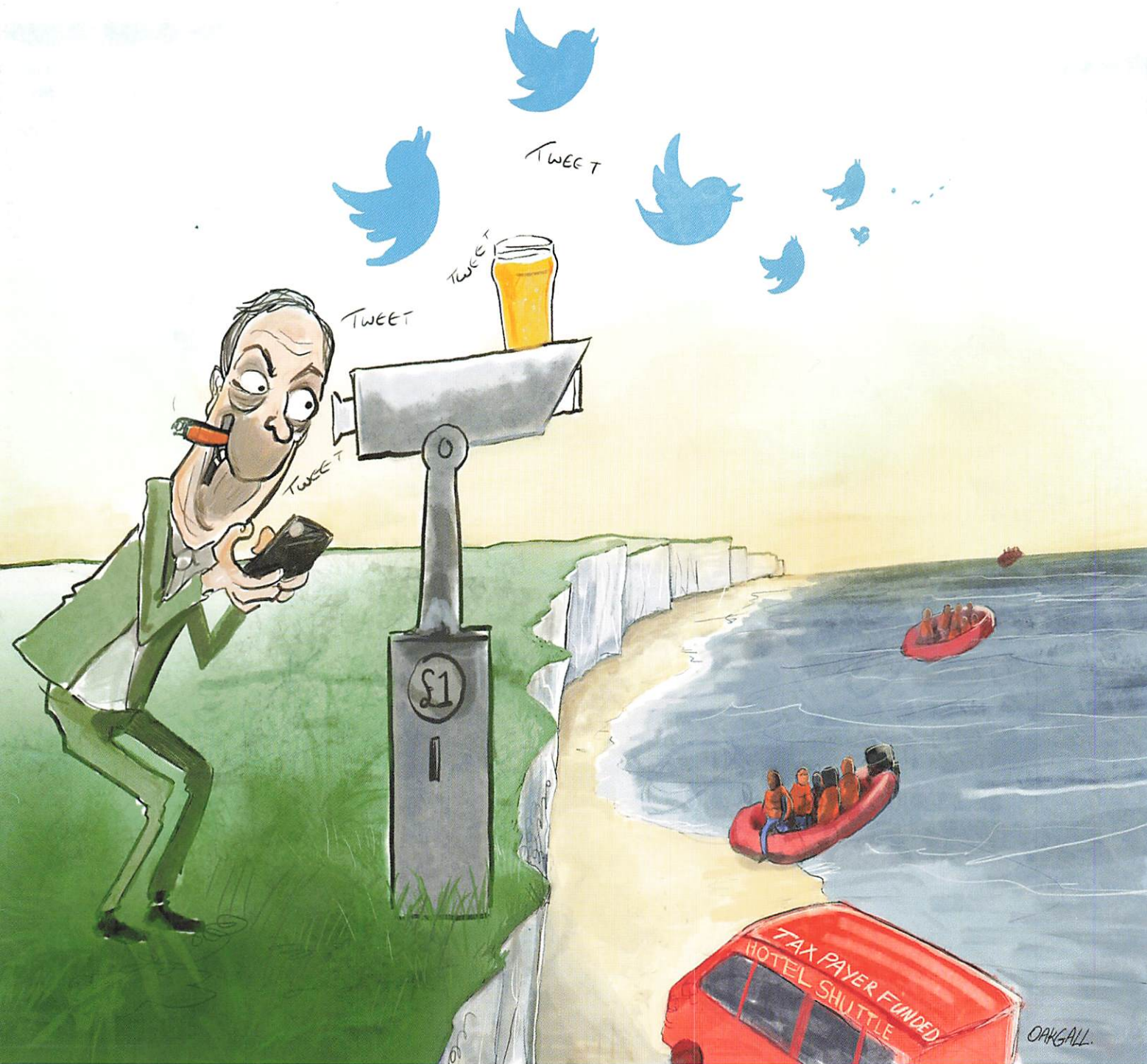


The
Salisbury Review

Absolutely the wrong opinion about everything



The quarterly magazine of conservative thought

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Squash a large number of animals in a confined space and sooner or later a fatal disease will make its appearance. Farmer Brown knows this only too well and keeps disease out of his factory farm by the liberal use of antibiotics, vaccines and confining them in crates. There is plenty of room on the earth for us humans to avoid being squashed together, huge areas of the globe are unpopulated, but cities are now the trend and people from all over the world flock to them. They arrive in aircraft with closed ventilation systems ensuring all the passengers share the same air and the same respiratory diseases. Aircraft are by no means the sole cause of Covid 19's spread but they ensure it spreads rapidly before governments have time to prepare a defence.

The arrival of Covid19, probably overnight from China, caused an enormous panic, yet it appeared to be a very ordinary infectious disease likely to respond to common sense measures familiar to anybody who works in a hospital: Wash your hands, keep your distance, avoid crowds, wear a mask and hope for a vaccine. It's cheap, it's cheerful and except for the vaccine, not difficult. Our government took a further step by locking everybody in their homes. Most British people obeyed cheerfully although it is unlikely they will do so again. Today's figures (20.7.20) show social distancing, masks, and hand washing have been highly successful. People are still arguing about lockdown.

Meanwhile, as in any panic, voices were raised against simple solutions. Everybody in the chattering classes became their own virologist blaming everyone but themselves for Covid's rapid spread. There were those who denied the existence of the virus, some who said masks made it worse, some who declared they would rather die than wash their hands and those who believed that crowds were the thing as they created 'herd immunity.'

Anti-vaxxers had a field day, declaring Covid19 to be a plot by Bill Gates and George Soros to start a world immunisation scheme putting governments in their power by forcing them to use their unique vaccine in return for starting a radical green agenda; no cars, no aircraft, no factories, no power stations, no home ownership, only vegetable soup in tower blocks powered by windmills.

In the panic the real victims, the very old and those whose lives had been artificially and often painfully extended by modern medicine, were deprived of the right to die at

home surrounded by their families (or in a familiar nursing home), of the 'old man's friend', pneumonia. Instead they were whisked off to intensive care units to die alone on a respirator, one of the most horrible ways of going you could devise.

So, who is at fault? The Green Fascists, the Chinese military, Bill Gates, Boris Johnson, Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump, various public health departments, WHO, drug companies, the Elders of Zion, or the old lady at the end of the street with too many cats? No, it's you and me dear reader. Who has not flown off for a weekend to Europe, taken a couple of transcontinental holidays in one year, or flown out to spend a week in a part of the world hitherto unspoilt by modernity, except for the other 50,000 like you who will visit it this year?

Have we learnt our lesson? No. Nobody is going to give up flying, that has been made clear by the surge in demand for holiday flights to resume, the profits they generate financing the means by which millions more migrants continue to flood the country from the poorer parts of Asia, making a Muslim Britain not far off. Like the Romans with their network of well-kept post roads, and fast galleys, we are subsidising our own destruction.

Will there be more pandemics? Probably, but impossible to say when; next year, a century hence or how fatal. But we do know that the spread of Covid19 and the half a million who have died worldwide is an example of the danger of pushing a technology, in this case aviation, to its very limits. 4.4 billion passengers took to the skies in 2018 with all that means for environmental destruction, the wiping out of cultures, unsustainable immigration, war and disease.

Aircraft don't just fly tulips to London from Amsterdam as you sleep, they fly urgently needed weapons the other way to ignorant and violent tribesmen in Yemen where 2 million have died in a pointless war, and many other things we could well do without, such as mass tourism, bombers, drug dealers, slavers, thieves and backward religious fanatics.

So, the next time you buckle in for that flight to Nice or Barcelona, think how a similar petrie dish to the one you are sitting in nearly wiped out the beaches of Bali, shut down our economy for three months, put your neighbour out of work, and killed old Mr Jones up the road with his weak heart. Come fly with me?

The Brazilian Job

LARISSA PREUSS

Brazil above everyone, God above everything'. This was not only the slogan coined to elect the thirty-eighth Brazilian president, it is Mr Jair Mesias Bolsonaro's motto, mantra and mission. One-and-a-half years into his mandate we are beginning to learn the meaning of the slogan and realise that Bolsonaro meant every word of it. Bolsonaro, now a name the world has recently learned, has made international headlines in subjects that range from the flaming Amazon to denying the danger of the new coronavirus pandemic. His positions are controversial, his opinions, acrid and his actions have triggered a fierce wave of reactions from opposers and supporters simultaneously. In Brazil, Bolsonaro is hated and also loved to extremes.

Elected with 55 percent of the vote, Mr Bolsonaro was the right wing's bid to bring the country an alternative government. He took office in January 2019 interrupting not only thirteen years of rule by the left, headed by the Brazilian Labors Party, *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, but also bringing to a halt a project that has pulverised Latin America since Vatican II, aimed at preparing the ground for a 'socialist spring' in the tropics. Under *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (*Workers Party*) former Presidents Mrs Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011), and their administrations have been linked to a succession of financial schemes considered by some to be the biggest corruption scandals ever recorded. Tax payers were robbed of billions of dollars to buy a permanent grip on government of a 'clean shaved' (bourgeois) communist ideology adorned with generous doses of liberal economics and cultural propaganda.

An investigation into this scandal, Operation *Car Wash*, beginning in 2014, revealed the corrupt mechanisms

that financed this political campaign, paid for by private contractors in exchange for large public contracts, such as the building of the over-budgeted World Cup stadiums and the production of the 2018 Olympics. This operation alone uncovered a leak of R\$ 8 trillion reals (approximately £1.1 trillion). As absurd as it may sound, a trillion in Brazil is million + million + million. 8 trillion reals was the amount of financial operations discovered during the operation *Car Wash* investigation. Some articles say 12 trillion, a sum larger than the Brazilian GDP of 2016 (6.2 trillion).

Operation *Car Wash* brought about the trial and arrest of Brazil's political élite and former president Mr Lula. The revelations caused a social uprising with huge numbers of people marching around the country demanding immediate change, culminating in the impeachment of president Rousseff in 2016, and paving the way for the election of Bolsonaro.

Before arriving at the top of the political hierarchy, Bolsonaro was a member of the 'low clergy', a term used to define little known members of Congress usually concerned with provincial or personal issues. The reformed army captain had been a Congressman for 26 years before running for president. Although he was able to secure a political stronghold among voters with connections to the armed forces, such as policemen, firemen and military personnel both retired and on active duty, he was depicted by the media and perceived by the general public as a folkloric

figure surrounded by an aura of controversy. He has never been a political icon. Quite the contrary, he's always been sympathetic to military rule. During his time as Congressman, he ran three times for chair of the House of Representatives. The last was in 2017 when he received four of 513 votes. This last loss is said to have ignited a



further ambition. Next time Bolsonaro competed for a position, he was elected President of the Republic of Brazil.

Bolsonaro is an improbable 'champion for the underdog' candidate, whose political campaign cost £316,000, 15 times less than that declared by his rival Fernando Haddad from the Labor Party, and lacked the elements to win an outright victory. Nor was he considered a threat to any other candidates, because his group was small, so he had little time on television to present his proposals: a total of eight seconds. Even before the election, he was already labelled a misogynist, homophobic, violent, anti-democratic and anti-human rights fascist. This bouquet of compliments, some of which he is proud of, were banners the left used to challenge his bid. His opponents considered his programme to be morally outdated, far too liberal in economics and out of tune with the politically-correct *establishment*. He presented no concrete plans, lacked rhetoric and even coherent arguments.

Nevertheless, he capitalised on his fame as a 'tough dog' and barked even louder. He also experimented with the internet to address his supporters through social media and shamelessly presented himself as that embarrassing uncle who jokes and laughs about uncomfortable subjects. His limitations proved to be powerful tools and to his advantage for he was soon seen as honest, funny, and a fearless defender of national interests and conservative values. Country people liked his redneck charisma and his outspoken defence of Christian moral values about abortion, gender identity and so on appealed to Roman Catholic, and other Christian denominations. He argued for a small State, the privatisation of state-owned companies, a more flexible labour legislation and an open, market-driven economy which entrepreneurs who saw as an opportunity to attract investment and increase economic growth. His pledge to protect the country against corruption and invest in public safety appealed to all Brazilians who just long for less violent days. His supporters called him 'The Myth' for making history with his daring declarations.

Although Bolsonaro waved banners about the legal right to own guns and delivered inflammatory speeches promising to at last destroy communism in Brazil, what secured his presidency was: his economic agenda, backed by Chicago's University's economist Paulo Guedes, who was appointed Finance Minister; his public safety agenda, which included an offensive against corruption, crowned by Bolsonaro's last minute invitation to Car Wash's hero judge, Sergio Moro, to serve as Minister of Justice; and, last, his conservative agenda, fuelled by the rise of the new right and the faithful support of evangelicals who took Mr 'Messiah'

Bolsonaro for a messianic figure who would not only redeem the country from the evils of socialism and communism, but also restore power to the 'heirs of the new covenant', which they believed themselves to be.

At the presidential inauguration, a crowd clothed in green and yellow, robed with the nation's football squad jerseys, wearing forehead bandanas that read *Brazil belongs to Jesus*, easily gravitated from intoning the national anthem, to soccer chants that praised their former army captain. Those who waited for Mr Bolsonaro's first address to the nation as the official head of state, were surprised by his first act which was to be endowed with the presidential sash. The man accused by militants of the left of misogyny and prejudice, then yielded way to his wife, first lady Mrs Michelle Bolsonaro, who in an emotional moment used delicate hand gestures to pledge in silence, that the new government would give a voice to Brazilians with all kinds of disabilities.

The first few minutes of the new government looked as if Brazil had been given the grace to start anew. As Bolsonaro closed his address: *Brazil above everything, God above everyone*, little did we know that the future meant that what he calls Brazil was to be above Brazilians, her democratic institutions, even the truth. Because the government was second only to God, anyone who challenged the dogmas proclaimed by Bolsonaro's ideological priests, would be persecuted as a heretic. Ironically, but not surprisingly, Lulopetism, a political form of government that espoused the ideals of the Labor party and had the populist figure of Lula to implement them and that Bolsonaro vowed to bury, is an analogous political phenomenon of a religious nature, the other side of the same coin.

This 'holy war of ideologies' made in Brazil has divided the country, polarised discussions, fracturing long-lasting friendships and even family holidays. As someone that has lost hope, but insists in toiling for a better present and future, in politics, communication and Christianity, it pains me to watch the gory public displays of ideological exorcisms, spectacles of entertainment devoid of any effort to restore truth.

We will see what happens next.

Larissa Preuss works as an independent journalist and former television producer in a network owned and operated by a protestant channel, holds a Master's degree in Communication Science from the University of São Paulo. Born and raised in Brazil, she has lived in North America, Europe and in the Middle East.

The Rise of Irrelevance

ANDREW TETTENBORN

In 1826 Lord Brougham and a number of other liberals set up a new university college in an unfashionable part of London. The thinking behind the nascent London University in Gower Street (now UCL) was simple and, for the time, radical: religion was no big deal. The institution should be secular, and interested only in whether a student was clever and keen to learn. Whether he was Anglican, Catholic or of any other (or no other) religion was irrelevant; indeed, this point was emphasised by a prohibiting any minister of religion sitting on the body's governing council.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the ability to follow a given end single-mindedly, while side-lining particular matters that might otherwise loom large in public opinion, became one of the distinguishing features of English cultural and public life. In the name of art, and, it should be added, profit, writers were published, and the music of composers played, despite features of their religion or private life of which people might disapprove. The pursuit of efficiency and good administration saw an enormous decline in the importance of social connections in the Army, and politics in appointments in the Civil Service; businessmen were usually happy to trade with anyone seen to be honest and solvent independently of their personal life. The state readily gave refuge to unsuccessful politicians from abroad whatever their politics. This was one reason why England became a proverbially well-administered and rich country.

For most of the twentieth century too, this ability to concentrate on what mattered and consciously disregard the irrelevant was something that distinguished the English intelligentsia. Plays by Oscar Wilde continued to be performed, and authors such as Radclyffe Hall published and read, since whatever one might think about what was in those days seen as scandalous and degenerate sexuality, he was a good playwright and she a good writer. Harold Laski, despite his firebrand socialism, was naturally defended in his position at the LSE against pressure for his removal: his politics was irrelevant to his scholarship – this was in stark contrast to events in the US, where he had faced repeated demands for his sacking from Yale. Ezra Pound, despite his overt and occasionally embarrassing Hitlerism, was published and studied for what he was, a serious poet; indeed, as late as 2004 English Heritage commendably gave him his blue plaque in Holland Park, where he had

lived up to the First World War. Most readers of Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* have a sneaking sympathy for the heroine when she is removed from her position after one of her charges snitches on her support for fascism. More recently, the British Academy to its credit refused to expel Anthony Blunt when in 1989 he was unmasked as a Soviet spy, taking the view that this did not detract from his scholarship.

No longer. Since the 1980s we have seen a tendency to regard as incomprehensible or even offensive the idea that a person might be worth celebrating despite a character defect; that it might be helpful to separate public fame from private vice; or even that we should study one aspect of a person's life which interests us, and take little or notice of some other which does not. Anthony Blunt may well have marked one turning point in this process. The British Academy may have acted fairly by him, but others were less punctilious. Not only did he lose his knighthood, which may have been justifiable in view of his treachery to the Crown; more ominously, Trinity College Cambridge swiftly docked his honorary fellowship.

Since then the list has gone on. Woody Allen, quirky film-maker but also incestuous abuser, has become such an unwatchable anathema, that his films, once much admired, now unchanged, and presumably as artistically accomplished as ever, excite disgust. The same fate has also befallen, on both sides of the Atlantic, Mel Gibson (racism), Bill Cosby (sex), and Kevin Spacey (sex).

More recently, even worse, we have seen the same applied even to matters not indisputably bad, but falling to be categorised more as wrong think. Consider Noah Carl, summarily asked to resign a Cambridge fellowship because of previous associations with alleged supporters of eugenics; Maya Forstater, dismissed from a charity she helped administer because of unacceptable views on gender expressed in a private capacity; and this year J K Rowling, comprehensively trashed by erstwhile admirers because of remarks casually dropped on the same subject. Most recently David Starkey, a learned man with a singular ability to make history popular, has similarly been un-personed and deprived of the opportunity to do so because of unguarded remarks that might – or might not – have been interpreted as racist. And that is only the living: statues of the dead are now fair game for removal,

or at times destruction by violent mobs, because of matters now regarded as unpardonable even if they weren't at the time.

This is worrying on many levels. It is immoral, in that it goes against a fundamental tenet of Christianity. The genius of the Christian doctrine of forgiveness is precisely the opposite: it accepts wholeheartedly that we all have good and evil in us and to love and nurture the former despite the presence of the latter. Senior churchmen, who ought to know better, see nothing amiss in suggestions that we might have to condemn church fathers to posthumous irrelevance like Richard Hooker, apparently too associated for comfort with colonialists and slaveholders or Constantine the Great, fourth-century Christianiser of Rome, again a probable slaveholder; it is strange that it never strikes them that this – and not some craven moral relativism – is the real meaning of injunctions like 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'.

It can spectacularly distort the structure of our intellectual life. Writers, for example, become known, not for their writing, but for more peripheral matters that would otherwise be side-issues of interest only to social historians or political activists. Sometimes this has led to an undeserved prominence. George Eliot was a moderately skilful chronicler of middle and sometimes lower-class life in the English Midlands. She would normally have become a connoisseurs' writer alongside others such as Fanny Trollope, but she gains largely unmerited prominence in breaking into the otherwise male world of Victorian authorship by writing under a male pen name. Much the same can be said of Edmund White, a competent American novelist now imbued with disproportionate significance not on account of his writing, which is best described as adequate, but because he is seen as a gay icon. Conversely, the same process can work to writers' disadvantage. Oscar Wilde was not only a literary intellectual but a wordsmith of enormous talent. He is revered: but, oddly enough, few ever read him. Instead, he is remembered for his conviction for gross indecency, under a law which everyone accepts should not have been there.

Most depressingly of all, the inability to separate out the good from the bad amounts to a crying waste of talent. Indeed, we are in danger of following in the footsteps of the Soviet Union, whose weeding out of the politically untrustworthy from its favoured artistic and scientific world deprived it of the service of many good artists and scientists. David Starkey, for all his faults, is a good historian: he is also, ironically for those who do not like elitism, someone with a genius for making history come alive for the benefit of the masses whose interest is not very academic. But

now it seems that one episode of alleged racism in an obscure podcast means that we will not hear from him again, nor, possibly, even read him. To its discredit, his publisher Harper Collins dropped him like a hot potato as soon as the story broke. Whenever a comedian is dropped, not because he fails to amuse, but because of some episode in his past like Tez Ilyas or Louis CK, we lose out: whenever an academic is sacked, or not hired, because of perceived previous misbehaviour or a remark regarded as sexist or homophobic, it is students – at least, those students in university primarily to learn – who are short-changed. If we want to introduce a culture of leadership by the mediocre but worthy, who have managed to keep their nose clean, we are going the right way about it.

Two recent university episodes sum up all that is wrong with the inability to separate the wheat from the chaff. Earlier this year, there was a scandal over a 77-year-old retired judge of Australia's highest court, also an ex-Oxford don and law professor. He was reported as having made a habit of propositioning young women he met in the course of his work. It was bad enough to witness the immediate closing of the ranks by the political, academic and legal world, without any suggestion that even if the allegations were true, he might be regarded as an excellent lawyer with a slightly unfortunate history. But this was apparently not sufficient. Academics discussed withdrawing academic books and articles written earlier by him years earlier from their courses: although it is hard to see how their intellectual soundness had changed as a result of the allegations, they were now apparently 'problematic'. It was even discussed whether an academic journal should pull a review of his latest book, although it had been already submitted and accepted. To its credit the journal decided to go ahead: I know, because I was the reviewer.

But the last word must go to an episode five years ago. Sir Tim Hunt, a Nobel laureate in molecular biology and a professor at the top of his discipline, made certain remarks about women at an obscure conference on the other side of the world. He suggested, presumably light-heartedly, that in his experience women researchers were too emotional and had an unfortunate habit of falling in love with their colleagues. By the time he returned from the conference, he had been told by his university to resign or be sacked. The argument that these remarks had nothing to do with his academic teaching or with molecular biology was pooh-poohed as outdated, offensive, and incompatible with the university's commitment to gender equality. He went. The university? You've guessed it. It was UCL.

Andrew Tettenborn is a University lecturer.

Early Days at the Review

ROBERT GRANT

I had met Roger Scruton fleetingly in about 1971, when we were both young Cambridge dons, but got to know him first in 1979, when I invited him to Glasgow to give a staff seminar. He and others had recently founded the Salisbury Group, for the promotion of traditional Toryism. It was named after the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (1830-1903), thrice Prime Minister in the late Victorian period, a brilliant intellectual, a gloomy realist about human nature, and by most standards a highly successful politician. The group's name was allegedly suggested by Michael Oakeshott, who had been impressed by Elie Kedourie's *Encounter* article of 1972, called 'Salisbury as a Conservative Intellectual'.

The Group overlapped somewhat with the Conservative Philosophy Group, started earlier by Hugh Fraser MP and Roger Scruton. Many of its luminaries ended up on the editorial board of the *Review*, which was launched in the autumn of 1982. The board included Diana Spearman, T E ('Peter') Utley, Maurice Cowling, Sir Charles Pickthorn, Robert Salisbury (the 6th Marquess), my own far-from-luminary self, and Roger, who was editor-in-chief. The Literary Editor was Ian Crowther, a successful advertising man and a brilliant, civilised writer, who perhaps accordingly had never been to university. I had been recruited to both the Group and the *Review* by Roger, and wrote many in the early 'Conservative Thoughts' and 'Conservative Thinkers' series of articles, which Roger collected in 1988 into similarly-titled anthologies, published by his own imprint, the Claridge Press. He bought this defunct publisher off the shelf for £100, but could not afford to change its name. It had no connection whatever with Claridge's Hotel, so it sounded a lot posher than it was.

The first issue of the *Review* created quite a stir. John Casey's Powellish article on 'The Politics of Race', written after the 1981 Brixton riots, suggested, in full recognition of its near-impossibility, the eventual repatriation of those among the West Indian

population who found themselves at odds with the host population's way of life, by re-defining them, German-style, as 'guest workers'. Charles Moore's 'The Old People of Lambeth' reported on what the said old people felt about their new immigrant neighbours. Curiously, neither author suffered the vilification the editor did. Casey later rowed back somewhat.

Needless to say, the *Review* was accused of racism, and convicted of it, because merely to be accused is to be guilty. But the real ballyhoo came slightly later, in 1984. Ray Honeyford was a Bradford headmaster. His great crime was not racism, though naturally he was accused of it, but, as he described it in the *Review*, falling out with the local Asian parents – or rather, their spokespersons – by attempting to integrate their children, in part by requiring the latter, in accordance with the law, to attend school regularly. One might have thought the attempt anti-racist, if anything, but Honeyford was still obliged to resign indeed to retire.

For once, implausibly, the *Review* may have been ahead of the times. The brave and admirable Trevor Phillips, formerly of the Commission for Racial Equality, has recently moved towards the Honeyford (ie integrationist) position on 'multiculturalism', at considerable cost to his reputation among Leftists. Casey's original article was perhaps over-pessimistic, as his subsequent change of tack may indicate. But still, the *Review*'s willingness to broach taboo subjects, and take the ensuing flak, probably did help eventually to make them discussible.

Then there was the *Review*'s Eastern European dimension, which meant that in those countries where dissidence, though still highly dangerous, was no longer a death sentence, the *Review* was much sought after. Václav Havel's 'Politics and Conscience', among many similarly distinguished contributions by 'Petr Fidelius' (Karel Palek) and others, was first published in the *Review*. For lack of sufficient copy, a good many articles were written