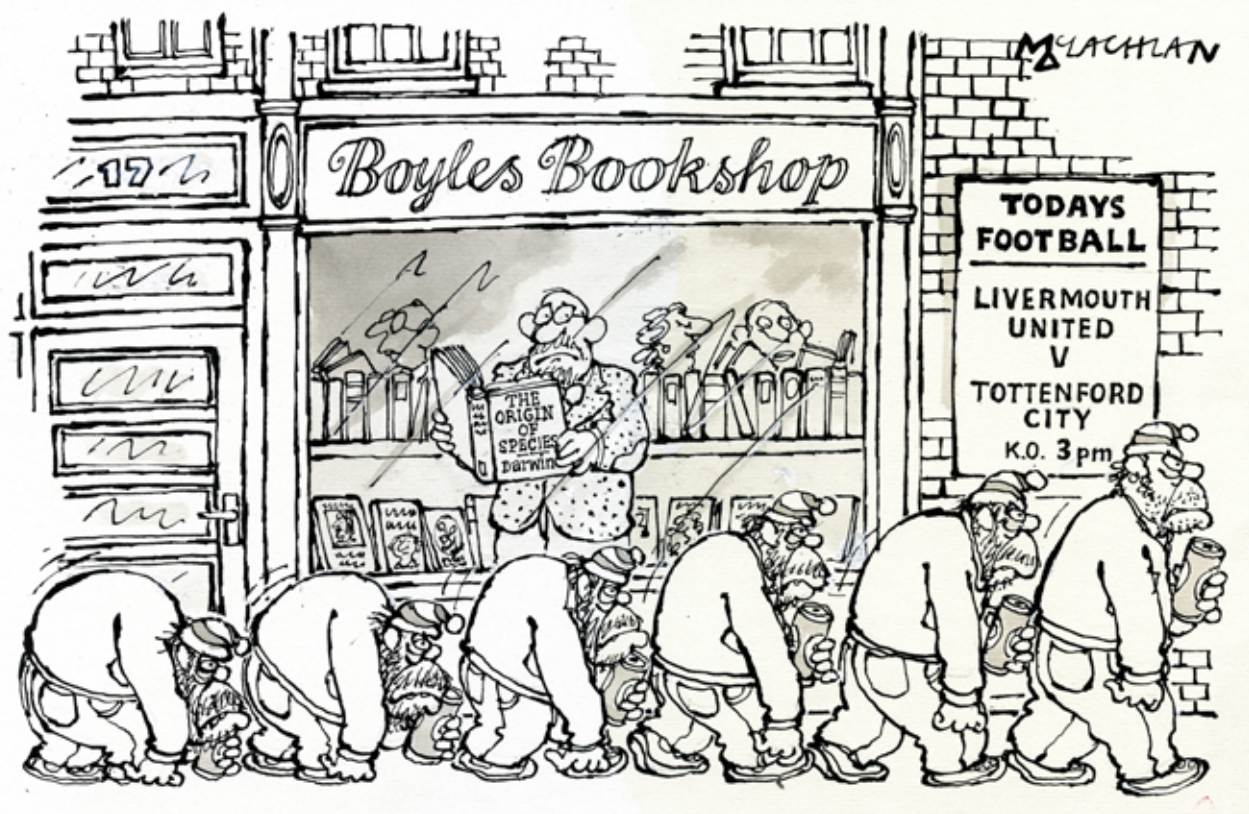


The
Salisbury Review
The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The Shard

Theodore Dalrymple

**God's Sparking
Plug**

Myles Harris

Teacher in China

Tom Nolan

**Freedom's Fire
Sale**

Tom Miers

**Multicultural
Madness**

Ricardo Duchesne

Swedish Lessons

Anders Åslund



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58 In Short



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The cult of youth has taken over our political class, turning our politicians into children. How many elections? That is the question young MPs ask one another. They don't mean: how many elections have you won, or even how many have you lost. It is an abbreviated way of asking: how many elections have you fought since you were first eligible to stand? The higher the number, the more impressive the score. A few MPs even boast about their clean state, having attempted to make it to the Commons every five years since the age of eighteen.

But such precocity is nothing to be proud of. The MP who wins this game is the one who has, from adolescence, wanted to be in Westminster more than anything else. The one who was reading Hansard at seven and learning the names of the All Party Parliamentary Group chairmen at eleven. An obsessive who has never stopped to ask what they could contribute to Parliament, or whether they are up to the job. That such a boast even exists says something about the psychology of the House of Commons: commitment is more important than qualification, ambition valued over experience.

Nowhere is this more obvious than the current Government. David Cameron was the youngest Prime Minister since Lord Liverpool in 1812. George Osborne was made shadow chancellor at the age of 33, and last summer held his 40th birthday party at Dorneywood. In the Thirties, the average age of Cabinet on its formation was 59. The average age of our current Cabinet, when first formed, was almost a decade younger.

Voters like young politicians – at least to begin with. Youth suggests optimism and a sense of possibility. Ask most MPs what age it is best to start, and they will remind you that Churchill was an MP at 25, while Thatcher first stood at 24. Any cynic can see that becoming a researcher and then a special adviser is the easiest path into a safe seat. Lord Salisbury himself

made the point that politics is the most difficult career of all, so it's best to start early.

But too often now youth means inexperience. Tony Blair's memoirs begin by stating that Prime Minister was his "first and only job in Government". Blair seems proud of this fact, and the sentence glows with the Messianic sense of destiny that took him all the way to the top. But really he should be ashamed. Blair set the model for the current crop of party leaders, and like them he was a young man in a hurry: leader of the Labour Party in his thirties, then Prime Minister in his forties. But Blair has since admitted that he came to power too young. Now 56, he realises that a few more years experience would have made him better at the job.

Two years into the current Government and it is not policies that are letting them down, so much as the politics. They are too inexperienced, and it shows. Youth is valuable when it brings courage and energy that a veteran may have lost. Yet the current Conservative leadership seems so afraid. Whether it is the demands of noisy pressure groups, angry newspapers editors or belligerent Lib Dems, it takes very little to force David Cameron into a retreat. Not only has this robbed his leadership of coherence and momentum, but those he has tried to appease only despise him, and demand even more. As a result, but for a handful of Cabinet ministers – those with age or experience, such as Iain Duncan Smith and Michael Gove – the leadership feels like a child who has got bored as soon as things became difficult, and given up.

Young writers who visited T S Eliot asking for tips were often disappointed. His advice was always the same: wait until you have something to say. For a would-be poet or hopeful novelist this is hard advice to follow. Yet no writer will be worth reading until that point, and for most it comes with experience. Perhaps aspiring politicians should be advised to wait as well. Not that they would listen. At least, not until it's too late.

A Splinter in your Eye

Theodore Dalrymple

There is nothing wrong with monuments to money. Cities need monuments, and without excesses of money there would be none. Thus criticisms of the Great Shard of London, that it is an insolent display of financial power, are beside the point. The problem with it lies elsewhere, in the sphere of taste.

I am hardly the first to say that the Shard would be perfect for Dubai: its glassy vulgarity would hardly attract notice there and would be lost among buildings of more dramatic size and shape. But London is not Dubai even if its prosperity is built, metaphorically, on sand; and the proposition that a building that is appropriate for one urban environment is not appropriate for another is so obvious that it hardly needs enunciation: except that architects appear not to know it, or if they know it choose to ignore it.

The architect of the Shard is a 74 year-old Italian, Renzo Piano. He was the subject of a revealing article in the *Guardian* newspaper on 13 June, which began by reciting arguments for and against the Shard. The argument in favour was as follows:

To its supporters, it [the Shard] is a jolt of the modern – the moment London truly joined the 21st century.

This argument is interesting for a number of reasons. The first is its assumption that jolting is an appropriate aim for architecture, that it can and should act like a bad examination result for a pupil who is gifted but not trying his best. The second is the evident failure to realise that modernity is the most fleeting of qualities, and hence utterly useless for assessing the worth of anything. Fascism and nylon shirts were once modern, but no one would now call them the finest flower of the human mind or spirit. The third is the assumption that modern is best, something necessarily to be aspired to,

irrespective of its other qualities. On this view, what comes after is always better than what comes before, presumably because of some principle of progress immanent in the world. Technical advancement, for which gigantism is often a metonym, is mistaken for improvement in all respects. This is like taking a modern kitchen with all its many appliances as a guarantee of good cooking.

The fourth, and perhaps the most dispiriting, reason is the assumption that modernity – by which is meant, presumably, keeping up with technology in order to be as rich as possible with as little effort as possible – is a matter of externals such as the presence of modern buildings. There is an aspect of magical thinking in this that reminds me of Nigeria in the 1980s. The Nigerians, perhaps for understandable psychological reasons,

turned their back on colonial building styles that were appropriate to the climate and cheap and easy to maintain, in favour of multi-storey glass, steel and concrete modernism. They thought that by sitting in such buildings modernity would come to them automatically, that nothing else would be required of them. I remember a hotel that advertised itself as being an ‘ultra-modern complex’ in which you had to walk up the stairs because the lifts were broken and there was a pervasive smell of mould because the air conditioning did not work but the windows were sealed. For modernists of the jolting variety, it is not what goes on in buildings that is important, but the buildings themselves, or the appearance of the buildings, that determines backwardness or modernity.

The author of the article interviewed the architect, Renzo Piano:

The 74-year-old Italian looks every bit the internationally renowned architect. Well, almost.



"It's absolutely ruined the skyline."

Beneath his raincoat, he's wearing a T-shirt with a pink slogan. 'Trust me, I'm an architect', it says.

Is this form of dress, with its facetious slogan, a manifestation of a laudable youth of spirit or of a failure to mature, of permanent egoistic adolescence? The evidence provided in the article suggests the latter.

Piano was Richard Rogers' partner in the design and construction of the *Centre Pompidou* in Paris that has a strong claim to be ugliest building in the world. Of the building of this monstrosity, described in the article as 'a lightweight box covered in ducts and pipes' (I once suggested, when it was undergoing cleaning, that it would be more accurately described as having an enema), Piano said to the author:

I'm still surprised we were allowed. We were bad boys. We were teenagers. Worse than teenagers – we were Beatles!

There is no claim here that the building is beautiful, that it represents an aesthetic adornment of the most beautiful large city in the world. The glowing and evident self-satisfaction of Piano's words attaches instead to the way in which the young architects were able to shock the grown-ups. At seventy-four he still thinks that his adolescent rebellion is something to be proud of in itself (though actually he was 39 when the *Centre Pompidou* was built, by which time he should already have matured somewhat). Nor does he consider that architecture is not a proper means for the expression of adolescent rebellion. Like many architects, he is far too egotistical for such a thought ever to cross his mind.

In reply to the criticism that the Shard was out of all proportion to the rest of the city, Piano said:

This building is not made with the intention to be aggressive or powerful. It is not about priapismo.

Here, if anywhere, is the intentional fallacy: that what counts is the architect's *intention*, that what is in his mind to do is more important than what he does. Piano cannot see that his intention is of no consequence in the circumstances: it is the effect of his giant building that is important, not the idea behind it that (he supposes) it is the duty of his critics and the population to understand. If it is true that he genuinely did not foresee what his building would do – unbalance an already much damaged skyline, and give an impression of psychopathic aesthetic arrogance – then he is a gross incompetent.

Piano continued:

This building is telling a completely different story. It is celebrating a shift – in the idea that a city should not happen by building more and more on the periphery. I'm not an advocate of tall buildings,

but I am an advocate of intensifying the city from the inside.

Here I am reminded of what the most celebrated modern architect of France, Jean Nouvel, who looks and dresses like a thug, said in an article in *Le Monde*: that Paris would have to grow upwards if it was not to remain a museum city. In other words that it would have to undergo the kind of transformation that Le Corbusier envisaged for it in the 1920s when he took a thick black crayon and scored out whole *quartiers* of the city, in the hope of replacing them by Novosibirsk-sur-Seine. Nouvel was demanding the right to transform Paris forever – as well as to a large number of lucrative contracts, of course. Likewise, by 'celebrating a shift,' by favouring what he calls 'intensification,' Piano is in effect demanding that more of the same should be built, notwithstanding his dishonest denial that he is an advocate of tall buildings.

Then he utters the charge which explains how and why so many town and city councils in Britain have embraced the modernist destruction of the townscape:

You do not get hostility because you are wrong, but because people have a fear of change.

This is analogous to the criminologists' claim that not crime, but fear of crime is the problem in Britain. Town and city councils have been intellectually bullied and terrorised (and no doubt liberally bribed) into betraying the heritage of which they were supposedly the guardians.

Change in itself is neither good nor bad; it can be either, and which it is depends upon its content. No one would wish, for example, to return to the clinical methods of medicine of sixty years ago, or for that matter to the telephone system. But by claiming that hostility to work such as the Shard is a symptom of a neurotic fear of change, Piano insulates himself against any possible criticism. Even if he is right, though, that opposition to the Shard is the result of a general fear of change, the briefest of surveys of the architectural effects of the last sixty or seventy years upon British towns and cities would reveal that a fear of change is a good deal more rational and justified by experience than the opposite, that is to say the embrace of change for its own sake. The devastation soon to be wrought by barbaric architects was clearly foreseen by Walter H Godfrey in 1954, in his book *Our Building Inheritance: are we to use it or lose it?* The architectural profession has since left no townscape untouched, and touched none that it did not destroy.

Si monumentum requiris circumspice.

Theodore Dalrymple's latest book is Litter, Gibson Square.

Swedish Lessons for Ed Balls

Anders Åslund

To Brits, Sweden with its tightly regulated social welfare state is often a byword for socialism. But in the last two decades the country has been transformed. Today it offers a flexible and dynamic European model with ever falling public expenditure, lower taxes, economic growth and budget surpluses.

After many years of absence from the Swedish debate, I attended a conference on the Swedish economy in the southern city of Malmö in May, organized by Swedbank. The 180 speakers represented the full range of Swedish views, which have moved amazingly far to the free-market right, not least social democrats and trade union leaders. Key values are competition, openness and efficiency, while social and environmental values remain. The idea is not to abolish social welfare but to make it more efficient through competition among private providers. A new consensus has emerged on having a social welfare society rather than a social welfare state.

The changes have been dramatic. While Sweden's public expenditure has fallen by one-fifth of gross domestic product since 1993, between 2000 and 2009 Britain's public expenditure skyrocketed by 15 per cent. This has brought Swedish and British public spending to a similar level, but Sweden's is still steadily falling. Swedish taxes have been cut and her markets have opened up.

The Social Democratic Party was in power from 1932 until 1976, and again from 1994 until 2006, but Sweden was actually quite a liberal market economy until 1968. After a century of superior growth, its GDP per capita was the third highest in the world.

But in 1968 left-wing madness took over. Our economic success had been too great, making the government take high economic growth as a given, and the left-wing wind that blew through the world in the late 1960s was particularly strong in Sweden. But the decisive reason was the election of the extreme socialist Olof Palme as prime minister in 1969. He dominated Swedish politics until he was murdered on the street in Stockholm in 1986. His murder remains unsolved, but it became a turning point for Swedish politics.

Palme ruled with great force. From 1970 until 1989, he raised taxes, including wealth tax, to more than 100 per cent of income for the wealthy, while social security exploded. Palme undermined the rule of law through retroactive legislation and arbitrary state intervention.

A major scheme for gradual nationalisation of Swedish corporations through a punitive tax on their profits, using the money to buy their shares, was adopted.

Arguably, Sweden is the only old nation that has never gone through a revolution, and the people stayed obedient and peaceful in the face of this onslaught. Private initiative was the victim. Since everybody was paid full wages when taking sick leave, Swedes recorded more sick days than any other nation. The truly wealthy emigrated *en masse* whereas others worked less.

Two decades of low growth ensued, and by 1990 GDP per capita had fallen to 18th in the world. Swedes started feeling poor during their holidays abroad. As elsewhere, Keynesian policies failed, and the country entered a cycle of rising inflation, devaluation and unemployment. In 1990, crisis hit. The country suffered a severe real-estate and bank crash that reduced GDP by 6 per cent in 1991-93. Prime real estate prices collapsed by 50 per cent in 1990. In 1992, like Britain, Sweden was forced into an uncontrolled devaluation of its currency. Unemployment surged and so did public expenditure that peaked at 71 per cent of GDP in 1993, when the budget deficit reached 11 per cent of GDP.

Finally, in September 1991, the social democrats lost an election and a real non-socialist government under Carl Bildt came into office from 1991 to 1994. Although it was a four-party minority government, it took many radical decisions and broke the trend. It turned the country around.

Sweden had been influenced by the free market ideology of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. In particular Timbro, a free-market think tank financed by the Swedish Employers' Confederation (SAF), caused a huge shift in political thinking. Right-wing social democrats, who controlled the public finances, systematically deregulated all the most complicated financial markets that left-wingers did not understand.

Swedish reforms have been many, systematic, and comprehensive. The immediate concern was the budget deficit. In the 1990s, Sweden's budget deficit was 13 per cent of GDP, with public expenditure cuts of 8 per cent of GDP and tax hikes of 5 per cent of GDP. Sweden's public debt was gradually reduced from 73 per cent of GDP in 1996 to 38 per cent of GDP in 2011. The government trimmed all kinds of social

security payments to reasonable levels. Sickness leave has fallen by half since employees are no longer paid from the first day or in full. Today, Sweden has regular budget surpluses, although tax revenues have been reduced by 9 per cent of GDP from 1994 until 2011.

Sweden's main scourge was tax. In 1990, the social democratic government actually cut sky-high marginal income tax from 90 per cent to 50 per cent. The current government has decreased taxes every year and abolished the wealth tax. Inheritance tax and gift tax are also gone. A corporate profit tax of 26 per cent may seem reasonable, but tax competition is fierce in this part of Europe, as most East European countries have slashed corporate taxes to 15-19 per cent. Business wants to reduce the corporate profit tax to 20 per cent.

One of the greatest reliefs is the simplification of tax administration. Since the tax reforms of 1990 abolished almost all deductions, while cutting rates, tax declarations have become extremely simple. Ninety per cent of taxpayers simply confirm with a phone message that the declaration automatically prepared by the tax authorities for them is correct.

Pensions have been subject to a major reform, giving everybody a pension in accordance with their contributions plus a minimum pension for all. As a consequence, the Swedish pension system is actuarially correct without any pay-as-you-go system or implicit pension debt. It is also transparent so that all can see how large a retirement capital they have saved, and to a considerable extent they can choose when and how to invest it and access it.

The Swedish school system, Palme's original bailiwick, was badly ravaged by left-wing reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. Today, all pupils are entitled to school vouchers of equal value for each child of a certain age. Their parents can allocate this school voucher to any school the child is qualified to enter. As a result, while in the 1970s Sweden had only four private schools, one-fifth of Swedish secondary schools are now private, some for profit, others cooperatives or non-profit foundations. Yet, in international school comparisons, Sweden lags behind Finland that never carried out any foolish left-wing reforms.

In 1995, Sweden joined the European Union in order to safeguard the rule of law. In the bad old days, the Social Democratic Party regularly appointed its partisan top civil servants as supreme court judges. Being within the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice means that the prospects of winning against the Swedish government have improved greatly.

After the devaluation of 1992, Sweden adopted a floating exchange rate and inflation targeting. The Riksbank used to be little more than a subdepartment of the ministry of finance, but now it is independent.

Today Sweden has persistently one of the lowest inflation rates in Europe. In 2003, a referendum dismissed euro adoption.

One of the first decisions of the Bildt government was to abolish the wage-earners' funds (sharing company profits with employees) and stop all nationalisation. By and large, Sweden has followed Margaret Thatcher's policy of privatisation, privatising piecemeal when market conditions are conducive.

A tedious but important task is deregulation. Swedish governments have quietly deregulated one market after another, contributing to greater economic dynamism.

The annual centralised wage bargaining between the Trade Union Confederation (LO) and SAF was the pride of the old Swedish model. But in the 1970s it led to inflation and strikes, and today this system is long gone. Wage bargaining is still collective, but it is becoming increasingly decentralised. Wage inflation is no longer a concern and strikes are extremely rare. The employers have won, but real wages are rising with productivity. As everywhere, trade unions are losing members, money, and power. The Trade Union Confederation has adjusted, its chair declaring recently: 'We want flexibility on the labour market.'

As the Thatcher revolution exemplified, real ideological victory is when your opponents steal your clothes. In 1994, the social democrats under Göran Persson returned to power and stayed until 2006. Although they complained about all the cuts the non-socialist government had undertaken and carried out few reforms, they did not revoke the reforms but completed fiscal tightening. It was actually Persson who abolished the inheritance and gift taxes.

In 2006, four non-socialist parties formed a coalition government with Fredrik Reinfeldt as prime minister. Finance Minister Anders Borg, with his trademark pony-tail and earring, has led further reforms. After having taken Sweden successfully through the global financial crisis, this government was re-elected in 2010, and the *Financial Times* named Borg Europe's best finance minister last year.

Keynesianism remains disliked in Sweden. Before the global financial crisis Sweden had a budget surplus on average of 2.5 per cent of GDP in the years 2004-7. After a minimal budget deficit in 2009, it has once again a budget surplus. Sweden remains, like Germany and Finland, highly dependent on exports, and its GDP fell by 5 per cent in 2009, but it rebounded by 6 per cent in 2010 and 4 per cent in 2011, and the current account surplus is substantial. Sweden's credit default swaps are lower than Germany's. The only concerns are the euro crisis depressing demand, and unemployment, which hovers around 7.5 per cent.

Swedes shake their heads when they see the

economic policy in euro crisis countries. They take their cue from their own crisis in the early 1990s and call for far more expenditure cuts and structural reforms. Finance Minister Borg argues against more expansionary policy in Sweden in case the euro crisis should lead to a real meltdown.

The right-wing drift of the much reduced Social Democratic Party continues, making it reminiscent of New Labour. Its brand-new leader, Stefan Löfven, came to prominence during the global financial crisis, when he and the metalworkers' union agreed to major wage cuts to safeguard their real incomes in the long run. The social democrats have not only joined the free market consensus, but seem to attack the current government from the right, demanding a better business environment. Gone are demands for the restoration of social benefits. Opinion polls have rewarded the social democrats for their right turn with sharply improved ratings.

The left-wing intellectuals are also gone. The old socialist think tanks have closed down. The Centre for Labour Market Studies was a state institution, and the non-socialist government closed it, since it did not generate research but left-wing propaganda. The Trade Union Organisation had a sophisticated

research institute, which it eliminated for not being sufficiently political. The trade union economists, who dominated the Swedish economic debate in the 1970s and 1980s, have been replaced by bank economists. The free-market right has won the debate and maintains substantial think tanks in Stockholm. Their main problem is a lack of resistance.

Sweden is not alone. Developments are similar in the other Scandinavian countries, the Baltic countries, and Poland. The Swedish about turn is the most dramatic. While its direction is clear, much remains to be done. The Baltic states look very attractive with public expenditures around 35 per cent of GDP and low, flat income taxes. They are a source of inspiration for their Scandinavian neighbours.

In the last two years, five incumbent EU governments have been re-elected, namely centre-right governments in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Poland, showing that the new North European conservatism enjoys popular support.

Anders Åslund is a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and a former Professor at the Stockholm School of Economics, 1989-94.



*66 ...and as a farewell present,
this beautiful clock. 99*

A School Teacher in China

Tom Nolan

For the last year I have been a schoolteacher in China. I lived for the last six months in the Haizhu district of Canton, a large island bounded to the north by the Pearl River and by three of its lesser branches to the east, south and west. The area is mostly residential: a dense forest of sky-scrapers crowds the view, presenting a prospect which, according to the time of day and weather, is sometimes beautiful, sometimes oppressive, sometimes mysterious but always daunting. Moderate-to-very wealthy inhabitants live in the skyscrapers, whereas the less well-off occupy low-rise fifties and sixties tenements that form a dingy ‘grouting’ in and around the splendour of more recent property developments. The tenements, with rust from cheap iron window-frames streaking down their cement facades, are separated by narrow streets and built to an identical plan. Finally, at the island’s southern edge, the large-scale buildings give out, and the architecture takes on the makeshift air of a shanty town, home to some of the island’s poorest people, with houses no bigger than kiosks forming an unruly procession along un-metalled roads.

Haizhu is not, however, a mere suburb. Its northwestern end is dominated by the famous Canton Fair and other commercial hubs – textile, footwear and electronics markets – that crater the residential landscape. My own flat, near the Dongxiaonan underground station, was within easy walking distance of one of the largest of these, a fabrics market whose ten-story high main entrance and sales hall would comfortably berth a zeppelin. The streets that led from it were entirely given over to clothiers’ shops, their pavements made almost impassable by a buzzing armada of motorbikes hooking and lunging round one another as they competed to get their high-piled loads to customers on time.

The streets of Haizhu are crowded from before dawn to late at night. Setting out for work well before seven o’clock I could avoid the worst of the rush-hour pedestrian traffic, but to enter the underground among thousands of commuting workers and students converging on foot from five or six large roads, or alighting with the alacrity of invading marines from battery-driven rickshaws was still an intimidating experience. The whole world seemed to be doing it: tens of millions of people pouring

themselves down a single urban drain only to emerge, equally numerous, from other drains elsewhere in this province-wide megalopolis. On the other hand, before seven in the morning the underground railway itself was at least bearable, it was usually possible to get a seat for some of the journey, which was an unlikely occurrence at any other time of day, when merely getting a foothold in one of the crowded carriages was a challenge I felt unable to meet. I took to walking home to my apartment of an evening: the ten-mile trek in stifling heat and heavy pavement traffic a less stressful alternative to braving Pazhou, the nearest station to my school and the Trade Fair. When a fair was actually in session it was necessary to push and struggle through the heaving crowds on both sides of the gate just to get oneself onto the platform, never mind the trains.

It was during those walks home that I got a general impression of the population of Haizhu. My face and build, so improbable to Chinese eyes, drew plenty of appalled second glances, the more so as I bore south and west away from the Trade Fair with its international clientele. The fact that the searing heat, locked-down cloud cover, and 95 per cent humidity – like wading through motor-oil – covered me in a triple coat of sweat can hardly have lessened the shock. But the more common reaction was a pleased ‘Hallo’ which a Chinese man or woman, too embarrassed and non-confrontational to say it to my face, would murmur in passing. Sometimes there was more: a recitation of questions and phrases remembered from school. ‘Where are you from?’ ‘What is your job?’ – followed by a reassuring display of tolerance for my halting answers, equally unintelligible in English or Mandarin.

The most striking thing about the thousands of people I encountered each evening was their self-control. The neutral faces and repressed movements were those of a crowd slowly evacuating a burning building, aware that the least concession to panic might lead to catastrophe. As I got closer to my apartment, though, and as the evening wore on, I would see more and more of the inhabitants of the island on home territory, sitting at tables outside the countless eateries that, no matter where you live in Haizhu, will never be more than a few steps from your door. Here the impression they gave was

of general, though never over-excited or drunken, cheerfulness. The intense but carefully calibrated pleasure they took in family and community life was obvious and admirable. I felt wistful that I was excluded from it.

At school I could test this general impression of bred-in-the-bone self-control and resigned cheerfulness against my acquaintance with Chinese teachers and students. The teachers were certainly long-suffering. Most of them, though university educated, were without teaching qualifications and on a pittance of a salary, for which they were required to put in five twelve-hour weekdays, and a half-day on Saturday. If I asked them how they felt about this, they said that their situation was an unenviable one, but only to be expected. Some had had experience of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and would on occasion express their resigned exasperation at that indefinable mixture of ruthless competition and intransigent bureaucracy which characterizes contemporary China, but never with the conviction that there might be a homegrown alternative. Life was to be suffered, and they were certainly suffering a lot less than their parents' and grandparents' generation.

The students, however, were a different kettle of fish. The school assembly was preceded every morning by an elaborate dance and musical exercise routine, which was enough to dispel any illusion regarding a supposed 'inherent' tendency to regimentation among them. They never followed the movements with any accuracy, hardly tried to disguise their boredom, and would sometimes go into unrelated improvisations of their own. In English classes, too, they rarely kept themselves in order, and foreigners who contemplate an educational career in China should be advised that piano-wire vocal chords and lungs like forge bellows are indispensable teaching aids.

However the students' behaviour changed according to the teacher's nationality. I could, for instance, be writing on the blackboard with my back to the class, but without turning round discern the nationality of any teacher who might look in at the door. If he was Chinese, the class would instantly fall silent. If he was foreign, the noise level would increase significantly to greet the new distraction. Was such Bacchic rowdiness the students' way of celebrating a momentary holiday from the pressure of a society which the foreign teacher could not

pretend to represent – and all the more violent for being momentary? Or did it mark the emergence of a more genuinely rebellious generation keen to anticipate a little the freedom it would demand when it came into its estate? I did not and do not know, but offer an anecdote which might be emblematic.

One of the warm-up activities I had devised to introduce my lessons for 13 year olds consisted in my copying Chinese characters out of a notebook on to the blackboard and asking the students to provide an English equivalent. On this particular day, I began by writing the sinogram for 'money' on the board, whereupon a particularly boisterous young man – the class clown – took a banknote out of his pocket and said, 'Teacher, this is money,' and then, pointing to the miniature portrait of Mao on one side of it, 'and this is the *Great Leader*'. The class, which had been as noisy as usual, suddenly fell silent. While it is possible to criticise aspects of Mao's reign in China, but always in a spirit of circumspect reverence, this seemed like an invitation to mockery. The students had fallen silent because they recognised the moment as potentially critical, didn't know how I would respond, or how *they* would respond to my response. We were all aware that there were spies

I could discern the nationality of any teacher who might look in at the door. If he was Chinese, the class would instantly fall silent. If he was foreign, the noise level would increase significantly to greet the new distraction.

for the headmaster and his staff and for the school cadre of Young Pioneers in the classroom. What would I do? I hesitated a moment, then got up on a chair and

adopted the chest-out, shoulders-squared, chin-and-eyes raised posture typical of statues of statesmen-cum-visionaries. 'But who', I asked solemnly, 'is the Great Leader in this classroom?' The silence intensified. 'Who is it?' I insisted. The uncertain expression on the face of the class clown who, conscious that he had started all this, was staring at me apprehensively, suddenly resolved itself into a grin. 'You are the Great Leader, Teacher!' 'Quite right', I replied, 'and this is my...' and I held the notebook up against my chest. A beat or two more of silence, and then, unanimously, '*That's your little grey book, Great Leader!*'

So far as I know, there were no negative consequences for anybody from this little episode, nor from the hilarity which followed it. Thereafter, whenever I wanted to get that particular class under control, I needed only to mount my chair and hold up my notebook to gain their complete attention.

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God's Sparking Plug

Myles Harris

By a curious coincidence the firing of the Great Sparking Plug at CERN, known to most of us as the Hadron Collider, after which scientists announced the discovery of the Higgs Boson particle, occurred on the third day of the month of the Olympics, which puts the lakeshore site on the same footing as Delphi, the sacred Pan Hellenic sanctuary whose priestesses foretold the future, and from where the original games were conceived. The ceremonies included a ritual slaying of Python, the Dragon who protected the navel (the omphalos) of the earth, followed by games after which young boys would climb laurel trees to cut branches for the victors' brows. These days we call such branches the Nobel Prize.

As for the modern navel of the earth at CERN you only have to glance at the terrifying jaws of the particle accelerator to understand why people are so in awe of it. When it was first revealed many feared it would create a black hole and swallow time. They were relieved to be told the news is good and instead of time falling down a gravity plughole, a God particle, the Higgs Boson, had been found. The ordinary believer may have no idea what a Higgs Boson is, but his priests tell him its sparking entrails are satisfactory. Soon, as the seer Stephen Hawking prophesied in his strange electrical speech, we will know the Mind of God. 'While in a trance the Pythia (at Delphi) "raved" – probably a form of ecstatic speech – and her ravings were "translated" by the priests of the temple into elegant hexameters.'

This is scientism, a religious cult that has grown up over the last two hundred years. It has nothing to do whatsoever with science, or the scientists at CERN. They now have a better understanding of a particle, the Higgs Boson and its field. It explains how the universe has mass. This prodigious technical feat explains neither who we are, the nature of consciousness nor the purpose of creation.

It is unlikely that many scientists at CERN believe it will. The difference between science and scientism is that scientists are curious about the nature of matter, but not anxious about it. They go where the facts take them. Followers of scientism, on the other hand, the universal religion of the modern liberal mind, are very anxious

it should fit their preconception of universal progress and the triumph of the European enlightenment. If it doesn't it is not science.

The last two centuries have seen the latter intensify their ambition to place man at the centre of the universe. Modern followers of Darwin declare that no creator can better evolution's most striking success, man, while the doctrine of materialism affirms that the universe from which evolution sprang is blind, unconscious and without purpose.

If the universe is blind, unconscious and without purpose, what are we humans doing in it? We are made of stardust, the carbon atoms of our bodies were created by the explosion of stars, so why is the universe which has been around a lot longer, and millions of times more complex, not conscious?

Such nonsense is dismissed by rationalists as teleology, the sin of ascribing a purpose to nature. Consciousness is an epiphenomenon, an hallucination peculiar to man. Animals may have a primitive version of it, so may plants, but it is not essential. Everybody has driven home without being aware of the journey, and without killing anybody. When did you last think about running downstairs?

It is why studies of telepathy are, while not completely and absolutely taboo in science, expected to have only one outcome: they must be shown to be false. Proving telepathy's existence would give credence to the idea that the material world is sentient; that there are thoughts out there. Mention telepathy in a university common room and you will hear the chairs moving away from you. Scientists have wives, children and mortgages to think about. The money for 95 per cent of all science research comes from government departments run by progressive liberals.

Nevertheless, the distinguished biochemist and cell biologist, once researcher of the Royal Society and Fellow of Clare College, Rupert Sheldrake says there is good statistical evidence for telepathy's existence. The author this year of a book attacking scientism, *The Science Delusion*, in 1981 he received the high distinction of being the subject of an editorial in *Nature* suggesting his first book *A New Science of Life*

should be burned and he be ‘condemned in exactly the language that the pope used to condemn Galileo, and for the same reason. It is heresy.’ Such is the open mindedness of the scientific establishment.

Yet we are all, says Sheldrake, familiar with thinking about somebody who a few moments later telephones. ‘Ah, I was just thinking about you’, you say, then forget it in the ensuing conversation.

Other forms of telepathy are dogs who know the moment the master decides to come home, even if he is still in his office; and some cats, who, long before the cat basket is got out or the word ‘vet’ mentioned, vanish. Their owners can even go to the extreme of phoning the vet from their offices but it makes no difference. The cats still know.

You only have to open your internet connection and tap out a remembered Shakespeare sonnet to realise that thoughts, even of the dead, can be transformed into invisible waves that pass through walls, and are able to reach the other side of the globe in a fraction of a second. They can travel even further. By now the first analogue radio transmissions from earth from the last century will be reaching out to stars.

Other examples are the instantaneous, co-ordinated and purposeful movements of entire flocks of birds or shoals of fish; and from the particle world, quantum entanglement, the ability of two particles, however far apart, even at the opposite ends of the universe, to know each other’s exact position and configuration.

While the particle physics example is accepted by scientism’s believers – on evidence that can only be gained by an understanding of the most abstruse mathematics – the remaining phenomena are dismissed as anecdotal. They are anything but.

Science always starts as anecdote, from Archimedes leaping from his bath to Fleming returning from a late summer holiday to notice that a culture of staphylococci he had left on his bench was killed wherever it touched a fungus called penicillin contaminating the plate.

Sheldrake has investigated telepathy extensively, as have others, and using statistical tools familiar to all scientists, including those working on the Hadron Collider, has come up with what appears to be solid statistical evidence for its existence. He is a reputable scientist, but his stories of what happens when he puts his findings to the scientific world, related on his website along with his findings, are instructive.

Like medieval priests coming across a denial of the actuality of the Virgin Birth, devotees of scientism instantly block their ears to any idea that the material world might be conscious, crying ‘paranormal, fake, Californian’. Invited to look at the evidence they refuse

or in some cases falsify their own findings. The most common statement is, ‘I don’t need to look into this. I know it is untrue.’

A similar stuffing of ears takes place to criticisms of neo-Darwinism. Out of the latter conflict arises the figure of the chief priest of scientism, Richard Dawkins, clearly more anxious about the one true faith than even the most Fahrenheit of his followers. He has made a nonsense of Darwin’s beautiful thought by turning it into an hysterical witch hunt against theists. However it is unlikely, if, as scientists admit, 98 per cent of the universe is unknown and at present unknowable, that Darwin’s theory will stand the test of time. The morphology of animals, their intricate shapes, and the speed at which proteins form into a pre-existing pattern, far faster than the theory would allow, suggest that there are other forces at work besides blind selection.

More recently, biologists think that colonies such as wasps and bees may be single organisms, each member acting as a specialised cell: for example the hive’s female workers who give up having offspring to look after the royal babies, while others become foragers, guards, larder wasps and so on. Why should members of a colony co-operate if Archbishop Dawkins’ selfish gene rules? Is the division of labour within a hive just a matter of complex exchange between various sense receptors, or are they, like us, yet another exception to the rule that all animals are merely reactive machines, and that something else unites them? Lewis Thomas, in 1971, writing of an ant colony said: ‘it is an intelligence, a kind of live computer, with crawling bits for its wits.’

Sheldrake goes even further and asks if the sun, an electromagnetic engine of unfathomable complexity – a description equally applying to our brains – is conscious. It is a mad idea, isn’t it? But if somebody asked you in 1500 if the population of a small provincial town could one day take to the air and fly around the world in 24 hours in a box driven by liquid wood what would you have said?

Such questions do no disservice to Darwin nor are they statements of belief in the supernatural. All scientific theories fail in the end when the theory no longer fit the facts, it is how they are defined. Even Newton’s fell to Einstein. But religions have longer lives and do more damage than scientific theories. The cult of scientism is a stumbling block not only to the public understanding of science, in which absurdly Dawkins held a chair, but for the advance of science itself.

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From Finland's Winter War to the Collapse of the Euro

Christie Davies

In the Finnish equivalent of the Imperial War Museum there is now a permanent exhibition, *The Days of Glory*, about the heroes who fought to hold back the Soviet invasion in the Winter War of 1939-40. When I was last in Finland in 1978, such an exhibition would have been impossible, for Finland was an isolated, neutral country without alliances, fearful of provoking another Soviet incursion. The fall of the Soviet empire has enabled the Finns to tell the whole truth in a public space, something that is important for their younger generation. I was honoured to be shown round the display by an 89 year old Finnish war veteran.

Although many Leftists have been forced to admit the failures of Communism, they have kept alive the myth of the heroic, 'anti-fascist' Soviet fight against the Germans in World War II. The exhibition crushes that myth and gives us a new perspective on World War II. Curiously, it also explains

two key aspects of contemporary Finland that impinge on us too – the pre-eminent position in the world enjoyed by Finnish designers and the stubborn refusal of the Finnish government to give in to the fraudulent demands of the European Union to 'save the Euro'. Finland today is not a small country at the periphery of Europe but a fighting country at the centre with an economy that puts ours to shame and a strength of will that reveals the craven feebleness of our own political classes.

The Second World War in Europe began in 1939 with two fake attacks: the Germans faked an attack in August on a radio station at Gleiwitz in German Silesia, as a pretext for invading Poland. Then on November 26th of the same year the Red Army shelled the Russian village of Mainila near the border with Finland, claimed that Finnish artillery (which was well out of range) was responsible and four days later invaded. Even before the official declaration of war, Soviet aircraft were bombing civilian targets to try to break the will of the population and managed to hit the Soviet embassy in Helsinki.

The Soviet lie fooled no one. Russia was condemned

as an aggressor and expelled from the League of Nations. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France and the Netherlands all sent ambulance units to Finland and Finnish-American, Swedish, Estonian, Danish, Norwegian, Hungarian and British volunteers, including pilots, arrived to fight alongside the Finns. The British volunteers wore British-style uniforms with Finnish armbands saying Sisu (Finnish for courage, guts). In the United States ex-president Herbert Hoover and Fiorello LaGuardia, the Mayor of New York, led a campaign to collect money for Finland and the American press ran ecstatic stories about Finnish tactical victories over the lumbering Soviet army.

The British and French governments planned to send 150,000 soldiers to Finland via northern Norway and Sweden in a move that would also have cut off supplies of Swedish iron ore to Hitler. The Swedish government

panicked and put pressure on Finland to end the war. Faced with an Anglo-French threat, Stalin agreed to end a war that had involved a Soviet army a million strong of which one hundred and thirty thousand were killed or died of frostbite. Like the German army outside Moscow in the winter of 1941-2, the Soviet troops lacked adequate winter clothing. There is a Finnish anecdote about a question put to a Finnish military attaché by a western ambassador during the Cold War:

'How many Soviet soldiers are there in Finland?'

'I will check the records say that it is four hundred thousand and four'

'What!?'

'Yes, and four of them are still alive.'

An alternative version ends 'four hundred thousand and two metres deep'.

Although the Finns gave their prisoners food and medical care, only five thousand Soviet soldiers surrendered, usually those who were lost or abandoned, because prisoners were savagely punished when they returned home and their families

were also persecuted. They certainly did not think they were taking part in a patriotic war. In the Soviet Union itself the NKVD (ancestor of the KGB) reported that graffiti supporting the Finns had been put up by disgruntled Soviet citizens, at considerable risk to themselves. The Soviet troops only fought because they were forced to. Deserters and those who retreated in an orderly way against the wishes of their political officials would be shot by the Soviet security forces. Every Soviet military unit contained political officials to whom the military officers were subordinate and everywhere there were informers. If the officers wanted to withdraw because it was militarily necessary, they could be over-ruled by the man from the Party – hence the futile slaughter. The senior officers knew that most of their number had been murdered in the Soviet purges of 1936-9, including the best generals.

The lesson of the Winter War is that we should view Putin's contemporary jingoistic celebrations of the Russian victory in 'the Great Patriotic War' (1941-45) with a great deal more scepticism. The huge Russian and even greater Byelorussian and Ukrainian casualties were a product of Soviet ruthlessness towards their own people as well as the Nazi's bestial racial hatred of the 'sub-human Slavs'. It is time to jettison the image of the gallant Red Army choir ensembles singing enthusiastically as they go into battle, guns in hand, with knives between their teeth. What was in it for troops from Russia's Mongolian colony or the suppressed peoples of the Caucasus or Muslim Central Asia – what did Alexander Nevsky or Suvarov mean to them? The Soviet troops were double victims, caught between two totalitarian systems happy to kill you or work you to death. By contrast the Finns, both in the Winter War and in the Continuation War 1941-44, showed themselves to be a civilized people.

The truly heroic fighters were the Finns who dressed in white, and continually swooped out of the snowy forests on skis to use Molotov cocktails against tanks – they were so effective that the Soviets had to surround their tanks with infantry to protect them. Finnish casualties were nearly 2 per cent of their total population, proportionately more than Britain lost in the whole of World War II. They were fighting for their freedom, in Marshall Mannerheim's words, for 'Home, Religion and Fatherland'.

The Left perpetuated the myth that the invasion of Finland took place merely to shift the border between

Russia and Finland, to gain territory needed to defend the Soviet heartland against German invasion. Yet long before the Winter War, the Soviets had already printed books of instructions for their soldiers, telling them in detail about Helsinki. The Soviet Union set up a puppet government in Russia under the servile Finnish communist Otto Kuusinen living in Russia, who told the Finns that the Soviets were coming to free them from landowners and capitalists. Finland's Social Democrats, some of whom who had been on the Red side in the Finnish civil war of 1918, following Finland's declaration of independence in 1917, repudiated Kuusinen and the country experienced complete patriotic unity. The Finland we know today is a product of the Winter War.

When the Russian Tsars ruled the Grand Duchy of Finland, the Finns took up design as a way of resisting Russification and giving their products an appearance that was modern and western and yet drew on distinctive Finnish symbols and traditions. The devastation caused by the wars with the Soviet Union, the huge post-war reparations to be paid to the Soviet victor, the Soviet veto on Finland receiving aid under the Marshall Plan and the cost of resettling 400,000 Karelian refugees from the lost eastern provinces put Finland in a desperate situation. The solution for a country with few natural resources is earning money through exports of good design.

Finland is ranked as the least corrupt country in the European Union, which sets it apart from those European countries currently begging for bailouts. It has a secure AAA rating and a stable economy. Finland made the mistake of joining the Euro, but then we were crawling into the Euro along the 'monetary snake' in 1992. It was not good judgment but currency speculators that kept us out. The Finns are now under pressure to give loans to the Mediterranean debtors club, but the Finns are a people who learned in the Winter War the virtue of stubbornness and the good sense not to trust others. The Finnish government has demanded collateral, the old pawnbrokers' principle of no advance without security. When the debtors go broke, as they will, the Finns will hold their assets. Even if in the end the Finns lose to the EU as they did against Soviet Russia, at least they will go down as heroes, unlike our cowardly political leaders.

Christie Davies has just returned from teaching at a summer school in a university in Finland.

The Real Sixties

David McVey

He won't see his fifties again, yet he wears brightly coloured cotton trousers, an embroidered cotton shirt and a woollen waistcoat. If you studied his grizzled, thinning grey hair closely you'd perhaps detect the ghost of the wild, shoulder-length locks he sported in his youth. This hipster OAP smiles a smug smile and pronounces, 'If you can remember the sixties, you weren't there!'

It's a line or a sentiment that's quite common, particularly in certain Hollywood films of the late 1980s and early 90s (remember *Field of Dreams?*). It implies that the sixties were not a decade but a *place*; a bright, sunny, optimistic place, smelling faintly of aromatic smoke, pulsing with love and governed by peace.

The cultural impact and legacy of this misunderstood decade were a great deal more complex than that. We might reflect, for example, that the sixties were the era of the Krays, Jimmy Boyle, Myra Hindley and Ian Brady. If it was the decade of passionate protest against the Vietnam War, it was also the decade of the greatest suffering and cruelty in the war itself. Nor was there a shortage of other wars, often compounded by frightful civilian distress; who could forget Biafra?

I was a child in the late 1960s and clearly remember the televised horrors of Vietnam. Used to the stories of heroism in the *Victor*, the *Hornet* and *Commando* comics, I wondered why they didn't just send in the British Army. Surely they'd sort out everything quickly, as they always did in three picture-strip pages of the *Victor*, thus tidying up the mess the Americans had made?

Most of the anti-war protest movement took place in the USA, and was driven by students. Students also took to the streets in Paris, particularly in 1968, but peace and love didn't seem to be high on their To Do List. British students also protested, partied and popped pills; experiencing the sixties, you might say. But students were an elite group at that time. Some new universities were opening but the Open University was still in the planning stage, and only 4 per cent of school leavers were going to higher education (it had risen to 8 per cent by the time I enrolled at a new university in 1977). Most of the rest of us experienced a

very different sixties.

1967 was, of course, the year of the Summer of Love. The music was certainly pretty good, but besides Sergeant Pepper and Monterey it's worth remembering that Vince Hill and Engelbert Humperdinck were still having smasheroonies then, and not a single flower in their hair. In any case, the Summer of Love largely happened in San Francisco, California and I lived in Kirkintilloch, Dunbartonshire. I do have happy memories of 1967, though, like many people from my background. Celtic won the European Cup, the winning goal coming from Kirkintilloch boy Stevie Chalmers. Rangers also reached a European final that year, Kilmarnock (*Kilmarnock!*) got to a semi-final and, of course, Scotland humbled alleged World Champions England 3-2 at Wembley; those were the days. I suspect English people from similar backgrounds entertain corresponding fondness for the following year's European Cup and the previous year's World Cup, paying much less attention to the Summer of Love in between.

What else were the sixties about? Well, there was Beeching; the soon-ennobled doctor plotted the systematic destruction of the UK's railway system and laid the foundations for today's traffic nightmares. His proposals were meekly permitted by the incoming Labour Government. I remember being told that our station in Kirkintilloch was closing, perhaps a week or two before the axe fell; I was 3½. I reacted with a tearful tantrum as if all my toys had been taken away. After closure, we had to

get the bus to Glasgow; it took 25 minutes instead of the train's 15. With traffic growth, it's now nearer 35 minutes. That's 'progress'. Thank you, sixties.

One day, at the very end of the Summer of Love, every pupil from every class in my primary school was taken to the assembly hall, with its mingled aromas of sweat, floor polish and school dinners. Our Headmistress switched on the school's only television and smiled in a way that suggested she had a special treat in store, and said, 'This is a very important day for Scotland. I hope you all watch this and remember.'

In monochrome we saw a bleak industrial riverside scene with cranes and crowds and an unfinished-looking, funnel-



"We turned on, tuned in and dropped out back in the sixties and here we are now just about ready to log off."

less but still elegant great ship sitting at an awkward angle on a slipway. Of course! Today was the day they launched the Q4! We thrilled, with viewers all over the country, as, in a rare live TV broadcast, the Clyde's latest marvel was named the QE2 and despatched into the river. We couldn't have known, of course, that we were watching the end of an era and that Clyde shipbuilding, something we were all tutored to feel a pride in, was doomed. If anyone spins me the line about the sixties being a time of brave new beginnings, they had better stay out of reach.

As the sixties slipped into their final year we watched one of the first major live TV broadcasts in colour (even if most of us only saw it in black and white); the investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle. The moon landing was a telly event that generated genuine excitement and enthusiasm, though it would have been better if it had

happened in colour. Also, in that closing year of the sixties, our local team, Kirkintilloch Rob Roy FC, reached the final of the pinnacle of Scottish non-league football, the Scottish Junior Cup. In front of 30,000 at Hampden, they lost 1-0 to Cambuslang Rangers. In fact, 1970 turned out to be quite like 1969, and 1971 wasn't too different either; it's the shallowest journalistic folly to package history and culture tidily into neat, decade-sized bundles. There was good and bad in the sixties, but most of us knew little of the events the cultural commentators and ageing hippies rave about.

Anyway, no one can persuade me to be fond of a decade during which Scotland failed to reach a World Cup Finals (see also the more recently completed Noughties). The sixties? I'll turn on, tune in, and drop out of them.

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Multicultural Madness

Ricardo Duchesne

Ever since Canada was officially designated a multicultural nation during the prime ministership of Pierre Elliot Trudeau in the 1970s the age-old British character of this nation has been under relentless assaults. Multiculturalism promulgates the equality of all races, religions and cultures; accordingly, it demands a Canada in which no particular ethnic group has a privileged position in the nation's history and culture. Will Kymlicka, the most prominent scholar and salesperson of Canadian multiculturalism, sums up succinctly what it all entails: 'Adopting multiculturalism is a way for Canadians to say that never again will we view Canada as a "white" country ... as a "British" country (and hence compel non-British immigrants to relinquish or hide their ethnic identity).' Non-British immigrants can retain and affirm their ethnic identity; they have a 'distinctive group identity', which must be protected 'from the impact' of the 'dominant' white culture.

Of course, multiculturalism is always presented to the public through rose-tinted glasses as a pluralistic philosophy dedicated to the prevention of discriminatory acts and xenophobic feelings. Immigrants should have the opportunity to celebrate their heritages and religious beliefs as well as being encouraged to see themselves as members of a wider liberal-democratic culture. But multiculturalism contains a negation within its very essence. It protects the group rights of non-Western

peoples while simultaneously denying the host (Western) nation any group rights of its own. The host culture is seen as a neutral site characterized by its provision of individual rights, which apply to everyone, and of group rights, which apply only to non-whites. The Anglo-French founders are mandated to be ethnically neutral and historically disinterested; representatives of certain deracinated values that belong to 'humanity.' While multicultural ideologues implicitly recognize that minorities have deep attachment to their ethnic backgrounds, and, in this vein, recognize that humans do have a natural love of their own heritage and ethnicity; they call upon whites to practice historical amnesia and pretend they were not the creators of Canada's institutions, parliamentary traditions, and common law. The historical fact that Canada was built as a nation state around a founding *ethnic core* must be discarded and hidden from students.

Children were once taught that Canada was a unique nation founded by two peoples, the French and the English; later they were taught that the 'Aboriginals' were founders as well; now they are learning to include Asians and new immigrants in the founding narrative. Newcomers are coming mostly from Asia; therefore Canadians should redefine their 'roots of citizenship' to reflect this new reality. In a 2002 publication, *A Newcomer's Introduction to Canada*, released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada 'for

new immigrants,' it was announced that 'Canada is a land of many cultures and many peoples'. Other than the Aboriginal people, everyone is an immigrant to Canada: 'We have all come from somewhere else.' The lack of unity or a national culture in Canada is presented as a positive trait: 'Through Canada's history, millions of immigrants have helped to build this country.' The heritage of the English and French amounts to no more than a set of procedural laws and institutional templates – a market economy, equality under the law, democratic representation – which belong to everyone. Minorities stand for authentic traditions celebrated for their colour and vibrancy.

Our esteemed liberal elites are also hard at work 'exposing' the colonizing activities of the first settlers, their use of a 'white supremacist' ideology as a nation-building tool, their imposition of the Chinese Head Tax, their anti-Asia immigration laws, and their continued existence as a the 'historically dominant majority'. They fashion themselves as liberators uncovering the suppressed histories of minorities and correcting 'the mythology that whites built Canada'.

The savviest user of the media in the advancement of Asian interests against Canada's British heritage is Henry Yu. A history professor at the University of British Columbia, Yu enjoys demonising Canada as 'systematically racist' and in need of reparations through massive immigration from the non-Western world. He is the recent recipient of two huge grants, a \$1.17 million project entitled 'Chinese Canadian Stories: Uncommon Histories from a Common Past,' which will seek a major 'reinterpretation of Canadian history through the lens of Chinese Canadians,' as well as \$950,000 from the Federal government to document the 'ignored histories' of one of the 'founding peoples' of Canada.

In an Op Ed piece in *The Vancouver Sun* (February 2, 2010), 'Vancouver's Own Not-So Quiet Revolution', Yu claimed that the English language 'stunts diversity'. Calling it a 'colonial' language, he demanded that Asian languages, long 'silenced' by 'white supremacists', be given the same official status. He even equated the presence of a high number of whites in leadership positions with 'the legacy of a long history of apartheid and white supremacy'. Elsewhere he added that the old bilingual Canada 'no longer makes sense'. Canada has ceased to be a Western-Atlantic nation. Between 2001 and 2006, the top four places of births for immigrants were in Asia; the five largest Canadian cities are heavily populated by Chinese 'migrants'. 'In Vancouver, Canada's third largest city, the visible minority is white.' This 'new Pacific Canada', he observed, marks a return to a Canada originally Pacific. The 'dominance of white supremacy in immigration policy' between the 1920s

and 1960s disrupted this founding Pacific orientation.

Yu relies on two meagre facts to support these claims: Asians built portions of the transcontinental railroad in the late 19th century, and the Chinese proportion of the population in British Columbia in 1901 was 10 per cent. The truth is that Chinese immigrants have played a microscopic role in Canada's history. In 1901, 96 per cent of the Canadian population was European in origin; there were only 17,043 Chinese immigrants (born outside Canada) relative to a population of 5.3 million. Vancouver, with the highest Chinese proportion throughout Canada's history, was virtually a white European city from its beginnings in the 1870s to the 1980s. In the 1950s, when the city had been fully developed into a metropolis, the British accounted for about 75 per cent of the population, and other Europeans accounted for about 18 per cent, whereas the Asian proportion (Chinese and Japanese) accounted for only 3 or 4 per cent. Patricia Roy's *Vancouver, An Illustrated History* (1980), exhibits a city that was overwhelmingly British in its architectural landscape, notwithstanding its Chinatown and Little Tokyo. The sports, the education, the legal system – every institution was British. The Founding Fathers, the Mayors, the magistrates, the school trustees, the chief constables, the physicians, the presidents of the Board of Trade were all British descendants.

The famed British sociologist Anthony Giddens calls Canada 'quintessentially an immigrant society'. This is totally untrue. The British and the French were settlers, not immigrants. They did not move from one country to another; they were the creators of a new country *ex nihilo*, out of a wilderness. The Aboriginals were here first, but they didn't create Canada. Canada's aboriginal population, living in tribal groups, reacted to, rather than participated in, the creation of a new civilization in a massive continental landmass barely occupied. Indeed the nation-state called Canada is British. The French certainly created the colony of New France, but the Canadian nation-state with its economic infrastructure across the country, and the majority of settlers and homestead farmers, were British. All Canadians, regardless of ethnic origin, are the beneficiaries of a British civilization.

'The city has changed irrevocably in the last 20 years', Yu says. It has. The total number of Chinese in Vancouver in 1951 was still a meagre 8,729, in a population of roughly 345,000; in 1971, it had increased to 30,640. During the 80s the entire Third World was invited to come to Canada. Consequently, by the mid-90s, the Chinese population in Vancouver suddenly shot up to 300,000, out of a total population

of 1.8 million. The population with British ethnic origins was reduced to 35.9 per cent by 2006, whereas the Asian population climbed to 42 per cent. 'In Vancouver', Yu says euphorically, 'you can't go to a neighbourhood now where Chinese aren't living in significant numbers. It's incredible.'

Before this invasion, Vancouver was a jovial city, with a strong sense of community and family life. YouTube videos show Vancouverites enjoying life in the city's parks in the 1940s or 1960s; harmoniously, with occasional pictures of (happy) Asian children – those days are gone. 'Vancouver is clearly an Asia Pacific city now', says pollster Angus Reid, Canada's most prominent public opinion surveyor. The landscape has undergone a massive transformation unprecedented in the history of cities. However, the legacy of the past is still visible, creating a bi-polar atmosphere, with a purely market-driven Asian side, dictated by external forces and controlled by (foreign) Chinese millionaires, and a European side standing for tradition, Britishness, and Vancouver as it was. The controversy over the 'monster houses' associated with Chinese real estate activities in the 1990s – a phrase prohibited in polite talk – accurately represents the huge, uniform and soulless houses that replaced the old European-style homes.

Yu describes present-day Vancouver as 'a global city that is one stop within the Pacific world, with two-thirds of male Canadians of *Hong Kong origin* between the ages of 25 and 40 living and working *outside* Canada.' For these Pacific trotters, Canada is a place in which alien businessmen have equal rights to make use of its better educational opportunities, exploit advanced medical treatment, and avoid the pollution they create back home. Coming from a background in which corruption is endemic with officials operating like Mafia dons, regularly embezzling funds and sending the money to family members abroad, these migrants covet Canada's fresher pastures. A 2011 survey showed that more than half of China's millionaires are either considering emigrating or have already completed their immigration applications, of which 37 per cent of the respondents wanted to emigrate to Canada.

Our immigrants generally come from cultures which, by our standards, are not merely illiberal but vulgarly racist. The works of Frank Dikötter on Chinese racism are worth considering. In *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (1992), he reveals how traditional Chinese notions about inferior 'barbarians' intermingled with Nazi forms of 'scientific' racism to form a distinctively Chinese racial consciousness in the 20th century. In *Imperfect Conceptions: Medical*

Knowledge, Birth Defects, and Eugenics in China (1998), Dikötter references government publications calling for eugenics as a vital tool in the enhancement of the 'biological fitness' of the nation, and heralding the twenty-first century as an era to be dominated by 'biological competition' between the 'white race' and the 'yellow race'. M Dujon Johnson's *Race and Racism in the Chinas: Chinese Racial Attitudes towards Africans and African-Americans* (2007), focuses on a series of incidents during the 1980s and 1990s, including one in which thousands of Chinese students set about destroying the dormitories of African students in Nanjing, Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, shouting 'Kill the black devils!' Johnson writes, '[my experience] demonstrated how life in Chinese society is racially segregated and in many aspects similar to a system of racial apartheid.' Recently, *NBC News* reported (May 16, 2012) that 'racial discrimination is a harsh reality within China's ESL (English as a second language) industry', where having a white face is a near-absolute requirement.

Ethnic minorities in China are treated as second-class citizens. Tibetans are routinely described as lazy, ignorant, and dirty. Han migration to Tibet is destroying their heritage; Han companies dominate the main industries, and the Chinese get the best jobs. The province of Xinjiang, nominally an autonomous region, is likewise being flooded with Han migrants. In 1949, Han Chinese amounted to only 5 per cent of Xinjiang's population; today they are up to 41 per cent. Urumqi, the capital city, consists of 75 per cent Han Chinese, of the 2.5 million inhabitants. The average Chinese views the natives from Xinjiang as backward and as ungrateful for not appreciating the modern infrastructure bestowed upon them by the Han. In the summer of 2009, this region saw violent riots by 2,000 to 3,000 thousand Uighur workers and Xinjiang separatists, in which approximately 150 Han Chinese were killed. The Communist reprisals were swift; the policy of Sinicization was intensified; in May 2010 Beijing announced a new development strategy to pour \$1.5 billion into the region, encourage the migration of more Han Chinese businessmen, together with a 'love the great motherland, build a beautiful homeland' patriotic education campaign that aimed to indoctrinate the Uighurs that 'ethnic minorities are inseparable from the Han'.

Multiculturalism calls upon Canadians to 'never again view Canada as a white [or] a British country'. This command has been thoroughly implemented in Vancouver. No one is allowed to call the city British. Anti-racist campaigns, regularly directed at whites, are enforced in the schools and workplaces. While the

founders have been dispossessed, the Chinese migrants have been encouraged to celebrate their ethnic identity. How about some answers to these run of the mill questions: How can one argue that Han Chinese migration into Canada is a wonderful act of diversity when most of the 'migrants' come from places where diversity is suppressed and Han supremacist ideas are officially sanctioned? Why are 'Anglo' people the only ones disallowed from retaining their ethnic identity and ancestry? Why is the dismemberment of Anglo heritage, history, and ancestry in Canada viewed as progressive and its affirmation as xenophobic? Can we interpret Han migration into Vancouver, in combination with multiculturalism and the continuous campaigns against white racism, as a form of Sinicization? Why are whites the only people on the planet expected to accept diversity and massive immigration? Why is

everyone assuming that pride, loyalty, and affection for Canada's European heritage are incompatible with the liberal-democratic values Europeans developed?

Indeed why is it that, not just within Canada, but across the world, the greatest intellectual movement in history, the European Enlightenment, that extraordinary flash of moral vision which rescued billions from ignorance, hunger, disease, slavery, anarchy and despair, creating the very opulence and freedom its critics bask in, has become the latter's target? Perhaps in their hearts, like all colonialists, they are terrified of democracy, the voice of the people.

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The BBC stabs Africa in the back

Will Emkes

How simple and predictable the world is judged through the lens of a BBC foreign correspondent. Yes, war, violence and injustice occur daily, but somehow right always prevails over wrong, and the winners always win. Such is the international news coverage presented by those benevolent souls at the BBC. They champion the cause of Libyan rebels in overthrowing the sickening brutality of the Gaddafi regime and speculate on the advent of democracy in Egypt, allowing millions at home to share in the triumphs of democracy over totalitarian rule, human rights over degradation, and liberty over repression. What happens after the BBC drops all news coverage from the area and these countries fall back into the mute obscurity from which they came, airbrushed from the reality of our news cycles?

The ideological skew of the BBC is no great secret. The scope of its international news coverage invariably reflects the left-liberal value judgements of the corporation, paying homage to its most grand conceit, namely, that the BBC stands neutrally between all contending views, but while all views are equal, some views, those of the BBC, are more equal than others. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the lack of informative news coming out of countries such as South Africa and Libya in the aftermath of their revolutions. Such a situation makes a mockery of the

BBC's pretensions to impartiality or neutrality. Things have gone horribly wrong in both countries, but the BBC has decided not to report them. To do so would be to give the lie to the Corporation's belief that there is no difference whatsoever between the inhabitants of a newly liberated shanty town in Johannesburg or Tripoli and the citizens of Tonbridge Wells; that President Zuma is Nick Clegg in a leopard skin, or that your average policeman in Benghazi would no more take a bribe or beat you senseless than the Fat Controller.

So while the BBC resolutely supported the cause of racial equality in South Africa, the problems that have ensued since the fall of apartheid have either gone largely unnoticed or have been deliberately hushed up. While we are treated to reports of the country's rapid economic growth, the boom in its industries and record export of raw materials, the corporation remains silent about corruption and crime within the ANC, the latter's employment of capitalism red in tooth and claw against South Africa's workers, or that armed robberies, car jackings, rape, murder and road fatalities have risen since the fall of apartheid to be some of the highest in the world.

The United Nations survey from the Office on Drugs and Crime ranks South Africa second for assault and murder per capita and first for rapes per capita. Murder and rape have become the staple diet of local news, yet

the BBC seems oblivious to such happenings.

Law and order in South Africa has broken down. A new, criminal élite has emerged similar to that in post-communist Russia, whereby the plundering of state resources has resulted in the enrichment of a few well connected individuals, leaving the majority of the population poor. The problem is so desperate that the former director-general of the Presidency, the Reverend Frank Chikane, stated recently that South Africa's democracy was in crisis due to compromised leaders running the country to serve the interests of crime syndicates. The development of black empowerment policies that brought about such an effect now constitutes the most severe threat to political stability since the fall of apartheid. I have never read, nor can I find a BBC report detailing this phenomenon.

The problem is mirrored in the BBC's coverage of the events in Libya. In a similar fashion to South Africa, the liberation movement received a colossal amount of coverage, which has since died off. But the problems associated with the installation of a democratic government and the difficulties of a nation coming to terms with an authoritarian past are not broadcast.

Militia leaders have turned post-Qaddafi Libya into a collage of murderous semi-autonomous gangs. Thousands of people, women and children included, are being illegally held in detention centres by such groups. A leaked report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations states prisoners held outside the control of the interim government are suffering 'torture and systematic mistreatment'. (Yet while Abu Ghraib was top of the hour on the BBC World Service for months who in the outside world has heard of this?) Nor do we have to rely on such reports alone for verification. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has suspended its operations, pulling all of its staff out of detention facilities after witnessing more than one hundred cases of torture against inmates by revolutionaries that overthrew Gaddafi. MSF stated that they were effectively 'keeping prisoners alive so that the authorities could continue to torture them'. Senior UN figures estimate the rampant abuse of 8,500 people held in arbitrary detention. No mention of this story can be found from a BBC source.

The BBC were quick to report on Libya's liberation after forty-two years of totalitarian rule, releasing many reports of the heightened expectations for democracy and of a fair, just and functioning legal system. Yet

almost nothing is mentioned of the aftermath; of a civilian population heavily armed with caches of weapons abandoned by the regime and subsequently looted. These include advanced weaponry such as surface-to-air missiles, known as Manpads, capable of bringing down aircraft.

Like South Africa, Libya is realising a bitter truth: that unity does not blossom easily in a country where power has long been concentrated in the hands of a few and where harsh autocrats have papered over profound cultural, religious and ethnic differences. The BBC, in keeping with its left liberal orthodoxy, has had a tendency to report these events as spasmodic bursts of change across all dimensions of development; economic, social, political and cultural, which they are not. Rather they are a series of incremental shifts over a much longer period. There is a misguided perception on the left which assumes societies are

free to remake themselves in any given generation. Most people in South Africa, as I suspect will be the case in Libya, continue to live in a horizon largely determined by the material and social

conditions of their respective societies. The failure of democracy to consolidate itself in both South Africa and Libya is due not to a rejection of democracy on an ideological level but rather to the absence of those material and social conditions that make it possible for accountable government to emerge in the first place.

Ultimately, this is where the BBC has failed to live up to its supposed objective of impartiality. It leads people into the same misguided belief, held so dearly by the corporation, namely that democracy and liberty will always win out in the end, that the world is simple and symmetrical, a mirror of our own values and customs. In this light the BBC bias is towards consensus, lending itself to the extensive coverage of revolutionary movements such as the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime and the liberation struggle of the ANC. In such scenarios the forces of modern liberalism are championed as it appeals to the sensibilities of those who watch the news.

There is also the undeniable prejudice, embodied in the BBC news bulletins, that a violation of human rights and civil liberties in a developed nation is far worse than the same violation occurring in a third world state. This simple and harsh fact is another element at play in the skewed international news of the BBC.

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Freedom's Fire Sale

Tom Miers

The current recession reveals fundamental problems not with capitalism, but with government. It is often billed as a crisis of capitalism. For many who place their faith in markets as the antithesis of socialism and a bastion of free choice, this great recession is deeply troubling. And it shows no sign of ending. Attempts by European governments to control their huge deficits have rendered them all but unelectable, and still the debts keep rising. The economy in Britain has plunged back into recession, a result, so its opponents claim, of those very efforts to deal with the debt. There seems no way out.

Meanwhile the financial sector, blamed by many for our woes, shows no signs of remorse. Barely a month goes by without some other scandal: interest rate rigging, pension mis-selling, excessive bonuses, computer malfunctions. Finance is indeed at the root of the greatest recession since the 1930's.

A colossal credit boom in Britain and America, funded increasingly by speculative borrowing from abroad, reached the inevitable end of its tether with a devastating credit crunch that plunged the western economy into a full-scale slump.

The inevitable government rescue of the banks transferred their monstrous bad debts on to the public ledger, and the crisis resurfaced in sovereign debt form, exacerbated by plunging tax receipts. The peripheral Eurozone economies, unable to devalue and incapable of cutting costs, have reacted by shrinking at record rates, dragging the rest of us down further behind them.

Yet, look carefully at the origins of this crisis, and what we see is not so much a crisis of capitalism as one of democracy.

Consider what lay at the root of the credit crunch. We

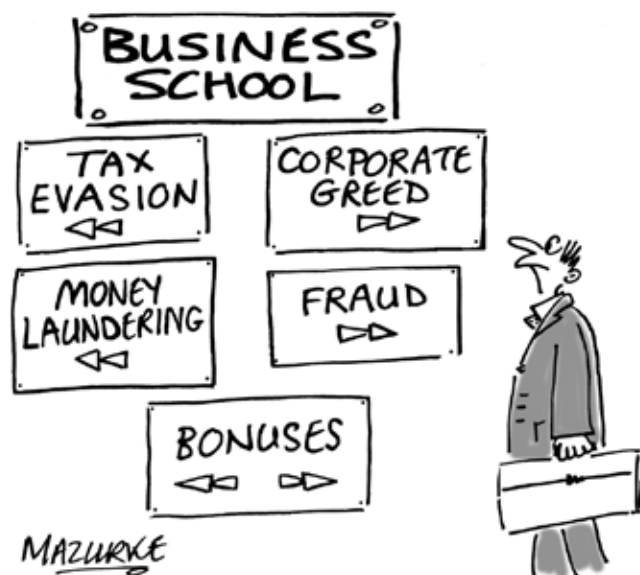
witnessed an explosion of irresponsible lending, most notably to mortgage borrowers. Why did the bankers take risks which should have made no commercial sense? The answer is that they were encouraged to do so by government. In the United States the mortgage market has been explicitly underwritten by the Federal Government since the 1930's. Later legislation such as the Community Reinvestment Act encouraged lending to poorer households who would not otherwise have qualified for loans. In Britain too the

government pursued policies designed to lower effective interest rates and make it easier to find mortgages, for example by excluding the cost of housing from inflation calculations. Meanwhile in every democracy governments provide an implicit guarantee to the banking system as a whole.

In effect, therefore, bankers were not taking risks that made no commercial sense, because the risk in question was borne not

by them but by the taxpayer. The corrective dynamic inherent to market capitalism – that investment flows only where the return outweighs the risks involved – has been undermined with disastrous consequences.

Finance is currently the most prominent sector where this has happened, but think back over the last decade or two and the credit crunch actually follows a pattern. Remember Railtrack going bust and being bailed out as 'Network Rail'? GNER? The PFI and government outsourcing scandals? All those consultants hired by Whitehall and the IT rip-offs? The Millennium bug and the NHS computer system? The water companies with their hose pipe bans in the rain? The shocking care home stories? The list goes on and on. Each seemingly an embarrassment to capitalism, but they all have something in common:



the state acts as guarantor, and in doing so transfers risk away from those who should be carrying the can. Sometimes it's in the form of a bail-out. On other occasions government creates an artificial monopoly, which is then exploited by unscrupulous profiteers.

Some have blamed an absence of morality in the marketplace for this. But in truth every human being will maximise his financial advantage if the circumstances arise and the law allows. Beyond the immediate confines of friends and families, self-interest is human nature.

For of course such behaviour is not confined to the private sector. The public sector virtually defines nest-feathering because public ownership removes competitive pressures both on the investor and the consumer sides. The NHS has no need to shop around for investors or clients. We are all forced to use it as patients, and to fund it as taxpayers. The risks of poor performance are borne by us, therefore, and this explains the extraordinary wastefulness and low standards of service that bedevil British hospitals, as other government concerns.

By contrast a properly functioning market is a profound force for moral good in society, because competition forces us to temper our self-interest to the benefit of others. If we don't come up with the goods, someone else will.

The analogy with the public sector leads us closer to the true nature of the current crisis. For to banks, utilities, railways, public contractors and care homes – organisations that operate in a sort of quasi market – you can add the NHS, schools and government housing. In each of these sectors the government feels it has to guarantee universal access. And so it intervenes via a variety of ungainly methods from underwriting to outright ownership. In doing so it undermines the proper role of competition, thus exposing the taxpayer to inefficiency, poor service and, worst of all, virtually limitless financial risk.

To understand the problem fully, we need to know

A Scottish NHS quango has spent more than £1 million on a fleet of luxury cars for its employees. National Procurement spent £971,000 on leased executive cars for staff deemed 'regular users' since October 2008.

Tax Payers Alliance, 2012.

why government intervenes in these sectors. And the answer lies in the very nature of democracy itself.

Politicians in a democracy win power by assembling a

Obama's battle against banks has a long history. In 1994, freshly out of Harvard Law School, he joined two other attorneys in filing a lawsuit against Citibank, the giant mortgage lender. In *Selma S. Buycks-Roberson v. Citibank*, the plaintiffs claimed that although they had ostensibly been denied home loans 'because of delinquent credit obligations and adverse credit,' the real culprit was institutional racism. The suit alleged that Citibank had violated the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Fair Housing Act and, for good measure, the 13th Constitutional Amendment, which abolished slavery. The bank denied the charge, but after four years of legal wrangling and mounting legal bills, elected to settle. According to court documents, the three plaintiffs received a total of \$60,000. Their lawyers received \$950,000.

Forbes, 10.05.09

coalition of voters who will benefit by their election. From time to time an existential issue arises at the ballot box which seizes the agenda – a war, for example. But the bread and butter of democratic politics is the economy. But it is not just a question of delivering economic growth. The most enticing manifestos offer a combination of general economic expansion with a package of additional benefits targeted at certain voter groups. Otherwise known as the redistribution of wealth, so long as the majority benefit financially at the expense of a minority, the model is politically sustainable. This is why taxes in countries that embrace democracy rise towards the 50 per cent level of GDP.

But tax and spend is only the crude beginning. Democratic politicians devise ever more ingenious ways of rewarding their followers. Borrowing off future generations who as yet have no vote is one method currently in vogue. Regulating activity to benefit key interest groups at an opaque cost to others is another. The incentive is for the executive to accumulate power in as many fields as possible, for by doing so it can extend the methods available to win re-election. Democracy, in short, has reinvigorated government after a long period historically (in countries like Britain at least) where it was regarded with suspicion and kept under tight rein. To justify their actions, democrats have invented a new

legitimacy. How often do we hear politicians claim an electoral ‘mandate’ against institutions designed to limit them, such as the judiciary or the House of Lords?

The same process affects public attitudes to certain key industries. Voters expect guaranteed access to banking, utilities, healthcare and so on, because they have at one stage or another been offered them. There is no way that a democratic government could let a bank go bust if it threatened voter access to cash and savings, even temporarily. It would just lose the next election to political opponents who offered to reintroduce the guarantee.

So the crisis is not really a modern phenomenon, It goes back at least to the 1930s, and probably before. The system, of course, has its limits. Eventually the overtaxed can become a majority. Similarly, government can intervene to such an extent that the economy starts to malfunction badly, as happened in Britain in the 1970s. At that stage the pendulum swung, and in Britain we saw a series of revisionist governments who attempted to reverse the baleful growth of the state.

The Thatcherites understood that state ownership of industry was inherently inefficient, but they did not know how to replace it. The governments of the 1980s and 1990s could not wash their hands of sectors

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Private Finance Initiative. It has been arguably the boldest and costliest experiment in public policy ever conducted, resulting in more than £200 billion of public debt, the burden of which will hang over the British taxpayer for decades.

Jesse Norman, *Times*, 7.5.12

where the public expected guaranteed access. We now have a bizarre situation where some industries that were ‘liberalised’ early on, such as utilities, are being re-regulated, while others such as education are belatedly embarking on their first steps away from state ownership. No doubt ‘free schools’ will in time feel the full force of democratic interventionism once again.

There is no philosophy behind such swings and roundabouts. Instead, governments, however principled they think they are, react to the inevitable dynamic of democracy. We lurch from intervention at the behest of a greedy electorate, to liberalisation, ‘market failure’, regulation and back again.

Today’s crisis is but one iteration of this endless

sloshing of political capital from one side to the other. What’s new, though, is that the crisis is an acute one that has caused sudden and enormous material damage. This gives us an opportunity to resolve this fundamental tension in democracy.

The critical thing is for conservatives to seize the new agenda. We hear worrying noises from the left about the crisis of capitalism which suggest a return to the failures of traditional socialism. That is not the remedy.

Instead, conservatives must recognise, however reluctantly, the limits of market competition in a democracy. Applying a capitalist ideal to industries where the electorate expect something for nothing is unrealistic. The first step has to be to articulate this problem coherently, so that public and politicians alike understand the nature of the crisis and the limits of government and market alike.

Then, within these defined limits, we must seek forms of governance that maximise competition, reduce the role of the state, while ensuring that risk is not transferred to the public balance sheet. No one form of governance will suit every industry. In banking it might be strict limits on market share. In utilities (where retail competition has already brought benefits) it could be new forms of ownership and a more interventionist competition policy. In schools and hospitals, perhaps, some sort of trust mechanism with local input.

This is not the place to explore in detail how the post-crisis fabric of society should be constructed. But the race is on for a political leader who will seize this agenda and make it his own. The way to solve a problem is to understand what it is. Whoever does that first could dominate politics for a generation or more.

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Turkish Delight?

Bill Park

As it throws off the shackles of military dominance and Kemalist authoritarianism under Turkey's socially conservative and pious ruling Justice and Development Party (JDP), is Turkey becoming more democratic and better governed? Or is it simply trading secular for religious dogmatism, and moving away from any European destination the country might once have had? Both interpretations have their adherents, as many outside as inside the country. So what are we to make of Turkey's current domestic, social, political and indeed economic revolution?

Economically, Turkey's light is shining brightly. Under the JDP's free market philosophy its economy grew by 8.5 per cent in 2011, a remarkable achievement since almost half Turkey's trade is with the recession-hit EU and the troubled Middle East. Exports grew by over 18 per cent in 2011, and continue to grow in 2012. Much of Turkey's economic dynamism and export surge stem from the so-called 'Anatolian tigers', new, small and medium sized companies that have transformed provincial Anatolian cities such as Bursa, Konya, Kayseri, and Gaziantep where the JDP has its strongholds. In addition relatively low levels of debt, and a reasonably sensible macroeconomic management of Turkey's sound banking system (which benefitted from EU, IMF and World Bank-sponsored reforms in the wake of the country's 2000-2001 economic crisis) have also contributed to the boom.

However there are clouds on the horizon. Although Turkey's substantial foreign trade deficit has fallen over the past few months, it remains worryingly high because of rising energy imports from Russia and Iran. These, combined with economic overheating and a falling Turkish lira, have increased inflation, although recessionary pressures have tamed the latter a little.

Worse is the country's current account deficit. Turkey has long been over-reliant on inflows of short-term capital. Although these have held up, their possible withdrawal hangs like a dagger over Turkey's economic stability. Turkish economic performance has experienced 'boom and bust' for many years and this risk remains. In addition disappointing foreign direct investment (overwhelmingly from the EU), a poor education system, and small female workforce raise doubts about Turkey's economic dynamism and growth. Nevertheless on the economic front Turkey offers a picture of 'Muslim modernity'. This

particularly appeals to modernisers in the Arab world, as well as an increasing numbers of Arab and Iranian tourists and fans of its glamorous and daring (for Muslim audiences) soap operas.

There are reasons to be cheerful. An all-party Constitutional Conciliation Commission, consisting of Kurdish parliamentary representatives, the Turkish nationalists of the National Action Party (MHP), the secular Republican People's Party (CHP) and of course the ruling JDP, began drafting a new constitution in May to replace the one drawn up under military rule in 1982. Chaired by Cemil Cicek, the speaker of the Turkish parliament, it went about its business calmly and constructively. Religious, civil society, business and women's groups were widely consulted, as were constitutional lawyers and others prominent in Turkey's public and intellectual life. It should finish its work by the end of 2012, and a new constitution will be put to referendum in 2014, the year of the next presidential election. Whether its solution will veer towards the more presidential or the more parliamentary end of the political spectrum is unclear, but Cicek has insisted that Turkey's new constitution will enhance the rights of Turkey's citizens rather than increasing the powers of the state. He also insists that Turkish law needs to get rid of its contradictions and limiting clauses, which cause so many politicised legal challenges.

This is where the sky darkens. The Commission is now struggling to protect its proceedings from the polarised, over-emotional atmosphere of Turkey's wider political life in which the four parties may not be able to come up with an agreed draft. This could lead to some serious infighting. There were ructions over the JDP's divisive educational reform bill, which was pushed through earlier this year with little consultation and maximum confrontation. The bill allows for home education after eight years of schooling – a recipe for child labour and a high (religious) female drop out rate – optional Koran classes in state schools and the incorporation of conservative religious Imam Hatip schools into the vocational education system. The ensuing bad blood provoked fistfights in parliament. Prime Minister Erdogan turned fiercely on anyone objecting to the bill, including the country's leading business (and unambiguously secular) association, TUSIAD. The opposition CHP is continuing a legal challenge to the bill.

Democratic development is also being hindered by the sprawling and never-ending 'Ergenekon' investigation into the activities of Turkey's 'deep

state' or terrorist organisation: a secret ultra-nationalist organisation with links to the country's police and security forces held to be responsible for countless murders, disappearances, death threats, and other crimes. Many welcomed the series of raids and detentions in the summer of 2007 as a long overdue assault against what were previously immune forces of darkness. Today over five hundred active and retired journalists, academics, policemen, soldiers, political activists, as well as criminals, have been arrested as part of the Ergenekon saga, and over three hundred charged. Well over two hundred hearings have been held, but no one has been found guilty yet.

Then the March release of four journalists held on Ergenekon-related charges for over a year without trial served to reveal the existence of a further one hundred journalists detained without charge for almost four years. The evidence against these and other Ergenekon detainees has often been weak, circumstantial, and even absurd. It appears that the government wishes to silence its opponents and particularly the Fethullah Gulen network, a religious brotherhood that many believe constitutes a new threat to Turkish democracy and the justice system. Meanwhile Ergenekon-related arrests continue, the most high profile this year been that of retired General Ilker Basbug, Chief of the Turkish General Staff until 2010. He was put on trial this March accused of plotting to overthrow the government and leading a terrorist organisation. He has asked that the prime minister, president, and other leading political figures be called to testify.

'Plot' allegations have provided an effective instrument by which the JDP government has been able to tame the country's once powerful military. Over two hundred active and retired military officers, including forty generals (around ten per cent of the senior command), have been arrested, accused of plotting coups. General Basbug's successor, General Isik Kosaner, resigned in July 2011 along with the army, navy and air force chiefs, in protest at a spate of arrests of military officers and the government's refusal to promote those it suspected of disloyalty.

In April 94-year-old General Kenan Evren and the then air force chief Tahsin Sahinkaya were put on trial for their role in a 1980 coup, although their hospitalisation meant they failed to appear in court. Earlier this year there were thirty arrests arising from an army-led 'post-modern' coup of 1997. Putting generals on trial for anti-government plotting and for leading terrorist groups is not a normal feature of a functioning democracy. The role of the National Security Council has been weakened and it is now chaired by a civilian, military budgets are subjected to greater scrutiny and the President rather than the service chief presides

over Turkey's Victory Day ceremonies. Much of the military's electronic intelligence has been transferred to a civilian intelligence agency and Turkey's parliament buildings are no longer patrolled by a military battalion.

The Kurdish issue continues to bedevil the country. The government still insists that it is trying to find a democratic solution, and in recent weeks the prime minister held a high-profile meeting with the well-known Kurdish activist Leyla Zana. But the government's so-called Kurdish 'opening' in 2009 has been forgotten. Since then, thousands of Kurdish activists of the umbrella Kurdish Communities Union have been detained, usually on charges relating to their 'support', rather than participation in terrorism. Some are members of parliament, many are elected local councillors. War against the armed wing of the Kurdish movement, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) has been intensified, with government soldiers and Kurdish fighters alike taking increased casualties. In December 2011 thirty-five Kurdish smugglers (smuggling is a common source of livelihood for many Kurds) were killed in a Turkish military bombing raid against what were thought to be PKK terrorists crossing the border from Iraq. Turkish bombing and commando raids frequently extend into Iraq and Ankara has sought to enlist the Iraqi Kurdish leader, Massoud Barzani, in its campaign against the PKK. Barzani has asked the PKK to halt its violence. He needs Ankara's economic support against Baghdad in Kurdish northern Iraq, and in any case dislikes Turkey's planes bombing his territory or Turkish soldiers and PKK fighters crawling over it.

Nevertheless the largely Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) has held its nerve and maintained its place on the Constitutional Commission. It seeks 'democratic autonomy' in a federal Turkey, with devolved government, full Kurdish language rights, constitutional citizenship, and an end to the ten per cent electoral threshold that penalises smaller or regionally based parties. It stands little chance of success. Perhaps the new constitution will offer protection for individual if not collective rights. However, whether any constitutional provision will overcome Turkish bad habits like authoritarianism, virulent nationalism and corruption, remains doubtful. Turkish political culture has a lot of evolving to do if it is to produce a fully-fledged European democracy. This has little to do with Islam, although that doesn't help. Nor can it any longer be exclusively blamed on Kemalism, which nevertheless set the tone of post-Ottoman Turkish politics. JDP-governed Turkey is certainly more representative and open than the Republic has ever been. But less anarchic? More consensual? It seems not.

Bill Park is Senior Lecturer for Kings College, London at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham

Russia: Calm before the Storm

Dmitry Shlapentokh

In a world where there is widespread unrest it is not surprising that the people in the Kremlin are uneasy, although there is scant evidence that the era of Putin's imposed tranquillity is over. A deep scepticism has prevailed among most Russians since the beginning of the post-soviet period. Most Russians believe that regardless of any changes, nothing can work to improve the lot of the ordinary person. The Kremlin rules over a country where a tradition of revolution has been strong for many years. The symbols of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions not only in its monuments but also in the naming of streets and subway stations still remind the population that resistance to power is an heroic enterprise and could benefit the masses, or at least wreak real vengeance on its oppressors.

During my trip to the country a few years ago, the masses were passive and the regime stable, but when I returned last winter, the political mood was different. One must not overestimate the revolutionary potential of the Russian populace; residual apathy continues to dominate the public view. But the change in mood is clear; and indicates how abruptly, and possibly irreversibly, the situation could change in any country, either in the East or the West. Just a few years ago, Russians believed that change led nowhere. The tradition of protest seemed to be dying out and was represented not so much by the youth, as it is elsewhere in the world, but by the elderly.

The elderly were the biggest troublemakers during the Putin era and launched the only recorded national protest in 2005 when the government tried to strip them of the old Soviet benefits. Now even these people are deeply pessimistic. The notion of mass protest should be intimately connected with the glamorization of the Russian revolutions (1905-1917) and the Soviet regime; still, this did not happen. The economic crisis ought to increase the popularity of the Marxist creed, especially since many Russians were educated during the Soviet era but dicta from Lenin and Marx evoke nothing but irony from most of those old enough and educated enough to remember them. But the elderly still

remember the old Marxist revolution; they were indoctrinated with it throughout their lives. An old woman selling vegetables on the street told me she deplored conditions in Russia, that the country awaits a new leader of the proletariat who would deliver the masses, as Lenin did at the beginning of the twentieth century. She acknowledged that the chances of a new Lenin are rather slim, as is the rise of the proletariat. Still, this appeal to Marxism-Leninism was rather an exception.

I told a middle-aged woman that, according to Marx and Lenin, the crisis should lead to intensification of the class struggle. She responded by quoting Lenin on the 'revolutionary situation', the social conditions that led to the revolution, but wore an ironical smile indicating that she regarded the Marxist-Leninist creed and socialism with the same scepticism as Western capitalism and Russian nationalism.

Attitudes of social worthlessness are widespread. People think that the Russian character has degenerated and therefore meaningful protest is not possible. Dislike of violence is striking even among the unemployed. An elderly lady with whom I spent a long train journey regarded the entire Perestroika and post-Soviet era as unmitigated calamity. She blamed Gorbachev for starting the downturn and claimed he would most likely have run to the US in case of trouble. She hated the post-Soviet elite, and said that everything taken by the rich should be given back and they, the bloodsuckers, should be exterminated. But she agreed that there is nobody in Russia who could lead a revolt. Many Russians have degenerated completely, and she noted with an air of contempt and self-hatred that in general Russians are 'worthless scum (*Chmo*)'. Not only are they unable to resist oppression, as in Europe, but some have lost the ability to work. As she blasted her own people, we watched scenes from the train windows that confirmed her gloomy vision. Uncultivated fields were covered by bushes, grass, and young forest. Villages were abandoned, and buildings in ruins. Apathy reigned among young workers who were either unemployed or on the

verge of losing their jobs.

Most of Russia's heartland never recovered after the post-Soviet collapse. The recent global economic slowdown had been hard on the industrial Urals. In Sverdlovsk Province, where a huge number of enterprises became bankrupt, there was constant news about closing factories, and commentators suggest that a new wave of unemployment was coming. The local TV commentator noted that unemployment should make recent graduates lower their ambitions and take advantage of government programmes, proposing public work, including such exotic solutions as collecting empty plastic bottles.

These problems exist not just in Yekaterinburg but also in other cities of the Urals. A local acquaintance stated that 70 per cent of the workers in one factory in Chelyabinsk, South Urals, had been laid off and finding a good paying job is aggravated by inflation, yet most workers and their families were quite passive and rejected violence as useless. I talked with a young sales clerk in Yekaterinburg about the implications of the crisis. She told me that her husband was working in a local steel mill where his salary had been reduced three times. She believes her family was still far better off than many others, and that a third of workers are unemployed.

I replied that she and her husband should reread the old Soviet textbooks, which not only explain the nature of capitalism but also provide a glimpse into the future. I noted ironically that this was the early stage in the development of capitalism. Russia was in the same condition as in the late nineteenth century. So history will repeat itself. Workers should engage in their first strikes; then the new Bolsheviks would emerge and a new era of revolutions would lead to terror and a totalitarian state. Finally, another Gorbachev would appear after a long period of bloodshed, industrialization, and military glory. She answered that although she was quite upset with the conditions of her husband and fellow workers she did not want a new instalment of violence and terror.

Two elderly women who sold berries on the street said that they have seen nothing pleasant in the last twenty years. They bemoaned the end of the Soviet regime and blasted Zyuganov, the Communist leader who surrendered power to Yeltsin. Life was becoming harder and prices, such as the price of public transport, were rising. The militia and law enforcement agencies represented the rich and would easily crush anyone who challenged them.

Despite the inertia of most people, the authorities were clearly worried about the possibility of unrest

and did their best to prevent this. The major way to deal with the problems was repression and control. Throughout the Putin era the Kremlin increased the punishment for what are regarded as manifestations of 'extremism' and steadily tightened its control of the mass media. This has continued during the Medvedev-Putin era. Any public statement that could be interpreted as a call for protest was seen by the authorities as absolutely inappropriate. This was demonstrated in a TV discussion on why Russians are not very productive. Several people engaged in the discussion. Two of them, with academic backgrounds, engaged in a sort of abstract reasoning. The third – Mikhail Deliagin, an oppositionist-minded intellectual – was invited to add some salt to their abstract discussions. He became increasingly animated and blasted the government, finally declaring that the only way the problems afflicting Russian society could be solved was through social protest. At that point, the discussion was abruptly stopped, and the entire show ended.

The authorities understand that repression alone will not work. Keeping the public from expressing dangerous thoughts is not difficult, for the majority seem to have lost any interest in politics. The newsstands with their many newspapers and magazines loaded with political information have practically disappeared. Radio provides limited political information; most broadcasts are advertisements for various drugs and discussions on how to improve one's health. Still, there is some daily news, including foreign news, on TV; and movies on historical subjects make complete de-politicisation of the Russian mind impossible.

Last December the spirit was different. I attended a conference focused on Solzhenitsyn's last epic, his *magnum opus*, *Red Wheel*, dedicated to the last years of Tsarist Russia and the February/March Revolution, which prepared the ground for the Bolsheviks to take over. The conference, with dozens of participants, many of them from the West, was a costly enterprise as all expenses were paid. The government, either directly or indirectly, provided the funds for the entire enterprise and for a legitimate reason. From arch villain during the Soviet era, Solzhenitsyn had been transformed by the post-Soviet elite to not just a great author but a wise man who understood not only the horrors of revolutionary regimes but how gullible the masses and myopic liberals were in leading the country and, of course, themselves to perdition. The conference had a peculiar air of being Soviet-

anti-Soviet. While dedicated to the unmasking of the follies of the revolution and the regime that had emerged in its wake, the papers were presented in unmistakably Soviet style. There was no attempt to find any problem with the writer's philosophy, political outlook or literary style. Still, some of the presentations were interesting; particularly the paper on the Russian public's perception of Solzhenitsyn's works. The presenter was amazed that some of the young rejected the brutality of the Soviet regime; and one of his young questioners declared that the Soviet era was a time of plenty. When the man responded that he had lived at that time and remembered so well all the problems the state had with supply, the young man said he was lying.

I took the floor and noted that I personally had met several young and early-middle-aged people with no or only limited personal experience of living under Soviet rule who also had such a vision of the past. And one could explain why this had happened: Russia had experienced its 'Thermidor' with



An elderly woman begs from the driver of a foreign car in Moscow. RT

a Restoration of sorts; 18 Brumaire is missing, for no Napoleon is in waiting. The entire Soviet period is quickly receding into the past and new generations of Russians have little or no memory of the Soviet regime. Their experience and mentality have become similar to that of the French populace who lived at the time of Thermidor and/or the Bourbons' Restoration. Russian *sans-culottes*, impoverished and dispirited, see in front of them the *nouveaux riches* who stole the national wealth and clothed their wives and mistresses in finery. This provides them with additional reasons to dismiss the negative image of the revolution and regime as it is presented in Solzhenitsyn's works.

My speech was not well received. I was booed and went back to my seat. What is most important here is not the existence of the positive image of revolution and regime – as a matter of fact, it competes with many other, often quite bizarre images – but that the image of an ideal society had re-emerged in the

public's mind, in stark contrast with the recent past.

My conference was over on the day of the first major anti-Putin demonstration at Bolotnaya Square in Moscow. An old friend urged me to change my air ticket and wait for another day so I could be witness to a revolution in the making. Still, sitting in the hotel lobby and waiting for a taxi, I saw no commotion, no change from previous days. There was only the sudden disappearance of several prostitutes who in their 'dress-to-kill' attire braved the Moscow cold and patiently waited for clients on the lobby sofas. I asked the hotel guard – apparently their pimp – whether the girls maybe went to Bolotnaya to play the role of Theroigne de Mericourt in the coming Russian revolution. The

guard had no inkling who the courtesan turned revolutionary was; and, when I explained, accused me of thinking badly of the poor girls; that they had no propensity for violence and even less for bloodshed – the poor girls were just concerned with earning their daily bread.

Will there be a revolution in Russia? The Russian revolution of 1917

was caused by a war and a general crisis a long way from Russia's borders. The major threat to Russian stability might come from the instability of the Western economy to which it is so intimately connected, and from wars that might start a thousand miles from Moscow.

If no major calamity strikes the West the newly re-elected Putin could well ignore lurking new editions of the 'Incorruptible', Lenin, Hitler and Mao who exist in any society. If the economy of the West collapses the proverbial Leninist 'weakest link' could break and cause a shock wave globally. Russia might play the role once again, albeit of course in a different capacity, for history never repeats itself word for word.

Dmitry Shlapentokh is Associate Professor of History at Indiana University.

The Dorchester Circus

The West End Front, Faber, 2011, Matthew Sweet

Mark Watterson

In September 1940 Vera Schalburg, a strikingly attractive Serbian-born cabaret dancer, drug addict and agent for the Abwehr, waded ashore in the Moray Firth with two male accomplices. Arrested soon after, she claimed that her ultimate destination was the Dorchester hotel, where she was to meet a contact and then spy on allied officers. After reading Matthew Sweet's *The West End Front* it would be difficult to imagine her heading anywhere else. According to the head of Special Branch, the Dorchester at the time was 'crawling with foreigners', suspected German spies and inexperienced MI5 agents; it was also home to the Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, one of a number of grandees offered concessionary tariffs in the hope of increasing the hotel's prestige.

At the outbreak of the war the future looked bleak for London's top hotels. The fear of aerial bombing emptied many, while others were requisitioned. By the end of the first month of war some 20,000 hotel workers had been dismissed. Gradually, however, the guests and diners returned, reassured by the steel frames and reinforced ceilings of many of the best establishments; Sir Malcolm McAlpine declared the Dorchester 'bomb-proof, earthquake-proof and fireproof'.

Within a short time the grand hotels occupied a more important role in the political and cultural life of the nation than ever before. Palaces of intrigue, they were home to politicians, aristocrats, military leaders, diplomatic missions, deposed monarchs, spies, traitors, as well as attracting swindlers, con-artists, journalists, poets, writers and prostitutes (in the case of Park Lane, collectively known as the Hyde Park Rangers): the Dorchester, the Savoy, the Ritz and Claridge's, each, states the author, 'was a kind of Casablanca'.

The enduring wartime glamour of such hotels was seen by some as British insouciance in the face of danger. To others, what Cecil Beaton described as their 'enforced jocularity and expensive squalor', was evidence of a privileged caste oblivious to the hardships faced by the many. Such sentiments were behind a working class occupation of the Savoy's bomb shelter on the eighth day of the Blitz, planned and led by communist activists from Stepney. Although resolved relatively peacefully, this incursion seriously alarmed Churchill's War Cabinet and went unreported in the mainstream press.

Drawn partly from the first-hand accounts of survivors

from a period now 'on the edge of memory', we are introduced to some memorable scenes and characters: the full-time cockroach-killer who scuttled about at night on knee pads in the Dorchester, the same hotel where Emerald Cunard held eccentric soirees; the birth of Crown Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic above a box of earth from Yugoslavia in Suite 212 at Claridge's; miserable Italian waiters interned and mixing unhappily with British fascists at Camp Seven at Ascot (the winter quarters of the Bertram Mills Circus in Berkshire). Surrounding all, suspicion, intrigue and conspiracy.

Wartime conditions famously relaxed sexual mores. The homosexual sub-culture that flourished at the time is encountered through the clientele of the Pink Sink, a thriving watering hole beneath the Ritz hotel. Colonel Cutie, Kim de la Taste Tickell (who carried a respirator box that contained nothing but Max Factor), the Admiral's Gifted Daughter and the Conservative member for Scarborough and Whitby are amongst the habitués of a louche subterranean world of sexual opportunity.

Perhaps most seductive are the crooks and conmen. Based at the Charing Cross hotel was Sir Curtis Lampson, his life described, with some understatement, as 'a project of intoxicating oddness'. He was eventually collared for selling fake military commissions. It is hard not to warm to someone who endured accidental castration at the hands of the NHS, suffered financial ruin backing an opera and later in life campaigned for the accurate labelling of bust-enlargement cream.

Equally compelling is the suspected Nazi double agent Stella Lonsdale, interrogated at the Waldorf, whose conversation 'cannot possibly be submitted in a report owing to its indescribably filthy nature'. The officer assigned to her case can only comment: 'She is without any doubt at all a woman whose loose living would make her an object of shame on any farm-yard'; another official is blunter: 'Her mind is – simply and frankly – a cesspool'. In the photo provided she looks a model of reticence.

These, and numerous other bizarre and haunting accounts, some chronicling darker crimes and activities, make *The West End Front* a beguiling social history and one which means that passing through the lobbies of the great hotels will never be quite the same again.

Mark Watterson is a tour guide operator

Conservative Classic – 48

Westwood by Stella Gibbons

Jane Kelly

W*estwood*, written in 1946, was republished by Vintage last year, but it is not as hilarious as *Cold Comfort Farm*, Gibbons' first novel from 1933 which made her famous. It's certainly more restrained and less cartoonish, a moody piece by Carol Reed rather than a rip roaring Ealing comedy, *Persuasion* rather than *Pride & Prejudice*. But it has what many of us look for in an English novel, a light but penetrative irony. *Westwood* is also interesting now as a period document, detailing a world we have lost, for good or ill.

The heroine of the piece is Margaret Steggles – Gibbons was always brilliant with names – a plain, bookish 23-year-old. She yearns for beauty and intellect in her life; instead she is stuck in teaching, already on the shelf, with narrow-minded lower-middle class parents and a best friend, Hilda, who is boy-mad and says she 'likes to keep my service boys ever so cheery'.

Margaret's illusion that she can escape all this to enter a purer *milieu* begins when she finds a ration book on Hampstead Heath. She returns it to its owner Gerald Challis, a writer of winsome plays, a weaker version of Somerset Maugham and Terence Rattigan. He is the owner of Westwood house in Highgate, 'the beautiful little house of a genius'.

There Margaret glimpses his luscious wife Seraphina and Hebe his sulky daughter, all living the kind of arty existence Margaret has always dreamed of, down the hill in her semi-detached.

As soon as she enters Westwood she is enchanted and changed. 'She felt any sacrifice was worthwhile to keep her right to visit the house.' These include the great Gibbons virtue, common sense. With it goes her friendship with Hilda as she takes up Zita, a Jewish refugee, another rank outsider, who she lives in Westwood as some kind of servant. Margaret even becomes a nanny for the family herself in her quest for a culturally enriched life.

The ration book and the character of Challis introduce us to the important themes of the book; the beauty and strangeness of London in wartime, class distinction, and self-delusion.

Gibbons spent her childhood in Vale Cottage on Hampstead Heath, moving to Highgate when she married in 1933. From its first paragraphs, *Westfield* is a vivid account of her city's grim struggle through the last years of the war, the 'shattered houses with windows filled with 'torn black paper,' when ordinary and Bohemian life was besieged by shortages and death.

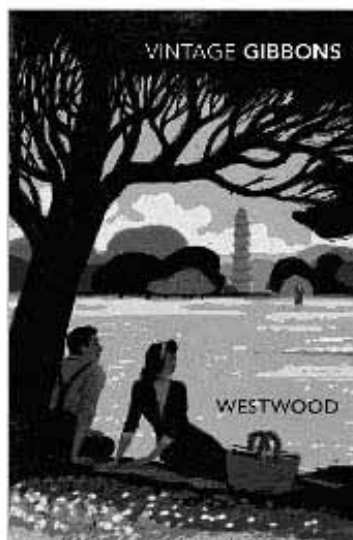
She gives subtle descriptions of nature asserting itself through the rubble, as did the willow herb which flourished where houses had stood. There are brilliant descriptions of war-time tube journeys, one wonders if they were worse than they are at rush hour today, people stumbling about in the 'impenetrable darkness' of the black-out, which today for reasons of political correctness would be renamed, 'the brown-out'. On one of those nights, Challis meets Hilda and

decides by torchlight that she is his ideal 'nymph.'

Many of the observations of the changes brought by the war reverberate for the modern reader. People are grumpy about a small influx of refugees from Europe. In Highgate Margaret sees an old woman, 'wading through the refugees with the air of one traversing a malarial marsh'. Someone observes that 'Hampstead is alive with them'.

Girls like Zita pose an interesting challenge for frumpy English girls: 'how impossible it would be for any Englishwoman to achieve 'the stinging smartness of Zita. An Englishwoman dressed like that would only look ugly or eccentric.' It's quite disturbing to read about the history of Haringay and Hornsey, places now best avoided but in 1946 still small pleasant villages only on the verge of change.

Gibbons, who made her name parodying bucolic fantasies, goes a bit Mary Webb herself in this work.



Hebe's husband Alex, tired of family life, wakes up 'under pine trees his mouth full of bread and cheese', 'comforted by the hard earth'. He is the Romantic ideal of an artist, just as Margaret imagines it controlled by no one, 'with no need of anything except the need to paint'. His father is even a stone-mason descended from medieval church builders.

There is no irony in these over-long passages but she does drag herself back to her plot to remind us how vile and silly the English can be. There is no chance of Margaret gaining acceptance by the Challis family. Pretty girls come from all classes, yet when he falls for Hilda, Mr Challis can't help feeling surprised by this. When he tries to accost her in the dark he employs a mocking tone which he 'always used with common little girls'.

When Margaret volunteers to go on holiday with the family to look after Hebe's three small children, she is packed off to the attic to eat by herself. The book innocently reveals some other unpleasant aspects of life seventy years ago. Apparently sex couldn't be mentioned, unless you were D H Lawrence. Because Margaret is plain and single, her headmistress suspects she might be a Lesbian, but this is not said: the reader has to assume it. The characters who have never met black people, accept what the BBC now calls 'casual racism', using such expressions as 'happy as two niggers'.

Worse: considering they were in the middle of a war to stop a regime dedicated to eugenics, a handicapped child, who probably has Down's Syndrome, is referred to as 'backward' and described mysteriously as 'Japanese looking'. Margaret's mother, who also detests Jewish refugees, is revolted by the thought of the child, and Margaret has to struggle to overcome her own feelings of distaste. Gibbons writes an interesting description of Down's Syndrome here, and they are rare in literature. *Westwood* shows us that even during the war with its camaraderie, England was not a cosy place for anyone different, whether Jew, Spinster, handicapped or intellectual, or any combination of those.

The book is full of period detail. Everyone smoked, it's almost a serious hobby. The Challis' manservant disapproves of Zita's cooking because she uses 'herbs and all that'. Children get Irish stew, macaroni cheese and semolina pudding. Margaret involves us in the perennial problem of spinsters, probably not much better these days for different reasons, but all women in *Westwood*, no matter how well married, are taken for granted. All the husbands are selfish philanderers. Margaret is even taken for granted by the unprepossessing Dick Fletcher when she is doing him the huge favour of looking after his disabled daughter for two weeks. Challis was correct when he thought of Hilda: 'Her flowering would be brief enough. How

he pitied women!' All of them, good and bad, exploit 'Granty' the ancient, overworked Challis family nanny who can only get the better of them by dying.

The book's other preoccupation is self-deception. In her romantic yearning Margaret falls in love with the narcissistic Challis, who through snobbery and vanity accepts her adoration as his due. This is sad but we get high comedy when he becomes smitten with Hilda because of her pretty face. He calls her 'Daphne' and makes her the muse for his latest play which he mistakenly believes to be a great work. She can hardly understand a word he says and tells her mother she's met 'an old guy, quite bats, but rather sweet'.

In all her books Gibbons explores common sense versus self-indulgent wallowing in emotion. In her stern, pre-1960s moral universe, to grow up and find a genuine wider life, Margaret has to discover that real 'love' is more 'Agape' of the group, than 'Eros'. To lead a full life she has to fulfil her moral duty, the sort Dick Fletcher has towards his disabled daughter. He also lives at a house called *Westwood*, further down the hill, and it seems rather sad that this is the better place for Margaret. There is no romantic ending; instead she has to come to terms with what old Mrs Challis rather dauntingly calls 'the hardest thing in the world, to live without earthly love'.

Gibbons went out of fashion after the war. Despite her cheeky style the sensible Christian morality inherent in her books had no chance against the tide of popular culture from the USA, with its insistence on individualism and replacement of duty by therapy. Most of her 25 novels, three volumes of short stories and four of poetry went unread. With all her fun and sadness she belongs to the past we have lost. She would hardly recognise her beloved London now. She died in 1989 before *Westwood* could be covered by a *Westfield*, or outlets serving Halal meat to Balkanised ethnic zones, in a metropolis more rigidly divided between socially superior and ordinary folk than ever before.

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Reputations – 37

Laurence Olivier

Ralph Berry

The Left hates Olivier. As the first Artistic Director of the National Theatre, he made it a bastion of the bourgeoisie, not the radical vision of Shaw and Granville Barker. As the Star of his age he embodied the star system, thus affronting the values of decent, hard-working actors who sought only to pull together in a team for the common good, a noble aim known as ‘ensemble acting’; worst of all, he blacked up to play Othello, a crime against the ruling ideology of today’s stage, that certain parts are ghettoized and reserved for black actors only. And as Lord Olivier, he was the apex of theatrical allegiance to the Crown. After such knowledge, what forgiveness?

His reputation now rests upon the dwindling numbers of those who saw him act on stage, and on his films. These are more and more at the mercy of the media camp followers who write capsule film descriptions for the TV pages. The word ‘ham’ now substitutes for brain cells. Take *Marathon Man*, in which his Nazi doctor has been derided by the capsulists. I do not know of a stiffer test of inflection technique than ‘Is it safe?’, repeated *nine times* in the torture scene. Variety within repetition is a supreme challenge to the actor. Olivier effortlessly surmounted it. Then take his French-Canadian accent in *49th Parallel*, which indeed sounds clumsy. Has any critic ever heard a Quebecois speak? There’s a persistent urban myth that when a Quebec film is shown in Paris it needs subtitles. Yet one capsule has ‘a rather hammy performance replete with variable French-Canadian accent.’ Olivier’s fault was a too faithful adherence to the Canadian model. As for the marvellous ‘Now is

the winter of our discontent’ opening to *Richard III*, that reveals ‘chilly magnetism’. Magnetism attracts, chill repels.

The living stage is something else; Olivier was above all a performer. I saw him act on numerous occasions and he never failed to excite. Once he came on in quite a minor role—Tattle in Congreve’s *Love*



for Love— and the audience sat up, galvanized, as though with an electric cattle-prod. Olivier conceived of acting as putting on a show, doing something to entertain and if possible amaze an audience. He was not of the school that believes in searching for the truth, peeling away layers of character until one arrives at the core of being. He went for effects, worked from the outside in, and held it infamous to bore an audience.

Olivier’s ideological position is revealed in the famous story of Dustin Hoffmann, who turned up for his torture scene wild-eyed and haggard. He had not slept for 36 hours, to prepare himself for the scene.

‘Dear boy,’ asked Olivier, ‘why don’t you try acting?’ Hoffmann’s response, which is perfectly proper, is that an actor gets his effects the best way he can. And that is compatible with Olivier. When playing Shylock, Olivier would leave the stage following his defeat in the trial scene, and then, off-stage, emit a long-drawn cry of pain. It was hair-raising. Olivier tells us (in *On Acting*) how he did it:

I used to leave and deliberately lose my footing in the wings. I’d fall forwards and smash the palms of my hands on the concrete floor. Then the real pain would make me cry and sob like a child.

Olivier was never afraid of physical risk. The list of injuries he incurred on stage and in filming would make a stunt man blench. In filming the battle of Bosworth in *Richard III*, he was actually pierced by an arrow. As Mr Puff in *The Critic*, he once found himself hanging on a length of piano wire with one hand, thirty feet above the stage. No one who witnessed it forgets the final scene of his *Coriolanus*: the dead hero pitches forward from the upper stage, is caught round the legs by two soldiers, and is left dangling upside down like Mussolini. The risk of the thing takes one's breath away and the risk is what one remembers.

There's always something mysterious in the relationship between acting – the public display – and the emotions of the actor. Donald Spoto tells a curious story that once, when playing Othello, Olivier was able to weep onstage. This he could never do at other times. After the performance, delighted, he called a member of the company backstage: 'Did you see that? I did it! I cried!' And yet weeping at will is a commonplace trick that many actors (and non-actors) have. He was once found in some depression after an exceptional performance of Othello. 'But you were marvellous tonight!' 'I know. But I don't know why.' It was vital for him to understand; then he could repeat the special excellence of that night. But he could not. Success, I think, is generally more mysterious than failure.

Olivier's way was always to work from the externals, to get a part from some detail that implied much else. This is of course a central tradition of English acting. Alec Guinness began building a part from his walk. Peter Sellers, perhaps the greatest impersonator of his era, could do nothing until he had found the voice. Shaving seems to have been a creative source for Olivier; he got into Shylock from shaving. As he stood before the mirror shaving, in the course of a normal day, he would think: 'How would Shylock shave? Would he draw his face back, thus? From what angle would he shave?' Early on, Olivier had the idea that teeth would be very important for Shylock; so he had a special pair of false teeth made, at his own expense, and these projecting teeth also affected the shaving calculation. He told Peter Hall that if he were to play Prospero, he should lecture Miranda in the first scene while he was shaving; all those whiskers and wigs that Prosperos once wore were impossible. In the event he never played Prospero but the idea is plain, no patriarchal pretensions, and he would have played the part for comedy.

Jokes, whenever possible, were his delight. He loved to make the audience laugh, even in the

greatest tragedies. I remember the broad wink that crossed his face when, as Othello, he spoke of the 'anthropophagi, and men/Whose heads to grow beneath their shoulders.' Translation: 'You have to lay it on a bit when you're chatting up the girls. She bought it.' As Malvolio, he convulsed the Stratford audience with a questioned pronunciation, at 'cast thy humble, er, sleowugh [short pause] sluff?' Malvolio wasn't sure, and neither was his audience. That was theatrical bonding.

Not all of the best Olivier stories are printable. Throughout his life and work ran a rich vein of vulgarity, which he was the first to acknowledge and conserve. Cocteau said, 'Whatever there is in you that people criticize, cherish it. It is yourself.' When Olivier told Noel Coward that he would be made Doctor of Letters, Coward riposted "Doctor of Four Letters", I suppose.' He died in part, on a Shakespearean joke. Tarquin Olivier, his son, is the authority for the last scene in his life. Olivier was then (1989) on his deathbed, which he had openly anticipated in *Brideshead Revisited* (1981):

The [male] nurse recalled that a day before Larry died he was lying speechless on his back. His parched mouth was open and the nurse, to introduce some fluid, cut an orange in half, held it over the parted lips and squeezed. A few drops fell wide and trickled under the cheek and round to the temple. The eyes opened and the voice crackled: 'This isn't -----Hamlet, you know. It's not supposed to go in the ear...'

That was the passing of Laurence Olivier, an actor and a man.

He has not yet found an enduring biography, which should be a three-decker. Books remain to be written on Olivier as man of the theatre, on his career in films, and his time as Director of the National Theatre. *Olivier: The Authorised Biography* (2005) by Terry Coleman, the *Guardian* columnist, is plodding. He quotes at stupefying length from his letters. Astonishingly, he made no reference at all to Roger Lewis's brilliant *The Real Life of Laurence Olivier* (1996), which is a provocative study of Olivier's psychological and emotional needs. The current Establishment view of Olivier can be taken as in accord with Simon Callow's review of Coleman's book in *The Times* (5 September 2005). He sees Olivier as representative of the star system, that evil vestige of feudalism destined to be overthrown by ensemble (cheers cheers). And there his reputation remains, nibbled at by the capsulistas. Olivier is a posthumous victim of our culture wars.



Roy Kerridge

On the outskirts of Ipswich there is a permanent gypsy camp in a field bought by the Smith family of Romanies. The eldest Smith, Kevi, welcomed me at the gate, for he is an old friend.

‘This is our new vardo’, he said, leading me up the steps of a chalet cum cabin of the type that modern gypsies favour. ‘Vardo’ was originally the word used for an old-style horse-drawn caravan. Modern vardoes have no wheels and are transported on lorries. These cabins must be a transitional stage between caravans and houses. Levi reintroduced me to his sister-in-law Lily, who looks after him, as he never married. I also met the family parrot and a fierce Jack Russell terrier. After tea, Levi led me through the overgrown site to the small shed where he sleeps and keeps his pictures (which he calls ‘photos’). He paints horses, and his idols are Munnings and Stubbs. Levi seemed a bit apologetic about his shed, which was smaller than Uncle Tom or Uncle Remus’s cabin, but quite cosy.

‘I’ve been twenty three years on the road in a horse-drawn wagon’, he told me. ‘Our family had two mares that followed the rest of us, unharnessed, browsing on the good grass and clover on the verges. They would keep looking up to see if our wagons were still in sight. After a while, they would come galloping up the road to join us – a wonderful sight’. We went back to Lily’s vardo, past hens that clucked around and past odds and ends of artwork that nestled among the nettles. I noticed a concrete model of a radio. More tea was produced, and younger relatives from the vardo next door popped in. ‘We can’t offer you any hedgehog!’ someone joked. Levi said that he had never tasted hedgehog, but Lily had, and she said it was delicious.

‘I had a friend once who sold a farmer a pig’, Levi told me, ‘I’ve been keeping a pig in a cage on my ratch’, he said. (A ratch is the rack on the back of a horse-drawn wagon, where birds in cages are often kept.) It’s a lot of trouble taking it down and feeding it whenever we stop, so you can have it for a fiver’. Done! Pay me now and my son here will show you the pig,’ he said, pocketing the money and vanishing. Well, it was a pig all right. It was a guinea pig!

Everyone laughed and I was reminded of the time when an Irish tinker girl stopped me on Willesden High Street in London: ‘I am a gypsy’, she introduced herself. ‘I have got a magic stone here which will make you live to be a hundred. Only two pounds’.

She opened her hand and showed me a glossy black pebble with a magic look to it. I gave her two pounds in a spirit of amusement, and she appeared to hand me the stone. When she had gone, I saw that I held a dark red cough sweet in my hand. The gypsy switch!

Mention of Irish tinkers saddened the company, for these are the people who are usurping official gypsy sites all over Britain, chasing out the Romanies by sheer force of numbers. They are not an Eastern people, but a kind of super-Irish, red-haired, freckled and often bare-footed. All the recent gypsy-horror stories in the Press and on television have really been about Irish tinkers.

Solemnly the Suffolk gypsies nodded as I told them that the inhabitants of the Clay Lane Travellers site in the East End had left and been replaced by the Irish. The new East End site at Major Road has been Irish from the first. Like Red Indians when oil is found on their reservation, the Clay Laners have been moved to make way for the dreaded Olympics. ‘It’s the same everywhere,’ Levi told me. ‘I know some sites where one or two old Romanies are hanging on among the Irish, but they will all have to leave sooner or later’.

Although they lack the rich heritage of Romanies, Irish tinkers have some good qualities. Of course they no longer ‘tink’, since plastic came in. In my London neighbourhood they began to sell carpets door to door, then switched to white rubber three-piece suites carried in vans. My mother bought some furniture at the door, and the men who carried it in all paused to cross themselves before a picture of the Virgin Mary on the wall. One man leaned forward to kiss the picture in great solemnity.

Recently I attended the launch of a children’s book, written by a member of a West Indian-dominated Pentecostal Church. The Master of Ceremonies, Pastor Errol, treated the book launch as if it were a ship launch.

‘Silence for the toast, he announced. ‘I now pronounce this book well and truly launched’. At once on cue, scores of invited children began to blow whistles with terrible energy. You really ought to have been there.

Another book launch recently took place in Devon, that of a handsomely produced volume *Animals in the Blood* by my acquaintance Russell Tofts. Russell is a

big man who breeds rare animals in his back garden in a Cambridgeshire village. In a shed slightly larger than Levi Smith's home, he keeps a fascinating collection of rare rodents in tiers of cages. However, the book is not an autobiography. It is the tale of Kenneth Smith, animal collector, zoo owner and zoo keeper supreme (1911-1979). *Animals in the Blood* is published by the Bartlett Society. Bartlett was the top-hatted head of London Zoo in the great days. He is famous for having successfully extracted the diseased tusk of an enraged hippo, without anaesthetic. Bartlett himself would have enjoyed this book, with its many large black and white photos of Smith and various members of his family holding exotic animals. I particularly liked the

picture of little Caroline Smith gravely sharing fruit with a young gorilla.

Gerald Durrell, the well-known writer-naturalist, gets short shrift from Tofts. A man with feet of clay, and, to be fair, a pen like magic, he took advantage of Kenneth Smith's good nature. George Trevisick, once owner of Ilfracombe Zoo and a friend of Smith, is treated sympathetically here. For once, I disagree with Tofts. Trevisick is the man who laughed heartily when one of his monkeys snatched off my spectacles. All these old zoo men are dead now, so perhaps I should let bygones be bygones. Russell Tofts is a disciple of one of the greatest zoo writers of them all, the late Clinton Keeling, and his prose now matches that of the master.

ETERNAL LIFE



Let us not pretend that this shindig over women bishops has anything at all to do with theology or even that vapid distraction, ecclesiology. The issue is purely one of feminism, human rights, diversity and equal opportunities. In other words, a religious and theological matter is being decided according to secular criteria. This scandalous reality has been made quite explicit by the ecclesiastical committee in parliament which has warned the church that it must proceed to the consecration of women bishops on the grounds of human rights.

There is a certain irony that this is happening around the time when the 19th century priest and poet John Keble is being celebrated in the church's calendar. Keble used his Assize Sermon in 1833 to protest against the Whig government of the day's suppression of ten Irish bishoprics. Keble's protest was the beginning of the Oxford Movement. Where are the likes of Keble today? Why do we hear no powerful theological arguments against the consecration of women bishops? Mainstream evangelicals do not seem to be particularly interested – certainly not to the extent of withholding financial support from central diocesan funds.

Perhaps Anglo-Catholics are making a great noise and fuss, but this is all sound and fury signifying nothing. What sanctions do they have? The depressing answer is none. They can of course clear off and join the Ordinariat. The supporters of women bishops would merely say, 'Take your hook then, and good riddance!' Or if, sulking, they stay, it will only be a matter of time before they will be compelled to accept

the authority of women bishops. This means that an historic and respected movement in the church will be wiped out: a whole theological integrity obliterated.

So much for Dr Habgood's courageous attempt back in 1992, when it was agreed to ordain women to the priesthood, to create and uphold two integrities: one which accepted the priestly ministry of women and another which did not, but for whom provision for conscience was enshrined in church law. Twenty years on, there is only one integrity – if indeed that is what it is – recognised: the secular, rights-driven, politically-correct, diversity-obsessed faction which insists on women bishops; and anyone who cannot conscientiously agree might just as well be damned or condemned to exile.

What Gertrude Himmelfarb referred to as 'the culture wars' have been fought and lost by conservatives and traditionalists. If you want a vision of the future of the Church of England, you should look at the Episcopal Church of the USA. The cultural wind is relentlessly a westerly. It is blowing our way and it is blowing mighty change to the whole nature and character of the Church of England.

Women bishops are a foregone conclusion, but they are only a part of the secularised, diversified package which English church people will be obliged to accept. There will be official recognition of active homosexuals in the priesthood. No doubt a quasi-religious order of the transgendered will emerge in due course. There will be – helped by the enthusiasm of our 'Conservative' prime minister – same-sex 'marriages'

solemnised in our churches. I dare say a small minority of diehards will hold out against this latter innovation, but the overwhelming majority of priests and parishes – seduced by the ‘inclusivity’ bug – will go along with it. The thus marginalised rump of reactionaries will simply be rendered irrelevant and in a very short time fade away.

We are living through a revolution. All the traditionally authoritative spiritual and theological categories are being abolished in favour of secular fashion. The word for people who perpetrate this is ‘apostate’. Those of us who won’t accept the new regime are not allowed the refuge of conscience: we are regarded as merely reactionary or grumpy old men. Indeed, I have been called a lot worse.

When I accuse the leaders of the church of capitulating to secular fashion, they become very hot under the dog collar and deny they are doing any such thing. What they protest instead is some sort of vague and bogus pseudo-theological plea for excuses. They are nothing if not sentimentalists and regard their manifesto of ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusivity’ as one which Jesus would have approved and implemented. To which the only rational response is, ‘Well, why didn’t he, then?’ The truth is, of course, that there is not a shred of biblical or patristic support for any of these catastrophic innovations.

It is not comfortable being a traditionalist serving under the ignorant, vicious authorities in the dumbed

down institution which our church has become. But I’m not in it for comfort. I don’t shirk a fight. Half my life has been spent in vigorous opposition to the begetters of our current decadence and infidelity. And I am not fighting a solitary battle. I have around me uncorrupted colleagues and an informed, devout and affectionate congregation.

When C H Sisson was faced with the problem of what traditionalists ought to do, he said:

What then is the position of the theological rump in our now lay, secularised clerisy? There are three possibilities. They can stay and fight their corner, struggling for an intelligibility which might come again, and will come, if it is the truth they are concerned with. They can sit on pillars in some recess of the national structure, waiting for better times. Or they can let their taste for having an ecclesiastical club carry them into one or other of those international gangs of opinion – that which has its headquarters in Rome or that which has a shadowy international meeting-place in Canterbury. In any case it will be a political choice that is being made. For my part, I shall prefer those who stay and fight their corner, content to be merely the Church in a place.

That is my position too. I will stay and fight my corner. Here, in this church, in this place.

Peter Mullen is Assistant Priest at St George’s Headstone, Harrow.

‘Renoir, My Father’

“While Renoir is put in position the model takes her place on the flower-spangled grass. Somebody prepares his palette while he adjusts his stricken body to the hard seat. It is painful but it allows him to keep upright and a certain amount of movement. The piece of protective lint is folded into his palm and he points to a brush. ‘That one there no, the other one.’ It is given to him. Flies circle in a shaft of sunlight. ‘Ah, those flies’, he exclaims in a rage, ‘they can smell a corpse.’ But then they stop bothering him and for a moment or two he seems somnolent, hypnotised by a butterfly or the distant sound of cicadas. ‘It is intoxicating.’ He stretches out his arm and dips his brush into the turpentine.

But the movement is painful. He waits a few seconds as if asking himself: ‘Why not give up? Is it not too

hard?’ Then a glance at the scene in front of him restores his courage. He traces on the canvas a mark of madder red that only he understands. ‘Jean, please open that curtain a little more.’ Then, in a stronger voice: ‘Ah yes, it is divine.’ He smiles as he calls everybody to witness the conspiracy which had just been arranged between the grass, the olive trees, the model and himself. After a minute or so he starts humming. And a day of happiness begins for him, a day as wonderful as the one which had preceded it and the one which will follow. It was under these conditions that he painted the last Bathers (inset). He considered it the culmination of his life’s work; or, as he put it: ‘Rubens would have been satisfied with it.’”



From ‘Renoir, My Father’, originally published Boston Littlebrown, 1962, ISBN 0-940322-77-3. © J Renoir 1958, 1962.

ARTS AND BOOKS

No Crown no Canada David Twiston Davies

The Right Balance: Canada's Conservative Tradition, Hugh Segal, Douglas and McIntyre, 2011, \$32.95

Despite claims that it has been withering away to the brink of extinction for more than a century, the Anglo-Canadian relationship has proved extraordinarily resilient. An inner warmth and sympathy have been apparent in close (but rarely publicised) dealings between ministers of all political parties which have been endorsed by public approval on both sides of the Atlantic.

One of the striking examples accepted without comment is the parallel Conservative governments that have held power in part of each decade from the 1950s onwards. But although they shared a deep attachment to the Sovereign, parliamentary government and a cautious approach to essential change in a world evolving ever faster, this does not mean there have been no disagreements. When Harold Macmillan and John Diefenbaker came to power in 1957 they enjoyed an immediate family feeling at the Commonwealth conference in London, but by the time both left office in 1963 this had dissipated. Macmillan had grown exasperated by the way Diefenbaker changed his views in line with the latest editorials in 'the *Winnipeg* something or other' but remained convinced that Britain's decision to join the European Economic Community would turn out badly in the end. When Margaret Thatcher arrived at 10 Downing Street in 1979, some three weeks before Joe Clark entered 24 Sussex Drive in Ottawa as leader of a minority Tory administration, she cannot have been impressed by Clark's reputation as a 'Red Tory'. She must have had doubts about the wisdom of removing the Canadian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem though admiring his resolution in successfully hiding American diplomats in the Canadian embassy in Tehran, then smuggling them out of the country before his government was defeated in the Commons after only eight months. And since David Cameron became prime minister in 2010 a close personal relationship with Stephen Harper has been cemented by a common belief in reducing deficit.

It would have been interesting to read Senator Segal's thoughts on why two governments still call themselves Conservative when their countries differ vastly in size, are thousands of miles apart and live among very different neighbours. But that would have meant a different book. British readers will nevertheless find a refreshing *brio* in *The Right Balance*, which includes a passionate defence of the monarchical system. The author explains the Queen's role as a vital symbol of Canada's history and future, something which few British politicians in our dumbed-down political discourse would have cared to do (at least until the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were underway).

Writing with the elegant periods of an experienced speaker who is used to being heard, Segal begins by reminding his countrymen why Canada is fundamentally different from its giant neighbour to the south. The American rebels who emerged triumphant from the revolutionary war of the 1770s brutally proceeded to expel 'the Tories' (as they called them) for wishing to continue living under the Crown. They drew up a constitution for their republic with the hyperbolic aspirations of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', whereas the United Empire Loyalists who moved north of the border sought only 'peace, order and good government'. Both planned a representative system modelled on that of Westminster. But while the Canadians came closest, in creating two legislative bodies making a coherent whole with the Sovereign, the American Congress and Senate were given a power enabling them, on occasion, to reduce a President's administration to impotence during his predetermined four-year period of office. Those who assume that anything American must be an improvement on any British system should think again.

Senator Segal concentrates on the development of Canadian political society, which involves the tensions characteristic of English-French relations wherever these two peoples exist in proximity. After the British Parliament passed the 1774 Quebec Act which protected the French language, legal system and Roman Catholicism, two alternative courses were available. These were thrown into relief when two minor rebellions some 60 years later prompted the London government to appoint the radical Earl of Durham governor-general. Durham seems to have set out to safeguard the country from the threat posed by the Americans' belief in their manifest destiny to take over the northern half of the continent, by pushing

the French to accept assimilation in order to enjoy the liberal rights and freedoms of English Canadians. Yet less than 10 years later his son-in-law, the eighth Earl of Elgin, induced French and English reformers to form one government which he presided over but did not control, the model adopted when the Dominion of Canada was created in 1867. Canada's bibulous first prime minister Sir John A Macdonald ensured that Canada would survive by developing within the bounds of the Empire. He rejected the spirit of America's untrammelled private enterprise, making the state guarantor of the transatlantic railroad which ran east-west, not north-south.

A political scientist as well as a lifelong Tory, Senator Segal glides through the history of the 20th century, pointing out how the Tories have led the way in widening the franchise, extending state aid throughout peoples' lives and spreading the use of the French language in federal institutions. But they have often disrupted their natural support in the process. The future Viscount Bennett's radical changes in the 1930s may have been a correct response to the cataclysm of the Great Depression but they split the party at election time. While much of his legislation was struck down by the courts it was later adopted by subsequent governments – only one example of the Liberals stealing the clothes of their Tory opponents.

Canada's right-wing Tories have chalked up three successive election victories, but the author is perhaps premature in suggesting that they are now the natural party of government. One former senior Tory minister now disowns Stephen Harper's administration, and the attacks on small but long-established services, such as CBC Radio, could ignite surprising trouble. In the end all governments in parliamentary democracies are defeated, all too often because they outreach themselves. And when that occurs, the political landscape can change in surprising ways.

Although it has still to be fully recognised on the political radar, public revulsion is growing against politicians who have allowed themselves to be transformed into media superstars as they pursue the unobtainable goal of a perfect constitution: Pierre Trudeau who sneered at the old imperial links while offering soft-soap sociology in the 1960s and his disciple Tony Blair who contemptuously assaulted the House of Lords a generation later.

Senator Segal advocates a North American Assembly 'not unlike the early European Parliament'. It is easy to see this as the next step after the North American Free Trade Association. But Britain's entrapment in the European experiment is a salutary reminder that constitutions can develop minds of their own. The Commonwealth, which Senator Segal champions, is

being taken with increasing seriousness as Europe staggers towards disaster. As a forum for shared values it is the best option for Britain and Canada.

This book illustrates, above all, the wisdom of the old adage – No Crown No Canada.

Trouncing the French

Nigel Jones

Blood Cries Afar: the Forgotten Invasion of England 1216, Sean McGlynn, Spellmount, 2012, £20 hb.

It is frequently stated as a truism that England was last successfully invaded in 1066, but this ain't necessarily so. There was, of course, a full blown and successful invasion by a Dutch army and fleet in November 1688, which brought down the purblind James II, substituting William of Orange and his wife Mary, James's eldest daughter. There were several regime-changing internecine invasions by rival factions during the Wars of the Roses; there were two invasions – by Isabella, the She-Wolf of France and her lover Roger Mortimer and that by Henry Bolingbroke – which brought down respectively Edward II and Richard II; and there was the subject of this gripping history: what Sean McGlynn justly calls the forgotten invasion of 1216.

As with the other invasions (with the exception of the Norman Conquest exactly 150 years before) that of 1216 was not launched to subjugate a hostile country but was aimed at removing an unpopular and unsuccessful King, in this case arguably the worst monarch – against stiff competition – ever to besmirch the English throne: 'Bad' King John himself. And, as with William of Orange, the invading Prince was not acting entirely on his own initiative, but was invading at the invitation of Britain's nobility – or a substantial slice of them – the Barons who had been exasperated beyond endurance by the murders, meanness and general misdeeds of John.

The origins of the invasion lay in the family squabbles of the Plantagenets, the Anglo-French-Norman dynasty whose first king, the efficient, hard-driving, but fatally quarrelsome Henry II was the fount of the subsequent turmoil. Henry negated his able administration of his far-flung Angevin empire – (as well as England, he ruled Normandy and most of western France thanks to his marriage to the redoubtable Eleanor of Aquitaine) – by his inability to control his famous Plantagenet rages. This not only led him into his lethal quarrel with his former friend Thomas Becket, but caused him to fall out with all four of his sons by Eleanor – as well

as with the Queen herself, who ended her life as a prisoner of her husband.

Henry died a lonely, bitter man, leaving his Empire to his two surviving sons, Richard and John. Richard, the eldest, looked every inch (and he stood well over six feet – a giant by Medieval standards) and indeed was, a warrior king. Powerfully built, golden haired, it is scarcely surprising that he has gone down in legend as an ideal ruler, the friend to Robin Hood and all true Englishmen. The truth, of course, is very different. Richard was cruel (he ordered a massacre of defenceless captives on his ill fated Third Crusade); grasping (he was killed trying to get his hands on a treasure trove by violent means); and far from being a patriotic Englishman spent all but a few months of his ten year reign abroad.

The best we can say about Richard is that he was several miles better than his loathsome younger brother. Squat, dark and far from handsome, John had every vice and very few virtues. Mean-spirited, treacherous, vindictive, sadistically cruel, an adulterer, a child killer and a rapist; all might have been forgiven had John been any good at the essential requirement of a successful medieval monarch: war. But he was useless at that too, as his contemptuous contemporary soubriquet ‘Softsword’ indicates.

John’s incompetence lost most of Normandy and much of Aquitaine to an intelligent and powerful French King, Philip Augustus, who skilfully exploited the chaos created by John’s Civil War with his justly rebellious English Barons to dismantle England’s French possessions. Building on this, Philip’s son Louis ‘the Lion’, at the invitation of the rebel Baronial leader Robert Fitzwalter, (who had a very personal score to settle with John who had abducted, starved and finally poisoned his daughter Maud in the Tower) assembled an army of Frenchmen supported by assorted mercenaries, and landed in Kent in May 1216.

Such was John’s unpopularity that Louis was able to occupy London and virtually half the kingdom with relative ease, holding court from the Tower and accepting the homage of many Englishmen. In October, with excellent timing, and shortly after losing his Crown Jewels in the Wash, John died at Newark castle – either from dysentery, poison, or the explosive effects of raw peaches and pears washed down with cider. Delighted to be shot of the tyrant, many Englishmen promptly switched their loyalty from the foreign Prince to John’s young son, Henry III.

The English Royal forces, under the able leadership of two competent Barons, William Marshal and Hubert de Burgh, squared up to Louis, though London remained loyal to the interloper. Marshal defeated the Frenchman at Lincoln, while Hubert trounced

a succouring French fleet off Sandwich. Louis then threw in the towel and returned to France, eventually succeeding his father as King.

These stirring and little-known events are well told by Sean McGlynn, who has filled in a previously obscure chapter in our history with flair and a deeply informed knowledge – especially of medieval warfare and castellation. Anyone travelling in western France should take along McGlynn’s book and gaze upon the mighty ruins of Richard the Lionheart’s great fortress on the Seine, Chateau-Gaillard. Richard proudly boasted that he could hold the castle ‘even if its walls were made of butter’. John, typically, lost it.

From Bede to the Wars of the Roses John Jolliffe

The History of England, Vol 1, Peter Ackroyd, Foundation, Pan, 2012, £9.99.

This first volume of *Our Island Story* relates what is known from the earliest times, effectively beginning with St Bede in the seventh century, down to the death of Henry VII in 1509. But it is much more than a chronicle of events and all the better for that. It is shot through with countless shrewd and well informed comments, individual illustrations of large statements, and explanations of unfolding developments which make the vast story as reader-friendly as is possible on the given scale.

Early on, there were three main kingdoms in Britain: Northumbria, predominant in the seventh century, Mercia in the eighth, and Wessex in the ninth. The chief enemy were the Norsemen who sacked the peaceful monasteries of Jarrow and Lindisfarne, the cradles of learning and literature in England. I never knew that this was not random vandalism but an intentional revenge for the destruction by Charlemagne of the pagan shrines and sanctuaries of Norseland. Long before the Norman Conquest, and until long after the present volume, it was the ownership of land that provided wealth and power, and its distribution and redistribution was what mattered most for the next few centuries.

In our Anglo-centric way, we tend to forget that the Norman kings were far more concerned with their continental possessions, and spent far more time in them, than in the peripheral island of England, whose language they couldn’t or didn’t speak. But when the Capetian Kings in France began to steer the country into something like its present form it was King

John, who was no more vicious or cunning than his predecessors, but far less militarily able, who lost virtually all 'our' French possessions. To regain them would require money, and he toured England in vain to try to raise it. But although you wouldn't guess it from Shakespeare, he also paid attention to details of administration and justice, unlike his predecessors. But when he failed to appoint a new Archbishop of Canterbury, preferring to retain the revenues for himself, the Pope placed the country under an interdict, forbidding any of the sacraments to be administered except baptism for babies and absolution for the dying. Magna Carta followed. It had nothing to do with the rights or well-being of the people; it was an attempt by the Barons to revert to the situation before the oppressive rise of the Angevin kings. Ackroyd throws a clear light on the disasters of John's reign, but for many of them he cannot personally be blamed.

The next reign, of Henry III, was long and largely peaceful apart from the rise of Simon de Montfort, and his death in battle at Evesham in 1265. After this the King could spend vast sums on the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey into something like its present form. Next, the fourteenth century was a period of royal success. Edward I ruthlessly fortified the borders of Wales and Scotland, and though the reign of his son was a setback, his grandson Edward III regained much in the course of the Hundred Years War. His grandson, the boy King Richard II, began with a great personal success in heading off the so-called Peasants' Revolt, which followed the catastrophe of the Black Death, in which *one-third* of the population perished. The Revolt was supported in no less than 340 villages in East Anglia and Kent, not only by peasants but by many local leaders of substance. They were protesting against the law having once again become a mechanism, as in King John's reign, for extracting money for an increasingly futile war. But Richard's lavish handouts of land and titles, and his emphasis on the overwhelming significance of his kingship, led to his deposition and death.

At least this part of the story is straightforward, though interpretations of the events naturally vary. But the complicated tangle of the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century needs all Ackroyd's skill to make it intelligible. He points out that although many battles were fought over the years, they were between the smallish private armies of the leading nobles, and much of the country, and of the population, was little disturbed. After the defeat of Richard III at Bosworth in 1485 we arrive at the beginning of the Tudors' hold on the throne, precarious at first in view of rivals with at least as good claims, but preserved by the cunning and caution of Henry VII.

Peter Ackroyd's achievement in bringing this long and complex story to life is remarkable. The reader can feel the darkness and aching cold of Lindisfarne, where the monks miraculously illuminated the gospel texts; can smell the dreadful stench of urban life; lament the shortness of life expectancy and the horrors of a mediaeval battlefield. We are also helped by the insertion of occasional brief thematic passages between the narrative chapters, and can learn about such things as the patterns of country roads and lanes, the woods and forests, and the details of English dress and diet. Our reputation abroad is also mentioned. In 1484 a visiting German knight felt that 'the English think they are the wisest people in the world ... that the world does not exist apart from England'. (Cp the famous twentieth century newspaper headline 'Continent cut off by fog'.) The tradition of *perfidie Albion* has a long history, and we ourselves admitted our faults: aloofness, greed, dishonesty, violence and above all drunkenness. A papal envoy in 1473 wrote that 'in the morning they are as devout as angels, but after dinner they are like devils.'

This excellent book, all the more valuable now that history is hardly taught at all in most schools, had a huge sale in hardback. Now in a well-illustrated paperback, at £9.99 for 462 pages, with a further fourteen of invaluable titles for further reading, it deserves to sell tens of thousands more.

Is there a Left-wing Gene?

Guy Stagg

The Righteous Mind, Jonathan Haidt, Allen Lane, 2012, £20.

Squint and you can't tell the difference between British politicians. In trying to win over swing voters, our MPs use the same arguments and the same policies. They even wear the same suits. But in the United States the opposite is true. Most American politicians spend their time widening the gap between Left and Right. Activists and the media push them even farther apart, giving a violently polarised electorate. It is this polarisation that Jonathan Haidt's *The Righteous Mind* attempts to understand, and ultimately overcome.

Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist. He maps this gap in moral terms, proposing six moral foundations that all societies share: the desire for care over harm, fairness, liberty over oppression, loyalty, authority and sanctity. The degree to which individuals value these foundations, Haidt argues, has a direct bearing on their politics. By analysing the responses of self-identified

Republicans and Democrats to a series of ethical dilemmas – is it OK to eat your dog if it has been run over? Haidt shows that although the Left values the first three moral foundations almost exclusively, the Right values them all equally.

This is the difference between Right and Left. It comes not from one side being evil, or stupid, but from whether or not you think authority matters as much as fairness. The Right can on the whole understand the Left, thanks to sharing half of their moral foundations. However, the Left cannot understand the Right, unable to include something like loyalty or sanctity as part of a moral outlook. Nor can people on the Left understand why anyone would vote conservative. So Democrats, who think of themselves as champions of equality, are baffled and angry when so many poor Americans still vote Republican. But, as Haidt realises, working class rural communities in America are voting on moral lines, they ‘don’t want to eat at The True Taste restaurant, and they don’t want their nation to devote itself primarily to the care of victims and the pursuit of social justice’.

Haidt is a contrarian, and *The Righteous Mind* is best when overturning academic fashions and bringing out our animal side. Today a strong and mindless attachment to country, class or an institution is seen as an embarrassing hangover from feudal times. However, as he argues, humans are ‘groupish’: 90 per cent chimp and 10 per cent ‘selfish primates who long to be a part of something larger and nobler than ourselves.’ Evolution has given us a hive mentality, encouraging big, non-kin-related networks and a morality that defends this group and encourages selflessness within it. What’s more, we will twist and squeeze the rest of the world to fit our tribe’s moral outlook.

This insight helps to demolish what Haidt calls the ‘rationalist delusion’. Although most philosophers celebrate logic and treat emotions with distrust, *The Righteous Mind* argues that most people follow instinct, only using reason to back up these choices. In other words, reason is the press secretary, conjuring arguments to justify the ways of the heart. This is an uncomfortable truth, especially for politics. Much as politicians, not to mention voters, like to believe that their opinions are the product of rational inquiry, in fact they are closer to faith. Therefore a huge amount of the disagreement between Left and Right is not competing factual analysis, but tribal hatred posing as forensic debate.

The Righteous Mind reads like a self-help book at times: each section sub-headed with a central metaphor, each chapter closed with a summary. The fundamental tenet is that of all self-help books: understanding is simpler than it first seems, and can be hammered

home with some choice mantras and clever formatting. But self-help books rarely sink in. They offer the type of lessons that can only be learnt the hard way: through experience. Correct answers are of limited use when you are struggling to understand the method. The same is true of *The Righteous Mind* – it neatly categorises moral debates, without engaging in the moral consequences of these categories. If you are trying to work out what is right or wrong, it is little help to be told that different parameters will give you different outcomes.

The Righteous Mind impressively makes the case that Republicans and Democrats can learn from one another’s moral framework, but does not resolve whether all six moral foundations are necessary for the good life. Therefore Haidt stops short of the obvious criticism: the Left has been blind to a number of society’s fundamental values, while also condemning those on the Right as immoral for taking a traditional position on marriage or abortion. Instead *The Righteous Mind* hints at relativism, where ethical differences are a question of priority, and a hierarchy of values is impossible.

Haidt avoids this charge by describing himself as a pluralist. He agrees with Isaiah Berlin that there are lasting truths and values, but that these are often incommensurate. This does not exonerate the book from exploring the more thorny moral debates, but actually demands it. What happens if Haidt’s six basic moral foundations are irreconcilable? After all, he is still prepared to use terms such as ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, and yet reluctant to ground them in anything more substantial than a cluster of conflicting intuitions. *The Righteous Mind*’s ends by asking whether we can disagree more constructively. But given Haidt’s own reluctance to take sides, this seems naïve.

A Utopia of Lower Taxes

Peter Mullen

Wealth Without Cost: White Alchemy in Economics (2 volumes), Barry Bracewell-Milnes, University of Buckingham Press, 2011

These days anyone who is a real Tory is referred to by the media and Cameron’s cronies as ‘a rebel Tory.’ So the economist Barry Bracewell-Milnes, who died recently, is regarded as a ‘maverick.’ This is because he did not subscribe to the statist social and financial policies of our principal political parties – which, whatever they call themselves, are all socialist now.

Bracewell-Milnes earned the great distinction of

being sacked by that archetypal capitalist organisation The Confederation of British Industry – ‘for supporting capitalism, the market economy and free enterprise’. It doesn’t get more ironical than that. Well, actually it does, and I can sympathise. For the worst crime you can commit in today’s Church of England is actually to believe in God, instead of regarding ‘God’ as a metaphor for social involvement, ‘diversity’, political-correctness and secular fads. I speak from forty years’ experience.

Indeed, I was pleased to learn that Bracewell-Milnes was a traditional Christian who would travel miles to find a service where they use the *Authorised Version* and the *Book of Common Prayer*. I wish he had discovered my church where we celebrated these realities every week. He would have been very welcome and discovered he was among friends. That would have been a blessing and a mercy upon him, precisely because anyone who stands out (as he did) against the banal orthodoxies of our contemporary church or state must needs experience a profound loneliness, amounting almost to exile.

He was known for his disapproval of taxation in all its forms, arguing, in particular, that inheritance tax and corporation tax are counter-productive in that they actually diminish the revenue they are designed to produce. He even argued against taxes on booze in a pamphlet, *A Disorderly House* – which upset the puritanical politically-correct battalions and our overpaid, hard-drinking doctors in the British Medical Association. And what’s the point of raising money through taxation anyhow, if you’re only going to squander it on magisterially inefficient and corrupt institutions such as the NHS and state education – to say nothing of the profligate culture of welfarism?

But, in a sense, these radical views were peripheral to Bracewell-Milnes’ main inspiration which was altogether more wholesome and wide-ranging than the mere politics of economic theory. He was a follower of Aristotle and that great philosopher’s vision of the virtuous man in the virtuous society: the immeasurable value of loyalty, charity, altruism, courage and freedom. These things, he understood, were worth more than many pots of gold. As an opponent of the nannying, centralised state, he would have agreed profoundly with T S Eliot who despised an age in which men were ‘dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good.’

Against the statist providers and the utopian commissars, Bracewell-Milnes understood that virtue – the source of all social good – is essentially an individual thing and that it depends upon actual, real, individual people behaving morally and charitably, with a view to the common good; and incidentally to

the salvation of their own souls.

The Cameroons should read these books – but they won’t. Because Bracewell-Milnes – in an extended fit of savage politeness maintained throughout these two long volumes – succeeds in the intellectual demolition of statism, corporatism and every manifestation of the lie that the government knows what’s best for us.

These books exhibit that rarest commodity: wisdom.

(Editorial note: Barry Bracewell-Milnes was a subscriber to the *Salisbury Review* from the beginning and an occasional contributor.)

Anglophobe Extraordinary Penelope Tremayne

Patriot of Persia, Christopher de Bellaigue, Bodley Head, February 2012, Hb £20.

We are told on the jacket of this book that Dr Mossadegh was ‘a man whose conception of liberty was as sophisticated any in Europe or America’. The Oxford Dictionary offers ‘adulterated’ as the meaning of ‘sophisticated’, and this term seems to me to fit the character rather well.

Mossadegh was closely related both by blood and by marriages to the reigning Qajar dynasty of Shahs but he began his political life, in 1906, as a democrat. Talk in Teheran about modernism and democracy, fired up by recent events in Moscow, had crystallised into demands for a constitution. A Constitutional Party (not anti-monarchist) was formed, and Mossadegh joined it. Soon, though not without agitation and violence, it attained its first objective: Muzaffar ud-Din Shah, (aged, ailing and living in the luxury hotels and spas of Europe) consented to the establishment of a Parliament in Tehran, and deputies were duly elected.

‘The foundations had been laid for the formation of a constitutional monarchy and Mossadegh was prominent enough to have played a shining young man’s role’. (He was twenty-three at the time.) Well perhaps. The battle between Court and Parliament continued unabated, the mullahs fed the flames, the deputies armed themselves and exchanged fire with the Shah’s Cossack guards. Mossadegh set out to take part, but lost his nerve, turned round and ran away. He lay low while some of the radical constitutionalists were executed; and a few months later went to France to complete his education. He then moved to Switzerland where he put his children into schools, gained a

doctorate in Law and applied for Swiss nationality. While waiting for this to be granted he made what should have been a short visit to Persia, but the First World War broke out while he was still in Tehran, and he was unable to return. Thus began his long and stormy career, much of which became history.

Patriot of Persia is a biography, so personalities are correctly dealt with in detail, but much of the complicated historical background is covered too. Persia in the early twentieth century was 'well suited to be one of the principal pursuits of the belle époque; the building of a secure, centralised nation state'. Mossadegh worked for this sporadically but his eyes were constantly set on personal goals, the main one of these being the destruction of Britain by every possible means. The Parliament teetered; the Shah fled, was deposed, and went into exile, leaving his adolescent son in charge. Mossadegh pursued his own course, while pledging loyalties both to the throne and to the revolutionaries. 'He passed close by events, rather than plunged in'.

During the next ten years prime ministers rose and fell like Jack-in-the-Boxes; Shah succeeded Shah and the Russians, despite their world-altering change of regime, pressed on with their colonization of northern Persia. In 1921 the editor of an anti-Mossadegh newspaper, Ziaud-Din Tabatabai, marched on Tehran with the Shah's Cossack soldiery. Ahmed Shah made him Prime Minister and also appointed a Colonel Reza Khan who eventually made himself Shah (the father of the last Shah who was deposed by the mullahs in 1979). Zia as Prime Minister devoted his time to working up a class war while Mossadegh moved up the ladder of political power. In 1951 he organised a coup to become Prime Minister, overthrew the Shah and nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Britain's biggest overseas asset, and ordered the deportation of the staff. In 1952 Mossadegh broke off diplomatic relations with Britain. In August 1953, with British help, the CIA engineered a mob to riot in Tehran and Mossadegh resigned. The Shah was restored and Mossadegh was imprisoned but in great comfort with a cook and other servants. He died in his eighties in 1967.

Mossadegh's whole career seems to have been built, not upon a splendid vision of a working constitutional monarchy but upon his obsessive determination to humiliate and damage Britain, as he believed himself to have been humiliated. A leader may be intensely patriotic and yet do his country irreparable harm. Certainly the Western response to Mossadegh's coup fuelled anti-Western feeling in his country and over the whole Middle East. Politically he swore loyalty to whoever held power: the choice was between Constitutionals and Royalists. He pledged undying

faith to either or both as circumstances might require. The great changes that occurred in Persia during his lifetime were brought about by others. He was a user not a maker. He was a great orator, swaying crowds like the Pied Piper, and often played the part of a man at death's door, declaring hunger strikes, unable to walk more than a step or two without help; but made a very nimble escape over fences and rubble when Tehran was cannonaded.

De Bellaigue writes an easily-digested if slightly down-market English, and carries us successfully through a kaleidoscope of Persian constitutional and legal problems. Despite his own admiration for Mossadegh, he allows the picture to emerge of the historical figure: of an hysteric possessed of a high intelligence and superb manipulative skills, but with a corresponding lack of cool judgement and of honour.

Opium of the People Anthony Daniels

Opium: Reality's Dark Dream, Thomas Dormandy, Yale University Press, 2012, £25.

Thomas Dormandy is a retired pathologist who has established himself as one of our foremost medical historians. His book on the history of tuberculosis, *The White Plague*, is a classic of the genre. Cultivated and polyglot, he has a telling eye for emblematic detail and his prose is always easy to read. He never indulges in the polysyllabic excursus into theory that many academics, perhaps less sure of their standing than he, believe will increase the *gravitas* of their work. He writes for the general reader, but so widely and successfully does he cast his net that I doubt that even the most specialised of specialists has nothing to learn from him.

Therefore he has written the best and most enjoyable single-volume history of opium and the drugs derived from it. If I now concentrate on my disagreements with it, this in no wise detracts from my overall judgment, or from the fact that I enjoyed reading it immensely. However, some of my disagreements are profound and, in relation to the theme of the book, important. I will overlook minor errors of fact, that are likely to creep into a book of this size and scope, for example the supposition that Mao Tse-Tung, like Chou En-Lai and Pol Pot, studied in Paris (he never did). But let him whose

books are without error cast the first correction.

There are more serious matters, for example Dormandy's treatment of Coleridge. Great poet as he was, his capacity for untruth, especially on the subject of himself in relation to laudanum, was almost unlimited. Dormandy acknowledges that what Coleridge said was often not true, but denies that he was in any straightforward way a liar; he continues with a passage that would warm the heart of any post-modernist politician (if such a creature had such an organ):

'Truth' and 'lie' are among the most emotionally charged words in the language today and in public life the most morally weighted. But context is all. In the opium addict's universe, fact, faction, fiction, fancy, fantasy and confabulation can become inextricably mixed.

This is a rare but important lapse from Dormandy, because what addicts say about their own condition is often taken as having some evidential value. If the distinction between fact and the various other forms of statement that Dormandy mentions are 'inextricably mixed' in the minds of addicts, what is true – that is to say true without ironising inverted commas – cannot be assessed by reference to what they say. And yet the view that addiction is some kind of 'enslavement,' a metaphor employed ever since De Quincey wrote his wonderful but mendacious little tract, has been accepted as genuinely descriptive of the condition of addiction by most non-addicts ever since.

Dormandy says that Coleridge 'did not disseminate malicious lies.' But a lie is not a lie because of the malice with which it is disseminated; it is a lie because it is a statement knowingly at variance with what the speaker believes to be the truth. Even if Coleridge's relationship with the truth was often like that of Mr Blair, there is abundant evidence that he was often a straightforward liar as well, and indeed, later in the book, Dormandy himself calls him such.

He also overlooks the fact that Coleridge was an alcoholic as well as an opium addict. Not only was laudanum tincture of opium in fortified wine, of which Coleridge is reported to have drunk pints at a time, but he also managed up to three bottles of claret a day. Descriptions of his withdrawal symptoms – pouring with sweat and shaking so much that he could not hold a glass – are much more those of withdrawal from alcohol than of those from opium. Moreover, he had the face of a sedentary alcoholic. The famous poem that Dormandy quotes, *The Pains of Sleep*, is descriptive more of the disturbed sleep of the chronic imbiber rather than of the sleep of

the opium addict. Those in search of perceptual disturbances because the world is insufficiently interesting as it appears to the unintoxicated brain do not choose opium or any other opiates to gratify themselves.

The travails of Coleridge and the other Romantics should be correctly interpreted because so much of the mythology surrounding opium and its derivative drugs (such as morphine and heroin) derives from an incorrect interpretation of them.

Abstinence from opiates is not a colossal struggle. Dormandy swallows this myth uncritically, and even quotes one of the most inaccurate and exaggerated descriptions of withdrawal that I know, described in a book *Drugs and the Mind* by Robert S De Ropp, and published for the popular market: the withdrawing addict ends up 'filthy, unshaven, dishevelled, befouled with his own vomit and faeces ... an almost subhuman appearance'.

Withdrawal from opiates is medically trivial (unlike that from alcohol); there is abundant evidence that most suffering from withdrawal is caused not by the withdrawal itself, but by the anxiety that precedes it. This anxiety is caused by the mythology and lies that have been constantly disseminated about it, a tradition to which Dr Dormandy contributes his mite.

There are other topics in the book whose discussion is superficial. This is partly the result of dealing with so large a subject in a short compass: to give every matter the length it deserved would have swelled the book to the dimensions of a library. Nevertheless, I found the way in which the author dealt with methadone, the substitute drug given out in huge quantities to heroin addicts, frustratingly brief and insubstantial. We do not learn that deaths from methadone poisoning are frequent and in some places more frequent than deaths from heroin poisoning; that the spread of heroin addiction has not been reduced by the frequent prescription of methadone; that in Scotland, where both methadone and needle exchanges are within the reach of all, the spread of Hepatitis C has accelerated, not declined.

Again, Dormandy uncritically accepts that Britain has a high prison population and ascribes this both to its high rate of drug addiction and to its punitive approach. But Britain does not have a high prison population in proportion to its rate of crime: if we had the same sentencing policies as Spain, we would have five times the number of prisoners. Readers will guess where the crime rate is higher, Spain or Britain. A third of all crimes in Scotland are committed by people already on bail, the vast

majority of them guilty of what they are charged with and a lot more beside; it is easy to show that the re-offending rate of people on community sentences must be several hundred per cent per year; Home Office research suggests that recidivist criminals commit, on average, 140 offences per year; and only one in 120 domestic burglaries ends in a prison sentence. This is hardly the unthinking severity that Dormandy implies, rather the reverse.

Moreover, the connection between addiction to heroin and crime is almost the reverse of what he supposes. Criminality is a better predictor of addiction than addiction of criminality. I estimated that most heroin addicts who ended up in the prison in which I worked had committed between 50 and 200 offences *before* they ever took heroin; and those few who claimed to have started taking heroin in prison (not necessarily to be believed, for in 14 years of duty in a prison with 1400 prisoners I never saw a case of overdose of opiates, whereas I saw scores of cases outside) could hardly claim thereafter that their criminality was a result of their addiction.

Dormandy quite rightly mocks the naivety (and later the hypocrisy) of those who sought to eliminate non-medical use of opiates from the world. But he is not short of his own naivety about the wonders to be achieved by legalisation. Colombia probably held the world record for the number of civil wars during the 19th Century. In the twentieth century it had two episodes in which, adjusted for population, the equivalent of more than a million people were killed, and this was before drug trafficking became important. Likewise its Marxist guerrilla insurgency there has lasted half a century and started well before the drug trafficking. Mexico now has a murder rate a quarter of what it was in the 1940s.

I must end on a positive note. No student of the subject will fail to learn a lot from Dormandy, and in the most pleasant way possible.

Choose your Parents Carefully

Christie Davies

Dysgenics, Genetic Deterioration in Modern Populations, Richard Lynn, Ulster Institute for Social Research, 2011, Hb £46, Pb £25.

Richard Lynn has produced yet another work of remarkable cogency and erudition. In addition to data from his own speciality, psychology, he has delved into

demography, social and economic history, medicine and genetics.

The first dysgenic factor he discusses is, curiously enough, the advance of medical science. In the past many of those with transmittable genetic defects died before they were old enough to have children. The faulty gene remained in the population because many were carriers only and only the children of two carriers suffered the full consequences. With the increased survival of the latter and, more to the point, their production of children this is likely to mean that the number of those carrying the defective gene increases. They are not harmed directly but some of these additional descendants will come to suffer the full consequences, which remain tragic, even if mitigated by modern medicine. It is a humanitarian and utilitarian paradox.

Yet possibly some of the protective genes of the past are now obsolete – who now needs an inherited resistance to smallpox, the lack of which led to so many deaths in the past? Likewise, what if those carriers of a genetic problem who are not directly affected do provide a general advantage in other ways? It has been argued for instance that those populations with a higher incidence of the truly devastating Tay-Sachs disease may be more intelligent because of the presence of the genes that can lead to it. These only lead to disaster when combined, which may be both uncommon and, with modern knowledge, predictable. Natural selection moves in a mysterious way.

Subsequent chapters show that today those who are less intelligent and less conscientious have more children than those who possess these universally worthwhile qualities. This would not have been true in the past, at least in those societies where there was a degree of social mobility. On the contrary, those who rose by intelligence and conscientiousness tended to have more surviving children than those who failed to do so. Some factors would have reduced this effect in the past, notably a high incidence of observed or enforced clerical celibacy which meant the social sterilisation of intelligent and ambitious poor peasants, and, as Lynn points out, the introduction of strict monogamy, which prevents the more successful men from having more wives than the others.

Lynn's model rests on a well-established finding, namely that intelligence and conscientiousness are to a substantial extent inherited. In regard to both these qualities identical twins, who have the same genes, resemble each other far more than fraternal ones do and this is true even when they have been separated at birth. Likewise adopted children tend to resemble their

natural parents more than their adoptive parents in both intelligence and conscientiousness. Lynn produces a great deal of further evidence to back up this thesis. Yet he will not convince his ideologically prejudiced opponents whose minds are closed on this matter. They will continue to try to pick unimportant holes in the data or the argument while ignoring the fact that their own environmental edifice is crumbling as new data becomes available. Lynn's thesis is a progressing research programme that continues to predict and explain more things, whereas those who believe in the dominance of environment expound a degenerating one which tries to evade its increasing problems by semantic trickery. At some time in the future our enhanced knowledge of the genetic mechanisms of the transmission of qualities of character and intelligence among normal people will conclusively decide the matter and probably in Lynn's favour. If it did not, Lynn would accept the verdict of science and change his mind but, if new findings turn out strongly in Lynn's favour, his egalitarian opponents will try dishonestly to wriggle out of accepting defeat.

Lynn is not a dogmatist, and indeed he has pioneered the study of the effect of improved nutrition in off-setting the genetic decline in intelligence – the Lynn-Flynn effect. The better feeding of pregnant women and of very young children ensures the proper development of the brain in the child's earliest years. In consequence today's four-year-olds are brighter than in the past; this happens before they enter the educational system. It is a savage condemnation of our primary schools that this improvement has not been translated into improved literacy and numeracy. The problem that remains is that in the richer countries this progress in nutrition is coming to an end and the genetic factors are coming to the fore.

Where I must disagree with Lynn is when he translates genetic decline directly into social crisis. Lynn ascribes the rise in crime in Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century to the observable greater fecundity of the unintelligent and feckless, whose command of contraception is poor and who lack foresight and self-control. However, the difference in birth rate between the bright and the dim, the conscientious and the feckless was at its greatest between 1870 and 1930, which was a time of falling crime. By the 1930s low fertility was almost universal in Britain and differences in birth rates between social groups were much lower, yet the incidence of delinquency was now starting to rise. As I have shown in my book *The Strange Death of Moral Britain*, there are other and better explanations of the steady rise in crime in Britain between 1955 and 1990, namely

secularisation and the elephantiasis of the welfare state leading to a decline in the ethic of respectability. Lynn is right that criminals have more siblings than the law-abiding (or undetected) but the effects of this would have been small by comparison. Curiously and very controversially, crime rates fell from the early 1990s in several countries and this has been ascribed to the liberalising of the abortion laws. Certainly the American data compiled by the economists Steven D. Levitt and John Donohue, which Lynn does not cite, seem to point in that direction. For obvious reasons their work has drawn the ire of American conservatives as well as liberals.

It is striking that Lynn's opponents never confront his statistical data properly. Some are scientists whose expertise is in very distant fields (such as palaeontology) and whom we know from their political activities to be driven by ideology – the blind watch-destroyers. Some of their notions to which Lynn refers are crackpot, for example the view that the intelligent are undesirable because they come to occupy positions of power and thus are able to do more damage than the stupid ever can. Lynn's book is well-worth reading. It exposes a problem which those who hold political power in Western (though not in Far Eastern) nations prefer to ignore.

Inside an Animal's Mind Celia Haddon

Why Animals Matter. Animal consciousness, animal welfare and human well-being, Marian Stamp Dawkins, Oxford University Press, 2012, £16.99.

Are animals conscious? Do they have emotions like we do? Do they feel pain as we do? Or do they live without consciousness in the same way that we humans drive our cars – automatically performing actions without thinking or feeling? *Why Animals Matter* is the latest contribution to a debate about animal consciousness and animal welfare, written by the Professor of Animal Behaviour at Oxford University.

In the seventeenth century, the philosopher René Descartes identified consciousness and self-awareness as the distinctive properties of the human mind. Thus animals, beings without either consciousness or self-awareness, were merely automata. If that was so, a living dog being cut up without anaesthetic by scientists only *appeared* to feel pain. The agonised

cries and gasping were merely the creaking of a living machine.

A century later the writer Dr Samuel Johnson in 1761 was outraged. He condemned the scientific ‘wretches ... whose favourite amusement is to nail dogs to tables and open them alive; to try how long life may be continued in various degrees of mutilation, or with the excision or laceration of the vital parts.’

Most of us nowadays would agree with the Doctor, believing that while animals may not think in the way we do, they probably experience pain in much the same way humans do. Indeed, Darwin himself saw a continuity between the emotional experiences of humans and animals, writing that ‘the lower animals are excited by the same emotions as ourselves’.

Neuroscientists, now able to peer into the workings of the brain in both animals and humans, think that animals experience the same emotions as we do (even if they cannot prove it). Marian Stamp Dawkins, however, argues that consciousness is a tricky concept even in humans. Brain imaging in humans doesn’t show an identifiable consciousness area. Some medical conditions even suggest that humans can be emotionally affected by something without being conscious of it.

Just as the lack of proof for the existence of God has led Richard Dawkins to believe that there definitely isn’t one, so there are those who believe animals don’t feel pain because we can’t *prove* that they suffer as we do. Even babies have fallen foul of this reductionist view. As late as the 1980s a baby was operated on without anaesthetic in the USA. In the same decade Peter Carruthers, an Oxford philosophy professor, argued that we should feel no moral concern about our treatment of animals, as they do not have consciousness. Indeed he claimed that it was ‘morally objectionable’ to spend money and time ‘alleviating the pains of brutes’. (He has since changed his position, arguing that it may be possible for animals without consciousness to experience pain).

Why Animals Matter lays out this debate in simple language and argues that the welfare of animals should not depend on whether they have full consciousness. Instead, one reason why we should treat animals decently is because healthy, happy animals are more likely to provide the benefits humans need, such as tastier free-range eggs or fewer zoonotic diseases such as bird ‘flu or anthrax.

Marion Stamp Dawkins’ contribution to animal welfare has been to study what animals want by watching what they do. You can’t ask the animal what it wants but you can measure how much effort it will put into trying to get it. If a duck will jump over a high

barrier to get to water it can swim in, we can infer that it badly wants the chance to swim. And if laboratory mice will spend time on a solid floor rather than a wire one, we can deduce they prefer solid flooring; but if nesting material is only provided on a wire floor that preference changes. We know what the animal wants because the animal’s own behaviour tells us.

Her point is that these studies do not depend on knowing if the animal is conscious or not. Lame broiler chickens will choose food with a pain-relieving drug in it, over food without the drug. This tells us that the chickens ‘want’ pain relief. An ordinary person would deduce from this that the chickens feel the pain of their lameness. However, scientists studying the broiler chickens can suspend belief or disbelief about the birds’ feelings and merely look at their behaviour to assess their welfare. In these studies the case for animal welfare does not stand or fall by the claim that animals are conscious.

This is a scientist’s book but one written for lay people in lucid language. It is a triumph of a book. She leads the ordinary reader through the arguments and summarises the current state of research. She describes the scientist’s case for good animal welfare and argues that more science, not less, will benefit animals.

While I am sure that animal welfare is safe in the hands of Marian Stamp Dawkins, I do not share her optimism about science being on the side of animal welfare. If genetically modified mice had consciousness and could speak, I think they would speak out against the idea that *their* welfare is safe in scientists’ hands. These small animals are bred to be ill, to succumb to Alzheimers, obesity, diseases, cancer and paralysis so that scientists can study human diseases. The purpose of their lives is to suffer.

Why Animals Matter concentrates on just one area of controversy, whether animal welfare depends on the nature of animal minds. Human history, however, suggests that the question of consciousness may not be as relevant as scientists think. As far as I know, Nazis never thought that Jews lacked consciousness. They merely believed that Jews were so sub-human and evil, that killing and torturing them (among other things in medical experiments without anaesthetics) was justifiable.

Of course, the rigorous study of animal behaviour can help us treat our animals better by educating us in what animals need for a happy healthy life. Yet how we treat other animals cannot be left to scientists or academic philosophers. Animal welfare is only partly a question of good science. It is also a question of ethics, those higher order thoughts that distinguish us humans from our animal cousins.

Marion Stamp Dawkins believes that emotional appeals are not enough to argue the case for animals and no doubt she is right to value the part science can play in helping animals. For the scientist's case for welfare, this is the book to read. But emotional appeals and ethics may sometimes be more perceptive than science. Dr Samuel Johnson with his unscientific horror of animal cruelty was well ahead of the scientists who in his day were cutting up living dogs without anaesthetic. Animals need both scientists and humane lay people on their side.

The Truth about the Prophet?

Mark Baillie

In the Shadow of the Sword, Tom Holland, Little, Brown, 2012, £25.

Tom Holland's history of the religions and empires around early Islam may not be perfect but it is a very valuable addition to a sparse field where theology has dominated, covering a period of immense change and little reliable evidence. Above all, he puts the apparently sudden expansion of the Arabs into context, in the ebb and flow of conquest, amid declines of neighbouring empires exhausted by plague and war, rather than a unique explosion driven by faith.

It is also a reminder that Muhammad was a ruler and a general, who conquered all of Arabia in his lifetime; much of the fighting, particularly but not only against Jewish tribes, is mentioned in the Koran: the continuing expansion beyond was a development, not a sudden burst. Furthermore, that burst was far from continuous, with multiple Muslim civil wars and coups within years but which the Romans and the Persians were now too weak to exploit.

It is tempting to describe Holland's rich prose as populist, both in style and in content, which is mainly about what people did or what happened to them, more than the history of rulers, laws and wars. There is, however, a practical justification for this because what people believe is part of what they do, often even more important than actual facts. Holland presents all the myths, rumours and legends that guided people's behaviour as real, even if not true, giving flavours that are at least as important as dates, places and events.

The headline story from this book, although it is not the only topic, is the questioning of the chronology and content of the development of the Koran as we know it. Muslim convention is that it was pulled together within 20 years of the Prophet's death in 632 AD, from notes

taken by his followers and their testimony. Holland gives it a longer, more evolutionary, story and denies any Koranic texts being compiled until about 40 years later and a whole Koran not until some 70 years later; but unfortunately he does not address the evidence of the oldest Korans still in existence, two that are supposed to be from 19 years after Muhammad's death.

- Although he frequently acknowledges the tradition that the Caliph Uthman (ruled 644-656) brought it together by 651, Holland says that by the time of the Amir Abd al-Malik (ruled 685-705) there is a 'resounding lack of even a single Qur'anic inscription dating from the reigns of his predecessors'. He says elsewhere there is no written mention of the Koran until the 8th century.
- The story that the Tashkent copy (perhaps captured by Timur the Great in Iraq, certainly taken by the Russian Empire but returned to Uzbekistan by the Soviets) and the Topkapi Museum copy in Istanbul are two of five definitive Korans drafted under Uthman may well not have been verified by carbon-dating but deserves consideration: UNESCO accepts the dating, while academics assessing and disputing the dates and content of an early find in Yemen in 1972 do not seem to mention these either.

This all seems a bit impenetrable but the point here, which affects the rest of his book, is that Holland makes an assertion where there is doubt and where there is certainly no proof or disproof. Much is annotated in scholarly fashion (with an adequate index) and his enthusiastic prose makes good reading, but occasionally it creates a purplish cloud around the facts, along with speculative theories, although many of these facts are so purple and wild that no amount of sobriety could dim their grisly allure.

This is a pity because his more prudent examinations of the context of and influences on Muhammad, the Koran and the development of Islam are fascinating and broad-ranging, as befits the time and place where Muhammad lived, among traders and nomads, between the edges of the crumbling Roman and Persian empires, in a society where much of the Zoroastrian and Abrahamic traditions (such as Abraham himself, Jesus and the Angel Gabriel, God's messenger to Muhammad) were familiar, if rather unclear.

An example not included here is that the Koran says not only that the Jews had broken their Covenant in some way, they also consider Ezra to be the son of God, a belief not actually known in Judaism itself: 'And the Jews say: Uzair is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: the Messiah is the son of Allah; these

are the words of their mouths... may Allah destroy them...' (Sura 9.30). Perhaps it was a confusion with Elijah who never died and was taken to heaven (2 Kings 2:11) but it was a useful part of the process of subsuming Judaism and Christianity, along with local pagan practices such as worship of a black stone, now in the Mecca Qa'aba, into Islam.

Holland describes how Islam itself would then become subsumed into the practices and interests of rulers and clergy 'stitching together a whole new legal framework' bolstered by *hadith* (sayings and actions from the Prophet's life) compiled over the subsequent two hundred years, much as Christianity and Judaism had evolved.

The problem with Islamic history is that there are virtually no independent contemporary sources remaining, even within the first two centuries, let alone of Muhammad's time. For Muslims to question any of the approved stories about the Prophet, the Koran or many other aspects of the religion runs the danger of heresy so there has been very little real research subsequently.

Karen Armstrong's *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (1991) and the highly successful *A History of God* (1993) merely repeat selected conventional Muslim (and other Abrahamic religions') stories without any attempt at historical analysis. She even states as fact the tradition that the pagan Arabs yearned for a single God, like that of the Jews and Christians: why this should be so is never explained in any way, as Hindus still manage very well with lots of gods and Buddhists with none. Armstrong makes clear in numerous writings and statements that she is seeking the best in Abrahamic religions (only), to prove that compassion is the core of all monotheisms: this is very sweet but it is not history. Holland's book therefore fills a gap and is a good antidote to the Saudi-approved show about the Hajj earlier this year at the British Museum, which was more PR than history.

The period he covers, from the accession of the Persian King Shapur I in AD 241 to 762, is a crucible of much that we recognise today, including the practices that still hobble and isolate Islam, hampering economic, social and political progress, creating the natural desire to blame its self-inflicted misfortunes on someone else. Its lunar calendar, although largely superseded now in practice, does not fit the ruling reality of the solar year and therefore of seasons, agriculture, navigation and fishery. The daily five prayer intervals prevent ever having a decent sleep, even if one does not pray, because of the calls from the muezzin (the longest gap is between sunset-to-midnight and before-sunrise). A yearly month of daylight fasting, including no water, disrupts

everything (let alone driving lorries or any other alert work), while economic activity is severely constrained anyway by the ban on renting out money, even though one can rent out goods or oneself, as labour. Those restrictions on making a living have engendered many poor and repressive societies and therefore frustration and resentment, not least among the female half of a society living under apartheid.

In the Shadow of the Sword helps understand where we are today, which can help in understanding the many sources of conflict in the Muslim world, often labelled with, but obscured by, theological pretexts when the reality may be social, political and economic, as it was in early times.

White Pariahs

David Ashton

The WASP Question, Andrew Fraser, Arktos Media Ltd, 2011, £20.

'The few proudly Anglo-Saxon patriots scattered around the world are now political pariahs', declares Andrew Fraser in *The WASP Question*. 'In an age of diversity, they are the invisible race. But their fate is not foreclosed; neither the gene pool nor the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race is doomed to extinction.' This former Australian university teacher, after analysing the present predicament of people of English ancestry in an era of commercial materialism and compulsory multiracialism, assesses their chances of survival and revival.

The 'White Anglo-Saxon Protestant' acronym, which began as an epithet for US wealthy founder dynasties, now stretches to anyone of British descent. Quite correctly Fraser regards all 'Wasps' within the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and North America – as a large *ethnic group*. They generally possess all four characteristics of ethnicity – phenotypic subspecies (Caucasian), ancestral territory (England), mother tongue (English), and religious tradition (Christian).

The Germanic tribes who founded our Saxon kingdoms absorbed many blood-related Britons, Danes and Normans; Scots, Welsh and Huguenots subsequently strengthened the heartland patrimony. And the transatlantic settlers had undeniably varied ethno-religious backgrounds. Compare Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Utah, whose English-descended Mormons today combine a bizarre theology with civic achievements.

The faith of the Venerable Bede's 'Gens Anglorum'

has transmuted from Thomas Arundel's medieval 'Marian Dowry', through Arthur Bryant's imperial 'Protestant Island' to Cole Morton's currently abysmal 'Everywhere and Nowhere, Baby' with 'black' archbishops confronting lesbian 'priests', while churches become mosques or museums, and secularists try to clear the faithful from the public space.

The crucial problem is that Wasps, however precisely classified, either no longer possess a positive self-identity as a specific group, or see themselves collectively only in a guilt-relationship towards other communities, who blatantly assert their own ethnicities. In 'societies' obliged to 'celebrate' intrusive and incompatible 'cultures' and fund their grievance-obsessed organisations, the erstwhile majority is losing both legitimate self-esteem and effective power within each homeland. 'The roosters have become feather-dusters.'

Particularly serious is Wasp demographic decline, aggravated by non-stop mass-immigration. Whether politicians attempt to preserve the heritage by incompetently 'assimilating' newcomers, or to betray it by 'equality' and dissolve it through 'diversity', it is indeed fallacious to think any distinctive civilization can indefinitely outlive its biological basis.

Fraser brings his formidable expertise in constitutional law to describe government structures from 9th century Wessex down to 21st century Washington, reinforcing his analysis with an erudition that embraces Hannah Arendt, Robert Bellah, Harold Cruse and John Milbank. He shows how a system once shaped by Anglo-Saxon folkways has been perverted into one that nullifies them, and contends that rescuing the founder-race and restoring control over its own future is morally justified. He envisages a future alternative: a worldwide self-sustaining network of English-speaking kinsfolk with their own guilds and churches, fondly recalling countryside villages and prairie homesteads.

Fraser believes the world economy is heading for a prolonged crisis and violent extremism. He is hardly alone; for instance, the economist Nouriel Rubini predicts a 'perfect storm' in 2013 from Eurozone chaos, American recession and Middle East war. Such retribution for managerial multiracialism, welfare parasitism, anomic consumerism, and the global nomadism of a mixed multitude, would consequently provide an opening for effective rebellion against the failed propositions and disintegrating structures of the ruling racketeers. However, any deliberate switch amid the wreckage, from hollowed-out constitutionalism towards an Anglo-Saxon 'racial' resurrection, requires, especially in our cyber-warfare era, realistic early preparation. There is little sign of that.

Reconsidering Viscount Bolingbroke (Henry IV), Fraser anticipates the emergence of a 'patriot king', freed from the conventional advice of 'godless ministers'. And who can rule out completely someone of royal lineage and personal wisdom eventually seeing his sacred duty in sweeping away corruption, during a severe emergency, and restoring 'Crown, Church, and Country'?

Nevertheless, serious questions arise: First, will Fraser's Anglo-Saxon remnant, however united and therefore strengthened, stay as a self-sustaining archipelago, or develop its people-hood into a territorial state-hood, thereby regaining hegemony over urban centres largely occupied by foreigners; and if so, how? Secondly, he draws on the notion of evolutionary competition, which threatens conflict with rival communities on an increasingly overpopulated, resource-depleted planet. Fraser's plans would require partnership with fellow-Europeans, from Catholic Irish to Orthodox Greeks, at least for common self-defence in any forthcoming major clash of civilizations. He opposes a comprehensive 'white nationalism' as vacuous and egalitarian, but surely it is prudent to preserve not merely ourselves from catastrophe but other western Caucasians and their creative elites? Thirdly, Fraser regards religion as decisively important. Without prescribing its detailed liturgy, ministry or doctrine, he proposes an exclusive Anglican 'Volkskirche'. Unfortunately it resembles a ring-fenced sect, his fusion of ethnicity with worship complicating rather than resolving the spiritual exigencies of our time.

Despite the negative impact of modern scholarship on the credibility of scripture, the author pushes his religious remedies even further with 'biblical' arguments against racial intermarriage and an idiosyncratic exegesis of the 'second coming' in terms of the ancient destruction of Jerusalem. Nearly two millennia of ecclesiastical experience after Saint Paul 'turned to the Gentiles', Fraser too readily invokes the Holy Spirit for his private interpretation and Divine Wrath for his novel mission. However his lucid prose style sparkles with striking imagery and neat alliterations. His book is also beautifully printed. Eccentric even in the heretically pagan Arktos list, it makes a refreshing change from the usual C-of-E bookstall pap.

Whether or not by 'imagining the whole of life – at work and at play, at home, school, and church, in law and even politics – as a form of prayer, the Old Faith will help to hasten that happy moment' when Anglo-Saxons themselves are 'reborn as a people of destiny', remains debatable.

So why not debate it?

French without Tears

Alistair Miller

French Children Don't Throw Food, Pamela Druckerman, Doubleday, 2012, £15.

Many an English parent browsing a bookshop will be arrested by the title *French Children Don't Throw Food* and, like me, begin to turn the pages of this charming, ambling, autobiographical and ultimately fascinating book. The dread that afflicted Pamela Druckerman, an American married to an Englishman living in Paris, whenever she had to take her eighteen-month old daughter out to eat in a restaurant, will be all too familiar to many of us. The author rues that whereas her experience was 'a circle of hell', there seemed to be 'an invisible, civilizing force' at work at the tables of French families. What is this force? How is it that French adults in the company of small children are able to have 'entire cups of coffee and full-length adult conversations' – a minor miracle in the author's eyes? How is it that an elegant mother brings to the park what appears to be a single ball to amuse her one-year old daughter for the entire afternoon, and then while the girl entertains herself quite happily, is able to converse and even lunch with her girlfriend? Why do French children not throw temper tantrums? Why are their parents not shouting? Why do French children happily eat what is put in front of them? How come French babies sleep through the night ... and even 'Why are French mothers more likely to be seen in skinny jeans than tracksuit bottoms?' These are clearly intriguing questions.

The answer is not always straightforward, but central to it is the *cadre*, the framework inculcated from the very beginning that prescribes clear boundaries but within which there is considerable freedom for the child. The key socialising principle underpinning the *cadre* is that children show respect for the needs of others – but how is this respect cultivated?

The answer is 'in a whole range of ways'. For example, French children eat at regular times, never snacking between meals except for the *goûter* at 4 pm and sit round the table to eat the same food, served in the same courses, as the adults; they often engage in the orderly weekend ritual of baking the cake and then have to wait before they can eat it – 'a perfect lesson in patience'; children are always asked, politely but firmly, to wait a minute when they interrupt; children are encouraged to play by themselves when the adults are otherwise engaged; parents respond to a child's

sudden demand with a firm 'no', explaining, for example, that buying a toy 'isn't in the day's plan' and then redirecting the child's attention elsewhere; and children learn the first rule of civilized encounters, which is always to formally acknowledge the other person (especially a guest) with the 'magic words' *bonjour* and *au revoir*. Even newborn babies are not exempt from being socialised. Instead of rushing in, mothers pause 'a little bit' before picking up their crying baby, so he can 'learn to fall back to sleep' on his own. The remarkable result is that babies nearly always do fall back to sleep, they learn to 'connect their sleep cycles', and babies and adults alike soon get to enjoy uninterrupted nights of sleep.

The effect of all this seems to be that French children learn quickly that the world does not revolve around them, that there are other people to consider, that they cannot have everything right away and that they must be patient; and in learning to cope with boredom and frustration, they acquire 'a core life skill'. Interestingly, this ties in with Walter Mischel's famous research finding in the late 1960s that children who are able to resist eating a marshmallow straight away at the age of 4 go on to be the more focused, resilient, calm and ultimately happy adults. In fact, this whole process of socialisation that the French term *éducation* amounts to an ongoing apprenticeship in how to delay gratification. Children are rescued from 'the tyranny of their desires'; and family life need not revolve around ministering to the children's needs, to the benefit of all concerned. The author has lunch with Mischel (now 80) in Paris, and, tellingly, he confesses that he is struck by the difference between French kids, who can control themselves, and American kids, who increasingly cannot.

The process of *éducation* begins in the *crèche* and is continued in the *école maternelle* or nursery. Instead of the intensive development of pre-literacy or pre-numeracy skills, the emphasis is firmly on socialization. Children learn to follow instructions, organise thoughts, speak grammatically and think rationally; and so it is that a nation of philosophers is born. Until the age of 7, the only 'literacy' is learning letters, sounds and how to write the children's own names. The centrepiece of the day is the dining experience, the elaborate ritual of a four-course lunch prepared from fresh ingredients, in which children learn to sample – and in the end to like – all varieties of food (even spinach). With *crèches* and *écoles maternelles* (nurseries) provided free by the state and properly resourced so that groups are small and staff are highly trained, mothers are able to go to work (and have a life) and the children are socialised without trauma.

Lurking behind the French approach to raising children are the philosophy of Rousseau, the psychology

of Jean Piaget and the advice of ‘the patron saint of French parenting’, Françoise Dolto. The mention of Rousseau immediately raises alarm bells for those of us who have read *Émile*; and Dolto’s manuals, complete with Freudian stages of libidinal development including the Oedipal period are even more alarming – though curiously, Druckerman makes no mention of this. And yet the French seem to have forged out of these unlikely sources a set of workable if somewhat contradictory principles for bringing up children on which all are agreed. So within the limits of the *cadre*, the spirit of discovery and self-construction is allowed to reign (and hence French playgrounds ‘are famously free-for-all’); children are allowed to ‘cultivate their inner life’, to work things out for themselves, without constant adult supervision; and they are treated as rational little adults by adults who speak calmly and respectfully, and always give reasons. Yet when it is necessary, when the boundary needs to be drawn, Rousseau’s ‘immutable no’ comes into play and the parent is affirmed the master. There is even a special look of admonishment – *les gros yeux* – to accompany the ‘no’ and to signal to the child that he

has transgressed. Could it be that the French are on to something – that in his programme for educating ‘the preposterous *Émile*’ (as Roger Scruton once termed him), Rousseau was right?

One thing is certain. The contrast with the ‘intensive parenting’ of the middle classes of Britain and America could not be more striking: the expectation that the child is constantly stimulated through a series of organised activities, that adults keep up a non-stop monologue of ‘narrated play’, that the child is seen as a project requiring ‘concerted cultivation’ and accelerated development, with parents competing to outdo each other and schools setting ever earlier and more ambitious targets. But have we missed the point? By no stretch of the imagination could French school leavers be described as scholastically *inferior* to their British or American counterparts – quite the contrary, in fact. Traditionally, French schools are highly competitive and exacting in their standards. It is just that the French, in common with most Europeans, take care to socialize their children first, and in the process give parents back their lives. Could we learn from the French? Here is certainly much food for thought.

FILM

The Shawshank Redemption

Directed by Frank Darabont

Myles Harris

The opening scenes of *The Shawshank Redemption* are inside a prison bus taking banker Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) to prison. It is 1947 and he has been sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for the murder of his wife and her lover. An American version of Dartmoor, Shawshank Penitentiary is a grim pile rising out of a featureless landscape. This is where, in fifty years or so, Dufresne will die, and where he will be buried under a rock in the prison graveyard just outside the walls.

The film, which made a loss on its first release in 1994, has since gone on to be one of the most successful ever made. Rarely off the TV screen, it has been voted ‘the best film to watch’ by two BBC audience surveys, and, in an international poll, one of the top hundred best films ever made.

Life inside the prison is a ritual of grey food, brutal wardens – on Dufresne’s first night a prisoner is beaten to death by the guards – gang rapes by a group of homosexual prisoners called The Sisters, and solitary confinement. Dufresne makes friends with Red Redding (Morgan Freeman), a forty year old black man serving a life sentence for a murder he committed at the age of 17. When Dufresne explains to Red that he is innocent, Red smiles and replies, ‘We are all innocent here.’

One day while working on the prison roof, Dufresne overhears a warden complaining about having to pay too much tax. He tells him there is a perfectly legal way of avoiding it. Within months, he is offering tax advice to all the prison staff, including the prison warden Samuel Norton (Bob Gunton) who, fond of biblical quotations, runs a money laundering operation concealing the bribes he takes from local businessmen for the hire of his prisoners.

Except for a job in the prison library, working for the warden buys Dufresne little in the way of favours. One afternoon he finds among a pile of donated books a record of *The Marriage of Figaro* which he plays

over the prison address system. For this he is beaten and thrown into lightless solitary confinement.

A young thief, Tommy Williams, arrives, who Dufresne teaches to read and write. In gratitude Williams tells Dufresne of a prison he was in where a cell mate confessed to a crime at the same time and place identical to the one for which Dufresne has been sentenced. The cell mate, a murderous psychopath, laughs as he explains how in the course of a burglary he came across a man's wife with her lover, shoots them both and then, for a joke, places the pistol where the husband is sure to pick it up on returning home, thus making it look like a revenge killing.

Dufresne asks Warden Norton to contact the prison where the psychopath is held. Norton refuses and when Dufresne protests he sentences him to a month in solitary. While Dufresne is locked away, Norton arranges to meet the young thief just outside the prison walls, where, at his signal, the guards shoot him dead. Norton is not going to let his money launderer go.

When Dufresne is released from solitary he tells Red that despite what has happened he still clings to the hope one day he will get out. He then mentions a village called Buxton near the prison and a field outside it in which stands an oak tree. Under the oak is a basalt stone. If Red should ever be released he should take what he will find beneath it. Red laughs. He has long ago given up hope, and anyhow he could no longer live on the outside. He reminds Dufresne of the prison librarian before him, who, released after 50 years of a life sentence, hanged himself in a rooming house in a nearby town.

A few weeks later Dufresne asks Red to obtain a ten-foot length of rope on the prison black market. It is plain that Dufresne has succumbed to despair and intends to hang himself but Red cannot interfere. If a man wants to kill himself in Shawshank, that is his right. After giving the rope to his friend Red spends the longest night of his life awaiting the outcome.

But in the morning Dufresne has gone, escaping through a tunnel he has carved over twenty years from his cell to the outside. Its entrance is hidden behind a Raquel Welch poster in his cell. The rope was to let him down a ten-foot wall to the prison sewer through which he crawls the last 500 yards to freedom. He has taken with him the warden's accounts.

The next morning, dressed in a set of the warden's clothes and proffering the forged identity papers of a non-existent customer he invented to launder the warden's money, he draws every cent of the \$350,000 from ten banks where it is hidden, posts the account books to a local paper – and vanishes. The account

books come from a safe in the warden's office behind a psalter on which his wife has worked the motto 'His judgement cometh and right soon.' That judgement soon materialises in the form of a local police inspector with an arrest warrant. Warden Norton shoots himself. A few weeks later Red receives a blank postcard from a small coastal town in Mexico. Dufresne has made it.

With Dufresne gone, Red, now an old man, comes up before the Parole Board for what has, over the years, been a meaningless ritual.

'Has he been rehabilitated?' asks the president of the parole board.

'Rehabilitated?' replies Red, 'that's just a made up word to keep young men like you in a job. Am I the same man who did that terrible thing so long ago? No. But I would like to go back and tell him how to be a better man, but I can't because he is long dead. Sonny, you go on and stamp your forms and let me go back to my cell.'

The president picks up a stamp and hits the paper.

'(Parole) Approved.'

And so one afternoon in high summer Red finds himself in a field outside the town of Buxton, opening the box Dufresne told him about all those years ago. Inside are five hundred dollars and the address of the small coastal town in Pacific Mexico. We see a bus with Red on board approaching the US Mexico border and the film closes with him walking along a beach toward his old friend Dufresne. The last line of dialogue is 'I hope.'

The Shawshank Redemption, its script as spare and gripping as a tale by Somerset Maugham, holds one from the outset. Under its mid-twentieth-century clothes it is a medieval passion play in which good struggles with evil, hope prevails, the good enter paradise, and the Devil (Warden Holter) and his archangel (the murderous chief prison officer Hadley) are thrust into hell. Justice is done.

As in a medieval passion play, the expositor, Red, narrating in the background, leads us step by step through the argument. Hope, almost extinguished, is saved by the humanity of one man toward his fellow prisoners. With the revival of hope comes justice. Replace the grim walls of the Shawshank Penitentiary with the grey shadows of our crumbling society, riddled with institutional theft, heartlessness, violence, corrupt authority and lack of justice, and this is a tale of our times. Where else would you find such an apt motto?

'His judgement cometh and right soon.'

Pious words behind which is hidden a safe full of laundered cash.

Rosa Newmarch 1857-1940

The woman who introduced Russian music to British audiences

Helen Szamuely



In 1932 the composer Arnold Bax and the pianist Harriet Cohen visited Jean Sibelius in Helsinki and talked, among other things, about Rosa Newmarch, whom he had not seen for some years. Cohen sent Newmarch a postcard with a somewhat breathless account of the meeting and quoted Sibelius's description of the latter as 'une femme inoubliable', an unforgettable woman. Given Mrs Newmarch's efforts to ensure that Sibelius's music should be known in Britain and that he, himself, should be well looked after during his visits, the comment seems accurate even if there is a slight feeling of exhaustion in it.

By 1905, she had already translated Alfred Habet's *Borodin and Liszt* (1895), published the first biography of Tchaikovsky in any language (*Tchaikovsky: His Life and Works*, 1900), given a series of five lectures on *The Development of National Opera in Russia* to the Musical Association, and embarked on writing countless entries on Russian composers for the second edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1904 – 1910). Over the next decade or so, she would translate Modest Tchaikovsky's *The Life and Letters of Peter Illich Tchaikovsky* (1906), write a trilogy of books on Russian culture – *Poetry and Progress in Russia* (1907), *The Russian Opera* (1914) and *The Russian Arts* (1916) – and edit *The Devout Russian* (1918), a series of extracts from Orthodox spiritual texts and modern writers on religious and philosophical questions, whose relevance was overtaken by political events. After the October Revolution of 1917 her interest shifted to the music of Czechoslovakia and, in particular, that of Leoš Janáček.'

From 1908 till 1919 she wrote analytical notes for all the Promenade concerts in Queen's Hall as well as other concerts, organized visits by musicians such as Sibelius, wrote musical criticism for the *Times* and more specialized musical publications, read foreign books for John Lane (and translated a few), translated songs and librettos, published several volumes of poetry, was active in the Society of Women Musicians, becoming its President in 1927. She was also active in the Anglo-Russian Literary Society and was involved in the setting up of the School of Slavonic Studies.

Her correspondence with Sibelius and Janáček has been published and other letters are available in various archives although her correspondence with the great Russian critic and essayist Vladimir Stasov has disappeared, one hopes only temporarily.

Rosa Newmarch came from a cultivated family and was well educated for a woman in that era. I first came across her when researching British attitudes to Russia between 1880 and 1918. At that time Russian literature became well known in Britain, with the works of the great novelists translated and much discussed. Russian art and music as well as drama and ballet were a heady draught of something new and exciting. Among the writers and literary critics I found a lady whose name did not seem well known but who appeared to know more than most of those who were pontificating on the subject. Rosa Newmarch was the only one to write about Russian poetry. She was described as someone who wrote about Russian music but I had no idea of the extent of her work.

Recently, I returned to the subject to find that there has been a mild revival of Mrs Newmarch's reputation with a biography and several monographs on various aspects of her activity. She has not been entirely forgotten – no history of the Proms can be written without a discussion of her role as the programme writer who began the still continuing practice of analytical notes that are aimed at the intelligent lay person, or of her influence on Henry Wood concerning Russian music. Nevertheless, her crucial position in the period that is described as the renaissance of English music was fully appreciated for many years. Even so, not enough was said about her role in making Russian music, now a staple of concert halls and opera houses, familiar to British audiences.

Rosa Newmarch's first book, about Brahms, was published in 1888, and in 1895 she read Alfred Habet's book on Borodin and Liszt, which she translated and published. While working on it she realized that much of the material came from Vladimir Stasov, the Director of the Imperial Library in St Petersburg, a critic of art and music with the odd foray into literature, and the man who promoted the idea of Russian national art,

particularly Russian national music. Rosa wrote to him (presumably in French) and received a long and detailed reply in which he suggested that if she was interested in Russian music she would have to learn the language. This was not unreasonable but took Rosa aback. Nevertheless, she found a teacher and in 1897 she went to Russia, spending some time in Moscow, meeting Russian doctors and investigating Moscow life, then traveling to St Petersburg where Stasov introduced her to people who were important in Russian cultural life.

After several months Rosa returned to London laden with music, notes for future lectures and articles and a strong desire to ensure that British audiences should hear Russian music that was not just Tchaikovsky or Anton Rubinstein, neither of whom in Stasov's or her own opinion produced truly Russian music. She proclaimed Rimsky-Korsakov as the great representative of Russianness in music-making, and promoted the 'mighty five', Mily Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Moussorgsky, Borodin and César Cui. She displayed a continuing distrust for German music, and some worry about chauvinism in English music. Russian nationalness, she maintained, was more genuinely linked to folk music as its existence was real and ubiquitous (unlike the English variety) and was closely attached to liberal thinking in the country. She thought, though not always coherently, that Russian nationalness (as distinct from crude nationalism) could have a salutary effect on English cultural and musical life.

Russian music and the need to educate the British public in it was what really mattered. Rosa wanted the British public to understand more about the history of Russian art and poetry. Fortunately Henry Wood was a kindred soul for he wanted to expand the scope of music in British concert halls. Apparently she waylaid him outside his home with the music she had brought back from Russia and they talked at great length. Wood was happy to perform Russian music at the Proms and inserted various pieces into the programme so often that one sharp-tongued critic suggested that Queen's Hall should be renamed Tsar's Hall. Wood and his first wife Olga became close friends with Rosa and, surprisingly enough, her husband Harry Newmarch who had not previously shared his wife's enthusiasms. Olga Wood provided musical illustrations to Rosa's lectures and found her a good Russian tutor. Henry Wood decided in 1907 that the Proms needed the sort of notes that Rosa could provide, knowledgeable but accessible.

There were more trips to Russia: in 1901, 1910 and a somewhat hair-raising one in 1915, when she went to see friends, to collect material for her book on the

history of Russian arts and to ensure that Russian music could still be published in England. Most of it had been published by German companies whose British branches could not function during the war.

Before the First World War when knowledge of Russian culture clashed with distrust of Russian politics people like Rosa Newmarch helped to pave the way for the highly controversial 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement and the dubious war-time alliance. Her writings during the war both while she was in England and from Russia are less interesting as they concentrate heavily on exalting the Russian ally and the fine Russian people who were, according to her and many others, determined to fight the enemy and to achieve victory. While she was in Petrograd and in Moscow in 1915, she talked to her friends and visited Shalyapin at his dacha and she did hear about the defeats and the growing dissatisfaction but convinced herself and her readers that this was not important.

Did Rosa Newmarch lose interest in Russian music because of the Bolshevik revolution, to which she referred on occasion with great distaste and disappointment; or was she, as Ross Bullock suggests, losing interest anyway? Certainly she became interested in Czechoslovakian music during the war and visited the new country as early as 1919 and almost every year for some time afterwards. As with Russia she was interested in the concept of national music and the Czechs' and Slovaks' refusal to become culturally and musically subservient to Germany. She made friends among the political as well as the cultural Czechoslovak élite and was welcomed as a grand visitor. That did not prevent her from working as hard as ever through writing, translating (she produced the first version of Janáček's Glagolitic Mass in English) and organizing musical events. Her interest in Russia disappeared almost completely. She always tried to find out what she could about events in the country and about the fate of her friends, but her work in that field, she was justified in thinking, had been done.

In old age she continued working: her book on Sibelius was published in 1939 and her history of the music of Czechoslovakia posthumously in 1942. For a time Rosa Newmarch's role was forgotten; it is being revived now and even her autobiographical notes have been used by Lewis Stevens in his recent biography, *The Unforgettable Woman*. Her greatest legacy is the continuing interest in the music she was so anxious to promote: that of Sibelius, Janáček and numerous Russian composers.

Helen Szamuely is a writer and researcher

The Power of the Clay

Tanya Harrod

The Ceramic Art of James Tower, Timothy Wilcox, Lund Humphries, 2012, £45.

The show *British Artist Craftsmen* toured the United States during 1959-60. Unusually, as its title suggests, fine artists and applied artists showed together. There was plenty of sculpture, mostly ecclesiastical, by major figures like Jacob Epstein, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. All the work by painters was translated into some form of applied art: for instance, there were tapestries by Cecil Collins and Graham Sutherland and embroideries designed by John Piper and William Gear. The spirit of the show was markedly inclusive, as befits the tail-end of post-war consensus during which it was assumed that one of the duties of an artist was to work in the public realm – for state schools, for universities and for the church, adorning shared spaces and buildings. Stained glass jostled with fine bindings, ecclesiastical robes, engraved glass and architectural reliefs. Work by Elizabeth Frink and Jacob Epstein sat alongside silver by Gerald Benney and Robert Welch and pots by Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, Ruth Duckworth, Nicholas Vergette and William Newland. It must have been a beautiful exhibition, a snapshot of a moment in time, reminding us that any equivalence between the fine arts and craft tends to be a fragile one.

Timothy Wilcox's monograph devoted to James Tower, one of the finest potter exhibitors in *Modern British Craftsmen*, beautifully brings out the problems of doing serious work in a craft discipline. Picasso explains the dilemma well. During his extended flirtation with ceramics after World War II, he was very conscious of pottery's uncertain status *vis à vis* fine art. He loved the way pots could unite sculpture and painting but in a darker moment he found the pot a frustrating vehicle for creativity, noting 'It's always an object but not always an *objet d'art*'. James Tower would have sympathised. He devoted most of his career to making *objets d'art* within the framework of

ceramics and was correspondingly vexed and frustrated by his status in relation to the art world.

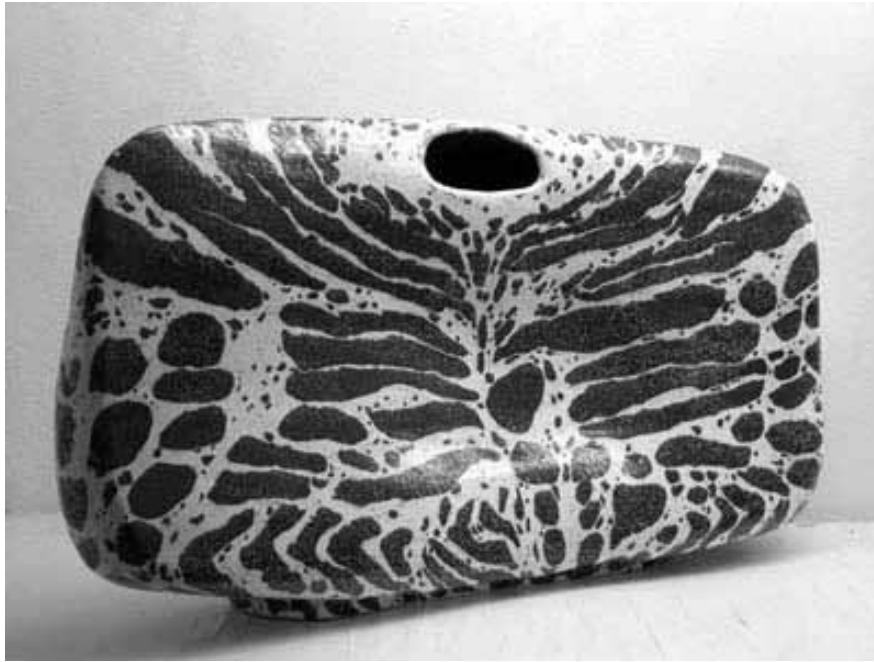
Tower started out studying painting at the Royal Academy Schools and, after the Second World War, at the Slade. He was a dutiful, prizewinning student who showed promise as an illustrator. His paintings suggested a cautious interest in the School of Paris. He coincided at the Slade with Nigel Henderson and the ebullient Eduardo Paolozzi but no friendship developed with those gifted fellow students. Mindful of earning a living in 1948 Tower signed up at the Institute of Education to train as an art teacher. There something extraordinary occurred.

The pottery tutor at the Institute was the New Zealander William Newland and Tower became Newland's first important convert to a form of ceramics that had its roots in a European tradition of tin-glaze and which was simultaneously being encouraged by Newland's colleague Dora Billington, the senior pottery tutor at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. They saw colourful tin-glaze as an alternative to the Orientally-inspired quietude of stoneware that had dominated studio pottery in the interwar years. Newland and Tower, and other of Newland's pupils such as Nicholas Vergette and Margaret Hine, rejected the certainties set out in Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*. Newland, Hine and Vergette were particularly conscious of Picasso's ceramic activities in the South of France (also mostly tin-glaze) and Newland, Hine and Vergette in particular paid tribute by working figuratively in a light-hearted spirit to create prancing bulls, harlequins and girls releasing doves. They decorated coffee bars and milk parlours.

Platters decorated with doves and owls suggest that Picasso also influenced Tower. But he gradually evolved a semi-abstract painterly and graphic language employing a limited colour palette, applied to mostly press-moulded vessels that ranged from vertical torso-like forms, heavily carved with striated lines, to shallow fish-like

dishes that recalled skate or rays. Paradoxically, by becoming a potter, Tower developed into a thoroughly ambitious artist, catching up with his apparently more ambitious fellow Sladers. The painting and drawing on his pots recall skeletal and cell structures, suggesting that he may have read the scientist D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's *Growth and Form* which inspired the radical, eponymous exhibition curated at the Institute of Contemporary Art by Hamilton, Paolozzi and Richard Hamilton in 1951. Tower's appointment in the autumn of 1949 as pottery instructor at Bath

Academy of Art at Corsham would have broadened his outlook. The Principal, Clifford Ellis, was assembling an impressive teaching staff of working artists and the atmosphere must have been stimulating. And through one of his colleagues, the Polish painter



Peter Potworoski, Tower was invited to exhibit his ceramics with the progressive dealer Gimpel Fils in London.

This set him apart from most of his fellow potters who invariably showed in craft and design venues like Heal's or Henry Rothschild's Primavera or at William Ohly's idiosyncratic Berkeley Galleries where they shared space with paintings and Far Eastern and so-called 'tribal art'.

From 1951 until 1963 Tower showed regularly with Gimpel Fils. His show in January 1963 was, however, entitled *Recent Sculpture* and signalled a move towards sculpture, albeit mostly using unglazed white china clay. Sad to say Tower proved to be a less remarkable sculptor than a potter. But making the switch evidently fulfilled a need, as it did with the great American ceramicist Peter Voulkos who similarly abandoned ceramics for almost a decade from 1962. One factor may have been Tower's new role as head of the sculpture department at Brighton Polytechnic where he

worked hard to create a good environment for students and staff. The introduction to Wilcox's monograph by Anthony Gormley testifies to his success in this regard.

But in 1978, as Wilcox eloquently explains, the ceramic artist was reborn and Tower returned to developing his unique pots and showing regularly at Gimpel Fils until his death in 1988. They were just as striking but perhaps lacked some of the rugged immediacy of the boldest pots made in the 1950s. What led him back? In some notes made

after his return to ceramics Tower wrote of 'becoming dissatisfied with undecorated surfaces' ... even if 'Ceramics less intellectual than sculpture'. But ceramics offered a 'more emotive response to surface and form, quicker – more existential'. As

Wilcox points

out, Tower was very much a painter and only one discipline permits painting to be combined with form-making in a thoroughly integrated fashion.

This is a handsome book that pays just tribute to a remarkable artist who, because of the curious blindness of most art historians and art critics towards ceramics, has been overlooked in general surveys of post-war art. Grayson Perry, Tower is not. He did not, like Perry, turn to ceramics in a semi-ironic fashion. Instead he worked in a modernist spirit, uniting bio-morphical abstract decoration with the pure form that ceramics offers as a gift to its practitioners.

Tanya Harrod's new book The Last Sane Man: Michael Cardew, Modern Pots, Colonialism and the Counter Culture, will be published in October by Yale.

IN SHORT

My life as it is lived, Roger Lewis, Pub Short Books 2010, £7.99

This is a bad taste commonplace book, not the author's bad taste, but that of our uncharitable, primping media society which has terrified so many into silence. However Lewis, who wrote a best-selling biography *The life and Death of Peter Sellers*, is fearless.

Here he surfaces to fire a torpedo at the Church of England.

After the sung Eucharist, complete with bongos, the vicar announced he had stage 11 breast cancer – a nice example of one of God's custard pies, as he is not even a woman vicar (or priestess as they should be called). Stress brought on by the compulsory installation of disabled toilets in the vestry will be at the back of it.

Lewis, a worthy successor to Peter Simple, writes of Harold Pinter:

What a ghastly clanking beast he was with eyeballs blacker than anthracite... I always found it very suspect, the way Pinter would write about oppression in faraway lands and under distant regimes but take it out on waiters and taxi drivers in London.

Lewis takes a cruise up the Amazon on the m/v *Spirit of Dementia* and observes the childish behaviour of its passengers: former ambassadors, lord lieutenants, surgeons, admirals and computer wizards, some of whom spend £65,000 a year on such jaunts. After a fortnight he begins to detect 'little caprices' in his fellow passengers.

A loony who because of her ill-advised face-lifts, we nicknamed Gloria Swanson (if she sat down her wig fell off) went everywhere with a teddy bear. The teddy wore dark glasses, because he's embarrassed to be seen out with her.

Then there are those condemned to remain ever onshore at the caprice of the NHS. They pay the price of their longevity with a total surrender of dignity.

Pensioner Marguerite Hicks of Lower Billingham, who because of her 'mobility problems and a heart condition' has a disabled parking badge, was outraged to be sent a form by the Council's Equality and Diversity Manager, asking her to tick the box that best described her sexual orientation and religious beliefs. 'I have never been asked that even by health care professionals,' said great-grandmother Mrs Hicks.

Like all great comics, Lewis's secret is sympathy, for a society which has everything, but like a child with a self-absorbed mother is condemned to be forever alone in front of a giant TV screen surrounded by toys but no love. Little wonder then that in Lewis's world Christmas catalogues keep coming as early as May the 24th.

Francis Hallinan

Treachery, Chapman Pincher, Mainstream Publishing, 2012, £14.99

Soviet espionage lacks neither professional nor amateur commentary, but not unexpectedly the subject has been bedevilled by disinformation and unreliable memories. Kim Philby, whose duplicity is universally agreed, continued with deceptions in his memoirs while the chequered role of western counter-intelligence has even provoked recent claims that the CIA's James Angleton and MI5's Peter Wright must themselves have been disruptive moles – a 'wilderness of mirrors' indeed.

Chapman Pincher's critique of British counter-espionage focuses on his long-held view that Roger Hollis was not just the negligent head of MI5 from 1956 to 1965 but a double-agent. His largely 'negative' case is not dependent, as often supposed, upon the debriefing of the controversial defector Anatoli Golytsin.

Two points particularly interested me. The first was the curious pre-war visit Hollis made to Shanghai, which General MacArthur's intelligence chief in 1952 identified as a communist centre for important subversives like Richard Sorge (codenamed 'Ramsay').

The second is whether the mysterious 'Elli' mentioned by the post-war defector Igor Gouzenko was Hollis, or one of several other suggested 'possibles' including Victor Rothschild. It is notable that Russian codenames for actual or potential agents sometimes selected two or three key letters from their actual names, providing clues in retrospect; for instance, 'Ales' for Alger Hiss, 'Johnson' for Anthony Blunt, 'Hola' for Melita Norwood and 'Olding' for Harold Wilson.

Pincher has fully updated almost all the circumstantial evidence against Hollis in over 600

carefully reasoned pages for the judgement of competent and unbiased readers.

David Ashton

Being British – What’s Wrong With It?, Peter Whittle, 2012, Biteback Publishing

As I was reading Peter Whittle’s *Being British – What’s Wrong With It?* it occurred to me that sport occupies a peculiar position in our political and social consciousness. All the virtues, so eloquently extolled by Peter Whittle, that have been abandoned or made to seem embarrassing, become acceptable. People are allowed to wave flags and cheer their country (though some problems arise with people who appear to think that certain sportsmen and women are Scottish if they win and British if they lose). Even the BBC joins in. There is another difference: for a short time the people who are presented as heroes and role models are not vacuous celebrities but people who have, necessarily, kept the old virtues of hard work, self-discipline and aspiration. But Olympic standards are unattainable for most and we shall soon go back to the vacuous fascination with celebrity.

Other problems raised in *Being British – What’s Wrong With It?* are the deliberate destruction by the self-hating political élite of pride in one’s country

and one’s culture, the whole idea of multiculturalism related to it, mass immigration that is both cause and effect of it, the dismissal of working class virtues, their destruction through all the above and the rapacious welfare state, and, above all, complete ignorance of the country’s history.

Once or twice I found myself vigorously shaking my head in disagreement: I do not share the author’s sentimental feelings about the 1950s. Nevertheless, the main argument of the book is accurate. Britain has created good things in the country and in the world, though often those who did the creating were the ones who found many of the solid British virtues tiresome and stifling, a curious contradiction noted by George Orwell; but those achievements have been deliberately denied and belittled by a weird self-hating élite. Although this country and its culture has been admired and emulated across the world (though not the NHS) it is disturbing to see its denigration at home.

But there are reasons for hope. People seem to be refusing to knuckle under: they remain stubbornly proud of their country and its achievements, they want to learn about its history and they are waking up to the importance and necessity of all that has been taken away from them. This book should help them in that process.

Helen Szamuely

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How can Britain exit the EU?

BRUGES GROUP MEETING

Monday, 8th October 2012

Lectures and Discussion: 2pm – 3.30pm



THE SPEAKERS



RT HON. JOHN REDWOOD MP

Member for Wokingham and Chairman of the Economic Competitiveness Policy Group



GISELA STUART MP

Labour MP for Birmingham, Edgbaston



PROFESSOR TIM CONGDON, CBE

Economist and advisor to previous Chancellors

LOCATION

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Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS

ADMISSION FREE AND OPEN TO ALL

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10.30am until 6.15pm

Bruges Group International Conference
Royal Over-Seas League, 6 Park Place
St James's St, London SW1A 1LR



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