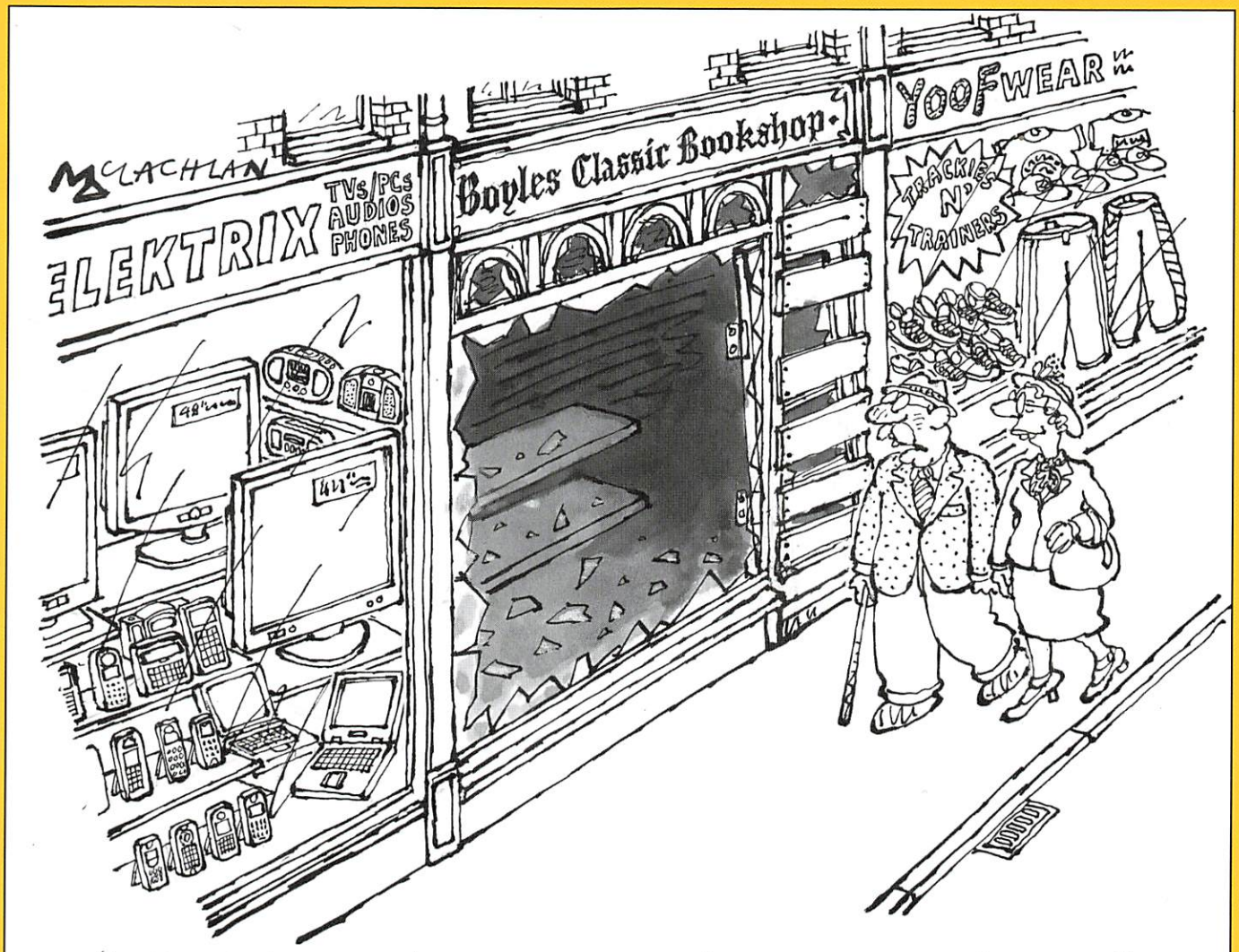
The
Salisbury Review
The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



"Nice to know we had more cultured rioters in our district."

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Britain is, as usual, being undermined from some familiar quarters – the feminists, an ever more intrusive State, the European Union and especially our absurd and destructive Human Right laws and a failing education system. Both of the latter have helped call into existence the vile rioting thugs and unscrupulous looters who have wrecked our cities and attacked our citizens. Why was there not a stern, indeed punitive response to the riots right at the onset, one calculated to force the rioters to desist and submit?

Sir Richard Packer, in a masterpiece of understatement, calls the Human Rights Act 'a disaster.' All systems of rights, especially when broadened and recast by judges, have unintended consequences, most notably the unjust 'protection of terrorists to the detriment of everyone else'. Not only terrorists but violent criminals and rioters are thus protected. Yet as Mark Griffith and Myles Harris indicate, the enforcers of 'rights' have not stopped excessive legal hacking by the state, local government and 600 public bodies into the records and communications of ordinary people.

There is no longer any right to be left alone but oddly we are told that there is 'a right to education'. But to how much education? The absurd and relentless drive to push or to lure more students into higher education has been a disaster for everyone . Vernon Rogers has the answer – let universities be free for only the most able 5 per cent of applicants and no nonsense about social justice. Many of our newest universities are clownish but as Marc Blake notes even our comedians have become worse. 'Alternative comedy' is left wing bigotry plus the boredom of the observational comedy of the inconsequential.

The very institutions that have proved feeble in the face of violent disorder seek viciously and punitively to destroy justice when ideology demands. Stephen Baskerville has drawn our attention to the proliferation not just of false allegations of rape but of false convictions for rape in Britain and North America alike. The feminists' assertion that 'the women never lie' is itself a lie. Yet they are so powerful that the presumption of innocence, that cornerstone of justice is being eroded.

Yet other threats too darken our sky: the European Union and Islam. Despite the sliding into collapse of the Euro zone, those committed to the idea are making European societies pay an ever increasing price to preserve the wretched single currency, which they see as a new version of the US dollar. Yet, as Christie Davies shows, for most of American history having a single currency and common monetary and tariff policies led to intense political conflict and secession.

The Russian historian Pavel Stroilov rightly declares that 'This is not an "Arab spring"', meaning that the current upheavals will not lead to individual freedom and market economies. Beneath the authoritarian, nationalist socialism of the 'Red Arabs' there was much collusion as well as a degree of conflict with Islamism. They were and still will be united by their hatred of Western liberty and Western values.

Other such negative sentiments were purveyed by the British Muslim author whom James Bryson heard lecture in Cambridge, who declared that Muslims have no need to integrate and no obligations to the local culture of those among whom they live. Religion, he claimed, should be independent of culture. Given that his religion was and is inexorable shaped by the culture of old Arabia, it is a very odd claim indeed. Yet none of his riddled-with-liberal-guilt university audience would firmly contradict him.

Our hope lies in the way Theodore Dalrymple's ordinary people continue to resist. Government surveillance and multiculturalism are universally disliked and rejected. No government would dare to hold a referendum on the powers of the European Union, which like the European Court of Human Rights and its British equivalents, has usurped power that legitimately lies with our people. Let us hope that the riots will awake us to take back that power and reverse the decades of liberal dominance that prevented the rioters from being quickly and firmly dealt with.

The Rape of Justice

Stephen Baskerville

Rape seems to pervade our politics these days: IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Wikileaks' Julian Assange, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi – all have been accused of rape. Justice Minister Kenneth Clark was recently pilloried for politically incorrect statements about rape. The *Daily Telegraph* says Britain's rape law is a 'disgrace' but does not say why.

It is not just the great and powerful who are committing *faux pas* over rape. The words of a humble policeman were 'insensitive' enough to send the women (or at least the feminists) of Toronto and other cities into the streets in a series of 'slut walks.' One woman wore a sexy outfit with the words 'rape me' written on herself. Clearly someone must be punished for all this rape, even if no one has actually been convicted of anything.

Conspicuously absent from all these accusations is any presumption of innocence or recognition that in a free society crime is supposed to be adjudicated case-by-case according to due process of law, with protection for the rights of the accused and weighing of evidence by a jury. Instead, we see mob justice at its most incendiary, driven by political ideologues demanding arrests and convictions regardless of evidence. The National Organization for Women called for Strauss-Kahn's head on the presumption of his guilt. 'NOW will closely monitor how law enforcement, the courts, and the media handle the Strauss-Kahn case,' the feminists warned.

'What harm can it do?' we all asked back in the 1960's when the sexual revolution began and we declared that recreational sex between 'consenting adults' was 'nobody's business'. Well, we are now seeing precisely what harm it can do. Ideologues and the wielders of state power have turned our fun into a crime and are using our license to destroy our freedom, with hardly a word of opposition.

As usual, the cost will be paid not by the high and mighty but by those ordinary people not protected by the glare of media publicity or by Strauss-Kahn's French Socialist Party, who loudly reminded the world of the 'presumption of innocence' but whose feminist cadres grant no similar presumption to lesser men hauled up on fabricated rape charges. If there is justice in this humiliation of the powerful, it is not that of the criminal justice system, which has been seriously corrupted by Stalinist feminism, but of a God who ensures that 'the postman always rings twice'.

The presumption of guilt against those who cannot afford Strauss-Kahn's seven-figure defence is apparent in the attack on Clarke, who dared to hint at the unmentionable truth that rape charges today are a massive miscarriage of justice. It is manifest in the 'slut walks,' where sexual display becomes nose-thumbing at men spending decades in prison on trumped-up charges.

Dressed in sexually provocative clothing and with signs proclaiming 'Slut Pride' and 'Proud Slut,' marchers revealingly proclaim their intent to 'take back the word "slut"'. 'Sluts and Allies, Unite!' declared a speaker. These unseemly displays of sexual anger were ostensibly set off by a policeman's incautious but hardly inflammatory remarks to a handful of women that enticing clothing may be unwise. 'While we are proud of our sexuality,' one speaker declared oddly, 'it is by no means an invitation to violence.'

Of course no one ever said that it is. The policeman's words (at a safety forum) were no more than what a father might advise his daughter. Would he be 'blaming the victim' and deserving of feminist invective or concerned about her safety? Indeed, any father of a daughter will recognize the adolescent sartorial rebellion on display in Toronto and elsewhere.

The harmless words became the occasion for a huge tantrum of undress in at least four countries. Far from suggesting that all this alleged rape might be reason to encourage some sexual restraint, we see women marching in their underwear, defiantly proclaiming their right to 'be sexual,' and celebrating sex as a virtue to be indulged for its own sake with no consequences.

As with 'Gay Pride' demonstrations, this public exhibitionism is far out of proportion to any political point such as protecting women, who in industrial countries are the safest people in history. What we are seeing is the unleashing of deeper passions coupled with the ancient and uniquely feminine power to use sex for political manipulation. People who instinctively understand that this saturation of the public discourse with sex cannot possibly be healthy, have trouble articulating precisely why. The reasons are very concrete. What is going on here is the blending of sexual and political radicalism in a dangerously authoritarian mix. The rationalization behind this sexual-political anger is that encouraging modesty is 'blaming the victim' for ill-defined but allegedly widespread and

tolerated sexual 'violence'. But no evidence supports this hysteria. It is not a defensive measure to prevent 'violence against women'; it is an aggressive grab for, as the feminists say, 'power and control'.

Here too the presumption of innocence is simply ignored and instead we see mob justice fuelled by sexual energy. What chance will a man accused of rape have for a fair trial in Toronto or any other city that has witnessed an angry mob of screaming, half-naked women – especially with officials subject to politically doctrinaire 'sensitivity training' that the Toronto Police Department say they have implemented? That training includes the feminist insistence that rape is 'political' and therefore the accused are always guilty.

The feminist principle that 'women never lie' about rape is unchallengeable in the media, academia, and the criminal justice system itself. 'Although it may not be "politically correct" to question the veracity of a woman's complaint of rape, failing to consider whether the accuser may be intentionally lying effectively eradicates the presumption of innocence,' writes forensic examiner Bruce Gross. 'This constitutional right is especially significant when dealing with allegations of rape, as in most jurisdictions sex offences are the only crimes that do not require corroborating evidence for conviction.'

The few scholars brave enough to research rape objectively have demonstrated that the epidemic of false rape charges is now out of control and that innocent men are routinely railroaded into prison. 'Any honest veteran sex assault investigator will tell you that rape is one of the most falsely reported crimes,' says Colorado prosecutor Craig Silverman. Purdue University sociologist Eugene Kanin found that '41 per cent of the total disposed rape cases were officially declared false' during a 9-year period, 'that is, by the complainant's admission that no rape had occurred and the charge, therefore, was false'. Unrecanted accusations certainly put the actual percentage much higher.

Yet innocence is no excuse. 'Now people can be charged with virtually no evidence,' says Boston sex crimes prosecutor Rikki Klieman. 'If a female comes in and says she was sexually assaulted, then on her word alone, with nothing else – and I mean nothing else, no investigation – the police will go out and arrest someone.' Almost daily we see men released after decades in prison because DNA tests prove they were wrongly convicted. And they are the fortunate ones. While DNA testing has righted some wrongs, the corruption of the rape industry is so systemic that, as demonstrated in the 2006 accusations against Duke University lacrosse players, clear evidence of innocence is no barrier to prosecution and conviction. 'A defendant who can absolutely prove his innocence – most obviously Reade Seligmann in the lacrosse case – can nonetheless *still* be convicted, based solely on the word of the accuser,' write Stuart Taylor and K C Johnson in their book on that case.

High profile cases are the exceptions that prove the rule. Even with intensive media coverage, prosecutors charge men they know to be innocent, such as the Duke lacrosse players, and feminist prosecutors pursue cases, like Julian Assange, where everyone knows that no rape took place. Most cases are ignored altogether. 'Nobody dependent on the mainstream media for information about rape would have any idea how frequent false claims are,' write Taylor and Johnson. 'Most journalists simply ignore evidence contradicting the feminist line.' Almost all the cases investigated by various projects involve rape. To the rape industry convicting people of crimes is a virtue for its own sake. 'The real scandal, when it comes to rape, is that only 6 per cent of rapes reported to the police end in a conviction,' writes Christina Patterson in *The Independent*. Regardless of the evidence? Perhaps it is because so many of the reports are fabrications to begin with. Why have trials and juries and due process of law, when Ms Patterson knows they are guilty?

Perhaps it is only when we stand in the dock ourselves, faced with trumped-up charges and Ms. Patterson's demand that our verdict be used to create politically acceptable statistics, that we begin to see through the optical illusion concocted by ideologues. In *The Prison and the Gallows*, feminist Marie Gottschalk attributes our rapidly expanding 'prison state' not to law-and-order conservatives but to rape and domestic violence campaigns. Gottschalk demonstrates how feminists have long been our most authoritarian pressure group, 'uncritically pushing for more enhanced policing powers'.

So the moralists' cliché that sexual license undermines civilization turns out to be true. Sexual indulgence has debilitated our willingness to defend freedom and left us all – left, centre, and right – acquiescing in an authoritarian ideology with an insatiable thirst for incarceration. We thump our chests in triumph over Osama bin Laden but cower in impotence before women in high heels. The licentiousness of every radical regime from the Bolsheviks to the Nazis shows where this leads, but we are the first to elevate sexual decadence to the top of the political agenda.

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). He is writing a book on sexual politics.*

Poland's Road to Brussels

Jane Kelly

One of my pleasures in communist times was travelling by train. True each journey took hours. There used to be a joke in Poland that passengers were requested not to pick the flowers while the train was moving. There was one train in the morning from Katowice in the south to Warsaw, and you got the same train back. The Pullman carriage with its waiters with neatly folded napkins over their arms was the only public place where you could get good food and courteous service. Soviet style incompetence made haste impossible, which made those journeys special as everyone chatted and shared their food and stories. By the time you arrived you had heard most people's life stories and learnt more Polish. As soon as the wall came down some of that changed, perhaps imitating us in the west; rail travellers became more reticent and less friendly. They started to look as if they were working on the train.

Returning to Poland recently, for the first time in ten years, I had a big shock. I was visiting my friend Ewa in Bielsko Biala, an area of outstanding beauty in the Beskid Mountains. The morning after I arrived I looked out of my window in her tall country house, which her husband had built by hand, to see, a few feet away, Expressway S69, a four-lane motorway. Like me, Ewa and her neighbours woke up one day to find they were living alongside the S69 and D3 sections of the new Trans European Transport Corridor No VI. From early in the morning you hear the noise of construction and men in orange vests swearing and shouting. Covering what used to be gardens and acres of allotments and fruit trees there is now a rigid barrier of concrete balanced on squat white legs. It's so close that you could reach out from the balcony and almost touch it, being built closer to domestic dwellings than any new road would be in the UK.

Where is Swampy when you really need him? The new Poland has not produced any knotty-headed tree huggers or groups of determined middle-class road protestors.

EU law allows a distance of 40 metres but here the distance is 35 at most.

'My house is like a watchtower overlooking the road,' says Ewa, over the sound of high-powered drills. 'Perhaps when the cars come I could stand on my balcony with a billboard, advertising something and get paid for it.'

That's about the only joke she's found in the situation so far. The cars won't arrive for another year, but the site is ferociously noisy and fills the air with dust. There is some vague plan to put up giant screens as noise barriers to shield the houses and schools, some of which are just an alarming eighteen metres away. In London a recent report showed that a third of all asthma cases occurred in children who used schools within 150 metres of roads.

The future will certainly be different in the Polish mountain towns; triple glazing, staying in doors instead of sitting in the garden or looking at the view, and smog masks. In the 1970s there were about 500,000 cars on the road in Poland, now there are about 20 million. Many roads are in bad shape. In Bielsko very little is done to repair the small local tracks which break up badly in the winter frosts. What the government loves is motorways, and using EU money, three major motorways spanning the entire country are being built. Many sections are under construction, due to be finished by mid-2012.

At the same time, astonishingly, they are running down the Polish railways, which were privatised quickly just before Poland entered the EU. This has not improved rail travel one jot. Poles now experience the kind of Christmas chaos which we enjoy so much in the west. Ticket prices have soared and passenger numbers fallen. Train lines that I used regularly in the 1970s, for instance from Katowice to Oswiecim (Auschwitz), now a major tourist attraction, no longer exist. You go by coach or car.

Early this year the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, announced that 4.8 billion PLN (1 billion GBP) which had been allocated for expenditure on Polish rail was being diverted to the road budget. What is so alarming about all this is the lack of any consultation with the public. In fact, backed by the EU, the Polish government is prepared to use a pile hammer against any form of protest.

A couple of years ago I wrote a letter of protest about the plans for Bielsko, to the European department of transport. They sent back a thick document written in dense jargon, saying that full consultation had taken place. That was a terrible lie. Neither Ewa nor her neighbours had any say in the matter. Local people suggested running the new highway along a route

proposed in the 1950s, skirting the town, or putting some of it underground, but those ideas were dismissed without comment.

I tried to understand Polish local democracy a bit – who is their MP or equivalent? No one is sure. There is a list of men, chosen by different parties by proportional representation, in a multi-party system, with sixteen regional governments, who send a representative to the Sejm in Warsaw. This is confusing to say the least and not one of the men appointed locally was interested in the residents' concerns. When Ewa went to the town hall a councillor told her, 'Well what can I do? I am only one man.'

Available land was quickly sold by the county council and even the church, so the new road seemed to locals like a fait accompli. The key man who wanted it was the mayor, Jacek Krywult, 70, a career politician who prospered under the communists, and has continuously been re-elected 'President' of Bielsko since 2002. Despite being 'vice-president for traffic safety,' he is not worried by having a major motorway bang up against two schools and the local church steps.

Where is Swampy when you really need him? The new Poland has not produced any knotty-headed tree huggers or groups of determined middle-class road protestors. Ewa and her neighbours say that demonstrators have been taken away, put in hospital and given drugs. 'Like in Soviet times,' they say with bitterness. One of her neighbours, called by Ewa 'the bravest', who refused to move out when ordered, had her 19th century house knocked down anyway. She was offered help to pack if she got out on the appointed date, but she stayed defiantly inside until police threw her out.

She received compensation and built a new, smaller house nearby. No one can sell their once fine houses so there is no chance of moving away from the road to a quiet, less polluted place.

It was disappointing to think that no local press reported her situation. When people are forced out of their homes on government orders in Beijing you see reports of it on TV and in *Time* and *Newsweek*. When it happens in the new EU, no one seems to care. A beautiful country town is now scarred, and raddled by road builders as blind to the environment as our planners were in the 1960s. The people making these changes are not starry-eyed Utopians. They are called the 'Red Bourgeoisie,' former communists now living on the fat of EU money, happy where they have landed in the new structure of advanced capitalism. This sometimes has its darkly comic side – in the mountain town of Zywiec an old factory has been turned into a Tesco, which has its logo vertically on the chimney stack. It looks ominously like a crematorium.

In Auschwitz itself, always a boldly unembarrassed little town, all the supermarkets apart from Carrefour are now German. There was an objection when Kaufland wanted to put up signs advertising itself with the initials KL, which not so long ago meant Konzentrationslager.

I enjoyed a couple of days sightseeing in the deep countryside visiting churches old and new. There was obviously a building boom going on. In beautiful lush valleys, detached houses were springing up, jostling against the grey concrete boxes patterned with asbestos tiles and flat roofs from communist times, when pitched roofs were forbidden as they used too much material.

'It is a mystery,' says Ewa. 'There are no jobs in Poland, yet everyone is building country houses.'

As long as Poles leave home they can become rich. There is a feeling of unreality to it all because the Polish Zloty is so low that Polish doctors and teachers are hardly paid a living wage, but people cleaning in Dublin and London can make enough money to return home and build these new houses. For some, membership of the EU with its freedom to work abroad has brought about an accidental fiscal miracle.

I hardly know what to make of the place now. It certainly looks different, but there is still no real feeling of individual freedom or security. People are trying to live as well as they can, but only in imitation of the West, because no matter how big your new house or fast your foreign car, you can't escape the hopeless feeling that the same people are still in power, just with different pay-masters.

Jane Kelly is a freelance journalist who contributes to The Telegraph.

Worse Than Rupert?

Myles Harris

Although in economic terms this is August 1914 for the Euro – like the Archduke Ferdinand the currency has been assassinated on Balkan pavements – the British left who enthusiastically supported its creation is enjoying a summer of preening self congratulation.

This, say Labour, is 'The British Spring'. Our oppressed citizenry, having thrown off the chains of the Murdoch empire, are emerging blinking into the daylight of a free press. 'Free' means left-wing. With *The Times* and *The Sun* muzzled, or sold off as the equivalent of Argos catalogues, the BBC, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Mirror* will teach the people how to prepare, when the Euro falls off a cliff, for direct economic rule from Brussels.

News International, long the Labour Party's *bête noire*, is mired in a phone-hacking scandal. Its share price has fallen by twenty per cent and its flagship newspaper the *News of the World* has closed. Some of its former executives have been arrested and two senior British police officers have resigned for being too close to the Murdoch Empire.

A parliamentary investigation is beginning and legislation may well follow that places restrictions on the press. This will be a disaster as the last ten years have seen Britain almost bankrupted by a cabal of city financiers and socialist politicians. With a left-wing BBC virtually all there is left as a major commentator, a pall of silence will descend over who is feeding at Britain's giant trough of public patronage.

In the hysteria there has been no mention of Britain's most prolific phone hacker, the government, or that it was the previous Labour administration – now pointing the finger at News International – that gave birth to its worst excesses. Since the year 2000 British officials have been given almost unlimited powers to hack into the phones and e-mails or open the letters of anyone they think may not be acting in their interests. A total of 253,557 applications were made in 2006 to intercept private communications. Nearly all were approved. 600 public bodies can monitor people's private communications and in the same year 122 local councils asked to spy on 1600 individuals. While councils have come under pressure not to abuse such powers, there is no reason to think numbers in general have fallen to any degree since then.

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (read it on the internet and be frightened) is drafted in such a way that officials don't have to have a precise reason for spying on you. It may be they think you are an Arab terrorist, but it can also be because you have tried to get your child into a school to which educational bureaucrats have forbidden you to apply. Your e-mail can also be hacked by local council officials if you put your dustbin out on the wrong day. The police can peep at it if they think you are insane. A schizophrenic discovered this when the police suddenly demanded the key to this poor man's totally harmless but encrypted e-mail. He refused and was imprisoned for months, then transferred to a mental hospital.

The latter twist came about because if you try to protect yourself by encrypting your mail, the police can demand the key and if you fail to surrender it, or tell anybody your key has been demanded, you can go to prison for up to two years. Nor can evidence obtained by phone-hacking be produced in court. It therefore proceeds in total secrecy. Reports suggest that there are almost 1000 phone taps a day.

Meanwhile the price of gold has risen above $1600 and Greek bonds are trading at a level that makes default inevitable. In the summer of 1914 the story that seized the attention of France was the trial of Henriette Caillaux, wife of French minister Joseph Caillaux, for murdering Gaston Calmette, the editor of *Le Figaro*. It was a story of high politics, love, duelling, and a letter that press etiquette demanded should never have been published.

It was the same year the Germans were completing the deepening and widening of the Kiel canal.

Myles Harris is a consulting editor of the Salisbury Review

Arab Winter

Pavel Stroilov

By pure coincidence, I became interested in the causes of the future Middle East revolution a few months before it began. I was finishing my book, based on the Soviet secret archives, about the history of the Cold War in the Middle East. I concluded it with a vision of a free and democratic Middle East after 'the Red Arabs' are finally confined to the ash heap of history. In just a few days, however, rapid events turned my prophecy into an unacceptable oversimplification, both trivial and misleading. Future revolutions are nearly always envisaged as simple and beautiful; but they look very different when they really come.

In the heat of the moment, with the uprisings suddenly spreading like fire from one country to another, the first comparison that sprang to our minds was with the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe. Indeed, much of the Arab world had been governed by the odd survivors of the Cold War – the socialist regimes which emerged from the Soviet-backed coups many decades ago. They had clearly outlived their time. Having exhausted their economy and the patience of their people – as all socialists do sooner or later – the Red Arabs go to the ash heap of history where they belong.

This much has been clear from the very start, even if nothing else was clear. Hence was the obvious parallel with the 1989, when the socialist regimes collapsed in Eastern Europe just like they are collapsing in the Middle East now. Yet, after the dust has settled and the expert opinion crystallised, it now offers us a very different Cold War allusion: the 'Arab spring'. That refers to the 1968 'Prague spring' – the attempt of Czech communist leaders to abandon the rigid Stalinist model and reform their regime into 'socialism with a human face'. At first, there were some hopes that the rest of the Soviet Empire would follow suit. In event, the 'Prague spring' was crushed by a Soviet invasion.

Obviously, this is a very different symbol from the 1989 revolutions. 1989 stands for regime changes, a collapse of an empire, a triumph of Western-style democracy and free market; almost the end of history. 'Prague spring' suggests some moderate, limited reforms. The same socialism, but with a human face – little more than a cosmetic change, and certainly not a revolution.

What we see happening in the Arab world has nothing in common with that scenario. The term 'Arab spring' tells us nothing about the events it refers to, but it shows us everything we need to know about those who selected it (with much care, no doubt). It reflects a convenient compromise – not between Arabs, but between different schools of Arabists. Whatever actually happens in the Middle East rarely comes into their theories. And yet, their theories – and consequent policies – may have truly disastrous consequences for the Middle East and the world.

The Arab world, we are told, has never known democracy. Arabs lived under the colonial yoke and then under post-colonial Western-backed regimes such as Mubarak's. That, naturally, caused a lot of discontent, which sometimes took ugly extremist forms such as Al Qaeda. The present movement, we are told, is the expression of the same discontent – fortunately, in a moderate form. This admirably moderate rebellion stands in the middle between the extremes of the era now gone, the era of pro-Western dictators and anti-Western terrorists.

This theory suits the Left, picturing the 'Arab spring' as another of their cherished 'liberation movements', the name hitherto reserved for various terrorists. Now, at last, they have one liberation movement with a human face. This theory suits the Right, too, as a justification of their own past follies: their racist fear of the 'Arab street', supposedly full of anti-Western extremists, their appeasement of mubaraks and kaddaffies as the only protection against that 'Arab street'.

While policy-makers are busy covering up their past blunders, events take their own course. What happens in the Middle East is not an uprising of wild fanatics from the mythical 'Arab street'. Nor, to put it another way, is this a 'liberation movement' against Western imperialism. This is not an Arab spring but a 1989 moment in the Middle East, the downfall of the Red Arabs. The only historic empire that comes into the picture is the Soviet Empire.

Describing the regimes of Kaddaffi, Assad or Saleh as 'post-colonial' or even 'pro-Western' is ridiculous. The real pro-Western regimes in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Iraq, Algeria, Yemen and Libya were overthrown in Soviet-backed coups in the 1950s and 1960s. Incidentally, some of those regimes were fairly democratic but 'post-colonialism' is now ancient history. Save for a few pro-Western oases, like Israel or the Gulf monarchies, the Middle East was taken over by the Soviet empire and is still governed by its heirs.

The present revolutions are no more anti-Western than the regimes are pro-Western. The protestors on the streets of Damascus are burning Russian, Chinese and Iranian flags. They are not burning American or Israeli flags. A Syrian foreign minister once boasted to the Soviet comrades:

> we rely on the toiling masses to pursue our anti-imperialist policy... We can appeal to our citizens to reduce their consumption of meat to twice per week, consumption of fruits to once per week, we can draft their sons for a war where they can be killed. The people will agree to all this if they know this is necessary for victory over the enemy.

After half a century of such rhetoric, no wonder the people dislike that regime and its everlasting war against the whole world. The last thing they would demand is a more vigorous 'anti-imperialist policy'.

None of those regimes would have survived so long without Western appeasement, yet appeasement never changes the nature of the regime. The history of the 20th century is the history of the West supporting its own enemies across the world. 'Western-backed' does not mean 'pro-Western'. Syria and Yemen still remain typical socialist regimes based on the Party – army – secret police triangle. Assad and Kaddafi have never been any more 'pro-Western' than Hitler, Stalin, or Saddam Hussein. Even Mubarak, in spite of all his manoeuvres, was a true heir of Nasser. Behind closed doors, as the Soviet secret archives demonstrate, Mubarak assured Moscow his game with the West was simply to get massive loans he had no intention of repaying, while waiting for a convenient moment to bring socialist Egypt back to the Soviet camp.

What we witness today is the final act of the Cold War in the Middle East. Of course, it should have happened long ago. The West should have brought the 1991 Gulf War to a victorious conclusion, and honoured its promise to help the Iraqi rebels remove Saddam Hussein from power. We should have tried and helped the anti-Baath revolution spread into neighbouring Syria and further across the region. The Gulf War victory should have resulted in democratic revolutions all over the Middle East.

Alas, nothing was done to make that happen. Even Saddam's regime was allowed to survive. The whole region was left to rot under the Red Arab yoke for another twenty years. Today, it has gone a full circle, giving us another chance to see a Middle East of freedom and democracy within our lifetime. We are losing that chance by repeating the mistakes of twenty years ago. Once again, we choose to support moderates instead of democrats and stability instead of freedom. We choose the Arab spring. We dare not go any further.

Driven into a corner in 1989, the Kremlin and its puppets in Eastern Europe tried hard to confine the revolutions to a mere re-run of the 'Prague spring'. The West swallowed this but the people of Eastern Europe did not. However, 1989 in Eastern Europe was not just a triumph of freedom. It was also a year of bogus movements and cynical power-sharing deals behind the scenes; a year of 'roundtable' negotiations between the dying regimes and the selected opposition groups, where communists and KGBs secured comfortable positions on the new political scene. By and large, their last, desperate attempt to cling to power failed. And yet, the newly born democracies were considerably corrupted. Instead of a speedy recovery, Eastern Europe was doomed to many years of 'post-communist' nonsense. It took a generation to clear the mess and the job is not yet completed.

The problem with 1989-style 'roundtables' is that the regime can select the opposition forces to deal with. The communist archives of that period reveal how the 'roundtables' were abused to split the opposition movements, to play one group against another, and corrupt their opponents one by one. The same may happen now in the Middle East. Indeed, such 'roundtables' in various forms are being strongly encouraged by the West for the sake of 'orderly transition'.

The results may be much worse than in 1989. There is no difficulty in splitting the opposition forces in the Arab world: a great and impassable divide is already there. Apart from the dying regimes and the infantile democratic movements, there is a major third force on the ground – the Islamists. We are not talking here about the religion – to confuse Islamism with Islam is the same as to confuse Socialism with society or Nationalism with nations. As a political movement, Islamism is another by-product of the Cold War. Its relations with Socialism have a long and complicated history, full of tactical alliances, double-crossings, mutual infiltration, and treacherous stabs in the back. It includes Kaddafi's 'Islamic Socialism' and the Islamists hijacking what had been planned as a socialist revolution in Iran. It includes the words 'Allah Akbar' on Saddam's socialist banners and the KGB's titanic work to mobilise the Islamic world against the West. It includes the assassination of Sadat, planned by the Syrian secret police and implemented by the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. It includes the massive infiltration of Muslim Brotherhood by Mubarak's KGB (or whatever is the Arabic for Gestapo) and ruthless repression against every other opposition group in Egypt. It is this legacy that will determine the future of the Middle East.

Undoubtedly, the Red Arabs will be happy to work with Islamists, who share so many of their past secrets and their present interests. Like the old regimes,

the Islamists are interested in keeping the archives secret and the witnesses silent; in 'stability' rather than freedom, and 'orderly transition' rather than democracy. Like the regime itself, they are only a well-organised minority. To get to power, they have to outmanoeuvre the majority, the 'Arab street', whose only organisation is Twitter. The Islamists' old link to Red Arabs is a valuable trump card in that game.

What we witness is a clash between three distinct major forces: dying Socialism, ageing Islamism, and the newly born democratic movement. The good, the bad, and the ugly. One would expect the West to support democrats on the streets but, alas, the 'Arab spring' theory commands us to support the Islamo-Socialist roundtable. Like all roundtables, it is moderate. It stands for stability and for an 'orderly transition': Socialism with a human face and Islamism with a human face, working constructively together to keep the wild 'Arab street' under control. If we let them do that, we will soon see a region full of Islamic Republics with socialist faces, as surely as summer follows spring.

Pavel Stroilov is a Russian historian and the author of Behind the Desert Storm: A secret archive stolen from the Kremlin that sheds new light on the Arab revolutions in the Middle East, *out this year.*

How Single Currencies Fail

Christie Davies

The Euro is in crisis. Politicians and bankers meet incessantly in secret sessions to argue about the bailouts of the weaker members of the Eurozone and the fall-outs when they begin to default on their debts. The crisis is not a mere result of Greek corruption, Portuguese profligacy or Irish speculation. The idea of a single currency for such a disparate group of countries was a thoroughly bad one. Instead the Euro-faithful would not listen because, as so often, they put the politics of moving to a 'united' Europe first and ignored the economic realities.

'Ah, but the basic idea was sound', cry the proponents of the single currency. 'Look at the success of the United States and of the dollar that is accepted from Maine to Arizona, from Hawaii to Florida.' This is not true. Having a single set of tariffs and a single currency was one of the main causes of bitter political conflict in the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Indeed it was one of the factors that led to the American Civil War, a war as destructive of life and property as World War I, the kind of war European economic and political 'unity' is supposed to prevent. For much of its history the United States, like Europe, was divided into an efficient economically growing North and a backward agrarian South. The North wanted high tariffs to protect its 'infant industries' and the South wanted the free import of manufactured goods. The dispute over tariffs led to the defiance of federal law by South Carolina in 1832 which the President called a rebellion and threatened to use force; South Carolina came close to seceding and indeed did so in 1860 even before the forming of the Confederacy. After the Civil War the bankers and industrialists of the North needed, wanted and got a hard currency, one tied to gold. The indebted southern states wanted a soft currency to inflate away their debts and ward off foreclosure. The politicians in the latter states tried to shift the basis of their currency to silver or at least 'bimetallism', and to abandon gold. Some were greenbackers, who simply wanted to print money. They failed. Their bitterness is summed up in the famous 'cross of gold speech' by William Jennings Bryan:

> I want to suggest this truth, that if the gold standard is a good thing we ought to declare in favor of its retention and not in favor of abandoning it; and if the gold standard is a bad thing, why should we wait until some other nations are willing to help us to let it go.... You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

The tension between these two very different sectors of America living under the stress of a common currency and thus a common monetary policy was only settled from the time of World War II. Only then did the dollar succeed. Northern investors went south to avoid labour unions, to avoid heavy corporation taxes and to avoid regulations, the very burdens the EC would like to make uniform throughout Europe. America's strength lies in its single language, English, and the common law – Britain's legacy – not in the dollar; Europe has neither of these and never will. But it also lies in the determination of individual states to compete by lowering taxes and dropping regulations. Hence the present rise of Texas at the expense of California. America succeeds because it is a European bureaucrat's nightmare.

There is another example closer to home – the

economic failure of German unification which condemned the former East Germany to subsidized backwardness. The great mistake was Chancellor Kohl's insistence, against the advice of his own central Bank, on monetary union with the immediate introduction of the Deutschmark into the East. The capitalist industries of West Germany were so much more efficient than those of the socialist East that the latter immediately collapsed. Had Germany retained two currencies such that East German goods could sell cheaply and West German industrialists could move there for the cheaper labour force would the transition have been less traumatic? As it is, unemployed East Germans seek work across the border in Poland – in Szczecin, which ironically used to be the German port of Stettin. The Poles have thrived better precisely because they could decide the relative value of their currency (the z□oty); the East Germans could not. For the same reason German investment went to Slovakia and not to the depressed industrial areas of Saxony.

As a German joke puts it:

> Ossi (Eastern German): Wir sind ein Volk! (we are one people)
>
> Wessi (Western German): So are we.

Perhaps in the long run it will work but 'in the long run we are all dead'. The Germans certainly will be as they are in rapid demographic decline.

The old EC countries want to force the East European countries into the Eurozone to prevent them from continuing to be competitive by undercutting on costs and prices. The central message of my lecture in Prague was to warn them against agreeing to this. Their treaties of accession oblige them to join the Euro but without setting a date for this. I suggested the year 2099.

The Euro failed because it is impossible to have a common exchange rate and a common monetary policy for all the different countries. During the unstable boom in Ireland with its speculative upward spiral in house and property prices, the Irish government desperately needed to raise interest rates to curb borrowing. It could not do so because it was locked into the monetary policy of the Eurozone. Similarly, Italy's problems stem from the fixed exchange rate imposed on that country by belonging to the Euro. The costs of Italian products and exports are rising inexorably, as they always have done, but now the Italians cannot correct this by devaluation. They are on the road to dusty debt.

For a long time the dangerous level and nature of the external debts of the corrupt and free-spending Mediterranean members of the EC were not recognized by foreign lenders. They assumed that if, say, Greece ran into trouble, the more solvent and efficient nations would pay off its debts in the manner of a foolish and indulgent parent. The Greeks borrowed uncontrollably against imagined German collateral. The EU had for political reasons ignored the corrupt misuse of its subsidies and the fiddling of the books by the Mediterranean countries, so why should it cavil at paying their debts? Foreign bankers lent to these countries much as a usurer would lend to the penniless heir to a great estate, only to realize later that there was nothing to inherit.

The moral of the story is that exchange rates should not be set by political decree – in this case in pursuit of the dogmatic ideology of European Unity – but left to the market. In Britain's case we should have learned from the disaster caused by the fixing of the pound to the dollar at an unrealistic rate in the 1920s. Result, the 1920s depression in Britain and the unstable boom in America leading to crash in 1929. The economic crisis of the 1960s was exacerbated by Harold Wilson's refusal to devalue at a time when Britain had excessive government spending and a widening trade deficit. Very sensibly foreign bankers got out of sterling, since they knew that devaluation was inevitable. Wilson blamed the 'gnomes of Zurich' just as Soros was to be blamed for Black Wednesday in 1992: ie the age-old complaint of governments that the inevitable failure of trying to fix the prices of commodities or of money is the fault of the speculators. It is not. They have merely read the market better than the politicians. The final disaster was Britain's joining, for foreign policy reasons, the ERM (the Exchange Rate Mechanism, the Eternal Recession Mechanism) as a preparation for joining the Euro. Interest rates went far too high, house prices crashed and bankruptcies multiplied. The British government lost three and a half billion pounds trying to prop up sterling only to be forced out of the maw of the Eurosnake in 1992. Black Wednesday ruined the Conservative's reputation for good economic management.

This attempt to please the Europeans by being Euro-friendly led to Tony Blair's victory in 1997. He appeased them in his own way. You would have thought that the Mediterranean countries and in its own way Ireland would have learned from the British crisis that monetary union and the attempt to create a single currency leads to disaster; but they did not. That is the cause of the much worse crisis that has now overtaken them.

Christie Davies is an economics graduate and former Wrenbury scholar of Cambridge University.

Ordinary People

Theodore Dalrymple

Having made my career observing and drawing the attention of the public to some of the less attractive aspects of the modern world, particularly as they are manifested in Britain, I feel the need to redress the balance slightly. My late mother used to wonder whether my association with undesirables like wife beaters and drug addicts had not warped my outlook on life. I used to assure her that it had not; I told her that such people did not, even now, constitute more than fifty per cent of the population.

For a long time I have felt the paradox weighing on my mind that while my writing has been one long letter of complaint to my contemporaries (and I write every day), my own life is, and has long been, perfectly satisfactory. Looking back, no serious injustice has been done me by authority, no one has ever stood maliciously in my path to prevent me from doing what I wanted. I have done more or less as I pleased, and cannot even claim to have suffered the economic consequences of having done so. To a large extent, I have been able to have my cake and eat it; my struggles, such as they have been, were against myself and my character: sloth, arrogance, ignorance and the like. I cannot claim to be a modern hero, that is to say a victim of something. Even my failures are my own.

My happiness does not derive only from the failure of authority to oppress me in any serious way (unless you count the income tax and other, growing, impositions). Contrary to the impression that I have sometimes given, and that I gave even to my mother, that my life was largely a matter of avoiding and evading the horrors of modern existence, from drunken vomit in the gutter to chewing gum freshly applied to the underside of seats in buses and the menace of feral-faced young men in hoodies and track-suit bottoms, I find much of my existence not only pleasant but made pleasant by the many helpful and good-humoured people whom I meet and who render me service, though I feel that I have done nothing to deserve it.

When I go to my local sub-post office, I am repeatedly pleasantly surprised and even humbled by the courtesy and helpfulness of the staff. They are not very well-paid; many of my friends would regard their salaries as little more than small change. And yet they are unfailingly cheerful, not only to me but to everyone else. Clearly they are not motivated by money. Short of outright dishonesty or being so disagreeable to the customers that they would give rise to large numbers of complaints, it matters not to them whether the customers go away heartened by their manner or the very reverse. So I am forced to the rather cheering conclusion that they are ordinary good people, to whom it gives pleasure to give satisfaction to others, irrespective of more tangible reward. As Adam Smith says, 'How selfish so ever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it.' No doubt this is not true of all men without distinction, but it is true of a sufficient number, including these post office workers, and I hope of ourselves, to render all our lives much better than they would otherwise be.

One might almost say that all happy interactions are happy in the same way, all unhappy interactions in their own way, which is partly why the latter are written about so much more. When I receive some service willingly and cheerfully given (it is not true that no public servants ever provide service in this fashion, particularly librarians, rat-catchers and firemen) I am not only uplifted in my mood, but prey to pangs of guilt, that I do not express my gratitude forcefully enough and so often appear to take such service for granted. One of the reasons for this guilt is that I know so little of the lives of the people who attend to my needs. I suspect that a kind of quiet heroism is much more common than we suppose.

When I am served in a restaurant where the service is pleasant and attentive, I feel a nagging anxiety that I am being spoilt. I do not feel this about young people who are serving as a temporary means of keeping themselves while they complete their studies or progress to a brilliant career, but rather about older career-waiters. What is their life like when the restaurant closes for the night, to what home do they go, and with what reward for the difficult and taken-for-granted service they have rendered many people who give them not a second thought? Is not their life, humble and humdrum as it must seem to many intellectuals, who in their hearts despise it, an instance of quiet heroism?

While staying for a time in Jersey, I started to talk to a waiter in an Indian restaurant there. He was about thirty years old, of Bengali origin, though strangely

enough he had worked also in a restaurant in the town in Shropshire where I live. His story was an interesting and inspiring one. His manner was pleasant without being ingratiating.

He was not, as I had supposed, a relative of the owner of the restaurant. Rather he went round the country, working in various restaurants for a few months to a couple of years at a time, living in lodgings and saving his money. He enjoyed the life, and had already saved enough money to buy a house outright; he was now saving to get married. He missed his family, but was able from time to time to fly home to see them. He was a young man who had carved out his path in life for himself, and was obviously pleased with it, whether or not it would suit anyone else. That path struck me as being, in a quiet way, a heroic one, admirable and useful to others.

Another waiter of Bengali origin, this time in Llanelli, in South Wales, also gave me a great deal of pleasure. I happened to be staying in Llanelli for a few weeks, my travelling being not altogether different from that of the first waiter. He started to talk of his life, and I asked him whether he had ever been abroad.

'Oh yes,' he said. 'I've been to Bangladesh – and to England.'

In his beguilingly unselfconscious answer, spoken in a Welsh accent, that equated Bangladesh and England as exotically foreign countries to him, was evidence of real and spontaneous, not officially, ideologically or bureaucratically sponsored, integration into his family's new country, Wales. Here was cause for a little light optimism.

There were many small pleasures to be had in Llanelli, which is not everyone's idea of paradise. People there talk to you at bus stops, and most interestingly. One of the things that I shall always remember of my time there was meeting an old miner, in his mid-seventies, at the bus stop on his way to the pub for his lunchtime pint, and a bit of shopping afterwards. Widowed, he was immaculately dressed, in a smart blue blazer, a snowy-white ironed shirt, blue-and-red striped tie well-knotted, and polished shoes in whose toe-caps you could see yourself reflected. Not for him, who had presumably known real proletarian hardship, the studiously dishevelled look of those who have never known real hunger or cold. For him, to dress smartly was a matter of self-respect; it was a small triumph of the human spirit.

So if we are surrounded often by evidence of degeneration, of egotism, of shallowness, of rudeness and ill-manners, of all that can make life a torment, so it is all the more important that we should seek out examples of depth of character, of kindness, of devotion to duty, and of all that can make life a pleasure for us. They are still abounding.

Theodore Dalrymple's forthcoming book is Anything Goes, *published by Monday Books.*

Nothing to Hide, Nothing to Fear?

Mark Griffith

Perhaps the commonest criticism of privacy advocates is that if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear. It sounds quite a persuasive argument at first.

The witty critic self-deprecatingly remarks on how unexciting his or her private life is, how government security services and anyone else are welcome to amass data on them, how boring it must be for the poor dears to read his or her file, ho ho. The smear is twofold. People who dislike the surveillance state either have something to hide, or have delusions of grandeur.

Nothing could be more worryingly false. The mistake is thinking the only thing John has to fear is somone gaining access to the secrets of John's life. Since, John proudly jokes with his amusing mock modesty, his life has nothing interesting enough to count as a secret, John therefore has no reason to fear more complete databases, more detailed tracking of citizens, more rapid access to deeper histories of John's past.

In fact, John has as least as much to fear from easier inspection of the lives of Jane, Justin, or Jessica by interested parties. In an important way, other people's privacy is even more valuable than our own, because we're powerless to affect what other people want to keep private. This makes the nothing-to-hide-nothing-to-fear mantra dangerously wrong.

Consider a hypothetical example. John's firm, on which his livelihood depends, is unhappily engaged in a lawsuit with a competitor and the stakes have become high. The brave new state is not interested in our two

litigants. It has the rich, sophisticated resources of 'joined-up government' at its disposal that Tony Blair wanted, connected databases replete with our joined-up data, but is officially unconcerned with John's lawsuit. However, quite unknown to John, the other side in his case uses personal connections with a minor official to obtain private information about the judge or a crucial witness.

This information need not pertain to a crime. Perhaps that crucial witness is currently in an extra-marital affair, and would be deeply upset if this were revealed. Many people cheat on their husbands or wives, it's worth pointing out, and however much we shrug this off when it concerns others, substantial numbers of them will break rules to keep their own infidelities quiet. Using the data resources of the superbly-informed surveillance state, John's opponent quietly obtains leverage and wins the case. Just a week earlier John was smugly proclaiming he has nothing to fear and nothing to lose from identity cards, personal files, RFID chips, biometric information kept by state authorities, street cameras with face-recognition software, because he has nothing to hide .... The saddest part is that John, even as he is ruined by the court case and sees his firm collapse, might never find out why the wheels of justice turned against him. Even after this experience destroys his business, he might never learn that other people's privacy was as vital to him as his own.

Imagine never knowing why you lost that job or were denied that promotion or why your child got turned down from that school. A surprising amount of state persecution of its critics in the old East European communist states took this seemingly mild form. A few years longer on the queue for that granny flat you would like your mother to get. Mysterious obstacles for relatives entering the academy of their choice. Even just having to wait weeks longer than others for a plumber or a gas engineer was a way of tiring out opponents of the regime, making their lives more exhausting ... or sometimes just revealed you had a personal enemy somewhere in the state's bureaucratic machine. We don't need to imagine an authoritarian British government of political extremists wearing strange uniforms to see why our joined-up citizen-tracking databases must be dismantled. People inside and outside the system will use – in fact right now are using – information on other people for private feuds and personal benefits. Misuse of other people's data will damage all of us.

We already know that data is often not handled carefully enough, and there will always be officials with security passes to data who can be suborned. We already know that no kind of encryption is safe – dozens of data-security specialists stress this repeatedly even if no-one listens to them. We already know that tight surveillance does not reduce crime – it simply criminalises surveillance organisations, because the power shifts to them. To believe that the COMECON countries had less crime simply because fewer folk had cars and fewer cars got stolen is laughable. Entire Communist ministries and national companies engaged in major crime full time for decades, breaking those countries' own laws – commandeering assets, stealing state funds, flouting rules daily. Many Westerners and Russians still suffer from the tragic delusion that the end of the Soviet Union caused an upsurge of criminal, gangsterish capitalism. It did nothing of the kind. Most of the pre-1990 Soviet Union was run by the very people later dubbed 'oligarchs'. Soviet state institutions right from the start broke the regime's own laws. All the changes in 1990 did was to make some institutions and individuals previously engaged in thieving thieve more openly. It also let honest businesses appear, in contrast to which surviving chunks of Soviet capitalism (like Gazprom) are more visibly the illegal enterprises they had always been.

From another side of the joined-up-government fantasy, we know that however strong encryption is, information can always be stolen before encryption or after decryption. The KGB once gave the Americans months of worry back in the Cold War – it was clear communications between the US Embassy in Moscow and Washington were being tapped somewhere along the line but they couldn't think where. The Americans methodically tested each link in their chain of heavily encrypted data transmission. It finally emerged that the Soviets had installed a bug inside the teleprinter inside the US Embassy, the teleprinter that printed out Washington cables after decrypting them into plain English. No kind of encryption solves this evergreen problem. In today's version of the KGB teleprinter bug, key-logging software sits inside a computer (having sneaked in through some underhand back door) reading keystrokes. This software then sends out files with the passwords and account numbers before they are encrypted. Thieves who use binoculars to watch someone punch in a PIN code at a cash machine from the other side of an airport lobby (half an hour before their colleague pick-pockets the card) are likewise doing something no encryption can defeat.

No safeguards will stop data theft, any more than 'procedures' stopped the insider-trading and corruption that old hands in the City correctly predicted after London's financial 'Big Bang' in 1986 ended the jobber/broker split. 'Safeguards' (like the obviously dodgy-sounding 'Chinese walls') haven't stopped front-running and data theft in banks and brokerages since. Likewise safeguards won't stop data theft in New Labour's surveillance state the one-year-old Conservative/LibDem coalition has done so disappointingly little to dismantle.

This also goes for private corporations. All states use anti-terrorism laws to extort confidential customer information from firms anyway.

What security experts call a 'data honeypot' is what joined-up government creates – a one-stop shop where malefactors can go to spy on, steal, or falsify people's data. The less of everyone's data is stored and the less joined-up it is, the safer we all are. Many people have embarrassing secrets – people you depend on to do their job fairly without being blackmailed, persuaded, or leaned on – you have a great deal to fear from what others might prefer to hide. Their propensity for being embarrassed or shamed might be greater than yours. Some absurd sexual preference which is perhaps quite harmless and legal, but silly and risible enough to affect their professional dignity. A teenage marriage they ran away from; a brief mental illness years ago which if it came up now would rule out that promotion.

The rise of electronic book-reading devices makes data profiling on any individual even more centralised, even easier to inspect. However blameless our own lives or reading lists, we are endangered when other people live under scrutiny this close. Surveillance-shruggers who, in their self-congratulatory smugness, proudly proclaim they have nothing to hide have everything to fear from the database society.

Most of them don't even understand the problem.

Mark Griffith is publishing editor of Collateral Damage – Global Crash Phase Two, *a collection of articles by 27 writers in finance and journalism about the economic downturn, available in paperback on Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.com.*

Machiavelli's Influence on British Philosophy

Edmund O'Toole

Niccolò Machiavelli was reviled in Elizabethan England, where his name became synonymous with the Devil as 'Old Nick' himself. However, he did have admirers and he had a notable influence on Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes, so that his effect on British thought has been significant.

Bacon's admiration for Machiavelli appalled some of his contemporaries but Bacon took many lessons from Machiavelli. He credited Machiavelli with making the distinction between what ought to be and what actually is, a problem that had beset the writings of many philosophers through their failure to recognize it.

Machiavelli observed that 'the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation.' When Bacon wrote *Of Empire* he offered that the Italians had a phrase for it: 'Tanto buon che val niente: So good, that he is good for nothing.' Bacon gave Machiavelli as recognizing that Christian goodness had led good men to be preyed upon by the unjust and tyrannical. Machiavelli recognized the error of accepting appearance for reality. Bacon, in seeking to address the knowledge of errors extended such notions to the prejudices and bias to which the human mind was susceptible. The general psychology of man as offered by Machiavelli was self-interested, untrustworthy and potentially corrupt; man was more prone to evil than good. The political virtue that Machiavelli espoused was in the ability to appear virtuous, but there was only one moral to the story, that of power and glory, evident in the fact that material riches and rewards were imbued with human value.

Bacon's political career was coupled with his economic problems and he struggled with debt as he tried to elevate his position. Under Elizabeth he had been appointed the Queen's Counsel and when James I ascended the throne Bacon attained the role of Attorney General and eventually Lord Chancellor. But his political career ended in accusations of bribery and corruption in cases over which he had presided as judge. In his defence Bacon made the distinction between the gifts that could be offered to a judge; those offered as an advancement to influence the case, those given when the judge believes the case to be concluded and those given when the case is actually concluded.

Bacon had conceded that, while he might have been guilty of accepting the second type of gift, he had never intentionally let a gift influence the verdict in a case. While it was a common practice for 'gifts' to be given, Bacon may have been a victim of political machinations and the corruption laws drew closer attention and refinement over time. However, the most pervasive and difficult area to deal with was the third distinction in

Bacon's analysis, which would have absolved him of any wrongdoing. This problematic form of corruption is pervasive in contemporary times, most evident in the 'revolving-door' of public and private representations. Bacon's distinctions continue to provide concern for the interest of the state and the common good but, in the end, Bacon, like Machiavelli, was consigned to the political wilderness in the latter part of his life.

Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher and a younger friend of Bacon's, continued the legacy of Machiavelli and, in turn, found supporters and detractors for his bleak account of human nature. In effect, Hobbes was advocating a civilized state with a strong ruler, where the potential for tyranny was preferable to the competition of men in a state of nature as war. Those who participated in the social contract recognized the curtailment of some freedom and rights in their acquiescence in the sovereignty of the authority of the state and this ensured a relatively peaceful and civilized society. Hobbes' account was challenged, most notably by the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau over a century later, who championed the notion of inherent goodness and believed human corruption was to be found within a civilized society which emphasised power and glorification. The consideration of human nature has been broadly conceived as dichotomized between these two views.

The work of Machiavelli and Hobbes exerted considerable influence on The Enlightenment. Later, the Hobbesian account became a source of interpretation for Darwin's work, particularly through Darwin's most vociferous supporter, Thomas Huxley. The debate over the interpretation of natural selection continued acrimoniously, but today many evolutionary theorists, such as the evolutionary psychologist and cognitive scientist Steven Pinker, accept the Hobbesian interpretation of Darwinism.

The theme of nature as war had been reasserted by Machiavelli, extended back to the ancient Greeks at least, and two thousand years earlier Heraclitus had pronounced: 'War is the father of all, king of all: some it shows as gods, some it makes slaves, some free.' Yet Machiavelli could also be redeemed as a moralist of the state as Hobbes undoubtedly had been. From his other works, Machiavelli had been interpreted as a republican but *The Prince* sat uneasy with those who saw in it autocracy and the destruction of humanist morality. Rousseau and others had considered *The Prince* to be a work of satire, a warning against the threat of tyranny by those who rule.

Isaiah Berlin rejected the notion of satire, noting: 'Machiavelli was looking for and thought that he had found timeless, universal laws of social behavior.' Bacon and Hobbes took Machiavelli as a realist but it must be wondered the extent to which a trade-off exists between tyranny and corruption. Hobbes had recognized accusations of tyranny will always be touted by those dissatisfied with the form of rule under which they live. Machiavelli recognized that the ruler must be careful not to produce hatred since this would undermine it.

Most of all, Machiavelli appealed to men of action, for it was men of action who came to rule, not men of contemplation. As Merleau-Ponty considered it: 'There will always be two kinds of men, those who live through history and those who make it.'

Edmund O'Toole is an academic in Ireland.

God's Atoms

Brian Ridley

I believe that cells divide by the grace of God. I believe acorns grow into oaks by the grace of God. I believe cows have calves and women have babies by the grace of God. I believe that all life is by the grace of God. I have to say that I have no precise idea of what I mean by the grace of God. But the God referred to is certainly not the God of institutional religions: more a Spinozan God, a pantheistic God, a verb rather than a noun, the God, in short, of deism. As I see it, there exists in everyone of us an intuition of a reality that infuses all of Nature, a sort of *a priori*. As a physicist, I have the same feeling about matter attracting matter, protons attracting electrons, and even $E=mc^2$. All non-life is by the grace of God. I would find it difficult to believe that a scientist exists who did not feel that awe of Nature, even those card-carrying atheists who inveigh against the God of the religions. My belief, feeling, intuition that within each of us there is an awareness, however faint, of a profound reality that lies behind the appearance and familiarity of things. It has been the source of primitive religions and the font of modern institutional versions. It is the basis of any belief that one's life has meaning. It has been an inspiration to philosophers from Plato to Kant.

I suspect the phenomenon has its analogue in music. 'What is jazz?' 'If you have to ask, you'll never know.'

If you don't feel it, experience it, it's like being tone deaf, forever missing out on the music of the spheres. Secular humanists seem to be uncomfortable with that inner music with its faint, insistent themes. Morality, they say, is an invention of the human mind, and certainly not any prescription of a God. They are undoubtedly correct. Man is stronger in a tribe than living isolated in some cave, but for a tribe to endure, there has to be a cohesive structure of morals and laws that are accepted by its members to balance the destructive tendency of unrestricted individual freedom. It is easy to see how that conformity can be strengthened by calling on that intrinsic music in order to confer the authority of a supernatural being on the tribal morality. Nations develop religions for the dual purpose of harnessing and expressing the intuitive feeling of otherness, and of incorporating that human invention, morality, into its teachings of its God. There may be other reasons for secularists to be antagonistic to religion – its tendency towards fanaticism, for a start – but there is no case for that antagonism to have to do with morality itself. Its flora and fauna of the bad and the good, duty and obligation, compassion and love, present the same challenges to the humanist and the priest. What the secular fundamentalist ignores is the natural religion underlying the institutional varieties.

The spiritual state of the present times is pitiable, never more so. Much of the blame falls on science, undeservedly but understandably. A life devoted to the elucidation of the laws of Nature is fulfilling in a sense comprehensible in terms of natural religion, but its success undeservedly blamed. The problem is the hubris of those scientists who claim that if science can't investigate it, it is meaningless, what ever the 'it' may be. Too many people, it seems, believe that claim. Materialists claim that matter is all there is. I'm utterly happy with that because I know that matter is very mysterious indeed. I might be able to work with gravity, but I haven't got a clue what it is. I can understand how electrons make a transistor work, but, again, I haven't got a clue what an electron is. Nor do I know what electric charge is, what mass is, what magnetism is, but I can make them all work, as Francis Bacon would have it 'For the good of humanity'. Matter is also of the quantum world, a world so mysterious and different from our everyday experience that it is beyond our understanding, in spite of our ability to exploit it. There is matter here that clinches the argument for natural religion. But what science really is, is very poorly understood.

Yet if that part of life which we call spiritual is not honoured as it once was, it is not entirely dead. Tales of the supernatural – *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings* – still fascinate us. You only have to watch one episode of 'Deal or No Deal' to find that number magic is very much alive and kicking. It may not be spiritual in the usual religious sense, but it is evidence of that sense of otherness. Superstition and a fascination with the supernatural abound, but the BBC clearly regards them as naughty words, and hence, in the one place one might expect enlightened commentary, there is silence – the same with the passions. Ambition, greed, envy, all wonderfully illustrated in the soaps, but without commentary. Love, that vital component of our lives, is treated likewise. Love is a fascinating mix of lust and empathy. The balls-lust of desire serves to continue the human race (by the grace of God), and the sympathetic union with another provides the back-up of marriage and family life. Does the BBC have such delicate sensibilities that it baulks at that combination of lust and sympathy in the name of love? Love is a many-faceted thing, as everyone knows. There is plenty of wild life and gee-whiz science on the telly, but for the world of the spirit, nothing. We have been served poorly long enough by the bien-pensants of the media, brought up, it seems, on a toxic diet of Enlightenment secularism, anti-elitism and scientism. Please return the original BBC to its owners – us – once it is found.

If I am right, we are all naturally religious, but it takes a special temperament to be content with that. Natural religion, or deism, offers no personal God, no spiritual guidance, no comfort. Those things are what institutional religion is about, why it is so valuable, and why its weakening influence, evidence of a loss of ground to secularity, is to be regretted. Natural religion cannot fill its place, but it does set a limit on what atheism can lay claim to. That limit is set simply by its existence. Alfred North Whitehead, mathematician and philosopher and co-author of *Principia Mathematica* with Bernard Russell, in his book *Science and the Modern World* (1926) puts the fact of its existence clearly.

> Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest.

Our spiritual life is a manifestation of that hopeless quest.

Brian Ridley is a fellow of the Royal Society

'Don't Worry?'

Frances Hallinan

> A substantial section of the chavs have become black. The whites have become black. A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion. Black and white, boy and girl operate in this language together. This language which is wholly false, which is a Jamaican patois, that's been intruded in England and this is why so many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country.
>
> Historian David Starkey Newsnight 12.8 2011

The necklace of semi-submerged volcanoes that extend from Cancun in Mexico to Venezuela and make up the islands of the West Indies shelter some of the nastiest societies in the world. In 2007 the World Bank estimated that 'the overall murder rate in the Caribbean was 30 per 100,000 inhabitants, four times that in North America'. Many of the islands are idyllic and untroubled, but others are hideouts for drug barons, pimps, gangsters, pirates, human traffickers and murderers, or refuges for industrial scale money laundering, islands where parts are often unsafe to go out in after dusk, and whose economies are often linked to vicious criminal gangs in America and Britain. It is no accident that Ian Fleming wrote his James Bond fables of gangsterism in Jamaica. Although Goldfinger was European, the West Indians who head today's drug cartels are often Jamaicans.

On the surface you will see none of this. These are the islands of song, whose charming inhabitants urge you in their signature song 'Don't worry?' to put away the frantic obsessions of western life. 'Whitey' has got it wrong. No need to turn up on time for work, no need to turn up at all, take a spliff and chill out. Over all this is a patina of Christianity. One of the most striking things about a West Indian Sunday morning is the sound of hymns.

The first generation of West Indian immigrants proved to be God fearing and hard working. However the *Empire Windrush* proved a Trojan horse, out of which, following the arrival of the jet liner, arose a second generation with close links 'back home'. 'Back home' usually meant normal family life, but it could mean, especially in Jamaica, gangs, drugs and – a hangover from slavery – gangsters who tempted males from the home at adolescence and fathers out of the house soon after their children were born.

At the time when the West, frightened by the growth of technology, the contraceptive pill, the plane, industrial pop and the disorientating effect of television wanted roots. The exotic newcomers, their patois, steel pan orchestras and descendants of slaves and therefore victims of the white man proved irresistible. It was only half the truth. The West Indies, particularly Jamaica, are home to many descendants of black slavers who became caught up in their own machine. Without the brutal Ashanti, from whom many Jamaicans are descended, European and Arab slave transporters would have only a toe hold in the slave markets of the African interior. This has never been faced by West Indian society, let alone in Britain. The Royal Navy's role in putting down the Atlantic slave trade in the mid nineteenth century, a long and ruthless war with a terrible mortality among sailors of the West African Squadron, or that Britain was the first nation in the history of the world to recognise slavery as evil, is carefully avoided. Ignoring these uncomfortable facts, our intellectuals, searching for 'authenticity', felt they had found it in the myth of negritude. Black studies flourished in our schools and universities.

Categorising the social history of the West Indies in this way is said to condemn their inhabitants in general, but while it is true the islands are mostly peaceful, a violent and anti-educational culture, feeding on the worst of western technology and local social pathology, is gradually taking root, and threatens both Britain and America.

Our Pied Piper procession down to the River Weser of the August riots of 2011 would never have happened if our own industries were not involved. In the sixties the large recording companies discovered that West Indian music could be produced without artists; any street lout who could open his mouth could have his voice grafted into a recording afterwards. The advertising companies also helped to weave a false culture of oppression around these products, created a sales explosion in music that encouraged violence. The sequencer had become a type of white man's barrel organ. This horrifying myth was also clothed by the West. Synthetic trainers and pantaloons, sold for astronomical profits, became the badge of the 'gangsta' as hero.

The mask has now been torn off this delusion. Behind it is the smiling face of Goldfinger reflected in the burning buildings of Clapham, Croydon and Tottenham. The myth is that there is a James Bond to save us. The solution is plain speaking.

Frances Hallinan lived in the West Indies.

The Climate of Treason

James Bryson

I came to England with great expectations. My advent was a spiritual homecoming of sorts. My paternal grandfather served in the Black Watch during the war, and my father read law at Oxford as his father would have done had King and country not called. As a boy my father read me the English children's classics, like the *Narnia* series, *The Jungle Book*, and Beatrix Potter. When I was admitted to Cambridge I was at once humbled by and thrilled at the prospect of deepening my discovery of those traditions my grandfather defended, my father studied, and my childhood idealized.

One can imagine my disappointment when I found that the England I had imagined was not there. Or rather it was there as a relic not readily apparent. My education at an English model grammar school, in a deeply conservative Anglican diocese, and through a literature imbibed as a child meant that I knew how to sift through the debris of what was England. A supervisor teaching the tradition; a parish devoted to the *Book of Common Prayer*; a quiet lane lined with cottage houses; or an Englishman who respected the law of the land were still to be found if one cared to look. It soon became clear to me that a national confidence in the institutions and customs which had made her great had long since left England's shores.

National confidence had been replaced by a craven liberal guilt. Spiritual ideals, like the very concept of a soul, had been abandoned as ridiculous. Dispossessed of their souls, Englishmen were left to cope with their bodily appetites without any higher purpose in mind. Individuals who once belonged to communities were sliced neatly into economic units with disparate interests.

This soulless culture and all its warts are what visitors to this country see first. Some of them argue, even as they make it their adopted home, that Britain is reducible to it. British Muslims claim to be especially perceptive in this regard, or at least this is the story Tarik Ramadan told recently in Cambridge as a guest speaker at our 'Islamic Week'.

Promoting his new book on the life of the prophet Mohammed (*In the Footsteps of the Prophet*), Ramadan addressed a room full of roughly 200 students, fellows and professors. Things became interesting when Ramadan addressed the struggle of British Muslims to be at peace with a culture which he categorized, without qualification, as consumerist. Hence British Muslims were under no obligation to 'please' it. Indeed for Muslims there is an obligation to wage a spiritual jihad against British consumerism as hostile to the basic tenets of Islam. The Prophet himself, he explained, faced an idol-worshipping culture from which it needed to be converted. Ramadan prudently stopped short of following that analogy through to its logical conclusion.

When the floor opened to questions, I felt compelled to tease him out. 'How', I asked, 'do you recommend British Muslims make a home in a culture which is fundamentally hostile to their beliefs, as you put it?' 'This is the crucial question', he answered patronizingly. His next thought, though, surprised me, which was to recommend that Muslims take personal responsibility to better themselves as people. Cultivating one's own garden was a very sensible idea – a traditional and conservative response to the impositions of an unsustainable cultural monolith. Of course I should have known things didn't end there.

It turned out that Ramadan did not recommend personal responsibility to become more assimilated to the better parts of a culture that has given Muslims a home 'I don't care about that!' he declared. Muslims have no obligations to the local culture, he continued, because culture is simply a set of values from which religion should be independent.

At this point I became very confused. I could not believe such a view was tenable for a Muslim considering Islam's roots in Arabic culture – not least through the Classical Arabic of their scriptures and the location of their holy sites on the Arabian peninsula. Surely language and place qualify as cultural? More importantly, however, Ramadan's argument had lost any internal coherence. Earlier in his talk Ramadan had been extolling the virtues of Western universities against their counterparts in the Arabic world where, he said, 'they were afraid to ask questions'. Surely he saw that these institutions represented a redeeming aspect of Western or, in this case, British 'culture'. At the very least I expected some member of the audience to challenge him on this point.

Not one word. I was shocked. Here I was sitting amongst some of the most privileged, and presumably best educated, people in the world, who felt no duty to defend the institutions, neither their university nor

their Sovereign, which guaranteed their privileged situation. One can only imagine what their less fortunate compatriots must feel or think.

The curtain had been completely pulled back for me. The only possible conclusion I could draw on the heels of such a performance from a British academic and the tacit consent of his principally Muslim audience was that they held a utilitarian relation to the ancient institutions they inhabit and enjoy. Most disappointing, though, was the realization that (even) at a place so ancient and so proud there is apparently no will to win the allegiance of hearts and minds so alienated from their roots.

I have discovered that young Englishmen today, including young Muslims, have not been educated to identify the paradox of Ramadan's message. Instead they swallow it wholesale as an easy thing to digest because it's a quick fix. Become a better Muslim and presto, Muslims are at home in Britain. Why? Because if you are a Muslim it doesn't really matter where you are. Just like if you are a good liberal. The laws of the land, which grew up in a primitive local 'culture', have no legitimate claim, since at their heart they are only 'values'. On the other hand your credo, as a card-carrying socialist or Muslim, has a monopoly on truth. Why compromise when you have a monopoly? Why do anything to 'please' another when, after all, you're the one who is right?!

For British Muslims to become more at home in Britain they need not become better Muslims as Ramadan would have it, for that is a matter of private conscience even if it complements a sense of public duty as it used to for Christians. Rather, British Muslims should attempt better to understand and therefore try to become better members of the country that gives them a home. This is a two-way street. Britain cannot claim the loyalty of her subjects if she does not ask for it; if she does not explain, take pride in, or defend her traditional claims, her tenants will simply use her for their own private advantage and never give so much as a second thought to the commonwealth. That not a single Muslim, in a room full of hundreds being educated at one of Britain's greatest institutions, could muster a word of defence for their denounced homeland is a sobering reminder of how far Britain has departed from the ideals which made her.

James Bryson is a PhD student at Cambridge.

Horror in the Fjords

Paul Gottfried

The horrific crimes of Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 76 people in Norway in a rampage that began with bombing the Norwegian Labour Party headquarters in Oslo, has set off a discussion on what rather loosely may be called the Right. My friends Dan McCarthy and Steve Sailer (http://www.amconmag.com/blog/breiviks-brain/) and my fellow-blogger Jim Goad have entered the fray, together with an assortment of FOX-contributors and other usual suspects. All of them have tried to unravel the tortured personality of Breivik, the disgruntled son of leftist, atheist, and presumably multiculturalized parents. This free-floating intellectual not only went on a killing spree, but also took excruciating pains to outline the reasons for his action and to provide an assessment of contemporary European life.

Breivik's thoughts were consigned to a rambling and now widely distributed document 2083: A European Declaration of Independence. From his appeal to sources that are critical of Islamic immigration and the multicultural justifications for this development, it would appear that Breivik was inspired by Gates of Vienna, Little Green Footballs, and various neoconservative commentators including Mark Steyn, Daniel Pipes, and Robert Spencer. The future killer discovered in these sources timely warnings against the Islamicization of Europe and in the case of the neoconservative critics of Islam, fervent support for Zionism and for European Jewry being targeted by Muslim youth. Breivik's invocation of 2083 is intended to remind the reader when, given present immigration and demographic trends, Muslims will overtake Christians as the majority population in his onetime Western country.

Breivik's inclusiveness in furnishing the sources of his inspiration has led to a game among competing groups on the right, consisting of flicking off onto others the guilt of being associated with someone who went from social criticism to mass murder. For example, the anti-Israeli, anti-interventionist Right is blaming the neoconservatives for putting Breivik over the top by fanning his hatred of Muslims. Significantly,

however, the assassin didn't kill any Muslims. Rather he went after Nordic leftists and the residents of a summer camp run by Norwegian socialists because those were the folks sponsoring Muslim immigration.

What we are hearing about is not a hate crime against brown Islamicists but a murderous shot across the bow in the context of a European civil war. This context cannot be hidden or wished away, as some are trying to do, by bringing up Breivik's supposedly aberrant predilection for Nietzsche. Steve Sailer lays stress in the American Conservative Breivik's rejection of Christian compassion; this, we are told, may have resulted from his 'neopagan' views and from his habit of reading books that reflect this orientation. Breivik is also viewed as a practitioner of 'upside down Leninism.' In his murder spree he was applying the Leninist principle of violent revolution from the right, a tactic that we should not confuse with traditionalism or Christianity. Unfortunately for this argument, there are millions on the right here and in Europe who relish the same literature as Breivik but are not hurting a fly. One blogger commented that the crazed killer sounded in his cultural remarks like John Lukacs and myself. Neither of us has ever tried to kill anyone (except perhaps with tedious academic discourse).

The neoconservatives quickly and disingenuously denied any connection to Breivik's hostility to Islam. The killer was just a 'psychotic' bigot on the 'neofascist fringe,' according to John Podhoretz and his friend Ross Doutat, whereas moderate conservatives in the US believe in tolerance, openness, and human rights. The neoconservatives are protecting themselves by stressing their dispassionate universalism, however hypocritically, given their ceaseless invective against anti-Zionist Muslims. But these advocates have a hard row to hoe, distinguishing themselves from an anti-Islamic, pro-Israeli mass murderer who is fond of neoconservative sources.

As the author of books on the evils of multiculturalism, it seems to me that Breivik's complaints are fully understandable—and perhaps even understated. What he says about the high rate of Muslim crime, the rape of white girls by Muslim gangs, the imposition of Sharia law in Western European cities, as the 'indigenous population' sits by reciting multicultural bromides, is undeniably true. One finds documentation for his charges on the true right, especially in such websites as Gates of Vienna and above all in the spirited polemics of its Swedish editor Fjordman.

One also finds Breivik's charges documented by such investigators as Spencer, Pipes, and Steyn. The two sides that are doing the documentation about Muslim crime and violence are not exactly soul mates. Whereas the neocon anti-Islamicists hold up for the rest of the world the American model of a true or false view based on human rights, Fjordman and other European traditionalists fear American practicality even more than the Muslim invasion of Europe. (Fjordman entitles one of his most provocative invectives (June 9, 2011) '*Why the Propositional Nation, Not Islam, Is Our Primary Enemy*'.) The point however is there is a solid basis for Breivik's concerns, and people with otherwise incommensurable worldviews have demonstrated the soundness of his concerns. The indigenous population that Breivik appeals to is in a wretched state culturally, socially and demographically; and believing that it needs more multicultural indoctrination and further Islamicization in order to regenerate itself, is like pumping insulin into someone who is already in shock.

What strikes me about what I've seen of Breivik's document is how remarkably eclectic his sources are. He draws no sharp ideological distinctions among his anti-Islamic critics; and he is quite happy to quote people who have never seen themselves as being in the same political universe. He also cites social democrats of an earlier age, like J S Mill and George Orwell, and gives the impression that these were men of the Right. Breivik is delighted to take his sources from wherever he can. More interestingly, as Sailer observes, he may not even be aware of the huge distinctions among the motley group he relies on. This is probably attributable not to Breivik's lack of interest in European history, or like students I tried to teach last year, he was twittering in class.

Rather it reflects the ideological dumbing down of much of the European 'free' or 'democratic world,' which shows an almost uniform multicultural or cultural Marxist landscape. There is a traditional Right in Europe but it seems to be holding on by its fingernails in many places and in the shadow of prosecution. In Canada one finds an equally unsettling situation. My friend Grant Havers reminds me that in British Columbia, the closest to a non-leftist point of view one encounters is David Frum's column published in the Zionist *National Post*. The marginalization of the European Right, and certainly of its intellectual defenders, is a topic discussed in dreary detail in my work *The Strange Death of European Marxism*. What Breivik calls 'cultural Marxism,' with its anti-Western, anti-bourgeois, and anti-national components, has captured European society and European government far more thoroughly than traditional Marxism ever did. This now entrenched force is far more radical and far more insidious than the older Left; and it rarely gets criticized in the American media because it claims to be fighting fascism and putting down Eurocentric bigots. Although as Fjordman properly notes, this multicultural virus has incubated in the US, the world's first global democracy, which 'in 1965 opened its

door to mass immigration from the entire world as a matter of ideological principle,' we in this country still have a national identity of sorts and at least a vestigial religiosity. Western Europe and particularly Germany are in far worse shape: 'Britain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Ireland, Spain and other Western countries with white majorities are no longer nations with a distinct identity, only random spaces on the map just waiting to be filled with a collage of different cultures.'

The reaction to this political and cultural denaturalization of European countries in recent years is the development of what *The New York Times* characterizes as European 'macro nationalism'. A rightwing version of the culturally Marxist EU, the macro nationalist movement is pan-European, anti-leftist and opposed to Muslim immigration. It speaks for a 'Europe of nations' but also stresses the shared roots of Europeans who belong to the same civilization and who now face the same cultural and political dangers. Its members tend to be pro-Israeli, if for no other reason than the Jewish state is confronting a Muslim opponent. Besides, being on the side of Israel is imagined (incorrectly) by European macro nationalists to protect them against the charge of anti-Semitism. Macro nationalists are not America-friendly. They are wary of the US, as a major purveyor of multicultural poison and as an imperialist threat to Europe. Although Breivik may have been too confused to fit easily into any camp, from his document it would seem that he inclined strongly toward the macro nationalists.

I would incline toward the same side if I were a European but I must qualify my endorsement: I sympathize with Breivik's concerns, his obvious macro nationalist leanings and his repugnance for the Norwegian Labour party of course, in no way do I accept his catastrophic attempt at a solution, but I would repeat Pat Buchanan's warning that the European civil war Breivik has entered with his violent act may be only in its first stages.

Paul Gottfried's latest book is Leo Strauss and the American Conservative Movement.

Abolish Disney Degrees

Vernon Rogers

Each autumn a cohort of confused youth is placed on the doorstep of the university. Neither the university nor these students know what to do with one another. As a percentage of all students they seem to have increased year by year for about forty years, so that they may now form a solid majority – even as the absolute number of students has ballooned. The effect is a near complete disconnect between what the university is (or is supposed to be) and the reason why most students are enrolled (often simply 'to get a job').

The university as it was known until as recently as thirty years ago has ceased to exist in all but a few places. The massive scale, loss of purpose and being used as a political tool for emancipation and social justice are all part of the problem. Expectations about its transformative effects on society have brought us all sorts of trouble, so that the university is now a tool for everything but education. Getting our expectations right is a step towards repairing this abuse. How did they ever get so out of line with what the university is?

Put simply, for some time reality seemed to have changed, and nearly everyone became used to the new 'reality'. The years 1950-80 can rightly be seen as a golden age of the university, when the doors swung open for many who formerly had been excluded, while the institution had not yet succumbed to all kinds of revolutions disguised as reforms. This change followed on the coat-tails of the greatest ever increase in wealth across the largest swathe of population and also during an age of relative peace. After WWII Europe was rebuilt largely with foreign money. Not long after, whilst sniggering at the defence ambitions of 'Colonials' (seeing no enemies on the left), and with the 'Yanks' footing the bill for Europe's defence, there was little need for the Old World to fund serious defence. Up through the eighties there was fecundity, optimism and residual manliness (in the form of entrepreneurship). As even economists know, population growth plus an expanding economy allows entitlements such as (nearly) free higher education.

Cheap energy met the oil crisis in the seventies. In the eighties, free love met AIDS (and a lost generation of children of divorced parents). In 2008, heavily-subsidised higher education may similarly have met its match. Without an economic miracle, the age of government largesse is over. Higher education may need to be limited.

This should not be long lamented but welcomed, as when a gambler comes home broke and has time

to consider reforming himself. The Mickey Mouse degrees in media studies and clown college courses in 'the carnivalesque' (I believe that these are now listed under Queer Studies in the handbook) can be jettisoned. The university may then prevent itself from drowning among the flotsam of late modernity. The temptation will still be to remain at the teat of government funding, which would lead it further away from its historic obligations. A poorer public purse will get very practical about the curriculum. The humanities would not stand a chance but be sacrificed to the gods of vocationalism.

Universities will probably return to being mainly the province of the rich and upper bourgeoisie. (A C Grayling's private humanities college is a forerunner.) However, it is not primarily about money. Even where universities are free (Austria) or nearly free (Holland) or very expensive (America), we see mostly the same sorts of middle- to upper-class students enrolling. Students go to university mostly for non-economic reasons: family or community culture being the most common, and genetics probably playing a stronger role than we are happy to admit. Yet, no matter who it is that makes up the university, our goal must be to shield its ethos and content: excellence in the love of learning and teaching; and the priority of the humanities as the disciplines that put 'uni-' in the university.

The university will need to shed many people, not only for financial reasons but also to maintain its identity. The less able students need to be freed from the university and from wasting 3-5 years of their lives, just as much as the university needs to have the freedom not to pretend to educate them.

There is a problem about shrinking the university that may prove intractable. We have for quite some time been speaking of education policy almost exclusively in the language of rights and social justice. When education is a right, someone else has the duty to provide it. 'How many taxpayer-subsidised degrees are you entitled to?' I asked a fellow Oxonian who had come back up for a second BA, 'bored' with the first subject he had read. Unfortunately, the more we think of education as a right, the less it is a right worth having. Not only does the university population become unmanageably large, but such entitlement also corrupts the relation between teacher and student and thereby the university's ethos. Education is, of course, a great privilege which we would be wise not to treat wantonly. When it is considered merely a right, freedom trumps liberty and responsibility goes the way of the buffalo. The right to free (or heavily subsidised) education eventually liberates both institutions and students from the difficult tasks of educating and becoming educated.

At least at Oxford and other élite institutions, the avant-garde speaks of free education largely in the language of social justice, and as such, 'the poor' get dragged into most conversations. These noble, mythical poor are now very nearly a pet obsession of do-gooders. Rarely has bald self-interest been dressed up so unselfconsciously as social justice. Students don't want to pay more. Who wants to pay more for anything? But few admit it. Instead, Rawls and Rousseau are marched in, to battle the zombie of the Bad Old Days, to protect 'the poor' (whoever they may be). One cannot spend too much time on the facts, the actual contents of the reforms are not the matter, the question of justice (without the weasel word 'social' attached) is doubly beside the point. Pragmatism about the actual cost of education is merely 'political stalling'.

We might anticipate an arduous battle. Students are trying to protect their parents' wealth from higher student fees and their own future salaries from graduate tax. To be fair, it is one thing to ask students to waste 3-5 years becoming half-educated so that they emerge modestly employable. It is another to charge them tens of thousands of pounds to do so. So, self-interest is coupled with a sentimentalism and idealism. Nostalgia to be part of a cause that matters (the protests of the sixties) and the temptation to violence (especially in young men) could protract this issue and prevent sense from seeming sensible. This is compounded by parents living out their political impotence through their children, co-opting them for their own labour protests. Even so, this has been the first time most young people have been roused into action for anything, and we should be grateful for the loss of complacency.

Nevertheless, feckless students do not start revolutions; they cannot even choose leaders. So the troubles in education will continue to manifest themselves in an inarticulate and schizophrenic movement that we are used to seeing. We will not even get a few good folk songs out of this.

Education must be lowered, or ratcheted down to a sustainable level, for financial reasons and to preserve the character of the university. Lowering education is about having reasonable expectations for what the university can do, and also understanding what it should (and especially should not) do. However, it is unlikely that anything will be done. I offer five (noticeably incomplete) proposals for the reform of education, with austerity and excellence as their mutually inclusive goals.

Abolish the bachelor's degree

Unless the cultural import of the bachelor's degree changes, the political push will be to expand access.

This increases the financial burden of higher education all round, without necessarily making society more productive, happier, or learned. Charles Murray, author of *The Bell Curve*, suggests we normalize the demand by introducing professional exams as qualifying credentials in many disciplines in lieu of bachelor's degrees. This is already the case for accounting in America and for law in parts of the UK. Why could it not be the same for other professions? One could still take a degree if one had the money, time and desire, but everyone would still have to sit an exam before entering a profession.

Universities could stop serving as pre-professional co-ed bath houses and put the onus on industries (including government) to craft the exams toward their own standards for future employees. In certain fields, employers would also want to identify and train candidates to pass the exams, which is beneficial both to the public purse and personal debt avoidance. Currently, private sector industries socialize the costs of training their future employees in a scheme of higher education. With this proposal, the university would be rid of all those who do not really want to be there, who merely want a job. The vocationalists would also then be rid of the university.

Stop allowing employers to socialize their costs

If one were a cynic one could accuse universities of being a necessary complement to the high unemployment economies of Europe. Universities serve as holding pens for great numbers of eligible (and competitive) workers, staggering the rate that they will hit the labour market. Both unions and private industry seem to benefit from this arrangement, though their reasons for supporting it could be contradictory. Unions want to drive up wages of current employees, which competition from the bottom of the market does not help. Employers want their future employees to arrive vetted and as educated as they can be, at someone else's expense, wherever possible.

One way to discourage this is to charge the company who takes on an employee a finders' fee (as head-hunters do), to be divided proportionally amongst the universities which have educated him. This would probably shrink the size of pre-professional programmes in the university: students who clearly would not pass muster would enrol in something else or enter the workforce elsewhere sooner; and businesses would no doubt fail to see the advantage of paying 50,000 pounds to universities for a person who is not well educated, when they could have done it right themselves for half as much.

(Mostly) abolish free higher education

Make free public higher education available to five per cent of the population holding UK passports by competitive exams. This would also be extended to the equivalent of one per cent of the UK population of foreign students, so as to attract some of the best and brightest to UK universities. Anybody else can pay on an open market for useless to very good universities. Or, they could have their education funded by future employers.

Forbid grievance studies

The university should not be the bulwark of one political worldview, and certainly not at great expense to the taxpayers. But how do we know which disciplines are politics in disguise? Begin by not funding any university discipline with the word 'studies' in it, such as women's studies, media studies, migration studies and film studies. These are nearly always bogus, and probably political. They are sub-academic. Try appending 'studies' to a serious discipline: 'philosophy studies' or 'math studies'. Any faculty with an implied 'studies' would also be axed.

Exile the 'edu-poli-crats'

Do not allow anyone who has ever been active in politics at any level to serve in an administrative role in the university, especially as president. They are not only expensive but also liabilities. For some time now, the temptation of politicians has been to appropriate higher education to 'fix' the failures of public 'lower' education, thus lowering the standards of the former in direct relation to the deficiencies of the latter. Former CEOs would be automatically disqualified for different, but equally compelling, reasons.

To begin to sweep the floor clean, any word whose origin was within the university education (studies) department should be banished from education policy. Where this is not possible one should use a tactic of the radicals: transform the language by re-appropriation. Do we support diversity in education policy? Yes, we support the greatest possible diversity of marks given to students.

Vernon Rogers is a graduate student of the University of Oxford.

Growing Old Disgracefully

Henry Oliver

There is much to disagree with in the Dilnot report. This not least: 'Under the current system someone who has lifetime care costs of £150,000 could lose up to 90 per cent of their accumulated wealth.' They are not losing their wealth. The purpose of working and saving and accumulating wealth and assets is to insure yourself against calamities. Spending your final years in a home is calamitous; selling your house to pay for it is not.

The proposal is an extension of the universal care policy of Beveridge: the grave has moved further away from the cradle, so we are going to give you more money. Life expectancy is on the rise: men can expect to live to 78, women to 82. That means that men live, on average, seventeen years after the age of 65, women twenty years.

This is a moral mistake. Look at the condition of the NHS; without the internal market Andrew Lansley was trying to impose it will only become a bigger more sacred cash cow. Dilnot is the first example of that. Leading people to believe that if they live long enough someone else will pay is wrong. One in six reach a hundred already: that number will only increase. We will not be able to fund care at this level. As the number of retirees gets bigger we will need mass immigration to grow the economy to fund this sort of system.

Because the Commission is not comfortable with people spending their money on their health care in old age, their aim is:

> The combination of the capped cost model (with the cap set at £35,000) and the extended means test would ensure that no one going into residential care would have to spend more than 30 per cent of their assets on their care costs.

This is absurd. Dilnot states that: 'those entering residential care are often forced to sell their homes – this is widely regarded by the public as unfair.' We need to have the courage to say to people that this is very, very fair indeed. It cannot be our departure point that people don't want to spend their money, so we won't make them. When people are faced with the choice of spending their own money rather than other people's they are less ready to spend it on needless things. One way of cutting waste from the NHS would be to have people pay for every trip they make to the GP that doesn't have a valid medical or pastoral reason.

One example in the report is of Alice:

> Alice lived alone in her own home worth £180,000. She had dementia and needed to go into a residential care home when she was 83 for the last five years of her life.

She ended up spending £165,000 of her pension income and house value. Under the new scheme after she had spent £35,000 the state would provide £18,500 per annum, and Alice would keep 80 per cent of her wealth. Why should people pay more in tax to allow Alice's daughter to get more inheritance? This takes the notion of expectation and entitlement too far, and Camilla Cavendish, from *The Times*, has sensible proposals to deal with the approaching demographic expansion:

> ...waive VAT on the granny flat that a daughter wants to build for her mother. Help people to release equity in their homes to buy a stairlift that could keep them there...Support the many grandchildren who are looking after their grandparents in this country.

The generation who in Martin Amis' words, 'are about to, fill up the restaurants and stink up the hospitals' need to pay for themselves. People who have a house to sell to pay for care ought to feel lucky that they live in a democratic capitalist country. There are plenty of problems in this area, reports of treatment of the elderly in the NHS being not the least, but one problem we shouldn't solve with state money is the inability to inherit your parents' house because they became old.

We ought to subsidise care for the poor, and no one else. Tax incentives linked to savings accounts and insurance policies would be a far better solution than tax and spend. Dilnot identifies the problem of cost in these terms: 'Around one in 10 people, at age 65, face future lifetime care costs of more than £100,000.' What if we could save a hundred thousand, tax free, in a retirement fund that was linked to an insurance policy for catastrophic illness and residential care. The insurance policy is based on the contributions made to the account over a working life. When retirement comes you are insured for catastrophes; but all residential care, night care and stairlifts that can be funded out of the savings account will be.

Couple this with tax breaks for people extending homes to care for relatives, a higher income tax

threshold and NI break for people whose parents retire to their children's homes. The more we remove the government the more we encourage two beneficial things: self-funded care, and family based care. The alternative is Dilnot's suggestion that people should be able to keep lots of money whilst the state pays for their care.

This is obviously a napkin sketch idea, but the principle comes from Singapore, where medical savings accounts are compulsory. In the light of the recent debacle over NHS legislation it is unlikely that we can expect a full-scale reform of NHS funding along these lines in this Parliament, but there is a chance to accept Dilnot's proposition that something must be done, while rejecting his proposals for how.

Henry Oliver blogs for the Adam Smith Institute.

The Lawyers' Trough

Richard Packer

I published an article in the *Salisbury Review* (Summer 2007) analysing some of the difficulties thrown up by the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights in the UK law via the Human Rights Act. Using examples from immigration and asylum I pointed out that the wish of the people, democratically expressed in elections and reflected by Members of Parliament, was frequently frustrated by the Courts on the grounds that the actions concerned ran counter to the provisions of the Convention and hence the Act. I suggested if that majority wishes on non-technical issues, like whether terrorists should be allowed to enter and remain in the country, were reflected in the policies of political parties commanding clear Parliamentary majorities, but were found by the Courts to run counter to the Convention, then the former view had greater legitimacy and should carry the day. In other words in such circumstances the law should bow to politics. In practice the law should be changed by repealing the Human Rights Act or perhaps by the UK's denouncing all or part of the Convention.

The Human Rights Act is a disaster because its effects were not and could not be predicted. It is phrased in such general terms that when judges apply it to specific problems the results come as an unpleasant surprise.

The adoption of the Act has led to a series of extraordinary legal rulings which seem to be utterly perverse. There is however a common theme linking them all. Paramount importance is given to the position and wishes of an individual or group who are in some way set apart from society at large. In planning law it has been held that people who claim to be 'travellers' are in some circumstances not subject to the same rules as the rest of us, and can therefore build on the green belt. Some foreign-born, known terrorists cannot be deported either because they have some family in the UK or because the authorities in their country of origin to which they would be sent might not meet British standards of behaviour.

The recent riots spring from many failures in public policy including education, welfare and other policies. But the Human Rights Act has also contributed. It cannot help that the Act and the thinking that lies behind it has allowed, indeed encouraged, the very large numbers of recent arrivals in the UK not to assimilate or to adopt British values. It certainly does not help that foreign gangsters can invoke the Act to stay in Britain even if convicted of serious crimes

The wishes and welfare of those whose actions are under scrutiny are treated as the only valid consideration; the effects actual and potential on everyone else, that is society at large, are treated as being of no consequence. The rights of those who wish to destroy our society and kill as many members of it as possible are treated as more important than the rights of those they intend to kill. A continuing mystery is how many leftish politicians consider this state of affairs to be a sign of 'a civilised society'. If 'masochistic and bent on self-destruction' were substituted for 'civilised' one would be nearer the mark.

This came about because in the WWII era many people, especially those belonging to minorities, were persecuted and murdered by the governmental apparatus in many parts of Europe. The provisions of the Convention reflected a determination that this should not happen again. Those who drafted it would probably be appalled that their attempt to protect people, especially those from minorities, was being interpreted so as to handicap society in defending itself from physical attack. The problems of the future will be different from those we are currently experiencing

and so it would be unwise to curtail our freedom of action unnecessarily. Unfortunately this cautious creed runs counter to human vanity, including the vanity of Convention drafters.

The Human Rights saga has not shown the judiciary in a good light. It is difficult to get too excited about footballers' indiscretions, but the judges have constructed a privacy law out of the Convention even though it also contains contrary provisions protecting freedom of expression, and the judges were aware that Parliament expected the Courts to give the latter greater importance. The wishes of lawmakers have been set aside. Worse, when the identity of some of those covered by such injunctions was revealed in Parliament, very senior judges have had the folly to suggest that they or those reporting them might not be covered by Parliamentary privilege. Lawyers have constructed a law out of ambiguous material, almost certainly unnecessarily, and the heads of the profession are now suggesting that protecting their invention is more important than one of the most fundamental British freedoms. Their hubris is unacceptable and the sooner lawyers and judges adopt a more modest role the better.

The Law of Unintended Consequences is one of the most powerful factors in life. Lawyers and politicians cannot be criticised if, from time to time, they run into trouble with that. They should be criticised if they unthinkingly take actions which increase the chances that they will run foul of its effects

The whole episode demonstrates one point even more clearly than was already apparent. The Human Rights Act is a disaster because its effects were not and could not be predicted. It is phrased in such general terms that when judges apply it to specific problems the results come as an unpleasant surprise. Indeed the outcomesin some cases like protecting terrorists to the detriment of everyone else could fairly be described as unjust. Yet the adoption of the Act was the cause to which so many pinkish lawyers were so attached at the start of the 1997 government. Their main fault was to overrate their ability to foresee future events, a fault to which idealists are especially prone.

Clearly the Act should go; the only thing holding up necessary action is that it would require large slabs of humble pie to be eaten by prominent people who consider themselves important. There are at least two other comparable issues where the lessons learnt from the debacle of the Human Rights Act might be relevant. The present government is proposing to put a requirement that overseas aid must amount to 0.7 per cent of GDP into law. Aside from objections based on the established fact that much aid is wasted and that to propose increasing it at a time when spending on virtually everything else is being cut is remarkable, why not make the same commitment for policing, health or defence? The future is unknown. Countries become richer; the UK might suffer an economic collapse or be fighting for its life in armed conflict. Anything might happen and to have closed off a large amount of national income from any other use in perpetuity may handicap future governments' ability to deal with major problems.

Another example might appear more attractive: the intention to legislate to put the 'Military Covenant' into law. Yet here, too, reflection suggests caution. Suppose British servicemen are killed and it is claimed that this was because their equipment was sub-standard. Land-rovers in Afghanistan spring to mind. Suppose this gets brought to court by some affected party – all recent experience suggests courts are quite happy to consider such matters. A court might find that the Covenant had been broken in that errors had been made in the procurement process, perhaps because the evidence about potential threats had been wrongly evaluated. This might even be a reasonable conclusion, but the consequences of reaching it might still be malign.

This is not just because of potential costs. Political pressure to put matters right on the issue would be irresistible. Yet by the time a court judgement had been reached the pressing need, if servicemen were to be best protected, might be quite different. The theatre of action might have changed and some other defect in equipment might be of more concern. Yet dealing with the contemporary worry might be handicapped by the need to deal first with the court's criticism of the original weakness. The court judgement would have a perverse effect, because of the time taken to reach a verdict, at which point circumstances might have changed.

The Law of Unintended Consequences is one of the most powerful factors in life. Lawyers and politicians cannot be criticised if, from time to time, they run into trouble with that. They should be criticised if they unthinkingly take actions which increase the chances that they will run foul of its effects. The Human Rights Act and the proposals to put overseas aid provision and the Military Covenant within the law are just such cases.

Sir Richard Packer is a company director.

No Joking at the BBC

Marc Blake

Discussing comedy is always going to be subjective, but the mammoth sell-out arena tours of today's big comedy names is proof that comedy is hugely popular. It is also homogenized, classless and bland. Where are the fractured geniuses of yesteryear? The suicidal Hancocks, the manic-depressive Milligans, the misanthropic Kenneth Williams or Peter Cooks? Where is the equivalent to Frankie Howerd or the strange perversities of Benny Hill and Kenny Everett? This is not to say that all comedians ought to be mentally unstable wife-beating alcoholics, but the most notable crisis of the new brigade was Stephen Fry absconding to Belgium.

Comedy has changed massively in the last few decades and this is not entirely because of television. It has undergone two seismic shifts, the first of these being the Swinging Sixties and its liberalisation of sexuality as represented by the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, which decriminalized homosexual acts in private. Before this, the 'dirty little secrets' (lavender marriages, cottaging, importuning) were more of an open secret in a country that openly celebrated cross–dressing in Pantomime and filth from Chaucer to Hogarth to Donald McGill. The camp comic's innuendo and sly asides were the product of his repression and this made his comedy both dangerous and delightful. Today's openly gay comedians (Alan Carr, Graham Norton and Julian Clary) barely employ a single entendre among their rude and lame pot shots. In an age as unfettered as Weimar era Berlin, the 'anything goes' ethic seems to have castrated them.

the 'dirty little secrets' (lavender marriages, cottaging, importuning) were more of an open secret in a country that openly celebrated cross–dressing in Pantomime and filth from Chaucer to Hogarth to Donald McGill. The camp comic's innuendo and sly asides were the product of his repression and this made his comedy both dangerous and delightful.

The second movement was the birth of Alternative Comedy in the 1980's. No one would deny that it swept away a culture of hate, including the overt racism of Bernard Manning and the defiant sexism of Jim Davidson, but was the baby being thrown out with the bathwater? ITV chiefs promptly ended Benny Hill's career, but the man was a great visual innovator who worked tirelessly with the actual medium of TV. Les Dawson was reduced to quiz shows and others were thrown back on the dwindling Workingmen's club circuit.

The new comedy certainly threw up geniuses like Harry Enfield, Fry and Laurie and the intermittently good French and Saunders, but the stand-up form itself became pedantic in its doctrinal approach. Observational comedy wears thin. It concerns behaviour that is all rather inward-looking and self-centered – and Dave Allen was doing it much better anyway back in the Seventies. Today, comedy is therapy and cure-all, and if it speaks for a generation then it is one with a minute focus on the inconsequential, on endless shtick about cats and dogs and the comic's supposed hopelessness in bed. It's not of them. The compulsion seems to be not to reduce the audience to hysterics but to be thought witty and clever. It is the laugh of the mind not of the gut.

When they do turn outwards, it is to easy targets such as the Welsh, Ginger people, Chavs or Americans singular or plural. There is precious little political comedy of note. Frankie Boyle is a shock jockey without the depth and range of his predecessor Billy Connolly. The others spout polemic or more often turn what they once had in spite and bile into a lucrative career in documentary making. Some of them do address real concerns but in the main our fears are muted and ridiculed as *Daily Mail* fodder. Muslim jokes are muzzled (as their women are) with the joke tellers far too terrified to bare their teeth in the face of a BBC fatwa. Most would gladly risk their lives for TV exposure but will not stick their head over the parapet. The BBC has been stymied by political correctness and has armies of lawyers checking out any possible transgression that may offend. We must all be seen to be doing the right thing, which erases any margin of error. It is even coming to light that the 'Sachsgate' Ross/Brand debacle was stage-managed. In the end, what we get on TV is a re-tread of the blandest Royal Variety Shows, now called the Michael Macintyre Comedy Roadshow. It is a parade of sick careerists out to calculate the lucrative benefits. There is no lunacy in their eyes, only pound signs. Comedy is now a career choice. There are numerous workshops and courses – and even the world's first Comedy and Performance degree at Southampton Solent University. Producers are looking for youth above all and their

heads are easily turned by any gibberish-spouting pretty boy with borderline autism.

Fundamentally the difference between the old and the new is in class. The new are middle class and University educated (which is fast becoming an oxymoron). Middle class comedy is urbane and witty, self-indulgent and neutered of having any real radical views by the virtue of the performer having come from a featherbedded existence.

In the past (and still today in Britain's ailing film industry) the middle classes were not invited. It was all Yobs or Nobs and comedy actors/comedians had to choose sides. Toff comedy character actors included Ian Carmichael, Joyce Grenfell, Richard Wattis, John Le Mesurier and Terry Thomas (a North London grammar school boy). These silly-ass roles were always subject to hubris and eventual downfall. Salt of the Earth comics included Chaplin, Stanley Holloway, Arthur Askey and Norman Wisdom. The great British underdog, the wily Brit who lived on his wits was a perennial favourite of ours right through to the 1970's. The mainspring of almost all comedy was Us vs. Them. Be it about Governmental interference, military ineptitude, management vs. unions or a comic criminal caper, the police were always bungling and inhuman, the doctors uncaring and distant and the bosses pompous and furious.

This has all changed. Now we have sitcoms like *The Office* about a boss who wishes to be your friend, or crude jibes at spin-doctors in *The Thick of It* (BBC). So many more of us are middle class now, however you define the term, there is nowhere to go. We can rail against the Government or Health and Safety Directives or management initiatives until we are blue in the face, but the problem is, these are all people like us and today's comedians are representing a liberal intelligentsia that has a terrible sense of entitlement. Not only are we are getting the government we deserve, we are also getting the comedians we deserve.

Marc Blake is a stand-up comedian.

Conservative Classic - 44

Frederick Rolfe: *Hadrian the Seventh*

Harry Cummins

In his *Guide to Modern World Literature* (1973), Martin Seymour-Smith, discussing the influence of Ronald Firbank on Evelyn Waugh and Anthony Powell, notes:

> Another source for these writers, as for Firbank himself, was Frederick Rolfe (1860-1913), self-styled Baron Corvo and priest, who was both more comic and more poisonous than Firbank. He was a confidence man, pauper, tutor, blackmailer, translator and author of seven novels and a number of short stories. Rolfe was a trickster whose failed life stank to himself as to the few friends whom he had and betrayed. But he was a fascinating figure: a bore, but also a pseudo-Borgian freak whose vindictiveness and paranoia have deservedly become legendary largely through A J A Symons famous biography, *The Quest for Corvo* (1930). Rolfe's one decent novel, *Hadrian the Seventh* (1904), is by no means the masterpiece Symons called it; but it is a psychopathological tour de force, an autobiographical fantasy about a man who, rejected as a priest (as Rolfe was), is elected Pope and proceeds to revenge himself (upon or to reform?) the Church.

According to its author, *Hadrian* was written in a public lavatory during a period of homeless destitution. Rolfe later told his friend Sir Harry Luke that the volume was inscribed on the paper supplied by the establishment and that it was only by means of its unusual format that the manuscript at last caught a publisher's eye. Not everyone shares Seymour-Smith's belief that *Hadrian* is not a masterpiece. Graham Greene called it a novel of genius and D H Lawrence a book of our epoch, continuing:

> If it is the book of a demon, as Corvo's contemporaries said, it is the book of a man demon, not a mere poseur. And if some of it is caviare, at least it came out of the belly of a live fish.

The novel opens in a squalid London boarding house where we find Rolfe's *alter ego* George Arthur Rose, an unsuccessful writer, and an even more unsuccessful candidate for the priesthood, raising a fervent prayer to the Lord:

> Why, O God, have You made me strange, uncommon, such a mystery to my fellow creatures, not a man among men like other people?
>
> Do I want to appear like other people?
>
> No, no, certainly not . . .

We find Rose sitting with his cat Flavio-reading the papers about a contemporary event, the failed Russian Revolution of 1905:

> How exquisitely horrible it is, he said to Flavio . . . a hecatombe . . . aristocracy, government, bureaucracy all annihilated, and Anarchy in excelsis . . . The Tsar well, that was to be expected. But the Tsaritisa though, if ever a woman bore her fate in her face she did, poor creature. Those dreadful haunted eyes of hers! That hard old young soft face! The innocent babies! How abominably cynically cruel! . . . But we're all Christians, Flavio; and this is only one of the many funny ways in which we love one another.

Extrapolating the unknown future from the present, the author now contrives a narrative in which, instead of being crushed, the Russian Revolutionaries of 1905 go on to triumph. Their movement spreads to France, which dissolves into a Communard-inspired chaos that sees the country's Christians massacred. Revolutionary Socialism threatens to engulf the entire continent. Happily, at this point, Kaiser Wilhelm (who happened to be Rolfe's personal hero) appears onstage one night at the Berlin Opera House during a performance of Rossini's *William Tell*. To the astonishment of the audience, he emerges into a semi-circle of the cast at the start of the Second Act and produces evidence that the Marxist leaders of Germany's hitherto dominant Social Democratic Party have been wallowing in a luxury purchased by selling the Reich's secrets to revolutionary France. It being quite contrary to the principles of socialism that anyone should enjoy themselves, this revelation is sufficient to destroy the Social Democrats at the ensuing general election, after which German Socialism crumbles: very soon now the silly obscene heresy would die and disappear, with the obsolete delusions of Gymnosophists, Anabaptists, Picards, Adamites and Turlupins. Not before George Arthur Rose, however, has delivered Socialism's quietus in the rest of the world. For in a further burst of clairvoyant fantasy, Rolfe, whose unfitness for holy orders, we are told by his biographer Symons, was recognised by his fellows almost without exception, propels his cipher Rose from rejected obscurity to the very throne of Saint Peter: he becomes the arbiter of mankind.

The day after we find him reading the papers, the maid informs George Arthur Rose that a bishop and the Cardinal of Pimlico are at the door.

'Dr Courtleigh and Dr Talacryn?' he repeated as a query, in the tone of one to whom Beelzebub and the Archangel Periel have been announced at eleven oclock on the morning of a working day.

Courtleigh, the Cardinal, has come to raise Rose to the priesthood. By persisting for decades in a fruitless attempt to win holy orders, Rose has convinced the Cardinal of his vocation. Made Courtleigh's chaplain, Rose must now proceed to golden and eternal Rome where the Cardinal has to deliberate with the rest of the Sacred College on the election of a new Pope. The Conclave, however, divided between the immoveable adherents of three or four famous Cardinals, soon becomes deadlocked. A group of nine Cardinal-Comprimissaries, including Courtleigh, is chosen by lot to break the logjam and impose a Pope on the others.

The Comprimissaries conclude that Rose's miraculous tenacity for the priesthood in the face of obviously unjust resistance proves that he must be God's annointed. The outcast is raised from the chaplaincy to the Papacy. As Pope, Rose rejects his benefactor's suggestion that he style himself Leo, or Pius, or Gregory, as is the modern manner? He chooses the name Hadrian the Seventh after the last Englishman to wear the Triple Tiara, Nicholas Breakspeare, Hadrian the Fourth (1154-59).

As Hadrian the Seventh, Rose devotes himself to Astrology and appoints as Gentlemen of the Apostolic Chamber two attractive plebeian athletes who wander around the Vatican in the nude. He also brings Flavio along, who is swiftly denounced by the Cardinals as his Familiar: A feeling that His Holiness was dynamic, picric, dangerous pervaded the Assembly. And no wonder. Hadrian sells the Vatican's treasures to feed the poor. Twenty years before either actually happened, he canonises Joan of Arc and, intoning my 'kingdom is not of this world', recognises the absorption of the Papal States by the Italian government.

He is also the driving force behind an international conference at Windsor at which the King of Italy, the Emperors of Germany and Japan, the President of the United States, the Ottoman Sultan and the other great Mohammedan power, England (Mohammedan because of her conscious sympathy with the barbaric) are licensed to divide the world between them and stamp out Socialism. Or, as our author puts it: 'Other malefactors felt the flail which, like Osiris, he wielded equally with the crook.' The Kaiser is given responsibility for the pacification of the revolutionary ruins that are European Russia and France, and is also allowed to acquire Poland, Austria-Hungary, Benelux, Romania, Scandinavia and Switzerland. Italy is presented with Greece, Portugal, Spain and the Balkans: above all King Victor Emanuel III is enjoined by Hadrian to wipe out Bulgaria, a country of heretics of the most notorious and dreadful kind, atrocious brigands to a man, ruled (or rather not ruled) by a foreigner who is a contemptible cur. The United States is bidden to absorb the Americas, Japan to devour Siberia. The Sultan is left only with the right to administer Persia and what remains of the Ottoman state in Asia, for, as the Pope wisely observes, Islam could only and would only mate with Islam. The other great Mohammedan power is gifted with every other part of the globe. At this point, however – at which the book ends – the Pope is assassinated by Keir Hardie, the leader of British Socialism.

Rolfe happened to bear a particular personal grudge against Hardie, who is known in the novel as Jerry Sant. During a period of homeless destitution in Aberdeen, Rolfe was taken in by M P H Champion, a local journalist who made the author his secretary. Champion was then locked in a duel with Hardie for control of Britain's nascent Labour movement. When Hardie denounced him as a Tory spy, Champion was forced to flee to Australia, leaving Rolfe without a job or a home.

Rolfe also suspected Hardie and Nancy Gleeson White (the widow of the artist Joseph Gleeson White) of placing a series of anonymous articles denouncing him in the *Aberdeen Free Press* in 1898. When reproduced in the national media, this poisonous farrago literally ruined Rolfe's life. Gleeson White's motive was that she had hated Rolfe – a friend of her husband – since naively attempting to seduce him. As Rolfe icily observed: She had not realised the feline temper which had caused him to repel advances as obvious, as abrupt and as shameless as a dog's. The articles detailed the lengths to which homeless destitution had compelled Rolfe as confidence man, pauper and blackmailer to go, and described in depth his many unsavoury scamming operations and lies.

In *Hadrian*, however, it is Sant and Gleeson White – or Mrs Crowe as she is known in the book – who are the blackmailers. They turn up in golden and eternal Rome where Mrs Crowe converts to Catholicism, and duly was slavered. The Pope is warned that unless he orders all British Catholics to vote for the Labour Party and accepts Mrs Crowe as his lover (all priests have housekeepers, Georgie! Crowe yaps), the details that Crowe has given Sant about George Arthur Rose's shady dealings as a destitute author will be passed to the press. Hadrian, however, rejects this *démarche* with contempt:

> His impulse was to make an end of the male animal in a tank of aquafortis, if such a convenience only had formed part of the pontifical paraphernalia: as for the female, he remembered George Meredith's sentence, and would have liked to squeeze all the acid out of her at one grip and toss her to the divinities who collect exhausted lemons . . .

The world's media, like Britain's after the *Free Press* attack, disseminates Sant's scurrilous hatchet job, but Hadrian defends himself before the Church with a magnificent *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (as Rolfe could not do in 1898) and Sant's onslaught bears no fruit. Ejected from a disappointed Labour Party (and by Mrs Crowe), an embittered Sant shoots Hadrian dead in St Peter's Square: 'How bright the sunlight was . . . on apostolic whiteness and the rose of blood. '

As Rolfe himself puts it: 'The world sobbed, sighed, wiped its mouth; and experienced extreme relief.'

Harry Cummins is a Development Manager.

Reputations - 33

Robertson Davies, 1913-1995

Jonathan M Paquette

> I see Canada as a country torn between a very northern, rather extraordinary, mystical spirit which it fears and its desire to present itself to the world as a Scottish banker.
>
> Robertson Davies

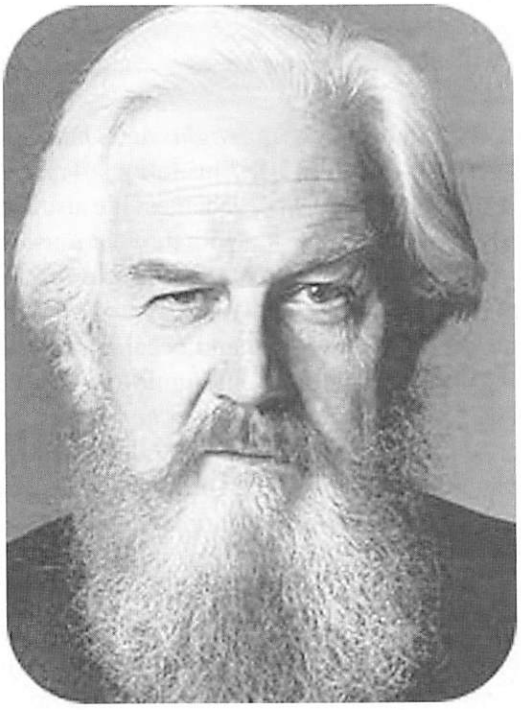
When speaking with English Canadians, one need only mention the name Robertson Davies in order to elicit a knowing smile and earnest conversation. Easily Canada's best chronicler of its national psyche, Davies's works illustrated social mores and deeply held convictions in a nation whose culture reflects both its British and North American roots. A keen Tory and devout Anglican, he imbued his novels with a deep reverence for tradition and sacredness within the modern world. Combining long-standing interests in esotericism and the interior lives of his countrymen, Davies wrote sophisticated works dealing with themes of sin, time and the weight of national memory. Described as 'Southern Ontario Gothic', his novels cleverly delineate fault-lines within human relationships and reveal complexities below the surface. In particular, his magnum opus *Fifth Business* forms an elaborate web with Jungian archetypes, Christian mysticism and the interwoven consequences of human actions. Always a delight, Davies's novels and plays are the best viewpoint into Canada's soul and well worth reading by British audiences.

Born in 1913 into an established Ontario publishing family, Davies began his life with a profound respect for the world of books and ideas. Raised in Thamesville and steeped in a deeply moralistic Presbyterian public culture, he readily began to perceive the provincialism and fault lines of small-town Canadian life. Finding refuge in the local library, he discovered the magnificent worlds depicted in *The Boy's King Arthur, The Arabian Nights* and Dante's *Inferno*, with its remarkable Doré illustrations. Travelling carnivals that passed through Thamesville also ignited young Davies's imagination, with their various freaks and wrinkled Gypsy fortune-tellers muttering over dusty Tarot cards. Desiring richness and vitality, he also gravitated to the theatre and became captivated by the power of greasepaint, costuming and backdrops to create scenes of emotional power and dignity.

Absorbing the works of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Webster, Davies realised that dramaturgy provided an avenue to express his own aesthetic and personal interests. Having failed the mathematics portion of his Upper Canada College graduation requirement, Davies's father managed to have him admitted as a special status student to Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. There, he began studying English literature and drama while continuing to observe the cultural patterns of his countrymen. Davies then obtained a B Litt at Balliol and began acting at the Old Vic. After being told by a *Daily Mail* theatre critic that he would make a better playwright and reviewer than actor, Davies turned to writing as an outlet for his creative energies.

On the outbreak of war he returned to Ontario, where he began working in his father's newspapers and writing satirical editorials under the pseudonym of 'Samuel Marchbanks'. Lampooning the provincial, middle-class outlook of his countrymen, the Samuel Marchbanks writings proved to be popular and brought Davies fame throughout Canada. Proving just as much a successful businessman as writer, the family newspapers brought him increasing wealth throughout the fifties and allowed him to pursue his literary efforts. Introduced to elite Canadian society,

he became accepted as a 'man of letters' and one who best represented the nation in his prose. Approached by Governor-General Massey in 1963 to form a graduate college at the University of Toronto, Davies re-entered academe with great enthusiasm. Insisting on a traditional, all-male environment, he indulged his medievalism and inherent conservatism in order to recreate an Oxford atmosphere in Canada. Perhaps his greatest enjoyment proved to be the annual Christmas party, where Davies would tell vivid ghost stories to delight his students. In such a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere, his literary output increased in both quality and volume with *Fifth Business*, *The Manticore* and *World of Wonders* all published within five years. Forming the celebrated Deptford Trilogy, these novels are Davies's finest works and illustrate the tremendous power of his literary imagination.



Set in small-town Ontario, *Fifth Business* delivers an extraordinary narrative concerning the effect of interconnected actions and their consequences. Invested with a deep respect for mysticism, Davies's characters are shaped by their own identities as Canadians, Christians and spiritual beings. One character emerges from the horrors of Great War trenches, where he is blessed with an apparition of the Blessed Virgin, to become an eminent schoolmaster and expert on hagiography. Another runs away from a disgraced minister father and insane mother to join a travelling carnival. There he learns fortune-telling, endures pederasty and later reappears as the world-famous stage magician and clairvoyant, 'Magnus Eisengrim'. A third character becomes a famous socialite, friend of the Duke of Windsor and wealthy industrialist, only to be undone by a long-forgotten victim of his pride and willful actions. The lives of these personalities are woven by Davies into a detailed tissue, in which the divine and demonic regularly touch mortal men and alter their lives. In one particularly memorable scene, our faithful schoolmaster wrestles with Satan, who is depicted as a hideously ugly woman with the strength of a gorilla. Exuding contempt for tradition and possessing a grotesque, flaunted sexuality, she reminds readers of times they themselves have come face to face with distinct evil. Continuing this magical narrative with *The Manticore* and *World of Wonders*, Davies depicted our world through the eyes of a contemporary mystic and one who dances to the rhythms of the past.

It was this magical realist vision which informed Davies's works and influenced his staunch Conservatism and Anglicanism. Instead of various socialist utopian theories and endless dialectical materialism, Davies delighted in the gothic and earthy elements of our culture. Like the Elizabethan dramatist John Webster, Davies regularly saw 'the skull beneath the skin'. Yet there always existed a fascination and a childlike, wide-eyed wonder in his work. Life mixed with Death, passion mixed with dry academicism and Gypsies mixed with Scottish Presbyterians all informed his artistic imagination. Like the best English authors and playwrights, Davies cleverly subverted seemingly normal appearances to expose the intricacies beneath. He continued to write after his retirement from Massey College, and the Canadian government awarded him the Order of Canada in recognition of his literary achievements. After his death in 1995, his works were included in school curriculums across Canada and read by a generation of young Canadians, who understood him as an illustrator of the national character.

An antiquarian and storyteller by nature, Davies enjoyed old books, good company, clever students and his loving family. In his last novel, *The Cunning Man*, the main character elegantly summarizes Davies's vision. Referring to an elaborate scene before him, the hero says, 'This is the Great Theatre of Life. Admission is free but the taxation is mortal. You come when you can and leave when you must. The show is continual.'

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Roy Kerridge

Not long ago I suffered a bunged-up right ear. It felt bubbly inside, and I soon became half deaf. My GP could find no superfluous wax, and sent me to the Ear Department of a nearby NHS hospital. A top ear doctor inspected my ear. She was a pleasant middle-aged woman in spectacles, with an insecure worried air about her. I knew that expression, so often seen on the faces of schoolteachers who have to swot up their lessons the night before.

'Will I be found out?' 'Is my job safe?' that look says. After peering down my ear and poking it with various instruments, she pronounced her verdict.

'You have gone deaf in one ear because you are very old', she explained. 'Never fear, you can enrol in our therapy group of similarly afflicted patients.'

I could just imagine our discussions: Eh? What's that you say? Speak up! And so on.

Instead I 'went private' at the cost of £350. My new doctor, a man, looked greedy but extremely intelligent. He swiftly extracted a lump of wax from my ear, and then told me that I had 'glue ear', a complaint normally suffered by small children.

'Will I ever get better?' I enquired piteously. He looked utterly astonished, and then said 'Of course! Just take these eardrops once a day, and the ear will clear up in no time.' A week later, my ear was completely cured.

Every incoming Prime Minister has to praise the National Health and promise to make it better. In my view, they are just throwing good money after bad. Our pioneering Welfare State has proved the hard way that Health and Secondary Education cannot be run by the State, at least not in Britain. Most people (unless old like me) do not realise that most hospitals were once charitable institutions, 'supported by voluntary contributions'. They imagine that once all hospitals charged the high fees that private hospitals charge now, and that the poor died in the street, stepped over by the heedless rich.

Those who can afford it turn to private hospitals (and schools). Before long, NHS hospitals may be known as 'pauper hospitals' and Comprehensives as 'pauper schools'. The spirit of charity will dwindle as the better off curse the 'paupers', blaming them for high taxation.

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Talking of paupers, it is a curious fact that those below pauperdom often lead fulfilled, useful and comfortable lives. Tribal villagers in the tropics work hard on their farms or hunting lands but have not yet discovered the use of money. Probably few if any such people exist today. In Central Africa, newly arrived imperial officials imposed hut taxes and so introduced money which could be earned and then taxed to support the Colony. At a stroke villagers became paupers, but quickly learned how to hire themselves out to white people. They could then not only earn the tax money but have some cash over with which to buy exciting new white people's products, such as sewing machines and bicycles. In England, *New Statesman* readers agonised over Africans who earned a penny a day, and looked forward to the time when such villagers could earn a pound. It never occurred to anyone to put the clock back and allow people once more to live without money. Africans would have resented such a policy, just as English people now would resent the abolition of the NHS.

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A man who *does* believe in turning back the clock is Paul Lister of Allandale in Scotland.

As a boy I was fond of shading in vast areas of the map of Britain, imagining that I could make them into Yellowstone-type National Parks, houses torn down, forests planted and wolves and bears restored. Landowner Lister evidently shared the same dream, for he has securely fenced in his Highland estate and introduced elk and wild boars. He hopes to bring back wolves and bears, but so far the law forbids him. In the eyes of Scotland's new rulers, the Scot Nats, Paul Lister is a reactionary Laird. They should instead look on him as a revolutionary entrepreneur whose National Park-like activities may one day send tourists streaming to Scotland, forsaking Africa, India and Alaska in their quest for photogenic wild life. Far from persecuting Lister, the Scottish government should go into partnership with this visionary man.

Lister's dream is to return his part of the Highlands to their original forested state. Heather moors are not natural to Scotland. The Caledonian forest has long been chopped down and cannot return while sheep and deer closely graze. Most Scottish landowners prefer heather to trees as it encourages red grouse. Forests are more conducive to black grouse and capercaillie.

I well remember walking through an Italian forest in the dusk, with black game rocketing up at every step. Mind you, if I had heard the eerie howl of a wolf, I would have dropped dead in fright.

ETERNAL LIFE

Baptism is called a means of grace. It is a sacrament. So by this water and these prayers God promises to pour particular blessings upon the child. It is also the beginning of the child's Christian nurture. From that day onwards he is meant to enter the world of Christian life and worship and not meant to delay his next church attendance until the day he gets married.

One essential piece of advice which should be given to all adults is, 'Never underestimate children.' They come out with the most miraculously unexpected sayings. Thomas Carlyle never spoke at all until he was two. Then one day he heard his brother crying and asked, 'What ails thee, Jock?' Thomas Babington Macaulay was a great reader from a very young age and always spoke in the style of the book he had just read. When he was four and had just finished a melodrama, a visitor spilt some hot milk on his arm. She was most apologetic, but little Thomas replied, 'Pray do not perturb yourself ma'am: the agony has abated.' Aged four, Ronald Knox was asked what he did when he couldn't sleep and he replied, 'I lie awake and think about the past.'

A great national characteristic of the English is to be sentimental about children while neglecting to attend to their best interests. Kierkegaard said that most people's idea of Christianity is a combination of Our Lord's saying about little children and his other saying to the penitent thief on the cross: 'And properly considered,' said Kierkegaard 'this is just a mixture of childishness and crime.'

In Charles Dickens, the abuse of children – Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Tiny Tim – usually involved rather obvious cruelty. In our times this cruelty tends to take the form of both indulgence and neglect. In the magazine *Viz* there is a regular feature called Modern Parents in which these creepy, empty-headed, pampering sentimentalists have a son called Algernon who is not merely *allowed* to do exactly as he likes, but in a perfect fit of satanic permissiveness is *compelled* to do as he likes. This is child-abuse of the worst sort: no landmarks, no boundaries and ultimately, therefore, no understanding of good and bad.

In *The Confessions of St Augustine,* particularly the first chapter, the great man presents no idealised picture of childhood innocence. There is a complete absence of sentimentality. He knew, better even than every real schoolmaster, that children have a brutish, malicious and selfish side. Therefore, they must be taught and indoctrinated – true doctrines should be put in. Why is it that the totalitarian relativism of the modern world regards 'indoctrination' as only a dirty word? Shouldn't we impart what we believe, what Christian civilisation has professed for 2000 years to be true?

If we don't impart this faith, then what is it proposed we should feed them on instead? Rather than instruct and inform children, the modern sentimentalists say we should simply love them, but giving them eternal truths is the best way to love them.

We should no more leave a child in ignorance of the doctrines upon which his eternal salvation depends than of a practical acquaintance with the Highway Code or the need to wash his hands before meals. At first his learning will take the form of learning by heart. We learn by heart before we learn by light. As Chesterton said, 'I knew pages of Shakespeare's blank verse without a notion of what it meant – and that is the right way to begin to learn anything.'

Any parent recognises the minor perversities of children: that mealtimes are the only times in the day when children will refuse to eat. Any father who ever walked barefoot into his child's bedroom at night hates Lego. No wonder that W C Fields said, 'A man who hates children and animals can't be all bad.' Country folk, farming folk, often have a more realistic perspective on human nature. I think it has to do with living close to the soil. These farmers know we are but dust. I remember when I was christening a little girl up in Yorkshire twenty years ago, she made a hell of a racket and I could see the parents looked rather embarrassed. A local farmer, Tom Pick, said, 'They've got to scream, Vicar. It's the devil coming out.'

The old Roman rite of baptism contains an exorcism as the priest says *Exorcisti te daimonio.* Thomas Cranmer's first Prayer Book of 1549 is even more enthusiastic than the Roman rite in casting out the devil. Archbishop Cranmer tells the priest at the christening to address the devil in these uncompromising words:

> I command thee unclean spirit that thou come out and depart from this infant...Thou cursed spirit remember thy judgement...wherein thou shalt burn in fire everlasting. And presume not to exercise any tyranny towards this infant whom Christ hath bought with his precious blood...

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ARTS AND BOOKS

United They Fell

John Jolliffe

The Pursuit of Italy 2011, David Gilmour, Allen Lane, 2011, £25.00.

This excellent book is published to mark the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the unification of Italy, which the author joins in celebrating with polite reluctance. One of his many strengths is his gift for combining a thematic with a chronological treatment of the whole complex and long drawn out story, in a way which I cannot remember finding to the same degree anywhere else. The themes include the rise and eclipse of Florence, Siena and Venice in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the French and Spanish invasions, the decline of Sicily, and the heroes of the Romantic era.

He begins by emphasising the country's unusual and crucial geography. In the north, a wedge-shaped fertile plain, and below it a largely mountainous or at least hilly peninsula stretching down over six hundred miles from north-west to south-east. Otranto in the south of Puglia is in sight of Greece and Albania, and is nearer to no less than seven other European capitals than it is to Turin; whereas Piedmont in the north-west marches with France and Switzerland. Gilmour quotes an apt Piedmontese image dating from before unification: 'We are too long a country. The head and tail will never touch each other, but if they are made to do so, the head will bite the tail.' This is exactly what happened.

Many different languages are spoken. One of the clumsier features of unification was the decision to mix up southern and northern troops in the same units in the army, in the vain hope that they would get on. The result of course was that half a company would sometimes be quite unable to understand the words of command, though this was far from the only reason for the almost unrelieved failure of the Italian armed forces ever since. One of the few victories which they could claim, at Magenta, was won before the Italian army got there, and at Custozza General Lamarmora, in his panic, succeeded in completely losing touch with his subordinates and ended up thirteen miles away from the battlefield. Later, his men brutally murdered many civilians whom they suspected of disloyalty to the new regime. For the sake of prestige the navy was enormous, but it had no one to fight in the Mediterranean. Its commander, Admiral Persano, had no seafaring background but owed his position to his talent for flattery and intrigue. When carrying Piedmont's contribution to the Great Exhibition in London, he ran his ship aground outside Genoa, and two years later he repeated the performance while transporting the Royal Family to Sardinia for a hunting trip. Later, in 1896, the army lost no less than 6,000 lives at Adowa in a ludicrous attempt to overthrow the Emperor Menelek of Ethiopia.

These were the sort of people that Garibaldi, with his magnetic, straightforward character, his endless integrity, resilience and appetite for adventure and hardship, had to deal with when he had handed Naples and Rome to Piedmont. He was given an overwhelming hero's welcome when he came to London, and on the centenary of his birth Meredith, better at poetry than politics, but rightly loving Italy, hailed 'Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi, her Brain, her Soul, her Sword'. There have been few more devious brains than that of Cavour, who was not 'Italian' at all, but half Swiss and half Savoyard. By 1867, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon reported that the King, Victor Emanuel, was 'a dishonest man who tells lies to everyone, and might end by losing his crown and ruining both Italy and his dynasty'.

The reality was thus different from the myth that had been so enthusiastically peddled, not least by the English historian G M Trevelyan, who could have learnt a lot from this book. The unification damaged both the North, potentially a prosperous, partly industrial zone, and the South, which had decayed under two centuries of Spanish rule, and was despised by the North as being inhabited by Africans or Egyptians, and not Italians at all. But in a sense nobody else was 'Italian' either: the great historian Momigliano declared that what he wrote about was not 'Italian history', but 'a history of events in Italy'. Gilmour records a conversation with the gloomy manageress of a café in Turin who told him 'Yes, we know how to work, but in the South they know how to live.'

Political and eventually military disasters increased in the period between 1890 and 1914, in spite of the best efforts of Giolitti, far the best of the many Italian prime ministers up to that time. Every military defeat inspired a new and more unsuccessful attempt to make up for it. The unfortunate Italian obsession with bella figura, looking good and impressive, inspired a programme of trying to found an empire in Africa just

at the moment when Britain had the sense to do the opposite, and to think about granting commonwealth status to those of its imperial colonies who appeared ready to develop it successfully. There was no way in which Italy had the slightest right to try and annexe Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somaliland or Libya, which the more sensible Italian politicians regarded as an 'enormous sandpit', though of course after the discovery of oil it turned out rather differently. But Italy wanted to be on a par with Germany or France in this respect, and French Tunisia was of course annoyingly close to the southern tip of Italy.

When war came in 1914, Italy havered about which side would bribe her more heavily to join it, the Triple Entente eventually winning with the offer of the Trentino, Trieste, Istria, the South Tyrol, parts of Dalmatia and Albania and most of the islands of the eastern Adriatic. The war was to cost Italy a million casualties, but at the Peace Conference Woodrow Wilson did not see why these places should be subjected to Italy, who therefore considered that she had been swindled, and redoubled her appalling slaughter of defenceless tribesmen in what she hoped (in vain) would be her African empire. Mussolini's policy there outraged French and British opinion, and eventually drove him into the arms of Hitler, with military disasters in Greece and North Africa far worse even than anything the Italian army had suffered previously.

After the war, Italy joined the EEC under De Gasperi, a prime minister of 'wisdom, honesty and sound judgment', who had been imprisoned for his hostility to fascism and had been appointed in 1929 as a librarian in the Vatican. He was able to outmanoeuvre the Communist Party, which in 1944 numbered half a million members, and whose chief newspaper described Stalin on his death as 'the man who had done most for the liberation of the human race', a breathtaking lie even by Italian standards. Berlusconi's grotesque career is too well known to need describing here.

To read anything so beautifully planned, and constructed with so much erudition, is a rare treat, especially when it is expressed with such lightness of touch. Gilmour first shows that none of the requisites for unification of the country ever existed. He is always fair, even courteous, and often pleasantly ironic, to those he disagrees with or despises; and he goes on to clear away so much of the vanity, hypocrisy, self-delusion, corruption and general absurdity of Italy's rulers for the past two centuries that we can stand back and gaze with thankful eyes through that clear, golden Mediterranean light at the surviving glories of Italian landscape, art and architecture, and forget for a time about the vandals who in many places endanger them.

Anyone who loves Italy will love this book.

The Riddle of the Sands

Nikolai Tolstoy

Hero: The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia, Michael Korda, JR Books, 2010, £25.

Michael Korda's title to his biography of Lawrence nails his colours to the mast. He makes no bones about proclaiming his subject a hero, and devotes much of his weighty (762 pages) work to explaining why. Fortunately, the vogue for writing debunking biographies of 'great men' (they do exist) seems to be in the main past, and it is gratifying to find the existing high estimate of Lawrence's talents and achievements borne out to a remarkable extent by the facts.

In 1955 Richard Aldington sought, and achieved, a sensation by writing a life of Lawrence designed to drag him from the pedestal he had previously occupied. As is frequently the case with revisionist works, Aldington's momentary éclat arose largely from one or two discoveries, which when sensationalized were supposed to startle readers into discarding their previous high regard. Lawrence, Aldington discovered, was (like William the Conqueror, and others who have made no small mark upon the world) illegitimate. His claim to have been offered, and refused, the post of British High Commissioner in Egypt in 1922 was an offer, Aldington claimed, that never took place.

Korda encounters no problem in shewing that it is highly probable that the offer was made (by Winston Churchill), and generally approved by Lloyd George. As for the illegitimacy, it took little research to uncover the fact that Lawrence's father, an Anglo-Irish baronet named Sir Thomas Chapman, had eloped with his young daughters' governess Sarah Lawrence. They then lived together as man and wife, five boys being born of the relationship. It was quite late on in their lives that those boys who survived the Great War gradually realized that their parents were living in sin, but given the domesticity and endurance of their household, together with the fact that the secret was generally well kept, it does not appear that the 'stain' on their background unduly affected the young Lawrences when they eventually became aware of their parents' history.

T E Lawrence (known to his family as Ned) grew up, like Horatio Nelson, with the frank determination to become a hero. His favourite books included Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and the Iliad, which he

re-read throughout his life. Maurice Hewlett's fictional biography of Richard the Lionheart gripped him so much, that he devoured it at least nine times. His talents were many and various. He read newspapers and books at four, began Latin at six, and entered the Oxford High School at eight. As an undergraduate at Jesus College he displayed consummate aptitude for scholarly studies, making numerous lifelong friends among eminent academics of the day.

It was his colourful career as an archæologist in Egypt, Palestine and Syria in 1911-14 that introduced him to the life of glamour, adventure, and danger which he craved, and for which he was pre-eminently equipped. By a fortunate chance he spent the early months of 1914 studying the Negev and desert country south of Beersheba for the Palestine Exploration Fund. Fortunately for Britain's conduct of the war in the Middle East, Lawrence's short height (5'5") disqualified him for regular military service, and he joined what became the Arab Bureau, whose remit was to exploit resistance to Turkish rule over Arab lands.

In October 1916 he travelled with Sir Ronald Storrs to Jeddah, where they conferred with the Sharif Hussein and his son Faisal. The Arab leadership had requested the support of a British brigade in the Hejaz, which Lawrence at once recognized would prove an unwieldy means of bringing the Arabs as an effective ally into the war. Instead, he persuaded his superiors to despatch him as liaison officer to Faisal. What followed effectively transmuted Lawrence, like his hero Richard I after Arsuf, from history into legend.

Korda skilfully shifts the chronology of his biography, bringing readers almost at once into the grand events which brought Lawrence immortality. In providing what is probably the clearest and most vivid account of the desert war to date, Korda incidentally vindicates the essential truthfulness of Lawrence's own magnificent account of his experiences in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. (Readers will also be struck by the broad accuracy of that other masterpiece, David Lean's beautiful film.)

Lawrence of Arabia is a long book, but few readers would wish it otherwise. Much less familiar than his leadership of the Arab revolt are Lawrence's political activities at the Peace Conference and in the subsequent inter-war period, when his political perception was matched only by his disillusionment at the Allies' treatment of their brave Arab supporters. As Korda wearily emphasizes, the Middle East might well have become a better place had Lawrence's eloquent advice been heeded. This impasse appears the more frustrating in view of the enormous respect he gained throughout his career from eminent military commanders and statesmen, from Allenby to Churchill. Cynicism and Realpolitik won through, with lasting disastrous results still plaguing us today.

It is hard to do justice to so exhaustive a work in the space of a brief review. What can be said with confidence is that it is likely to be long before this superb biography comes to be superseded.

MacIntyre's God

William Charlton

God, Philosophy, Universities, Alasdair MacIntyre, Continuum, 2009, £17.99.

Universities have changed vastly over the last fifty years. In this book Alasdair Macintyre addresses questions of some urgency: what are the aims of higher education, and will these changes, which are still accelerating, help or hinder its achieving them?

The universities of the modern world all derive from the Academy and the Lyceum, societies partly convivial and partly religious dedicated to the Muses, the goddesses who inspired not only poetry but also history and astronomy. In the medieval west the word 'university' was first applied to guild-like associations embracing both masters of various arts and their pupils, and universities as we know them were founded as such communities by people who took the truth of Christianity as much for granted as the alternation of night and day. They were thus marked on the one hand by communal living, on the other by religious practice, marks still visible in the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge with their 'common' or 'combination' rooms, their dining halls and their chapels. Outside those colleges these marks have largely disappeared. There is little contact between tenured teachers and undergraduate students, teachers of different subjects do not eat together, and there is (Heaven forbid) no cultic dimension to academic life.

MacIntyre paints a disturbing picture of modern universities. He calls them 'research universities' because in them the emphasis has passed from teaching, that is, from handing on to new generations the knowledge accumulated by their predecessors, to research, that is, to advancing the frontiers of knowledge. No one expects the ever-expanding new knowledge to be grasped by a single individual, or even by a small body of individuals: it is to stay dispersed through an increasing number of minds, each packed with more and more information about less and less, but it provides the specialised 'human resources and skills needed in an advanced capitalist society'. Undergraduate study 'has become largely a

prologue to specialisation and professionalization,' so the curriculum becomes 'an assorted ragbag of disciplines and sub-disciplines, each pursued and taught in relative independence of all the others'. The result is that research universities 'have become richer and richer, and at the same time more and more expensive': richer because they attract massive funding from governments and business; more expensive 'because they charge what their market will bear. Research universities in the early twenty-first century are wonderfully successful business corporations subsisting by tax exemptions and exhibiting all the acquisitive ambitions of such corporations.'

MacIntyre concedes that higher education today may 'benefit the economy' and he might have added that it may enhance a country's military capabilities; but he denies that it offers any insight into how the various disciplines fit together or, more serious, how we ourselves fit together, how the various aspects of a human being, as a physical body, a biological organism, a member of society and an imaginative, emotional and intelligent individual, form any kind of unity. Yet 'any institutionalized scheme of learning,' he says, 'presupposes some view of how the various academic disciplines do or do not relate to one another.' Research universities rest on the assumption that they do not. He contrasts the universities of the Communist bloc, in which different studies were unified by a comprehensive theory of dialectical materialism, and theistic universities, in which they are unified by the belief that the whole natural order is created and sustained by a benevolent God.

These different understandings of what higher education is doing entail different ideas of how it should be conducted and what it is for. If the theistic view, which MacIntyre favours, is correct, a study of physics or economics which does not recognise that physical processes and economic interactions are part of the divine scheme of things will be to that extent incomplete; and if another part of that scheme is that we should get closer to God through studying his works, the ultimate aim of higher education is to benefit teachers and students by deepening their understanding of nature and themselves.

The task of taking an overview of the arts and sciences naturally falls to philosophy, or at least to the type of philosophy for which Plato and Aristotle provide a paradigm. But although the topics they discussed are still studied in modern philosophy departments, some universities (my own, Newcastle, is an example) have dispensed with a department of philosophy altogether, and the rest see philosophy as just one subject among others, and demand the same specialisation in it as elsewhere. Hence philosophers today, as MacIntyre says, 'address only those who are already at work on the detail of the same problems on which they themselves are currently at work'. They employ 'a semi technical vocabulary,' each particular problem gives birth to 'a large and growing literature that has only a few readers,' and their mode of writing 'successfully obscures from view what it is that might give their elucidations some general importance'.

MacIntyre himself so far flouts convention as to write good English that non-philosophers can read. He develops his ideas in what he calls 'a selective history of the Catholic philosophical tradition'. This is in fact a tradition descending from classical Greece via Augustine, Boethius and Muslim and Jewish writers down to the twelfth century. It is governed by the convictions that the common theism of Jews, Christians and Muslims is compatible with the best conclusions of rational thought, that God wants us to use our intellectual capacities in academic enquiries, and that belief in God assists us in those enquiries: faith both seeks clear understanding and is a prerequisite of it. The account MacIntyre gives of this tradition and those who wrote within it, though selective, is historically accurate, but his aim is not just to write history but to persuade us there is a coherent and not unappealing alternative to the research university. He presents Newman's book *The Idea of a University* somewhat as a manifesto for such an alternative. Though he does not quote them, I think he agrees with Newman's opening words, that a university is 'a place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object is on the one hand intellectual, not moral; and on the other that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement.' But he echoes Newman's warning that this knowledge, while truly an end in itself, is not all we need: 'a university education, even if successful, not only may but often does result not in fostering good moral character but in a kind of simulacrum of morality ... a fastidious self-regard.' Perfectly educated people may still fail, as MacIntyre puts it, to separate moral judgement from aesthetic discrimination; perhaps he is thinking of Bloomsbury or of British moralists from Lord Shaftesbury to Lady Warnock.

MacIntyre writes of research universities as if they were godless and in consequence had no comprehensive view. Yet he himself observes that some such view is presupposed by 'any institutionalised system of learning'. Explaining how theists use the word 'God' he says that God is the source of the natural order, and that if he exists, he exists necessarily and requires unconditional obedience. Underlying the modern research system is the idea that the natural order is its own source, and could not cease to exist. That gives it one qualification for being God. Its laws command

absolute obedience: when we feel we are trying to act as we ourselves think right, our struggles are just the manifestation of those laws holding at some deeper level. If we try to understand nature, that is because nature ordains that we should, and we are made in its image in that as natural processes are without purpose, so is all our behaviour. Unlike Jehovah the universe is not a person; but it has a character of its own, that of diffusion. Everywhere wholes are as they are because of the parts of which they consist; the order of explanation is always from the small to the great. And the compartmentalisation of the arts and sciences simply reflects the fragmentation of nature. Research universities are not godless but pantheistic and the actual researching is their cultic rite.

MacIntyre does not explore this line of thought. But in case the phrase 'Catholic philosophical tradition' should have slightly authoritarian overtones, he tells us at the start that he is applying it to 'a continuing conversation through centuries, in which we turn and return to dialogue with the most important voices from our past in order to carry forward that conversation in our own time'. The conversation, he says, is shaped in every age by the assumptions and institutions of the time. And the deepest philosophical conclusions rest not on arguments that are logically compelling, but on considerations which may be found compelling by one individual and not by another 'because of the different antecedent background beliefs that they bring to their evaluations of it'.

The Resistance in Italy

M R D Foot

Mission Accomplished: SOE and Italy 1943-1945, David Stafford, The Bodley Head, 2011, £20.

In this scintillating book, David Stafford – one of the leading historians of the Special Operations Executive – reveals the little-known story of what SOE did in the Italian campaign after Italy changed sides in the war against Hitler. He has been amply helped by Christopher Woods, a former SOE adviser to the foreign office, who fought in Italy himself, earning a military cross in an SOE mission to the Veneto. He has used SOE's surviving archive, now at Kew, masses of published recollections by several sides' participants, and his own historical training and common sense.

Through the thickets of resistance history Stafford's machete cuts clear paths. He presents a whole series of clandestine coups, explaining at each barely credible turn how it was arrived at, who did it, and with what; there are masses of good stories here, many worth writing up into a book. A few of them have long been familiar – operation Tombola, for example, a mixed SOE and SAS operation in March 1945 to storm a German headquarters in the Apennines that failed; Roy Farran, the SAS major who took part, wrote a book about it. A great many more are fresh, at least to an English readership, and make this book most readable; let one example stand for many.

Among resisters' difficulties was, as usual, the inability to trust even one's closest friends. Three quite senior Italians who were helping resistance in Lombardy fell under suspicion as possible Gestapo agents. They rose to an invitation to cross – illegally of course – into Switzerland and dine with SOE's Italian section leader in Berne, Jack McCaffery. He drugged their soup, tied them up unconscious, and smuggled them over the French frontier in an American diplomatic motorcar; from France they were flown to Rome for interrogation. Nothing was positively proved against any of them, but a mass of useful intelligence about the Gestapo resulted.

SOE's principal task in these years was to arm the partisan movement, and advise in assisting the general allied strategy – by attacking bridges or railway lines or petrol dumps, or in the closing stages by protecting factories and hydro-electric plants from German demolition. This was done through British liaison officers (BLOs), some of whom could be infiltrated through the fighting lines on foot, but most of whom needed to be parachuted in, or sent in by light aircraft or by small boats. SOE was therefore largely dependent on the RAF and the USAAF for air support; which in turn depended on the weather, foul often in winter. Lack of proposed air drops, because of bad weather, did not make BLOs popular with their partisan companions, but was hardly the BLOs' fault.

Moreover the partisans were sharply divided among themselves. They included a large, vocal, left-wing element under Communist inspiration, as well as numerous non-communist but anti-fascist groupings. The foreign office was disturbed at the idea that SOE was distributing arms round Communists who would use them to seize power at the war's end – as seemed to be happening in Greece at midwinter 1944-5. Even apart from the 'red menace', whether true or false, politics made incessant difficulties for BLOs and for SOE's staff. That staff moreover was divided: J section, which dealt with Italy, had its head, Colonel Rosebery, in Baker Street, a forward headquarters in Berne under McCaffery, and a still farther forward headquarters at Monopoli and Bari, moving later to Siena, under Gerry Holdsworth (replaced in spring 1945 by Dick Hewitt). Holdsworth's early dealings with Italian military

intelligence, which followed the monarchy in changing sides in September 1943, did not make all Holdsworth's early agents acceptable to many anti-fascist resisters.

And SOE's staff was in constant – more or less friendly – rivalry with the American OSS, also anxious to operate in Italy, fully equipped with fluent Italian speakers from the United States, and by 1943 perceptibly much richer than SOE. There were some overlappings, not all of them fortunate, between these two rival secret services' efforts. They did not reach the severity of overlappings between competing resistance groups, several of which were suspected of informing the Germans about their resistance rivals' whereabouts.

The Germans were ferocious enemies. If they caught a partisan alive, their usual treatment was to soak him in paraffin and drop a lighted match on him. Any house in which partisans had been hiding was liable to be burnt; those who lived in it were lucky if they were only deported to forced labour. Field-marshal Kesselring himself ordered the utmost severity; his armed forces, as well as Himmler's and Mussolini's police, carried it out. No wonder that at the end of the war there were ructions. One of SOE's principal achievements was to persuade the bulk of the partisans to lay down their arms quietly when the Germans had gone.

It is a great pity that the publishing industry seems disinclined to put before the public Christopher Woods's account, completed by Roderick Bailey, of how J section's operations began in the earlier years of the war; it would make a fascinating companion volume.

Graveyards of the Past

Martin Dewhirst

Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, Timothy Snyder, The Bodley Head, 2010, £25.

The bloodlands in this magnificent monograph – mainly Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and the western strip of Russia from the present St. Petersburg and the Leningrad (still) region down to Kursk, but not the former Czechoslovakia – are now somewhat less 'far-away' than was claimed in 1938 (though many of the 36 maps will be appreciated by readers), and we all now know something rather than 'nothing' about the people who lived there then and some of whose descendants live there today.

'Something', but not 'very much', which makes it difficult for most outsiders to understand the psychology and political preferences of our contemporaries who inhabit the bloodlands today. It is easier for us in Britain and many other parts of the world to forget and forgive than it is for them.

Snyder's book concentrates on the period from 1939 to 1945, but starts with the early 1930s and goes forward to 1953, with brief references to earlier and later events but not very much about the first ten years after the October Revolution in Russia and the influence of Lenin and Trotsky on Hitler and Stalin. Nor, it has to be said, is the impact of religion(s) and atheism on Stalin and Hitler and their followers examined, while life and death in the three Baltic States during the Second World War are not investigated here in the depth that they deserve.

Here the criticism ends. This book is the result of years of serious research and of reading in a very impressive range of languages. Almost inevitably, the author starts by comparing and contrasting Hitler and Stalin and their policies. In its first six and a half years, the Nazi regime killed 'only' about 10,000 people, and any Germans, including Jews, who wanted to leave could do so. Contrasting this with the millions killed before the autumn of 1939 by the 'Soviet' regime (let alone the additional millions sent into internal exile and to 'special settlements' and the GULag), one inevitably adjusts one's attitude to the Western 'appeasement' of Hitler, who, in the 1930s, was definitely an evil somewhat lesser than Lenin and Stalin (taken separately or together).

Indeed, chapter 1 sheds light on the deliberately organised 'Soviet' famines (note the plural) and concludes that the deaths of several million Ukrainian peasants *should be* regarded as genocide in the strict sense of the word (*gens, genus*) – they were allowed to die of hunger not because they were peasants (a social category), but because they were Ukrainians. Snyder, needless to say, points out that millions of Russian and Kazakh peasants were also allowed to die of hunger years before Hitler began to implement his manic desire to exterminate the Jews.

The author then discuses 'class terror' and 'national terror' in the USSR and Germany in the 1930s, drawing particular attention to the widespread purges of Poles living in the USSR, making it appear (although the author doesn't put it as crudely as this) that the so-called Katyn massacre was to some extent 'merely' a continuation of a well-established policy. German National Socialist policies and 'Soviet' communist and atheist socialist policies led quite naturally to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939.

In a particularly interesting chapter, 'The Economics of Apocalypse', Snyder writes about the 1941 invasion of the USSR by Hitler, who, encouraged by his rapid success in France and the weak performance of the Red Army in the 1939-1940 Winter War against Finland, genuinely thought that his attack would lead

to a short, victorious war that would be over some time that autumn. In retrospect, it seems obvious that by the end of 1941 Nazi Germany was *bound* to lose the war, however long it lasted. To what extent did Stalin and Hitler realise this? The latter certainly had to change his priorities: Jews, who hitherto were to be utilised mainly as agricultural workers, supervised by German farmers, in the lands occupied by the Nazis, notably in Ukraine, were now to be liquidated *en masse*, so that at least something 'good' resulted from the occupation of Poland and part of the USSR. But how could this be justified, especially for the people who carried out this operation? Easy. 'The blame for the death of the Jews [...] did not rest on the Germans. If the United States was a Jewish state [...], its leaders must have understood that Hitler was keeping alive the Jews of Europe as hostages. If the United States entered the war [...after Pearl Harbour in December 1941...], Washington was responsible for the death of these hostages.' (This somewhat convoluted reasoning strikes me as remarkably similar to that behind Stalin's justification of his antisemitic policies after the end of the 'Great Fatherland War'.)

We then read about the various versions of the 'Final Solution', the Holocaust, the Nazi death factories (to be distinguished from the concentration camps, where there was some hope of surviving resistance to the Nazis.) Then there were the often very complicated and ambiguous priorities of the partisans' resistance movements, especially in Belarus. We learn of the genocidal ethnic cleansings in the south of the Soviet Union (*after* the 'Soviet' victory at Stalingrad and during the retreat of the Nazi armies). Finally, the author details Stalinist antisemitism after the end of the war, when a Jew in the USSR could be simultaneously both a 'rootless cosmopolitan' and a 'Jewish nationalist'.

Even for people who already know a great deal about the subject and have watched the greatest plays and films on the horrors of the Nazi and 'Soviet' regimes (eg, *The Passenger*, Poland, 1961-63), reading this book will be an extremely unpleasant, even distressing, experience. I would recommend no more than one chapter a day. The author has, rightly, gone to great lengths to establish as accurately as possible the number of civilian deaths during this tragic period of European history. The names of millions of victims are lost, but to be noted as a digit is at least a bit better than not to be remembered at all. Snyder periodically tells us something about a few of those whose names are known, so that the figures he provides are not just impersonal statistical data: 'Cultures of memory are organized by round numbers, intervals of ten; but somehow the remembrance of the dead is easier when the numbers are not round, when the final digit is not a zero. So within the Holocaust, it is perhaps easier to think of 780,863 different people at Treblinka: where the three at the end might be Tamara and Itta Willenberg, whose clothes clung together after they were gassed, and Ruth Dorfmann, who was able to cry with the man who cut her hair before she entered the gas chamber.'

This historical volume should have considerable significance for us today – it is anything but 'bunk', and demonstrates that any suggestion that it is time for 'closure' should be completely and immediately rejected. It's curious that there are dozens of museums and research and teaching centres dedicated – and rightly so – to the Holocaust, but very few such institutions devoted to the much greater and longer lasting crimes against humanity which were carried out by the 'Soviet' authorities in the USSR. Indeed, only now is the first such academic centre (as distinct from a handful of NGOs) in the former Soviet Union for the study of the 'Soviet experience' being set up, in Lithuania at the University of Kaunas. In 1991 Stalin was regarded favourably by about 10 per cent of the Soviet population. By 2005, after the alleged end of the Cold War, this figure had risen to over 50 per cent. The latest figures I have seen show that 71 per cent of Russians regard Stalin as having been 'a great leader' and only 11 per cent 'acknowledged Stalin's tyranny'. There are now far more Nazis (nationalist socialists) and admirers of Hitler in Russia than in Germany. It will be interesting to see whether Snyder's monograph is translated into German and Russian and, if it is, to read the reviews.

Wrong But Romantic?

Nigel Jones

Reprobates; the Cavaliers of the English Civil War, John Stubbs, 2011, Viking, £25.00.

When that little masterpiece *1066 and All That* characterised the Cavaliers of the English Civil War as 'Wrong but romantic' (their Roundhead opponents, by contrast, were put down as 'Right but repulsive') – it encapsulated an image that has lingered in the popular consciousness ever since. When we think of the warring sides in that most disastrous of English wars (the Royalist philosopher Thomas Hobbes estimated that the war killed 100,000 Englishmen – proportionally equivalent to more than a million today) – we picture the Cavaliers as foppish dilettantes with lacy collars, big buff boots, long flowing locks and satin and velvet cloaks and breeches. As John Stubbs amply demonstrates in this fascinating amalgam of literary

and political history, certain aspects of this image stand up to examination – but crucially, others do not.

Stubbs book is hard to label or pigeonhole – and I mean that as praise rather than complaint. A trained literary critic, Stubbs here ranges far beyond his discipline in an ambitious and wildly original way. Part social and political history, part literary criticism, and part group biography, it certainly succeeds in two of its aims: restoring a group of friends united by their double devotion to literature and Royalism, to their proper place in our national story; and explaining the context in which the 'Cavalier' – like so many labels originally a term of abuse by their enemies adopted with pride – was born.

Stubbs' study, it must be said, is not directly related to the Civil War at all. Although he explains the context in which the concept of the Cavalier arose – especially the service of so many of them in the pre-Civil War armies of Sweden's King Gustavus Adolphus, fighting in Germany's Thirty Years' War – those expecting a rigorous examination of the ideology of the Royalist cause, still less a celebration of it, will be deeply disappointed. The book is, rather, an examination of the Cavalier style – and it approaches this, by concentrating on a little-known group of literary figures with Royalist sympathies who came to be known as Cavaliers more for their rumbustious lifestyle than their ideas. None of the group – for all their threats and swaggering – played a prominent part in the war, and the men who we would perhaps think of as typical Cavalier soldiers – Prince Rupert, Sir Jacob Astley, Bevil Grenville, John Byron, George Goring, Lord Hopton, and, of course, the sainted Charles I himself, play but walk-on parts in Stubbs's story.

The central figures in his group, as befitting the acclaimed biographer of the great poet John Donne, were all poets, or at least, poetasters. Sir William Davenant, for example, became an early Poet Laureate, and was once highly regarded as a founder of the classical school of English poetry. Though today almost forgotten, Davenant was a significant figure in his day, and certainly deserves to be rescued by Stubbs from the condescension of posterity. Born in an Oxford inn where no less a figure than Shakespeare was reputed to stop over for the night *en route* between London and Stratford, Davenant encouraged rumours that he was the Bard's natural son – and had inherited his father's literary and dramatic gifts. He was certainly Shakespeare's godson, and traded on the connection to advance his own career in letters.

An archetypal Cavalier – boastful, dissolute and lecherous – Davenant was a victim of the Cavalier's occupational disease, syphilis, and famously lost his nose to the pox – or rather to an overdose of the mercury he took to treat it. His friend, the antiquary and biographer John Aubrey, tells us in his gossipy way in *Brief Lives* that he 'Gott a terrible clap of a Black handsome wench that lay in Axe-yard, Westminster'. Despite this disability, for which Aubrey says that he was much mocked by 'cruel witts' – Davenant served the Stuarts with his sword, as well as his pen, and suffered three spells in the Tower as a consequence. He was released on the intercession of a greater poet, John Milton, who, as Cromwell's Latin Secretary, was equally committed to the Parliamentary cause. (After the Restoration, it is pleasant to record, Davenant returned the favour by using his influence to protect Milton from trial and possible execution as a Regicide). Back in favour following the return of Charles II, Davenant became a leading figure of the Restoration Theatre, pioneering the use of movable scenery and female actors.

Davenant's set included those other quintessential Cavaliers, Sir John Suckling and Sir Richard Lovelace. The luxuriantly golden locked Suckling, reputedly the most handsome man in all England, ('but devilish prowd' alleged Aubrey) – shared Davenant's links with the Tower. He was one of the leading spirits in an attempt to seize the fortress and rescue King Charles's doomed Minister, the Earl of Strafford, from execution, at the same time restoring the King to full power in a sort of military coup. The plot failed and Suckling fled to Paris, where, in poverty and despair, he took poison and died miserably.

Lovelace, an enormously wealthy heir to great estates who dressed in silver and gold in his pomp, also suffered in the King's doomed cause. Banged up in London's Gatehouse prison for presenting a petition from the men of Kent in favour of the King, he wrote *'To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars'* and the immortal lines 'Stone walls do not a prison make/ Nor iron bars a cage'. Forced like Suckling into exile, Lovelace was falsely reported dead, upon which 'Lucasta' – his mistress, Lucy Sacheverell – married another man. Having spent his fortune in the Royal cause, Lovelace was reduced to rags and, the Oxford chronicler Anthony Wood tells us, became 'very melancholy, and very poor in body and person and mostly lodged in obscure and dirty places, more befitting the worst of beggars and pooreste of servants' before dying of consumption.

Another Cavalier poet reduced to poverty at least partly by his devotion to his King was Sir John Denham, a favourite of Charles I, who entrusted to him the task of spiriting his two youngest children, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, out of Parliamentary hands and to the safety of exile with their mother. Though he succeeded in this mission, Denham was less successful as a soldier, failing to hold Fareham Castle for the king. Extravagantly praised by Dr Johnson for

his poem 'Cooper's Hill', nostalgically describing one of his estates that he was forced to sell, Denham survived to see the King come into his own again, but the Restoration brought him little joy. He was driven into a 'distemper of madness' when his beautiful third wife, Margaret Brooks, became the love object of the licentious Duke of York, ironically once the boy Denham had rescued from the Roundheads.

Probably the most talented of the poets Stubbs considers – certainly he is the one whose work has worn well and remains intelligible to modern minds – was Robert Herrick, renowned for his timeless bitter-sweet lyrics celebrating love's young dream, while mourning its transience: 'Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may,/ Old Time is still a flying:/ And this same flower that smiles today,/ Tomorrow will be dying'. A disciple of Ben Jonson and too old to take part in the war, Herrick, an Anglican Clergyman, retired to his parish at Dean Prior deep in the Devon countryside and kept his head down in rural seclusion throughout the conflict. He could not escape the Puritan thought police after Parliament won, however, and was deprived of his living for refusing to renounce his Royalism. He returned to London to publish his poems, *Hesperides*, and on the Restoration was triumphantly restored to his Devon parish – where he died, aged 83, in 1674.

Some Conservatives revere the memory of Charles I as a saintly martyr of Anglicanism, a victim of un-English Puritan religious fanaticism and dangerous levelling proto-socialism. This ignores the duplicity and ingratitude of Charles's cold and shifty nature, demonstrated most palpably by his abandonment of the loyal Strafford under the pressure of mob rule. Although Charles himself repented of his moral cowardice and was happy to atone for Strafford's death with his own noble end, his dignity on the scaffold cannot camouflage the fact that he, like most of his unlucky family, was a truly dreadful king. One closes Stubbs' book with a deep sense of sadness at brave lives and fortunes thrown away for so unworthy a master.

Oh my Fur and Whiskers!

Celia Haddon

Fur, Fortune and Empire. The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America, Eric Jay Dolin, W W Norton & Co, 2011, £22.99.

Religious liberty, the search for gold, or simply the acquisition of territory inspired the early expeditions to North America, but it was often beaver fur that paid the bills. About the time that the European beaver had been hunted to extinction in Scotland, its American cousin became the focus for the first ships trading with North America. Nowadays, fur is a minority luxury worn by the mistresses of Russian millionaires, women who don't mind being spat at in the street or those rich enough not to set foot on the street in the first place. It's difficult to imagine fur as a major market product yet it was furs, rather than the gold found in South America, which the early explorers brought back to England, France and Holland and sold for a profit.

Eric Jay Dolin, a writer whose interests include both wildlife and history, tells the story of the white man's colonization of North America via the fur trade. For it was the fur trade that underpinned both early trading prosperity, the 'discovery' of the Wild West, and the near extinction of the American beaver, the sea otter and the buffalo.

Beavers, the large rodents who are a byword for hard work, had the misfortune to have thick and thus desirable fur coats. There were millions of them in North America. For the native Indians (Dolin's term) using stone not metal weapons, they provided food as well as fur clothing and were hunted in sustainable numbers. For the white man, they were the raw material not for food or even for clothing but for hats. Indians traded with the early colonists like the Pilgrim Fathers and various trading ships from Europe, exchanging beaver fur for the corn, clothes, wampum (beads), metal tools and sometimes guns. Fur, apart from land, was almost all they had to offer. One of the earliest colonists sowed 6s 8d of corn, reaped the crop and exchanged it with the Indians for £327 worth of beaver fur, a profit of 1000 per cent. Not surprisingly French, Dutch and English competed for the trade.

Once back in Europe, the beaver fur was processed into felt by a hatter who would first pluck out the coarse hairs, then cut the softer hair off the skin. The undercoat was then 'carded, weighed, bowed, basoned (sic) planked, trimmed, dyed, stiffened, steamed, ironed, brushed, lined and finished' into a hat. A beaver hat was the 'highest achievement of the hatter,' according to one authority. Millions of beavers died and were turned into hats like 'The Paris Beau', 'The Wellington', or the navy cocked hat of 1800.

As beaver numbers dwindled in the East coast states, the traders and trappers moved relentlessly west killing thousands as they went. In the first half of the eighteenth century 20 per cent of the value of New York's trade with Britain came from fur, mostly beavers. Hundreds of thousands of skins were traded and though Benjamin Franklin had labelled British fur traders 'the most vicious and abandoned wretches of our nation', the new American traders were no better.

Next, the sea otter fell prey to traders who could exchange 200 skins for a few metal tools, then sell

them for huge sums in China and Japan. Some Russian traders paid nothing at all, merely slaughtering the native population if they failed to come up with enough skins. The American traders who took over the trade and at least paid for the skins, could sell as many as 18,000 sea otter skins a year to the Chinese. The population of 150,000-300,000 otters fell to a couple of thousand.

Finally, traders turned their attention to buffalos, beasts that had been killed by Indians for their meat and their hides. Now the herds were slaughtered merely for sport, sometimes by men shooting from trains. Thousands more died for their skins and their tongues, a delicacy. The rest of their flesh and bones was wasted, left to rot on the plains. More than quarter of a million buffalo 'robes', (skins), were sold in St Louis in the fifteen years to 1830. Once there had been perhaps as many as 30 million buffalos, by 1889 there were perhaps a thousand left. As General Sherman had declared with approval twenty years earlier, this animal holocaust was, conveniently, a weapon against the indigenous humans too, being 'the quickest way to compel the Indians to settle down to civilised life.'

For the fur trade that so enriched the early colonists and traders, ruined almost every Indian tribe involved in it. While the French may have treated the Indians with some respect, both British and Dutch merely saw them as savages. Those that survived the devastation of introduced European diseases like smallpox, fell prey to alcohol supplied by the traders. As early as 1642, a Long Island chief begged, 'Sell no more fire-water to our braves.' About a century later an Iroquois chief complained to the Governor of Pennsylvania: 'These wicked whiskey sellers, when they have once got the Indians in Liquor, make them sell their very clothes from their backs: if this practice be continued, we must be inevitably ruined.' The ravages inflicted upon both native humans and animals did not prevent fur traders becoming idealised as pioneers in the nineteenth century. Washington Irving wrote *Astoria or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains* praising fur traders as 'the pioneers and precursors of civilization'. Irving's book is full of tales of daring trappers, rather like the Victorian books written about big game hunters in Africa who killed huge numbers of creatures without a second thought. Eric Jay Dolin, who at times seems to buy into this ideal picture of the sturdy pioneer slaughtering beavers, describes the trade as 'a seminal part of who we are as a nation'.

To tell the story of the United States through the fur trade is an extraordinarily difficult undertaking. An earlier author in 1902 complained that 'the task of making connected narrative has been well-nigh impossible'. Dolin's big sweep narrative has been well constructed, but at the expense of interesting detail. The footnotes are occasionally more enjoyable than the main text. Perhaps an American reader, more familiar with his country's history, would find the main narrative more enthralling than I did.

Another problem is that most of the humans in this story show themselves in a despicable light. Fur traders showed as little mercy towards Indians as they did to animals. It is hard to warm to the sturdy mountain fur trader who deliberately shot an approaching Indian holding out a peace pipe or to admire the rich Mr Jacob Astor who publically decried the use of alcohol among the Indians while liberally supplying it to boost his fur trading profits. Like other colonising Empires, our own included, the United States was blind to its damaging effects on the native populations and animals. Fortunately, the sea otters, beavers and buffalos survived the devastation of the fur trade. But only just.

Well Spun

Anthony Hallgarten

Twirlymen, Amol Rajan, Yellow Jersey, 2011, £14.99.

This splendid and fascinating book has nothing to do with those who attempt to use their bus passes before the appointed hour but is all to do with spin bowlers – until recently cricket's unsung artists.

The book's sub-title is 'The Unlikely History of Cricket's Greatest Spin Bowlers'. What the author, Amol Rajan, considers unlikely is that despite placid pitches, the long dominance of fast bowling and the timidity of selectors and captains in turning to spin, this form of bowling has survived at all – indeed is now flourishing at all levels including, to the surprise of many, 20x20. Happily, at Test level, spin-bowlers now have the advantage of Hawk-Eye technology. Rajan observes that 42 per cent of Graeme Swann's wickets have been lbw; those of his main predecessors varied between 10.9 per cent and 16.3 per cent.

Rajan himself was no mean bowler, until forced to give up because of tendon troubles. His account is filled with all the enthusiasm of the true devotee, eager to impart both information and his own love of spin-bowling.

One of the great charms of cricket – and in particular spin-bowling – is that it can be played and practised by those who are not natural athletes. Can this be said of any other sport? William Lillywhite – 'the nonpareil' and founder of Lillywhites Store – was five-foot-four and had a far from slender frame: over a three-year period he took 685 wickets. Moving

closer to our own times there among the greats were 'Tich' – the name says it all – Freeman and Clarrie Grimmett, both tiny men. Indeed, two of the bowlers featured by Rajan positively benefited from physical handicaps. Chandrasekhar, who lacked a wrist bone in a withered arm; and, of course, the incomparable Muralitharan with a congenital deformity which meant that he could not straighten his arm. Each was able to produce extra bite.

There are three threads running through Rajan's book. First there is the historical account of spin bowling from 'Lumpy' Stevens to the present day. Pen portraits of leading exponents run seamlessly (so to speak) into one another, giving a fine overview of the obstacles which bowlers had to overcome, of their ultimate achievements and of their many eccentricities. We learn that the great but surly Sydney Barnes (an astonishing 49 wickets in just four tests against South Africa in 1913-14; he declined to play in the fifth), following the example of the Australian, Monty Noble, practised by placing two poles down the wicket, one at about 10-11 and the other at 16-17 yards: he would bowl a ball to the leg-side of the first pole, which would swing to the off-side of the second pole, and which would then nip back to hit the wicket. More recently – can 1950 be described as recent? – I was present at the Lord's Test when the West Indies recorded their first Test (and ultimately rubber) victory in England, so that Rajan's account of Ramadhin and Valentine is particularly evocative. England's batsmen (including my then hero, Bill Edrich) were reduced to novice prodders. The two spinners took 18 wickets between them; amazingly, some two-thirds of their overs were maidens.

The second thread is largely technical. From time to time, Rajan interposes ten 'Interludes' giving examples of various types of spin. These comprise highly instructive illustrations showing the bowler's grip, how his hand appears to the batsman and the movement and flight of the ball. Armed with Rajan's book I can now confidently pronounce to my neighbour: that was a 'Zooter' or 'Carrom' or 'Flipper' or indeed the teaser, 'Rajan's Mystery Ball'. Or can I? Possibly 'yes' if I happen to be among those lucky spectators – say 5 per cent – with seats behind the bowler's arm. If not, I will need to rely on the radio commentary or on large-screen replays which, at any rate at Lord's, show lamentable disregard of what the knowledgeable spectator would like to see. Raw pace can excite the spectator anywhere in the ground; spin needs subtler treatment which, alas, it rarely receives.

The third strand concerns the constant search for and development of fresh techniques. On the one hand Rajan is at pains to observe that genuine innovations have been few. Bosanquet did not invent the 'googly' (or 'bosie' or 'wrong-un'); rather, he was the first to exploit it, being himself the precursor of its finest exponents – a South African quartet during the Edwardian era. With spin bowling, Rajan says, 'all patents are fraudulent'. On the other hand, Rajan relishes the various ways in which spin bowlers are always seeking new variations – albeit he considers the contortions involved in executing the 'doosra' to be the ruination of many a promising career. In his concluding chapter he suggests that bowlers of the future may perhaps turn to the thumb for imparting fresh forms of spin.

What, of course, lies at the heart of spin-bowling is deception. Before the Australians' 1997 tour of England Shane Warne boasted that he had no fewer than sixteen different deliveries to baffle his English opponents. This, as Rajan observes, was manifestly absurd; but it represents exactly the sort of propaganda which gives batsmen sleepless nights and ultimately ensnares them.

It is a shame that the book contains no photographs. And on occasions Rajan repeats himself, although one instance, Hedley Verity's observation that 'the best length is the shortest you can bowl and still get them playing forwards,' is well worth saying twice. One chapter is headed 'Two Dichotomies?': the first is between off- and leg-spin, but the second rather eluded me. The main dichotomy seems to be between those who aim primarily for accuracy and those who strive for maximum spin (often at the expense of accuracy). It is one of the glories of the most recent era that in the persons of Warne and Muralitharan there has been no such dichotomy.

Rewriting the Rules

Robert Crowcroft

The Coalition and the Constitution, Vernon Bogdanor, Hart, 2010, £20.

Britain is in the midst of a remarkable episode of constitutional stress precipitated by the political classes. Alas, it was all too predictable. Two years ago, during the explosive expenses scandal, I speculated with a friend that the period following the general election would see nothing less than the whole constitutional basis of British politics reduced to a pawn in the game played by party leaders.

I thought this because, first, the legitimacy held by politicians had collapsed as a result of the expenses

scandal. That raised serious questions about the moral authority which they could claim. Secondly, New Labour's aimless tinkering pillaged the constitution so badly that there are equally serious questions about the structures of authority. That created a situation ripe for exploitation.

Vernon Bogdanor is Britain's leading expert on the constitution, and in this volume he examines the implications of the coalition and its programme of constitutional reform. The result is a highly readable excursion across the workings of the government, the supposed national aversion to coalitions, electoral reform, fixed-term parliaments, and the prospect of an elected second chamber. Bogdanor predicts that because of devolution and the breakdown of class as a determining factor, hung parliaments are likely to be more frequent in the future.

The analysis is enjoyable, but it does overlook some important elements of what the politicians are up to. While plenty of attention has been paid to the Machiavellian calculations behind the referendum on the Alternative Vote, we need to realise that this is just one element of a complex, overlapping series of 'crises' created by politicians in a bid to recapture their lost authority. The Coalition Agreement declares that 'our political system is broken'. That offers a great many 'causes' for politicians to anchor themselves to for the purposes of political gain.

The electoral system itself has been condemned as undemocratic and unrepresentative by those with something to gain from the end of first-past-the-post (indeed, Gordon Brown oddly converted to this view once the voters rejected him). Much fiery rhetoric was deployed about the need to change the system to make it 'fairer'. But the AV referendum underlined what is wrong with democratic politics. The electoral system was not in 'crisis'. It had become a tool. AV, a method with profound long-term implications for government in this country (not least being able to get rid of a knackered administration), was put before the public not because it was desired but as the result of short-term calculations by David Cameron and Nick Clegg.

The failure of the 'Yes to AV' campaign means that Cameron may feel that he needs to give Clegg an alternative constitutional reform as a sop to his activists, and the House of Lords is the obvious target. Labour's policies toward the upper chamber have left it in such a mess that what the coalition will cobble together is now still unclear, but it seems likely to be shaped by what is best for Cameron and Clegg, rather than what is best for the country. Meanwhile the innovation of fixed-term parliaments is a further change to the rulebook that is wrapped up in the language of a 'fair' solution but actually done on the grounds of short-term expediency. Politicians shout loudly about their ideas to 'clean up' politics, but that is all about signalling moral worthiness. Populist pledges to get petitions debated in the Commons are hot air (will MPs consider bringing back hanging?).

The status of the constitution as a pawn is still clearer elsewhere. Devolution to Wales and Scotland has created yet more layers of government. It has also made the Union itself something to be manoeuvred over. Fresh off their electoral victory in the spring, Alex Salmond and the Nationalists are preparing for a referendum on Scottish independence. They too claim a 'crisis'. Salmond is a cunning operator with the ability to transcend the zero-sum nature of adversarial politics (so not only concessions by Westminster are portrayed as a success for Salmond but any resistance is spun as English colonialism, thus constituting another political 'win' for the SNP). It is doubtful Salmond reckoned his exploitation of Scotch romanticism would ever see things put to the proof; and if the Scotch reject independence – the *raison d'être* of the SNP – then it is hard to see where his party will go. Labour will be fretting over the issue, as independence would deprive them of crucial seats north of the border. Perhaps Cameron should surrender to Salmond and get rid of the financial black hole that is Scotland in order to hinder the Labour party.

With one or two exceptions, politicians in these islands are floundering. The general election was inconclusive because no party was convincing (indeed the Conservatives gained just 36 per cent of the vote, four per cent less than when the party was bludgeoned in 1945). There is no guarantee that a contest in the near future will return a government with a working majority. The Balkanisation of Britain means that smaller parties are genuine players. Bogdanor argues that UKIP cost the Conservatives a majority. Meanwhile the BNP attracted twice as many votes as another extremist party, the Greens, who have still got an MP. Add to that cynicism over expenses, the democrat deficit caused by politicians themselves (who habitually ignore the public on visceral issues like independence from Brussels, immigration, and crime). There is no obvious way to reconcile the solution to the economic crisis (a massive reduction in the size and duties of the state) with electoral success (the public having been hooked on state spending). It is no surprise that politicians are tinkering with the rulebook to secure some legitimacy and authority. In doing so they are not being too choosy about where that leaves Britain's political arrangements. What matters to them is whether the constitution can be altered to benefit their careers. The politicians are running very fast, and the public had better keep up.

Secret War

Penelope Tremayne

The War that Never was, Duff Hart Davis, Cornerstone Century, 2011, £14.99.

This is a straightforward account of a clandestine campaign brilliantly conceived and organised, extending over several years and carried out expertly and at times heroically by a handful of men, under appalling conditions for modest and irregular wages and no job security.

In 1958 President Nasser, still on a high tide after nationalising the Suez Canal, signed an agreement with Syria and set up a United Arab Republic (UAR) headed by himself. His aim was to destroy first the Saudi Kingdom, attacking from the south through the Yemen, then to pick off the Gulf states and thence finally and totally to destroy Israel. In his own words, 'The road to Tel Aviv lies via the Gulf and al Riyadh.' Only Syria actually joined the UAR; other Arab States kept eyes open and heads down. Arms and cash were liberally supplied to Nasser by China and the USSR so he was not deterred. Britain's interest in Aden was clearly declining; in 1959 she set up a South Arabian Federation of Arab Emirates with the declared intention of preparing them for independence by 1968. Nasser poured Soviet and Chinese supplies (including labour for roads, port facilities) into the launching of a socialist Republican revolution in the whole of the Yemen.

This large and difficult area was ruled by the Imam Ahmad who had been in power since 1948. He was both incompetent and near-insanely cruel, but the majority of his population were fundamentally, even fanatically, loyal to their Imams. They claimed blood descent from the Prophet and were accepted not just as kings but, much more important, as hereditary spiritual rulers. Imam Ahmad was murdered, at Nasser's instigation, after many previous attempts in September 1962 and his son Mohamed al Badr was declared Imam. Two days later Nasser landed three thousand troops, tanks and artillery at Hodeida (whence later, via the road the Chinese had been building for him, he seized and occupied Saana); ordered the murder and immediately announced the death of the new Imam. He declared that a revolutionary socialist Yemen Arabic Republic was now in being with an Egyptian trained Yemeni Colonel al-Sallal as President. In fact the Imam had not been killed, but tipped off at the last moment. He and his father in law escaped into the mountains, whence they and the loyal Emirs with their tribes sustained a civil war, living in and fighting from caves and receiving little or no outside help.

Other states, with one or two honourable exceptions, gave diplomatic recognition to the new Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), with Egypt, the USSR and China of course in the lead. President Kennedy, perhaps from naivety, or sympathy with Nasser's aim to clear the British out of the Middle East, gave recognition at once. The Foreign Office was determined to follow America as were most of the Colonial Office but Lord Home remained staunch to British responsibilities. So did Macmillan, but he had spent five years washing-down decks after the Suez fiasco so now he issued only a studiously ambiguous statement which could be read as required.

This was the background against which a small group of formidably experienced men headed by Colonel Johnson privately discussed the infiltration of a hand-picked team of ex-SAS and other available experts to carry out sabotage and guerrilla operations in Yemen for the hindrance of Nasser's take-over. Nasser had already put some twenty thousand Egyptian troops ashore there, claiming they were for the protection of the YAR from the forces of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Britain (none of whom had stirred). The plan which less than six men then worked out and then put into action involved no official backing, no financial help nor cover or political decisions. Macmillan and Home when told of the idea approved, but knew nothing of what, how or when. The Governor of Aden and MI6 learned a little in due course and once or twice helped with communications. King Hussein of Jordan and King Saud of Arabia contributed moral support and, vitally, money, of which the participants contributed what they could (none of them was wealthy). The British taxpayer paid nothing at any stage. Israel's brief and tiny but highly significant contribution is a fascinating short story in itself.

Congratulations to the author and his sources for airing a few facts about Nasser's atrocious gas bombings of Yemeni villagers and tribesmen: facts that, to the fury of those who did know, were swiftly suppressed at the time and steadily denied later. Hart-Davis has used only one example, that of the two MiG's flown direct from Egypt which dropped smoke-bombs to show wind-direction and were followed by nine Ilyushin-28s which between them dropped twenty-seven gas bombs. More than 200 people, including women and children, died. All animals in the area died and crops were scorched. The British government maintained that there was no positive evidence for this or any other gas attack and the Prime Minister Harold Wilson refused to refer the matter to the UN. When pressed Nasser officially suggested that the victims

had died of tuberculosis.

Was this minuscule British operation worthwhile? The Yemen in its 14th century form has gone, and what has replaced it is not very different from the old one, nor any more desirable, but the effect on Egypt was out of all proportion to the men and material involved. In the desert some forty men (Nasser estimated them at 800), of several European nationalities, gave the Imam and his followers enough organisation, military know-how and moral support to stay in the field and keep much of the Egyptian air force and army occupied for three years. More significant may have been the distraction of Egyptian intelligence from the area of real danger at the critical time. When the end came with the devastating Six Day War, the 40,000 men still locked in the Yemen (more than a quarter of Nasser's total) would hardly have turned the day, but without that vainglorious side-show there might have been some straighter Egyptian thinking. What Johnson's merry men had been doing may not have looked like much more than a very unsubstantial thumb in the dyke, but Nasser himself later said (several times, it seems) of the affair in the Yemen, 'It was my Vietnam'.

For some reason the publishers have presented this excellent book under a title and a jacket suggesting some routine gung ho mini exploit. Perhaps the designer had only read a page or two and picked up the answer attributed to Johnson when first approached: 'I've nothing particular to do in the next few days. I might have a go'. Perhaps today serious books, even when they are highly readable, have to be 'popularised' to sell them.

Left on Afghanistan's Plains

Frank Ellis

Dead Men Risen: The Welsh Guards and the Real Story of Britain's War in Afghanistan, Toby Harnden Quercus, 2011, £18.99.

> But the man who can most truly be accounted brave is he who best knows the meaning of what is sweet in life and of what is terrible, and then goes out undeterred to meet what is to come.
>
> Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War

Dead Men Risen covers the tour of duty of the Welsh Guards in Afghanistan between April and October 2009. In the introduction Harnden points out that his manuscript was subjected to pre-publication review by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Though parts of the book are blacked out, it is clear that the MoD needed to prevent any leakage whatsoever into the public domain of information about operational security, and, above all, about the electronic counter measures adopted by the British Army to neutralise Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). No author can complain about that.

In any case, the MoD censors inflict no damage on the book. *Dead Men Risen* is clearly written and the author pulls no punches about human weakness, fear, psychological collapse, life and death in the Welsh Guards. The book also abounds in inspirational examples of pure courage and leadership and that priceless staple of any good regiment: humour. Interwoven with the personalities and characters of the Welsh Guards are detailed accounts of the many specific phases of counter-insurgency operations in Helmand: mine clearing, often very slow because of the need to use prodders to detect IEDs with low or no metal content; patrolling; the use of air power; the devastating effect of British snipers; and the dangers of resupply convoys. It was during one such convoy that the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Thorneloe MBE, was killed when his vehicle, travelling along the edge of the Shamalan Canal, detonated an IED.

The shocking revelations of *Dead Men Risen* are not found in the endless lists of casualties, killed and wounded, and families shattered forever but in the fact that the men and officers of the Welsh Guards – and the same must be true of other regiments as well – were sent to fight a campaign without sufficient amounts of the proper equipment (the lack of helicopter support is disgraceful). This is the 'real story' and the blame rests squarely with the malevolent and mendacious do-goodery of Blair, his successors, and senior military officers who grossly underestimated the difficulties of any such campaign. One relatively minor example speaks volumes for the quality of planning. A naval commander giving a briefing about language requirements was not even aware that the main language in Helmand was Pashto not Dari.

Far worse, since it exerts a paralysing effect on command and control, is the intellectual and moral confusion that informs the British effort. This has undoubtedly led to large numbers of British soldiers being killed, wounded and maimed for no obviously good cause. Central to the propaganda that justifies the British mission in Afghanistan is the assertion that the security of what is nominally still the United Kingdom depends on the presence of British troops. This assertion is endlessly made without clear evidence to support it. The absence of any convincing arguments for the presence of British troops in Afghanistan is compelling evidence against the need for their presence. Security in the United Kingdom mandates the following measures: an immediate end to all

Muslim immigration; the hunting down, rounding up and deportation of all illegal immigrants; strict entry and exit controls involving racial and cultural profiling; the closing down of mosques with any involvement in terrorism; those persons found to have had any involvement with terrorism should be stripped of their British passports and deported. None of these measures requires risking British lives in Afghanistan. Nor are worries over Pakistan's nuclear weapons, Iran's nuclear ambitions or oil good reasons for our being in Afghanistan. If Cameron thinks they are, let him spell it out and make the case. Men who are being sent to risk their lives are entitled to know the truth.

Dead Men Risen provides clear evidence that the same kind of dangerously sentimental and intellectually incoherent assumptions underpinning multiculturalism in the West are being applied to Afghanistan. Major Rob Gallimore, who was responsible for training the Afghan National Army (ANA), found himself agonizing over the fate of some Taliban IED layers caught by soldiers of the ANA with whom he was working. All the evidence is that the captured Taliban were subjected to Afghan justice by their captors (three were summarily executed). In Britain and in the USA it is a staple of multicultural propaganda that cultural and racial diversity are strengths; that no one culture is 'better' than another. Yet here we have a Welsh Guards officer agonizing about the attitudes and practice of ANA justice. One cannot claim, as Western multiculturalists do, that Western notions of the rule of law enjoy no special status; that they merely represent one way of seeing and dispensing justice and then assert that the execution of Taliban terrorist insurgents by members of the ANA is not right. If, as xenophiles claim, no one culture or view of the world is better than another, fine, let us demonstrate our commitment to diversity in justice by supporting ANA/ Taliban standards of justice. If we are too squeamish to fire the control shot then our ANA colleagues can do the necessary and dirty work on our behalf and we can wash our hands with rainbow-coloured soap and look the other way.

The outcome of the presidential elections in 2009, totally undermined by corruption, was another brutal reminder of the cultural and psychological divide separating Afghanistan from its NATO occupiers. That 3,400 voted in the Welsh Guards Battle Group Area out of a total of 50,000 eligible to vote can only be seen as a victory for Taliban intimidation. It is all well and good claiming a victory because the polling stations remained open, but if those eligible to vote did not vote out of fear of Taliban retribution that is a victory for the Taliban, not NATO. Peter Galbraith, a UN representative in Afghanistan, realised that the corrupt election was a disaster, 'a foreseeable train wreck' and a massive propaganda victory for the Taliban.

Another impediment to the prosecution of effective military operations is the American-inspired doctrine of so-called 'courageous restraint' or as I would call it negligent, incomprehensible restraint. To quote Harnden: 'Thorneloe had told his company commanders that "killing 20 Taliban cannot bring us victory but killing one local national can bring us defeat"'. Despite my admiration for Lieutenant Colonel Thorneloe, I have to disagree with him. Killing 20 Taliban who are attacking a patrol base will assuredly not bring victory in Afghanistan but it would be a highly desirable outcome for the NATO soldiers under attack. High concentrations of NATO troops armed with all kinds of weaponry and supported by fast air and gunships mean that the death of local nationals is guaranteed at some stage. If killing one local national can bring defeat, a rather strange claim in any case, and one that lacks any empirical support, then the logical outcome is to cease all military operations and not use any weapons at all in order to avert this possibility. Moreover, the failure to use NATO technology to kill the Taliban for fear of bringing about this supposed catastrophic outcome will not pass unnoticed by the Taliban. It will embolden them. Fear of killing local nationals – note the implicit Western assumption that all life is precious, an assumption demonstrably rejected by the Taliban – can only exert a paralyzing effect on the conduct of military operations. In fact it is also a clear psychological victory for the Taliban who, having perceived NATO's aversion to risking civilian casualties (for whatever reasons), have successfully exploited it for military ends. Compelling your enemy (NATO) not to use his superior weapons because you know that he thinks all life is precious and is worried by adverse propaganda is an astonishing victory, a brilliant example of insurgent judo.

I salute the Welsh Guards and especially Lieutenant Colonel Thorneloe, an officer who embodied physical and moral courage. His decision to place himself in a position of great danger so as to inspire his soldiers was a magnificent example of leadership. This was a man above other men.

Killing not Murder

Will Robinson

Fine Lines and Distinctions: Murder, Manslaughter and the Unlawful Taking of Human Life, Terence Morris and Louis Blom-Cooper. Waterside Press, 2011, £35.00.

In a distinguished career spanning more than six decades, the veteran lawyer and social reformer Sir Louis Blom-Cooper has established himself as arguably the leading authority on a subject that most of us, happily, have very little to do with: murder. Now in his 86th year, he has co-authored a book with criminologist Terence Morris which will probably be his definitive view on the subject. His trenchant, often brutal, attack upon many of society's most time-honoured assumptions about serious crime will no doubt cause his critics to squirm, but hopefully not without successfully drawing attention to an aspect of the criminal law which the Lord Chief Justice, in a brief and somewhat guarded Forward, appears to acknowledge as ripe for revision.

The book takes its title from the 'fine lines and distinctions' that Baroness Wootton of Abinger claimed at the time of the abolition of the death penalty to distinguish murder from manslaughter. To 'the man or woman in the street', she observed, '[the] distinctions... were not always easily intelligible'. Over forty-five years later her remarks remain valid. Much of the difficulty stems from the fact that the legal definition of murder is rooted in the world of the seventeenth century, when the octogenarian jurist Sir Edward Coke wrote his famous *Institutes of the Laws of England*. In that monumental work, Coke defined murder as the unlawful killing of another individual with 'malice aforethought'. The phrase remains prominent in the judicial lexicon. If a defendant can be proved to have wilfully and maliciously taken the life of another human being he will be convicted of murder; if he is found to have killed accidentally then he is guilty of manslaughter.

This neat categorisation may have worked in the past, but is no longer fit for purpose. Only in a fraction of cases can the defendant's exact state of mind at the time of committing homicide be determined with anything approaching certainty. Yet under the present system this point remains vital: murder, though no longer a capital offence, carries a mandatory life sentence, while sentences for manslaughter depend largely upon the judge's discretion. The arbitrary chasm that yawns between these two extremes explains why murder trials currently occupy such a disproportionate amount of court time.

Blom-Cooper and Morris propose to replace this binary division with a single offence of criminal homicide. This would allow judges to hand down sentences according to the severity of individual cases. One potential benefit would be to spare juries from the unyielding, not to say impossible, task of assessing the moral culpability of defendants. At a stroke the law would be freed from what one nineteenth century commentator smartly dubbed 'the baggage of morals'.

Such reform would also end the perversity that currently places those charged with 'mercy' killing in the same judicial category as child murderers. Whereas nuance and flexibility is built into the law at almost every turn, in the area of homicide the law remains defiantly monochrome.

The reason for this is obviously political: a harsh and arbitrary sentence for murder remains, in the popular imagination, an essential 'deterrent', which some claim to have been promised to defenders of the death penalty as the price of abolition. Blom-Cooper and Morris dismiss these arguments as specious. Indeed, contrary to conventional wisdom, they believe that the fetishisation of murder may in fact encourage other forms of unlawful killing since many serious homicides fall short of its cast-iron definition. In such cases judges may be unable to hand down a sentence of appropriate severity.

One of the most notorious anomalies which the authors highlight are deaths caused on the road. These are always treated as cases of manslaughter, even when the vehicle has, as in the case of Captain Binney, whose body was callously run down and then reversed over by escaping criminals – purposely been used as a murder weapon. There is no logic to this arbitrary prescription. According to the authors it can be attributed to the fact that the relevant legislation was passed at a time when cars were the preserve of the rich and powerful.

Blom-Cooper and Morris are no less robust in dealing with the thorny issue of corporate manslaughter, which in some cases they seem willing to liken to murder. This is well illustrated by the appalling case of the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, which sank soon after leaving harbour because its bow doors were not raised, killing nearly two hundred crew and passengers. Although the ship's owners had been aware of the danger of having no warning system on the bridge, and were roundly condemned in the official inquiry for 'the disease of sloppiness', their fine was derisory, and no manager or executive faced criminal proceedings.

Such cases highlight the essential point of this important book: that there are as many 'fine lines

and distinctions' in cases of homicide as in any other kind of crime. Every tragedy involving the loss of an innocent life has its own mitigating and aggravating circumstances. If we aspire to live in a truly humane and civilised society, it is time that this fact was properly acknowledged, and not swept under the carpet as embarrassing and politically inconvenient.

Aux Armes!

M R D Foot

Time for Outrage! Stéphane Hessel, trans Damien Searls with Alba Arikha, Quartet Books, 2011, £4.50.

This review does not as a rule notice pamphlets, but this one is out of the ordinary. It appeared in French last October, entitled *Indignez-vous!* had sold over six hundred thousand copies by Christmas, and has affected world history already. Stéphane Hessel its author is in his early nineties, but still in tremendous vigour; he electrified an audience at the Institut Français in Kensington, for example, at a conference in June last year held to celebrate de Gaulle's famous speech of 18 June 1940. His father was a German Jewish novelist, who emigrated to France in 1924 with his wife, a Prussian beauty, and their son who was then seven. (According to Charles Glass's long biographical foreword, the parents were the originals for Jules and Katie in Truffaut's film *Jules et Jim*.)

Stéphane Hessel went to the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, from which he was called up to fight in 1939. Like over a million other Frenchmen, he was taken prisoner by the Germans the following summer. He at once escaped, and made his laborious way to England to join de Gaulle's free French movement, reaching London in March 1941. Three years later he parachuted back into France, before the invasion, to help organize resistance, but was again captured, this time by the Gestapo. They packed him off to Dora and to Buchenwald concentration camps. In Buchenwald, he was picked by Yeo-Thomas, GC, as the most promising of the French clandestine prisoners, and managed to escape from the strictly guarded *innere Straflage*; escaping from the main camp was comparatively simple for him.

After the war, he joined the staff of the United Nations, and helped Eleanor Roosevelt draft the universal declaration of human rights. He has spent his life fighting for them; rising to be an ambassador in the French foreign service and to receive the grand cordon of the legion of honour, the French equivalent of the Garter. He remains a sound resister – and an angry man.

What the Germans, and Marshal Pétain, did to France made him furious, and his message in this pamphlet is to remind us to be furious, like him, when abominable things are done; not to put up with them, never to say to ourselves that if we lie low we shall pull through, but to come out and protest. This is a booklet to make dictators uneasy, and to stimulate anybody who feels oppressed.

Hessel harks back to the programme announced by the free French in March 1944, which the early Fourth Republic governments implemented. It included nationalising the banks, since privatised by the Fifth. One of the aspects of modern life that most exasperates him is the growing gulf between the very rich and the very poor; this he ascribes to the power of unregulated private financiers. His other main complaint in these few pages is against the current government of Israel, which he believes is grossly unfair to the Palestinians it has dispossessed. Though an active resister in the past, he now believes that 'peaceful insurrection' is the way forward, and concludes in capitals:

TO CREATE IS TO RESIST
TO RESIST IS TO CREATE.

The translation into English, by Damion Searls and Alba Arikha – daughter of the painter and the poet – is admirable; it does not read like a translation at all. *Indignez-vous!* has also been put into several other languages, including Spanish and Arabic. Protesters against government misdeeds in Spain call themselves *los Indigneros*, significant enough. The Arabic translation reached Tunisia in January; the Arab Spring sprang there the next month. This cannot have been an accident, and suggests that no more influential pamphlet has been published since 1848, when Marx and Engels put out their Communist Manifesto. Nobody interested in the current state of the world should fail to read it.

Teaching Tom Stoppard

Richard Foulkes

In a programme note to his 2011 revival (Chichester Festival Theatre and the Haymarket Theatre, London) of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* Trevor Nunn recalls that back in 1965 he had been scheduled to direct the premiere of the play for the Royal Shakespeare Company until various factors intervened in, as the title ('Better fate than never') of his note implies, a peculiarly Stoppardian way, mingling destiny and chance. Instead it was the Oxford Theatre Group that first staged *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* in its original (shorter) version at the 1966 Edinburgh Festival. Whereas the vagaries of Nunn's early experience with Stoppard could be attributed largely to circumstances beyond his control. Although I was at the 1966 Edinburgh Festival to my eternal regret I did not attend one of the performances at the Cranston Street Hall.

I swiftly made amends for my Edinburgh omission by seeing the National Theatre production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* twice and went on to see the original production of all Stoppard's plays, including *Enter a Free Man* (but not alas *Jumpers)*, all the London and many regional revivals, one in Washington DC and two in New York: Jack O'Brien's magnificent staging of *The Coast of Utopia* at the Lincoln Center in 2007 and in 2011 the reprise of David Leveaux's 2009 West End *Arcadia* revitalised by recasting and the responsiveness of American audiences. Thanks to Taki for the tip-off in his *Spectator* 'High Life' column (9 April 2011): 'Tom Stoppard is our greatest playwright, and I think *Arcadia* is his best play... There's nothing like Sir Tom's intelligent wordplay and mind-boggling knowledge to put one in a great mood...').

During the first quarter of a century or so I seized opportunities to include a Stoppard play in the university adult education drama courses that I taught during that period. Each play, from *After Magritte* to *Professional Foul* (surely the best television play ever written), could be relied upon to provoke a lively discussion of both the form and the content. Rewarding though this was, the experience tended to be rather piecemeal. The nature of the syllabus meant that the Stoppard play was often next to other rather dissimilar work and the nature of the student recruitment meant that it was impossible to rely on much cumulative knowledge in the group, some of whom were familiar with the Stoppard canon whilst others were not.

Then in one of those twists of the plot experienced by many a Stoppard character I was transferred by the university to the Department of English and, instead of going out at night to meet my eclectic band of adults whose attendance was rarely based on a desire for paper qualifications, I was confronted by a roomful of 18-21 year olds, most of them with three good A levels including English Literature. The department was looking for a supervisor for a (fee-paying) postgraduate student from South Korea who wished to write his doctorate on Stoppard. The match between Mr Kim and me was swiftly made, with Stoppard as the marriage broker. Over the next three years I marvelled as much at Mr Kim's determination to master the works of Tom Stoppard written in a language not his own (to indulge in a Stoppardian grammatical ambiguity) as I did in Stoppard's own inventiveness. Mr Kim successfully completed his thesis entitled 'Individual(s), individualism, and the world of chaos and order: a study of Tom Stoppard's work' and returned to South Korea where he gained an academic post.

When I needed to extend my range of undergraduate teaching to offer a final year (Special Subject) course, one on Stoppard struck me as being an ideal solution and so 'From Elsinore to Arcadia: The Dramatic World of Tom Stoppard' was born. A few students had studied a Stoppard play for A level, some had performed in one (generally *The Real Inspector Hound*), one had even attended Stoppard's alma mater, Pocklington School, and after 1997 every one had seen the film *Shakespeare in Love*. Nevertheless for nearly all the students choosing this course, rather than one of the alternatives from Gothic literature to Slang and the Web, was a bit of a stab in the dark though happily without the risk of such a calamitous outcome.

If someone set out to construct an author for the benefit of university students and academics the result would be Tom Stoppard. There is his own life (as pieced together – without Stoppard's aid – by Ira Nadel, the first of no doubt many biographers) from his birth at Zlin, Czechoslovakia, in 1937 to his early years in Singapore and India to his arrival in England, his education here, his professional success and absorption into the country's establishment (knighthood and OM). Making connections between an

author's life and his work is regarded in some quarters as a dubious activity, but in Stoppard's case it seems to be unavoidable. What an amazing spectrum of work it is: the major full-length stage plays (including the trilogy), the one-acters, the television and radio plays, the films, the translations and of course that novel. Then there is the subject matter covering science, theology, philosophy, journalism, language, politics and the big recurring themes such as the freedom of the individual, free will, the existence of God and love. Furthermore there was the remit to relate Stoppard to contemporaries including Pinter, Ayckbourn, Bennett, Frayn, Hare, Nichols, Brenton, Bond and so on. At the end of the ten-week course students were required to undertake a 5,000-word essay. I resisted setting essay topics, preferring each student to create one of his/her own with the result that I must have read and assessed well over one hundred essays on a very wide range of topics. One outstanding essay was written entirely in the style of *Travesties*.

'British and Irish Dramatists Since World War II' was an overview of Stoppard's work to date (2001), but the theme that engrossed me over the years was Stoppard's politics. In his justly celebrated 1977 New Yorker essay Kenneth Tynan wrote: 'He [Stoppard] resists commitment of any kind...He feels grateful to Britain...and that makes it hard for him to criticize Britain'. The ability to give voice to opinions with which he does not agree is undoubtedly essential for a dramatist, as Stoppard himself put it about Joyce, Lenin and Tristan Tzara in *Travesties*: 'you have to give the best possible argument for each of them. It's like playing chess with yourself – you have to try to win just as hard with black as you do with white.' Nevertheless Stoppard acknowledged that 'I find Joyce infinitely the most important' and as for Lenin, whose lengthy speeches are drawn from his own published works, he is hoist with his own petard. Similarly in *Professional Foul* Stoppard confesses his identification with the Cambridge philosopher Professor Anderson (brilliantly played by Peter Barkworth) whose assertion of the rights of the individual brings the conference he is addressing in Prague to an abrupt end: 'I can honestly say that I have held Anderson's final view on the subject for years' and in his journalism play *Night and Day,* whilst he admires the trades unionist Wagner, it is the strike-breaker Milne who 'has my prejudice'. *Night and Day* provides a good example of Stoppard's work for comparison with his contemporaries: Arnold Wesker's rather unwieldy *The Journalists,* and more especially Howard Brenton's and David Hare's *Pravda* with the South African newspaper magnate Lambert La Roux, based on Rupert Murdoch and charismatically played by Anthony Hopkins at the National Theatre, as the villain of the piece. Stoppard's own short play *Dirty Linen* provides a lighter treatment of the subject, but of more substance is his latest work *Rock 'n' Roll* in which the effect of liberalisation on the Czech media is explored alongside the press standards ('We give them crap. They eat crap, they read crap, they watch crap...' as the unrepentant Marxist Max puts it). If there's a whiff of disillusionment here it is worth noting that the play is dedicated to Vaclav Havel, sometime dissident playwright, latterly president of the Czech republic, whose plight under the Soviet regime Stoppard seems to be all too conscious he might well have shared had fate not intervened in the form of his escape to Britain via Singapore and India. Dedications are always significant: *Night and Day* to his then Buckinghamshire neighbour and convert to the right, Paul Johnson, formerly editor of the *New Statesman*.

In his *New York Times* interview of 29 July 1979 Stoppard avowed: 'I'm a conservative with a small c. I'm a conservative in politics, literature, education and theatre', a creed that, as has been observed, is strikingly similar to that of another author who wholeheartedly espoused the values and traditions of his adopted country: T S Eliot. My remaining teaching is on a course on The English Country House to which I contribute a seminar on Eliot's *The Family Reunion* and Stoppard's *Arcadia*. *Arcadia* never ceases to amaze me as I return to it for another performance or another seminar. Its distillation of the values of (English) civilization as accumulated at the ancestral home of the Croom family, which we see in different generations from 1809 and the present day, is reminiscent of the 'fragments' that in Eliot's words we have 'shored up against our ruin'. Ultimately of course this will be to no avail. Just as human life inevitably ends in death so will our planet end in destruction; but whereas for Samuel Beckett and his like this destroys any meaning to existence, Stoppard asserts the value of individual lives and the achievements of humanity over the centuries: 'The procession is very long and life is very short. We die on the march.' This culminates in what for me is the transcendent final scene in which Stoppard movingly celebrates the life of the teenage prodigy Thomasina Coverly only moments before she unknowingly goes to her untimely death. For this scene, if for nothing else, Tom Stoppard's place in the theatre's hall of fame is assured.

Richard Foulkes is Emeritus Professor of Theatre History, University of Leicester. He is the author of several books and articles including Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire.

The Genius of Saint Sulpice

R J Stove on Widor: a Life Beyond the Toccata

Widor: a Life Beyond the Toccata, John R Near, Eastman Studies in Music, University of Rochester Press, Rochester, New York State, 2011, £47.50

John R Near not only knows more about Charles-Marie Widor than any of his readers ever did. He probably knows more about Widor than Widor himself ever did.

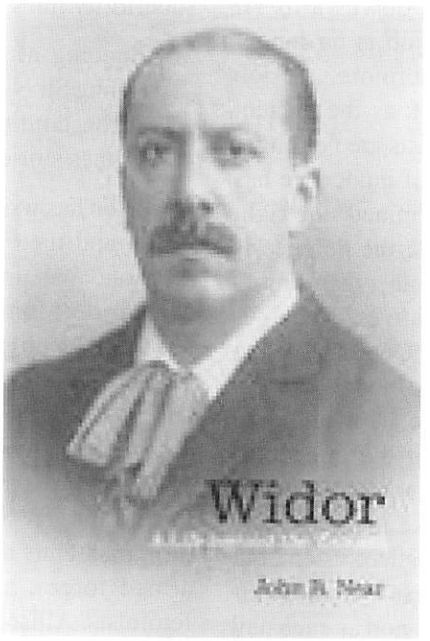
That which H C Robbins Landon achieved on Haydn's behalf, David Cairns on Berlioz's, Jerrold Northrop Moore on Elgar's, and more recently John Tyrrell on Janá□ek's, Near has now achieved on Widor's. He has honoured his subject by combining powerfully muscular English prose with research so staggeringly comprehensive as to be what fashionable circles would call 'a game-changer.' Some of us have been studying musical activity during France's Third Republic for the better part of two decades. Yet even we will find that the present volume has new insights aplenty about the man who served as 'temporary' organist at the Parisian church of Saint-Sulpice for no fewer than sixty-three years.

Near loses no time in reminding us how recently Widor's creative talents were first done justice in the Anglophone world. Two generations ago the *Gramophone Classical Catalogue* included half a dozen recordings of the Toccata and very little else from Widor's pen. In a 1941 textbook, Columbia University musicologist Paul Henry Lang trashed the Widor organ symphonies (the only Widor works which any American of 1941 could possibly have heard, or seen in print) as 'contrapuntally belaboured products of a flat and scant musical imagination, the bastard nature of which is evident from the title alone.' The following bizarre assertion appeared, not in Norman Lebrecht's latest gossip-column, but in a 1975 number of the American Guild of Organists' house magazine: 'Sludge is an apt word to describe [Alexandre] Guilmant, Widor and the others'. Near himself, auditioning as an organ student in New England with an extract from Widor's Sixth Symphony, was primly told: 'We don't play Widor here; you know, he really didn't write good music.' That some among Widor's compatriots long remained equally sceptical about his artistic value is confirmed by a 1965 remark from Versailles organist Georges Robert: 'Widor? Certainly he introduced innovations on the plane of instrumental technique, but his works mark too much his time period and he was wrong to make the organ a veritable symphonic instrument.' One wonders what more Widor would have needed to do in order to be taken seriously: jump off Saint-Sulpice's bell-tower, perhaps? Thanks to Near – who has been scrutinising Widor's life since the 1980s – wondering can now cease, while the esteem in which musicians as diverse as Puccini and Edgard Varèse held Widor's gifts becomes eminently understandable. *Widor: A Life Beyond the Toccata* will make readers want to blitz academic libraries in search of CDs devoted to Widor's oeuvre. (The absence both of a discography and of printed musical examples from Near's pages prompts regret.)

All the surviving information about Widor's emergence is here: his musical ancestry – 'I was born in an organ pipe,' he once jested – and the errors consistently perpetrated regarding his year of birth (1844, not his tombstone's 1845); his lessons in Belgium from virtuoso J N Lemmens; his friendly dealings with Liszt, the great organ-builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, and the aged Rossini; his enduring alliance with Albert Schweitzer; his Paris Conservatoire appointment in succession to César Franck. By 1920 Widor had become not only a universally respected teacher (of Darius Milhaud, Artur Honegger, Olivier Messiaen, Marcel Dupré, Louis Vierne, and Charles Tournemire, among others), but almost as venerated a historical monument as was Saint-Sulpice itself. A Legion of Honour member, he served as perpetual secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, first director of the Fontainebleau Conservatoire Américain (whence the brilliant pedagogue Nadia Boulanger exercised so much of her influence), founder of Madrid's Casa Velasquez for young artists (the griefs of his old age included this building's destruction during the Spanish Civil War), and so on through line after line of eventual death-notices. One particularly charming photograph reproduced by Near shows Widor in company with French President Alexandre Millerand and Queen Marie of Romania; another depicts him receiving

congratulations in 1931 from Paris's Archbishop, Cardinal Verdier. Cornelia Otis Skinner, the poet and actress, visited Widor in his organ loft on her first journey to France, and unforgettably described the experience in her 1942 minor classic *Our Hearts Were Young And Gay*.

Despite his tireless dealings with the great and the good, Widor retained a predominantly down-to-earth and civil temperament, preferring wherever possible to show towards his antagonists sweet reason, rather than the habitual dyspepsia of a Saint-Saëns. Withal, he could administer a cat-scratch with the best of them, notably his swipe at Vincent d'Indy's expense: 'What a shame that such a man is not musical!' Unfailingly *mondain*, accustomed to associating alike with prime ministers (including Jules Ferry) and street-sweepers, he silenced a sugar merchant's aristocratic and truculent daughter with the mildly voiced query: 'Madame, may I dare to ask you to mingle in your conversation a little of that sugar which Monsieur votre père manufactures so well?'



Near also memorably recounts Widor's disputations with the Solesmes monks, leaving beholders to marvel afresh at the peculiar *ad hominem* dirtiness which fights over plainchant always seem to inspire (Widor likened the Solesmes chant edition's later stages to 'a water-colour course taught by the blind'). Subsequently Widor joined that small and happy band of men who live to see their own obituaries published: a Stockholm newspaper of 1905 insisted that he had been 'dead since 1887.' Actually he survived till 1937, physically weakened during his nineties by partial paralysis, but mentally impervious to time, and correcting sheet-music galleys until almost the end.

Of Franck, Debussy said, 'He did not know what it was to be bored'; of Widor, with his quenchless enthusiasm for all the arts, we can say the same. Unlike most Gallic musicians he visited Bayreuth for its opening season in 1876. Afterwards he publicly spoke of Wagner's achievements with admiration. In practical terms, though, he did what d'Indy, Emmanuel Chabrier, and Ernest Chausson all did: absorbed those elements of Wagner's style which looked inspirational, while jettisoning the rest. The tenacious myth of Wagner having turned an entire generation of Frenchmen into idolatrous zombies – whose brains could be restored only by prompt emergency action from Erik Satie and Francis Poulenc – is long overdue for pensioning off. Few traces of Wagnerism mark the organ symphonies, which, notwithstanding the occasional Debussyan turn of phrase, come decidedly closer to Mendelssohn and Brahms in their convincing fusion of classical and romantic elements.

Already Near has given us the definitive printed edition of these symphonies (the versions that publishers issued in Widor's lifetime must now be regarded as hopelessly obsolete) and he explains at length in his book the composer's mania for revising. This mania he likens to the work methods of Bruckner and Stravinsky, though it had different origins from theirs. Neither Bruckner's profound fear of hostile critics, nor Stravinsky's concern for copyright renewals, governed Widor. Rather, a desire to tinker for tinkering's sake seems to have been uppermost in his mind. After 1914 he composed little in any medium, and much of what he did compose met a cool response, whether because it genuinely marked a decline in his powers or merely because (like his last stage work, *Nerto*, from 1924) it lacked the shock-value which Les Six and suchlike iconoclasts had led audiences to expect. Will we ever encounter again his 1895 opera *Les Pêcheurs de Saint-Jean*, which within a few years of its première had been staged in Marseilles, Rouen, Lyon, Nice, Avignon, Grenoble, Geneva, Antwerp, and Algiers as well as Paris? Will we encounter anything else from his vast non-organ output, other than the few chamber compositions that now and then are revived?

If we do, much gratitude will be owed to Near's investigations, This biography is a pleasure to read and to own. Any organist who ignores it needs, in the immortal words of an American politician from long ago, 'not only his head but every part of his anatomy examined.'

R J Stove's book Cesar Franck: His Life and Times *is scheduled for release by Scarecrow Press (Maryland) in November. A slightly different version of this article appeared in the Spring 2011 issue of* The Organ *(East Sussex).*

IN SHORT

Criminal Justice under Siege, Jan Davies, Social Affairs Unit, 2011.

Jan Davies is an experienced and able criminal practitioner, the inheritor of a proud tradition of representation and advocacy that is now slipping away. It is depressing to think that, in a generation or two, as a result of the brutal and, one is tempted to think, calculated battery of our proud legal system the likes of Jan Davies will not be in our courts.

Fees have constantly been driven downwards (if ever paid) to the point at which the job is no longer one that can provide a living. Furthermore, the job will no longer exist in the same form, as the ancient liberties for the defence of which it exists are no longer quite recognisable. The presumption of innocence has been systematically eroded and undermined; the right to silence effectively no longer exists; the defence is increasingly obliged to disclose a case rather than simply rebut the prosecution's; political imperatives on charges like rape have distorted the process. Contrary to the interests of justice, we punish people for thought crimes. Davies catalogues all this and more with unerring accuracy, mustering and marshalling the anecdotes and observations of a lifetime spent in an honourable vocation soon to disappear. Those like me who have practised in (and loved) the criminal justice system, but have seen the writing on the wall and escaped the ever-narrowing constrictions of the job, will nod as each nail is rammed home. Those on both sides of the political aisle who have held the important responsibility for the upkeep of our legal system should read it and hang their heads in shame.

This book is an important if depressing addition to the lengthy story of decline and harm done to our once proud criminal justice system, so it is a shame that it has not received the binding that it deserved. The Social Affairs Unit has distinguished itself for many years with the quality of its production but this reviewer's copy came apart. Perhaps it was meant as a calculated metaphor for the state of criminal justice, in which case it is a fine piece of modern art.

Alex Deane

My Father's Bookcase: a version of the history of ideas, Lincoln Allison, Social Affairs Unit, 2011, £10.

Lincoln Allison is a most erudite and entertaining conservative intellectual, though the term conservative must be qualified by his own admission that he is a libertarian, a utilitarian and a hedonist. He is also an old fashioned Oxford hearty, who has played both soccer and rugby for Stanford Business School and is often to be found on the cricket pitch clouting the ball for six. He is truly the flannelled fool at the wicket, the muddied geek at the goal, a sort of Lancastrian cross between F E Smith and Cyril Washbrook, with just a hint of Stan Laurel and of Albert and the Lion's father Mr Ramsbottom. Allison knows Latin and Italian and in this book comes out with one of the best throw-away superiority lines I have seen for some time:

> Glancing at Rossiyskaya Gazeta while I was reading Sir Nigel I remarked on a full page feature on the continuing popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories in Russia.

Allison has written a series of fifty essays about noted books and their authors, ranging from the heights of Ayer and Voltaire, Hume and Mill, Albert Camus and Michel de Montaigne to the depths of Machiavelli, Giovanni Gentile and Antonio Gramsci and the smiling plains of Richmal Crompton (William Again), Sellar and Yeatman (*1066 and All That*) and W S Gilbert. In writing about Gilbert (The Savoy Operas), Allison has clearly expressed the cheerfully conservative nature of much satire. W S Gilbert mocked a supine Parliament, dim aristocrats and the widow of Windsor's ludicrous armed forces, as well as effete aesthetes and early feminists. Allison writes:

> You find the odd radical, Scotsman and so on who loathes Gilbert and Sullivan... Their fury occurs because the cheerful acceptance of life's absurdities is a form of the conservative spirit which they have never learned to counter'.

Allison's style ranges from his dispassionate and innovative analysis of D H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to his dismissal of Lawrence's obsessional admirer F R Leavis. I can now understand why Eliot liked and edited Kipling's verse from reading Allison's fine essay on T S Eliot:

> So if you 'ave business with Faber – or Faber
>
> I'll give you this tip and it's worth a lot more,
>
> You'll save yourself time and you'll save yourself labour
>
> If just you make friends with the cat on the door
>
> (T S Eliot: Cat Morgan introduces himself)

The good sense of Samuel Smiles and Dean Inge are found in this book but Allison is incensed by the appalling nonsense peddled by Cobbett, an anachronistic reactionary whom conservatives ought to disown. He comments that *Rural Rides* is 'bombastic, boring', and 'laced with uninteresting prejudices'. Yet his essay on Sir Walter Scot's *Ivanhoe* which has the title *Unhand me Black-Hearted Norman Dog* (it sums up Scott's 'sub-Shakespearean, faux-medieval style') is curiously sympathetic. You have to be a remarkable bibliophile to get through Scott but Allison is a book-addicted soul struggling to escape from the bibliophobic confines of the shell of a committed hearty. He has made good his escape and we should not only admire him for it but enjoy the fruits of that escape.

Christie Davies

Monarchy Matters, Peter Whittle, Social Affairs Unit, 2011, £10.

There is something about the monarchy that seems to send even sane people mad. Some of the comments before the Royal Wedding of 2011 could not be characterized as anything but insane. People who would never call themselves Republican and would scream with horror if one accused them of toeing the left-wing establishment line were choked with bile and predicted dire events. A complete lack of interest, disgust with the expense and riots were all mentioned. When sane people like Melanie Phillips boil with anger because – Good Heavens! – the Beckhams were invited to the wedding, you know something has gone wrong.

What had gone wrong, just as it had done with the Golden Jubilee and the Queen Mother's funeral, was the mentality of those who presume to lecture us or lay down the rules of our thinking, whether they be on the Left or the Right. The wedding was a huge success – more than a million people turned out to watch the event, many millions watched it at home and billions did across the world. The bride looked lovely, the groom looked nervous, the best man looked worried then cheerful and the maid of honour stole every male heart in the land. The Queen's yellow outfit became an instant success; and so on. As Peter Whittle explains in this excellent book, the monarchy reasserted its position as the unifying symbol of the nation, the one institution that we can all look to and accept as our own, no matter what the bien pensants might think or say. It is at one with the Commonwealth, as seen in Canada when the now married Duke and Duchess of Cambridge garnered applause and adoration on their recent visit. Perhaps there is more life in the Monarchy than in the Commonwealth.

Monarchy Matters traces the ups and downs of that institution's history and relationship with the people of this country and points out that, no matter what happens, only 18 per cent consistently say that they would prefer a presidential system (and many of them blanch when one points to the likely candidates for that presidential position). Nearly 70 per cent, in other words, consistently prefer the system as it is and are prepared to overlook problems with individual members of what is sometimes referred to as the Firm, understanding that it is the actual institution that matters, not personal foibles, particularly as they tend to be over-ruled if necessary.

Many monarchists feel that, although they might be in the right, they do not necessarily have the arguments with which to defeat the media produced propaganda. Here is a book that will provide them with useful arguments.

Helen Szamuely

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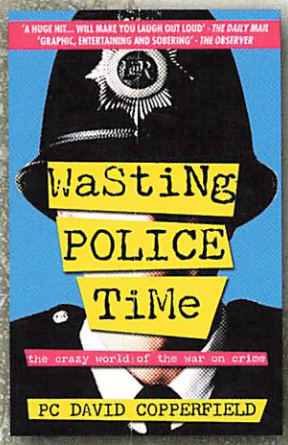

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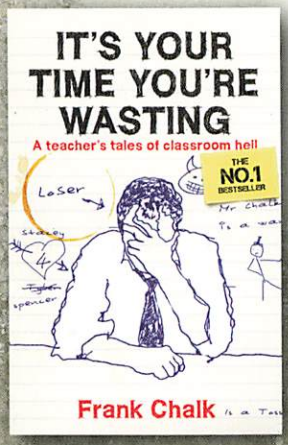

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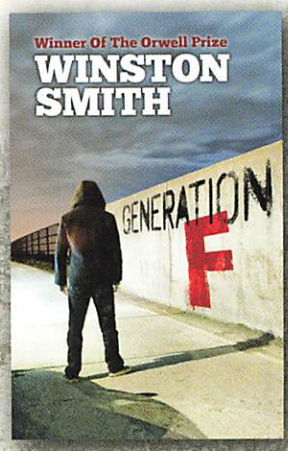

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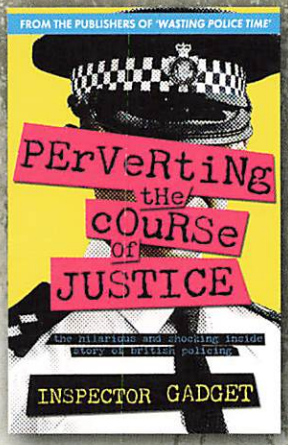

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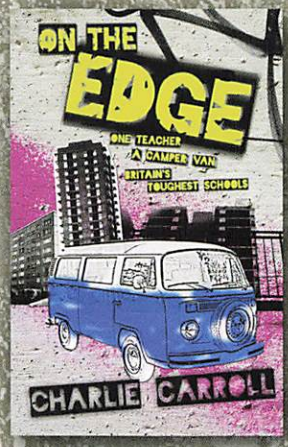

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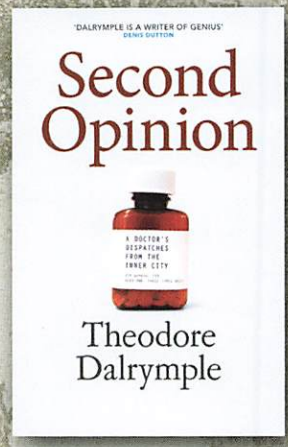

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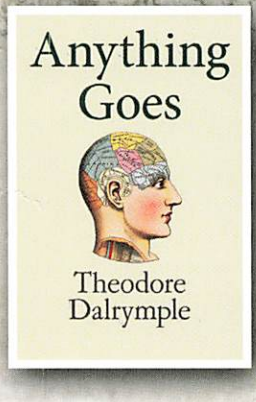

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