The first and more important respect was that these young people were polite, charming, intelligent, capable, enthusiastic, civilised, smartly-dressed and obviously well brought up. All is not lost, then; and certainly they were better-behaved than I when I was their age. They must surely be the first group of medical students in the history of the world to have called for more formal teaching in anatomy (just as, and for similar reasons, art students have called for formal teaching in drawing).

The second and less important respect in which the experience was reassuring was that it persuaded me that my observation of the prevailing charmless and militant vulgarity that I see about me in Britain almost everywhere I go is not a figment of an imagination embittered by the approach of old age and the pace of change. In other words, I am not so blinded by prejudice that I cannot easily recognise the good when I see it; but this has the unfortunate corollary that it strengthens my belief in my perception of the bad.

I was also gripped by a kind of melancholy on these students' behalf. I wish I could say that I thought that, with all their admirable and attractive qualities, they would exercise a deep or preponderant influence on their society, acting as beacons for others, but it seemed more likely that (unless they emigrated) they would spend their lives being harried, pursued and almost persecuted, in short managed, by people grossly their inferior.

In fact, they seemed already almost resigned to the combination of bureaucratic dictatorship and bungling incompetence that will so profoundly affect their lives and careers. I sat next to a student whose medical school had recently made a breakthrough in administrative idiocy. Several of its students, having completed their course, had started work as doctors, only to be told some time later that they must stop doing so at once: they had not passed their exams as they had previously thought and been told, but failed them.

This kind of error — which has taken place at more than one medical school — would once, before the ascent of managerialism, have been unthinkable. But such grotesque errors are now commonplace in almost all aspects of modern administration, precisely as the bureaucratic reach so far exceeds its grasp; and the medical student to whom I spoke seemed to regard the error not so much as an outrage as an inconvenient variation in the weather, that is to say something beyond human intervention.

No number of revelations of bureaucratic incapacity ever reins in the politico-bureaucratic ambition to bring about perfection by the administrative elimination of problems, be they real or imagined. Indeed, the worse the bureaucratic failures the better: for failure is the perfect locus standi for further bureaucratic intervention and institutional growth.

The General Medical Council's proposals (at the behest of the government) for revalidation of doctors, which are but a faint intimation of what those excellent medical students will have to endure in their professional lives, are in themselves a very good example of this. Here is yet another bureaucratic Moloch who appetite can never be sated, or whose growth will never cease.

Starting from the unassailable but totally uninteresting premise that doctors should be trustworthy, compassionate, technically competent and up to date, the GMC thinks it can devise a formal procedure that will guarantee these desiderata, or rather persuade the public that the authorities have done all in their power to guarantee that these desiderata have been met: anticipatory self-exculpation being to modern government what theology was to the mediaevals, namely the queen of the sciences.

One of the documents about the GMC's proposals for the five-yearly revalidation of doctors, Revalidation Update, March/April 2010, as good as admits that the whole complex process is not a solution to a problem because there is no problem to be solved. Over and over again, it reiterates that the vast majority of doctors have nothing to fear from revalidation, and that they will not have to change what they are doing in any way:

> For all but a minute proportion of doctors, the new system should be nothing to worry about... The vast majority of doctors do an excellent job.

This being the case, what is the problem to which revalidation is supposedly the answer? It is specifically denied to be that of Dr Shipman: which is just as well, for there is little doubt that a future Dr Shipman, if there is one, could sail through the GMC's revalidation process.

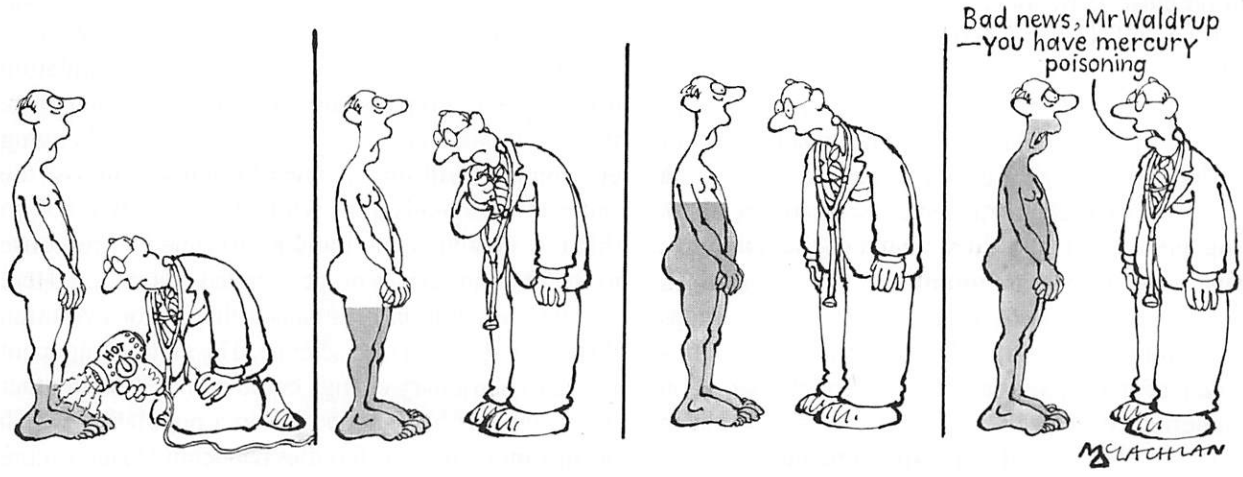
Indeed, there is no mention of any problem to be solved, other than the need, whose existence is by no means proved, for a vague public reassurance that doctors are fit to practise. Nor does the document attempt to answer two rather obvious questions about revalidation: will it in fact reassure the public and, if it does, will the public be right to be reassured?

The answer to the latter question, at any rate, is clear: no. According to the proposals, every doctor will have to have an Orwellian-sounding 'Responsible Officer' whose job it will be to recommend to the GMC whether or not he should be revalidated. Since each 'Responsible Officer' — mostly, but not always, a doctor — might have as many as thousands of doctors for whom he is that officer, he will have to rely on the annual appraisals carried out each year on the doctors by one of their peers.

It surely requires very little knowledge of human nature, and of organisational behaviour, to know that most of this activity will be, indeed must be, pro forma. Any attempt to overcome the pro forma nature of this activity, by requiring that some patients be canvassed for their opinion of the doctor who treats them, inevitably raises problems of its own, quite apart from the inapplicability of the method to, say, forensic pathologists.

The GMC document does not mention, let alone solve, the problem common to all screening procedures: namely that of false positives and false negatives. Some of those testing positive (for unfitness to practise) will in fact be negative; while some of those testing negative will in fact be positive. (Every doctor knows that those who are best at complying with regulations are not necessarily the best doctors.)

Where conditions are very rare, true positives may easily be outnumbered both by false positives and false negatives, especially where the diagnosis is not easy or straightforward but relies on judgment. The screening procedure in these conditions causes more suffering than it prevents; and the revalidation proposed by the GMC perfectly fits the bill for a screening fiasco. On its own admission, only a minute proportion of doctors are unfit to practise; and no sensible person could call its proposed diagnostic instrument other than extremely vague and prone to error. However, the appeal procedure will at least give much employment to bureaucrats and lawyers, and in times of economic crisis and high unemployment this is not a benefit to be despised.



No one could object to the requirement that doctors be kept up to date by continuing to extend their knowledge; but compliance with this requirement could be enforced by relatively simple methods. The fact that the GMC is planning an elaborate procedure of revalidation of doctors at the behest of the government, without any clear and unequivocal understanding of the need to do so, suggests that the GMC has itself become a victim of the government's belief in its own infinite benevolence. Infinite benevolence, of course, both justifies and requires the exercise of infinite power. Government is the new God.

Theodore Dalrymple's latest book is Not with a bang but a whimper *(Monday Books).*

More Doubts about Darwin

Brian Ridley

Is the theory of evolution true? Or is it, like global warming, bedevilled by dogma and closed-mindedness, so that any dispassionate appraisal is virtually impossible? Why does it matter whether it is true or not? We're here because we're here, and so much for history. Well, there are those like myself, not geneticists, not molecular biologists, not ecologists, who love the story, but would really like to get the position clear. How much myth, how much science? So, I thought I'd try and sort it out, at least in my own mind.

Darwin's theory of evolution, we are told, was suggested by the fossil record and his observations of life in its environment. A century and a half of research and discovery has clearly added considerable depth to, and support for, his theory, so much so that Darwin's theory of evolution has become as true as Newton's theory of gravitation, at least for many, and perhaps most, scientists. Today's Darwinism incorporates the idea of genes, suggested by Mendel's work on the inheritance of peas, and their materialisation in the form of elements of a massive organic molecule, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), a molecule that is found in every living cell. Before genes were discovered, Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace independently had the idea that the mechanism of evolution consisted in the ability of a living form to adapt to its environment. Those that adapted survived and produced offspring that inherited the adaptation; those that did not were weeded out. Evolution was seen to have been driven by adaptation and the survival of the fittest. Once genes were discovered it became possible to understand how adaptation might come about through random mutations that affected the genetic structure of the DNA.

Modern Darwinism (sometimes referred to as Neo-Darwinism) consists of six components, according to Jerry Coyne in his book *Why Evolution is True*. First is the idea of evolution itself, that over time (hundreds of millions of years in some cases, a few weeks in others) a species can change into something very different from what it was. The second part is the idea of gradualism, meaning that many generations are needed to produce a significant change. The third component, speciation, accounts for the origin of species, the splitting of a life form into altered forms that can no longer interbreed. Closely allied to speciation is the fourth component, which is the idea of a common ancestor, back to which different species can trace their evolutionary history.

So far, all this is inspired natural history, simply a narrative, a beautiful myth, that describes the origin of the multitudinous forms of life we see on the planet; or so it seems to Jerry Fodor and Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini in their book *What Darwin got Wrong*. However, the fifth and sixth components attempt something different — an explanation. The fifth component is the famous idea of Darwin and Wallace — natural selection. Individuals within a population differ slightly from one another genetically, and those that have traits that confer an advantage in a changing environment will survive and breed offspring with the same advantageous traits while the others will not. In this the advantageous traits are selected in response to the environment, a process called adaptation. Here we get the addition of a causal theory for evolution that converts myth into science. The sixth component is that evolutionary change could come about in other ways, such as by genetic drift in a population which occur simply by some families happening to have more offspring than others; or by the inheritance of a random chemical modification from a parent that has no immediate advantage. In neither of the latter examples does adaptation play a role. Nevertheless, adaptation is regarded by modern Darwinists as overwhelmingly the dominant mechanism for evolutionary change.

I would like to add a seventh component: that life is a natural manifestation of the laws of physics and chemistry. Life began with some replicating molecules in a favourable environment on the young planet Earth; Darwin's theory of evolution explains the rest.

Majestic though Darwin's theory is, it fails to command the universal assent that Newton's theory of gravitation and motion enjoys. The main reason for this is that it conflicts with strongly held religious beliefs: the creation of life in all its abundance and complexity is God's work. The arguments against evolution theory based on Intelligent Design are well known, but there are other arguments that are worth looking at. Rational criticisms that can be levelled against some components of the theory are scarcely surprising, since any scientific theory is never immune.

An account of a few of the worries that some have, starts at a fundamental level, the nature of life itself. The seventh component that I smuggled into

Darwinism assumes the doctrine of physicalism. This adopts a thoroughgoing materialism, expunges all traces of spirituality, and says that our knowledge of matter is exhaustively given by the laws of physics and chemistry. In this view it is just a matter of time before some clever molecular biologist creates a self-replicating system of molecules in his test tube. The most primitive life-form he could create would be something like the cell of a bacterium, as it would have to be, if it claimed to be a recognisable life-form. Viruses are simpler, but can't replicate without the help of a living cell, so that won't do. Creating an artificial virus is not a good idea in any case.

The idea that a cell could be replicated in a test-tube in the conditions approximating to a primeval soup is ludicrous; the complexity of the cell's organization, and the even more fantastic complexity of each of its thousand or so proteins, makes the idea of it all coming together naturally in that ancient broth, even during the 4,000 million years when life could survive on the planet, simply unbelievable.

The idea that a cell could be replicated in a test-tube in the conditions approximating to a primeval soup is ludicrous

So it is reasonable to doubt whether that physicalist claim could ever be achieved. But if physicalism won't do, what then? Some minds are open to the possibility of the existence of a force of nature that is the essence of life. Such a force would join gravitation, electromagnetism and the nuclear forces in the panoply of causative agents whose essence is just as unknowable as those forces of physics. Schopenhauer would call such a force the Will to Life, and indeed he already has. Bergson would call it the *élan vital*, and indeed he already has. Card-carrying Darwinists would call it supernatural rubbish, and indeed they already have.

The trouble with physicalism is that it cannot account for mind and mental phenomena that correspond remotely with the subjective experience of each one of us. As minds must be products of evolution, that is a considerable defect in the present context. Physicalism is also embedded in deterministic nineteenth-century physics, which teaches that any particle like a molecule has the classical attributes of position and momentum. Quantum theory says that it is meaningless to ascribe a definite position and a definite momentum to a particle without subjecting the particle to a measurement, in which case it would have to be a measurement of position or momentum but not both. That pair of attributes is subject to the Principle of Complementarity which states that knowledge of one rules out knowledge of the other. Application to the mind-body problem would imply that mind and brain are complementary aspects of a single entity — talk about beauty and truth and you say nothing about the brain; talk about firing neurons and you say nothing about the mind. Quantum theory tells us that matter is not what it used to be in nineteenth-century physics. To a certain extent the properties of matter are determined by the experimentalist. In this sense, mind and matter are inextricably linked, even at the most fundamental level. The materialism of modern Darwinism cannot explain the existence of mind and consciousness in the higher animals. What were the survival advantages of the development of musical talent, art, metaphysics? It follows that the development of mind and its flowering as human civilization introduces factors that lie well beyond the scope of Darwin's theory of evolution. This is a conclusion that is roundly put by David Stone in his book *Darwin's Fairytales*. Needless to say, Darwinists are not put off, as the existence of the field of evolutionary psychology vouchsafes.

It would be a heinous heresy for Darwinists to consider mind and its aims and intentions in any context of evolutionary theory. Yet, as Jerry Fodor (*op cit*) speculates, Darwin himself never wholly insulated himself from the examples provided by the deliberate selection of desired attributes in the breeding of domestic animals. According to Fodor, intention lurks within the idea of adaptation. Phenotypes (technical term for life forms) are always found to be well-adapted to their ecological niche. If they hadn't been, they wouldn't be there! This fact seems to imply that nothing can be said meaningfully about the process of adaptation, for 'niche' is defined in terms of 'adaptation', and 'adaptation' is defined in terms of 'niche'. To say that an animal is well-adapted to its ecological niche is nothing more than a tautology. Snowy regions are white, therefore good for polar bears with their white fur; polar bears have white fur as an adaptation to living in snowy regions. What is needed here to argue that the white fur of polar bears is an adaptation to snow, is the existence of a counter-factual, the evidence, say, that all polar bears with green coats did not adapt and therefore died out. But all history is *post hoc*. We can't know the fate of polar bears with coats that were other than white, but this is exactly what is needed in order to demonstrate adaptation. Thus, according to Fodor, adaptation as it stands as a fundamental idea of Darwinism, is empty of content. What is needed, he says, is a proper theory of adaptation that explains in detail how a particular trait, one of a vast fusion of traits in an animal, is selected by the animal's interaction with its environment. Trait A is found along with trait B. Which trait is the one chosen by the environment, and which is the free-rider? No

way of telling, unless 'the environment' was a breeder, who would obviously know the difference. Otherwise, there is no theory to define which is the chosen trait. In its absence, he claims, adaptationism subconsciously evokes intention, perhaps of Mother Nature.

Naturally, Fodor's dismissal of adaptationism has induced a mixture of sadness and scorn in card-carrying Darwinists; sadness that such a clever philosopher as Jerry Fodor should ruin his excellent reputation, and scorn for his whole analysis. 'It is true', says Professor Papineau in his article in the March 2010 issue of *Prospect*,

> that when an adaptive and a non-adaptive trait are tightly yoked together, natural selection will be forced to take them both or not at all, so in these specific cases will be 'blind' to the difference. But it does not follow that there is no relative difference at all between the two traits in question. Of course there is. One trait helps survival and the other doesn't.

It seems to me that this misses Fodor's point completely. Without counter-factuals, traits cannot be labelled adaptive or non-adaptive meaningfully. To label a trait that has been 'adapted' an adaptive trait is simply a tautology. Fred Hoyle, mathematician, astrophysicist, cosmologist and an iconoclast of genius, makes this relevant remark in his book *Our Place in the Cosmos* with co-author Chandra Wickramasingh: 'Had you been born with a fortune, and spent it improvidently, you would now have little money in your bank account. Right now, it is indeed true that you have little money in your account. Therefore you must have been born with a fortune. The mental process here is just the same as it is in biology.'

Fodor and his co-author go further and criticise the one-dimensionality of the causal track from genetic mutation to natural selection, calling it bean-bag genetics. The human body, for example, is responsible for tens of millions of kinds of anti-bodies, 10^{11} neurons, 10^{13} synapses, about 60,000 miles of veins, arteries and capillaries, involving many processes of spontaneous self-organisation obeying laws of form. Similar complexity exists in other animals. There must be, therefore, severe internal constraints that will affect any sort of adaptation, and these would have to be taken into account in any adequate theory of adaptation. One can point to the similarity of genetic structure in widely different genera that appears to be basic and not prone to adaptation. An enzyme found in the cell of a bacterium would work equally well in a human cell. The structure and composition of enzymes and other proteins found in living cells are hugely complex, yet the same ones appear throughout the living world. Among the vastly many other structures that are chemically conceivable, the relatively few that are found in cells have been found to work and hence appear in all sorts of life-forms. How did life discover that very special set? By chance? Darwinians dream on!

Another highly controversial worry concerns Darwin's insistence on gradualism. Fred Hoyle has likened gradualism to a river flowing to the sea without waterfalls or cataracts, and therefore extremely unlikely. Stephen Jay Gould in his book *Punctuated Equilibrium* goes along with that and stresses the possibility of saltations, sudden (geologically speaking) explosions of mutations, triggered perhaps by cosmic-ray storms, that could account for some speciation, and perhaps explain the explosion of life in the Cambrian era. In this view, held by many as well as Gould, evolution is far from being a smooth continuous process, but rather a series of jumps interspersed with long periods of quiescence. Hoyle is adamant that the major branches of life could only have come about suddenly as a result of genetic storms. He points to the notorious lack of fossil evidence of any connections between those major branches. He goes further, and traces the origin of genetic storms to viruses and other primitive life forms encapsulated in the detritus falling on the Earth from comets and other items of space-matter. Life did not begin on Earth; it is spread throughout the Milky Way and the Universe itself. And, as an astrophysicist, he has some solid evidence for his claim (H and W *op cit* and Hoyle's book *The Intelligent Universe*. His hypothesis of the cosmic origin of species deserves to be taken at least as seriously as Darwinism has been.

Jerry Fodor's criticisms convince me that a lot more work needs to be done to strengthen Darwin's central causal theory of evolution — adaptation. We need to have a logic-tight explanation of why any phenotype finds itself in its ecological niche. I believe the dogma of gradualism should be abandoned in favour of what Hoyle and Gould advocate. A more fundamental lacuna is that the theory of evolution says nothing about the origin of life, so what life really is remains a mystery for me (in spite of Richard Dawkins' confident assertion that the theory of evolution has cleared it all up). But then, Hoyle doesn't clear it up either. I believe that the life-force has to be regarded as being in the same epistemological category as gravity, electromagnetism and the nuclear forces. Life-force apart, Darwin's ideas of evolution and the origin of species are wonderful, and so are Hoyle's! And I can't help feeling that a touch of quantum reality here and there would not come amiss. But then, as a physicist, I would feel that, wouldn't I?

Brian Ridley is a Fellow of the Royal Society

Haiti's Thirst for Education

David O'Regan

An observation made in the early 1990s by Theodore Dalrymple has haunted me like a sorrowing ghost, especially during my international travels. To quote the sceptical doctor:

> Having worked in several countries of the so-called Third World, and having travelled extensively through all the continents, I am convinced that the poverty of spirit to be found in an English slum is the worst to be found anywhere. More flagrant injustices by far, worse physical conditions, greater exposure to violence, are of course to be encountered elsewhere: but for sheer apathy, for spiritual, emotional, educational and cultural nihilism and vacuity, you must go to an English slum.

I have been fortunate that my professional duties have not only enabled me to have travelled to dozens of countries throughout the world, but also that they have taken me far from the normal pathways trodden by visitors. My observations in places like the poor districts of Calcutta and the seedy backstreets of Kuala Lumpur have long given me the feeling that Dalrymple was on to something. In particular, the sight of optimism and dignity in the most difficult of circumstances appears like a beacon of hope alongside the nihilism of modern English culture.

What finally clinched Dalrymple's argument for me was an extraordinary, daily sight in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, shortly before the earthquake of January 2010. A visitor to Port-au-Prince is — or should be — struck by the extent to which, amidst the long-running economic and political despair, a large part of the population places emphasis on education. Of course, Haiti's overall literacy level of around 50 per cent shows that education in that country is far from universal, with many slipping out of its net. And Haiti's educational system contrasts badly with that of the neighbouring Dominican Republic, whose literacy rate is far higher. (The large educational gulf between the two halves of Hispaniola is reflected in most other measures of social well-being, including per capita wealth and life expectancy.)

Nonetheless, despite the limitations on education in Haiti, it is somewhat disconcerting to the English eye to observe thousands of well-turned out children making their way to school in Port-au-Prince, impeccably dressed in crisp school uniforms which stand out against the surrounding squalor. The impeccable school uniforms are matched by impeccable behaviour. In contrast, the beneficiaries of the compulsory and free English state education system have the resources of a major economy at their disposal, supported by an elaborate welfare system, yet their contempt for learning is a source of national shame. The English educational problem derives from what Roger Scruton has described as a 'culture of repudiation', a form of cultural suicide in which those responsible for safeguarding our education system have set out deliberately to subvert it. Thus education is no longer understood as the transmission of objective knowledge, but rather as a tool of 'emancipation' which aims at liberating children from the grasp of their national culture.

In Book 8 of *The Republic* Plato puts into Socrates' mouth a description of a certain type of semi-anarchic democracy in which educational hierarchy and rigour have been undermined. It seems also to sum up the current educational culture of England, in which objective standards have long been supplanted by the imperatives of contentious social engineering, and a reverence for learning by an aggressive loutishness:

> Teachers are afraid of their pupils and curry favour with them. Pupils have an equal contempt for their teachers...and challenge them in everything they say or do. The old descend to the level of the young. They pepper everything with wit and humour, trying to be like the young, because they don't want to be thought harsh or dictatorial.

Most Haitian schools are in private hands, run by religious organizations, charities, international organizations, and private individuals. (State schools are in a minority and although they offer free tuition, the costs of books and uniforms often place them out of the reach of the poorest.) Yet the large numbers of serious yet happy school-children indicate that the reverence for education is not restricted to a tiny elite.

The visual impressions are reinforced when one speaks with Haitians and realizes the significance attached to education. I made enquiries from what I believed to be reliable sources, and concluded that the frequent talk of a thirst or 'swaf' for education was not empty chatter. ('Swaf' is the Creole spelling of the French 'soif'.) The armies of children making their way daily to school reflect thousands of small sacrifices made by countless parents in Port-au-Prince to ensure their children go to their education smartly, punctually, and eager to learn. This cannot make

a visitor from England feel anything other than a sense of embarrassment at the degradation of English educational culture.

These thoughts swirled through my mind one evening, on a restaurant terrace high in the hills overlooking Port-au-Prince. The memories of that evening's dinner conversation have now disappeared, hidden by the blaze of the other thoughts, like stars in the daylight. But the memory of those other thoughts — the insights given by the Haitian 'swaf' for education — have remained vivid.

Was I magnifying the significance of what I had seen in Port-au-Prince? I thought again of the English children. It seemed unfair to blame them for their lack of attachment to their schooling, when those responsible for their education — parents, politicians, the educational establishment, and many individual teachers — had abdicated their responsibilities so completely. How could the children possibly rebel against an institutionalized mediocrity so crushing in its uniformity and so ruthlessly backed by state power?

And it seems that there are factors beyond education that have contributed to the creation and the sustaining of the English underclass which has been so accurately portrayed by Dalrymple. I thought of many of the children who loiter on the streets of my home town after dark. Their tired, pale, faces point to problems beyond the classroom, including poor diets, a lack of parental supervision, late nights, and a violent environment. Not all the viciousness of English social pathology can be laid at the door of the educational establishment. Nonetheless, although the proportion of social pathology that should be attributed to bad education may be unknowable, it is certainly substantial and its consequences have been clear.

Years ago I had wanted to teach French to English school children. This had propelled me towards the then-mandatory year of state training in 'education'. Somewhat naively inspired by my love of the French language, which I considered a kind of cultural holy tongue — a secular version of *Leshon HaKodesh* — I was soon reeling from the indoctrination of the educationalists, the philistinism of the teachers, and the delinquency of the pupils. The systematic disregard of rigour, hierarchy, and objective knowledge in favour of an emotional classroom 'experience' had been a profound shock. The successful replacement of quality education by a hollowed-out curriculum had hit me with a harsh, metallic clang throughout my year in the grip of educational indoctrination. I had found it hard at that time to articulate my disappointment at being surrounded by such an insouciant disdain for knowledge and culture, but I had escaped from my *selva oscura*. My training in 'education' completed, I had fled to the safety of the accounting profession, with its more objective, numbers-based territory.

My thoughts turned to comparisons of Haiti with the 'third world' country with which I am most familiar — India. India's overall literacy rate is slightly higher than Haiti's (but with a larger discrepancy between the sexes), and millions of Indian children slip through the educational net, but millions more attend school with the desire and expectation of acquiring knowledge as a means of advancement. And, as in the *quartiers louches* of Port-au-Prince, the sight of thousands of immaculately dressed children on their way to school through the slums of Calcutta or Delhi is jarring to the English eye, accustomed as it is to seeing throngs of badly-educated, loutish English youths making their way to 'educational' establishments.

It is not merely the wealthy who value education in India — the desire to learn shows that it is a community effort, as many parents sacrifice their meagre resources to ensure that their children receive a good education. The success of the Indian emphasis on rigorous education has made major contributions to India's economic renaissance. It has also spread out from India's shores — I have seen information on the relative achievement levels of different ethnic groups in English schools; I am not surprised that the children of Indian parents are the most successful.

I gazed down at the twinkling evening lights of Port-au-Prince. In this country, the lovers of education unreservedly spoke of their 'swaf' for learning, in a variant of my holy tongue. I somehow felt a kind of mystical union between the educational cultures of francophone Haiti and anglophone India that boded well for the future of both countries.

A month after I left Haiti, large parts of the country were destroyed by an earthquake. Many of the schools I had seen have been destroyed, and many of the children killed and injured. The quiet desperation that has long been life in Haiti has taken a turn much for the worse. The media almost unanimously declared that Haiti was henceforth without any real hope. Yet what I observed there gives me grounds for optimism for that country, at least in the longer term. After a few years, Haiti will be reconstructed, and although it will continue to face immense political and economic problems, in the long run a country in which many of its inhabitants desire a good education for their children stands a good chance. The reconstruction may even open the door to improvements in the Haitian education system, especially in extending coverage to more children.

The desire for education in Haiti is unlikely to disappear. If in future this thirst can be assuaged by extending the level of inclusion in schooling, who knows what successes Haiti may enjoy? Just as India's

slow but tangible economic advances have been founded on its educated citizens, so Haiti may, in the long run, undergo a similar experience.

On the other hand, a comparable thirst for education seems to be missing in England. This is surely one of the major reasons why Dalrymple — in his marvellous mixture of integrity, anecdote, and scimitar-sharp irony — has been right, and will continue to be right for the foreseeable future.

David O'Regan is an accountant

Dr Seldon's Brave New World

Alistair Miller

Anthony Seldon is widely acknowledged to be an innovative and pioneering head teacher. He has managed to transform both Brighton College and Wellington College, where he is currently Master, inspiring pupils and driving up standards of achievement; and his impassioned plea that schools should develop the whole child rather than produce fodder for exams has caught the mood of the times, so much so that he has been tipped for a peerage under a Conservative government and the post of minister of education. It is not surprising that the Conservatives should turn to a man who argues for the freeing of schools from the shackles of the Whitehall bureaucracy, who argues that teachers should once again be allowed to teach their subject (as opposed to deliver statutory orders), and who has himself such an impressive track record. Who could fail to be impressed by a man so versatile and efficient that he can combine the roles of head teacher, journalist, political biographer and media personality, so driven that he rises at five in the morning.

The problem is that Seldon has recently embraced a philosophy of education — positive psychology or 'the new science of happiness'; and if he succeeds in persuading Michael Gove as he already has Ed Balls that it should be adopted in all state schools, and its principles pervade the curriculum, untold harm may be done. Yet another nail, perhaps the final one, will have been hammered into the coffin of liberal education.

On the face of it, positive psychology is quite plausible. Its central assertions — that people should pursue goals that reflect their inner needs and strengths, and that these can be attained with sufficiently positive attitudes — seem unobjectionable. It is not crudely hedonistic but advocates that absorbing interests and engagements including altruistic ones are central to a happy life; and its promise of a scientific recipe for the attainment of happiness and fulfilment ('the good life') grounded in evolutionary biology holds obvious attractions in a secular, liberal age. And yet there is a suspicious air of circularity and tautology about the whole project that makes one feel uneasy, even though it is difficult to quite put one's finger on where exactly the problem lies. For example, it would be difficult to question the assertion that the more positive you are, the more likely you are to succeed, or that natural optimists tend to be happier (happier in the sense of being less troubled by worries or doubts), or that people chronically lacking in confidence or self-belief are more prone to depression. But do these assertions and the mass of empirical evidence adduced to support them really tell us anything we did not already know?

Positive psychology's leading advocates — Martin Seligman (the acknowledged founder of the discipline), Tal Ben-Shahar (the teacher of Harvard's most popular lecture course: positive psychology) and Jonathan Haidt — have no doubts. Positive psychology can transform our lives by showing us the way to optimal living, authentic happiness and lasting fulfilment. All we have to do is identify our deepest, authentic inner needs (desires, interests, talents or 'strengths'), set them up as goals, and then adopt a positive, optimistic attitude toward their achievement. The question of course is how we identify our authentic inner needs, interests, talents, strengths and aptitudes, as opposed to the needs, interests, talents and so forth that actually do motivate our behaviour, whether we explicitly identify them or not. Positive psychology recognises that there are limits to what we can achieve, and so the proviso is added that our goals must be 'realistic'. But the problem remains: if our goals are founded on a realistic appraisal of our needs and interests taken together with our capacity to realise them (given our attitudes, our personality, our aptitudes and our circumstances), why should our plans and our actions be any different from the ones we would undertake anyway; and if our goals are more ambitious (for example to be Lawrence of Arabia), and assume that there are no such constraints on our behaviour, then how can we possibly distinguish our dreams and fantasies from reality? All we can then

say is that if a person is motivated to do something, he will do it (or at least attempt it), and if he is not motivated to do it, he will not do it — which is actually to say very little.

The root of positive psychology's circularity really lies in its supposing that a person's behaviour is explained in a causal sense by his motives, goals and attitudes; whereas in fact when we talk of a person's attitudes, personality traits, motives and needs, we are not identifying ghostly, immaterial mental phenomena that cause his behaviour (a myth originating with Descartes and famously termed 'the dogma of the ghost in the machine' by Gilbert Ryle) but are merely *describing* his behaviour, or more precisely, his behavioural patterns. In other words, we are describing *who he is*. And the only reason we describe a person as having particular attitudes, personality traits, motives and so forth is that we have observed that he typically behaves in a particular way. It would be difficult to describe a person as being a talented pianist if we had observed that he could not play the piano, or as being driven to achieve something if he never actually did anything about it. So though we might be able to predict a person's behaviour in certain situations because we know from past experience the sort of person he is — for example that he is rather shy and introverted — it does not follow that his being shy and introverted *causes* him to behave as he does. Likewise, if we say he acts in a certain way *because* he is shy, the 'because' is not causal in the sense of an antecedent cause standing in relation to an effect, but simply an attempt to explain (ie make intelligible) his behaviour to others by describing the sort of person that he is — so, for example, they are not offended when he appears to ignore them.

The problem with positive psychology is that by attempting to detach our goals, motives and attitudes from our actions and put them under our conscious control, there is nothing left to determine our actions either one way or the other. Of course we change over time. Our attitudes, motives and goals are continually being shaped and reshaped by life; but it is only when they find concrete expression in our behaviour, that we can recognise them. But where does this leave positive psychology's assertion that people could achieve their goals if only their attitudes were positive enough? The answer is that though people suffering from debilitating mental disorders (phobias, neuroses, chronic anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorders) might well benefit from therapeutic or drug treatment to enable them to lead normal social lives, it is not possible to re-engineer normal people's attitudes to be more 'positive' without changing the whole complex of their personalities — without in fact changing them into somebody else.

It is not even desirable to seek to 're-craft' normal people's attitudes to be more positive or optimistic. Positive psychology subscribes to a crude cult of extroversion, the widespread assumption that people who are outgoing, gregarious, generally optimistic and relatively untroubled by worries or doubts are happier — that, as Jonathan Haidt puts it in *The Happiness Hypothesis*, they have 'won the cortical lottery'. If only everybody could be conditioned to be more of an extrovert, the world would be a happier place. Now this is undisputable if we regard happiness as the state of being perpetually cheerful. But for many of us, fulfilment does not take this crude form at all, which is why we dread the company of cheerful extroverts, and why many of us actively seek out solitude in order to write, or compose, or paint, or just be alone. To anybody versed in the psychology of personality, or even psychiatry, this is obvious, but in positive psychology people do not seem to have personalities of any complexity: they merely have attitudes that are optimistic or pessimistic, positive or negative.

Reading its literature, one cannot fail to be struck by how completely positive psychology detaches the pursuit of human happiness or fulfilment from culture and from history. There is no sense whatever of human nature and its vision of the good being formed in a civilization or of there being values — moral, aesthetic and intellectual — that transcend biological instinct. Positive psychology amounts to little more than an enlightened hedonism: there is a place for kindness, but only because it makes us feel better. That rational beings might have cultivated different values, tastes, sensibilities and pleasures, perhaps even higher ones (as J S Mill once acknowledged, so casting a spanner into his own utilitarian works), is simply ignored; instead, our needs and instincts have arisen out of an evolutionary process of natural selection, and it is by satisfying them that our happiness can be maximised, and our behaviour optimised. The social sciences, with psychology in the vanguard, will triumph over the old humanities — over philosophy, history and the liberal arts. We might as well be rats in a maze.

Instead of the pursuit of truth, knowledge and wisdom, a pursuit inspired by the Delphic injunction 'know thyself' and culminating in self-knowledge, a pursuit necessarily mediated through a civilization, we have a spurious science of the mind: psychology.

It is the spectre that haunted R G Collingwood some seventy years ago. Instead of the pursuit of truth, knowledge and wisdom, a pursuit inspired by the Delphic injunction 'know thyself' and culminating in self-knowledge, a pursuit necessarily mediated

through a civilization, we have a spurious science of the mind: *psychology*. Instead of the man cultivated and formed in a civilization (its arts, its sciences, its crafts and its religion), we have the man whose self comes ready-formed and who simply has to express his 'inner' needs or desires. But as we have seen, the notion of an authentic inner self is a chimera. For New Age, psychological man, there is nothing to express but his animal instincts. If life is in some sense a quest for the good, for meaning, for self-knowledge, it is a quest that psychological man will have bypassed altogether. For him, the homecoming T S Eliot speaks of in *Little Gidding* will forever be denied because the journey will never have been undertaken:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

Positive psychology's utopian vision could conceivably be realised if everyone were conditioned or genetically engineered to be an extrovert: perpetually cheerful, outgoing, optimistic and untroubled by doubts. But as well as pessimism, worry, anxiety and doubt, something else would have been eliminated from this brave new world: the quest of rational beings to make sense of their lives by seeking the truth, a quest on which our civilization depends and which necessarily begins with an initiation into that civilization. Though animals are happiest when their instinctive needs and appetites are satisfied, the fulfilment of human beings depends on these needs and appetites being transcended.

We must decide what the purpose of school education is. Should it allow us to express our instincts and achieve our goals; or should it form and cultivate in a civilization?

Alistair Miller teaches in the independent sector.

Natural Selection — a Bike with Square Wheels

Myles Harris

According to Darwin's theory natural selection is blind. Evolution has no purpose or intention, it is just a process. But we live in a world in which examples of its absolute opposite, unnatural or conscious selection, abound. Walk into your local family planning clinic and watch members of a common species of animal, *Homo sapiens*, consciously deselect or select themselves for reproduction. A decision to put on a condom or swallow a contraceptive pill involves purpose.

I too am a walking example of the falsity of the theory. I inherited a deleterious gene mutation on my mother's side which should have killed me years ago. But in consulting a doctor and receiving treatment I unnaturally (consciously) selected myself to survive. The fact I can chose whether or not to have children, and thus decide whether to pass the gene on, further violates the theory. It is why operating theatres, vaccination clinics, even ploughed fields are all temples to anti-Darwinism. Such activities, which improve the chances of our species' survival, demand intention and choice, and in doing so fly in the face of natural selection.

Darwinists admit the problem of conscious choice but teach that consciousness and language, by which we construct and signal our thoughts, are products of a blind process, therefore the theory is not violated. Moreover any choices we make are ultimately selfish and dictated by genes. As evolutionary psychologist Robert Wright explains in *The Moral Animal*:

> ....free will is an illusion, brought to us by evolution. All the things we are commonly blamed or praised for, ranging from murder to theft to Darwin's eminently Victorian politeness, are the result not of choices made by some immaterial 'I' but of physical necessity

Although Wright later suggests we may be able to partially liberate ourselves from our genes — which seems contradictory — many will consider the idea of an overriding physical necessity, profoundly unscientific. The atoms from which we are made recognise no necessity, they just are. There is no purpose in the universe, even its existence. As Mr Prendergast, the vicar whose doubts led him to leave the church in Evelyn Waugh's comic novel *Decline and Fall* declared: 'I couldn't understand why God had made the world at all.'

If we accept a theory that fails to explain how that fundamental engine of life, the cell, millions of times more complicated than any animal it shapes has arisen, we can see that evolution has two phases; unconscious, the bacterium blindly grubbing in a dirty pool, then conscious, the patient sitting in a family planning clinic. Once conscious, evolution takes over, it becomes

directed and a great deal more efficient. We create culture, then science and eventually the ability to design living creatures ourselves, of which Dolly the sheep was the first, hesitant step.

To understand why Darwinists become warm when confronted by criticism we should recall the movement's political origins. Natural selection was a gift to those intent on overthrowing religion in the 19th century, and ended in a fight to the death between secular intellectuals and the established church. The usual things were at stake; wealth, land, power, position and the ear of government. Darwinism, at first just a biological theory, became, in the 20th century, a novel interpretation of human motives. We were, evolutionary psychologists averred, biochemical wind-up toys programmed with the delusion of choice: Only the strongest would survive. Nature always puts its foot in the face of a drowning man.

Now we know that such things as love, self sacrifice, bravery, are tricks played on us by our genes, who listens to priests, and what value, save as tourist attractions, are our cathedrals and churches? Power is now in the hands of scientists. Money pours into laboratories not collection plates. Politicians listen to geneticists not bishops. Of course it did not begin like that. Darwinists were idealists, searchers for truth fighting against the forces of obscurantism. These days Darwinism is the triumphant basis for our secular society. Honour and power comes with it and, like Victorian admonitions about the dangers of sex, contemporary intellectual conversation is littered with warnings about doubting the secular nature of creation. It is why rabid Darwinists want the Pope arrested when he arrives in Britain in September. Ostensibly it is about the latter's alleged role in covering up paedophile scandals in the Catholic Church, in reality it is a way of punishing a wrong idea, that mankind is the special creation of God. Its reacceptance would mean a transfer of power back to old hands.

But in this battle between materialism and spirit, have we got things the right way round? Which comes first, the material world or mind, the latter which we can only reach through language? Higher language began in the human forebrain, a location, some biologists say, it shares surprisingly with birds but not other primates whose language centres appear to be in the lower brain and whose cognitive abilities are extremely limited. Archaeologist Stephen Mithen writes in *The Prehistory of the Mind*,

> The similarities between acquisition of language by children and that of song by young birds are as striking as the differences from language acquisition by chimpanzees. Song plays a much more important role in the life of birds than does vocalization in the life of non-human primates; it is possibly as important as the role of language among humans.....it is perhaps not surprising that the most impressive non-human linguist is not an ape, but an African Grey parrot called Alex.

One would have expected the evolution of language to be more step like, to proceed up each species chain, not seize upon totally different species. Higher language, of course, should be distinguished from mere signalling. Even flowers are said to have a primitive means of communicating the direction it is best for their companions to grow, but it is when language becomes reflective that it changes from being a purely passive phenomena to an active one. It is bizarre that natural selection, which depends entirely on blind chance, should score an 'own goal' by evolving foresight. It is like a bike evolving square wheels. Moreover the evolution of a higher language would be very difficult to achieve through natural selection, for, as our distinguished contributor Brian Ridley points out on another page,

> The human body.....is responsible for tens of millions of kinds of anti-bodies, 10^{11} neurons, 10^{13} synapses, about 60,000 miles of veins, arteries and capillaries, involving many processes of spontaneous self-organisation obeying laws of form. Similar complexity exists in other animals. There must be, therefore, severe internal constraints that will affect any sort of adaptation, and these would have to be taken into account in any adequate theory of adaptation.

This criticism particularly applies to that Darwinist's nightmare, the human brain. In which jungle was it necessary for the brain to evolve the ability to do calculus or write equations describing the ultimate incomprehensibility of quantum particles?

It seems clear that the higher an animal's language (which does not have to mean speech) the more divorced from natural selection it becomes, even my cat makes choices, and as practically all animals have some means of communication this could mean a great part of the living world, in trying to shake itself loose from the chains of blind selection is reaching out to grasp the hand of reflective consciousness. Few animals succeed in being truly reflective; but of those man is the most successful. Which is why the painting on the roof of the Sistine Chapel might be far closer to the truth than Darwinists realise. It would be wise not to arrest its owner when he arrives in London this September.

Myles Harris is a consulting editor.

Talking Chinese

Donald Briggs

Myles Harris's sombre analysis of China today in the Spring issue of the *Salisbury Review* was depressingly accurate. China's actions in encircling India with a necklace of naval bases, and building four huge airports, roads, and a railway on the roof of the world in Tibet, are a clear indication of the regime's strategic aims. Like all powers in history, it is expanding and will continue until a superior power halts its advance. The UK's decision to build two nuclear submarines and more warships, is welcome news. However Barack Obama's health care reforms are sending America down the road Britain took in 1945. Big, welfarist government weakens a strong people.

We should not, however, write off China and shun positive contacts like trade. There was no Internet in the days of Nazi Germany, which was a strong state with a weak people, and had a Roman Catholic Church, which willingly suppressed political protest. China today is a very strong state, but the strength of character of her people should not be underestimated: she has many patriotic dissidents who will not be easily cowed.

China today is unrecognisable from what she was only a quarter of a century ago. Millions have now been given a glimpse of what free societies are capable of, and can see the fruits that freedom offers. In 1982, China was making faltering attempts to open up. I was in Beijing, surrounded by millions of men and women dressed in blue trousers and jackets. There were few cars. I had been invited to give a talk to 30 postgraduates at China's most prestigious Party-run think-tank, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Casually, I slipped in a reference to the liberal philosophy of a great Victorian editor, C P Scott of *The Manchester Guardian*, and said his innovative approach to news had helped to make Manchester the workshop of the world. At the mention of Scott's dictum COMMENT IS FREE, FACTS ARE SACRED, their tutor Professor Xu Chengshi, head of the English section of Xinhua's international news department, leapt to his feet and wrote those words in huge capitals on the board, as if trying to burn them into the minds of those future Chinese journalists. 'Tell them everything you can about this man,' Xu said. 'I want my journalists to be the best.' Unnerved, and seeing the Party cadre glaring at me from the back, I wondered if Xu was inviting me to dig a pit for myself. I looked him in the eyes, and then seized the opportunity he gave me to talk about freedom and its benefits. Xu was then well over 80. During Mao's Cultural Revolution, he had spent more than three years in solitary confinement as a despised intellectual. His wife and children had been sent a thousand miles away to work in the fields. When he was freed, Xu had to be taught to speak his own language again.

I agreed to give two more talks, and in rooms plastered with English proverbs like 'Waste not, want not' I told them that freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press were essentials if you would develop a nation and its people. There were gasps as I described how as a boy from a poor back street in Nottingham I had left school at 16 of my own free will and got a job of my choice as a journalist. The murmurs grew louder as I said I had gone to Manchester in search of a better life for my family, and found it.

During those six weeks I spent in Beijing as a volunteer consultant polishing the grammar of China's first, and struggling, new English-language newspaper, *China Daily*, I was astonished to find that a work unit in the same *People's Daily* building had refused to develop two colour films for the editor because he could 'pay' for them only with newspapers they could not read. It took me three weeks to discover that, while I waited for pictures to design China's first newspaper colour supplement. I had suggested *Life in Beijing* as a way to generate cash by getting multi-nationals to pay for advertisements. Because the government had no foreign exchange reserves (today they have the world's biggest), I paid £9 from my own pocket to get the films developed at a hotel. Banks and airlines stampeded to buy space, and *China Daily* was forced to add a second supplement to cope. They made a fortune out of the project, and supplements blossomed throughout China. As I flew home, a grateful Feng (my host) told me I had come close to being arrested several times, and pressed a pair of cloisonné vases into my reluctant hands.

My reasons for volunteering to help communist China were altruistic. A book of letters written by a young Englishwoman who had gone to China as a Methodist missionary and witnessed the rape of the country by the Japanese in the 1930s had fired my interest in its people. I reasoned that it would be

no bad thing to help spread knowledge of English among communists. Today, English is China's second language, after Mandarin.

Chairman Mao's corpse had just been replaced in its glass coffin in Tiananmen Square after being reinflated, when I arrived. I joined a queue of hundreds in the packed square out of curiosity. A soldier led me to the front, and then insisted I left my Pentax camera and lenses on the ground. I protested, fearing they would be stolen. A stranger reassured me. 'Leave them. They will be safe,' he said. They were still there, untouched, among hundreds when I went back to retrieve them. An American professor told me his wallet had been stolen on a bus. 'Go to the police,' I advised. 'They will get it back for you.' He was incredulous. But he went, and got his wallet back. Intact. How did they find it? 'We have 5,000 Chinese watching you foreign devils,' they told him.

Benjamin Franklin believed that personal contact with a foreigner was more valuable in building international understanding than any diplomatic manoeuvre. When *China Daily*'s Night Editor handed me a news story which condemned as guilty a factory manager arrested for alleged theft, I shocked the executives by pointing an accusing finger at him and saying: 'Is that all I have to do in China to put you in jail?' He went white. A discussion followed about England's centuries-old legal safeguards of presumption of innocence, *habeas corpus*, trial by jury, and double jeopardy.

Back in England, and six years later, I was teaching a workshop in London to an international group of promising journalists. I asked the organisers if I could teach them about C P Scott. No, was the response, presumably because of Foreign Office diktats. So, casually during a coffee break, I mentioned Scott and Freedom of the Press. A reporter from Shanghai sat up sharply. For the next four weeks, as we walked beside the Thames, we talked about democracy, and freedom, and how Scott helped to develop Great Britain by publishing information such as cotton prices in Egypt, and articles by engineers like Sydney Camm about their entrepreneurial approach to developing new industries.

Zhang Ping went back to Shanghai, his imagination fired. He kept in touch for 19 years and became Diplomatic Correspondent of *China Daily*. He witnessed Tiananmen Square's night of horror and saw friends die. At great risk, he wrote me an anguished letter: he was contemplating suicide. I told him to carry on for the good of China and his family. Zhang challenged the hard-line anti-capitalists and was finally given four phones and a computer to found CBNet — China Business Information Network. His objective was to build a database of his nation's resources and skills to help develop it by attracting multinational investors. I advised him in faxes and phone calls that his data must be flawless in integrity, not *China Daily* propaganda.

The Sars epidemic helped China's newspapers to break free of much censorship to report facts, and that frightened the government. Crackdown followed, and 200 journalists were jailed. I do not believe, though, that this is the end of aspirations for freedom, or more representative government, for China's people. A few days before I began writing this article, 13 of China's most influential newspapers in Beijing and Shanghai, including *The Economic Observer*, united to publish a joint editorial calling for reforms. 'We believe the Chinese people are born to freedom and [should have] the right to migrate,' it said. (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 March, 2010). A year ago China's most prominent liberal philosopher, Professor Xu Youyu, infuriated the government by defying demands by the Communist Party to retract his signature from a ground-breaking charter calling for reform, elections, and freedom of speech. (Leading Chinese dissident stands by call for freedom of speech, *Daily Telegraph*, 11 January 2009).

Xu, professor of philosophy at Beijing's Academy of Social Sciences, is a former Red Guard who studied logic at Oxford. He was among 300 leading intellectuals, lawyers and activists who signed Charter 08, which called for a new politics modelled on dissident movements in the former Soviet bloc. For six years 40 copies of Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* dispatched by the Institute of Economic Affairs may hopefully have been circulating among those intellectuals and their students.

The Chinese Government opened a Pandora's Box when it decided to become the cheap-labour workshop of the 21st century world. I do not believe they will be able to close it again.

Life in China today is still grim for many. But millions of ordinary factory folk have now been exposed to the talent, the ingenuity, and the affluence of people living in less closed and authoritarian societies. The Chinese Government opened a Pandora's Box when it decided to become the cheap-labour workshop of the 21st century world. I do not believe they will be able to close it again. That is the law of unintended consequences. Enoch Powell was prophetic about politics and economics. 'The people always win in the end,' he said.

Donald Briggs was a Daily Mirror *journalist in Manchester for 23 years.*

Harvesting the Dragon's Teeth

Margaret Brown

As caretaker of a Pembrokeshire camping site I work hard in the summer. At peak weekends we have 400 customers. The campers themselves are little trouble for our clientele are self-selecting — healthy, sociable and honest. Not all of them however. In June my employer spent a few days away and left the site in charge of a temporary manager. Ten youths appeared in a hired van from South Wales. My employer would not have admitted them, but the supply manager did not have the authority to turn them away. Five terrible days followed. Drunken singing, setting off fire alarms at 2 am, damaging the toilets, loud quarrels, streaking and scattering of litter made other campers threaten to leave. When my employer returned, she had to send for the village policeman to make the delinquents go.

His attitude was ambivalent. He clearly saw himself as mediating in a dispute in which both sides had a case. However the boys agreed to go that afternoon and went to the village for the morning. When they returned to remove their tents and property, I brought out my camera and, on being challenged, told them that I was photographing them in order to prevent their ever returning and to warn other camping-sites.

All hell broke loose. A wave of hysteria swept over them. One claimed, most improbably, 'I'm a lawyer!' One bleated, 'I'm only 17! I'm only a child! You can't photograph me! You're paedophiles! We'll expose you on the Net!' All of them shouted. Two of them phoned the police on their mobiles. We also phoned the police. The policeman came, accused me of exacerbating the situation and confiscated my camera. In his car he herded the boys out on to the main road. It soon became obvious why the boys had resisted being photographed. They had left tents, property and litter. This included broken bottles, spilt drinks, food waste, a supermarket trolley, a bollard and streamers of toilet paper. It took three hours to clear it all up. The boys had also obscenely defaced the camping-site sign.

This was not the end of the story. I wrote to the policeman asking for the return of my camera. I informed him that the film contained pictures of a Conservative dinner addressed by Michael Gove and that I was writing to my MP about this matter. At once the policeman brought the camera back. He asserted that if the situation had not been defused he could have ended up having his head kicked in. He had been the only policeman on duty for miles around. When I asked about the boys' further activities, he responded vaguely. 'I wasn't on duty over the weekend.' It turned out that he knew the family of one of the boys. The family had a house in the village and the boys could have gone there.

On the gossip channel I picked up items on the boys' other activities. It was quite a list for a stay of only a week. None of the aggrieved had been put in touch with fellow-victims. The incidents were played down. It was as if the police were colluding with the boys and protecting them from the consequences of their own actions. I considered the implications and wrote to the local paper urging the creation of an early warning system along the lines of pub watch.

During the season we had to eject three other groups for drunken noise. Last year we had to dismiss only one. The rise seems due to the credit crunch and the growing exasperation of foreign police forces with our undesirables. When they are excluded from British towns as well because of improved police technology and organisation and increased vigilance by residents, shop managements and others, they spill over onto rural areas — just like cannabis manufacturers. So now, instead of trustingly letting campers book themselves in by inserting money in envelopes and putting them through the letterbox, we man the office all the time to keep out single-sex groups, adding hours to our working day. Our single-sex policy applies to women as well. A request from a couple to put a caravan on the site for their 16-year-old daughter and five friends was rejected out-of-hand. And Heaven preserve us from the sort of hen parties luridly described and illustrated in the tabloids.

Things will probably get worse. In previous generations the outer circles of trouble-making gangs drifted away and were absorbed into the adult world via employment. One could hope that all but the two or three motivators of our gang would at 25 have settled down. But now? With a million NEETs already? New NEETs are coming in without older ones graduating out. How long before the figure reaches two million?

Our troubles constitute a microcosm of an ominous macrocosm of the shrinkage of law. This year two widely publicised episodes focused attention on a semi-hidden but common problem. In July Colin Philpott of Wokingham was arrested for stabbing 16-year-old

Josh Haseler. Apparently Mr Philpott and his family had been persecuted for weeks. On this occasion his stepson's head was being kicked in. Seizing a paper-knife Philpott rushed out to rescue him. When his wife tried to photograph the gang, one of them threatened to burn the house if she did. The 'victim' boasted on his 'gangstaaaar' web-site, 'We run Crowthorne'. The family said that when called on previous occasions the police had just moved the gang on to calm the mood and taken no further action. Haseler's family played down his behaviour.

The other episode was the inquest on Mrs Fiona Pilkington of Barwell, Leicestershire. After ten years of persecution by the Simmons family she had burnt herself and her disabled daughter to death rather than take any more. The papers published her heartrending catalogue of incidents and vain appeals to the police, thirteen of them in the last ten months of her life alone. Buck-passing, indifference and self-deception about the seriousness of the situation had been the police responses. Some of the records, it was alleged, had been lost. The neighbours had been frightened of the Simmons family but the parents were in denial. The mother said, 'He's not a bad boy ... I'm really rather proud of him'. They felt cross because Mrs Pilkington had complained to the police at all.

It is a fair guess that this is happening at a low level all over the country. Both these problem groups were threats to all their neighbours. One neighbour admitted frankly that her reaction was, 'Thank God, they're not outside my house tonight'. The police seem to be abdicating; there are complaints they are trying to put the responsibility for keeping order on such estates on to housing associations and councils. In October 2009 an official police document 'Striking The Balance' deplored the public's 'unrealistic expectations' that police officers would take 'unreasonable risks'. Lack of numbers and lack of nerve are connected.

Police stations are closing at the rate of one a month. Car patrols are not enough for nothing has the same impact as police officers on the beat. In 1981 the St. Paul's Riots in Bristol were too much for the police to hope to contain and their temporary near-withdrawal led to 'a night of looting and destruction as extensive as anything seen for two centuries', to quote a newspaper account. Presence has to be continuous and effective. In 2005 Ed Jones, a middle-class down-sizer, moved to a rough area of Salford. He was soon driven out by its violence, despair and lawlessness. Writing about it afterwards in the *Guardian* he commented that the police were rarely there and didn't seem too bothered. More recently David Lammy MP has claimed that in parts of London the official justice system has been 'replaced by one overseen by gang bosses and enforced by the gun and the knife'. Nature abhors a vacuum.

We have set up a welfare state and a huge public sector intermeshed with it. They protect people from the consequences of their action or inaction. We have then undersupplied its pretensions and allowed people to wreck themselves and the national economy. Like Cadmus we sowed the dragon's teeth. Now they are sprouting, not into armed men, as in the Greek legend, but into what can best be described as evolutionary dead ends, likely to do as much harm as armed men. The gods told Cadmus to throw a stone among his armed men. He did so. The men started fighting among themselves. Only five survived and with their aid Cadmus built Thebes. Our dead ends are unlikely to build a city. They are more likely to constitute a colossal drag on the construction process. For 'city' read 'community'.

What then is the solution? Not only more prisons in the short run but a change in emphasis and ethos. More use of solitary confinement, discouragement of swaggering, blustering and bullying and zero tolerance of drugs should be expected and the acquisition of literacy and numeracy should be insisted upon. However society evolves, these skills will be essential. If early release is retained, the prison officials signing the release should take responsibility. If the prisoner re-offends, the signatories should serve his or her term with him, or rather in the next cell. This would discourage premature releases.

Underinvestment caused this crisis. Heavy investment, the custodial equivalent of military surge, might cure it. On the front line the police should completely abandon the attitude of their 'Pirates of Penzance' brothers who hide from pirates and arrest women and children, and they should forget the political correctness of the Neasden Code as satirised in *Private Eye*. They should concentrate on maintaining order. Citizens are less concerned about over-active policing of demonstrations than under-active policing of their streets.

If this is not done the rise in crime already apparent as people try to steal goods they could formerly afford to buy is likely to be accelerated by the possibilities of looting offered by widespread flooding and disruption of communications. New Orleans five years ago was a terrible warning. What would happen if several areas at once suffered severe flooding? In self-defence communities would either form vigilante groups or hire ex-soldiers. In fact private protection forces are already on patrol. Combat courses like Krav Maga, based on Israeli military training, would multiply. Of course there is always the danger that these private forces might dominate their areas and might become condottieri or warlords. People hunger for security so

it would be goodbye not only to PC Plod, PC 49 and Dixon of Dock Green but also to Inspector Barlow, Gene Hunt, Batman and even Judge Dredd — and hello to Sandline, Executive Solutions and Blackwater. Not exactly the Magnificent Seven, but better than anarchy and/or gang rule.

If our village policeman had, instead of confiscating my camera, ostentatiously phoned for reinforcements and had the boys arrested and their behaviour put on record, the troubles of the following days would have been avoided. However I got something out of our dragon's tooth. The boys left a set of barbells for weightlifting. So now I can strengthen my muscles to cope with the next group of difficult customers.

Margaret Brown is a freelance writer

Women on Top?

Stephen Baskerville

Gender politics is becoming too conspicuous to ignore. Triumphalist proclamations of female political dominance now appear in ostensibly detached scholarly journals. The trend is real, but it represents much more than 'the macho men's club' getting its just comeuppance for causing the financial crisis, as Reihan Salam writes in the prestigious journal *Foreign Policy*. On the cover of the august *Wilson Quarterly*, Sara Sklaroff sees fresher salads and smaller bus seats as evidence that 'women are taking over.' That journals with pretensions to serious scholarship address on this frivolous level what may be the most profound power shift since the fall of the Roman Empire demonstrates that important questions are not being asked. Salam, Sklaroff, and other prophets of a feminine future are quick with predictions, but they ignore the trends already well advanced in the present. The sexualisation of politics — and the politicization of sex — is the most profound social trend of the last forty years, with roots going back at least a century. In importance it far exceeds (though is also connected to) the challenge radical Islam presents to Western society. The emergence of women into top positions of power is only the tip of the iceberg. More far-reaching are the vast shifts in political power at all levels from the family to the United Nations.

'Sexual politics' (the term was popularized in a book title by feminist Kate Millett) has never become a subject of focused critical or scholarly attention, except by its proponents. Its impact thus goes largely unperceived and unexamined. Yet it now dominates national and international agendas. Overtly sexual issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage are only the most obvious. Every item in modern politics is presented in terms of its implications for women. The economic collapse is said to bring special hardships for women, though as Salam points out, the resulting unemployed are about 80 per cent men. War too is said to fall disproportionately on women, though obviously most casualties are men. In a foreign policy where war aims are already promiscuous and undefined, women's liberation is thrown into the grab-bag of justifications.

For years, an assortment of otherwise unrelated issues have been promoted by sexual activists in sexual terms. The vanguard of this trend is in the United States, where gun control is advocated by the Million Mom March (and opposed by the mostly male National Rifle Association), drinking laws are changed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and Code Pink dominates the war opposition. The militant Moms Rising is another variation on the theme. 'Some commentators argue that the whole agenda in the US is shifting towards 'the politics of maternity',' observes *The Guardian*.

The impact transcends current events and has altered our understanding of the very scope and purpose of the state. Salam quotes historian Stephanie Coontz arguing that the welfare state benefited men because it created jobs. In fact, the welfare state throughout the West was overwhelmingly a feminine and feminist initiative. John Lott has documented how the welfare state grew up following the enfranchisement of women, who have consistently voted for its provisions far more than men. As a result, the traditional state roles of defending borders and internal protection have given way to a government apparatus extensively involved in childrearing and caring for the sick and elderly. Government itself has thus become feminized. 'The annexation by government of most of the key responsibilities of life — child-raising, taking care of your elderly parents — has profoundly changed the relationship between the citizen and the state,' writes Mark Steyn. These are responsibilities governments have assumed because they are precisely the ones women have renounced. Conversely, the traditional military and police roles increasingly abdicated by the state are traditionally masculine.

This feminization of state machinery points to another trend with direct consequences today. For as Salam obliquely reveals, the welfare state functions are overwhelmingly female-dominated: education, child care, care of the elderly, and health. These are also the fields now being expanded by the Brown and Obama governments' massive expenditures for economic stimulation. Whether or not this spending will stimulate the private sector where most masculine employment occurs, it will certainly expand public sector female employment.

The consequences extend well beyond the economic. For what the welfare state represents, beyond huge government expenditure, is the politicization and bureaucratization of roles traditionally performed privately within the household. Expanding female employment into traditionally male occupations has taken place largely among the elite. Many more women have entered the workforce in jobs that reflected the domestic roles with which they felt comfortable. Rather than caring for their own children within their own families, women began leaving the home to work in government offices where they care for other people's children as part of the public economy: day-care, early education, and 'social services'. This transformed childrearing and other family functions from private into public and taxable occupations, expanding the tax base and with it the size and power of the state. Meanwhile, their sisters entering traditional male occupations were driving down male wages, turning female employment from a luxury into a necessity. Soon, a political class paid from those taxes took command positions in vastly expanded public education and social services bureaucracies, where they supervise other women who look after other people's children, further expanding the size and reach of the state into what had been private life. This has had profound effects blurring the distinction between private and public. For as feminists correctly point out, the traditional feminine roles were mostly private. Politicizing the feminine and shifting feminine roles from the home to the state has therefore meant politicizing and bureaucratizing private life.

A major manifestation is the politicization of children. Hardly an issue is raised today without being presented in terms of its impact on children. Whether the matter is healthcare, environmental protection, gun control, seat belts, or war, the imperative is made more urgent by what it will do 'for the children'. Concurrent with the emancipation of women, a huge machinery has arisen over child welfare. Few journalists or scholars scrutinize it, and few people understand it until its extensive regulatory requirements affect their decisions about their own children. It is the world of 'social services': social work, child psychology, child and family counselling, childcare, public education, child protection, child support enforcement, and juvenile and family courts.

The US also led this trend, despite being regarded as among the less extensive welfare states. It is institutionalized in the $50 billion federal Administration for Children and Families, itself part of the gargantuan $900 billion Department of Health and Human Services. HHS dispenses over $200 billion in grants ('larger than all other federal agencies combined') funding local 'human services' or 'social services' bureaucracies — by far the largest patronage network ever created in the Western world, reaching into every household in the land, and one that makes the former Soviet *nomenklatura* look ramshackle. Britain and Europe have followed suit with cabinet-level ministries devoted to women and children. This machinery caters largely to needs created by the sexual revolution. For the problems it addresses have arisen principally through welfare expansion itself, unwed childbearing, and divorce. Here too the vanguard has been British and American women.

As women dominate politics and paid employment, they have less time for children and families. But the result is not that men share in these spheres, as we once assumed. Instead childbearing simply declines, and childrearing is taken over by state functionaries, while men are marginalized and even criminalized, as Salam recognizes. The most obvious consequence is the decline in fertility throughout the West and beyond.

Just as welfare was a feminine initiative, so the resulting societies have become literally matriarchal, dominated not simply by women but by single-mother households. These communities are characterized by poverty, crime, substance abuse, and other social ills, all of which correlate to fatherlessness much more than to race, class, or any other factor. Contrary to the widespread assumption, nothing suggests that paternal abandonment is responsible. On the contrary, the evidence is clear that it results from feminine choice. This is documented as fatherlessness spreads to the middle class through divorce, where the overwhelming preponderance of filings are by women. Few involve grounds such as abuse, desertion, or adultery. Instead most women divorce for reasons such as 'growing apart' or 'not feeling loved or appreciated'. Because this marginalization of fathers accounts for social pathologies such as substance abuse and crime, it also serves to justify almost every expansion of state power — from additional welfare provisions, to education and health expenditures, to expanded law enforcement and incarceration.

The most serious consequence of the feminization of politics proceeds from what is after all the most basic

internal government function: punishing criminals. For the marginalization of men and fathers has increased not only criminality but also criminalization. If there is an elephant standing in the halls of power today it is the proliferation or redefinition of sexual crimes — crimes labelled and defined so that only males can be guilty: rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, child abuse, non-payment of child support, human trafficking. These offences blur the distinction between private conflict and violent crime, bypassing the due process procedures and protections of standard criminal law.

Sklaroff predicts that in a female-dominated world 'there will be more police' than ever before so that women can feel safe. When it is no longer ideologically acceptable to suggest that women be protected by husbands, fathers, or other men in their families, the need is filled by gendarmes. Sklaroff's prediction has already been fulfilled. In *The Prison and Gallows* (Cambridge, 2006), feminist scholar Marie Gottschalk documents how the massive increase in incarceration since the 1970s results from campaigns not by law-and-order traditionalists (who were hardly new) but by newly vocal 'interest groups and social movements not usually associated with penal conservatism'. Yet she names only one: 'the women's movement'. As Gottschalk shows, the principal pressure group lobbying for more arrests and incarcerations for at least two centuries has been politicized women. 'It is striking what an uncritical stance earlier women reformers took toward the state,' she observes. 'They have played central roles in... uncritically pushing for more enhanced policing powers.'

The feminization of politics and law enforcement is global. Quasi-governmental organizations like the United Nations and the European Union were created to prevent armed aggression and war. As they prove themselves either incapable for that task or irrelevant, they have found new missions for themselves, creating their own social work bureaucracies similar to those found in Western governments, which they also propagate among less developed countries. Most of these emphasize the politics of women and children. Here too we see, on several fronts, attempts to criminalize ideologically incorrect behaviour, even matters not previously considered crimes and even when beyond the reach of any effective judiciary. Innovations like the International Criminal Court, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and measures against human trafficking are all efforts to take complex political, economic, and social problems such as underdevelopment, poverty, and war and reclassify them as crimes whereby alleged malefactors can be prosecuted by politicized tribunals that lack the detachment and due process protections found in developed judiciaries.

'The axis of global conflict in this century will not be warring ideologies, or competing geopolitics, or clashing civilizations,' writes Salam. 'It won't be race or ethnicity. It will be gender.' He may well be right. But cheerleading for political trends is seldom a constructive substitute for unbiased inquiry. If we are to avoid the 'very violent' future Salam predicts as a result, we should stop gloating and start understanding.

Stephen Baskerville is associate professor of government at Patrick Henry College and author of Taken into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family *(Cumberland House, 2007).*

The Salisbury Review Listens to the BBC

Most of us could quote disturbing examples of pro-Labour or Lib-dem bias in the ether.

The incoming news material is handled by skilled producers, so one would hardly expect crude distortion. Casual listeners like myself have noticed some of the techniques used by BBC news folk to benefit left-wing mentors.

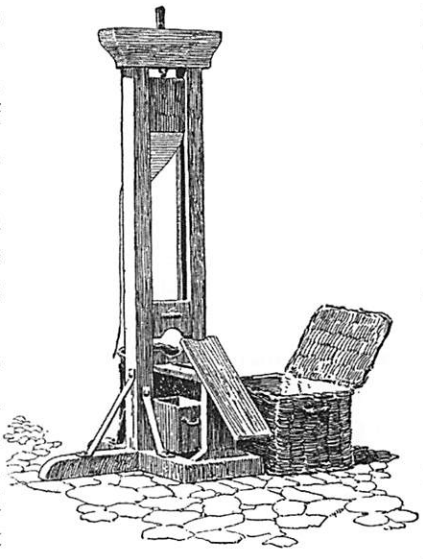
- Reducing positive news items about the Tories to an absolute minimum.
- Placing such items well down on the news list.
- Keeping the most trenchant, hard-hitting Tories off the air. Those invited to the microphone often seem to be timidly polite and hardly aware that they are operating in a hostile milieu.
- Introducing positive items about the Tories in a negative context: thus, for example, instead of *'the Conservatives offer this, that or the other'* we get *'the Conservatives' policy on this, that or the other has been criticised by other parties because ....'*
- Damping down a positive news story about the Conservatives by putting a negative sting in the tail.
- Showing a gentle deference to politicians on the left of the political spectrum, one unmatched by a similar deference on the other side.
- Jumping in swiftly to change the subject when a Conservative speaker has made a good point.
- Giving Tory speakers a much rougher ride than the Left, sometimes with a shocking degree of interruption, and more hostile questioning.

Conservative Central Office should train timorous spokesmen to handle BBC interviews more robustly. Some of them do the Conservative cause more harm than good.

French Conservatism: Accès Interdit

Jerome di Costanzo

Roger Scruton told me that he collects French conservatives — having met just twenty. It is difficult to find a self-declared French conservative: most of them use some elliptical denomination to mask their conservatism: left-wing conservative or alter-conservative, a liberal or a neo one. In a country of Revolution it is not easy to say that you want to conserve anything. For many years the term conservative has been synonymous with reactionary, nationalist or monarchist, or worst of all anti-Semitic and anti-democratic. The French intellectual world has produced radical critics of the Revolution like Charles Maurras, who embodied not just one, but all of the synonyms above. Even though others labelled him conservative, he never defined himself as such, but as a counter-revolutionary.



The French largely ignored Burke's criticism of the Revolution and, when they did consider his work, classified it as reactionary literature. His vision of the 'bath of blood' did not sit well with their self-indulgent view of the Revolution. Only now in the last 40 years is French conservatism being born, notwithstanding Maurras' reputation. In 1965 François Furet's book *The French Revolution* analysed the Revolution in a scholarly way. Furet thought, contrary to the dominant Marxist analysts, that the Revolution failed in 1793 after the masses confiscated the political process. The book was a 'big bang', firstly because it challenged national dogma and secondly because it was free from the influence of political allegiances. From this impartiality, French 'forbidden' conservatism started to emerge — in literature, philosophy and intellectual traditions, as well as its political influences.

French intellectuals have long been fascinated by totalitarian ideology, both fascism and communism. During the mid-50s despite the revelations about the reality of life in the eastern block, Marxist philosophers like Sartre, Deleuze and Foucault tried to find a second wind for the ideology. They worked on the mystique of the Revolution, the total abstraction, to forget the crimes of Communism and the Prague Spring

This naïve and idealistic perception of the Revolution and its lack of moral sensitivity has periodically produced some 'Burkean outlaws', like the sociologist Raymond Aron who was a socialist before the war, then an unorthodox Gaullist, and finally a distinguished critic of Communism. He was the first opponent of the May 68 student demonstrations, which revealed the survival instinct of French Marxism. Alain Finkielkraut proved himself another Burkean outlaw when with the writer Pascal Bruckner he wrote *Les Nouveaux Desordres Amoureux* in 1977, against the myth of the sexual revolution promised by May 68. His work trenchantly embraces conservative thinking in its respect for traditional mores.

In 1997 the *Black Book of Communism* was compiled by a group of intellectuals, including Stephane Courtois (an ex-Communist party member), Pierre Rigoulot (ex-Sartrian), and Jean-Louis Panné (ex-Gauchiste). It was a very ambitious book in a Communist-friendly France, and, more sacrilegiously, made a comparison with another murdering ideology. They called for a Nuremburg of Communism. The philosopher Jean-François Revel, the historian Alain Besançon and sovietologist Françoise Thom contributed to this autopsy of the Soviet era. Revel explained his political position as a moral one against 'the prison, psychiatric asylum and association of murderers', the terror produced by the Soviet system.

After 11th September 2001, the danger of radical Islam was a catalyst for further metamorphosis — progressivist-converted conservatives appeared. Back in 1988 in a radio show 'France Culture' Taguieff defined himself, with reservation, as a left-wing Burkean. But in 2004 at the end of his book *Le Sens du Progress*, Taguieff tried to define what he called a 'conservatisme critique ou alternatif', preaching in favour of an intelligent and selective conservatism. His '*melioriste*' position believed that aspects of

modernity — ethnic policy against the secular tradition, globalisation and mass culture — have to be radically reviewed. This alter- or neo-conservatism '*à la francaise*' seems to be a late, enforced awakening of conservatism, but the earlier reluctance of right-wing French thinkers to refer to themselves as conservative was understandable because of Maurras' curse and the progressivists' aggressive opposition.

One such progressivist 'Daniel Lindenberg' wrote *Rappel à L'Ordre* as a direct denunciation of this 'political treason'. Taguieff defended his stance in his book *Les Contre-Réactionnaires* in 2007, describing the progressivists' tendency to enter into aggressive diatribes in the absence of solid arguments or ideas. He attacked the omnipresent terror of stigmatisation in the intellectual world. This intellectual bullying had started before the Revolution with radical strictures from the 'societies of thinking', such as the Salon, Encyclopaedists, and philosophers and was also identified in Burke's *Reflections*.

In spite of the hostile reception to their ideas, the generation of intellectuals who developed their ideas after May 68 has much in common with the 'neo-Conservative'. If they still define themselves as left-wing, they are more radical than the conservatives in many respects. They supported the invasion of Iraq against Jacques Chirac and maintain secular republicanism against Sarkozy's ethnic and religious-friendly policies. Their extreme criticism of Islamic fundamentalism is a break with the mesmerised fascination of progressive thinkers for exotic revolution and the self-flagellation of the western tradition.

The French largely ignored Burke's criticism of the Revolution and, when they did consider his work, classified it as reactionary literature.

The French intellectual world was and is heavily influenced by its literary outpourings. In the late 19th century Maurice Barrès was relegated to the purgatory of the intellectual world for his position against Dreyfus. A number of right-wing writers of the 20th century were completely discredited during the Second World War. After 1940, Georges Bernanos fled the country and Louis-Ferdinand Céline collaborated with the Nazis. Both Céline and Bernanos were categorised as reactionary and anti-Semitic and as a result their literature was marginalised. In the 50s a short but courageous revival of conservative writers took place with the 'Hussars', but the end of the decolonisation wars closed this chapter.

Not until the 1980s and the publication of the biography *Céline, Tel Quel*, was French conservative literature rehabilitated. Céline's biographer Muray didn't dissociate the books of Céline with his obsessional anti-Semitism. For Muray literature was a history of liberty: 'Céline's name belongs in literature, this is to say to the history of freedom.' One of Muray's main concepts was to define contemporary man as *Homo Festivus*. He observed a society in which everything changes and must be entertaining: a rock concert for a famine; a carnival for minority rights; May 68 was a festive happening. He depicted the left-wing intelligentsia as entertainers of the French cultural world with their *intellectualisme professionel*, merchandising their thinking and their predictable conformism. Muray died in 2006 but he never considered himself a conservative — his answer was 'What can we conserve?' — but was a prominent figure among a new school of writers, along with Michel Houellebecq and Maurice G Dantec, who were also attacked in Lindenberg's pamphlet.

Houellebecq rebutted Lindenberg in *Le Figaro* with the article '*Conservatisme comme source de progress*'. Written with a humour reminiscent of G K Chesterton, he concluded: 'Contrary to the reactionary, the conservative needs neither heroes nor martyrs; if he doesn't save anyone, neither does he make a victim. As a result, he is not particularly heroic; but he will be, and this is one of his charms, an individual of little danger'. It is a mischievous answer as Houellebecq defines himself as a conservative and not a guilty and forbidden reactionary. In this way, he destroys his critics' indignation.

Dantec, author of science fiction novels, defines himself as an American writer in the French language. When I asked him if he considered himself a conservative, he replied: 'Conservatism is a makeshift solution; and also a sort of holdall which brings together very disparate concepts. For example what is the connection between the American social conservatives — like Huckabee — and Sarkozy or Merkel? On the other hand, the word looks back to an older time, when the liberal revolutionary force opposed the partisans of the Church and monarchy. Now what do we have to conserve today except the rags of a civilisation which has committed suicide? As a result I am not conservative, even though I vote for them in Canada, for want of anything better. I consider myself a Euro-American counter-Revolutionary, pro the restoration of a tri-European empire — Russian, European and North American — an orbital successor of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire.'

After the chaos of the Revolution the question wasn't what to conserve but what to restore. The dynamic of conservatism is not just limited to preserving or conserving, but also to restoring essential structure after damage caused by violent trauma. Would the Glorious Revolution have been successful if there hadn't been

a restoration of the old Stuarts? Burke denied any political influence between the Glorious Revolution and the French one. The impatience for emancipation in the French Revolution had decisively cut the tree from its historical and religious roots. In 2003, the European parliament rejected any reference to Christian heritage for a future EU constitution because of the Inquisition. After the vote, President Jacques Chirac declared 'the roots of Europe are evenly Christian and Muslim.' This view must come from French intellectual influence, from Sartre to Foucault, which felt it necessary to repudiate Catholic culture. Fortunately there are dissenting voices in France against the myth of Europe's Muslim roots: Remi Brague, professor of Arabic and religious philosophy, has written extensively on the nonsense of this exotic relativism.

Georges Bernanos fled the country and Louis-Ferdinand Céline collaborated with the Nazis. Both Céline and Bernanos were categorised as reactionary and anti-Semitic and as a result their literature was marginalised.

The philosopher Chantal Delsol leads the quest to reconnect French cultural roots. Defining herself as liberal-conservative, her principal idea is her concept of singularity, but she emphasises the need for roots as expressed in Burke — 'men are also sons of their history'. She defends federalism against centralisation, subsidiarity, autonomy, and the restoration of the patriarchal family structure for her abolished by May 68. She believes the legitimacy of an authority isn't an arbitrary dogma but a logical heritage. The eradication of the incumbent authority eliminated a structure used for organising society and maintaining peace. If the power of the king wasn't perfect and patriarchy arbitrary, its destruction deprives society of authority and guidance.

Another defender of French cultural roots is Jean François Matteï. In his book *Le Regard Vide*, he describes how the Revolution and the king's execution was a cultural disruption of the Hellenic and Judeo-Christian tradition. Our Western culture sprang from Greek civilisation and Judaism. For Matteï our ability to perceive reality has been lost. We've lost our heads and have fallen into an abstract reality.

Pierre Boutang, mentor to the young Matteï and one of the principal figures studying ontology in modern society, is one of the most neglected French conservative philosophers. George Steiner described his *Ontologie du Secret* as the metaphysical masterpiece of our century. He is forbidden because of Maurras' influence on his work. He revisited the classics, such as Cervantes, and introduced T S Eliot to the French public. Boutang was a monarchist, and he saw politics as a way of improving human lives.

The fight for recognition of paternity found an unexpected ally in the pope, Benedict XVI, who, though not a conservative thinker, is certainly one of the last classical philosophers. In his speech about the Christian roots of Europe at the Bernardins convent in Paris in front of the French intellectual world, the Holy Father concluded:

'What gave Europe's culture its foundation — the search for God and the readiness to listen to Him — remains today the basis of any genuine culture.' This lies at the heart of conservative thinking: the notion of Being, or God, known and unknown, and man's search for and expectation of its manifestation is what was lost with the Revolution.

In this climate of suspicion and the curse of Charles Maurras, it is remarkable that Roger Scruton can claim to know even twenty self-confessed conservatives. However, the philosophy and culture of conservative thinking is emerging in a number of different fields of study and there is some collaboration between the different strands: Taguieff writes for Maurice Dantec's literary magazine *Sur le Ring*: Finkielkraut has written an essay on the Catholic writer Charles Péguy: Chantal Delsol, in 2008, led a miscellaneous bunch of right-wing thinkers in the collective book *Liquider, mai 68?* But the group is quite fragile and hasn't a name. So is French conservatism a reality or 'a holdall'? Will it find a name?

Criticism of the Soviet era and its demise is common to all French conservative thinkers: it is in line with the ideas of Taguieff and Finkielkraut, present in the books of Dantec, who was very troubled by the war in ex-Yugoslavia, omnipresent for the Burkeans, and bordering on an obsession in Chantal Delsol's book *The Dissident*.

France wasn't a part of the Warsaw pact, but it was a victim of intellectual bullying, where conservative thinkers had to be careful not to be condemned. In a France very keen on 9/11 plot theories, where anti-Zionism is growing, and where an anti-liberal economy is gathering pace, the right always run the risk of being relegated to the Gulag of political philosophy.

Jerome di Costanzo is a French Writer who is a contributor to La Droite Libre *a liberal conservative think tank.*

Putting Down Granny

Elspeth Chowdharay Best

The official Commission on Long Term Care Strategy published its report in 1999, recommending that so-called 'social' care such as is needed by persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease, should remain part of the NHS, paid for by the taxpayer. Joel Jeffs, QC, and his friend David Lipsey, published a Dissent. They recommended offering only means-tested help from local authorities, in effect to 'devour widow's houses', and this was the advice the Government chose to take, although the Scottish Executive decided otherwise. Every year 3000 people are forced to sell their homes to pay the bills. Joffe and Lipsey were afterwards ennobled and Lord Joffe became famous for campaigning for Assisted Suicide.

'Millions of pounds promised for respite breaks for carers have been misspent and diverted to plug NHS deficits, an investigation has found' (*Sunday Telegraph,* 7th March 2010). 'Carers desperately need these breaks', commented Dr Helen McKeown, writing from the British Medical Association (14th March), 'Depriving this undervalued group of people of their entitled, funded breaks is a false economy, as the health and social care services may end up having to provide care for both care and cared for.' Is Assisted Suicide the answer?

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Keir Starmer QC, following his own new Court-ordered guidelines for non-prosecution, declared that the son of Sir Edward Downes, the well-known conductor, was 'wholly motivated by compassion' when he facilitated his parents' journey to Switzerland.

Lord Falconer proposed such an amendment to the Coroners and Justice Bill on 7th July 2009. Baroness Campbell, a disability Rights activist, said 'I simply point out that if we go on with this amendment we turn the traffic lights from red to green on state-sanctioned assisted dying, albeit in another country'. Amendment 173 was defeated by 194 votes to 141. A later attempt was voted down even more heavily, but in general the media rely on handouts from Dignity in Dying (formerly the Voluntary Euthanasia Society) and repeat the cry that the matter has not yet been properly discussed.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Keir Starmer QC, following his own new Court-ordered guidelines for non-prosecution, declared that the son of Sir Edward Downes, the well-known conductor, was 'wholly motivated by compassion' when he facilitated his parents' journey to Switzerland. Others may feel that the depth of compassion in such cases should be for the courts to decide.

Oddly enough Lord Phillips of Matravers, who wrote the House of Lords' Judgment granting Debbie Purdy's demand for 'clarity' was the judge who overturned the ruling of the High Court in Leslie Burke's case in 2005. He declared, apparently with fury, that there was no right to food and fluid if a patient needs it given by means of a tube. (He may only refuse.)

Other dangers to life have included the Government's 'End of Life Care Strategy'. The Liverpool Pathway, part of this, puts patients at risk of death by dehydration, since heavy sedation prevents normal drinking. Funding which traditional hospices could only dream of has gone into spreading this treatment of patients thought to be dying, in hospitals and care homes across Britain. Last year there was a public outcry, sparked off by senior doctors and relatives of the dead. Following this Version 11 of the Pathway was replaced by Version 12, which allows food and fluid and more consultation with families, but some healthcare professionals have complained that the previous version was 'simpler'.

Baroness Campbell wrote in *Disability Now* in November 2009: 'I warned about sleepwalking into an assisted dying culture only two months ago, when I challenged Lord Falconer's amendment to the Coroners' and Justice Bill. On that occasion the amendment was defeated. I likened such seemingly small moves to traffic lights. I think we are definitely on amber now...'

Warnings have done some good: protests against the DPP's Intermin Guidelines on assisting suicide had the effect of stiffening them up, removing the official blessing for doctors doing it, or anyone helping to kill a person with disability.

It pays to fight.

Elspeth Chowdharay Best is the Secretary of ALERT (Against Legalised Euthanasia Research and Training)

Conservative Classic — 39

Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son* 1907

Christie Davies

Edmund Gosse's parents, who were Plymouth Brethren, lived in the 1850s in an utterly unchanging way, one dominated by their faithful adherence to the view that everything in the Bible was true in a completely literal sense. They lived in 'entire resignation to the will of God and not less entire disdain of the judgement of man'. Their home was a place of constant prayer and constant examination of the state of their souls. Every spare minute was spent in 'interpretation of prophecy and particularly in unwrapping the dark sayings bound up in the Book of Revelation' or in evangelism, in the thrusting of tracts and of earnest conversation on strangers in public places. Many souls were saved in this way.

Gosse as an adult was no longer a true believer but he nonetheless records how very happy his parents were, happy to be married to each other and sharing unfeigned contentment in a religious way of life into which no doubts ever crept. The discerning of the workings of prophecy was a shared intellectual and moral interest and they were greatly comforted by their certainty that the Jews would return to Jerusalem and that the Church of Rome was doomed. And so it came to pass. Benjamin Netanyahu and abused Hibernian altar boys may seem unlikely instruments of Providence but God moves in a mysterious way.

Gosse's mother died slowly and painfully when he was in his seventh year but despite her sufferings and sorrows she died in peace and tranquillity, faith-filled and lucid to the last. Her dying injunction to her husband, Philip Gosse, was that he bring up their son to walk with her and her beliefs as securely as her conviction that she was about to 'walk with Him' in white.

Even in the age of Victorian faith, the Gosses' way of life was not entirely well regarded and in the twentieth century the secular authorities have persecuted such sects as theirs, as we know from the illuminating studies made by Bryan Wilson. Our own era has been a time of multi-cultural pandering to the most extreme, violent and kaffir-hating of Muslims but one of exclusion for these peaceable saints. Progressive educationalists sneer at such ultra-committed Christians, saying that they are depriving their children of a 'normal childhood', words they would never apply to those with depraved and criminal dissolute parents, one of whom may have gone missing, or to the little robots packed off to the Medrassah to recite by heart an obscure text in Arabic, a language few of them understand.

The death-bed admonitions of Gosse's mother led his father to be even more aggressively solicitous of his son's spiritual welfare. This combination of his autobiography and his father's biography is about the inner tensions created in the son, which eventually were to drive him openly to embrace Ibsenism and worse. Even earlier, as a young child, he had tried to test out God by deliberately indulging in idolatry, by praying to a chair, which he addressed in the un-Churchillian vocative as 'O chair!' Nothing happened and he began to have doubts, not about religion but about his father and his father's views on religion.

Some will say little Edmund had a narrow childhood from which all children's fiction and also the pagan celebrations of Christmas were excluded; but what childhood is not narrow? The young Gosse read maps until he knew the location of every town in the world and he read astronomy and the works of natural history that were the basis of his father Philip Gosse's career as a leading biologist. How many children then or now know anything of these solid joys and lasting pleasures or indeed any science at all? With that knowledge of science came a love of and capacity for observation and a profound sense of the beauty of what God had created in nature. The lives of other middle-class mid-Victorian children who were read the banal tales of Jack the Giant Killer and forced to learn to play the piano badly, so that the family could sing sentimental ballads or folk songs were far narrower than his. While they learned mere social graces, Edmund explored the universe.

Yet it was in that universe that troubles arose that disturbed his father, who believed both in the details of Genesis and in the inexorable progress of the natural sciences. Enter Darwin in 1857, bearing natural selection as the cause of the evolution and diversity of species. Many, such as Philip Gosse's friend the Rev Charles Kingsley, found it easy, indeed cheering, to embrace both and there is a theological tradition going back to St Augustine that shows it is not necessary to take the six days of creation literally. Philip Gosse's mind was too rigid for this. Instead he tried to reconcile the two in his book *Omphalos* that begins with Adam's

possession of a navel even though he had never been born. Philip Gosse FRS argued that similarly everything on earth had an imagined history built into it. It is not an unreasonable argument in the light of post-modern philosophy and anthropology. We cannot know the past and our world would look much the same whether the past is real or exists only in the imagination of God. Darwinism is a very useful mental construct with strong explanatory power which everyone should know about but as the social constructionists tell us, how can we possibly be absolutely certain that there was such a past? The geologists and biologists did not take Gosse seriously, nor his belief in successive catastrophes. Led by Lyell they believed in the unjustified doctrine of uniformitarianism, of change occurring only through the observable geological processes of the nineteenth century; the idea that an angry God should hurl a hefty asteroid at the earth and wipe out a whole range of species, making room for others, was beyond their imagination. It was only in the 1960s with the study of plate tectonics that American geologists came to accept the reality of continental drift with its horrid implication that their pure New World was a drifted part of the corrupt Old World.

Philip and Edmund Gosse

Gosse was upset at this rejection of his thesis but he continued to toil at his empirical work, catching sea anemones in the rock pools of Devon and cataloguing them with care and insight; whatever his son may imply, father Gosse remaind a respected scientist. Philip Gosse invented the Victorian aquarium and his son records sadly how this led to the invasion and disturbance of the eco-systems of our beautiful rock pools by endless common trippers armed with nets and trowels. Their very sense of the splendour of the natural world awakened by the work of Philip Gosse led them to destroy the very beauty that had perfumed his many books for the general public, books often handed out as Sunday School prizes. All men kill the things they love; today the Greens are destroying our landscape in the name of saving it.

Edmund continued to be inwardly rebellious and when told that he was destined to become a missionary in heathen parts he records that 'I beat upon the coverlid with my fists and I determined that whatever happened I would not, not, *not* — go out to preach the Gospel among horrid, tropical niggers.' In one fell beating of the fists he had fallen away from the faith. Yes, in our secular world we still retain unthinking magical beliefs as gross as those of Gosse *père*.

The young Gosse was unwisely introduced to the study of Latin and in particular of Virgil, whom Victorian Christians saw as more wholesome than other classical authors. They forgot that included in Virgil is the indecent tale of the unnatural lusts of Corydon. In later life Edmund Gosse was to become a Corydonist, a devotee of Corydonism who wrote emotional Corydonian letters to male associates and was close to John Addington Symonds and André Gide and also the mentor of Siegfried Sassoon. Our Edmund doesn't hint at this tendency, for in 1907 it was a matter not to be spoken of, not even among Christians.

At school Edmund fell in love with poetry, particularly that of Shakespeare and Shelley and even took to fiction, starting with *Tom Cringle's Log,* a work that could be justified as geography and natural history but soon lapsing into a pastiche of *Pickwick Papers,* which he found amusing. He left home to work in London and became further estranged from this father. It is through this estrangement that he looks back at his childhood in fascinating, though I am told not entirely accurate, detail. This is a great work that casts light on the mores of an era that even when he was writing seemed remote and strange. Its strangeness can be felt in the actions of Susan Flood, one of the little congregation of saints to which Philip Gosse ministered, who went to the exhibition in the Crystal Palace, that 'Temple of Belial', and smashed the naked Greeks in the Sculpture Gallery into fragments with the business-end of her parasol. She was admired and applauded for this iconoclastic act by almost the entire local community of saints. Yet perhaps it was just a strange precursor of the attack with a meat cleaver on the fair bottom of Velazquez' famous 'Rokeby Venus' by the suffragette 'Slasher Mary' Richardson, in 1914. Like her religious predecessor Miss Richardson disapproved of the way in which men gaped at such artefacts. They both hated the dictum *Vita brevis est, ars longa.*

Edmund Gosse's work is a fine study of that crucial and central building block of the social order, the tie between father and son. Men who have never known it are truly impoverished. Gosse quarrelled with his father but he remained ever tied to him, which is how the masterpiece *Father and Son* came to be written.

Roy Kerridge

When walking in wild places, it is always a thrill to come across a mysterious pool, fast-flowing stream or hidden river with bushy bank. If the pool is a bubbling spring, it may be the parent of the river. No wonder our ancestors venerated holy wells. Re-dedicated to saints, such wells still have their place in Roman Catholic worship.

There is an uncanny or creepy side to wild water, and some pools all over the world are regarded as unholy, abodes of demons or man-snatching mermaids. Every year the River Dart claims a heart. Rhine maidens are not always benevolent, for there is a dark aspect to water.

Both Ghanaians and Jamaicans have told me 'true' stories of modern bridge builders thwarted by 'mermaid spirits' in rivers. A Yoruba friend once asked me wistfully if mermaid spirits really existed.

'I like to think so', I replied truthfully.

Asked why he was throwing money into the River Zambezi, near Victoria Falls, an English-speaking Matabele tribesman told my sister: 'This money is for my mother the Zambezi. The Zambezi does everything for me. She gives me water for my land. Thank you, Zambesi for the gift of water!'

Almost certainly the man believed the Zambesi to be both river and goddess, the water personified by a beautiful lady. Such a lady can both live in the river and be the river. In Dublin there is a modern statue of the river lady, or lady river, Anna Liffey. My Indian friend Padma knows a river goddess, named Bala, who may be related to Lake Bala in North Wales. However the Welsh lake may be called after a malevolent god, (Balor of the Baleful Eye). Padma herself is named after a goddess for there is a River Padma in North India.

The River Thames, like the god-named River Ogun in Nigeria, is a man, Old Father Thames. When he was a god, Dad Thames was known as Temis. Lud, also a Celtic god of great importance, gives his name to Ludgate in London. Demoted to a mere King Lud in legend, he became spiritual leader to the machine-wrecking Luddites. There is a River Lud in Lincolnshire. It runs through the pretty town of Louth, where it forms a boundary to a local park. On my visit to Lud, I was entranced by the sight of a herd of fallow deer on the far bank of his river. Perhaps sinister water spirits such as Somerset's Nicky Nicky Nye and the Nucker of Sussex owe something to memories of crocodiles that accompanied the Celts in their wanderings westward from India. Stuffed crocodiles in the Natural History Museum and live ones at London Zoo both received tributes of coins when I was a boy.

Last month I popped into Soho's Rain Forest Café and saw a pool with a realistic model crocodile, a lucky coin-getting device to raise money for charity. Everyone was throwing money in except a sad-eyed young African woman who asked everyone, 'Is that crocodile real? No one answered. Perhaps they thought she was joking. I told her it was a model croc, and she then asked if the wishes came true. 'Well I half believe it,' I said, and she nodded earnestly. 'Have a wish on me but don't tell anyone what it is, or it won't come true', I added, giving her a small coin. She threw the coin into the crocodile pool with an expression of complete trust. I like to think that the gods, or God, appreciated such faith, and that she found the room, man or job for which she may have been seeking.

ETERNAL LIFE

Christians in Britain are being persecuted and senior Bishops have written to the newspapers to complain. However, the degree of persecution is nothing like the suffering Christians in Pakistan endure where houses and churches are burned down, or in Sudan and Somalia where Christians are being slaughtered, as in Iraq, Nigeria and some of the former Soviet republics.

There is an aggressive secularism and a militant, philistine atheism on the march in Britain, while the mass media is crowded with professional God-haters who wish to see the Christian faith banished from public life. These people belong to a new Establishment. With political power and enormous influence through the enactment of new legislation, they have the authority of the state behind them. Social trends and changes in the law for the last forty years have been in favour of the secularists and against Christians. The moral climate of our nation has been destroyed and replaced by edicts promoting diversity and multiculturalism, and by so-called social policy reforms.

It has been discovered that the Labour government deliberately shaped its immigration policy to promote diversity and, in its own phrase, '*to change the character of the nation*'. These efforts have succeeded. Multiculturalism is not the pleasant image of people of different races and cultures living happily side by side, as the social engineers who devised it would have us believe. It has produced racial separation, and in the East End of London, the Midlands, and the North actual ghettoes. When this development took place in South Africa, it was condemned as *Apartheid* by the same people who are promoting it over here.

Churches are closing by the thousand and, whereas there were six mosques in Britain in 1961, there are now 1700. Immigration together with the comparative birth rate will make Britain and Europe predominantly Muslim within a generation. The generation of my youngest grandchild will inhabit an alien culture. They will be strangers in their own land. Even to draw attention to these likely outcomes is enough to incur the charge of *racism*. This is how dictatorial bureaucracies silence their critics.

These calamities have not been forced upon us by enemy action. We have willed our own demise and acquiesced before the new laws and new social trends while high living standards produced complacency. When the word *God* was pronounced in public in this country, everyone assumed it referred to *the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. You would have been laughed to scorn if you had suggested it would soon be *offensive* to put up the Crib at Christmas or against the law to wear a Cross at work.

If you were a City Rector or churchwarden, you would not hesitate to ask the bank in your parish to help you pay for the leaking roof. Now diversity prohibits business support for the church. Many firms will not advertise church services among their employees. The City of London Corporation will pay for a handrail on the church steps, provided it is understood that the payment is for tourists and devotees of organ recitals and other *cultural* activities. On no account will it pay anything to help people attend Christian worship. Churches are now obliged to register with the Charity Commissioners. Deliciously ironical this is when you consider that the very word *charity* derives from the Christian Faith.

Late in the day, a quiver of senior bishops has woken up to discover a spiritual wasteland in which Christians are being persecuted. It is astonishing that they are shocked at the state of the country for it was they, the bishops and our rulers in the General Synod, who colluded with the secularisers, ensuring that the church accommodated its theology and moral teachings to the new social policies. Meanwhile the leaders and guardians of the faith threw out the basic texts of English Christianity — *The Authorised Version of the Bible* and *The Book of Common Prayer.* This was iconoclasm perpetrated by those who were appointed to care for the icons. Next year marks the 400th anniversary of *The Authorised Version* and places who never use the *AV* will bring it out for a junket and then put it back in the cupboard for another 400 years.

The clergy's ruling elite denied the miracle stories of the Gospels and even the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. While losing no opportunity to cast doubt on the faith they promised at their Ordination to uphold, they vigorously championed world religions, interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism: the Archbishop of Canterbury notoriously wishing to accommodate aspects of Sharia law. How strange for Christians to play up Sharia while discarding the Ten Commandments and replacing them with the bogus fashionable nostrums of antiracism and environmentalism

It is not only a religious issue but the loss of Christian civilisation which has given to the whole of Europe, and to this country, not just a parade of dazzling cultural

achievements in art, music, architecture and literature, but some fine political liberties, and an intellectual coherence never so fully attained hitherto. The great mathematician A.N. Whitehead declared that 'there is but one source for science also: It must come from the Medieval insistence on the rationality of God.'

Where the eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, and their prettified imitations in Hampstead drawing rooms, have preached otherworldliness and renunciation, a world of pure spirit, and where their modern opposite, the creed of materialism, insists there is nothing beyond earthly satisfactions, Christian civilisation has given us the only metaphysical principle upon which lasting coherence can be built. This whole world of art, morals, law and science is bound up with the Christian life — not as an abstract principle, but as actually lived over generations of private prayer, reading the scriptures, meeting to receive the Body and the Blood, and daily trying to practise charity. All this has now very nearly gone. And if it goes completely, then all the good things we have come to rely on and to love will go with it. They will not survive the death of the faith to which they owe their significance.

In the 20th century the philosopher R.G. Collingwood saw this danger:

> Civilizations sometimes perish because they are forcibly broken up by the armed attack of enemies without or revolutionaries within; but never from this cause alone. Such attacks never succeed unless the thing that is attacked is weakened by doubt as to whether the end which it sets before itself, the form of life which it tries to realize, is worth achieving. On the other hand, this doubt is quite capable of destroying a civilization without any help whatever. If the people who share a civilization are no longer on the whole convinced that the form of life which it tries to realize is worth realizing, nothing can save it.

In conclusion I adapt Collingwood: The gravity of the peril lies especially in the fact that so few recognize any peril to exist. When Rome was in danger, it was the cackling of the sacred geese that saved the Capitol. I, Peter Mullen, am only a priestly goose, consecrated with a cassock and surplice and fed at a rectory table; but cackling is part of my job, and cackle I will.

Peter Mullen is Rector of St Michael's, Cornhill.

Reputations — 28

Nesta Webster

H E Taylor

Nesta Webster's literary career got off to a good start with the 1916 publication of *The Chevalier de Boufflers, a Romance of the French Revolution.* The author's sympathy with the subject, owing something to a conviction that she herself had lived and loved at the court of Louis XVI, together with her diligent quest for original sources, secured for the book a good deal of success. But far from sitting on her laurels, Mrs Webster remained immersed in the period, months of research in the Bibliothèque Nationale and elsewhere finding fruit in 1919 in *The French Revolution, a Study in Democracy.*

Although omitted from recent academic bibliographies, Mrs Webster's history remains an original contribution. She documented in the Terror a systematic plan to promote democracy by depopulating France. And while the TLS suggested a 'tendency to advance from a presumption to an inference and thence to a conviction', other reviews were more favourable. In any event, the book made some impact, and the London Library holds six copies. Not the first to sense the shadowy presence of Freemasons and Illuminists behind events, Webster spares no pains in trying to run these intrigues to ground. At the same time her general narrative is exceptionally clear in its vigorous prose.

For better or worse Mrs Webster's history appeared at a time of another revolution with internationalist pretensions. It was not long before she began to trace the Russian revolution to the same occult origins as the French. The outcome of her labours was *World Revolution: The Plot Against Civilization*, published in 1921. Here she sought to demonstrate that the great social and revolutionary upheavals of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries were but episodes in an overarching anarchist conspiracy originating with Adam Weishaupt in 1776. Again the timing of publication was significant. The panics of 1919 had faded. In so far as Britain had been exposed to a 'revolutionary moment' bulk opinion sensed that the danger had passed. Warned by a London publisher that she would have 'the whole literary world against you', this book was less well received.

A straightforward patriot and a feminist, Mrs Webster remained true to the ideals of the pro-war party of 1917-18. At the same time her feet were now set on a controversial path. This stemmed from her observation, commonplace enough in the immediate post-revolutionary period, that many Bolsheviks were Jews. There followed a suspicion of inherent revolutionary tendencies among Jews. A supposedly common materialism, and shared internationalist outlook inclined to dreams of world domination, cemented the connection. Putting aside their own domestic frightfulness, the Bolsheviks' sponsorship of industrial unrest in Europe and of nationalist revolutionary movements in the East unmistakeably threatened the security of the Britain and the empire. The idea of an anti-British conspiracy with a Jewish component took hold, finding an outlet in books and articles for the *Patriot* and the *Morning Post.*

Further 'investigation' starting in the first century AD led to *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* (1924), the most completely evolved expression of Mrs Webster's occultist views. She found a model for later secret societies in the system of the tenth century Egyptian Fatimites. The ardent believer was inducted into the first degree, 'but with the fifth degree the process of undermining his religion began' until, in the ninth and final degree 'all belief in revealed religion was ... destroyed'. In other words the final secret was the utter negation of the original beliefs, and it is hard not to trace in this method the lineaments of our modern political parties. From there Mrs Webster progressed steadily forward through the Templars, Freemasons and others to 'Pan-Germanism' and the 'Real Jewish Peril'. And if Mrs Webster questioned the authenticity of *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, it was perhaps because from her perspective they were too good to be true.

Her anti-semitism was not of the conventional kind. Resolutely opposed to all enemies of the British Empire and the Christian civilization it represented, she initially lessened her burden by conflating the German with the Jewish menace. She saw them as one and abhorred them both equally. When the early links between the German General Staff and the (still predominantly Jewish) Bolsheviks emerged from the shadows at Rapallo in 1922, they provided Mrs Webster with a workable paradigm until the emergence of Hitler in the 1930s. The bias, however, was clear, and when a final deviation point was reached she went against the Jews. The association with international Bolshevism was absolute, and Bolshevism remained the fundamental threat. As an English gentlewoman, she was not therefore motivated by Nazi-style racism and did not advocate persecution, but caught between the logic of self-restraint on one hand and the logic of Hitlerism on the other, she was left immobilized, with nowhere to go. And by the time the abandoned anti-German strand of her thinking achieved its unexpected apotheosis in the Nazi-Soviet Pact, there was no way back.

The irony of Mrs Webster's career is that her profound focus on history placed her decisively on the wrong side of it. There she remains, enjoying a reputation with fringe conspiracy groups, but otherwise as far from the mainstream as can be imagined. That is in some ways regrettable because her books, putting aside the anti-Jewish content (no small task, admittedly, in *Germany and England*, 1938), explore from a now untypical perspective important aspects of British and European history.

The Socialist Network (1926), took up where *World Revolution* left off and continued the work of unravelling communist conspiracy. Mrs Webster's logical mind, impelled to seek the causes of effects, was unafraid to join the dots. The book is a comprehensive directory of past and present revolutionary organizations, grouped under various genres. True to its title it sets out the links between them and aims to establish a common cause. Opinions will differ as to the extent of her success, but the chart tracing the bloodlines of the various movements, however the data is interpreted, represents exhaustive research.

In 1931 Mrs Webster varied her approach. Feeling that she had done enough in drawing attention to enemy action, she turned to the weaknesses, failures and betrayals that she believed to lie within. *Surrender of an Empire* is an interesting book. It examines the British response to Sinn Fein, Swaraj (India), the Wafd (Egypt), Zionism and other expressed enemies. (Strangely the USA is omitted). If Mrs Webster in any way yielded to the force of her own analysis she must have seen that the empire was going down. But unlike the chatterers of the Round Table school, she was quite happy to stand to her post on the blazing deck. She did not imagine the ship of empire reduced to a maritime museum. Perhaps she really was so astonished that 'the rulers of a nation that stood up to a Ludendorff and a Tirpitz quail beneath the threats of a Gandhi' that it was only common sense to believe that a sterner reality would assert itself.

Curious echoes of contemporary affairs resonate through the book. When in 1929 the Prime Minister of France, Aristide Briand, proposed the formation of the United States of Europe, Mrs Webster again traced the origins of this idea to the Illuminati scheme for a Universal Republic. Working forward through Anarcharsis Clootz, Victor Hugo and other theorists of European union, Mrs Webster identifies Sir Max Waechter's 1913 European Unity League as

a significant modern starting point. In characteristic fashion she draws out the parallels between Waechter's later 1924 manifesto and the programme of Clootz. Nor does she overlook Trotsky's input, specifically his 1923 assertion that 'The United States of Europe should be the new slogan of the Communists.' The attitude of the little-known Clarté group is examined, as is that of the Theosophical Society. Finally, after setting out various possible forms that European union might take, some more alarming than others, she suggests that 'it would be well to obtain a clear answer to these questions before it is too late.' Perhaps we stand at last on the threshold of initiation into this ultimate secret.

In general, however, the internalized focus of the book allows Mrs Webster to cross over from conspiracy to the productive fields of cock-up. In examining what she terms the Conservative Debacle, she uses as a case study the Equal Franchise Act of 1929, which extended the vote to women aged 21 and older. The rights and wrongs of this measure have long since been decided. Its interest is purely historical. But in politics timing is everything, and the way in which the bill was enacted by a party that was a) opposed to it, and b) electorally torpedoed by it, provides a certain grim amusement. Mrs Webster is always thorough, and as she traces the capture of senior Conservative opinion by a radical partisan lobby group, the unrequited sucking up to the Labour Party, the disregard of supposed principle, and the contempt bordering on hatred for supporters, we find the template for perhaps every subsequent Conservative administration but one. In any event in 1929 the Conservatives went down ('after you, Claude') to crushing defeat.

Mrs Webster died in 1960 aged 83. She had returned to more conventional history in 1937, with two books on Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Otherwise, apart from a few articles, she published only a volume of memoirs after 1938. The Anti-Defamation League, in rebutting modern critics of the Talmud (Mrs Webster was one), points out that 'they judge the [offending] passages based on contemporary moral standards, ignoring the fact that the majority of these passages were composed close to two thousand years ago by people living in cultures radically different from our own'. (*The Talmud in Anti-Semitic Polemics*, 2003). In re-evaluating Nesta Webster's contributions, should not just a little of this indulgence be allowed also to a writer rooted in the context of a more recent, but still very different time?

LETTERS

Sir,

The election of Jacob Zuma as President of South Africa makes one very gloomy. (Letter from South Africa Spring 2010). Apart from anything else Zuma is a Zulu with a Standard 3 education.

Both the revered Mandela and Mbeki are from the Xhosa tribe. Zulus are regarded as superior to Xhosas and it is often said that no Zulu male will cohabit with a Xhosa woman. When Mandela came to power the Xhosa dominated the ANC, sidelined the Zulus and their party officials. What kind of South Africa will Zuma control with his cronies?

The sidewalks in all the suburbs are overgrown and neglected. Broken streetlights are never repaired and roads are deteriorating by the day. Municipalities are bankrupt since the blacks do not pay rates and taxes. The crime rate — theft, rape, murder, physical assaults and white collar crime — is the highest in the world and is increasing. Eskom the electricity supplier can only provide power to households at certain times and for the rest is prone to frequent brown-outs.

Zuma, who is not being brought to account for his 385 crimes, is in good company as Winnie Mandela, a murderess, is still free and never held to account. Joe Slovo, a devoted communist and anti-Christ, was buried after a church service conducted by Desmond Tutu.

The moral values of the black community in SA is illustrated in the following true story: A Soweto urchin of some 13 years was selling morning newspapers in Braamfontein. Having sold his total allocation, he was busily counting his money on an upturned vegetable crate, carefully setting aside his allotted fee in coins. Strolling down the pavement two well dressed black gentlemen paused at the paper seller's crate, grabbed all the money, and frisked the boy to see if he had any money hidden on him. They strolled further on unperturbed by his impassioned pleas and tears streaming down his face that the money was for his family of a mother and three sisters. A perfect example of black morality in the new South Africa.

I left my country after 72 years and am now settled in Britain never to return.

Jo Muller, Milton Keynes

Sir,

I wish to correct a sentence in my Letter from Australia (SR Spring 2010): 'The atheist nomenklatura in its anti-Abbott campaign includes ex-Catholics like Britain's Nick Cohen.' What I originally wrote was something very different: 'In Australia, *pace* Kevin MacDonald, the main counter-cultural heavy lifting has been carried out by ex-Catholics instead of by secular Jews (even if secular Jewish Marxist-turned neocon Nick Cohen proclaimed his Christophobic, anti-Abbott credentials in *The Guardian* on 6th December).

To the best of my knowledge, Cohen not only eschews religious belief now, he always did eschew it. Thus for the record, it is incorrect to call him an ex-Catholic.

R J Stove, Melbourne

ARTS AND BOOKS

All Het Up

Ruth Dudley Edwards

The Real Global Warming Disaster, Christopher Booker, Continuum, 2009, £16.99.

It has been the lone, angry voice of Christopher Booker in his *Sunday Telegraph* column which for years has given courage to those of us who felt instinctively that the-end-of-the-world-is-nigh global-warmists were hysterical ideologues and that Al Gore was a dangerous fool. Remorselessly, Booker turned over scientific stones to uncover skulduggery, misrepresentation and slovenliness, and put realistic figures on environmental initiatives that showed that in the cause of combating climate changes alleged to be man-made, our politicians were on course to render us bankrupt as well as devoid of sources of energy other than the inefficient turbines that are ruining our landscape. Faced with true believers, we could utilise Booker-provided ammunition, and when shrilly denounced as deniers and Flat Earthers, we would think of the great man and stand firm. As he made clear again and again, the very fact that dissent was stamped on so brutally showed how rocky were the intellectual foundations on which this mad ideological edifice has been built.

He was not alone, of course. There are many heroes in this story, so gripping I read it in just two sessions and so shocking my metaphorical jaw was permanently dropped. There were, for instance, two Canadians who understood how computers can distort statistics and took on Michael Mann and his hockey stick. It was young Dr Mann who in 1998, in *Nature* — an organ of warmist orthodoxy — answered the prayers of the alarmists within the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) who needed, as one wrote in an email, 'to get rid of the Mediaeval Warm Period', an inconvenient historical fact that buttressed the arguments of those who believed that climate changes were cyclical. Mann's computer model produced a graph which showed that average temperatures had declined through nine centuries and had shot up to an unprecedented level in the late twentieth century. Named the 'hockey stick' because it was a long line with a sharp curve at the end, this graph was rapturously welcomed by the man-made-climate-change establishment — who removed the Little Ice Age from history along with the Mediaeval Warm Period — and was used by the IPCC to spread fear of an imminent apocalypse caused by modern man and his carbon emissions.

When in 2003 Professor Ross McKitrick, an economist, and Stephen McIntyre, a financial consultant and statistical analyst, got hold of Mann's original data, they discovered the algorithm programmed into his computer model was so flawed that whatever data was fed into it emerged in the shape of a hockey stick. Corrected and applied to Mann's data, it showed that the fifteenth century was hotter that the twentieth. Why, asked McKitrick later, did those at the top of the IPCC give such extraordinary prominence to 'the hockey stick data as the canonical representation of the earth's climate history. Owing to a combination of mathematical error and a dysfunctional review process, they ended up promoting the exact wrong conclusion. How did they make such a blunder?'

Because they wanted to, of course. As they wanted to believe anything that enhanced the value of their emotional and intellectual investment and disbelieve anything that revealed their gullibility, which is why sacred environmental texts went unexamined and heretics were silenced, denied funding and squeezed out of public discourse. Sir David King, Chief Scientific Adviser, who had learned no humility from his disastrous role in the foot-and-mouth fiasco of 2001, went to an international seminar in Moscow in 2004 intent on persuading the sceptical Russian government to sign up to the Kyoto Protocol. Having failed despite help from the British government to have two-thirds of the participating scientists prevented from speaking on the grounds that they were 'undesirable', he and his team displayed their anger at any contradictions of IPCC dogma. (An example was a Swedish geology professor who dared to point out that while the IPCC insisted the Maldives were at risk from rising sea levels, the extensive field observations of his expert team showed them to have fallen in the 1970s and then remained stable.) When King repeated the IPCC claim that global warming was responsible for melting ice on the summit of Kilimanjaro, he was challenged by the entomologist, Professor Paul Reiter of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, who had resigned from the IPCC when it refused to take any account of his evidence that global warming had nothing to do with the spread of insect-borne diseases. Numerous studies, Reiter pointed out, showed melting had begun in the 1880s

and was a result of deforestation. Unable to refute the point, King broke off in mid-sentence and led his delegation from the room.

The enraged chairman, Alexander Illarionov, Putin's chief economic adviser, denounced the British attempts at censorship and told a press conference that the reputation of British science and the British government had 'sustained heavy damage'. The ideological base of Kyoto, he said, 'can be juxtaposed and compared, as Professor Reiter has done just now, with man-hating totalitarian ideology with which we had the bad fortune to deal during the twentieth century, such as National Socialism, Marxism, Eugenics, Lysenkoism and so on. All methods of distorting information existing in the world have been committed to prove the alleged validity of these theories. Misinformation, falsification, fabrication, mythology, propaganda.'

How right he was. As Booker shows, it was the psychological vacuum in the West left after Marxism crumbled that enabled environmentalism to popularise an ideology aimed at saving the planet from the greed and selfishness of humanity. Maurice Strong, an early recruit and a passionate proponent of world government who saw the UN as a means to challenge the selfish materialism of the rich Western countries — was chosen in 1972 by U Thant to organise and chair the first 'UN Conference on the Human Environment'. This was the ancestor of the IPCC, an allegedly scientific body set up by the UN in 1988, which picked up on the issue of global warming and set out to change the conduct of the world.

Over two decades, almost unchallenged — with the enthusiastic support of leaders of the EU anxious for a cause to give it moral purpose — the IPCC's pronouncements became Holy Writ in the self-hating West. So mesmerising was this secular religion that academics, journalists (the BBC was particularly slavish) and politicians (Czech President Vaclav Klaus apart) questioned nothing and backed policies that if implemented would cripple developed economies. As late as 2006, in *An Inconvenient Truth* — a film as well-made as it was ill-informed and emotionally incontinent — Al Gore terrified millions: 'If the vast majority of the world's scientists are right, we have just ten years to avert a major catastrophe that could send our entire planet into a tail-spin of epic destruction involving extreme weather, flood, droughts, epidemics and killer heat waves beyond anything we have ever experienced.' Gore made millions and won a Nobel Prize for this rubbish and David Miliband, the Environment Secretary, ordered that the film be sent to every school to frighten further a generation of brainwashed children.

The UK was to the fore among self-harming warmist states, committing itself to spending untold billions in pursuit of unnecessary reductions in carbon emissions. When Barack Obama became president, the US became the UK's main competitor in the race to see who could wreak most economic havoc on its people in the pursuit of environmental sanctity. By then, the work of increasingly confident dissidents was available on the internet through such blogs as McIntyre's *Climate Audit* and meteorologist Anthony Watt's *Watts Up With That?*, through painstaking work the bedrock of the IPCC's conclusions was being steadily eroded and the weather was getting colder rather than hotter, yet the Western establishment went on chanting its familiar mantras and promising to throw trillions at a problem that does not exist.

'Is the obsession with "climate change" turning out to be the most costly scientific blunder in history?' asks Booker. It certainly looks that way, unless the speed at which the bogus science is unravelling, the refusal of the non-developed countries to be bullied into joining the warmist herd, and the true crisis that has hit the global economy causes a new generation in the West to begin asking tough questions. As usual, the average Joe has kept his wits when intellectuals and rulers have been losing theirs, so outside the ranks of the faithful, there are plenty of ordinary people who think it possible to adjust sensibly to the inevitable vagaries of the climate and responsibly to conserve the resources of the planet without consigning the world to poverty. Christopher Booker, who should be patron saint of bloody-minded investigative journalists, has done us a great service.

Ideas and Consequences

Anthony Daniels

Intellectuals and Society, Thomas Sowell, Basic Books, 2010, £17.99.

Thanks to the expansion of tertiary education, there are more intellectuals, or perhaps people with intellectual pretensions, credentials and careers, than ever before. However, the sum of human wisdom has not been much increased by this proliferation of intellectuals, rather the reverse. In this book Thomas Sowell shows us why. Sowell is a black American economist and social philosopher not nearly as well known in this country as he should be. This, perhaps, is because he does not say what the vast majority of intellectuals want a man of his ethnicity to say. He lays about the pieties of our age with gusto, always writing with maximum clarity. He wants to be understood, not admired.

Intellectuals, in Sowell's sense, are people who live by ideas that have no immediate practical effect or direct empirical confirmation, and have a high level

of abstraction and generality. Although engineers and doctors obviously live by ideas, they are not *ipso facto* intellectuals. By contrast, opinion journalists, who generally deal in second-hand thoughts of much lesser rigour and complexity, do count as intellectuals.

This is not to say that the ideas that intellectuals peddle are not without effect, very far from it, they are often of the deepest historical significance. As Sowell shows, one of the reasons for the French collapse in 1940 is that the teachers' unions in France, under intellectual leadership, had for many years expunged reference to heroism or national pride in school accounts of the First World War. They wanted to instil the idea that war, any war whatsoever, was the greatest calamity that could befall mankind, and they succeeded. This, no doubt, was an understandable emotional reaction to the slaughter of the Great War; but intellectuals (not only in France) consistently preferred preserving the purity of their own rejection of war in the abstract to serious reflection on the obvious practical intentions of the psychopath who had taken power on the other side of the Rhine. The will to resist him had been sapped; for, as Churchill put it (so succinctly that Sowell quotes him), Britain cannot avoid war by dilating on its horrors.

Dilating on horrors is the speciality of the intellectual class. It is its *raison d'être* and perhaps its *sine qua non*. By constantly focusing on what is wrong in society, by taking civilisational achievements for granted and not believing that conservation is as important as change, intellectuals have exerted in many cases a deeply destructive influence. Possessing what Sowell aptly calls the vision of the anointed, that is to say a blueprint of the good society in their minds that is so unarguable that anyone who opposes or even casts doubt upon it is not worthy of serious consideration (and that gives the anointed the right to direct society at their will), most intellectuals are unable to see that deterioration is as possible as, and often easier to bring about than, improvement.

A good case in point and one which Sowell uses to effect is crime in Britain. Within the space of half a century, Britain went from being among the least crime-ridden societies in the western world to being the most (the same pattern is discernible in New Zealand, which so often follows Britain, God help them). It did so because of years of intellectual propaganda that sapped the will to suppress crime. British intellectuals took for granted as indestructible the achievement of a low level of criminality. They thought that Britain could avoid crime by dilating on the horrors of punishment.

The interest of intellectuals in what they have wrought is generally minimal. Like Mr Brown (an intellectual) they prefer abstractions to realities, indeed the two change places in their mental economies, and are therefore capable of no remorse or guilt. If the selling of the country's gold reserves resulted in a huge loss well, at least it was right in theory, and done for the best motives, which is what counts. The judgment of intellectuals is often wrong, in ways that would be hilarious if they were not disastrous. Sowell lucidly analyses the systematic reasons for their ill judgments.

Perhaps the most important is that intellectuals live in a costless world in which there is every incentive to devise other theories that defy common sense. A doctor who believed that the best treatment of appendicitis was green cheese would soon lose his licence to practice; but an intellectual suffers nothing, however absurd his theories. This is for several reasons: the connection between what he propounds and its practical effects is usually arguable, and in any case delayed. A man treated for appendicitis with green cheese is likely to die; the abandonment of punishment as a means of suppressing crime occurs in the context of many other changes.

Intellectuals, like everyone else, live and work in a marketplace. In order to get noticed they must say things which have not been said before, or at least say them in a different manner. No one is likely to obtain many plaudits for the rather obvious, indeed self-evident, thought that a street robber cannot commit street robberies while he is in prison; but an intellectual who first demonstrates that the cause of an increase in street robbery is the increase in the amount of property that law-abiding pedestrians have on them as they walk in the streets is likely to be hailed, at least until the next idea comes along. Thus, while there are no penalties for being foolish, there are severe penalties (at least in career terms) for being obvious. This automatically increases the propensity of intellectuals to espouse extreme or preposterous ideas that would never occur to anyone obliged by circumstances to keep their feet on the ground.

There is a further reason why intellectuals espouse preposterous ideas. Because they live in a world in which preposterous proposals are costless (that is, costless to them, not to others) they believe in benefits that are brought about without cost. They seem often to believe, for example, that you can have positive discrimination without negative discrimination. And if by some chance they are forced to face this thought that is not, after all, very difficult to grasp, they will keep it at a high level of abstraction. They will say, for example, that white males are paying the cost of their past dominance, not that an injustice is being done to Smith or Jones. Intellectuals want to be just.

Opposing the vision of the anointed is the tragic vision: while many aspects of life are susceptible to improvement, not all things that are desirable

are compatible, and in any case human life has inherent limitations. All the advances in medicine notwithstanding, man is still mortal; what Dr Johnson called 'the pains of separation' are still an inevitable part of human existence.

Throughout the book, Sowell gives instances of what one might call the stupidity of clever people. Some of them are hilarious: the eminent economist, Lester Thurow, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by no means therefore a fringe figure, claimed that the United States had the worst unemployment record of any country in the western world, a conclusion he reached by considering the unemployment figures in the United States alone. You don't have to be a professor to know that it is advisable, before saying that a is larger than b, to have some idea about the size of both. Nor was this an isolated slip on the part of Professor Thurow, a valued member of the *commentariat*. He also immortalised himself in 1989 by writing that 'Today the Soviet Union is a country whose economic achievements bear comparison with those of the United States', a misjudgement in the area of his supposed expertise that has not, however, deeply affected his career as a pundit. Intellectuals are like indebted Latin American governments: their mistakes are always forgiven and forgotten.

The need to stand out from the common herd of mankind by having original thoughts (that is to say, in many cases, thoughts that are original only because no sensible person would entertain them), the lack of personal consequences for the propagation of these thoughts, and the loss of caste that follows the enunciation of obvious but unpalatable truths means that intellectuals as a class are more often wrong than right.

This book might be subtitled 'The Economics and Sociology of Intellectual and Emotional Dishonesty' Of course, we have not yet got to the point at which public exposure of such dishonesty is impossible or illegal, but the auguries are not good, especially in this country, in which legislation founded on such dishonesty is constantly passed unopposed and even unnoticed, and where, to the hosannas of many intellectuals, ruthless, self-interested benevolence vies for predominance with unfathomable incompetence.

Another Boswell

Christie Davies

Samuel Johnson, a Life, David Nokes, Faber and Faber, 2009, £25.

David Nokes' great achievement is to tell us much of matters about which Boswell, Johnson's most famous biographer, was either not knowledgeable or not forthcoming. Boswell did not meet Johnson until long after Johnson's wife had died and in total Boswell only spent just 426 days with Johnson and during the last twenty-one years of Johnson's life, of which 101 were on their tour of the Hebrides in 1771. Johnson's wife was an important figure in his life, yet neither Boswell nor Mrs Thrale say much about her in their biographies of Johnson, possibly because they sought their own closeness to the great Cham. Boswell did try to gain details of Johnson's emotional life, even pressing Elizabeth Desmoulins with indecent questions; but he learned little and what he did find he did not use. Thanks to Nokes we can see far more clearly why Johnson married a widow twice his age. She was rich. Few women his own age would have married the young Johnson because his appearance, his tics and his oddities rendered him repulsive and he had neither fame nor money. Johnson was also restrained and constrained by the moral teachings of his religion so he needed matrimony; the frolics of Boswell and Henry Thrale with mistresses and actresses, chambermaids and whores were not for Johnson. Garrick speaks indirectly of the vigour of the Johnsons' early married life but as Johnson's wife Tetty sank into being a slave of those two great curses of humanity, alcohol and opium, she often refused him and after her death he took matters into his own hands. It is not surprising that all his life Johnson had a fear of madness and of going blind.

> According to Garrick, Johnson on being asked what he believed the greatest pleasure answered f*****g and the second was drinking. And therefore he wondered why there were not more drunkards, for all could drink though not all could f**k. The fact that for long periods of his life, Johnson abstained from *both* these pleasures indicates the strength of moral control he exacted on himself.

Many will be shocked at Johnson's coarse language but he did at least keep the 'F word' out of his dictionary. 'Praised by young ladies for having excluded the most 'naughty' four-letter words, he is alleged to have replied, 'What my dears! Then you have been looking for them?'

Johnson's greatest achievement was his Dictionary and it is interesting to learn from Nokes that having intended to fix the English language, he soon realised that purity and perfection are not to be had, for so much is a matter of arbitrary and changing usage. Johnson did though keep our language pure by excluding Scotticisms from it. Many of his assistants on the Dictionary were Scots and Nokes has discovered among Johnson's notes many examples of Scottish words suggested by these minions that Johnson had firmly crossed out. Among Johnson's discarded

examples is 'Baby (Babee). In Scotland this denotes a half penny, as alluding to the head impressed on the copper coin' We owe it to Johnson that today the word 'bawbee' is used only in jokes about stingy grasping Scotsmen and the content of their sporrans.

Because he was realistic about the inevitability of change Johnson was able to complete his work more effectively than his vast team of French rivals in lexicography who were working on French, a narrower language to English, one with fewer words than English and in consequence far fewer shades of meaning and allusiveness. One can just imagine a committee of Frenchmen squabbling for decades over the 'correctness' of a definition, while Johnson just got on with his task. No wonder our language has become that of the entire world. Johnson was disdainful of the French in general as well as their capacities for making a proper dictionary. In his Dictionary he defines Monsieur as 'a term of reproach for a Frenchman'. On his visit to Paris Johnson was horrified by the surly lack of manners of the French and their crude behaviour, such as hawking and spitting in public. On his visit to Paris with the Thrales Johnson declined to speak French and spoke to the more educated natives in Latin:

> Both (Johnson and Mrs Thrale) agreed that French cooking was vastly inferior to English, 'Their meals are gross' was Johnson's remark; she commented that 'Onions & Cheese prevail in all the Dishes, and overpower the natural Taste of the Animal excepting only when it stinks indeed, which is not infrequently the Case.

David Nokes is a historian whose goal is accuracy and he is right to stress that Johnson's earlier years were dogged by poverty, his latter ones by illness and decrepitude; but do we need so much detail? Still at least it brings home to us that for many the eighteenth century was less a time of elegance than one of the fear of debt and the debtors' prison. Today we are constantly harangued by a distinguished and eloquent ex-prison doctor about our dependence on the products of the pharmaceutical industry but in the eighteenth century opium and alcohol played the same part in people's lives and played it much worse. There were no better and less addictive pain-killers or mood-lifters available. Even Johnson's inordinate fondness for tea may be considered an addiction; indeed there is a medical term for the consequences: theism, from which Johnson certainly suffered. To drink twenty five cups at one sitting may not inebriate but it must cheer to an alarming extent, though perhaps not the hostess who is paying. Johnson's confidante Mrs. Thrale had eleven children, most of whom died young. The witty woman who brought so much delight into Johnson's life must have always either been pregnant or preoccupied with the latest baby. Mrs Thrale tried to be a philosopher but pregnancy was always breaking in.

Nokes acknowledges Boswell's status as Britain's greatest biographer but in a recent symposium on Johnson at the British Library he referred to his masterpiece as a work of fiction and in places he is rather dismissive of Boswell's accuracy and character. His own work is a fine history but it runs up against the problem that Johnson's continued existence as a known and vivid person is entirely due to Boswell. Who reads Mrs Thrale or Sir John Hawkins, Johnson's other biographers, today? Johnson was in his later years a celebrity whose doings were noted in a press that even invented scandal about him, suggesting that he was the real father of Mrs Thrale's son, but celebrities are soon forgotten. Even though we read and admire other eighteenth century authors we are rarely interested in their personal lives. We are curious about Johnson because Boswell made us so. David Nokes has repeated the reasonable view that Boswell was so self-obsessed that his life of Johnson was really about Boswell himself. Yet why should we not stick with Johnson as seen in Boswell's mirror? Why should we not accept Johnson as part of a double act, as a stage Englishman tied for eternity to a stage Scotsman? We can and should read David Nokes and be grateful that we now know more about Johnson; but then we shall return to Boswell.

An Insider's Biography

John Jolliffe

Gladstone, A Portrait, Sir William Gladstone, Michael Russell, 2010, £20.

The author of this portrait is the great-grandson of the Grand Old Man, and consequently has material in his archives which has been neglected by previous biographers: not perhaps of a spectacular kind, but which bring the subject to life in a fresh and enjoyable way, such as the facsimiles of a number of Gladstone's own notes for Budgets and other speeches.

The family were Scottish, prosperous grain merchants in Leith, before moving to the wider trade centre of Liverpool, where the future Prime Minister was brought up. At Eton he was critical of the teaching, and of the 'slackness of Chapel services', which he counteracted by private reading of Paley's *Evidences,* an early example of his extreme seriousness and determination. At Christ Church the men translating Aristotle's *Rhetoric* with him included two future headmasters, three budding bishops and three future viceroys. There

was a compulsory service every day in the Cathedral, and his religious zeal grew. This crucial aspect of his nature is well explored in Richard Shannon's excellent recent book *Gladstone, God and Politics,* even though Sir William does not share all its conclusions.

This new short book does not set out to unravel the extremely complex story of a political career which lasted over sixty years. Instead the treatment is thematic, 'presenting the subject in a series of scenes.' Family background and education is followed by immediate election to Parliament as a Tory, soon with intensive work under Peel, whose good influence was to remain powerful. After the great drama of the Repeal of the Corn Laws Gladstone began relations with what were to become the Liberals, and made a smashing attack on Disraeli's Budget in December 1862, which in effect 'brought down the government single-handedly.' On the strength of this he became Chancellor himself at the age of forty-three. His preparation for it was intense. (His diary for February 18 records 'Yesterday I had fifteen hours work; today not much over thirteen.')

The next chapter covers his personal and family life, including his exceptionally happy marriage, and his taking over the management of his wife's family estate at Hawarden in Cheshire, her brother Sir Stephen Glynne being no businessman and indeed at one time threatened with bankruptcy. Gladstone's eldest son eventually inherited the property.

1864 was the year in which he said that 'every man who is not presumably incapacitated by a general unfitness or political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution', not at the time a Tory sentiment. Unlike the politicians of today, Gladstone always did what he seriously considered was in the national interest, quite without regard to what people might think. His great rival Disraeli, on the other hand, as his generally admiring biographer Robert Blake admits, 'lived from crisis to crisis, improvising, guessing, responding to the mood of the moment.' Part of the reason for this may have been that Gladstone was a rich man who could afford to indulge his moral code, and Disraeli was poor, and on the make. But the temperamental difference lay much deeper.

Garibaldi's visit in the following year took London by storm. Gladstone was carried away by the 'simple nobility of his demeanour, ... integrity ... inborn native grace.' So appalled was Gladstone by conditions in the prisons of Naples that he failed to spot the great harm the unification of Italy was to do to a country where some sort of federation of radically different peoples would have been far better, as for many years in the Austrian Empire. Slamming them all together was eventually to lead to the disaster of Mussolini.

When Disraeli succeeded Derby as prime minister in 1868, Gladstone routed the Tories and plunged into crucial legislation: the Irish Land Act, the Cardwell reforms of the army, Forster's Elementary Education Act, the Licensing Act, the Judicature Act were all important steps forward. All were stoutly resisted by the vested interests of the day, and in 1874 Disraeli came back. Gladstone, exhausted by his herculean labours, announced his retirement but in 1879 came the triumphant Midlothian Campaign, masterminded by the young Rosebery. He returned to his roots in Scotland, and made thirty speeches in fifteen days, including one to an estimated audience of 20,000 in Edinburgh. Disraeli was swept aside.

In some ways the most important, tantalising chapter is the one on Ireland. This subject was such an overwhelming burden that in 1881 he noted 'Spoke on Transvaal but am too full of Ireland to be *free* in anything else.' Sir William reminds us that the social and economic condition of the country was appalling. With some local exceptions, life at starvation level often caused emigration. The penniless Roman Catholic population had to pay for the Protestant Church. However, the bungled assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish on his arrival as Chief Secretary was a disastrous setback for all ideas of treating Ireland fairly. But by 1885 Gladstone had come round to some kind of Home Rule. 'I have long suspected that the Union of 1800 ... like Pitt's Revolutionary War, was a gigantic, though excusable, mistake.' But his desire for cooperation with Parnell was unfortunately ended by Parnell's disgrace and death. The second Home Rule Bill was passed by the Commons but resoundingly defeated by the Lords, some of whom were large landowners in Ireland. Thereafter there were still eighty Irish members in the Commons on whom, with unfortunate results, the Liberals were to depend for a majority. What is fascinating is that unlike most Liberals, who become more conservative as they grow older and more experienced, Gladstone became more and more radical, and when his plans for the right of tenants to buy out their farms with government loans blocked by the Lords, his new disciple Rosebery made it his mission either to abolish the House of Lords altogether, or to curtail its veto severely, a measure which of course only came about, for other reasons, in 1911. When he came back in 1880 Queen Victoria had come to dislike him so much that she described him as 'that crazy and in many ways ridiculous old man'.

Unfortunately, Sir William does not finish by drawing up a balance sheet of Gladstone's heroic qualities and his lesser but unfortunate failings. But readers, especially those who have a vague idea of Gladstone's greatness but who haven't the time for a detailed study,

will come away with a real admiration for this titanic figure. His almost incredible energy, both physical, moral and intellectual, has never been seen again, even in Churchill, and, it is safe to say, never will be.

Henpecked Historians

Kenneth Minogue

A World by Itself: A History of the British Isles, Ed Jonathan Clark, William Heinemann, London, 2010, £30.

Historians don't have it easy these days. Philosophical theories swirl around them in order to undermine the inherited view that historians tell us the story of what happened in the past. Whigs — the story of freedom as progressive — and Marxists — how the workers, stage by stage, are moving us into a true community — are certainly rejected as exhibiting the vice of historicism. At a more sophisticated theoretical level, grand pattern-makers from Hegel to Spengler are thought little better than grandiose frauds. Poor Fukuyama is left for dead in this part of the forest. One grand area of struggle is that between those who think mankind's past must be a story — a narrative — and those who think it is a process. But narrative — at least according to a host of amusing post-modernists — can never be anything but a 'fiction', while process can hardly avoid demoting human beings to the status of robots, mere materials in some grander mechanism. Process theorists always end up knowing more than the people they are describing, like Hegel, but without the jokes. The past, we are told, won't lie down; it's just as unpredictable as the future. And throughout all this flim-flam, the one sure thing is that the difference between popular and academic history (between clean pages and the footnotes) will be sniffily sustained among the academics.

It's that gap between the academics and the readers that Jonathan Clark's *A World By Itself: A History of the British Isles* seeks to bridge. He has recruited five heavyweights to help him survey the reality of life in the British Isles from prehistoric times to the present. The book quivers with intelligence as the authors respond to every critical *caveat* historians have had to endure over the last century. Counterfactuals are invoked lest we succumb to the idea of historical inevitability, and each of the contributors ends with a few of them. All the contributors are wary of the idea that historical dates stand for grand shifts in human life: history is a slow evolution, and the English did not wake up in 1485 to a new Tudor world. The idea of the Enlightenment is reallocated to the twentieth century, and the Industrial Revolution sinks to an evolution. Anglo-centrism goes out the door so that the three Celtic peripherals can be given their importance, for that's the only way to understand much of what happened in London. But if this particular revision is valid, can this history be 'a world by itself'? What of the French: much British history amounts to a dialogue — or a blazing row — with them. These are quibbles, of course, but they illustrate the henpecked character of historians today.

Clark's contributors are James Campbell, dealing with the Romans up to the Norman Conquest, John Gillingham with the High Middle Ages up to 1485, Jenny Wormald taking on 1485 to 1660, Clark himself taking us from 1660 to 1832, William D Rubenstein 1832 to 1914 and Robert Skidelsky dealing with the twentieth century. No lack of firepower here, and no one could fail to learn a lot. But most are tied down to the rules of a difficult game, and only Skidelsky, a writer of dazzling lucidity with a gift for epigram, is fully in command of this difficult exercise.

I learned a lot, but for a dabbler in these fields, I had an unusual advantage. At the age of 11, as punishment for some minor misdemeanour I was commanded by a teacher to learn the dates of the kings and queens of 'England'. He thought he was punishing me, but few things in life have been more useful. Those dates constitute the longitude and latitude of my grip on the past. The Mongols threatening Europe in the 1260s? — ah yes, that was Henry III. These simple facts, lodged in the skull, meant that I had a reasonable knowledge of what everybody rather despises these days — the grand narrative of England, and the legendry as well: Canute and the tides, Alfred and the cakes, When did you last see your father? Those cutsey philosophers may despise narrative, but it certainly supplies an orientation that allows the reader to find his way around, and no amount of *longue duré* will supply that. It can help us take all those interpretations and reinterpretations, those delicate variations of emphasis, in our stride. Such things may tell you a bit, but Charles I still lost his head, and Wellington still won Waterloo.

I had a particular question to put Clark's volume to the test. I hoped that it might solve the baffling question of why the British had a civil war between 1640 and 1660. The death rate has been estimated at a hundred thousand, the country was full of mad ideas, but apart from a few 'extremists' like Cromwell, no one wanted to get rid of the king (not even Cromwell), or of monarchy, until driven to desperation by the folly of Charles himself. The literature on this is now huge, and Jenny Wormald relates it in a capable way. She can set up counterfactuals that explore alternative possibilities, but in the end she just seems to think the

inhabitants of that time were a sad lot of people: 'For too much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries men lived in an uncertain political, constitutional and religious world.'

One thing that is very clear throughout the book is the power of kingship, and that itself is often found puzzling because the English had a taste for liberty that could look rather like an instinct for republicanism. Even today there are a few eccentrics who still don't 'get' monarchy, but it was kings and queens, as the bastions of honour and of chivalry, on which modern (by contrast with classical) freedom was based.

This is a problem for Clark when dealing with the period 1660 to 1832. He thinks that the loyalty of the people of those times was to the dynasty, and that the abstract idea of the state was a very late development. Political philosophers familiar with Hobbes, and with Locke's grounds for rebelling against a king who subverts the constitution, will certainly think differently. The odd thing about the treatment in *A World by Itself* of the whole period from 1485 to 1832 is that it presents the British Isles as a depressed region on the margins of European politics. This was no doubt plausible as an account of long stretches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the military victories of Churchill, from 1704 onwards, heralded not only a new power in Europe, but a new type of society to which freedom was the key. This was how such intelligent Frenchmen as Voltaire and Montesquieu saw the matter, and for all the perils and doubts that the British experienced from 1688 to 1815, they were a confident and successful power.

The central issue in Whig history is to make some sense of the idea that the English were in some special way free. Alan Macfarlane's book on individualism has brilliantly elaborated one dimension of the view that they were. Clark makes a heroic attempt to tangle with the revisions of this question in an early section of his part of the book — on whether Britain was an 'Open Society or *Ancien Régime*'. He is forced to recognise the anachronism of both terms, but the problem deepens as he tries to discover how much social mobility can be found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He uses a whole series of power-terms — patriarchy, ascendancy, paternalism, class (even genocide a couple of times) — in attempting to grasp what he recognises as an immensely variable situation. All he can report, however, is that interpretation and reinterpretation in this area has absolutely run amok. My take on the past character of English society was recently illuminated by the discovery that among those who loaned money to the Government in the first Bank of England issue of gilts were six — or was it eight? — individuals who said they were domestic servants. Anecdote is the singular of statistics. It sometimes trumps them.

Clark's aim is to meet the many objections philosophers have advanced against the historians' claim to represent reality. The supposed shallowness of mere narrative can be deepened if backed by sociological depth. Sometimes his contributors do this brilliantly, sometimes we end up with hit and miss statistics. It was an admirable enterprise, even if one must pronounce the result a heroic and stimulating failure.

Johnson's Greatest Man

Alexander Boot

Edmund Burke, Dennis O'Keeffe, Continuum, 2009, £65.

A constitution has to be written in the people's hearts. If it is, no written document will be needed; if it isn't, no written document will be effective. However, a lot must be written about an unwritten constitution – like theology, political science is post-rationalisation of intuitive knowledge, a way of linking people's hearts with their heads. That's why England, a land blessed with the best, yet unwritten, constitution in history, has produced so many brilliant political minds. None, however, was so brilliant as Edmund Burke.

Though Burke's sagacity comes across in a smallish corpus of work, it cannot be exhaustively covered. There is always room for one more book, which O'Keeffe's effort proves both persuasively and elegantly. O'Keeffe displays an enviable sense of structure, which enables him to combine in a small space a comprehensive exegesis of Burke's thought with a sweeping overview of secondary sources — and still have enough left over to show how Burke's ideas apply to today's world. Any attempt to elucidate a great thinker in a slim volume must involve compromises. O'Keeffe's is opting for breadth rather than detail. That makes the book a valuable introduction to Burke — and an invaluable crib for any student unwilling to scrutinise either primary or secondary sources.

However, as in music, multiple variations can only add up to cohesive unity if they are linked by a leitmotif. It's another of O'Keeffe's achievements that he unerringly identified the adhesive that holds Burke's thought together. This leitmotif runs through the entire narrative: 'Burke's politics derives from... his religious convictions,' 'He believed in a divine order beyond this world which nevertheless laid down imperatives for the political management of this one,' '...lifelong conviction that to shake the foundations of the church is also to threaten the political order...'.

O'Keeffe senses correctly that it was precisely the

rigidity of Burke's core principle that allowed him to be so flexible in practical matters, which has drawn facile accusations of utilitarianism. O'Keeffe dismisses those convincingly by showing that Burke's pragmatism towers over the godless utilitarianism of Bentham or Mill. Ideologues could not forgive Burke for eschewing ideology in favour of thought based on how things are, rather than how we would like them to be.

Burke responded to de Maistre's desperate '*Nous ne voulons pas la contre-révolution mais le contraire de la révolution*' by explaining what constitutes the opposite of the Jacobin afflatus: government by prejudice (intuitive knowledge), prescription (truth passed on by previous generations) and presumption (inference from the common experience of mankind).

On the basis of this philosophy Burke showed how the synthetic constitutional ideas of Aristotle and Machiavelli applied to contemporary England. Equally aghast at both Jacobin and Jacobean excesses, he saw as ideal a constitutional balance that would discourage any estate from trying to usurp the whole power. Burke believed that such a balance should rest on the fulcrum of aristocracy, counteracting both the authoritarian urges of kings and what Tocqueville later described as the 'tyranny of the majority.'

O'Keeffe's comments on this aspect of Burkean constitutionalism are the only part of this book that makes one wish to argue. Burke, he believes, was wrong in trusting 'aristocracy as a responsible form of government'. 'In a few centuries the bourgeois order has done more for human economic welfare than millennia of aristocratic dominance have achieved.' Factually, this statement is unassailable. Philosophically, it's debatable. For Burke was absolutely right on his own terms. It's just that his terms differed from those pervading the modern, post-Christian, world.

Only in post-Enlightenment modernity has 'economic welfare' become the principal desideratum of society, the measure of its success. Driven by his faith, Burke would have placed equity and virtue before wealth and comfort. And he would be appalled at the mayhem produced in his beloved land by the upsetting of the constitutional equilibrium he held so dear. The balance sheet of unchecked 'bourgeois order' is not, nor can ever be, all prosperity. The negative side of the ledger shows social disintegration, cultural breakdown and constitutional demise. O'Keeffe assesses the bottom line as positive, but one doubts Burke would. He would probably see that *godless* capitalism, though more palatable than godless nihilism, is ultimately as much of a menace to what is left of Western civilisation.

'It would be absurd and improper... to dismiss the whole Enlightenment,' writes O'Keeffe, and 'Burke was not opposed to the Enlightenment as such'. One could suggest that lack of hindsight was the sole reason he wasn't opposed to it. For the main animus of the Enlightenment, either French or Anglo-Saxon, was to push man from the periphery of God's world to the centre of his own. That struck against Burke's core principles. Had he not been misled by the empty deist noises emanating from American revolutionaries, he might have revised his belief, in the 'dramatically contrasting nature of the two revolutions'. There was a contrast, but it wasn't as dramatic as all that.

This is a subtle reminder that, though Burke was the founder of modern conservatism, in his day the great Whig was not regarded as particularly conservative. The Tory Dr Johnson didn't live to see the French Revolution, but he no doubt would have lambasted it with Burkean scorn. However, his assessment of the American one wasn't laudatory: 'How is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?' Now that Tory conservatism has sunk into oblivion, we have to make do with the Whiggish variety, which has, alas, veered far from Burke's unshakeable belief in divine providence.

Perhaps, like the protagonist of his thought-provoking book, O'Keeffe accepts things as they are, realising that these days we have to settle, at best, for Thatcherite Whiggishness. There's wisdom in such realism, though some of us may still be kicking and screaming as we are dragged into the soulless modernity of two cars in every garage.

Middle-Eastern Exiles

Penelope Tremayne

About This Man Called Ali, Amal Ghandour, Eland, 2009, £18.99
Mother Land, Dmetri Kakmi, Eland, 2009, £16.99

Born in the forties, Ali al Jabri was the only son of a distinguished Syrian family, already in decline since the end of the First World war; but, a generation later, still rich and influential enough to hold powerful positions in successive governments. When Ali was seven he was taken unexpectedly out of school in Aleppo, where his parents were living, and placed in Alexandria. He is said never to have understood why this was done, and to have believed it was because he was unwanted. It was a sensible precaution, for a *coup d'état* had just taken place in Syria. Two years later, during another *coup d'état*, this time in Egypt, he was transferred to Switzerland, whence, when he was about twelve, he was moved to England.

As an art student at Stanford University, he quickly

fell into the light-hearted drink-drugs-and-sex life of the expanding sixties and first steps in homosexuality. When it came to finals, Ali had conclusively failed. 'He simply could not make it to those classes, write those papers, complete those assignments. A future in architecture was pure fantasy now.' This was serious, for he had a talent for architectural drawing. He remained in California and his parents found him with the help of the FBI. Ali was taken straight back to England as if he had been still at school, (though he was 22 by this time) and lodged with an ex-schoolmaster who coached him for three months, and in due course got a diploma from Bristol University. Later a minor post was found for him in the Jordanian embassy (the al Jabris were relations of the Jordanian royal family). He claimed to hate this, but he now looked on England as his real home. Anywhere else, he insisted, would be exile to him. However, his residence permit expired and could not be renewed. He retreated first to Cairo, then Aleppo, then Jordan, where eventually he took Jordanian nationality. His looks deteriorated but he painted more successfully, aided by a large commission from King Hussein; later he took on design work in connection with Jordan's plans for development. At the age of sixty he was bloodily murdered by person or persons unknown.

Amal Ghandour is a kindly biographer who credits Ali with more talent than he had; the figure that emerges is entirely selfish, devoid of morals or loyalty to anyone, and a lifelong, ruthless sponger. Ghandour's style is somewhat gushing and may deter readers. This would be a pity because the rest of the book gives a shrewd and very informed picture of life among some of the new nations that were carved out of the ruins of the Ottoman empire after 1918. The blurb on the book-jacket says that it reveals 'the lasting effects of colonial attitudes', which prepared me for the usual 'blame the British' routine. But not so. She shows how despairingly difficult it is for the nationals of states set up by international committees to find their feet. She is particularly good on General Nasser's pan-Arab dream: its disastrous effects on the Middle Eastern states and its humiliating collapse.

Mother Land is set in Tenedos which was Greek from its beginnings (first called Leukophryx and later named for a legendary ruler, Tenes). It changed hands many times through the centuries, being always highly valued for its strategic position at the mouth of the straits: the route that links the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The Turks held it from the fall of Constantinople until 1922, when by the Treaty of Sèvres it was allotted to Greece, and then a year later re-allotted to the new Turkey of Mustafa Kemal. A population exchange was agreed and ruthlessly enforced, at enormous cost to both sides in human misery and resources: all Greek Orthodox Christians in Turkish areas were shifted into Greece, and all Moslems in Greek areas into Turkey. The only exceptions allowed were for Greeks living in Constantinople and for Turks living in Thrace. No doubt pockets here or there among the islands escaped, but surely not Tenedos? Yet Kakmi as a child knew two generations of Greek kin and neighbours who seem always to have lived in the island and remembered it as their forebears' home. There must have been a steady trickle back.

The fictional element in *Mother Land* does not carry much conviction; it hinges on a terrible secret which within so small a world would surely have been known to everyone. A child might not have understood what was involved, but could hardly have gone on being mystified into middle age. Another difficulty is that the fiercely unpleasant nature of its main character, the narrator's mother, tends to dishearten a reader.

But the book grips on a different level. It almost makes you feel that you know that island yourself. The rocks and dust, the bitter winters, the stoicism and the poverty which is no shame. The Turks do not come very well out of it, but it is not unjust. Kakmi does not inflate anything, or latch on to contemporary religious fears; he simply tells us what life is like for those under a foreign occupation, even a relatively well-behaved one. Liveable, yes. Not prohibitive of friendly contacts between denizens and incomers, provided they are kept inconspicuous; but they are not much desired by either side. Greek irredentist feeling is not involved. The child Dimitro recalls his Greek elders listening to the radio news about Cyprus: 'Makarios the bastard priest stirring up trouble' they call it. There is no thought in their minds of him as a hero of Cypriot revolution; they comment that 'it's just like a churchman to stir up trouble'; and they are all afraid of 'a repeat of the exodus of 1964' but dare not say so to each other.

Although Kakmi does not labour the tensions between Greeks and Turks he makes it plain that they ran strong. The children fight each other or stone each others' houses. A newly installed woman school teacher says in class to Dimitro 'Because you are not a Turk, may the bread you eat be poisonous'. Kakmi adds that about half the pupils were Greeks. There are references too to the Turkish government's deliberate policy of shipping Turkish criminals and undesirables on to Tenedos, in order to hasten voluntary departures of Greeks whose houses can then be given to incoming Turks. (This sounds outlandish; but it was certainly a policy employed in Cyprus after 1974.)

Unstated but running very clearly through Kakmi's book is the deeply embedded passion of Greeks for their homeland, not just as a place that belongs to them

but for itself: the cliffs, harbours, olive groves and the thin soil from which they live. *Mother Land* is a vividly recalled memory of a painful, but deeply cherished Paradise Lost. It puts on paper the feeling, not that the place that gave us birth and raised us belongs to us, but that we belong to it. This is a gut instinct, and gives rise to a loyalty second only to that which we have to our nearest kin. And it has relevance at the present time not as a popular contemporary appeal to us to feel other people's pain but for its reminder that countries can be lost, but love of country is built into us and can never be replaced.

Downhill all the Way

Mervyn Matthews

50 People who buggered up Britain, Constable, 2008/2009, pbk £7.99.
Bog standard Britain, how mediocrity ruined this great nation, Constable, 2009, £12.99 both titles by Quentin Letts.

These twin volumes encapsulate [well reflect] the distress which many honest folk must feel about recent developments in our benighted land. The people responsible for them are castigated in due measure. Quentin Letts, who was named Political Journalist of the Year in 2009, and is a regular broadcaster, dissects his targets by withering comment. The two books are similarly structured — comprising small, mostly unflattering vignettes of well-known public figures, largely, but not entirely, on the left of the political spectrum. There are short summaries of the nasty problems they have created.

Letts begins with Mrs Thatcher's former favourite — Lord Jeffrey Archer — who was convicted of perjury in 2001, went to prison, and thereby besmirched British politics into the foreseeable future. In the pages which follow the Archer episode reputations fall like ninepins. Kenneth Baker, 'charming and mellifluous', dealt a massive blow to school discipline by outlawing corporal punishment. (When I was in my state school we were caned on the hand, and it was commonly believed that bottoms were caned only in upper class public schools). Indeed, I benefited from a few sore palms myself. The abolition of the cane contributed, Letts believes, to a sharp rise in youth delinquency.

Ed Balls and his spouse Yvette Cooper are 'an insufferable and dangerous menace', promoting educational bureaucracy, while themselves enjoying an elitist life-style. Richard Beeching 'damaged our transport network so badly that it suffers to this day from his malign meddling'. John Birt 'the bore', Director of the BBC, is an organisation-mad bureaucrat: Ian Blair, formerly Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who was ultimately responsible for the unlawful killing of an innocent Brazilian in the London tube, is 'a political schmoozer, a disaster zone', apart from which he encouraged unhealthy politicisation of the force.

Tony Blair does not get a pasting until forty seven; unlike other party leaders, he left the House of Commons immediately on resigning the party leadership — for otherwise he would have been 'obliged to disclose his outside earnings (£7 million pounds and rising), his interests and his patrons'. His role in the Middle East would have generated 'fat expenses and a great pad in Jerusalem'. Gordon Brown, who is done a little later, is 'the prime example of [the] sort of profligate politician who uses the state's wealth as personal vote manure'. Edward Heath's fast dismissal of Enoch Powell after the latter's well-known speech on race 'created a climate of political terror about immigration. The ensuing silence was far more damaging to inter-community relations than old Enoch's mercurial rhetoric'. John Prescott was 'the most gormless and ineloquent person yet to hold the non-office of Deputy Prime Minister ... a revolting specimen with the manners of a flatulent caveman [who] demeaned our public life.' His housing policies laid waste great swathes of England's fair countryside. Diana (Prince Charles's one-time wife) 'was dim. A long line of herbal-cure fraudsters, psycho-babbling self-esteem preachers ... beat a path to her door ...'. The author criticises Harold Wilson for allowing a burgeoning of Special Advisors, paid for out of working people's taxes.

Among the more conservative figures criticised is dear Maggie herself: we are told that her inept handling of the miners' strike wrecked the country's coal industry and established the north-south divide. The miners had 'the sort of social values which Mrs Thatcher herself could and should have recognised'. The remaining targets among the fifty or so selected miscreants are mostly prominent journalists and media figures. In the paperback version of the book the author added an extra half-dozen.

The second, 'bog standard' volume concentrates more on public failings. Letts holds that the English language is suffering from slang, slovenly mispronunciation and the impact of immigration. The awful 'mate' and 'guys' words are squeezing out courtesies like 'ladies and gentlemen' which are now considered hierarchical. Blair's ministers have apparently been encouraged to address one another by their first names

in Downing Street. Careless dressing is in vogue, furthered by figures no less than Princes William and Harry, who may sometimes be seen the worse for wear after their late-night frivolities. The magic of monarchy may not last, we are warned, if this 'faux egalitarianism' is pursued too long. The dumbing down of the educational system (with, for example, honorary degrees for football), the 'equality crew's' drive against private schools, and the popular anti-intellectualism of the BBC are regrettable. Binge drinking is reaching Hogarthian proportions. Our hitherto healthy sporting ethic is deteriorating, as is respect for referees as well, not least due to the antics of the tennis player John McEnroe. Though he is American he and people like him have helped to spread bad sportsmanship.

I found both books compulsive reading, but, after a while the author's unrelenting criticisms became a little tedious. As for the individual miscreants, perhaps an occasional kind word would also have been in order — many were no doubt doing their little best behind the scenes, and had positive qualities. Maybe even John Prescott, despite his limited intellect and disconcerting digestive habits, had a good heart? Looking back over the decades, perhaps some positive social developments could have been mentioned — more travel for most people, central heating (instead of the daily coal fire), mobile phones and computers ... The author can still, it seems, enjoy good ballet, and seek solace in a nice Church of England service, provided that the proper hymns are sung, and the readings come from the traditional Book of Common Prayer.

I may add that the books revealed some unexpected lacunae in my own old-fashioned utterance. I was quite flummoxed, and still am, by *yoof, flubbering, chalk pinger, rozzer, grunge, wonkish,* etc, though I might be able to guess a few. So if there is a reprint I would suggest short glossaries for the elderly. As they stand, though, these small volumes are one author's personal monument to the public enunciation of unpleasant truths, to free speech and liberty. As such they are to be welcomed.

Some are More Equal

Patricia Morgan

The Death of the Grown Up, Diana West, St Martin Press, New York, 2007, $14.95.
Not with a Bang but a Whimper, Theodore Dalrymple, Monday Books, 2009, £14.99.

The people on the platform at a recent meeting at the British Academy were like children who, having grabbed most of the sweets, still had to have the last candies in the shop. The subject was inequalities, with a panel of worthies: Peter Tatchell (gays), Trevor Phillips (ethnics), Baroness Greengross (oldies), Pat Thane (women) and a strange lady from an International Gender Studies Centre in Oxford who ranted about our dreadful prejudices towards 'travellers'.

The panellists recounted how they had contributed to removing discrimination against women and minority groups before scraping around to find some residual grievance to seize. There was outrage that, while the pay gap had narrowed considerably, women did not have completely equal outcomes with men because many dropped out of the labour force in the promotion years between 25 and 40. It was unclear what might be done short of making artificial wombs and programming women not to care for their own offspring. Churches ought to be made to employ homosexuals, who must be allowed to marry as well as have 'civil partnerships'. From the law on assisted reproduction — and by extension, everywhere else — to please a miniscule minority, would the entire corpus of marriage law be reformulated to suit homosexuals?

The panel was suddenly stirred out of its petty rummaging as golden uplands came into view upon mention of Harriet Harman's equality legislation with its obligation to address socio-economic inequalities. What opportunities! We had nearly forgotten class and now it had returned.

If we intend to squash inequality, why does a person's ascribed group identity matter above all else? Why does a suspected 'homophobic remark' elicits a stronger police reaction than arson? The travellers' lady cited for our approval the example of her virtuous mother who spoke of Caribbean immigrants being much more civilised than her fellow countrymen. I recently attended a conference on gang warfare where someone asked why black youngsters were responsible for such a disproportionate number of killings and violent crimes. Horror abounded and he was nearly lynched.

Such events provide vivid illustrations for Diana West's trans-Atlantic analysis of the many causes and ramifications of the *Death of the Grown Up;* many more are to be found in another of Theodore Dalrymple's collections of masterly essays that explore the ideas changing the British way of life and the state of our culture. Earlier Europeans projected nobility unto primitive peoples denying their obvious savagery. Our present day 'verbal terrorist' sneers at everything great and ordinary about Western people and their institutions; making them feel that nothing about them is legitimate. Only the inclusion or domination of non-Western cultures might detoxify Europeans and

endow them with the virtue of diversity. As history is replaced by myth, exhibitions emphasize (British) slavery, slaughter and strife and ones on Africa omit slavery, slaughter and strife. It would be impertinent for penitent people to think of the rule of law, parliaments, railways, roads, Shakespeare, Newton, penicillin, anaesthetics.

'We won the war, but lost the will to survive' is West's judgment. Hitler unwittingly helped to destroy the democracies he could not defeat in war through a post-Nazi peace that made allegiance to the nation state an act of nationalist supremacy. Maintaining, defending or, ultimately, even defining Western culture, became condemned as evil chauvinism. As Dalrymple reminds us, one professor of race relations, Bikhu Parekh, has even suggested that Britain change its name, because of its negative connotations for so many around the world.

The guns at the synagogue or St Peter's door symbolise our cultural acquiescence to the infringement of freedom resulting from the introduction of Islam into Western society, not least through unprecedented immigration. Police and soldiers patrol our cities and airports, a situation unparalleled in our history. We censor ourselves to 'respect' Islam and the press submits to Islamic law against depictions of Mohammed. Norwegian authorities prohibit Jewish symbols. A report on anti-Semitism was shelved for concluding that Moslems were responsible for most of the incidents. We fail to recognise that our 'war on terror' is a defensive reaction to the latest in thirteen centuries of jihad, with a sweating fear over even asking the question.

What West characterises as this self-imposed silence of 'dhimmitude', is one of an insecure, post-adult, society. It is the directionless stance of the uncertain minor, not the behaviour of the worldly guardian; the passivity of a victim, not the responsible action of the hero. The re-emergence of Western confidence would be anathema to the culture of non-judgmentalism which is one of the leading aspects of an infantilisation that destroys the ability to set limits, draw lines and take control. The voiding of public and private distinctions with the end of censorship has helped merge childhood and adulthood, as much as it eradicates the difference between art and pornography. Reducing everything to mundane trash, nothing appropriate to one sphere is inappropriate in another, just as no possibility is shameful. Radical egalitarianism, and radical individualism, which rejects limits to personal gratification, render all forms of self-expression equal. Under their aegis, child-centered education is not so much adjustment to age, maturity and comprehension, as something devoted to the tastes and desires of the young. The traditional view was that children were apprentices waiting to take their place in the real world, where adults ordered and steered young people towards responsible membership of the community. Now, virtues of maturity such as refinement and restraint, honour and forbearance are corrupt and phoney and self control a form of emotional blockage. Neo-atheism, as Dalrymple describes, is little but one big intolerant shriek or the 'kind of historiography that many of us adopted in our hormone-disturbed adolescence, furious at the discovery that our own parents sometimes told lies and violated their own precepts and rules.'

As children occupy almost every once adult-only situation, they now decide on school discipline policy, their 'education, health and safety' and 'direct their own learning'. Involved in the design of sex education programmes, children have sex when they consider themselves 'ready', which is a crucial indicator for 'well being' and the 'positive sexual development', that government decrees schools must foster. Unable to invent this for themselves out of a vacuum they are having their 'nascent sexuality defined by the grinding industrial genitals of porn' (West).

As authority and reason have handed over to novelty and feelings, the child has nowhere to grow to. He has already achieved his own perfection, celebrating what he is (little), and will never be anything else. Instead of giving children a sense of growing up, the rest of society must adjust down to them — symbolised, not least, by men dressing like children.

Nowhere else has civilisation gone so far and so fast into reverse, eroding *Not With a Bang, But a Whimper.* The only chance of reversal that West sees is for both individuals and states to impose boundaries — which will spell the end of multiculturalism. That means breaking our silence; requiring us to conquer our fears as a part of growing up. Otherwise, there is the big bad wolf at the door and we know what that will do to little children.

Parson's Pleasure
David Edelsten

The Old Rectory — The Story of the English Parsonage, Anthony Jennings, Continuum, 2009, £25.

The clue is there in the somewhat Delphic title: this book is both rather more and rather less than I had expected when I first opened it.

As well as being of general interest, it is a book of specialist reference. For instance, in Chapter IX, 'The Architects', are listed some hundreds of them from John de Cranswick (1311-?), 'who undertook repairs

to the mansion of St Andrew's prebend for the minster authorities in Beverley', to Quinlan Terry, who 'has done some parsonage modifications'.

The central chapter, 'Parsonages through the ages', a *tour de force* later described by the author as a gazetteer, gallops through brief, often engaging, references to a selection of numberless parishes and their parsonages from Horton Court, in Gloucestershire, 'said to be about as early as 1216', to the vicarage at Lastingham, North Yorkshire, which 'has a delightfully vernacular quality, like a farmhouse, appropriate for its remote setting, stone with a pantiled roof'.

If indeed 'still the wonder grew', as one read a text which is extremely learned, dense even, in its detail, minutely yet widely researched, and most helpfully illustrated, every now and then this 'gazing rustic' was rewarded with a sudden, grateful shaft of light. Here is one such...

> As a generalisation, the Jacobeans refaced timber in stone or brick and added a wing, the Georgians refaced again and stuck on another, the Victorians added yet another or rebuilt, and the new Elizabethans of the twentieth century reduced or demolished.

And here another....

> In England, the younger (and poorer) rocks are in the east and they get older as we go west, from the sand, shales, chalk and clays of East Anglia, the South and South East, to the central limestones, the sandstones of the West Midlands and the older sandstones, slates and granites of the West.

For all its detail, the style is light, a twinkle seldom absent from the eye of an author for whom 'aspersions are rather fun'. Indeed he fires broadsides in all directions, especially at the flannel-headed hierarchy 'which seems to have little time either for its buildings or for its history'. But, having played the 'base Indian' with its peerless liturgy and the King James Bible, it is perhaps no surprise to learn how recklessly the Church of England threw away its heritage of real estate, in 'the great twentieth-century sell-off'.

A delightful chapter mysteriously entitled 'The People' lists, again, countless incumbents, their excellences, eccentricities, the hymns they wrote, their literary and other interesting connections. We learn of Sabine Baring-Gould's pet bat; of R S Hawker, who 'went everywhere with a pig, which he took into parishioners' drawing rooms'; of Marcus Morris who 'founded the popular comic *Eagle*'; of Sydney Smith, who 'fitted antlers to two of his donkeys'; of Edward Stokes, 'who was blind but would hunt with a servant who rang a bell at the jumps', and of the wretched unfrocked — wronged in the opinion of his Rural Dean, my grandfather — rector of Stiffkey, who exhibited himself in a freak-show and 'died in the claws of a lion called Freddy at Skegness'.

What this book does not tell us — is of the sometimes almost numinous quality of life in an Old Rectory; of slight but rewarding duties, which, unlike those of the Manor House, may not be avoided; of unique pleasures, such as seeing, through boyhood and in old age, the church tower with its invaluable weather-vane daily silhouetted by the rising, and gorgeously bathed by the setting sun; of unearthing about the garden fragments of window tracery, and memorials, including in one case, unforgettably, a complete stone, gently smiling, portrait face, discarded as rubble during the church's Victorian 'restoration'; of knowing from the Roll of Rectors hanging in the church exactly who previously lived in the house and when, and of finding behind a window-shutter, pencilled and dated, the heights and ages of a nineteenth-century rector's children.

Readers of a conservative bent will certainly wish to make room on their shelves for this book, but it should be eschewed by those who are proud to call themselves 'progressive'. I can pay it no higher compliment.

In a Persian Market

Harry Cummins

Khomeini's Ghost, Con Coughlin, Pan Books, 2010, £8.99.

Reading the distinguished Foreign Editor of the *Telegraph*'s account of the career and influence of Khomeini it is impossible to think of a single man who has inflicted more damage on the West than the late Ayatollah. Not only the Lenin and the Stalin of today's Islamic movement but its eternally alive and inspirational Che Guevara, in Coughlin's hands Khomeini makes the other anti-Western tyrants of the last century seem limited. Though his cruelty compares favourably with that of a Pol Pot, for instance ('the regime even devised a special device, a miniature version of the French guillotine, to amputate the limbs of those convicted of offences under Sharia law'), the Ayatollah's ability to appeal to the irrational forces innate in religion renders his malice of greater scope and duration than the designs of any Hitler or Mao. Coughlin informs us that, according to the Iranian constitution, the Ayatollah's Red or 'Revolutionary Guards' are still 'responsible not only for guarding the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world, this in accordance with the Koranic verse 8.6'.

Khomeini's belief that he and Islam had the right to rule the world — including its non-Muslims — lay behind the *fatwa* he placed on the life of Salman Rushdie and on the publication anywhere on Earth of *The Satanic Verses*, not to mention his support for Islamic terror groups and his attempts to build a nuclear bomb. Whereas Hitler 'only' wanted to kill the Jews, Khomeini's followers are prepared to wipe out millions of their fellow Muslims to achieve the same objective. Coughlin reveals that Khomeini's disciple and successor, Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, opined in 2001 that a Muslim nuclear war with the Jewish state is much to be desired since it 'would leave nothing of Israel' — or of the Palestinians, Lebanese or Syrians of course — 'while only damaging the Muslim world'.

The Ayatollah was born Ruhollah Musavi, the son of a wealthy landowner, in 1902. His studies in the holy city of Qom soon elevated him to the senior Shia clergy and when he became an Ayatollah he changed his name to that of the town of his birth. 'Khomein' in Farsi means 'two jars'. The city was given the title in honour of the two huge jars, one of pomegranate juice, one of water, which at just that spot refreshed an invading Arab army that was about to impose Islam on Iran in the Seventh Century. It is unlikely that the Irish, say, would thus honour a town that had offered some service to an invading English army. As V S Naipaul has written of Muslims in Iran: 'Islam is the most successful form of imperialism ever . . . A convert's world view alters. His holy places are in Arab lands; his sacred language is Arabic. His idea of history alters. He rejects his own; he becomes, whether he likes it or not, a part of the Arab story . . . for the Muslim converts... it is the start of their neurosis, because in this fantasy the convert forgets who or what he is and becomes the violator. It is as though — switching continents — the indigenous people of Mexico and Peru were to side with Cortés and Pizarro and the Spaniards as the bringers of the true faith.'

It is said that the Iranian people's anger at the Shah's attempts to modernise Iran was channelled by Khomeini in order to overthrow the monarchy. Khomeini rode the crest of their fury at the alliance that the Shah forged with the United States. In 1957 the Ayatollah 'declared that Muslims who drank Pepsi "would roast in the fires of hell"'. What the 'neurotic', 'converted' people of Iran really resented were the Shah's attempts to purge Iran of the influence of the Arabs and to turn its face towards its glorious pre-Islamic past, the dazzling era of Xerxes, Darius and Cyrus the Great. The Persepolis festivities that the Shah arranged in 1971 to celebrate the achievements of Cyrus and his decision to change the Iranian calendar so that it began with the start of Cyrus' dynasty and not with Mohammed's flight from Mecca inflicted an enormous psychic wound. It was as if a nation of aggressively virile 'closet queens' had been reminded of their actual nature. Manipulating the ensuing pain, Khomeini was able to destroy the throne. It was not the Shah's fondness for American imperialism, but his hostility to Arab imperialism that upset the Iranian people, not his desire to change them into something new, but his determination to return them to what they were that caused the rage. Here was the real catalyst for the revolution. 'Before Islam', Coughlin quotes Khomeini as saying, 'the lands now blessed by our True Faith suffered miserably because of ignorance and cruelty. There is nothing in that past that is worth glorification.'

What of the future? Unhappily, Coughlin finds 'Khomeini's Ghost' animating Iran's current president, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, as destructively as it did the Ayatollah's other successors. It appears that Ahmedinejad, too, would like to provoke a nuclear war, in his case because only Armageddon will trigger the return of 'the Hidden Imam', a figure to whom he is personally devoted. 'At one of his first cabinet meetings', Coughlin writes, 'the new president revealed his deep devotion to the Twelfth Imam [the Mahdi], whom devout Shia regard as a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed . . . According to tradition, the Hidden Imam, as he is also known, will only return after a period of cosmic chaos, war and bloodshed — what Christians call the Apocalypse . . . One minister helpfully suggested the government should undertake a programme of hotel expansion to accommodate all the visitors that would flock to Iran when the Mahdi finally returned.' How many holidaymakers will actually be prepared to brave the 'cosmic chaos', of course, remains to be revealed!

FILM

A Prophet

Jane Kelly

Malik, an illiterate Arab teenager, enters a gloomy Paris prison and is immediately kicked to the ground and robbed. This award winning, Oscar nominated prison-gangster film has been called by one reviewer, 'a state-of-nation primal scream'.

Neither politicians nor the public are keen on looking at prison life; there are no votes in penal reform and crime statistics are now fatally tied up with immigration, that other dark corner of modern life, which cannot be examined.

In *A Prophet*, director Jacques Audiard turns a pitiless eye on the racial and cultural tribalism that now controls European prisons. The languages of the film are French, Corsican, which apparently has its own dialect, and Arabic. Young Malik quickly discovers that he can survive and eventually thrive in this globalised hell by changing his identity as required by whichever ethnic group holds power at the time.

Apart from the sight of French lags loafing about with baguettes under their arms, the prison looked very similar to the one I knew when I worked as a teacher in HMP Wormwood Scrubs in 2007. The whole of Europe is now bursting with urban peasants and vicious criminals from all corners of the planet. In the Scrubs there were between eighty and one hundred and twelve different nationalities at any time, in order of numbers; Nigeria, Jamaica, Somalia, Ireland, Poland. On my way to classes I was surrounded by men shouting in Yoruba, Ibo and Polish or the equally incomprehensible patois of the London Street. Thirteen per cent of all UK convicts are now foreign, including one in five she-lags.

Malik is attacked by Corsican Catholic prisoners who call him a 'filthy Arab'. The prison becomes a microcosm of social tensions as Audiard transforms the racial divide into violent tribal warfare. In 2007 I saw the beginning of this situation. In the Scrubs Arabic classes were always packed out. Muslim teachers on the staff exuded an aura of people who knew their time had come. The few middle class English teachers on the staff were alarmed at men bringing prayer mats to class and upending themselves without permission. At that time there were nearly nine thousand Muslims in UK gaols, about eleven percent of the total population. A year later that had risen to nearly ten thousand. The Muslim prison population has increased by fifty percent in England and Wales in the last five years.

As this film graphically shows, Islam has dramatically changed our prison culture. Forget *Porridge*, it's now all about couscous. Gangs of Muslim prisoners are an increasingly powerful force. In HMP Whitemoor in Cambridgeshire and Long Lartin in Worcestershire, prison officers have complained to the Home Office about forced conversions and bullying. They have not been heard. Colin Moses, chairman of the prison workers' trades union, told the BBC last year that there is a growing problem of prisoners being forcibly radicalised by gangs.

'As the Muslim population grows,' he said, 'the gangs are becoming more and more prevalent by the week and they fight to take control of the drug trade and the dealing of mobile phones in prison.'

Although the government is oblivious to this situation, our prisons are becoming more violent. *A Prophet* demonstrates how Muslims and Christians vie for power, aided by corruption which reaches all the way from prison guards, to the judiciary. Sarkozy's France is portrayed as a chaotic place where anyone can be bought, and one can only hope that England's judiciary is different.

This battle between Islamic and Infidel convicts is the moral equivalent of the Krays kicking the Maltese out of the East End in the early 1960s. Both sides are equally vile, although in this film the French Arab men are extremely good looking.

The Corsicans are led by 'Cesar,' a hideous old brigand who refers to 'those f***** Arabs,' 'les barbus', and seeing them in the prison yard asks poignantly – 'Am I crazy, or do they keep multiplying?' César needs someone to eliminate a Muslim prisoner, who is about to incriminate a contact on the outside. He forces Malik to cut the victim's throat or be killed himself.

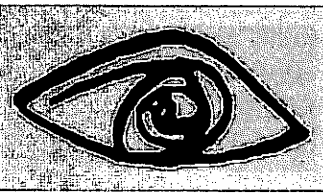
In a radical move away from the usual sentimental prison film, such as *The Shawshank Redemption*, this film has a new twist on the idea of redemption. It doesn't exist. Audiard's heroes gain essential meaning in their lives from their struggle for survival. There is nothing else. Malik's hideous crimes do not affect his integrity as a man. He is constantly haunted by his first victim, who stays by him as a kind of forgiving, ectoplasmic therapist. Referring to the title of the film, from this murder onwards, Malik has a mysterious

and rather confusing gift of prophecy which allows him to survive.

For more than two tortuous hours of internecine warfare, we watch Malik, always blank and uncommitted, struggle to preserve himself within this bestial cage, eventually rising within the prison hierarchy and becoming the agent of Cesar's downfall. There is a Young Hal/Falstaff scene where he overcomes and rejects his old boss who finally loses power to the Muslim gangs. When Malik is released we see him going off with a dead friend's girlfriend and baby, redeemed by murder and survival, free to go and lead a mundane, manly life.

This film offers a very bleak view. Apparently the tension between the French and their former colonial subjects is at boiling point, and there is no social or legal will to deal justly with the problem, a situation uncomfortably close to our own. Muslim clerics alone provide a solution for disaffected youth.They work within the void once filled by Christian reformers and educators who can no longer deliver anything to the rootless underclass and no longer count. According to *A Prophet*, like Malik we are stuck with the rotten society we are forced to inhabit. Survival is all down to the resources of the individual, and increasingly the strength of his tribe. In this world the Arabs come out rather better than the Infidel — because they still have a sense of brotherhood and group cohesion, long ago abandoned by us.

Prompted by the Visual



Andrew Lambirth

I write in the run-up to Easter, when thoughts turn to Christ's supreme sacrifice. Most people probably don't take enough time to contemplate the great spiritual renewal of Eastertide, though awareness of it should not be confined to only one moment of the year. As an art critic, I am habitually besieged, or prompted, by the visual. It is heartening to report that in this secular age, art can still point the way to belief, as a remarkable exhibition of images of the Crucifixion demonstrates.

A school in Kent has taken the lead, in conjunction with the Ben Uri, Europe's only dedicated Jewish Museum of Art, by mounting a well-selected exhibition of paintings, drawings and prints, with a single sculpture and a photograph, on the theme of the Crucifixion. It proves to be an invaluable aid to meditation on the subject. A few years ago the governors of Mascalls School, near Tonbridge, which specializes in the visual arts, decided to build a gallery to further the involvement of pupils — and the local inhabitants — with modern art. A full-time curator was employed, and in Nathaniel Hepburn Mascalls was fortunate to discover someone with enough initiative and imagination to make the project a success.

Hepburn made sure the gallery was equipped to a sufficiently high standard of security and environmental controls to qualify for loans from major museums, and he aimed for a level of excellence compatible with limited budgets. The gallery opened in 2006, and since then has shown an ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions including Latin American and gypsy art, the photographs of Walker Evans, and monographic displays devoted to Henry Moore, Andy Goldsworthy, Lee Miller and Graham Sutherland. A major John Piper show is planned for 2011, but meanwhile *Cross Purposes: Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, is introducing Mascalls to a wider audience.

It's not a huge exhibition — blockbusters overload people and make them punch-drunk or indifferent but a keenly selected survey of modern interpretations of the Crucifixion, with the emphasis firmly on British art. There is a group of watercolour studies by Chagall, but that's because he designed a magnificent series of stained glass memorial windows for the nearby church of All Saints at Tudeley. These are the only complete set of Chagall windows in the world. Aside from Chagall, the other big names are probably Eric Gill and Stanley Spencer, Duncan Grant, Tracey Emin and Maggi Hambling, Craigie Aitchison and Graham Sutherland. Some of the most resonant images are by the least well known, such as John Armstrong and Robert Henderson Blyth, Betty Swanwick and Emmanuel Levy. Easily the most unattractive image in the show (despite competition from Emin and a dreadful piece of fey drawing from Duncan Grant) is F N Souza's *Crucifixion* (1959), spiky, savage and garish, perhaps a suitable image for a lapsed Catholic to paint.

Souza depicts Christ as blue-black, perhaps because he himself was from Goa. Do artists always paint Christ in their own image, in a kind of mirroring of God's initial creation? Not necessarily. Craigie Aitchison, a Scotsman, sometimes painted Christ as a black man, principally because he liked to paint black skin (he loved the way other colours jumped against it) and preferred to use black models. I recently

received a letter from a reader in Kenya who pointed out that it was 'a continuing fraudulent contention of the Christian Church that the characters living in the Eastern Mediterranean all had white skins.' My correspondent insisted that it was 'fairly obvious that Jesus Christ and all his contemporaries were dark-skinned somewhat like today's Yemenites', and that to portray them as white while claiming that this was 'realistic' was entirely misleading.

This opens up a whole spaghetti junction of questions. How can religious painting, and particularly depictions of the Crucifixion, be realistic at all? Surely they are only symbolic in intent, since no one really knows what Jesus looked like? The tortured and apparently decomposing green flesh that Grunewald gave Christ in his celebrated Isenheim altarpiece is harrowingly effective, but surely not intended to be 'realistic'. Equally, Gilbert Spencer's extraordinary depiction of Christ being raised on the Cross (in the Mascalls exhibition), looks more like God the Father rather than God the Son, and was quite possibly based on the artist's own father. By contrast, Henderson Blyth's Christ is a hollow figure, headless and full of holes, an image of the devastation of war — perhaps as wreaked on the city of Hamburg, whose destruction the artist witnessed in the Second World War. His Crucifixion is called, with terrible irony, *In the Image of Man*.

The exhibition opened at Mascalls in March and will run there until 29 May. After that it will transfer to the Ben Uri in London, where it will be displayed from 15 June to 19 September. I urge anyone interested in the Passion of Christ or Modern Art to visit it. If you can't get there, the galleries have published a fascinating hardback catalogue to accompany the show, fully illustrated in colour, and filled with interesting commentary. I have contributed two short essays, on John Armstrong and Maggi Hambling. This book costs £28, though with a special exhibition price of £20.

I picked up a book the other day on the Scottish artist William Gillies (1898-1973), a superb landscape painter in oils and watercolours, and an influential teacher. (Among the artists I admire whom he taught are Jeffery Camp, still very much with us and about to publish a book he has written himself about his art, and Margaret Mellis, who died last year at the grand age of 95.) At the bottom of the front cover of this handsome Gillies paperback monograph of some 160 pages, well-presented and illustrated, is emblazoned in red 'Supported by THE POST OFFICE'. What a pleasant surprise! Admittedly the book was not new, for I had bought it in a second-hand bookshop in Norwich, and was actually published in 1998, but isn't this just the sort of initiative the Post Office, or Royal Mail as we call it now, could do with today? Its popularity must be at an all-time low, as customers become increasingly irate at unreliability and high prices. And how can they claim no one uses the service any more when Amazon and other internet companies deluge the delivery vans with parcels of books and discs to be taken to the door? So how about some book sponsorship, Royal Mail? You could start with a much-needed series on the great British artists of the 20th century. That would be a fine thing to put your name to.

Between Purcell and Elgar: a Musical Void Fill'd

Nicholas Dixon

In the popular pantheon of great English composers, the most oft-quoted names are Byrd, Tallis, Purcell, Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Britten. These are the names we cite to dispel the old myth of England as 'das Land ohne Musik'. And yet between Purcell and Elgar there is a gap of 162 years — a period in English musical history that has long been dismissed as a time when the best native composers were but poor imitators of continental masters such as Handel. However, as soon as one scratches beneath the surface, one discovers a substantial body of English repertoire that deserves greater recognition.

The most prominent English composer after Purcell's death was Thomas Augustine Arne (1710-1778). Originally destined for a career in law, he was compelled to play a spinet with muffled strings in the attic of his Covent Garden house at night, to hide his activity. When his father discovered his son playing in an instrumental band, he was persuaded to allow him to pursue his passion. By all accounts, Arne became a dislikeable and debauched character, but this is not reflected in his elegant and graceful music. As a Roman Catholic, he had no opportunities for church or court patronage (although he was organist at the Portuguese Embassy chapel). Thus his chief contribution was in the field of theatre; a masque entitled *Alfred* (including

'The Celebrated Ode, in Honour of Great-Britain, call'd Rule Britannia') was performed for the Prince of Wales at Cliveden in 1740. Alongside such pastoral dramas as *Thomas and Sally* and *Love in a Village*, his greatest work is undoubtedly the opera *Artaxerxes* (1762). With a libretto by Metastasio translated into English by Arne himself, this work was performed well into the 19th century; the virtuoso coloratura aria 'The soldier tir'd of war's alarms' survived even longer. Unfortunately Arne's pioneering of English *opera seria* in this masterpiece did not develop any further.

Thomas Arne

Among Arne's contemporaries was William Boyce (1711-1779), who is now best known for his collection *Cathedral Music*, which revived the sacred music of the 16th century. His own compositions include the charming eight symphonies, and a number of anthems. The robust voluntaries of the blind organist John Stanley (1712-1786), Boyce's successor as Master of the King's Musick, have stood the test of time, whilst the Italianate *concerti grossi* of Newcastle organist Charles Avison (1709-1770) show that musical creativity was certainly not restricted to London. By the middle of the century, English music was moving away from the late baroque Handelian idiom towards the simpler, less florid *style galant*, the direct precursor of classicism.

Arguably the most remarkable English composer of the second half of the 18th century was Thomas Linley the Younger (1756-1778). While studying in Italy, Linley met the young Mozart; the two prodigies forged an instant friendship, and their parting was a tearful occasion. Back in England, Linley helped turn the tide in favour of native composers with works such as his ode in honour of Shakespeare (1776) and the oratorio, *The Song of Moses* (1777). He also collaborated with his brother-in-law Sheridan in *The Duenna* (1775), the overture of which contains an enchanting country dance. Linley's finest piece is the opening chorus of his incidental music for *The Tempest* (1777), 'Arise, ye spirits of the storm'. The sense of anticipation combined with the sheer variety of emotional content make it memorable. Linley achieved a wonderful synthesis of English gravitas and Mozartian exuberance that marks him as a very inventive composer. His untimely death in a boating accident at Grimsthorpe Castle deprived England of someone who, in Mozart's words, 'was a true genius... had he lived, would have been one of the greatest ornaments of the musical world.'

Mozart also thought highly of his pupil Thomas Attwood (1765-1838); 'he partakes more of my style than any other scholar I ever had'. A fascinating manuscript record of Attwood's compositional studies with Mozart survives in the British Library. Attwood became organist of St Paul's Cathedral in 1796, and wrote a poignant dirge for organ for the funeral of Lord Nelson. He also wrote much Anglican Church music and conducted the premiere of his friend Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture* in 1832.

There were a few notable successors to Arne in the field of theatre: Charles Dibdin (1745-1814) produced a number of comic operas in a manner which anticipates the Savoy operas of the next century, as well as lively sea ballads. His most enduring work strikes a different note: the song 'Tom Bowling' (1789) is an affecting elegy for a sailor with a serenely artless melody. Sir Henry's Wood's adaptation for his *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* is still heard at the Last Night of the Proms, albeit with mock weeping from prommers. Dibdin also became the first person publicly to perform on 'a new instrument call'd the Piano Forte' in England when he accompanied a song at Covent Garden in 1767. James Hook and Samuel Arnold were two of the many composers who wrote many pleasant airs for London's pleasure gardens.

A fine surviving opera of this period is *Rosina* (1782) by William Shield (1748-1829), a shipbuilder's apprentice from Swalwell, near Newcastle, who rose to become the leader of King George IV's band. It is a charmingly rustic evocation of a pastoral idyll, with folk-like elements and urbane sophistication ingeniously blended to create a uniquely English variety of classicism. Mozart's friend Stephen Storace (1762-1796) composed several Viennese-influenced operas for the London stage after he returned home in 1787.

Provincial England also had its fair share of active composers during this period. John Marsh (1752-1828) of Chichester, a true polymath, produced a number of excellent Haydnesque symphonies for local subscription concerts. The eccentric hosiery manufacturer William Gardiner (1769-1853) of Leicester did not produce anything of great merit but must be credited with bringing the music of Beethoven to England when he obtained the score of a string trio at Bonn in 1794. Unfortunately the stockings woven with musical quotations that he produced for Haydn never reached the great man.

George Frederick Pinto (1785-1806) produced some inventive piano music during his short life. A prodigy cultivated by Haydn's impresario Salomon, his idiosyncratic creations anticipate the Romanticism of Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin. His Grand Sonata in A Major (1803) contains a subtle lyricism and pleasing harmonic innovations. Pinto's early death, like Linley's, was a tragedy for the musical world in which he had flourished. Salomon's judgement was that 'if he had lived and been able to resist the allurements of society, England would have had the honour of producing a second Mozart.'

The burgeoning Romantic Movement encouraged many composers to look to the past for inspiration at the dawn of the 19th century. Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), nephew of the founder of Methodism, was attracted to Roman Catholicism for aesthetic rather than theological reasons, saying, 'If Roman doctrines were like the Roman music, we should have heaven on earth.' Besides some brilliant symphonies, he composed a number of sacred choral works which were mostly archaic in character, such as the motet *In exitu Israel*. His *Missa de Spiritu Sancto* of 1784 was dedicated to Pope Pius VI and sent to the Vatican, and shows eclectic influences. Wesley was also a talented organist; his exquisitely crafted *Air and Gavotte* achieves an agreeable effect.

Another composer with a strong sense of the past was the Norwich carpenter's son William Crotch (1775-1847), who was already playing on the organ at the age of 18 months. Like Mozart, his prodigious talent took him on extensive tours, when newspapers would announce (for example) 'the Musical Child, who will perform on the organ every day as usual, from one o'clock to three, at Mrs Hart's, milliner, Piccadilly.' He became renowned for such works as the highly original oratorio *Palestine* (1812), with words by Bishop Heber of Calcutta. As the first Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, Crotch formulated a sophisticated musical hierarchy of the sublime, the beautiful and the ornamental. He saw 'ancient' music as the epitome of the sublime, and encouraged its revival. Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795-1856), who emigrated to Germany, embodied this musical equivalent of the Gothic Revival in his numerous pseudo-Tudor part-songs.

Antiquarianism was by no means dominant in the first half of the 19th century. Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786-1855) wanted to become a jockey at Newmarket, but his physique was found to be unsuitable. Instead, he studied harmony under Francesco Bianchi in London; the first of many theatrical works was performed at the still intact Theatre Royal, Margate, in 1804. For the next 30 years, Bishop's dramas and adaptations were pre-eminent on the London stage. Known as 'the English Rossini', his works are a nuanced combination of the Italian *bel canto* style and the tradition of English song inherited from Arne. Besides the famous ballad 'Home, Sweet Home' from *Clari, or the Maid of Milan* (1823) and a few arias like 'Lo, hear the gentle lark', much of Bishop's prolific oeuvre remains unexplored, and awaits a full revival. Nevertheless, he became the first musician to be knighted by a British monarch in 1841 and earned his place on the Albert Memorial. One of his final works was a funeral march for the Duke of Wellington — perhaps not simply an elegy for the Great Duke, but also for the musical era which was coming to a close. The works of fine Victorian composers such as Sir William Sterndale Bennett (1816-1875) and Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900), who wrote many more serious works than the Savoy operas, were part of a move towards Germanic Romanticism; they had both spent periods in Leipzig. Soon after Bishop's monument at the new East Finchley Cemetery was completed, a boy was born at Lower Broadheath in Worcestershire. Edward Elgar would radically change the direction of English music, away from the Regency days of Bishop and his ilk.

One cannot help feeling that some characteristic traits of English music were lost as the 19th century drew to its close. The diatonic tunefulness and youthful vigour that characterises much of the music is not merely an imitation of continental models; it is an adaptation of them to create a distinctive national sensibility that eludes semantic definition. The music of the Georgian period does not deserve its present neglect; now that it is increasingly available on disc, a genuine reappraisal of this aspect of our cultural heritage is long overdue.

Nicolas Dixon is an A level student.

IN SHORT

The World of Yesterday, Stephan Zweig, Pushkin Press, 2010, PB £15.

There is a revived interest in Zweig's work recently thanks to the fine new translations published by the Pushkin Press, notably *Beware of Pity,* SR Vol 28 (no 3). This outstanding memoir is a fascinating record not only of the vanished Golden age of security before the First World War but also of European culture particularly in pre-1914 Vienna. Zweig knew all the main players: Freud, Yeats, Ravel Joyce, Toscanini, Pirandello, Gorky, Rilke and Romain Rolland are some of the friends he writes about. A genuine liberal who welcomed freer relations between the sexes and the emancipation of women and international cooperation, yet he was prescient in recognising the raucous nationalism that the First War had unleashed. Some writers swore to have nothing to do with French or English literature. The author, Ernst Lissauer, a Prussian-assimilated Jew, achieved fame with his Hymn of Hate for England but was very quickly forgotten and indeed later shunned by his homeland.

One of Zweig's most poignant descriptions is that of his return to Vienna in 1919. The effects of the inflation and the Treaties are not so well known as those of Germany. On the way he witnessed the Emperor Karl's departure at Feldkirch recognising that a thousand year dynasty had ended. Austria was a country which did not want to exist but was forbidden to join with Germany while having lost all her former territories. Civilised life had broken down against a backcloth of famine and violence. The tragedy that befell Europe in the Twentieth century broke Zweig's heart; he and his wife committed suicide shortly before this book went to press in 1942.

Merrie Cave

The Nearest Guard, David Edelsten, BeneFactum Publishing, 2010, £29.99.

Carrying a foreword by HM the Queen, this sumptuously illustrated volume — with full colour paintings, prints and photographs from the sixteenth century onwards — is a fitting tribute to the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms, founded in 1509 by Henry VIII as a mounted escort to guard the Royal person: an office which in the century or more of religious conflict that followed the Reformation was by no means a sinecure. The Corps last saw active service, protecting the Sovereign in the field, during the English Civil War at the Battle of Edgehill in 1642.

After 1688 and the accession of William of Orange to the throne, the Body Guard began to assume the primarily ceremonial duties — attending the Sovereign upon great state and domestic occasions — which it continues today. From being at its inception a cavalry unit and, as David Edelsten writes, ' a nursery for warriors' the Body Guard gradually evolved into a dismounted Corps armed with pole axes (which they still carry today) and 'a source of honourable employment for military men whose active service is behind them'. Edelsten devotes much of his vividly told narrative to the individual histories of these men who before joining the Body Guard, had distinguished themselves in action 'as battle hardened warriors'.

Although the duties the Corps now performs are purely ceremonial, they are not for that reason — as utilitarians would no doubt aver — worthless. Having served their country valiantly in war, the Gentlemen at Arms continue to serve it in peace; for by lending the lustre of their military reputations to the Sovereign's Nearest Guard, they lend it also to the authority and majesty of state. Hence there is a nobility of purpose and a usefulness in this ceremonial service to the Crown which only those besotted with 'modernity' could fail to appreciate.

Ian Crowther

The English Civil Wars, Blair Worden, Phoenix PB, 2009, £8.99.

This book is a lucid account of a crucial period in our history now mercifully released from the shadow of historians like Hugh Trevor Roper and Christopher Hill who explained the wars as a conflict between aristocracy and gentry or between a rising bourgeoisie and a declining feudal order. From the Restoration to the 19th century when royalists and Tories dominated politics, it was described as the great Rebellion or the Interregnum. After the 1832 Reform Act, writers warmed to the Puritans as displaying the origins of contemporary political reforms; Cromwell became a cult figure and a statue was raised by public subscription in 1899. Indeed the interpretation of the civil wars is often a way to advance a particular cause — Tony Benn has always had a great interest in the Levellers.

Worden reveals clearly a much more complicated picture and shows the confusion of many of the protagonists. The Parliament parties and the Royalists were often divided among themselves. He emphasises the ferocious interruption in our long political evolution: the monarchy and the House of Lords were abolished and replaced by a republic and military rule while the Church of England was overthrown. Much worse was the death toll, as high as the First War. And what had anybody gained? The monarchy was restored which the King had needlessly lost. The parliamentarians had gained nothing. Dryden's poem sums it all up: ' thy wars brought nothing about'.

Merrie Cave

Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qa'eda, Gretchen Peters, Oneworld Publications, 2009, £12.99.

According to Gretchen Peters, Afghanistan is and always has been not so much a country as a heroin producing machine. Since its introduction by Alexander the Great, the opium poppy has flourished. The cultivation of opiates for the consumption of local and global addicts has been Afghanistan's most important industry since at least the Sixteenth Century and it currently accounts for between 30 and 50 per cent of national GDP. (Cocaine, Peters points out, has never provided more than five per cent of even drug ravaged Colombia's GDP). All of the country's factions and governments — the pre-1973 monarchy, the Taliban, Al Qa'eda, even the Western-backed régime of Hamid Karzai — have depended, like the Afghan people itself, on drug production and trafficking.

'The Afghan president', we learn, 'raised eyebrows in 2007 when he appointed Izzatullah Wasifi as his anticorruption tsar. Wasifi was convicted two decades ago for trying to sell $2 million worth of heroin to an undercover officer in Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas . . . There were worse cases. In June 2004, counternarcotics agents raided the offices of the [Western-backed] twenty-something Helmand governor Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, where they found nine metric tons of opium'. Needless to say, Mr Akhundzada was in charge of the province's drug eradication programme.

For the Afghan peasant farmer, Peters suggests, there is simply no alternative to the opium poppy. Cereals and soft fruits are less portable than poppy residue and much less valuable. Also, unlike the wheat harvest and apricots, opium resin does not decay. If heroin prices fall, it can be stored until the market improves. Peters alleges that Taliban leader Mullah Omar is now personally hoarding at least 3,800 tons of raw opium, enough to slake the craving of every addict in the world.

That being the case, the destruction of Afghanistan's poppy crop by planes armed with defoliants, which has often been advocated, would simply push up heroin prices worldwide. This would enable Al Qa'eda and the Taliban, among others, to make a huge killing on their squirreled hoards. This, after all, is what took place during the Taliban's last year in power when they 'banned' opium production in order to spur the market. Only when the decadent West loses its appetite for heroin, Peters implies, will Al Qa'eda and the Taliban disappear.

Harry Cummins

Uses and Abuses of History, Margaret Macmillan, Profile, 2009, PB, £11.99.

Margaret Macmillan's outstanding book on the Paris Peace Treaties could not find a publisher in the 1980's thus illustrating one of her themes — that the march of events open up important events which people have forgotten. The end of the Cold War and the resurgence of new conflicts in Central Europe showed how the arrangements of 1919 and the resulting dissatisfactions had shaped the modern world. Communism had put a lid on many complicated forgotten quarrels which erupted messily in the 1990's.

It is paradoxical that History is a popular leisure activity with many fine books, television programmes although of varying quality and a somewhat obsessive interest in personal ancestors. But politicians have little knowledge especially when it is crucial — the most recent example being Blair's ignorance of the history of Iraq. The school curriculum is also deficient, concentrating on skills, antiracism and slavery, Hitler and Stalin. Macmillan's main message is that history is a dangerous weapon in unscrupulous hands. Authoritarian regimes use the past as a method of social control; the Chinese only get one version of their history and any criticism of Mao or the Communist Party is still forbidden. Many people have grown up with the idea that The Treaty of Versailles caused the Second World War. This sweeping generalisation ignored some important facts: Germany defaulted on her war bonds and only paid a fraction of the reparations. But the myth appears in many text books and examination answers. In the American South black children in segregated schools had textbooks in which slavery was not mentioned. A more balanced story only came with the Civil Rights movement in the sixties when museums and other bodies acknowledged a black presence. In 1998 The BJP in India tried to

bring the past into line with its own views that Indian civilisation was wholly Hindu. France's attempt to confront the Vichy past was painful and at first only foreign historians examined the period carefully. In Spain similarly people agreed to forget the past. Now there is a national effort to locate mass graves. The proper role of historians is to challenge and even explode national myths and to insist that there are no certainties. A willingness and a humility to face the wrongs of the past provides a good contrast between a liberal and a totalitarian society.

Merrie Cave

The Myth of Jewish Communism, André Gerrits, P.I.E. Peter Lang, Bruxelles/ Oxford, 2009, £35

In 1905 Lenin praised the revolutionary contribution made by leaders of Jewish origin. Other observers took a dim view, and still others took grim action, with regard to a phenomenon that noticeably ranged from the short-lived Red Terror in Hungary to the longer-lasting CPUSA membership. In 1937 the Roman Catholic historian Hilaire Belloc could assert that the modern communist movement 'was inspired and is directed by Jews', whereas by 1939 the Board of Deputies press-officer Sidney Salomon assured his readers that Bolshevism had become 'purely Russian' — with many Jews among the victims of a militantly atheist and anti-bourgeois regime now attacking 'Trotskyites' as well as 'Zionists'.

The world is different today, but what was the truth about an issue that led to so much spillage of ink and blood? Admirable or deplorable, the attraction during the past century of an urban minority of secularised Jews to international socialism is historically understandable. Proper explanation has been overshadowed by the mistaken inversion of communist ideology and organisation as subordinate instruments of a Jewish plan for world domination; an ominous misinterpretation that can be found in a 'nutshell' of a conversation in 1943 between Hitler and Goebbels about the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Professor Gerrits of Amsterdam University investigates the subject with candour and competence, combining precise attention to detail and balanced scholarly analysis, with special emphasis on eastern Europe, where this sensitive 'question' recently regained volatility from disputes over local collaboration with the rival dictatorships and their comparative atrocities. The sheer quantity of his information alone confronts the festering fantasies of doctrinaire 'anti-semitism', while also advancing beyond the more disingenuous apologetics of 'anti-defamation'.

His thoroughness is further illustrated by a substantial bibliography, though this does not include, for example, the studies by Alexander Solzhenitsyn on Russian-Jewish relations, Michael Futrell on foreign subsidy, Cesare De Michelis on the composition of the *Protocols*, or Henry Srebrnik on the Yiddish pamphlets unbelievably defending the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

In coverage his book could even be compared with Julius Carlebach's similarly groundbreaking *Karl Marx and the Radical Critique of Judaism*. Research into this important and intriguing subject must continue, and this makes a good start.

David Ashton

The Salisbury Review

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

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.
ISSN: 0265-4881. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or other without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.
Copyright ©The Salisbury Review
Printed in the UK by The Warwick Printing Company Ltd.
Typesetting — DASH
Design — Jessica Chaney

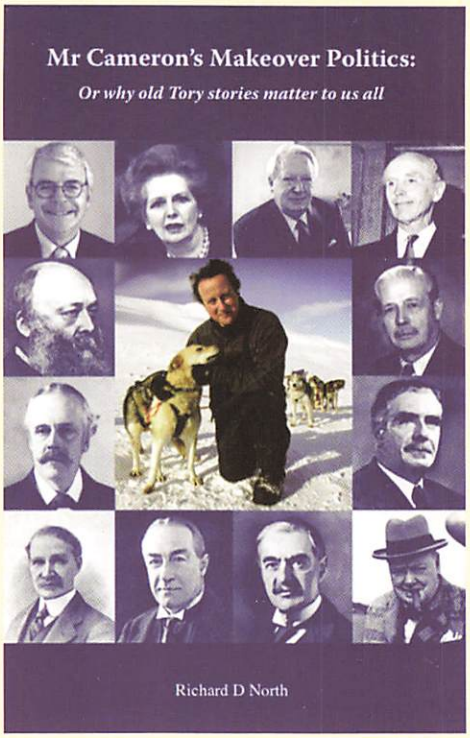
Web site: http://www.salisburyreview.co.uk

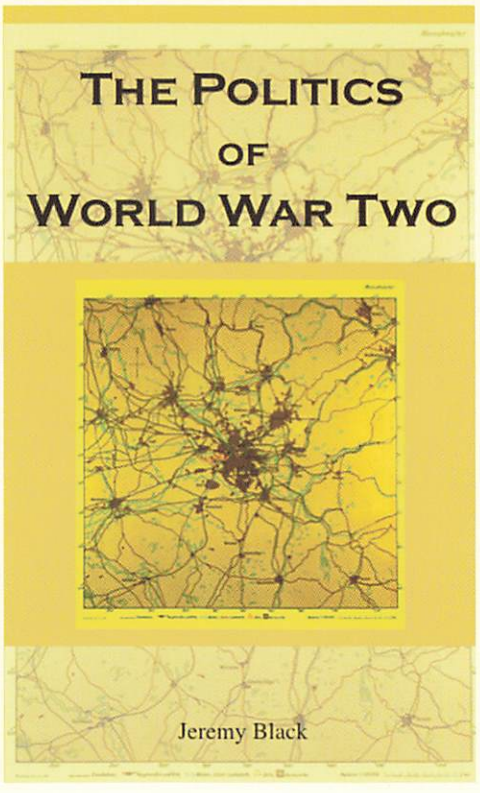
War Since 1990
Jeremy Black
One of the UK's leading historians offers a succinct but comprehensive and deeply researched history of warfare - from Bosnia to Iraq, Congo to the War on Terror - in all its forms since the end of the Cold War.
Shortlisted for the Royal United Services Institute's 2009 Duke of Westminster's Medal for Military Literature.
2009, 176 pp. £10

Who Were the Rich? A Biographical Directory of British Wealth-holders Volume One, 1809 - 1839
William D. Rubinstein
The product of a lifetime's research, Who Were the Rich? is a unique and original work which provides comprehensive biographical information on all 881 persons who left personal estates of £100,000 or more between 1809 - 1839. Its author William D. Rubinstein is the leading academic expert on wealthholding in Britain over the last two centuries.
2009, 528 pp. £20

Geopolitics
Jeremy Black
Addressing the role and understanding of geographical factors in international relations - past, present and future - Jeremy Black presents space, location and distance as key issues. As a field on which policy makers rest (or even unthinkingly base) their decisions, geopolitics calls attention to the context in which national security decisions are made and issues of war and peace are decided, and, more particularly, the relationship between strategy and geography. Classical geopolitics discusses the key importance of geography for statecraft and defines the relationships between the exercise of power, changing geographic constraints, and the opportunities for success and failure. Black considers not only geopolitics before the term was employed from 1899, but also the geopolitics of British power, the Age of Imperialism, the World Wars, the Cold War, and the situation since 1990. He also assesses the geopolitics of the future.
2009, 248pp. £10

Mr Cameron's Makeover Politics: Or Why Old Tory Stories Matter to Us All
Richard D North
This book argues that "Mr Cameron's Makeover Politics" has ignored the best back stories for our time and suggests that the current Tory leadership is being a tad feeble in choosing which to recycle. In this new book, North argues that all the Tory traditions (dry, wet and sensible) were developed by thoughtful politicians and are timeless.
2009, 202pp. £10





The Politics of World War Two
Jeremy Black
Television and book, film and newspaper are full of images and accounts of the Second World War. Controversies are to the fore, as is blame. Should is the key term as far as much of the discussion is concerned, because the point is to blame. Thus, exposition and explanation generally find fault. The continuing overhang of the politics of the war is a key theme of this book, which aims to bring together two dimensions, those of the war as it occurred and its subsequent recollection. In doing so, there is an attempt to look for relationships that throw light on the conflict, on the processes by which events are understood, and on public history. An appreciation of the political issues of the time is important to an assessment of the subsequent politicisation of the discussion of the conflict.
2009, 277 pp. £10

Israel, the Jews and the West: the Fall and Rise of Antisemitism
William D. Rubinstein
Antisemitism has been termed the oldest hatred, and seemingly reappears in every age. This book examines how it has evolved in modern times, and examines the controversial question of whether hostility to Israel and its policies constitutes antisemitism. It offers a clear, brief examination of how and why Jews have aroused so much hostility in the past. But it also argues that hostility to Jews on the centre-right has virtually disappeared, to be replaced by extreme hostility from parts of the far left. From the 1960s until the 1980s, the Soviet Union and the Western extreme left served as the main focal point of hostility to the State of Israel and the Jewish people. With the collapse of Communism, and also with the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements in the Middle East, a new and virulent form of hostility to Israel and also to Jews has arisen, often allied to the Western extreme left despite the apparently total differences in the two. This alliance is also deeply hostile to Western democracy and pluralism, and to the United States and Britain. This deeply-researched book is a thought-provoking and often alarming introduction to a crucial area of international politics.
2008, 88pp. £10

THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS UNIT

All books available at amazon.co.uk