

The
Salisbury Review

Absolutely the wrong opinion about everything



Tory Dreams

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Twenty years ago you could pass freely in and out of the country with a paper passport. The police could be there to arrest you if you were wanted for a major crime, but as they had no means of knowing when you would leave, or by what means, it was possible to slip out under an assumed name, a disguise, a mate's passport, a sailing boat or hidden in the boot of car.

Now electronic gates equipped with facial recognition software await us all at ports with lists of people, guilty and innocent, the police would like to interview. In the next few years new cars will have a compulsory 'spy in the cab' that can regulate your speed, and stop your car if necessary. And what is that sound we can hear overhead, that distant buzzing? Ah yes, the drones. Good angels keeping watch above for murderers but more often illegal lockdown barbecues or meetings of more than two people in the street, far more of the latter two than the former.

It is hard to argue with such practical solutions to crime, but you can feel the prison walls, and they say if you have done nothing wrong you have nothing to fear. But what do we mean by wrong? Wrong the authorities say, is anything we say it is or anything we have the means to prevent. The internet gives us the power to fight more and more wrongs. Murder is wrong but, if we have the means to prevent it at almost no cost, so is not making a tax return or dodging a parking fine. So why not arrest both murderer and parking fine dodger if they try to leave the country? Machines are also important in defending the public health from those who flout the Covid regulations. If a drone with infra-red sensors can catch you sneaking from your lover's house at four in the morning, you deserve a £10,000 fine. As Stalin said, 'If we did not arrest the innocent, how would the guilty fear us?'

Have the machines helped in the fight against Covid? No, they are the cause. Without the net governments would never have been able to give a pandemic on this scale. They would not have been able to count all the

cases, the rate of spread, or frighten everyone hourly with fresh death rates and send everybody scurrying into their houses for months on end. Without the internet they would not have been able to wreck whole economies at the flick of a switch. Covid would have come and gone and people would have remarked on how many old people died last winter and then talked about something else. It might come back for a second year but by then most of us would be immune.

This is the price of falling in love with a monster. The internet was love at first sight, a whole world of knowledge and convenience opened up for all which got bigger and better every day. Press an underlined word on your computer screen and it connects you to anything from the archives of the Library of Congress to tonight's menu at your local curry shop. You can learn in seconds things which would have taken you days or weeks to find out the old paper way such as the correct treatment for a disease, and attend lectures by some of the world's finest minds.

But even in the quiet of our homes, the internet is a lover who neither forgives or forgets, a stalker always at your heels. Nothing typed into the net is ever destroyed; thousands of people have had their careers ruined by something they wrote years ago, and if you own a mobile phone the authorities know where you are within ten feet twenty-four hours a day. But it is a lover we cannot say goodbye to. Without a mobile or a computer, unless you are prepared for a great deal of inconvenience you can't function. And there are many things that just won't work with cash. If you want to fly to America, find a wife or new job you do it on the net.

Is it too late? Has the key been turned in the lock of our electronic cell? We can still escape. Our jailers have left the key, our mobile phone, hanging in the lock of each of our cell doors. We only have to walk through the door and throw it away to be free.

They say the devil has to offer his victim one last chance of grace, before she signs over her soul....

Last Trump

ALISTAIR MILLER

Trump has declared that he won the US presidential election and the Democrats have stolen his victory. What should we think?

We all know that Trump has had the political, mainstream media, social media, financial, and business establishments against him the whole time of his presidency. We all know that the global liberal elite personally benefit from open borders, free movement, cheap labour, and government by international bureaucracy. And it is therefore understandable that Trump should think that the global elite are an international conspiracy, and that anyone who opposes him is part of this conspiracy – Democrats, for example. It is but a small step to believing that the electoral system has been rigged by Democrats, global liberals, and fake news merchants, and that he is the victim of electoral fraud.

There are always going to be irregularities, just as there have been in past elections. For example, in 2012, it was revealed that 59 inner-city divisions in Philadelphia failed to record a single vote for Barack Obama's Republican challenger, Mitt Romney; and that in Florida, 53,000 dead people were registered to vote – the dead being overwhelmingly likely to vote Democrat. Then there is the vexed issue of verifying and rejecting signatures on mail-in (postal) ballots. But notwithstanding all this, 'the majesty of the democratic system', as George Bush put it in his 1992 concession speech, has always prevailed – until now.

But it was always predicted, given the Covid pandemic, that there would be record postal voting, that postal ballots would favour Covid-fearing Democrats, and that early Republican leads would shorten as the postal ballots were counted. For

Trump to attribute the disappearance of his early leads in close-run states to electoral fraud, and to call for the counting of postal votes to be stopped, is therefore outrageous. 'If you count the legal votes, I easily win', declared Trump on Thursday.

Patrick O'Flynn surely was right when he wrote in the *Telegraph* recently that by questioning the legitimacy of the election result, by attributing his defeat to 'dark forces orchestrating things from the shadows', Trump plays straight in to the hands of his enemies, poisoning both his legacy and his own (or his successor's) future prospects. O'Flynn compares

Trump to King Lear laid low and threatening to visit terrible punishment on his enemies. It seems an apt analogy.

Yet with the imminent demise of Trump, millions of ordinary patriotic folk whose attachments are to family, community, and nation, who value freedom, and who value free expression, will be deprived of the one Western leader who would stand up for these values. Indeed, Trump was the only Western leader who dared stand up for our Western values and Western civilization *tout court*. Is it just possible

that 'Europe must strengthen its borders', Macron has seen the light, and that France might now lead the way?

Trump's achievement in redressing the balance in favour of the ordinary patriotic American is immense. He leaves behind a Republican senate and a Republican-dominated Supreme Court. The battle can be carried on. But if he clings on to power, he will only ensure that, in O'Flynn's words, his political epitaph is 'written by his liberal-left loathers'. This is surely the tragedy of Trump's final days.

Alistair Miller is a teacher.



The Next President

JAMES MONTEITH

The next time I hear that Kamala Harris will be the first US vice president *of colour*, I shall reach for my revolver. The facts are that Harris' mother was a biomedical scientist born in British India of Tamil Brahmin parents (the highest Hindu caste) and her father was an economics professor of mixed black and white descent born in Jamaica, who claimed descent from Hamilton Brown, an Irish slave-owner.

It would be more accurate to describe Harris as the beneficiary of British imperialism, Indian caste privilege, and white slave-holders. Her background reeks of privilege in every way. Her only 'black' ancestry is on her father's side, and that is distinctly mixed. She is, it seems, no more black than Megan Markle, and no more the victim of historic injustice or oppression than Boris Johnson.

In *Three Months in Jamaica*, the Methodist Henry Whiteley recounts his seven-week stay on a sugar plantation in 1832. He was surprised to hear from Hamilton Brown (Kamala's paternal ancestor) of 'the happiness and comfort enjoyed by the slaves' and 'the many advantages possessed by them of which the poor in England were destitute'. However, his subsequent experience

of negro slavery on the island told a different story: of slaves working from dawn to dusk without respite, of overseers cracking whips, and of brutal floggings administered to men, women and children alike, 'the blood oozing out from the lacerated and tumefied parts'. Whiteley was so disgusted at his experiences, he concluded that though the conditions of factory children in England were deplorable, the conditions of slaves were 'infinitely worse'.

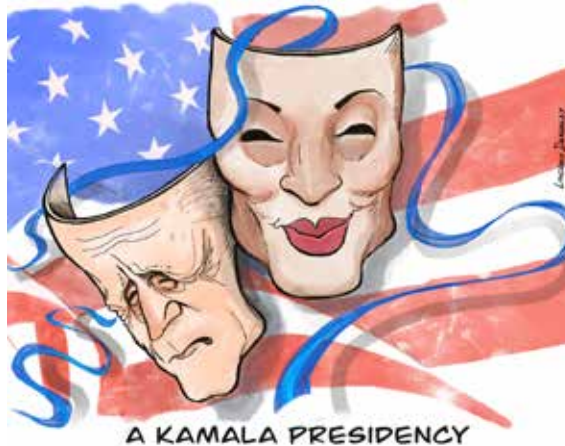
Can it be that America will have a vice president

who is the descendant of a brutal white slave-owner?

Those who subscribe to Martin Luther King's dream of people being judged by the content of their character and not the colour of their skin will have different criteria for judging Kamala Harris's suitability for office. Their sole concern will be whether she is up to the job. But unlike Dr King, Kamala Harris subscribes to the identity politics-historic victimhood agenda of the Black Lives Matter movement. By their exacting standards, her fate is sealed.

Cancel her!

James Monteith is a writer living in London.



*The Editor and Staff of the Salisbury Review
would like to thank our readers for their unstinting
generosity and support over the last year*

Aussie Flights to Nowhere

DARYL McCANN

Australia, much like the USA, gives each state government jurisdiction over police and health, two key policy areas in the Year of Covid. One consequence is that the intensity of the pandemic has varied from state to state. Victoria endured one of the most draconian lockdowns in the world. Meanwhile, in the whole of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, which constitutes more than half of the continent's land mass but less than twenty percent of the nation's population, only 11 people have died from the virus. If there is anything to be learned from the anomalous Australian experience it is the advantage of the 'lockout' over the dreaded lockdown.

The lockout, in terms of Covid-19, was initiated by Taiwan well before Australia. Most commentators expected that Taiwan, in unenviable close proximity to China's Fujian province, would be overwhelmed by the pandemic; and yet, as I write, there have only been 7 deaths amongst a population of 25 million. Moreover, the island has now been Covid-free for more than 200 consecutive days without mandating facemasks, let alone enforcing a lockdown, temporary, partial, regional or otherwise. One obvious explanation is geography. For many countries, it is logistically impossible to pull up the drawbridge. The Taiwanese also had the advantage of distrusting Beijing's early narrative about the non-communicability of the coronavirus emerging from Wuhan. Travellers from the PRC were being monitored as early as December 31, 2019, and totally prohibited a week before President Trump made a similar decision on January 31 and Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison one day after.

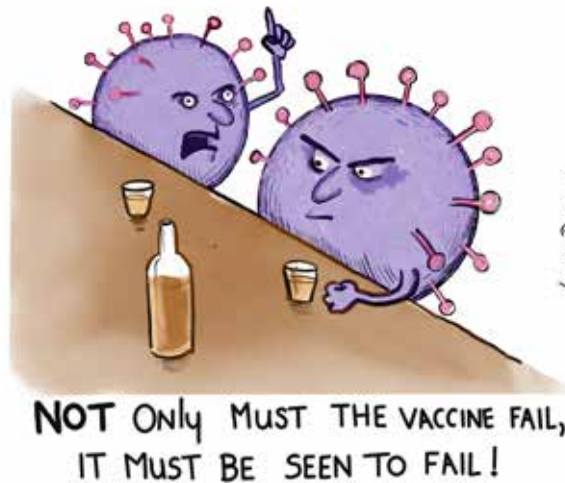
China's Xi Jinping might be threatening to 'liberate' the Taiwanese but at least he cannot accuse them of anti-Chinese racism. Australia, despite its multi-

ethnic make-up, is another matter. In early February, Ambassador Cheng Jingye condemned the Australian government's decision to deny the entry of Chinese nationals, including tens of thousands of young people wishing to take up their places at Australian universities and private schools. Relations between Beijing and Canberra, as I have reported previously, only worsened in June when Morrison requested an independent

inquiry into the genesis of Covid-19. The Australian people as a whole have not taken kindly to the resultant bullying attitudes displayed by Xi Jinping's regime and his English-language propaganda outlets such as *The Global Times*. That said, the embargo placed on young Chinese nationals saved us from the Wuhan virus because our schools return from summer vacation in February and the universities as late as March. This, of course, is not so in the United States or Europe. The

China virus, though few were aware of it at the time, already had a beachhead in the US before Trump's January 31 travel restrictions.

A lockout, then, is not the same as a lockdown. It comes at a price, starting with the collapse of an international tourist industry. It means being confined to your island home for the duration even if a family tragedy or urgent business necessitates being elsewhere; it has even meant being confined to your own state. The passion for international travel, no less intense for the Taiwanese than it is for Australians, has been satisfied in the most unusual way – flights to nowhere. In the case of Taiwan, planes regularly depart Taiwan's four international airports and head out over the international waters of the East China Sea or the Philippine Sea, only to turn homewards after several hours. Most passengers, we are informed, dress for their 'flight to nowhere' as if for an evening at the opera and take great delight in the on-board duty-free shopping on the return leg.



Qantas has now introduced its own version of flights to nowhere. Its seven-hour trip without an actual destination sold out in ten minutes despite being on the pricey side, the equivalent of £430 for an economy ticket and more than £2,000 for business class. The Boeing 787 Dreamliner, normally reserved for international flights, flew over Uluru, Kata Tjuta, the Great Barrier Reef, Byron Bay and Sydney Harbour and then repeated the whole thing several more times. Because Australia is an island-continent rather than a mere island like Taiwan, Qantas has now announced flights to somewhere, which involves touchdown near Uluru and a night under the stars before flying back to Sydney.

Many Australians would now argue that the advantages of a lockout (a global quarantine in essence) outweighs the disadvantages of isolating ourselves from the world and even from the other regions of Australia. In Western Australia, for instance, Premier Mark McGowan (Labor) boasts that his state has been an 'island within an island'. The WA police force, until very recently, operated a hard border against the rest of the country, including its immediate neighbours South Australia and Northern Territory, despite the two not recording any locally generated Covid infections for months. Travellers from New South Wales and Victoria are still locked out of Western Australia. Covid-proofing his state, McGowan asserts, not only protected the locals but also the interests of all Australians, since WA's enormous mining industry provides a significant share of the nation's export revenue and has remained in full operation throughout 2020. It is also true that during the period of Western Australia's lockout, the locals have not needed to wear facemasks, feel scared in supermarkets, sanitise every two seconds, avoid people on the street and never see their families.

Premier McGowan, backed by the vast majority of West Australians, argued that prevention is better than the cure from both an economic and medical sense. In Victoria, for instance, Premier Daniel Andrews (Labor) failed to establish a protocol for returning expatriates, the one group living outside Australia permitted to enter the country. Over the last six months, tens of thousands of Aussies living abroad have managed to secure (very expensive) seats on specially sanctioned flights into Australia. Expats, in almost all cases, have been escorted to a specified 'quarantine hotel'. They must pay for their own accommodation at the stipulated hotel and remain isolated there, under supervision, for two weeks. In every state, apart from Victoria, professional supervision was provided by the police (which in Australia is the domain of the six states and two territories). For still unidentified reasons, the Andrews' administration assigned supervision of the

quarantine-hotels to private security guards, some of whom were given no more than ten minutes' training.

One (possibly apocryphal) story which emerged out of the fiasco is that a guard believed it was all right to have sexual relations with a virus-affected returnee because Covid-19 is not a sexually transmitted disease. Other guards – and this is from the subsequent enquiry – took their charges shopping in the local mall to cheer them up. Daniel Andrews, in true politician style, has accepted 'overall responsibility' for the catastrophic lapse without offering his resignation or admitting that he himself made an error of judgement. He even denies that the federal government's repeated offer in June to provide members of the Australian Army to supervise the quarantine-hotels reached his office. As a consequence of the ineptitude of the Andrews' government, 800 of the nation's 900 Covid-related deaths have occurred in Victoria.

The population of Melbourne (almost five million) has paid a bitter price for the failure of its state government, including a brutal 111-day stage-four lockdown. There have been evening curfews, 25,000 people charged with contravening the strictest lockdown rules in the world, an East Berlin-like barrier erected around the greater metropolitan area, the decimation of small businesses and an exponential rise in mental ill-health. A friend of mine, trapped in Melbourne for the duration, described a typical Saturday morning in one of Melbourne's parklands: 'I'm sitting in a park in Carlton and there are people walking/running in circles and talking/screaming to themselves.' On the evening Premier Andrews eventually lifted many of the lockdown restrictions, he toasted his fellow Victorians on a job well done with a photograph of an expensive brand of local whiskey. For some there is no shame.

Without the advent of a reliable vaccine, Australians are determined to remain cut off from the world. Prime Minister Jacinda Aherne's recent electoral triumph in New Zealand tells a similar story. New Zealand looks like being the only country to be added to our travel bubble in the immediate future. Taiwan, possibly, is somewhere on the horizon. This whole scenario must sound decidedly unreal for those in the UK, Europe and the US experiencing a dire second wave and even third wave of Covid-19. But few here are willing to give up the miracle of normality as the blight of Covid-19 threatens to carry over into 2021 and beyond. Mark down Australia and New Zealand as the two new Hermit Kingdoms of the Pacific.

Daryl McCann is an Australian journalist. He has a blog at <http://darylmccann.blogspot.com.au>

If the Scots ask to leave the Union we must let them go

DAVID KERNEK

There are Scottish National Party concepts I haven't so far been able to comprehend; perhaps it's because I don't follow @NicolaSturgeon. SNP leaders talk in the same sentence of a 'free' and 'independent' Scotland having a future as a member state of the European Union. My grasp of those words is not theirs. Distinguished lawyers – be they Remainers, Leavers or Don't Cares-Just-Pay-My-Billsers – unanimously agree that sequential European Court of Justice decisions have established the unqualified supremacy of European Union legislation over the national laws of member states. I can't understand why the SNP hasn't seen how Brussels and the European Central Bank deal with small countries they think have not grasped the programme. Perhaps Ms Sturgeon didn't hear Greece's former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis talking about his country's euro crisis:

Europe, in its infinite wisdom, decided to deal with this bankruptcy by loading the largest loan in human history on the weakest of shoulders ... What we've been having ever since is a kind of fiscal waterboarding that has turned this nation into a debt colony ... What is being offered to the Greek people is circuses with no bread. And the circuses are not even funny.

But as a Right-of-Centre English small-c conservative – who's been a Brexiteer since before the UK made the great mistake of joining the embryonic European Union in 1972 – I think there's not a scintilla of a moral or logical case justifying a rejection at Westminster of a demand for a second independence plebiscite, if made manifest in a mandate given to the elected Edinburgh government next year.

The Brexit vote first put the state of Britain's union and its profoundly flawed devolution settlement on the agendas of the chattering classes in London, Edinburgh,

Cardiff and Belfast – and, doubtless, Dublin. The Scottish independence movement got a reviving wind, as did conjecture around dinner tables and at the BBC about the ways in which Mrs May's 'precious' union might crack up. Older readers might remember what a British prime minister, Harold MacMillan, said when he was asked what would fix his government's course. 'Events,' he replied, 'dear boy, events'. The Covid-19 event and the different ways in which the

UK's four governments have stumbled from one blunder to another have shone a powerful torch on the union's creaking foundations, and what has been revealed has come as a bigger surprise in England than elsewhere in the union.

'Why,' an Englishman returning to London from Portugal wanted to know, 'can't there be a single UK quarantine policy?' The question was put to

a BBC Radio 4 reporter, which was appropriate: one of the achievements of the BBC since its creation in 1927 has been to render – south of the Solway-Tweed line – British and English interchangeable. The word England was heard rarely on the corporation's radio stations before the plague other than in contexts in which it couldn't be dodged: cricket, football and rugby coverage, and weather forecasts. More significantly, the reality of the UK's constitutional muddle is beginning to bubble up in public conversation. An English Tory MP, while talking about the different and ever-changing quarantine regulations across the UK, referred to the 'English parliament'. It was a slip of the tongue, since he must know – I assume – that the last time one of those was seen was 1707.

MPs in the three Unionist legacy parties now talk about the Four Nations, which brings me to the problem Brexiteers on both the Right and Left have when denying Scotland another opportunity to make a choice about its future. For a great many of us in the Brexit movement, the argument was not fundamentally

The Covid-19 event and the different ways in which the UK's four governments have stumbled from one blunder to another have shone a powerful torch on the union's creaking foundations

about immigration numbers, the financial cost of EU membership, or the best ways in which to sell and move cars, cows and Cognac across the continent. Neither was it about any particular EU law that might or might not be useful or useless. It was a struggle to restore the right and liberty of a country – albeit at this point a polity comprising four nations – to directly elect the people who make the laws of their state and remove them. It was about restoring the democratic government of a free nation state.

Our philosophical starting point could be best summarised in the words of two English politicians who sat on opposite sides of the Commons chamber but who shared a deep regard for the warp and weft of the democracy as they saw it rooted in these islands. They were Peter Shore, a nonconformist Left-wing minister in the Labour governments of the 1960s and 70s, and an unwavering opponent of Britain's involvement in the European project. The other was Margaret Thatcher. Both could be described as nationalists.

Shore first: this was what he said when the Commons was asked in 1972 to accept the Treaty of Rome:

It is a treaty – the first in our history – which would deprive the British Parliament and people of democratic rights which they have exercised for many centuries. I can think of no treaty, to cite only one characteristic of the Rome Treaty, in which the British Parliament agree that the power to tax the British people should be handed over to another group, or countries, or people outside this country, and that they should have the right in perpetuity to levy taxes upon us and decide how the revenues of those taxes should be spent.

He added later:

I did not come into socialist politics in order to connive in the dismantling of the power of the British people.

Mrs Thatcher in 1988 delivered a speech at the College of Europe in Bruges that set the Conservative Party's Eurosceptic fuse alight:

We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels ... Working more closely together does not require power to be centralised in Brussels or decisions to be taken by an appointed bureaucracy ...

The decades-long struggle by EU-sceptics to regain the sovereignty of the nation they called Britain might, once upon a time, have been recognisable in Ireland as a quest for nothing other than Home Rule. But now we know there was and is no such nation as Britain. It

was a construct cobbled together by England for three centuries and its end is approaching, if not imminent. It is being seen off by the Brexit vote, the Covid plague and the devolution settlement that was designed to preserve it but that would inevitably fail to do so. Westminster's devolution legislation was a recognition of the legitimacy of nationalism, at least in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It had not a clue – and still hasn't – what to do about England.

So this is the tangle my Brexiteer friends – Tories, Labour, UKIP and Brexit Party folks – appear unwilling or unable to unravel. They fought for the right of what they thought was a nation – Britain – to make a choice about its future. The philosophical case was flawless, it was just that the nation they believed they were safeguarding didn't and doesn't exist. But the moral basis of that campaign has been established and is there to be taken and asserted by the SNP with the voice Scotland's parliament, the country's crucible for national debate, gives it.

What makes the Union so 'precious' for those who see it as such? History and sentiment? They undoubtedly have weight in the affairs of nations and their alliances, but they do not fix constitutions in stone. An intellectual inability to accept the mortality of all unions, even those that have survived for three centuries? Possibly; it was beyond the comprehension of EU Remainers that Britain's obviously unhappy 48-year marriage with Brussels could be brought to an end. Labour knows it is unlikely ever to have a majority at Westminster without first adding substantially to its Scottish count in the current parliament. The Tories? Perhaps they fear the emergence of a variety of English nationalism that might scare them in a way the Scots, Welsh and Irish forms do not? How many of them own bits of Scotland for the grouse shooting?

Yanking Britain out of its place in the Brussels Empire was the act of radicals. That radical spirit on the Tory Right will be needed again if it's clear that the majority of Scots are as displeased with the British union as the British, or chiefly, the English, were with the European one. What could the UK's or England's prime minister do if the Scottish government went ahead with a referendum without Westminster's consent? The Madrid Solution – send in the riot police to drag old women out of polling stations in Edinburgh and Glasgow? There will be no alternative to saying 'Yes' when Scotland asks for the opportunity to say 'We're Out'.

David Kernek is a freelance editor and writer.

Relaxing over a Good Crime

THEODORE DALYMPLE

There is nothing like crime for relaxation – or perhaps should I say nothing like reading about crime. Moreover, to be relaxing, the crime one reads about as one settles into one's armchair has to be *past* crime, not the contemporary variety which is only anxiety-provoking. Crime in the first part of the Twentieth Century was still an unexpected intrusion into a genteel world, taking place in a décor of aspidistras, antimacassars, brilliantine and patchouli, rather than the mass phenomenon it is now. Crime writers in those days were decorous, with a strong streak of irony. At the very end of the epoch were writers such as E Spencer Shew, for many years a crime reporter, and Edgar Lustgarten, a former barrister turned writer and broadcaster.

Sic transit gloria mundi!

Lustgarten was once a household name; his was the face and voice of crime, though a firm believer in law, order, retribution and the death penalty, he was also a stout defender of the wrongly, or doubtfully-convicted. His unmistakable voice and perfect if lugubrious diction were familiar to millions. But when I asked people who were of an age to remember him, his name rang only a faint bell. They had heard of him, but could not remember in what connection.

Recently, I settled down comfortably one evening to read one of his books, *The Judges and the Judged*, published in 1961, that I had bought in a charity shop for 50 pence. Given the economics of charity shops, that would probably represent a donation of 10 pence to the actual charity, but that did not concern me in the least. It was the book I wanted, not to do a

good deed. Reading about crime is a slightly guilty pleasure, and since no one likes to think that he is being merely salacious, a reader tries to persuade himself that he is not merely enjoying himself but trying to learn something worthwhile. In a country with a protestant tradition, learning is meritorious, enjoyment either sinful in itself or imbued with



the possibilities of sin. Lustgarten's 'enthraling anthology of drama, scandal and sensation in court' (to quote the dust jacket) was instructive. It spoke of an age that is now as distant, and forgotten as Restoration London or mediaeval Paris.

Lustgarten was the son of a Latvian Jewish immigrant who himself became a prominent barrister in Manchester. Edgar was President of the Oxford Union in the 1920's, afterwards

joining his father's chambers, and perhaps not surprisingly, ever afterwards was an ardent patriot who thought British justice was the best in the world, notwithstanding its occasional, and sometimes egregious, lapses. He understood that perfection was not of this world.

What is interesting in Lustgarten's book, apart from the sensational cases themselves, of course, is the moral certainty with which he writes. There is no awareness of the upheaval that British society was about to undergo. Lustgarten, who was born in 1907, had a conventional and bourgeois scale of values though, to the alarm of his much-loved wife who pre-deceased him, he enjoyed the company of pretty young women in fashionable restaurants and clubs. I suspect that if he were confronted

with this apparent contradiction, he would have said that public propriety had claims in itself, and that to destroy that propriety in the name of moral consistency was to destroy civilised behaviour, and also any possibility of genuine humour and irony. If his scale of values was so entirely bourgeois, it was not because he was a naïve, unsophisticated or unintelligent man, or even that he was a repellent hypocrite.

Would anyone now write, as did Lustgarten, at the beginning of his three-page account of the case of Alma Rattenbury:

In the domain of sexual partnerships, there is an accepted code of seemliness as well as of morality. It has been shaped and settled by a collective instinct which operates with a force superior to law?

There could have been fewer times at which such words would be so quickly and comprehensively disproved. The very word *seemliness* is now as outdated as, say, a typewriter. It would be interesting to find out how many people under the age of 40 knew what it meant.

E Spencer Shew, describing Mrs Rattenbury in his compendium of the same year as Lustgarten's, 1961, wrote:

Alma Rattenbury was an elegant, indeed beautiful woman. She was also a generous, kindly creature, artistic, gregarious, passionate, emotionally unstable, entirely amoral, faintly vulgar and rather silly.

No non-judgmentalism for E Spencer Shew. His description, like Lustgarten's words above, apart from being written with an elegance of which few journalists of today would be capable, bespeaks a firmness of moral values. He is against emotional instability, amorality, vulgarity and silliness. Having died in 1977, I do not think E Spencer Shew would have found today's world much to his taste.

At the beginning of his account of the case of Dr Hubert, Lustgarten writes:

On holiday by the sea you may dispense with the conventions that normally govern the acquirement of new friends. What is strictly taboo for the respectable citizens of London or Birmingham when they are at home is perfectly good form for those same respectable citizens when they are at

Brighton or Weston-super-Mare. Especially does this operate among the younger folk. The retrieval of a beach ball, adjacent deckchairs on a pier, an involuntary smile at a third encounter on the front – these will sometimes fulfil the same purpose as the most formal introductions do elsewhere.

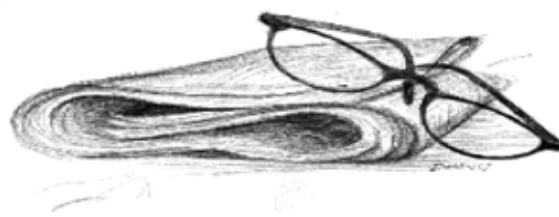
Not much commentary is needed, I would imagine, to draw the contrast between the manners of 1961 (at least in Lustgarten's view) and now. *Good form, respectable*: what do these words mean now? As for a third encounter on the pier, it is more likely to lead to a knife fight than a romance. I just about remember this world of twitching curtains, and of divorce, let alone bastardy, spoken of *sotto voce*, as if the very mention of it were contaminating. The *News of the World* was kept from my eyes, and at a football match when the game was still proletarian in the most literal sense, I heard a man in a cloth cap say to those around him, 'No swearing, there are children present.'

Was it a better world – morally better? In some ways it was, but not in all. Lustgarten describes the fanatical and ridiculous Noel Pemberton-Billing, MP, who believed during the First World War that the Germans had a list of 47,000 prominent homosexuals in Britain who were undermining the national moral fibre, a good thing from their point of view. One is now rather shocked by Lustgarten's words, although he was no admirer of Pemberton-Billing:

That he detested perverts, and fought their evil influence, is not – except by perverts to be placed to his discredit... No doubt it all showed a healthy British attitude to sexual perversion.

Reading Lustgarten, then, is an entertaining and easy way in which to observe some of the social changes, for good and ill, that have taken place in British society in the last 560 years.

Theodore Dalrymple's latest books Around the World in the Cinemas of Paris, Mirabeau, 2020, £9.94 and Embargo, Mirabeau, 2020, £7.65



Brussels demands its living space

ANDREW TETTENBORN

The more the EU flexes its muscles as a federal body with the trappings of a state, the more determined it becomes to dictate how members run their internal affairs – even those that do not form part of EU competences. And, as every action has an equal and opposite reaction, the more it does this the more a number of states – mainly in Eastern Europe – push back. Prominent among the awkward squad in the last three years or so have been Poland and Hungary. Both are relatively homogeneous in outlook; both are run by populist (and popular) nationalist parties; happy to reflect the instincts of their supporters rather than the cosmopolitan and supranational ambitions of the elites in Brussels and Luxembourg; and neither has any compunction at saying what it thinks of the EU.

Not surprisingly, the EU loathes both regimes – the PiS (Law and Justice) Party in Poland, and Viktor Orban's Fidesz in Hungary – with a vengeance. In the last year or so, the gloves have come off. A change in the system of appointments and retirements within the judiciary in Poland, and a Hungarian law aimed at preventing foreign organisations attempting to influence Hungarian policy without revealing who is financially supporting them, led to judgments in the European Court of Justice declaring them illegal and demanding their rollback.

The EU is still not satisfied. Both countries have failed to do what is expected of them in other respects, such as migrant quotas and protection of LGBT rights, and Brussels wishes to take more general action, ultimately to spark regime change.

There is a provision, Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, allowing a member state to be deprived of its right to participate in the government of the EU in the event of a serious threat to the values of the rule of law. The EU would love to invoke this, and has taken steps to do so, but faces a difficulty. Envisaged as a last-resort measure, Article 7 requires the unanimous consent of every member state other than the targeted one. Faced with this threat, Hungary and Poland have sensibly made common cause, and let it be known that neither would support the use of this nuclear option against the other, thus stymying this effort to bring them to heel.

Faced with this, Europe tried a different tack: money. The EU budget for the next five years – of which both Poland and Hungary are large net recipients, to the tune of €11.6 billion and €5 billion respectively – is being set, together with the amount of a massive Covid recovery fund. And while the budget itself requires unanimity, the rules for its distribution don't. The EU, under the

presidency of Germany, which would be expected to bankroll a good deal of this, has now agreed in principle that there should be a new rule allowing the EU monetary tap to be turned off if a qualified majority determine that a country is backsliding on rules of law that 'affect or seriously risk affecting the sound financial management of the EU budget or the protection of the financial interests of the Union in a sufficiently direct way.' Moreover Brussels has thought that these words are likely to be widely construed, as to include not only financial sins, but anything it sees as a threat to an independent judiciary (Poland, take note) and any other 'systemic aspects related to the fundamental values of the EU, which commits all Member States to respect freedom, democracy, equality, and human rights, including the rights of minorities.'

This is squarely aimed at Poland and Hungary. Its morality is distinctly curious, since the funds largely go for the benefit of social cohesion and levelling-up within the EU. In effect the poor, and those who live in undeveloped regions in Eastern Europe, are being told that they will be punished for what their government does. It is as if Boris Johnson had told Nicola Sturgeon that grants from London to help the disadvantaged in Scotland and build roads to connect isolated communities would dry up unless Scotland changed its attitude on devolved matters (for example, hate crime). Not surprisingly, the Polish and Hungarian governments have made dark references to EU blackmail, and threaten to veto the whole budget process unless Brussels and Berlin give way.

This whole process may well sow distinct seeds of doubt as to the long-term future of the EU as a bloc that can accommodate both the cosmopolitan West and the nationalist East. Poland and Hungary are essentially being made an offer by the EU: we will subsidise you handsomely, provided only that you control your democracy and if necessary, take steps to prevent the elected government carrying out policies on which it was voted into office. There are some countries, one suspects, with sufficient pride to see the humiliating nature of this offer, and possibly in the long term to say that they prefer to be slightly poorer – but at least honest and ruled according to the desires of their own citizens. This particular episode may be patched up in the short term: at least for the moment, money maintains some of its loquacity. Long-term, though, one has doubts.

Andrew Tettenborn is a University lecturer.

Putin's Plummeting Popularity

MARTIN DEWHIRST

Not many people in the West are keeping a daily watch on events and trends in Russia. After all, Putin (allegedly) can't be much of a danger, can he, now that he's in charge of developing his country's state-controlled capitalism? Nonetheless, many of the few close observers of the Russian scene were somewhat shocked in the middle of January this year when Putin suddenly and unexpectedly announced that his country's 1993 Constitution was no longer fit for purpose (*i.e.*, fit for his purposes) and needed to be updated. Yet if what is now the former Constitution had a major weakness, it was to give the President too much personal power, enabling Yel'tsin, a 'former' high-ranking Communist Party official, the opportunity, in effect, to appoint his own successor, who turned out to be a 'former' Soviet KGB officer called Putin. And in mid-March this year Putin decided to out-trump Trump and rewrite the Constitution, giving himself the legal opportunity to stay on as President, should he so wish, until 2036. What was going on? Why was he, apparently, so indispensable and, literally, irreplaceable?

Various theories, if not answers, have been suggested, and if we put some of them together we might find an acceptable explanation for this antidemocratic behaviour. One theory is that Putin had finally lost patience with Lukashenko, the leader of Belarus', who had been in power for even longer than Putin and, despite being generously subsidised by Moscow for decades, was still resisting increased pressure to allow his country to become a component member of the Russian Federation. For Putin, Russia, despite having illegally picked up two bits of Georgia (in 2008) and two parts of Ukraine (in 2014) was still not big enough.

For him, a person somewhat short in stature, especially evident when photographed together with Lukashenko, size was everything, even if it meant 'levelling down' part of his country's still small middle class by, for instance, 'optimising' (ie reducing, or hardly increasing) expenditure on medical and educational services in the vast Russian depressed provinces. Until very recently Putin seems to have been one of the many people who thought that the Belarussians, like the vast majority of Russians, would never come out on to the streets in large numbers, more in despair than in hope, to oppose anything that their political leaders decreed, especially after repeatedly making a mockery of the institution of free and fair elections. Putin apparently thought that he could 'buy' Lukashenko and/or, in effect, incorporate Belarus' into the Russian so-called Federation.

Another theory claims that by January 15th Putin had been privately tipped off that Russia, with its woeful medical services, would probably be overwhelmed by the deadly new virus coming in to Russia not only from China but also, and inevitably, from many other countries as well. This would inevitably lead to greater discontent with and criticism of the political leadership in the Kremlin. By March 15th it was glaringly obvious. Better try to make it clear to everyone that there would be no serious changes to Russia's political system until the mid-2030s at the earliest.

A third theory is based on the perception that Putin is horrified by the prospect that he will go down in the history books together with the leaders of other states, such as Serbia and Libya, who also wreaked enormous damage on their own and other countries before coming to a very bad end. We should remember



"SURE YOU WERE NEARLY PRIME MINISTER,
AND I'M THE KING OF NORWAY!"

that in mid-January it was expected that the trial would begin of some of those responsible for shooting down a Malaysian airliner over Eastern Ukraine with the loss of nearly 300 lives. It was (and is) almost certain that Putin knew about and approved this Russian-backed plan in advance and, once out of power, would be forced to go to The Hague and answer a few questions. Thanks to Covid-19, the trial had to be postponed and is still far from over. This helps to explain a few of the hundreds of recent and ongoing changes to the Russian Constitution, which now grants former Russian Presidents a life-time immunity from any attempts anywhere to call them to account for any crimes they may have committed.

A fourth reason for changing the Russian Constitution has been gaining in popularity as 2020 is progressing, but it was already present over a year ago. It is regarded by some as a 'cover' operation to try to hide that Putin is, by now not merely a *lame* duck, but also a *dying* duck, who will be incapable of carrying out many of his presidential duties not only beyond 2024, but even before 2024.

So, like Stalin nearly 70 years ago, there is an acute problem of finding a successor who would not immediately trash Putin but prove to be acceptable to as many members as possible of his highly unappealing entourage. There are reports of panic, rather than mere worry, about the chaos that may ensue when Putin finally leaves the political scene, and the recent desperate attempt to poison the highest-profile member of the opposition, Aleksey Naval'ny, is a good example of this. The word *tranzit*, transition, is becoming more widely used, and many Russians' longing for justice and at least a reduction of the widespread corruption that is wrecking the economy is being voiced. Putin might initially be replaced by somebody even more odious and dangerous, who, like Beriya, would not remain in power for very long.

Work on the text of the new Constitution is only just beginning, but the signs are very worrying. Putin is aiming to reduce the number of judges on the Constitutional Court, appoint all of them himself, and ban any of them from circulating, let alone publishing, a dissenting opinion on any of the Court's majority decisions. This opportunity has been possible, and taken good advantage of, until very recently, by its most principled and honest members.

Something is very rotten in the state of Russia, and the West, on the whole, apparently prefers not to try to influence unduly the outcome of Russia's ongoing tragedy. Hope, of course, dies last.

Martin Dewhirst is a retired University lecturer.

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Is Conservatism a Mental Disorder?

MYLES HARRIS

The drug psilocybin (the active principle of the magic mushroom), is to be licensed for clinical use in 2022. It is far more effective than any anti-depressant now in use and in addition possesses a curious property; it gives spiritual comfort to the dying, who become existentially reconciled to their fate with a degree of conviction far surpassing that of traditional faiths.

After psilocybin administration, (dying) patients report alleviation from anxiety, reconciliation with death, emotional uncoupling from cancer, spiritual or religious phenomena, reconnection to life and greater confidence'

Biomedicine Magazine

What place will future clergymen have when you can get religion on the NHS?

That is not all. Psilocybin can change your politics.

One study of psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression reported that the treatment decreased authoritarian political views in patients. That clinical trial also detected another effect that had previously been reported in healthy participants: psilocybin use leads to increases in the personality domain of openness, itself a predictor of liberal values.

Biomedicine Magazine

Openness is not a predictor of liberal views. With their passion for censorship and PC, 'liberal' views have the openness of a crocodile's jaws. Think of the Labour politicians who want to force all children into state schools to teach them things their parents don't want them to learn. As for decreased authoritarianism, remember Pol Pot, Stalin, Mao, Kim Il Sung who in their heyday had

millions of left-wing devotees in the West.

Yet like some fungal disease the sinister left-wing project creeps on.

I can hear the gentle clearing of a future GP's throat, not so many years from now, as he sits listening to Mr Smith of pronounced conservative beliefs.

Have you ever thought your views might be an illness Mr Smith. I can offer you a treatment that might be able to save you much needless anxiety?

Saved from what? A belief in the free market, law and order, respect for one's elders, double entry book keeping, arriving on time for work?

Psilocybin works by disrupting the firing patterns of the primitive 'crocodile' part of our brain, the amygdala, where memories of the death of those we love, disasters such as financial ruin, exile, illness and so forth are stored. In depression the amygdala becomes overactive and gives such memories back in the raw.

How good is it? Very good according to the clinical research. But we should remember there are no independent measures of mental health, nothing like the platinum bar in the centre of Paris which defines the exact measure of a metre. Our mental health cannot be measured in mini Freuds or Jung Units.

It depends partly on our genes, partly on upbringing, partly on circumstance. For a large number of victims of depression there is no discernible reason. There are those who inherit depression, and those who have depression thrust upon them. Would the Yorkshire Ripper, had he been given a choice at birth whether he wanted to be a depressed killer or a gentle librarian, have chosen to be a killer? Would the ever-cheerful Dali Llama have chosen to be the Yorkshire Ripper? You may come from a family full of anxiety

and blame, or having witnessed your family's genocidal murder be depressed for life.

It can depend on where you live and what you think is right. The state executioner in Saudi goes to bed at night feeling he has done a good day's work after slaying an innocent homosexual. An Islington counsellor will not sleep easily if she has failed to persuade a client to accept the very condition that his brother lost his head for that morning thousands of miles away. Exile either to a society with opposite values and they are likely to fall prey to serious suicidal depression.

The argument for the deployment of drugs like this, apart from the overriding one of alleviating of terrible suffering, is also economic. Depression is immensely costly, slows productivity, and takes up the time of tens of thousands of health workers.

If we know in what place in the brain chemicals which change our behaviour as radically as psilocybin act, what other discoveries might there be in the wings? Somewhere in the brain there must be the centre that launches the psychosis of love.

The victim, becoming obsessed with the curve of a nose or the lift of an eyebrow, loses insight, becomes unrecognisable to friends, does not sleep, hangs by the phone, fails at work, spends hours in dramas with his lover only to wake up twelve months later to the cry of a baby in the bedroom next door, wondering what had overcome him.

We know one of the chemicals involved: oxytocin the 'trust' hormone. Mothers secrete it in large quantities at the sight of their wrinkled, scrawny, farting primate screaming for milk. Lovers do so, victims at the voice of their conman on the phone.

Love is expensive. If we chose our partners more rationally, not only would we all be happier, but the costs of divorce and homelessness would plummet.

Can its effect be reversed by blocking it in a part of the brain? let us return to the office of our future GP. Miss Smith weeps quietly in front of him relates the details of a terrible betrayal of love. The doctor, secretly anticipating his next holiday, listens for the prescribed time. Then he types up a prescription and hands it to the weeping Miss Smith.

'One twice a day for two weeks, then come back

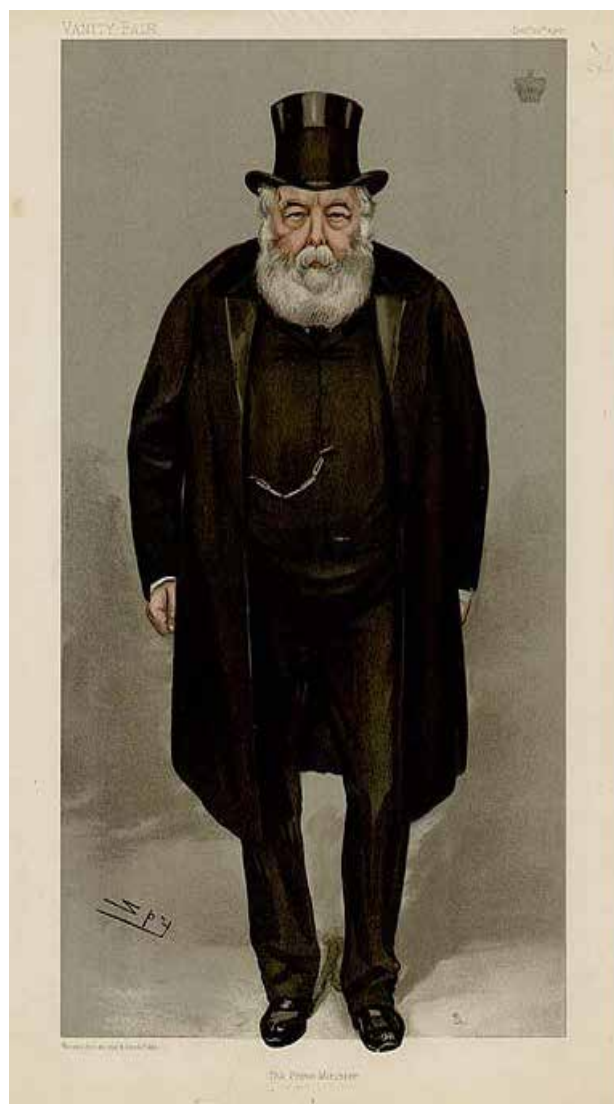
and see me.'

Returning from his holiday a fortnight later his first patient is Miss Smith; in a new dress, a recent hairdo, confident and laughing.

Scientists by that time may have found where the love centre is, traced the chemical path which causes it to the very tear ducts of each victim and tailored a drug to dry them. Take the tablets twice a day for a fortnight. Your mental vision clears, your heart slows, your appetite returns, a lightness comes back to your step.

Step out to what? The theatres are closed, the opera silent, the poets have lost their voice. Romeo no longer calls to Juliet, Rodolfo no longer reaches for Mimi's hand. Love is dead.

Then somebody discovers a drug that makes you fall in love.....



The Irish: Cowed and Terrified by Covid

DAVID VANCE

Anyone who knows Ireland knows that pub life is central to the Irish way of life. Tourists travel from all over the world to experience the ‘craic’ with Irish song and chat in equal measure distinguishing the local scene. It was the Irish-American poet J P Donleavy who observed that *‘When I die I want to decompose in a barrel of porter and have it served in all the pubs in Dublin’*. It’s as well that he died in 2017 because in 2020, his wish would be denied him since the pubs are all closed. The Guinness factory on the banks of the Liffey is still open, so it’s not a total disaster, but you can no longer join a tour of the Guinness Storehouse located within it and savour a taste of the black stuff. That is also closed.

In this year of Covid-19, most of Dublin’s pubs were slammed closed in March and won’t re-open until early December, perhaps not at all this year. Pubs have now been reclassified into ‘wet pubs’ (closed) and those that serve food (open for carry-outs).

But many of the most iconic pubs in Irish cities and towns do not actually offer food and so it’s been a miserable 2020 for them with little optimism lying ahead. Furthermore, the idea of sitting outside in Ireland and eating a meal somewhat contrasts with the Irish weather – not renowned for its balmy character.

Like many other parts of the world, Ireland has been dramatically changed by Covid. It’s not just the pubs of course, Irish restaurants also are closed. Takeaways are provided by some but many are simply shut up. Irish chefs have produced some world class food in top class restaurants

across the island and speaking from personal experience, they were a real highlight, but their light has gone out.

Hospitality has always been central to Irish tourism and the US market has always proven lucrative to the Irish economy. Around 1.5m Americans make the journey across the Atlantic to Ireland each year, making it the second biggest tourist market, after the UK. That annual flood has been reduced to a trickle and if you want to kiss the Blarney Stone, you can’t, it is currently closed. You can still see Molly Malone’s statue, wheeling her barrow through the streets of Dublin, but just make sure you wear a mask.

Despite recent referendum results, Ireland is still

It has been made clear to the big Grocery chains that they will face prosecution if they do not stop the sale of items that the Irish Government deems ‘non-essential’. Just like Wales this curious closure of Irish retail space is defended on the grounds of ‘fairness’ – nothing to do with fighting Coronavirus.

a religious place with the Christian church still occupying an important part of life for many people. Yet when Covid came in, the Churches rapidly moved to embrace Government advice and they closed. Most recently Christenings and Holy Communions

are at risk following the latest public health guidelines. Acting Irish Chief Medical Officer Dr Ronan Glynn insisted that these gatherings risk further spread of Covid-19 and discouraged the ceremonies altogether while case numbers are still high in parts of the country.

The Catholic Church in Ireland is also facing financial uncertainty because of the alleged pandemic and this was now becoming a threat to its existence on the island, the co-founder of the Association of Catholic Priests has said. Fr Brendan Hoban said church income was ‘in free-fall, and will be for some time’. Church collections

were ‘the main-stay of parish life’ and restrictions imposed by the pandemic were having a drastic effect.

‘In Dublin’s Catholic Archdiocese income from collections fell by around 80 per cent when Churches closed last March’, a spokeswoman said. Since the reopening of Churches in June ‘anecdotally there is a modest improvement in collections, but obviously with reduced numbers permitted at Mass – it is still a very significant challenge’, she said. Two donation streams – the ‘common fund’ collection for priests and the ‘support for share’ fund – dropped by 70 and 80 per cent respectively in Dublin between March and June compared with the same period last year.

The Church still remains important in Ireland and around 70 per cent of Irish people identify as Roman Catholic. These numbers have declined compared with what they were 50 years previously but it’s important to explain the pain that the closure of Churches brings to Ireland’s devout flock.

There’s been a lot of media furore in the UK about the decision by the Welsh Government to stop the sale of ‘non-essential items’ in large Grocery stores but it is less commonly understood that the same bizarre thinking now prevails in Ireland. It has been made clear to the big Grocery chains that they will face prosecution if they do not stop the sale of items that the Irish Government deems ‘non-essential’. Just like Wales this curious closure of Irish retail space is defended on the grounds of ‘fairness’ – nothing to do with fighting Coronavirus.

In response to rising Coronavirus positive PCR cases, the Irish Government has reviewed its ‘green list’ of safe places to travel and concluded nowhere is safe. On October 8th the Irish Government decided that as no EU/EEA countries were below the required 14-day cumulative number of Covid-19 cases, so there would be no countries on the Green List from Monday 12 October. The impact on the Irish airlines like Ryanair and Aer Lingus will be considerable; recently Ryanair, which is Europe’s biggest carrier, announced a

£178m loss for the first half of 2020, with even worse figures expected for the second half of this year. Compare the £178m loss to the £1billion profit for the same period in 2019 and you get a glimpse of the impact of the Irish Government’s policy on Covid.

Against such a background, the compliance of the Irish people with ever more draconian legislation and rigorous imposition of such seems oddly out of character. Irish people have always prided themselves in rebelling against unfairness but when it comes to Coronavirus, they seem to be hypnotised and paralysed with fear. Even during the peak period of the pandemic in Ireland, leaving aside the very elderly with co-morbidities, the mortality figure was around one person per million. Yet many Irish people have been scared into meek obedience and do what they are told.

People around the world have heard of the ‘fighting Irish’ – a people who won’t be told what to do who fought for their freedom from the United Kingdom. But it seems that this spirit has become just another victim of Covid-19.

David Vance was a Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) Parliamentary Candidate.

The compliance of the Irish people with ever more draconian legislation and rigorous imposition of such seems oddly out of character



A deafening silence over Islamist beheadings

JANE KELLY

The Guillotine, ‘The National Razor,’ was last used in France in 1977, while the last beheading in the UK was in 1747 of Lord Lovat, a Jacobite. Killing by blade had been consigned to history but now it’s back as a method of execution, apparently approved of by many; at least no one in the institutions mostly loudly concerned with social justice have said they disapprove of its return.

On October 16th teacher Samuel Paty had his head hacked off by a Jihadist in a Paris street. His ‘crime’ was to discuss the Charlie Hebdo cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed with his class. The killer posted a photo of the decapitated head along with the message, ‘I have executed one of the dogs from hell who dared to put Muhammad down.’ That slaying follows the stabbing of two people outside the former offices of Charlie Hebdo at the end of September, by an 18-year-old Pakistani.

The French responded with outrage and sadness. Two days after, French Prime Minister Jean Castex stood with teachers’ associations and trades unions in central Paris, in support of freedom of speech and in memory of the teacher. Some called for, ‘Collective strength,’ others held placards reading, ‘I am Samuel’ echoing the ‘I am Charlie’ rallying cry after the 2015 slaughter. On social media the hashtag #JeSuisProf (I am a teacher) went viral. There was a moment’s silence broken by applause and a rousing rendition of the French national anthem. Demonstrators also gathered in Lyon, Toulouse, Strasbourg, Nantes, Marseille, Lille and Bordeaux. All classes and political groups gathered there were certain of what French values are; and determined to defend them. Later, representatives of French teaching unions met the education minister Jean-Michel Blanquer and the prime minister Jean Castex. Before the meeting Jean-Remi Girard, president of the secondary school teaching union said teachers were, ‘devastated but would not be cowed.’ ‘It is terrifying to see that in France in the 21st century, a teacher can be decapitated in the street for doing his job,’ Girard said. ‘We will continue to speak about freedom of speech. If there are difficult subjects, we will continue to teach them. We will try to encourage

our students’ critical spirit and explain that everyone has the right to disagree.’

The Association of Head Teachers in Scotland, the Association of School and College Leaders. The Educational Institute for Scotland, Irish National Teachers’ Organisation, National Association of Head Teachers, National Association of Women Teachers, the Association of School and College Leaders, National Education Union, (two divisions), the Ulster Teachers Union, said nothing. Not only have no teachers come out on the streets, not held a minute’s silence or called for freedom of thought in education, they have not said a word.

The beheading upset many French Muslims. A group of imams in Lyon met to discuss what they called, ‘the appalling assassination of our compatriot by a terrorist who in the name of an uncertain faith committed the irreparable.’ The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, representing fifty-seven Muslim nations, spoke of their, ‘Well-known position of rejecting all forms of extremism, radicalization and terrorism for any reason or motive.’

UK based Muslim groups such as the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK, Hizb ut-Tahrir, ‘Welsh Islamic Events,’ or The Muslim Association of Britain, followed British teachers in saying nothing. It’s as if we are now living in Tudor England where beheading is a normal procedure. More in agreement with M Girard, I contacted some of these esteemed social justice warriors on twitter to investigate their response.

The National Education Union (NEU) which approved mass BLM marches at the height of the pandemic, did not reply. It has a very large web-site with a vague ‘Mission Statement’ about making everything better for everyone. Their main concern now is attacking the government on their policy about getting children back to school. ‘The Association of Head Teachers & Deputies in Scotland,’ AHDS – not to be confused with ADHD, or AHD a parasitic worm, did not reply and had nothing to say on-line. The National Association of Head Teachers, motto, ‘Strength and Diversity,’ ditto on both counts. The

National Association of Women Teachers, asks people to, 'Get active,' in politics not sport, with a big, bold web site, mainly dedicated to 'Black History Month'.

There has been no response from Sadiq Khan, the Muslim mayor of London, or any of the Islamic groups I contacted; The Muslim Association of Britain are busy fighting with a group called, 'Muslim non-believers'. The Muslim Public Affairs Committee have joined with the far-left Antifa, BLM movement. Hizb-ut-tahrir, the only openly radical group on Twitter, is too preoccupied with bringing about a 'Return of the Islamic World Order, to care about the murder of one infidel, as that is what they believe he was. Their website tells us that, 'Where secularism has failed Islam will succeed.' Interested in the US election they offer a video advising Muslims on, 'What Allah says about Muslims participating in a democratic system.'

A 'Dr Abdur-Rafay' reports that, 'Allah says democracy is about rules based on Kuffir laws,' 'all in contradiction to The Koran' against the 'known facts' of Islam, which, 'negates democracy'.

In Britain there is not just a lack of interest in the death of Paty. As the Black Lives Matter movement puts it so loudly and so often; silence is complicity. This unanimous silence comes from the UK's woke elites, which dominate education, and the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury was similarly silent in July 2016, when a French priest had his throat slit by two followers of IS while he was saying Mass in his parish church; broadcasting and publishing show exactly how much they share with radical Islamists.

Both groups believe it is a sin to criticise Islam. The elites which increasingly influence children through teaching and literature, term it 'Islamophobia,' while Muslims call it Blasphemy. Their aim is the same; to censor and close down criticism and also to dislocate groups from one another.

From the left there have been no calls to 'take the knee' in memory of the dead man. We've heard nothing from Afua Hirsch, so keen to pull down public statues representing evil oppressors. She recently retweeted a message from an *Observer* journalist blaming Home Secretary Priti Patel's 'anti-immigration rhetoric' for a knife attack in London. Nothing has been heard from Naz Shah, Shadow Secretary for 'Community Cohesion'.

The difference between the UK and France is startling. President Macron said that Paty died for teaching that we all have, 'The freedom to believe or not believe'. Here that freedom is being destroyed by tacit silence. It's perhaps no accident that Paty was a History teacher. For in the UK, unlike the rest of Europe, that subject is regarded with suspicion from the Left and regarded as too contentious. Unlike France, 'difficult subjects' are

not welcome in the classroom while in most countries people know their own History and have a clear idea of their national values. Here we are assailed by demands to 'deconstruct the curriculum,' and 'British values,' are subject to withering contempt or accused of no longer having any validity.

Despite cries for 'inclusivity' there has emerged a rejection of the idea of integration, replaced by a desire for disintegration and what often sounds like apartheid. This was best expressed in 2016 in a video called, 'Against Integration,' by the normally loquacious Muslim commentator Ash Sarkar. She rejected integration as 'a coded' 'racist discourse in which people of colour must assimilate into social relations which have been deemed civilised by a white-supremacist state.'

Like many older people and the French, I'm clinging to those 'civilised' mores and still think that lopping off heads and eating people is wrong. Call me racist if you like.

Jane Kelly was a celebrity interviewer for the Daily Mail.

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Living on Europe's Edge

MARK GRIFFITH

Perhaps the strangest thing about Hungary is that in some way it's still on the edge of civilisation – or the edge of Europe, perhaps not quite the same thing. In some odd way the 'edge' seems to be roughly the same place it was one or two hundred years ago. Despite plentiful trappings of Enlightenment modernity, out east past Budapest something curious changes, something hard to pin down. An unsettling but interesting sense you're no longer in the west (or in the present century) grows quietly stronger the further you travel.

I'm currently unwell and being kindly looked after by a friend, in his small Budapest flat within a hundred yards of the city's grand 19th-century terminus, the Eastern Railway Station ('Keleti' 1884). The other grand terminus, Eiffel's Western Railway Station ('Nyugati' 1877), is roughly two miles away to the west. Both stations are large. Nyugati, then a new structure, is mentioned in the first paragraph of Bram Stoker's 1890s novel *Dracula*. It marks the edge of the western known world, where Stoker's hero, Harker, is about to leave civilised parts, to travel 'off the tracks'. In the vampire novel he's about to venture into the darker, mountainous wilderness of Transylvania, a few hundred miles east and south. By Stoker's reckoning therefore, as I'm in the shadow of Keleti station I'm now living a mile or two off the edge of the map of Europe. That's roughly how it feels.

My friend's street is the city's gathering place for communist-era red trolleybuses, and they lurk here in bunches at all hours of day and night, ready to loop back through the poorest districts. For some reason, communist transport planners thought that trolleybuses, rather than trams, buses, or underground railways, were the natural way for

minimum-wage proletarians to move around. Some garbled story about one of Stalin's last birthdays in the 1950s gets cited to explain why all the trolleybus routes have a number in the 70s. The anecdote changes every time I hear it.

You don't see many of them here, but Transylvanian and other Romanian peasants regularly travel the few hundred miles to Budapest – arriving mostly right here at Keleti Station. They stubbornly insist on wearing their traditional costumes, as if following some secret Tourist Ministry edict. The effect is most peculiar.

In the shadow of some grim 1960s modernist block, you'll suddenly spot a small clump of people, perhaps three tubby middle-aged women, stoically trudging somewhere. They'll be wearing solid, sensible boots of leather, carrying baskets of some rural offering like slightly tired spring onions, and summer or winter they'll be clad in heavy embroidered frocks. The handmade frocks will be densely designed in often quite ugly traditional patterns of black or red crosses on a white field, some stripes, perhaps small repeating flower patterns. These designs will relate to some specific valley in a neighbouring country that was once part of the pre-World-War-I 'larger Hungary' and are worn with a sort of weary pride. Not unlike those people on the streets of rainy northern English towns emblazoned in the colours of some football club that hasn't won a national event since 1900 – but they're your local team, so you have to support them, don't you?

The grumpy peasant women seem unaware of how curious they look. A couple of summers ago I chanced on a catalogue of some water-colour sketches Turner did on a trip up the Loire valley in the 1820s, before railways. I was fascinated that

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Turner drew the designs of linen headdresses country girls wore, apparently distinctive to specific French villages. Watching Balkan women wander round Budapest in their special fabrics made it easier for me to imagine why 19th-century French girls might think it normal to wear a style of hat or headdress identifying their corner of their county.

The Romanian, Ukrainian, Moldovan villages the Balkan women come from are remote in another sense. Even in some of the leafier suburbs of Budapest it's common for moderately dangerous tusked wild pigs to wander in at night for a snuffle in the rubbish bins. Further south, in the Romanian hills, wolves and bears are part of everyday life as well. Occasionally even in a big Romanian industrial city a wild bear will enter a public square. The urban space will rapidly empty as people who moments earlier looked like modern office workers, shoppers, college students show some mediaeval common sense and run for cover while Bruno is on the scene.

Villages out there where inhabitants fetch their water each day in buckets are still common, and flocks of sheep in Transylvania are not so much herded as guarded by a large sheepdog breed called the Komondor. This hound is hardy, vicious, brave, intensely loyal, usually to only one human, strong, and strikingly stupid (apologies to any fond Komondor owners among *Salisbury Review* readers). A certain wilful lack of intellect is perhaps a vital quality for dogs who will fight to the death against wolves – and will even take on a bear if they have to. One friend's Komondor only recognised me on my fifth visit to his owner, and used to cheerfully drag around a large car tyre chained to its collar because only this would stop him leaping a six-foot wall, gallivanting down to the village, and killing some neighbours' hens for a lark. This is a country which perhaps requires a different sheep-herding skillset to the quick-minded nifty negotiator we know as the Welsh border collie. Komondors, covered in thick shaggy white fur that tangles into huge dreadlocks, also appear to be impervious to the cold. They seem happy to doze off on deep-chilled concrete, frost-soaked soil, thick snow, whatever's available.

I'm unable to share any supernatural anecdotes chiming more closely with Stoker's 1890s book

about the bat people and the strangeness of the east – except for one story about a village priest.

That's another oddity of this region. Western Hungary is Catholic, but eastern Hungary and Transylvania is Protestant, dating back to Anabaptist days and the followers of Jan Hus. Romanians, Serbs, Ukrainians, Russians have Orthodox churches, yet the Hungarians, the most Asian-influenced nation of all round here, somehow have no Orthodox denominations. The only trace of the Constantinople-centred Magyar church that might have been are the 'Greek Catholics'. These are a small sect of Orthodox Christians that decided in the 19th century to reconcile with Rome, but who retained much of the Orthodox rite. Their roots go back to

Venetian Catholic churches in the eastern Mediterranean in earlier centuries. Hungary is one of the only countries in Europe where they are a significant minority.

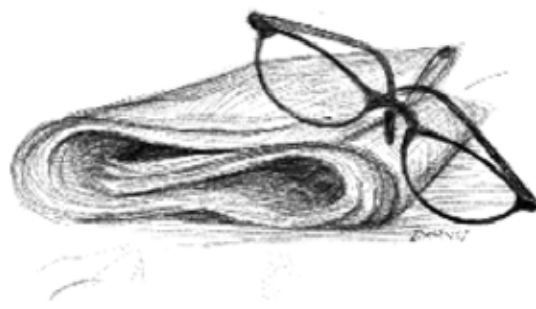
But it was a normal Catholic (not Greek Catholic) priest in a bleaker rural part of central Hungary not far from the frontier with Romania ('the Great Plain') who was approached by a friend

of a friend about some unpleasant poltergeist activity at one particular farm. 'Ah, in the Hungarian church we're strictly rational and modern about that sort of thing,' explained the priest apologetically, 'It's made extremely clear we're not allowed to do exorcisms. Our hierarchy's most firm on the matter.'

Peasant sighs with gloomy resignation.

'But if it's a serious nuisance and you really need some help,' confided the priest then, trying to be sympathetic and dropping his voice a little, 'I can get you someone very good from over the border.'

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My Brazilian Diaries

LARISSA PREUSS

Brazilians claim God is Brazilian. But as we often say here, ‘Brazil is for the tough ones’. Though I love my country and my people and wouldn’t possibly want to build a home anywhere else, I am not naive enough not to see the enormous challenge that divides us as a nation and hinders us from becoming a world power.

Brazil is a country of sharp contrasts. It is the place where the ‘girl from Ipanema’ and the kids from the ‘favelas’ – the Brazilian slums – bathe off the same beaches in Rio de Janeiro. It is the homeland of the only five-time World Cup champion soccer squad, but also the place where, as of March, 222 million homeless people are living. By the end of 2020 it is estimated the country will reach 14.7 million under-nourished, a number that has soared due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

While 13.8 per cent of the population currently unemployed surprisingly the first semester of 2020 registered an increase of 49 per cent in new insurances for luxury cars. According to the insurance company 3SEG, that holds 60 per cent of the market share, the total amount insured reached £71 million.

To paint a picture of the economic abyss, when the Porsche 911 Carrera began selling here in September 2019, it started at £79,000 and became one of the 13 best-selling luxury models in the first quarter of 2020. So, for a Brazilian working on a government fixed monthly wage of R\$1,045,00, it would take 41 years of investing ones’ entire salary to buy this car. And if you add in the 30-35 per cent taxes withheld by the government, it would take 59 years, an entire working lifetime, to purchasing a Porsche without spending a penny on anything else.

When I first visited Angola in 2009, I remember being horrified at the cost of things. A plate of very plain Chinese noodles cost \$25. I asked our guide what kind of food regular people ate and I got to try

some of the ‘fungi’, a stew made of manioc or corn flour and water complemented whenever possible with fresh or dry fish soup. They say the stew glues to your stomach and delays hunger. It made sense. The exorbitant prices of food and everything else do not allow for much variety at the table.

I then lived in the Middle East for a short while where I worked as a teacher for refugee kids. I decided I wanted to go for the full experience and asked to live with a refugee family. I spent the little stipend I received as a volunteer on food and fun activities for the kids, taking them to museums, book shops or even for ice cream. Evidently a western outsider, I spoke no Arabic and didn’t wear a hijab. I was assaulted a couple of times in taxis and when I went grocery shopping at the local shops, I was always ripped off.

After these experiences I began wondering what foreigners think of Brazil when they come here. When you’re a native, although you acknowledge the problems around you, you have to build a thick skin to deal with them. They become embedded in what you know as life.

When tourists come to Brazil, they want to see the exotic beaches, the wild Amazon rainforest, the magical spectacle of Carnival. Even though some so-called ‘social’ tourism has gained some fans who swing through the favelas in safari jeeps (imagine that!), most people don’t get a taste of real life here. Every time I fly to Brazil and meet someone who is coming to visit for the first time, I wish them good luck and pray nothing bad happens to them.

Violence is our biggest issue. It’s not uncommon to hear of people who come to visit and go back without a wallet, a necklace, a camera, or unfortunately don’t make it back at all. No, it doesn’t happen to everyone and yes, it can happen anywhere. I have friends who have been pickpocketed in Spain and I myself fell to

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a cruel scam in China. But I wish it wasn't like that here. I was taught that when a guest comes to your house, you do the best to make them feel at home.

I was born and raised in Brazil. I have lived in six of the 26 states, but later in life was able to visit almost all of them. Brazil is a country of continental dimensions. We have 8,514,876 km² of land kissed by the Atlantic Ocean on the east coast, Brazil is covered by lush green rainforest in the North and touched by drizzles of snow in the South. Each region is a world on its own. First colonised by the Portuguese, we've also owed much to the Africans, Dutch, French, Germans, Italians, Ukrainians, Polish, Japanese and Lebanese who left their home countries, willingly or unwillingly, to settle here. All of them created a great miscegenation known as Brazilians.

Brazilians are known worldwide for a variety of reasons. But from my point of view, those that are worth knowing usually go unseen. We are millions of 'Marias', 'Joãos', 'Josés' and 'Terezas', who wake up way before the sun rises, take a bite of bread with butter and a sip of dark coffee and walk towards the public transportation stations. Some ride for hours until they reach work. They do it every day, twice a day. A lot of these people live in small houses in the peripheral areas of the big cities. Some of the households have 6-8 people and many homes are maintained by single mothers who work all day cleaning and caring for other children while their own children go unwatched. Many middle-class children are raised by 'babás', nannies that work from 7 am to 5 or 6 pm. Many middle-class working mothers spend most of their earnings paying the nannies and housekeepers. Some of these women's kids who go unwatched fall prey to drug lords and become drug dealers and robbers themselves. But others collect books from the trash and become college graduates.

Here, the very rich safeguard themselves in heavily-guarded gated communities, get around by helicopters and enrol their children in bilingual schools that can cost up to R\$5,000 per month on high school fees. On the other hand, half of the population, 105 million Brazilians lack access to clean water and sewage. If you consider education, only 0.8 percent of people between ages 24-65 hold a master's degree. According to the report 'Education at a Glance' released in September 2019, that examined the numbers in higher education in 45 OECD member countries, only 0.2 per cent of Brazilians hold a doctorate degree. The figures get uglier when you look at elementary education, which by the way is President's Jair Bolsonaro's target.

According to the latest PISA test results, four in ten 15-year-old students can't grasp the main idea in a text, read graphs, understand a simple scientific experiment or do simple mathematical calculations with whole numbers. In the homeland of Field's Medal laureate mathematician Artur Ávila, 11 per cent of the population can't read or write.

There are many countries within this country, and unfortunately, we don't visit each other quite often. Social divisions, infrastructure problems, the lack of education and cultural development, the stifling bureaucracy, the corruption a cancer in every business, the horrible politics, the economic hardship, the violence – oh, the violence that claims almost 50 thousand lives by homicide alone each year, the racial and gender inequalities, the disregard for rules, the weak law-enforcement system, the unequal treatment by the judiciary... the list of maladies that affects my country could continue for pages, are reasons enough to want to move somewhere else. In 2018, 224,000 people applied to leave the country, many doctors or scientists seeking better opportunities.

Then what makes Brazil a good place to live, other than being one's birthplace?

As I see it, even though I know the downtown streets in Rio smell of creosote, the metro in São Paulo at five in the afternoon makes you feel like a canned sardine, where you have to watch your belongings at all times, Brazil is still a place where anything you sow grows. That's why I insist on sowing small seeds of the very best I've learned here and abroad so my children or even grandchildren can reap better days under the blessings of a country which is lucky enough to have a Redeemer with open arms as its main postcard. When the Christ the Redeemer statue was built in France in the 1920's, the French didn't believe we had the experience nor the skills to craft such a masterpiece. Perhaps we didn't, we were too busy working with our hands and feet to build a country with open arms.

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Italy's underwater Economy

'Economia Sommersa'

ALEXANDER GRIEG

Alone among the Sick Men of Europe, Italians enjoy Wealth and Prosperity. In August, I moored my small racing sloop at Livorno. Being unable to locate a port official, I proceeded to a house party at a trendy locale of American and Russian millionaires and arrived as the sun was setting over the Apennine foothills. The scene looked akin to something out of 19th Century Mississippi. I was not the only illegal immigrant at the villa.

Patience, a beautiful 19 year old Nigerian, emerged from the kitchen to hand Prosecco around the guests. A Neapolitan Count in a Pompeii Red jacket cocked a quizzical eyebrow at our host and hostess, inquiring – and I translate the sense of it.–

'How diyd you come bah Patience?'

We heard that she had arrived via the same family who had also supplied the bare-chested negro currently at work in the flower bed. She was from a large Christian family and had received tertiary education as a nurse at Lagos University.

She was happy to enter the employment of a house which provided shelter from the authorities, among other things. One couldn't enquire about her wages, but this is a moot point: once legal, she would be able to find employment suitable to her background on a more official basis. My hostess was working tirelessly with the authorities to help her staff achieve this. The bureaucratic nightmare of employing them legally would then become someone else's problem while the loss of domestic help at the villa could be remedied by means of

charity towards the next worthy cohort fresh from the Calabria docks – and around we go.

A jurisdiction which grants workers' rights and minimum wages on one hand yet fails to exclude those workers on the other effectively hands powers of state to employers in the grey economy. In sophisticated cultures, the moral glue which holds this together tends to be the ideology of the left (Over the Fortress, Black Lives Matter etc). But, as a former employee in Italy's grey sector myself,

I would like to stand up for the civic virtues a clandestine economy in the age of fiat currency, multinational government and market controls.

I returned to Via Machiavelli, the city street where I used to live, and met an old friend who is a musician at the local opera house. 'We artists

are all unemployed at the

moment,' he told me. At the start of the lockdown, the municipality had requisitioned a four-star hotel, shut it down and paid it to house displaced foreigners. After three months of not trying particularly hard to return to his native Mexico, my friend had secured himself a position as the hotel's caretaker and was now being paid to keep the place shut. Starved of the tourist industry, the others had gradually run out of cash and gone home until things start moving again.

'It's just me and Anna left,' he said, indicating a devastatingly beautiful Siberian violinist who was reading *Harry Potter* behind the reception desk. 'She's on a student visa like me, but her family are wealthy – so she is actually studying.'

Exploring deeper into the dark building, I discovered the torpid downstairs quarters of the



A Ravenna Mosaic

workforce which had kept the hotel ticking over until a few months ago. The rooms were stacked with boxes of bean curd and furnished with rotating dining tables from Alibaba. Cupboards had been made habitable and festooned with auspicious Baxia charms for strength and prosperity.

How much of Italy's wealth rests on this unmeasurable part of the economy?

When I arrived in Via Machiavelli, six years ago, I quickly found work on an informal basis and, like many doctors and lawyers, took my cut from those cash transactions which we could get away with without recording. My accommodation above the shop was free – existing as it did on a fuzzy line between residential and commercial space. With my meagre untaxed earnings and my involvement in the vast open secret of Italian society, I enjoyed a standard of living and sense of social inclusion that was unimaginable in London – and that was before I could even really speak the language.

My credulity in the system was tested to the limit when a squatters' association set up an office in the street. I asked the bearded Cheguevarista at the desk how the association operated. 'The police,' he explained, 'come to us to request street protests which prevent them from evicting poor, elderly, residents from gentrifying areas. In return they turn a blind eye to our occupation of abandoned commercial and industrial buildings.' Thus, their completely illegal civic activity could continue to enjoy brazen shopfront operations as if they were selling handbags, bicycles, antiques, banking services... I'm now struggling for an example of any business in Via Machiavelli which doesn't keep a second set of books. Pharmaceuticals – there we are! I reckon the chemist on the corner is pretty kosher in its finances.

A French banker friend of mine sniffed that such barbarity could never occur in Paris, because the French government has pretty much eliminated cash. Britain also likes to think that it is edging towards electronic utopia. With Sterling cash payments accounting for over a half of our transactions a decade ago, they measured – measured – less than a quarter at the start of lockdown.

Italy, on the other hand, is wise enough not even to volunteer official figures on this matter. To give you an example of how hopelessly out of control they are, Prime Minister Conti recently proposed a lottery for card users, effectively bribing people to engage with the legal economy with the possibility

of random state handouts. More power to Italy if the ECB buy Conti's feigned consternation. Should Italians be concerned that their official debt is at 180 per cent of GDP? Or that their government has been issuing probably illegal Euro bonds? Not really. The best a Eurozone citizen can hope for is that his government is winning the race to the bottom and thus sharing out the public debt with neighbours while there is still a viable currency to cheat with. Italy is on track to ride the Euro until it is no more.

If the Cinquième République has succeeded in gaining total control of the market economy by the time that day comes, the Sixième will be born amid garbage piles, blackouts and sirens. We might also expect creditors like Germany to put up a bit of a fight – seizing infrastructure and outright banning any foreign cash. But those who perceive wealth in units of fiat currency could take a valuable lesson from societies whose response to worthless cash is well within living memory.

In Via Macchiavelli, people will just stand at the bar and watch the telly with mild curiosity as some doomsday fanatic at Standard and Poor declares their nation bankrupt. Then they will pay for their coffee in IOUs or US dollars and pawn their watches or cufflinks to tide them over until someone blows the dust off the old lira-printing machines and starts inflating the next wave of worthless cash. Any part of an economy which produces wealth can survive the complete collapse of its currency. Any arm of the state which is surplus to absolute and immediate public necessity probably cannot.

For once, I regret that the UK is not in the Euro. Despite the lockdown spree of fiscal spending, Sterling is well accounted for and will probably survive. Next year, a generation of effectively bankrupted graduates will once again plough through online job listings, lining up with their P45s and debt anxiety and dystopian expectations of stability regardless of true production. Frustration will boil over into rioting and demands for yet more controls to enforce justice and equality and rights. Most of us will never be forced to ask ourselves:

'Could we have survived by our own efforts?' 'Do we really need the state in every aspect of our lives?'

True slavery is that which believes that freedom emanates from the paymaster.

Alexander Grieg is sailing the Mediterranean in his racing sloop.

The Mandate of Heaven. China Expands her Empire

FRANCIS HALLINAN

One could be forgiven for thinking there is something very fishy about the Covid 19 outbreak and China's handling of it. While the rest of the world is reeling economically from the effects of the Wuhan virus, China's economy is flourishing and reports of the disease within the country have virtually ceased. And while the west is still waiting for a safe vaccine China has already started vaccinating her population. Why is she so far in front?

Beijing does not like to be reminded of this which is why she has imposed a crippling ban on imports from Australia for demanding an international enquiry into the origins of Covid 19. The Chinese government has made it clear, both over Hong Kong and Australia, that there is no room for western states and their free speech nonsense within her empire. They are to go. At the best she might allow Australia to continue as an impoverished rural economy on the edge of her empire, with left wing New Zealand eagerly trotting behind; Hong Kong however is to be incorporated into the great political silence that is mainland China.

Meanwhile under cover of the pandemic as well as consolidating her grip on Hong Kong she has been strengthening her borders. Chinese troops have started skirmishing again with Indian and Nepalese troops in the Himalayas, the ethnic cleaning of the Uigurs in the west of China lest they prove enemies in wartime has been stepped up, and China's ring of maritime blockhouses on the Spratley islands along the approaches to her Pacific frontier is being reinforced. The Philippines who protested vigorously at this were given short shrift.

Why the aggression? Historically China has scores to settle with the west. Britain and America's colonial adventures in 19th century China, the Opium Wars, the Boxer Rising, and the imposition of Christian missionaries, have left deep scars on the Chinese political psyche. They don't like us; they certainly don't trust us and are determined that China will never be as humiliatingly weak again. China sees America in decline and wants to take her place. At the height of American power, no large enterprise, military adventure or major change in a political economy could

be undertaken anywhere in the western world without Washington's permission. China would like to see far larger numbers of western suppliants than presently go to Washington at the Court of the Son of Heaven.

How does the new administration in Washington fit into this? While the Trump administration's raising of tariffs against Chinese imports was a serious check to China's ambitions, and his sending of the US navy into the Pacific left her in no doubt of the consequences of overstepping the mark over the Spratley islands, will the new administration in Washington take such a hard line?

Biden says he will remain firm on Chinese tariffs, and ensure support of western allies in the Pacific, but words like 'realistic', 'a firm stance for public consumption on both sides,' in subsequent interpretations of his policies by Washington insiders, belie any intention of him really standing up to China.

Weakness is not something Beijing admires and America is weak. Half her population feels bitterly cheated by the election, armed militia roam the streets and it could be years before the courts rule on the legitimacy of Biden's presidency. China will take advantage of this.

Of particular concern are Taiwan and Australia. A situation could arise where Beijing feels sufficiently emboldened by a crisis in internal US politics to try and seize Taiwan. Australia's predicament is also serious. With a major principle of free trade at stake, America will have to start moves to rescue Australia from Beijing's grip by making it as easy as possible to shift her exports elsewhere. President elect Biden is old and frail; he will be 82 when he leaves office and decisions like this may fall, at least in private, to Kamala Harris. A political unknown, a hardline criminal lawyer when she was Attorney General in California, 'two strikes and you are out'; she is also the daughter of a radical Marxist. Childhood sympathies can run deep. If she abandons Australia it will be a Chinese not an American century.

Francis Hallinan is a journalist.

An Unfair Cop?

FRANK HAVILAND

Anyone with half a retina on the ball in Britain knows the Old Bill unofficially retired from policing years ago. Burglary, assault and shoplifting are out, investigating pensioners' tweets, people who think men are men, and dog walkers are in. With fewer than 1 in 100 thefts now being solved, the public might get a little concerned, but at least there's less chance of being called 'racist' that way. Public confidence in the police has fallen to such an extent, citizens are no longer even bothering to report crime. And with police morale depressingly low, the cacophonous mixture of Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion and Covid has finally flushed the full horror of police wokery out into open view.

Not only are police now making up crimes as they go, they have become unashamedly political – a two-tier force, who will nick you or kneel for you, depending on whose lives your T-shirt thinks matter: utter subservience to Black Lives Matter rioters, statue desecrators, Ashura rallies, or idiots gluing themselves to buildings; riot police for those defending our monuments, mask objectors, or birthday parties for 10-year-old terminally ill children.

You can ponce around in all the rainbow LGBT cars you like, cancel the male choirs, and ban straight, white males from ever becoming coppers but it doesn't change a thing; the police oath, to uphold the law *without fear or favour* is no longer being observed, and that situation is totally unsustainable. The fault for such dereliction of duty clearly does not reside with ordinary rank and file PCs, but with the senior officers instructing them to placate rioters *à genoux*, instead of enforcing the law. Unlike Covid, this is a genuine pandemic, with Britain's constabularies riddled with a woke canker.

Cressida Dick and Sadiq Khan, two of London's finest and most senior diversity appointments, must shoulder a substantial part of the blame. Indeed, Dick and Khan, while a perfect fit in other avenues of life, are not quite hitting London's g-spot when it comes to crime. Dick spends her days apologising for officers doing their jobs properly, while Khan, who you'd think would have bigger fish to fry, with crime in London rising five times faster than the rest of UK, appears to have only two policy concerns: opposing 'stop and search', no matter how many lives it saves, and increasing 'diversity' to 100 per cent, at which point presumably he has to start over again?

Cast your eye around Britain's constabularies, and diversity of thought is the one thing you won't find. Julie Cooke, Deputy Chief of Cheshire Police, wants pronouns policed. Nick Adderley, Northamptonshire's Chief

Constable, threatened to search supermarket trolleys for 'legitimate' shopping. Peter Goodman, Chief Constable of Derbyshire, used drones to spy on dog walkers. Andy Marsh, Chief Constable of Avon & Somerset, defended officers for not intervening as statues were toppled. Counter-terror Chief Neil Basu asserts that right-wing terror is Britain's biggest threat, despite the fact that 90 per cent of the extremists on MI5's watchlist are jihadis.

So the question is, with Britain's police no longer neutral but decidedly political, why should the citizenry uphold their end of the social contract? Instead of cooperating, should we not regard the police as a hostile organisation bent on stifling free speech, and focus our efforts on coordinated civil disobedience? A step too far you may well argue, except we are now moving to the realm of farce. The fashionable *crime de jour* is, apparently, interviewing David Starkey. Whatever you think of Starkey's comments on slavery, I have already written extensively in his defence, that is irrelevant. If you cannot conduct interviews with the controversial, the only interviews worth holding, incidentally, then the game is up. Starkey, betrayed by almost every institution and friend he could be, including Grimes himself, has already paid the ultimate price of being silenced. But for the MET police to go after Grimes is a curious move for unlike Starkey, Grimes is mild-mannered and polite in debate, his only conceivable crime is being a working-class lad, voting the wrong way. So it's hard to see this as anything other than a free speech grab, silencing Grimes before he amasses too many Twitter followers. If we're going to have a Stasi, couldn't we at least get one with a bit of dash to it?

As bleak as things are, shutting the police down should not be considered, the lawlessness that would follow is already well-documented, and Black Lives Matter welcomes precisely this scenario. Moreover, I have no doubt that most police officers are entirely decent and eager to do the job they signed up for, appalled at the decisions being made on their behalf.

We need to get back to good, old-fashioned policing: Bobbies on the beat, enforcing the law without fear or favour; protecting the public rather than impeding them, and supported not condemned by its management. We need a root and branch cull of pc PCs, but we also need a government confident enough to do so.

Frank Haviland lives in South Korea and his latest book is Banalysis: the Lie Destroying the West.

The Woke Princess

NIALL McCRAE

The sycophantic authors of the book *Finding Freedom* have done us all a favour. If anyone was in doubt about whether they are being fair in criticising Harry and Meghan, they won't be now. Omid Scobie and Carolyn Durand, who appear to have had the ear of this celebregal couple, have unwittingly produced a classic case study in woke-infused narcissism.

I enjoyed the book, although not as the authors intended. Hardly a page went by without a guffaw. *Finding Freedom* presents the self-righteousness and hypocrisy of Harry and Meghan so transparently that one wonders how such lack of insight is possible. With an insatiable desire for positive publicity, pursued through moralising missives on social media and liaisons with a chosen few (Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, Serena Williams, *et al*), the lapsed royals preach to lesser mortals the doctrine of, 'do as I say, not as I do'.

Fittingly, the focus is on Meghan, symbolising Harry's secondary status. The modestly successful Californian actress was on the crest of a wave when she joined the Royal Family. Who would have dared to dislike her? But long before that wonderful wedding in Windsor, Meghan never hid her intent to undermine this cherished institution and to subject the British people to her champagne radicalism.

As Harry said, 'what Meghan wants, Meghan gets'. In her youth she eschewed socialising for the

sake of it. Everything was meticulously planned: holidays, nights out with friends, shopping for shoes. This instrumentalism is evident in the social media videos with Harry, who meekly does what he's told. When her husband strayed off script with a self-effacious remark that they are too old to be part of a youthful movement for change, Meghan cut him off sharply.

Before becoming the woke princess, Meghan was determined to reach a wider audience and on her own terms. She started a lifestyle blog *The Tig*, named after a red wine Tignanello that took her to a higher plane of consciousness (perhaps what lesser mortals would describe as tipsy):

It was my first moment of getting it – I fully understood what people meant by the

body, structure, finish, legs of wine. The Tig is my nickname for me getting it. Not just wine, but everything.

Profound, eh? A startling phenomenon of the internet is the mass following of celebrities, whose vacuous messages are taken so seriously and personally. On Independence Day in 2014, Meghan declared:

Raise a glass to yourself today – to the right to freedom, to the empowerment of the women (and men) who struggle to have it, and to knowing, embracing, honouring, educating, and loving yourself.



Following in the footsteps of actress Angeline Jolie as an activist in Africa, Meghan had something in common in Harry, who felt more at home in Botswana than Buckingham Palace. When they first met, hours were spent sharing their mission to make the world a better place. Harry, having done sterling work for disabled soldiers, was enlightened by Meghan's progressive agenda. Once one of the lads, Harry was radicalised into seeing those around him as conformists perpetuating injustice.

William, watching his brother go head over heels, advised, 'don't feel you need to rush this; take as much time as you need to get to know this girl'. Sound advice, surely, from an older brother on the pressures and pitfalls of a very public courtship. But Harry was hurt, and stopped speaking to William for months. Meanwhile sassy Meghan and prim-and-proper Kate never warmed to each other. Courtiers warned of turbulence ahead.

Meghan declared war on the popular press, and is currently suing the *Mail on Sunday* for breach of privacy. Initially gushing in their coverage, the tabloid newspapers got on the wrong side of 'this girl' by inquiring into her background. The Markles had plenty of material, and Meghan tried to shoot the messenger. Scobie and Durand are sneering towards Meghan's family, with the exception of her black mother, deemed the source of all that is good in her daughter. Reading between lines such as 'the window fitter' (half-brother Thomas Markle Junior) lurks the notion of 'white trash'.

Undoubtedly Meghan has been abused by trolls, and she blames the media for feeding this hate. But allegations of racist reporting are unfair. She is partly responsible for racializing the relationship between herself and the Royal Family, and for interpreting our heritage in the style of a lecturer in critical race theory, despite being warmly welcomed by the British public.

After marrying into the *Firm*, Meghan felt stifled. Tension with the family and palace staff was exacerbated by the couple's media strategy, channelled through the *@SussexRoyal Instagram* account. 'People can get the news directly from us', Meghan said. This vast following, though, was not necessarily admiring: some (like me in buying this book) are intrigued by the character flaws, in the same way that Donald Trump's Twitter following includes millions who despise him.

Meghan's public appearances were often provocative, cocking a snook at dusty old traditions

and the ignorant masses. After visiting a charity for prostitutes, where she wrote messages on bananas ('You are special', 'You are amazing', etc) she hissed at the predictable ire in the tabloid press. 'Animals', she called them; an ironic riposte, having said on becoming patron of an animal welfare centre that 'animals are such an important part of my life'.

At a community kitchen in London, Meghan exclaimed 'I feel so proud to live in a city that can have so much diversity...twelve countries represented in this one group of women! It's pretty outstanding'. By this logic, a cooking and catering crew of all Nigerian origin, for example, would be substandard. Like Meghan's constant stream of platitudes (tellingly, with frequent use of the phrase 'incredibly proud'), those of her admirers are all flattering hyperbole. Thomas Reilly, British ambassador to Morocco, said of the Duchess of Sussex on her official visit: 'Here's a woman jumping into a helicopter to fly 1,400 metres high, still smiling and ready to do it all'.

As Scobie and Durand assert, Meghan is always 'focused on implementing change'. But she was unsuccessful, lamenting to a friend after Harry's last gig as captain general of the Royal Marines: 'The powers are unfortunately greater than me'. Nonetheless, having settled in a mansion in Beverley Hills, Meghan has got her prince in a private paradise, free to display her values and virtues unfettered by the men in suits.

Promoting the 'When we all vote' campaign to female voters before the US presidential election, Meghan drew attention to the fact that her poor, disenfranchised husband has never been allowed to vote. The pair implored Americans to vote against hate (*aka* Trump); at the time of writing it was not known whether the electorate, particularly the downtrodden in Rustbelt states, would appreciate voting instructions from this privileged elite.

Egotistic and manipulative, Meghan seeks every opportunity to burnish her image as a princess of progressive philanthropy. I was no fan of Diana, but she won more hearts in her tragically shortened life than 'Woko Ono' ever will.

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Giving your brain a left-wing perm and set at a British University

ROGER WATSON

British universities appear to have given up educating students. Instead, they are more concerned with educating or, re-educating their staff – Chairman Mao would have been proud. This is a significant waste of time and resources, but few academic employees would dare to question the ideological regime

Long gone are the days when staff induction and development were focused on fire safety training, running a research project, and giving a lecture. University academic staff are now enmeshed by a plethora of compulsory staff development courses designed to adjust their thinking. Few of these are aimed at making them more effective academics, they are aimed at aligning their thoughts with the cultural Marxist agenda. At face value, the modules offered seem innocuous. Who could object to training in equal opportunities, inclusive teaching or anti-discrimination? Nevertheless, it is doubtful if time-consuming training sessions are required, to encourage people to be nice to one another, fair to students and, regardless of what you think, not to voice a prejudicial opinion.

It is not enough, far from it. What we think must be adjusted is through abject nonsense such as unconscious bias training and anti-terrorist training. As far as I can tell, however, if your unconscious bias is against conservative values and our Judaeo-Christian heritage then that is acceptable. Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom recently spent nearly half a million pounds on unconscious bias training. There are only 650 Members of Parliament; there are over

80,000 academics in British universities and companies charge approximately three hundred pounds per person trained. This is where a significant proportion of student fees is going.

Challenging the established orthodoxy of staff re-education is impossible and attendance at an increasing number of training courses is closely monitored, usually at staff appraisals. For those unaware of what a staff appraisal is, it is a hour – at least – out of the life of two people that achieves absolutely nothing, sets targets that are

completely ignored and reveals nothing that either party did not already know. However, imposing the staff development programme is one tangible outcome and, as these are mostly done

online, Big Brother or Sister can monitor your ‘progress’, set your objectives and chastise you if you have not ‘achieved’ your targets.

The vacuity of unconscious bias training is apparent when anyone offering a session is questioned about it and asked for a definition. The response is usually along the lines of ‘Well, what do you think it means?’, a classic deflection technique designed to put the questioner on the ideological spot in front of colleagues. The obvious response never goes down well. Such sessions proceed along the lines of self-examination which is not considered successful until each participant has owned up to some deep hidden prejudice, they had not previously realised they held. I find that the sooner you declare something, the sooner you can get back to your day job.

To illustrate the sheer stupidity of the exercise and the manifest stupidity of those offering the

University academic staff are now enmeshed by a plethora of compulsory staff development courses designed to adjust their thinking.

training I once responded to the following question in the following way:

Question: ‘When an interview candidate walks into the interview room how long does it take you to come to an opinion about the candidate?’

My response: ‘About two to three seconds?’

That was not the correct answer. The correct answer was that you could only arrive at a conclusion at the end of the interview. I interrupted to indicate that I was answering the question, not offering an opinion and, moreover – and sincerely – I knew that I was wrong to come to such rapid opinions. I was aware of this failing (it was not unconscious) and I appreciated that the subsequent interview process, which may overturn my prejudice, was valuable. Still wrong, apparently. The trainer was completely unable to accept that I was expressing what actually happens in such a situation rather than what should happen. Eventually I walked out, without consequence.

The following also happened, as reported to me by a colleague who – because of his position – was obliged to attend a training session on dealing with terrorism. It became apparent, before long, that the terrorism being referred to was exclusively about right-wing and fascist fringe groups. My colleague asked about the threat from Islamist inspired terrorist groups and the ever-present threat of the Irish nationalists and was simply brushed aside. But, he insisted, only one type of terrorism – of which he heartily disapproved – was being referred to; surely there were others. He was effectively silenced by the coordinator and received no support from colleagues in the group.

This is another ludicrous situation and that should be obvious to anyone organising such sessions. As far as I am aware, the last right wing, racist fascist group to terrorise the British population was led by Adolf Hitler and the terror was inflicted by the Luftwaffe. However, we have suffered decades of terrorism from Irish nationalist groups. The main protagonists, the IRA, may have declared peace and given up enough arms to convince Bill Clinton of their good intentions, but disaffected splinter groups exist and are active in Northern

The IRA, may have declared peace and given up enough arms to convince Bill Clinton of their good intentions, but disaffected splinter groups exist and are active in Northern Ireland

Ireland which, last time I checked, was still part of the United Kingdom. Moreover, in recent years we have had several serious attacks with fatal consequences by Islamist inspired terrorists and they continue to be active in Europe. Cells are regularly discovered and dealt with in the UK, but so frightened are they of offending anyone of any ethnic or religious background, that British universities promulgate nonsense in the name of staff development. And worse, they collude in silencing critics. While boasting diversity and inclusiveness, it appears that diversity does not include anything contrary to woke opinion.

British universities have clearly lost their way and, instead of competing to excel at academic excellence, they now trip over one another to declare vacuous concepts such as ‘carbon neutrality’, ‘sustainable development’ and ‘black lives matter’. The first is impossible, the second has only been achieved in capitalist countries (but this is not what they are referring to) and the third is not reflected in the staff or student profiles in any British university. These are usually implemented at the behest of the ephemeral student body without reference to the permanent staff; they are presented as *fait accompli* by vice chancellors and, as with unconscious bias training, dissent is not tolerated. With the recent success of the move to online teaching, needed by the global pandemic, the enormous misuse of university resources on unconscious bias training and the tangible mission drift from education to ideology, is this the time to question how many we need and how much we need British universities?

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BBC Lies and Abominations

MARY SIDNEY

A muffled, sinister voice spells it out: ‘At midnight tonight mass deportations begin of all deaf, blind, disabled, diverse and non-English born, unwilling to marry (an English born person).’

Bartholomew Abominations, broadcast on Saturday on BBC Radio 4, is set in England, 2032 where everyone must marry able-bodied and indigenous (white) English people or face deportation to ‘detention centres’. We hear Tom who’s deaf, discussing this with Ned, an immigrant Pole. Both miss the chance to find an ‘able-bodied’ partner that night and face deportation.

‘The round-up begins in three hours,’ intones the voice.

It’s 75 years since VE Day, which Sir Tom Moore recently called, ‘A great day for the world,’ and the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, which prevented a Nazi invasion, but the BBC decided to use this weekend to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act, with this play.

A re-write of Ben Jonson’s 1614, *Bartholomew Fair*, a rollicking Jacobean comedy about the rise of the Puritans. Jonson and Shakespeare worried that the Puritans would close down theatres depriving them of their living, and everyone else of ‘Cakes and ale’. The BBC calls it a ‘radical reinvention of a classic drama for 21st century audiences, reflecting narrow minded disability discrimination, and the English nationalism of the early 21st century.’

It’s absolutely right that disability rights are enshrined in law. Access, particularly in old infrastructure isn’t as good as it should be, but this problem is increasingly being improved. People can be inconsiderate. Reporter Frank Gardner recently told how he was left stranded in an airport when his wheel-chair was mis-laid. But it’s very strange that the English should be accused of desiring a re-enactment of Hitler’s racist laws of 1935, and his Aktion T4 against the disabled of 1939.

There is something of a tradition of charity in this country; among many Victorian charities we had The Royal National Institute for the Blind, 1868, the first of its kind. In 1928 a charity for the Deaf-Blind was established. Guide Dogs for the blind began in 1931, invented by Muriel Croke and Rosamund Bond who trained the first ever four guide dogs in a garage in Liverpool. The Spastics Society arrived in the 1950s. We also have charities for animals, birds and fish. One hundred and sixty-six in all, raising nearly fifty billion pounds from the public annually.

There are also our overseas charities for the disabled, including the only spinal injuries unit in Bangladesh, founded by Valery Taylor from Bromley. Then there is UK foreign aid, nearly twenty billion, more than the spending on the police. The top recipient being Pakistan.

It’s tempting to say we are a charitable people, and who

but the English would have invented Guide Dogs? No one else did. But that would be nationalistic and this play is not so much about disability as traducing ‘English nationalism’.

Paul Sirett, ‘Olivier nominated playwright,’ is white, but his previous work includes, *Skaville*, a homage to ‘two-tone and ska,’ (Jamaican music), *Worlds Apart*, about immigration control, and *The Big Life*, a British ska musical, combining Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labours Lost* with the story of Windrush immigrant.

A review in the *Independent* said, ‘The show registers the privations that these immigrants suffer – the institutional racism, social humiliations, the realisation that the medal of a brother who died fighting in the Second World War cuts no ice in this society. It helps that the women (English) seem to be horny as hell.’

England; a callous, cruel, latter day Nazi Germany. The only good thing about it is that the women are promiscuous.

A Martian visiting, hopefully socially distancing, might well be dismayed. Statistics on the effect of the lock-down report twenty-two per cent more babies dying from abuse and neglect. People are blocking track & trace numbers and being abusive when called. There is continuing waste of public money as the NHS tries, yet again, to improve its computer system. Chaotic, uncivil and poorly educated, but it’s hard to recognise the genocidal inclinations described in this play.

The BBC now re-write every classic text to keep things safely woke, and although this one is set in the future, it’s aim is to attack the present, to increase English self-hatred, banging home the idea that our history was wicked and its legacy taints all indigenous white people. According to this ideology we were never a cohesive, resilient people, always just cruel exploiters of the poor and weak.

The play switches from the deportees, huddled like prisoners facing transport to Auschwitz, to Sir Michael, an English toff who, surprise, surprise sounds like Boris.

‘Let’s make England English again,’ he says, jubilant about the terror on the streets. He then exults over the deaths in the pandemic, pleased, as a Hitlerian eugenicist that the population has been reduced.

‘I care about people like us,’ he says, evily.

Bartholomew Fair was clever, funny and frightening, foreseeing the arrival of the dreaded Puritans with their dead hand and cloth ears. This play shows they’ve returned. The writer, without poetry or comedy, takes a vicious hammer to his own people. Rather than hilarious satire to entertain us in this time of trial, an old attack on Puritans is now reclaimed and re-written by Puritans for Puritans. The result is of course deadly dull just as they would wish.

Mary Sidney is a social commentator.

Where Ignorance is Bliss

BRIAN RIDLEY

While politicians, once they have a theory in their teeth, will defend it to the death, however wrong, scientists are always looking for ways to prove their theories wrong. Known as the principle of falsifiability it gives science its enormous success. Scientists collect facts, build theories from them, then try to falsify them.

Consequently, there is no such thing as a final explanation of the material world, or 'the science' as defenders of Global Warming or Darwin's Theory of Evolution like to think. Despite their extreme respectability, despite the religious mysticism surrounding them, like all theories, they are bees in summer facing an inevitable winter of falsifiability. Sometime somewhere, a single ugly fact will almost certainly destroy them.

Contrary to Darwin, thanks to recent discoveries in epigenesis, you can pass on certain acquired characteristics to your offspring, while Global Warmers are struggling with the killer fact that present atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are historically only just above that needed for plant growth. So why are we trying to reduce it? There is no bedrock of science you cannot drill under, no scientific truth a politician can fall in love with and not be cuckolded by facts. Which is why we had had the disaster of Covid 19.

Covid is a corona virus and therefore has form, both as a killer and one that can adopt multiple

disguises. It arrived rather interestingly in a period in which normal influenza viruses seemed to be taking a sabbatical. November 19 to January 20 saw their lowest activities for years

We hear a lot these days in connection with the corona virus pandemic of ministers 'following the

science', which strikes me as an odd thing to do, since, beyond knowing that the virus is transmitted from person to person, like Mrs Thatcher's 'there is no such thing as society,' 'the science' does not exist. While it is true that an education in the humanities is desirable for any member of a government to have, an education in science, in contrast, would be far too

simplistic. Unlike opinion, scientific knowledge is reliable because it is based entirely on Karl Popper's principle of falsifiability, the principle of rationality and experiments designed to falsify any claim to the truth. Not so.

As a scientist, I could not live without the humanities, but I would guess that anyone educated in the humanities could usually get along very well without science. Therefore, in the current climate it would be prudent to understand a little more about the science we are to follow. I am very aware of extensive shortcomings about my knowledge of the classics, literature, poetry, art, music and philosophy. I have blind spots regarding much of modern art and modern music, but, otherwise, it is all essential to my life. As a scientist, I am aware



The Nativity by Botticelli

that I know quite a bit about particular bits of the material world, but can largely ignorant about the universe at large, and have only a rough idea concerning those parts that other physicists know about, such as general relativity, string theory, quantum gravity. I am comforted, if comfort is the right word, by the view of Einstein: ‘How little we scientists know!’

This should give us pause when we contemplate those prevalent views about modern society in the West. So much that was once unquestionable is no longer so: religion giving way to science, the limits imposed on free speech by the pundits of woke and race, even democracy itself questioned by parts of the establishment. All of which is in the realm of opinion, some of it rationally argued, much of it passionately held, all with optimistic claims to the truth, in short, the rhetoric of the humanities. Science is not like that. What science knows best is the world of matter, and although it thinks that human beings are composed of matter, it hasn’t a clue about consciousness and therefore cannot lay down laws of behaviour. Social studies, economics, politics are not sciences, but fields of informed opinion.

Nevertheless, experiments are attempted – pub closing time, rule of six, use of masks, working from home etc, but since they all take place at once, the efficiency of any one aspect cannot be established. Even the effect of a general lockdown is controversial; agreement is limited to the vulnerability by age and ethnicity.

But there are more sorts of science than generally realised. What sort of science is being bandied about in the current context needs to be

recognized. Very roughly, one might distinguish two sorts – passive and active science. Active science is the proper stuff, involving falsifiable experiments, that is, experiments designed so that if whatever idea they are designed to test proves to be wrong, it will be revealed.

Wrong ideas certainly need to be weeded out, but it is somewhat non-intuitive that an experiment that falsifies a claim is more useful than one that supports the claim, which does not mean that a supported claim is necessarily true, it is only good as far as it goes. Truth has a very hard time establishing itself in science.

On the other hand, passive science involves describing as quantitatively as possible some phenomenon about which there is insufficient knowledge to predict anything. This is the sort of science we are encountering now – plenty of graphs and statistics, but no theory beyond extrapolations of the data. Not surprising, given that it attempts to deal with

something that is alive. Science is comfortable with neutrinos, electrons and quarks, the stuff of matter, but anything alive presents a formidable challenge. So, it is passive science for us and the media, active science for the laboratory. Ultimately, we will know as much as possible about the virus and a vaccine will be discovered. Getting there is what science is about. In the meantime, we will have to put up with ‘informed opinion’ and get on with life as best we can.

B K Ridley is a Fellow of the Royal Society/



A Pope's rebuttal of Marxism and Socialism

JAMES MONTEITH

Rerum Novarum, which can be translated either as 'of new things' or 'of revolutionary change', depending on taste, is the papal encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 (subtitle *On Capital and Labour*) addressing the pressing issue of the condition of the working class. It was the Catholic Church's response to the twin challenges of socialism and Marxism.

Although it is the foundational text of Catholic social teaching, advocating among other things a living wage and the right to form a trade union, *Rerum Novarum* is rarely cited nowadays. Its reputation of meaning all things to all men is no doubt partly responsible: whereas for socialists it is merely an apologia of the *status quo*, for *laissez-faire* conservatives and neo-liberals it is an anti-capitalist diatribe which has spawned liberation theology. But in the main, the advent of modern secular liberal democracy has simply rendered late nineteenth-century papal encyclicals redundant to modern political debate.

Yet *Rerum Novarum* remains influential in what must count for traditional socially conservative Tories as two of the most interesting political developments of modern times – Maurice Glasman's 'Blue Labour' and Phillip Blond's 'Red Tory' movements. And reading *Rerum Novarum* for the first time, one is struck above all by its powerfully cogent statement of the fundamental principles of conservatism: the family, personal virtue, moderate taxation, private property, inheritance, natural inequality, social hierarchy, the tempering of power and privileges with

obligations, and a state which guarantees law and order. Its argument is the more compelling for being rooted not in the abstractions of political theory and imaginary social contracts, but in the realities of the human condition – in our God-given nature and reason. The market is criticized, but only when it undermines

these conservative principles, and people are reduced to commodities used 'as mere instruments for money-making'. *Laissez-faire* liberals might object, but for traditional conservatives – Tories – society is an organic whole and can never be reduced solely to the market. Socialism, on the other hand, appeals to little more than 'the poor man's envy of the rich'.

Rerum Novarum begins by establishing the primacy of man's right to provide for his own subsistence – a right that precedes the formation of any state. This has its origin in the survival instinct he shares with all other animals, but in the case of man, who God uniquely endowed with the capacity for purposeful

action (reason) and enjoined to 'possess the fruits of the earth', this right also extends to cultivating the land. And it is through cultivation, through the act of expending his energy and skill, that a man makes 'that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his personality' his own. Hence, we have the origin of private property. The bible adds its sanction: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife; nor his house, nor his field ... nor anything that is his.'

These rights are even stronger when man's social and domestic obligations to his family are considered. For 'the society of a man's house' has rights and duties that are as primal as those of subsistence, and again precede



those of the state. It is ‘a most sacred law of nature that a father should provide food and all necessaries for those whom he has begotten’; and ‘in no other way can a father effect this except by the ownership of productive property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance’. Paternal authority proceeds from the same source. Again, the bible adds its sanction: ‘Increase and multiply’.

Once these rights are recognized, socialist dreams of equality and ‘community of goods’ must be ‘utterly rejected’. Such arrangements are profoundly unjust as they are contrary to ‘the natural rights of mankind’, the ‘sources of wealth would run dry’ as ‘no one would have any interest in exerting his talents or his industry’, the door ‘would be thrown open to envy, to mutual invective, and to discord’, and citizens would be subjected to a slavery ‘intolerable and hateful’. Moreover, it is impossible to ‘reduce civil society to one dead level’ for ‘There naturally exist among mankind manifold differences of the most important kind; people differ in capacity, skill, health, strength; and unequal fortune is a necessary result of unequal condition’. Utopian dreams of ‘an undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment’ are deluded and only bring forth worse evils. The biblical authority here is uncompromising. Man is sinful, fallen: ‘To suffer and to endure, therefore, is the lot of humanity’.

However, in a Christian society, the existence of natural inequalities need not be a recipe for conflict between mutually antagonistic classes. Work and the conditions in which it is undertaken is more than a by-product of market forces; it is necessary if a man is to live. Self-preservation being ‘a law of nature’, the worker ‘has a natural right to procure what is required in order to live’, and his wages should be ‘sufficient to enable him comfortably to support himself, his wife, and his children’ – even ‘to put by some little savings and thus secure a modest source of income’. Out of this comes a fundamental principle of Catholic social teaching: reciprocal duties bind the employer and the worker. Just as the worker must ‘fully and faithfully perform the work which has been freely and equitably agreed upon’, the employer must ‘respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character’.

How are people to be persuaded to conduct their economic relations in this civilized manner? The spiritual cornerstone of *Rerum Novarum*, the ultimate integrating element, is that it relates our worldly lives to the ultimate moral purpose of our existence, which is God’s purpose for us. It is the sure knowledge that by leading virtuous lives on earth (ie by loving our neighbour, by sharing our riches, and by treating our workforce fairly if we are their employer) we store up

riches in heaven and win eternal life, that motivates us to lead virtuous lives. Christian morality, then, is the vital ingredient that powerfully restrains the ‘twin plagues’ of ‘greed of possession’ and ‘thirst for pleasure’.

But take away Christian morality and does *Rerum Novarum* have anything to offer in our secular age – that is, apart from the message that we need Christian morality? I think it does, both politically and morally.

Politically, the principle that power and responsibility should be devolved to families and communities, and ownership spread as widely as possible, the state only intervening as a last resort, is a powerful one for traditional conservatives and a necessary corrective to *laissez-faire*. Out of this has grown a tradition of ‘distributism’, promoted in this country by Hilaire Belloc and G K Chesterton in the pre-war period through their ‘Distributist League’, and taken up occasionally since then by Conservatives looking to a revive a ‘corporatist’ tradition with its origin in the medieval guilds, and advocating corporate partnership, profit sharing, workers on boards, proper work-based apprenticeships, and regional investment banks. Mainstream conservatives remain wedded to atomistic neo-classical liberalism, but as the Germans have shown, a system which recognizes that capital and labour have reciprocal obligations can produce both economic benefits (higher investment, higher productivity, and a better trained workforce) and a more cohesive society.

Morally, life has a higher purpose than maximizing pleasure or maximizing profits. Most of what *Rerum Novarum* attributes to our God-given human nature can be attributed simply to human nature: the desire to have a family and provide for it, own property, enjoy the fruits of one’s labours, make the most of one’s talents, and be treated with dignity. But none of these socially conservative instincts entails the exploitation of others, greed, or selfishness; all are compatible with service to others, generosity, and humility – so long as these Christian virtues are cultivated. The notion that human fulfilment requires us to lead ‘the good life’, and that this entails cultivating socially endorsed virtues, dates to Aristotle and stands independently of religious belief. Paradise on earth is illusory, but if the Christian virtues are cultivated in our schools alongside the classical character virtues of justice, courage, wisdom, and temperance, then we can produce, if not a Christian society, then at least good people fit for a just society in the Christian tradition.

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Conservative Classic - 79

THE MACHINE STOPS E M FORSTER

ANTHONY DANIELS

EM Forster's single foray into the genre of science fiction, *The Machine Stops*, which was published in 1909, is not merely prescient but prophetic. Having increased in salience at an alarming and accelerating rate, it is a parable for our times and a warning.

In this story set at some unidentified time in the future, Mankind now lives underground in isolated cells, eschewing and fearing the surface of the earth. Everything – food, air, water – is delivered by a vast apparatus called the Machine which no individual understands. Communication between people is almost entirely through electronic means, also operated by the Machine. Everyone is provided with an apparatus that strongly resembles a smart-phone in its functions. So accustomed has everyone become to this kind of communication that most people now have a horror of direct human contact, which now appears disgusting or vulgar.

The protagonist of the story is Vashti, a woman, who never leaves her cell: She knew several thousand people for in certain directions human intercourse had advanced enormously. One cannot help but think at this point of present-day children in their bedrooms, feverishly concentrating on the little screens with which they spend more time than with physically-present human beings, sending trivial messages to one another and unable to conceive any other way of life.

Vashti has a son, Kuno, who lives on the other side of the world. Like all children, he was taken from his mother at birth and placed in the 'public nurseries', allocated an underground cell in which to live once he was grown. In the new dispensation, the duty of parents ceases at birth and is taken over by the Machine. No doubt an intermediate stage in this development would be the Scottish government's idea (now abandoned, but for how long?) to appoint a state functionary to secure the welfare of each child.

Forster even suggests that, as a result of the means of communication at a distance, attention spans have declined. In the first scene of the story Vashti tells her son that she can devote only five minutes to talking to him because she is so busy. As soon as their conversation is finished, she turns to the electronic messages she had received in the meantime, the conversation having lasted only three minutes. What was the new food like? Could she recommend it? Has she had any ideas lately? Might one tell her one's own ideas? Would she make an engagement to visit the public nurseries at an early date? Miscellaneous messages and demands put a mind through the mental equivalent of a food-mixer – and Vashti's experience is now almost everyone's.

Significantly, Vashti gives lectures, her subject being music: they last ten minutes, as no one is able to concentrate for longer. I am reminded of the time when the BBC asked me to appear on a long discussion, and when I asked how long the long discussion would be, they replied 'Six minutes'. When

I said that that did not seem very long to me, they replied that it was long for them – and for the audience, presumably, or for the audience as they presumed it to be.

When Vashti leaves her cell, she is 'seized by the terrors of direct experience.' She returns to her cell feeling unwell, and immediately electronic apparatus descends from the ceiling that measures her temperature and applies cooling pads to her. This level of medical care (or surveillance) is what we aspire to.

Kuno is a rebel against the Machine: he wants to explore the surface of the earth, which is blasphemous. He also wants his mother to visit him in person. 'I want you to come and see me,' he says to her. 'But I can see you!' she protests, for his face appears on her screen. 'What more do you want?' Electronic presence is all that is required.

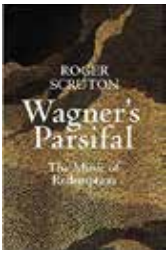
Nevertheless, she agrees to visit him for this is still permissible, and the journey of thousands of miles is undertaken in an airship that flies at great speed. Here Forster's prescience fails him; our aeroplanes fly faster. 'Few people travelled in these days, for, thanks to the advance of science, the earth was exactly the same all over.' Who, having spent a night at an airport hotel, would disagree?

En route, Vashti tries to ensure that she sees nothing of the surface of the world that she flies over, and is appalled when the blind of her window fails to shut out the sight of the sunrise, which she finds horrible and disturbing. 'Unless she was careful, it would strike her face.' She is able to see the Himalayas, but views them as uninteresting and uninspiring. Seeing Greece below her, she says 'No ideas here'. The real world to her, the world that encompasses all her interest, is that of her life underground. The parallel with those for whom the virtual world is now more real than what we used to think of as the real world is painfully obvious.

Her son tells her that he has visited the surface of the earth and she is horrified. What he has done was not only forbidden but revolutionary. He tells her that 'We [humans] invented the Machine to do our will, but we cannot make it do our will now. It has robbed us of the sense of space and of the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relationship and narrowed love down to a carnal act; it has paralysed our bodies and our wills, and now it compels us to worship it.' Who observing a crowd glued to the screen of its smartphones could disagree?

In the story, the Machine starts to break down. The air that it distributes becomes foetid, the food rotten. No one knows how to repair the Machine, but everyone is so dependent on it that when it ceases to provide, people die in droves. *The Machine Stops* is a powerful warning that technical sophistication and progress is not enough, that Mankind must hang on to deeper and more permanent values. This is not a warning that Mankind has heeded.

ARTS AND BOOKS



Hitler's Lift Music

Peter Mullen

Wagner's Parsifal, the Music of Redemption, Roger Scruton, Allen Lane, 2020, £20.

My first sighting of Roger was in York University in 1985 when he was being cat-called, abused and threatened by his audience of spoilt-rotten lumpen intelligentsia who would not allow him to speak. Ironically, Roger had been invited to come and give them a talk on freedom of speech! Over the decades we had some enjoyable conversations, made more enjoyable because Roger was always polite – and often mischievously polite. About fifteen years ago, he preached eloquently and amusingly for my congregation at St Michael's, Cornhill. I last communicated with him about a month before his death last January. I had reviewed one of his books and sent him a copy of what I had written. The subject of God came up and Roger told me – rather wistfully, I think, that he had never ‘...been able to make the necessary leap of faith. I'd like to talk about this.’ Regrettably, we never got the chance.

Here was a man who earnestly wished he *could* believe, but in all honesty he could not. He wrestled intellectually and emotionally all his life with questions about beauty, love, death, sin, guilt and the possibility of forgiveness and redemption. These matters were not, for him, riddles cast in the form of academic abstractions for the entertainment of those with minds so fine that they had never been penetrated by a single idea. They were not the preoccupations of culture-vultures and gallery-gawpers. They *were* him: his feelings, his mind and his soul. Yes, his soul. For no one who knew him could call Roger soulless. So, for a man so blessed and cursed by these deep experiences but unable to find their resolution in the God of Christianity – the historic religion of the England he loved – how does he proceed? Where does he turn?

In this book Roger turns to Wagner and approvingly quotes him:

It is reserved to art to salvage the kernel of religion, inasmuch as the mythical images which religion would wish to be believed as true are apprehended in art for their symbolic value, and through ideal representation of those symbols art reveals the concealed deep truth within them.

So, the Christian faith is not actually *true*, but only forms a convenient story to provide an aesthetic objective correlative – a stage set – for thoughtful artistic people. But this will not do. A man dying of thirst is not restored by an opera about the Holy Grail. What he needs is a glass of water. Art, music, painting, architecture – and Roger was a supreme authority and gifted practitioner in all these things – do indeed bring us incomparable intellectual and aesthetic rewards. As a Christian, I would claim that in our artworks we are imitators of God the Creator. Art created or beheld delivers our rapt attention the extremes of ecstasy and woe. But art is not religion. It cannot be a substitute for religion: these two are not the same kind of thing. And if, honestly like Roger, you cannot find religious faith, then religious faith is something you will just have to do without.

The opera *Parsifal* is Wagner's remaking of the Medieval legend of the Grail in the image of a god called Richard Wagner. His desire was to create his own sacred myth in the perfect – for Wagner was never one to lack self-confidence – creation of what he called the *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the complete work of art. Now we are all people of our own times. Even Wagner was a man of his own times. And his times were post-romantic and decadent. Love and death were mixed up together, so Wagner was not alone in reflecting this mood.

For example, Gustav Mahler composed his delicious *Kindertotenlieder*, while Freud in his cesspit of psychoanalysis in which the apex of all our human achievement arises out of the goings-on in the last few inches of our alimentary canal declared explicitly that *eros* and *thanatos* are the governing instincts of the human psyche. Well, just look at anything by Aubrey Beardsley and you would think he took lessons from Freud. Cast your mind back to the white faces and unhealthy foliage of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. There is dead Ophelia lying on top of her grave looking

as if she is sick of waiting for a delivery of William Morris wallpaper. There is *Proserpine* by Rossetti and Swinburne's poem of the same title which celebrates death as an erotic experience:

*Her languid lips are sweeter than love's who fears
to greet her*

But it was Wagner who most rejoiced in succulent death and he returned addictively to this morbidity over and again, as in *Liebestod*

The effect is of a perfumed garden overlaid with the musty stench of corpses. Or Blake's *O rose thou art sick* and Duke Orsino's:

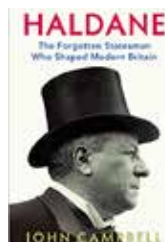
*If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.*

Whether Wagner knew what he was doing or not, there was one man who explained him precisely: Nietzsche said he was not so much a composer as '...a disease, that old snake who arranged Christianity for Wagnerians.' And, in case we protest that this judgement is unfair, recall that *Parsifal* was always performed on Good Friday at the Wagnerian shrine of Bayreuth and reverently received as if it were *The St Matthew Passion* with no applause allowed until it was over. And, at over four hours duration, it was far too long-winded. Rossini remarked: 'Wagner has some wonderful moments, but some dreadful three-quarters of an hour.'

Roger devotes half his book to Wagner's meaning and philosophy and the other half to a technical analysis of the music. Roger admires and loves it. Others come to a different assessment. I am revolted by Wagner's pedantic device of giving to every character and object in *Parsifal* its own particular theme which he calls its *Leitmotif*. There are dozens of these and, tediously, every time a character appears his theme is repeated. As Mark Twain said, 'Each presents his calling cards.' This is artistic creativity only at the level of painting-by-numbers. Another tiresome aspect is the music's relentless chromaticism and the poor old diatonic scale hardly makes an appearance. Such unrelieved chromaticism has been described as one straining to achieve orgasm – and failing.

One thing is not in doubt and that is Wagner's own assessment of himself as music's presiding genius. His pompousness was as laughable as his plots. When he met the little-known American composer S G Pratt, Wagner told him, 'You are the Richard Wagner of the United States.' And the other replied, 'And you, Sir, are the Silas G Pratt of Germany!'

Bang to rights, I think.



Undeservedly unknown

John Jolliffe

Haldane, the Forgotten Statesman who Shaped Modern Britain, John Campbell, Hurst, 2020, £30.

Haldane's name is now probably only known to specialists in pre-1914 political history, but this exemplary biography shows that he deserves to be seen as at least the equal of the best-known names of the period. He came from a family which had been prominent in Scottish life since the fifteenth century, chiefly in the law, the navy and the church. But they had always been able to avoid the various catastrophes which from time to time overtook many of the great Scottish families.

His great political career was based on a heroic capacity for hard work, but this was balanced by a delicate sense of how to get on with people, even those with sharply different political positions. He was a past master of what would now be called an 'inclusive' approach which made his success much easier than more doctrinaire attitudes would have allowed. He could see his plans from the point of view of his opponents, and if possible, accommodate them and disarm them. Above all, he had developed a deep-seated political philosophy of his own, based on definite first principles which are helpfully summarised at the end of the book. It was the skill with which he put those principles into practice which raised him head and shoulders above his colleagues, let alone over any politician operating today.

The high points of his career are well known. First, his major achievements in state education, which earned full treatment in this book. He went on to be the founder of Imperial College, and among many other achievements he would enable industrial and academic life to go hand in hand instead of being lost on one another. He was then Secretary of State for War from 1905 to 1912 and Lord Chancellor from 1912 to 1915, when his dismissal was 'regarded as a national scandal even among his contemporaries'. His great reforms as Secretary of State for War from 1905 to 1912 later earned astonishing tributes from both French and Haig, who said that without them the German armies could not have been turned back in France in late 1914. Seldom has a politician combined so happily with the generals. When the coalition was formed in 1915 the Prime Minister, Asquith, has been heavily criticised

ever after for sacrificing one who had been his closest political and personal friend for thirty years. But it must be remembered that the country was in a completely unprecedented crisis, and a danger beside which Covid90, equally unprecedented, is a mere passing source of alarm. Asquith was ultimately a tough Yorkshireman, not afraid of making a decision which must have cost him great pain, if in his judgement it was in the national interest.

What Haldane's enemies completely failed to understand was that his close familiarity with German institutions and methods was a huge advantage in confronting them. Instead, the Tories to their eternal shame, pretended that it was evidence of disloyalty, leading to potential treachery.

All this time he was sitting as a judge on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, where among many other things he delivered nineteen judgements on the future of the state of Canada, not least on the ticklish question of the respective powers of the federal and provincial governments. (One of his overriding principles, referred to above, was that decisions should ideally be taken as close as possible to the people that they affect.)

Given the huge range of Haldane's involvements in all these areas, Campbell is surely right to treat them thematically rather than in strict chronology. It is not only in that aspect of the extraordinary story that he shows great literary skill, and sometimes artistry. His knowledge of the Haldane family goes back over many years, and his personal insights make the book attractively readable. Some of the technical details may seem heavy going, but without them it would have been impossible to do justice to Haldane. He is also good on the personal side. Haldane was twice engaged to be married, but remained a bachelor. There is a good description here of his close intellectual and emotional friendship, over nearly forty years, with Frances Horner, whose daughter married Asquith's eldest son. 'You are a very clever woman', he told her in a letter, 'with a very strong character, and an intense sense of truth and fact'. Elsewhere he told her revealingly 'I am seriously thinking of refusing law office or any other office which would take me away from helping the masses.' And, to sum up their relations, 'I owe the best I have to you.'

The author's well-balanced approach is borne out by the tributes that have been heaped on the book from right across the political spectrum, from the present Lord Salisbury through Frank Field to Gordon Brown. They are interspersed with praise from a number of legal and academic luminaries. They make it all the more surprising that no life of Haldane on this scale has previously been attempted. Campbell makes light

work of a complicated task from which others have shied away.

Altogether a wonderful book.



The Greatest Botanist of them all

Celia Haddon

Planting the World. Joseph Banks and his Collectors. An Adventurous History of Botany, Jordan Goodman, William Collins, illus, 2020, £25.

Keen gardeners in the end of the eighteenth century saw a huge expansion of new flowering plants, vegetables, fruits and trees to choose from. A network of ships' captains, naval surgeons, botanists, diplomats and merchants with an interest in botany, sent back seeds and plants to Britain, established botanical gardens all over the world, and in their turn transported fruit trees, corn and other agricultural crops to the new colonies and trading stations. At the centre of this network was Joseph Banks, (1744-1820), the only son of a wealthy landowner and MP.

At his death Banks left, not only a botanical library and a herbarium, but also around 100,000 letters he had written to several thousand people around the world and their replies. This was the hand-written equivalent of a huge computer database, a kind of iCloud in hard copy. His correspondents were ships' captains, diplomats, merchants, botanists, hobby naturalists, ships' surgeons, gardeners, nurserymen, the occasional Catholic priest, politicians and wealthy friends who had, like him, been educated at Harrow, Eton (Banks went first to one then the other) and Oxbridge. He was the supreme networker, whose connection with men of power was unrivalled, and whose influence was literally global.

His driving force was to discover, collect, classify and catalogue hitherto unknown flowers, shrubs and trees that might adorn the King's garden at Kew or be an asset to Western agriculture. During childhood he had collected plants and insects, but it was at University that he decided he wanted to become a serious botanist. Since the Oxford syllabus was one of classical studies, he simply paid for a Cambridge botanist to give a set of lectures to him and 60 other undergraduates. After the lectures he didn't bother about a degree but moved to London and continued his studies at the British Museum.

This book is not a biography of Banks but instead

an examination of his correspondence with other plant collectors and the naval, government and royal authorities. While still young he had accompanied a schoolfriend on a naval trip to Newfoundland, then joined an expedition under Captain Cook to the South Pacific on HMS *Endeavour*. He was one of eleven civilians on board – one other botanist, two fellow members of The Royal Society, two artists to record plants and landscapes, a secretary to write up the findings, and four servants and assistants. Being a wealthy man, he was able to pay for his retinue and took with him a huge quantity of cases, book shelving, drawing paper, plant presses and other botanical equipment. The expedition was not without its hardships. Two of his servants froze to death after drinking too much (the boat had taken 14,000 litres of Madeira on board) and one of the artists died suddenly before their final destination, *Terra Australis Incognita*, was sighted.

This was Bank's last plant-hunting trip in person. On his return, his botanical efforts turned to employing others to find hitherto unknown plants and to distribute useful plants from Britain or elsewhere to the various British colonies or trading stations. The first plant collector under his guidance was a Kew gardener, Francis Masson, and the original plan was for him to travel with Banks on *The Resolution* and to stop off at the Cape of Good Hope where he would hunt plants, while Banks went on with Cook to Australia.

Banks had designed and persuaded the Admiralty to build a special superstructure on the ship to house the living plants that would be hopefully be transported back to Britain. However, the ship's first lieutenant flatly refused to set off, claiming that the ship was made top heavy with the plant house on the deck and would sink in a rough sea. (The reader is not told whether this superstructure was a glorified garden shed or some kind of greenhouse). Banks seems to have taken offence and refused to go on the voyage. This clash between seaworthiness and plant protection was to occur at other times, with some ships' captains complaining about the space taken up with botanic equipment.

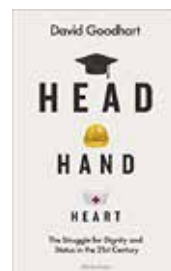
The cramped conditions on sailing ships took its toll of plants. The only place for living plants was on the deck, exposed to sea spray and the ship's livestock, which usually included goats and sheep to be eaten later at sea. Water was often scarce during long voyages and could not be spared for horticulture. James Glegg, a surgeon on *The Earl of Mansfield*, had carefully tended a water lily for Banks in his cabin for weeks, but it died when water was rationed to half a pint per day during the voyage.

Dried seeds and pressed plants survived better but even these were not immune to the danger of

shipwrecks. Twenty potted plants of the *Wintera aromatica*, an evergreen shrub still found in UK gardens, sent back from Staten Island by one of Bank's collectors, were on *The Duke of York*, a ship that sank. The crew successfully made for the boats, but the 20 potted plants and the dried specimens went down with the ship. Living plants on their way home from China came to their end in the Channel when their ship, the *Triton*, was smashed by a passing naval ship. The mast fell down on the deck flattening most of the plants except for one tree peony that had been kept in the gallery at the back of the ship.

Banks was relentless in his efforts and was irritated when anything frustrated him. His collectors had an unfortunate tendency to want to marry and settle down, tired of roaming the globe on his behalf. 'This marrying has been often in my way,' he wrote when George Caley, his collector in Australia at the turn of the century, wanted to marry an Australian widow. 'I did not hire him to beget a family.... I must certainly get rid of him.' Unlike most of the collectors and Banks, himself, Caley was sensible enough to get help from the local aboriginal inhabitants and declared 'I could single out several that surpass numbers of Englishmen in mental qualification.'

This is a meticulously researched study of Bank's extensive plant-hunting organising correspondence. Historical and horticultural explanation and anecdotes are eschewed in favour of serious scholastic thoroughness. This left me disliking Banks by the end of the book and wondering how far his plant-spreading activities had harmed the conservation of native plants or been responsible for invading garden pests. Horticultural historians and keen gardeners with more horticultural knowledge than I possess, will enjoy this book.



A Parasitical Elite

Alistair Miller

Head Hand Heart: The Struggle for Dignity and Status in the 21st Century, David Goodhart, Allen Lane, 2020, £20.

David Goodhart's latest book is a worthy follow-up to *The Road to Somewhere*, his devastating assault on the smug liberal hubris that was shattered by Brexit, and that originated the now

commonplace distinction between geographically mobile professional Anywheres and more rooted Somewheres. *Head Hand Heart* will not set the political world, or liberals, ablaze in quite the same way, but nevertheless brings together a wealth of material about our society's overvaluing of the cognitive, and undervaluing of the practical and caring, a bias which has been brought sharply into relief by the Covid-19 crisis. Many of the themes are familiar – the hollowing out of the occupational middle by digital technology, the concentration of power and wealth in a new cognitive elite rendered hereditary by assortative mating, the crisis of care, the damage wrought by elite feminism on family life, the laying waste of local communities, and the lack of vocational education and training in the UK – but Goodhart does a good job synthesising his material and deploying it in a powerful assault on those all-encompassing yet rarely questioned contemporary political ideals of meritocracy and social mobility.

Goodhart has nothing against people being selected for positions 'on merit'. No one could be opposed to meritocracy in this sense. The problems arise when cognitive-analytical ability becomes 'the gold standard of human esteem', when the entire education system is geared towards propelling students to university, when the only criterion of success is to gain a professional occupation and join the cognitive elite, and when the same elite forms the political class. The system serves the elite and its children well, but is devastating for the half of the population whose needs and talents go largely unrecognised, and equally devastating for all those graduates who discover their expensive degree is worthless and end up doing work they could have done just as well if not better at 16 or 18 with some decent on-the-job training. Yet all this is justified in the name of 'social mobility', the possibility that a minority of disadvantaged kids might go to university and join the cognitive elite. What happens to the rest of the population, necessarily the majority because the number of high-status professional jobs is limited, or to their communities, is not considered.

The push to get more and more of the population to university was originally justified by the rise of the 'knowledge economy'. Information technologies combined with the decline of traditional industries would create the need for a new sort of workforce – better educated, more flexible, and equipped with generic cognitive skills, as opposed to the craft and industry-specific skills of old. Combined with the moral imperative to engineer a classless socially

mobile society, the case for university expansion was unassailable. But the knowledge economy has turned out very differently. The effect of digital technology, the possibility of devising software packages that perform many of the routine tasks previously allotted to middle-ranking managers, administrators, professionals, and office workers, has produced a massive 'hollowing out' of the labour market. At the top are the 10 per cent or so of high-fliers, the cognitive elite, who are richly rewarded for their superior capacity to exercise judgement and 'add value'. Beneath them are the rest: the remaining white collar functionaries, whose software packages can easily be contracted out abroad where labour is cheaper, and all those doing the 'hand' or 'heart' tasks that computers cannot replace – shelf packers, bricklayers, care workers, and so on.

Although much of this work is low paid because it is not cognitively demanding, there is a labour shortage and, where demand will grow, especially as the population ages. Yet the current educational system, weighted toward meeting the needs of the cognitive elite to ensure their children are safely conveyed to Russell Group Universities and elite professional careers, is doubly damaging. By failing to provide adequate apprenticeships or high-level vocational training, it ensures that 'hand' and 'heart' jobs remain low skilled and poorly paid, much more so than in the rest of Europe; and that there are gaping skill shortages which can only be filled by imported cheap labour. Meanwhile, mothers who are not destined for high status, identity-conferring professional careers, but would rather work part-time, or not at all, so that they can care for their children, receive no support at all – not even a transferable tax allowance. Unpaid care has no value so far as the cognitive elite is concerned.

The statistics back this picture up and constitute a standing rebuke to the British political class who wax lyrical about creating a society of opportunity. In Britain, 65 per cent of young people have a level 3 qualification, mostly academic A levels; in comparable European countries, the figure is closer to 90 per cent, a significant proportion comprising non-academic qualifications and apprenticeships. The average salary of a Further Education lecturer (catering to school leavers and adults on vocational courses and apprenticeships) is £30,000 a year – roughly the starting salary of a primary school teacher. And over £8 billion annually is spent supporting 1.2 million UK undergraduates, compared to a paltry £2.3 billion supporting 2.2

million FE students. To top it all, civil servants (according to Vince Cable) even suggested closing the whole FE college network ‘because no one would notice’. Goodhart is surely right in arguing that the annual mass migration of 1.5 million British teenagers to residential universities, effectively dividing the country into ‘a residential university class of mobile, professional people, and a more rooted non-graduate group’, needs a drastic rethink.

If things do not change, the future looks bleak. In his paper ‘Capitalism in the Age of Robots’, Adair Turner, former chairman of the Financial Services Authority, predicts that we will ‘only need a very small number of very clever IT literate people to write all the code we need for all the robots, all the apps, and all the computer games’. Rising income inequality and social segregation are inevitable, but so long as low earners ‘still enjoy adequate living standards’, the lid will be kept on social revolt. For American economist Tyler Cowen in *Average is Over*, the elite will enjoy ‘fantastically comfortable and stimulating lives’ while the rest, though earning little, will have ‘a lot more opportunity for cheap fun and cheap education’ courtesy of the internet.

Can this dystopia be averted by spreading respect and status more evenly, by striking a better balance between hand, heart, and head? Much hinges on educational reform, for example, a massive shift of resources from universities to technical colleges, a revised secondary school curriculum, residential apprenticeships, or some form of national service so that all might experience the ‘horizon-raising and social mixing experience of the residential university at its best’, and properly funded apprenticeships. The idea of individual learning accounts might even be resurrected so that all might benefit from post-compulsory education.

Whether our experience of Covid-19 will translate long term into a greater valuation of those ‘who do not excel cognitively’, and constitute most of our ‘key workers’, is difficult to say. But there is always the consolation that the sense of meaning, identity and belonging to be derived from practical and craft work, from caring, from loving relationships and from home, are ultimately more important than monetary reward and professional status. Goodhart cites research into people’s dying regrets, which invariably centre around our sense of belonging, love, and family. Work and achievement hardly figure. And this applies to the cognitive elite as much as to anybody else.



Clement Attlee’s attack dog

Brian Eassty

Ernest Bevin, Labour’s Churchill, Andrew Adonis, Bite back, 2020, £20.

A few weeks ago, a radio station launched a poll asking listeners to nominate ‘the greatest Prime Minister we never had’. Of course, the winner was Jeremy Corbyn who rather touchingly gave an acceptance speech. This was followed by some rather mean-spirited commentary from writers alleging that those voting for Corbyn had perhaps not considered the claims of, say, Hugh Gaitskell or Ian Macleod before plumping for the sage of Islington. For some days, the favoured topic on opinion pages was prime ministers manqués.

Ernest Bevin was mostly absent from the lists of fantasy premiers who, particularly in this year, given the universal imperative to applaud the NHS, has been barged out of the national consciousness by his near namesake Nye Bevan. If Bevin has been forgotten, it is not biographers who have overlooked him. Alan Bullock produced a massive three volume account of his life in the 1960s and there have been reassessments by Peter Weiler and Giles Radice in recent years. While Andrew Adonis’ new biography does not contain much that is new, it is a very readable account of the life of a remarkable man who deserves to be better known.

In an age when too many politicians go into Parliament having known little else except politics, it is pleasing to read of Bevin and his achievements long before he stood for Parliament. As Adonis reminds us, he created the medium through which those achievements were made by bringing into being the Transport and General Workers’ Union. By 1920, he was also something of a celebrity, having acquired the nickname of the Dockers’ KC after conducting and winning a case in the High Court for a dockers’ pay claim. He surprised the Court by bringing in a plate of food to show the meagre nourishment available for a docker to sustain him for a day of hard work. It was the most effective use of a demonstration of household budgeting until Margaret Thatcher displayed the contents of her stock cupboard and showed her gift for communication. In 1905, as Secretary of the Bristol Right to Work Committee, Bevin was never averse to a publicity stunt, as when he led a silent procession of

the unemployed into the Sunday morning service at Bristol Cathedral.

Such organising skill compensated for Bevin's lack of formal education. Born into abject rural poverty, he was at least taught to read and write before leaving school at the age of eleven. Anything more came through the Workers' Educational Association but aware of this disadvantage, he was cheerfully self-mocking about it. Asked how he dealt with Parliamentary procedure, he said: 'I stand up when they nudge me. I sit down when they pull my coat.' This self-confidence was much more winning than John Prescott's defensive approach to working with those better educated.

At his first job on a farm, impressed by his assertiveness, a fellow worker remarked: 'That boy will never work on a farm but he'll be in Parliament yet.' At the Labour Party Conference in 1937 Bevin followed George Lansbury to the podium with the conference cheering Lansbury and singing 'For he's a jolly good fellow' and, in the biggest oratorical reverse since Mark Antony followed Brutus, completely turned the conference against him.

Most of all, that self-confidence was seen in the paradoxical relationship Bevin had with Clement Attlee, the more self-effacing public-school man. As Attlee himself put it: "'If you have a good dog, don't bark yourself' is a good proverb and in Mr Bevin I had an exceptionally good dog.' When, having tripled his party's seats in the 1945 election, Attlee found Herbert Morrison plotting to take over the party leadership, he relied on Bevin's forceful support to ensure the plot fizzled out. He appreciated Bevin's loyalty and rewarded him with greater autonomy than any other minister in his Cabinet. One commentator said that 'Attlee is called Prime Minister, Morrison thinks he is Prime Minister and Bevin is Prime Minister.'

Bevin's pugnacious character determined the portfolio he was assigned to. Having served on economic committees before the war, he might have expected to go to the Treasury but with the Potsdam Conference in progress, Attlee needed a forceful Foreign Secretary to face the Russians and the Americans. Bevin would not disappoint for his trade union background meant that he had seen communism at first hand in the British Labour movement and fully understood that it was as big a threat to democracy as fascism. This bemused Molotov who complained: 'Churchill and Eden used to be friends of the Soviet Union but you and Attlee are old-fashioned British imperialists.' Such an uncompromising approach helped to stiffen the resolve of American Secretary of State, James Byrnes, whose credulity could have been disastrous for Europe. Equally though, Bevin was able to say truthfully to Molotov: 'When our government

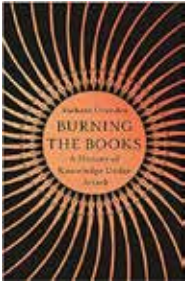
was trying to stamp out your Revolution, who was it that stopped it? It was I, Ernest Bevin. I called out the transport workers and they refused to load the ships. I wanted you to have your Revolution in your own way and without interference.' This referred to the incident of the *Jolly George* when Bevin's dockers would not allow munitions to be sent for use against the fledgling Bolshevik regime. Bevin went to 10 Downing Street for the first time when Lloyd George assured him that he would not try to prevent the Russians choosing their own government.

Bevin might have preferred to have his name memorialised by something other than the Bevin boys, for it was not his most successful initiative as Minister of Labour. Though many were proud to volunteer to serve their country, working down a coal mine was a wretched post for a conscript and there were more desertions than in any other area of conscripted service. Bevin was more successful as a leader of organised labour in keeping industrial action down during the war to a fraction of what it had been in the First World War when it had seriously hampered the war effort.

Because Adonis is a prominent pro-EU campaigner, he reserves some of his strongest criticism for Bevin's failure to embrace the Schuman Plan for the European Coal and Steel Community, the first step towards a European Union. He puts this down to the Attlee government's fears that it would scupper plans for coal and steel nationalisation and quotes Morrison as declaring that 'the Durham miners won't wear it'; somewhat prescient, as the Red Wall seats of former coal and steel producing areas sealed Brexit last December. But Bevin thought Britain could better help Europe from outside in a relationship with the continent like that of the United States. Adonis mocks the Commonwealth attachment, quoting at length a silly speech of Attlee's about the Commonwealth countries liking cricket, but it remained a potent one for some decades, forming a key plank in Barbara Castle's and Peter Shore's arguments during the 1975 referendum.

In Adonis' thorough survey of Bevin's time as Foreign Secretary, it is strange that there is no mention of China. The Communists took over China on Bevin's watch in 1949 and he was keen to persuade America not to intervene for fear of driving China into an alliance with Russia. As a writer, Adonis is at his best when he trusts his readers to know some political history. It is hard to see what a sentence as vague and clumsy as 'Lansbury was a 1930's Jeremy Corbyn, just a bit older and more so' does to enlighten those who know little, while it insults those who know slightly more.

One wonders why there is no statue of this extraordinary man. I understand a plinth is available in Bristol, the city he served so conscientiously.



Book Burners

Anthony Daniels

Burning the Books: A History of Knowledge under Attack, Richard Ovenden, John Murray, 2020, £25.

In the middle of Liberia's civil war, I visited the library of the University of Liberia. The books had been pulled from the shelves and trampled on, and many of them destroyed. This was not the result of destruction such as inevitably occurs in war, but of targeted vandalism, as if the library and the books it contained represented something that was hated and upon which revenge had to be wrought. The teaching hospital had been vandalised just as thoroughly and both institutions were now completely deserted.

I confess that I was shocked, though I should not have been. The fact is that the destruction or pillaging of archives and libraries is almost coterminous with their establishment. In this book, the present librarian of the Bodleian, Richard Ovenden, gives us not so much a history of knowledge under attack, as vignettes from that history. As Walter B Pitkin puts it in the preface to his *A Brief Introduction to the History of Human Stupidity* (592 pages long, published in 1932), a full treatment of the subject would require many volumes.

I confess to a slight disappointment in reading this book: I had hoped, no doubt very parochially, for more on the growing disregard or disdain for books in this country, not only, or even principally, of the unlettered, but of those whom one would have thought would know better, that is to say librarians and other supposed guardians of our heritage. As a bibliomane (not a bibliophile, which is another thing entirely), much of whose life had been lived through books, I frequent second-hand booksellers who tell me hair-raising stories of the speed with which libraries now disembarass themselves of irritating encumbrances such as books, the better to have space to instal more computer terminals. For them, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books are no more to be revered than disposable napkins. If they could burn books without drawing attention to themselves, they would; as it is, they give the impression of *hating* books as much as did the destroyers of the library of the University of Liberia.

Alas, we have little regard in this country for the

literary remains of our writers unlike the French, but at least we can console ourselves with the thought that they find a good home in the United States, to which a civilised sensibility has long since migrated.

As Ovenden tells us, the destruction of archives and libraries is often, though not quite always, politically motivated. Libraries are not only destroyed, they decay through neglect. But at the same time, archives and libraries are often destroyed as a deliberate attempt to destroy national or local identities. In a small way, this has happened to our hospitals. *Their* archives are incorporated into much larger collections of documents, where they are swamped, so that the identity of institutions is attenuated. No doubt good reasons, or rationalisations, could be given for this centralisation of archives, but without archives of their own, institutions lose their distinctiveness and *esprit de corps*. Managers hate local identity because it makes staff as difficult to herd as cats, and they therefore see it as their enemy. Ovenden only hints at this; but he does say that archives and libraries 'help root societies in their cultural and historical identities through preserving the written record of those societies and cultures.'

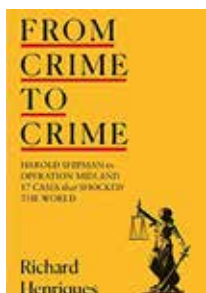
No wonder, then, that archives and libraries are under attack, for cultural and historical identity is now regarded by the average *bien pensant* as the next worst thing to fascism itself – and never mind that the cultural and historical identity might include a relatively welcoming attitude to whoever wants to accede to it.

As librarian of one of the world's greatest libraries – which a friend of mine describes as being dedicated to the prevention of research, but he may be speaking from unfortunate personal experience, as so many of us tend to do – Ovenden has now to deal with a completely changed paradigm of conservation of information and learning. For hundreds of years, the book and the printed page was the repository, the *ne plus ultra*, of all accumulated human knowledge and wisdom, but this has been overturned in my lifetime and his. Gone are the days when medical researchers, for example, turned to the bible-paper pages of the *Index Medicus* of the Surgeon-General of the United States to look up the scientific literature of their particular subject. Now everything is done on-line; we regard paper as almost as antiquated as the typing pool. The fact that I don't regard anything as truly published until it appears on the printed page merely proves what a dinosaur I am.

Nevertheless, our author, whom I suspect of being secretly prejudiced in favour of books and paper (or papyrus and parchment) documents, points to a number of problems, potential and actual, with our supposed digital paradise, in which an infinity of information can be stored for ever in an infinity of cyberspace.

Electronic information decays, even without the activity of hackers and other smart-alecks, perhaps at a rate far faster than that on the printed page. It is not true that cyberspace is infinite; several storage sites have found themselves obliged to delete large quantities of information without informing the owners, simply because they had no more space to store it.

Ovenden is rightly worried about the power of a very few giant corporations to determine what information is stored and what is made easily available. But he thinks the answer is for quasi-governmental organizations, acting in the public or general interest, to supervise the storage of information contained in databases. However, governments do not have a glorious record when it comes to their use of the information at their disposal. One of the reasons why the highest percentage of the Jews of any western country, (the Netherlands) were killed in the Holocaust was because the Dutch kept such good records. I suspect that there is no solution to the problem of an excess of information stored about the citizenry. As we are told about Covid, we must learn to live with it.



A Miscarriage of Truth

Jan Davies

From Crime to Crime, Richard Henriques, Hodder and Stoughton, 2020, £25.

Boris Johnson recently said there would be ‘targets’ to increase the number of rape prosecutions. I hope that this is just the usual Johnson bluster and that when he actually thinks through the insanity of such a policy he will back off, for rape is the most difficult type of case to prosecute successfully. Some years ago, when I worked for the Crown Prosecution Service, I was approached at a conference by a lady who ran a rape crisis centre. She said ‘You are prosecuting too many weak cases.’ It was, she explained, much easier to console a woman who had been told there was insufficient evidence to prosecute a case in court, although staff at the centre believed her, than to help someone who had had the ordeal of waiting for months for a case to come to court and of giving evidence, only to find, predictably, that a jury could not agree to convict. So many rape cases depend on one person’s word against another’s.

Sir Richard Henriques is one of my heroes. In Operation Midland the police investigated allegations made by a man known then as ‘Nick’ of serious child abuse and murder against prominent public figures (Sir Edward Heath, Leon Brittan, Harvey Proctor and others). Sir Richard Henriques’ report into that investigation was published in October 2019 and made grim reading. He pointed out numerous failings in the investigation but the one which made the most impression on me was his distaste for police referring to complainants as ‘victims’ before any decisions as to their veracity have been made by a court. Time after time in my local magistrates’ court I have to listen to prosecutors referring to complainants as ‘victims’. The convention used to be to call them ‘the aggrieved’ or ‘complainant’, but for several years now the prosecution opening in a case is peppered with reference to ‘victims’. If I am feeling sufficiently cross, I will get to my feet and growl that no person is a victim until a court says he/she is one, but the practice is so widespread that I have almost given up. The use of the word ‘victim’ is designed to emotionally charge the prosecution case and to give the impression that no one can challenge the prosecution version of events. Sir Richard’s denunciation of the practice is unfortunately often ignored.

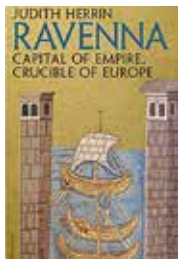
Sir Richard’s book was originally planned as an autobiography, but it has turned out to be an analysis of the most serious cases he has been involved in, from when he was a defence counsel, to cases he prosecuted and more recently of cases he has heard or reviews he has conducted as a High Court Judge. Many of us will recall having read press reports of the individual cases as they were happening – the trial of Thompson and Venables, the boy murderers of Jamie Bulger; the trial of Harold Shipman, the trial of Barry George for the murder of Jill Dando and the appeal of Jeremy Bamber.

But this book is vastly superior to any journalist’s account. Frequently it can be irritating that the press take no interest in facts that do not fit their own version of what has happened. A murder trial I was involved in ended in a conviction for manslaughter only. For the first few days of the trial our footsteps were dogged by journalists, but when we had a full day of psychiatric evidence there was not a news-hound to be seen. The psychiatric evidence was vital and explained the acquittal for murder but it didn’t fit the narrative the newsmen had devised. More recently we had a trial at Reading Crown Court of three young travellers whose actions had resulted in the death of Andrew Harper, a police constable who was dragged along behind a stolen vehicle down a country lane. There was little attempt in any press reports to explain how the jury had reached the verdict of manslaughter, and one suspects

that his widow had not been warned by the prosecution that the case could end in the way it did. Emotional interviews make for riveting viewing but they do not help to understand how our justice system works.

The recommendations in his final chapter on future developments in the judiciary, make an important book. In particular, the office of Lord Chancellor needs to be held by a prominent lawyer to command respect and not by an ambitious political nobody. Previously, the convention was that the Lord Chancellor should be someone with a legal background: recent office holders have included Chris Grayling (a joke among lawyers), Michael Gove, Liz Truss and David Liddington. Michael Gove earned some plaudits for undoing some of Grayling's wilder wheezes, notably restricting the availability of books for prisoners. None of these four is a lawyer. Sir Richard contends that in their various ways they have each of them demonstrated that the Lord Chancellor must have a legal background.

There are other recommendations – for example, that complex fraud cases should be heard by a judge alone sitting with two assessors and that the criminal justice system urgently needs more funding. He says 'Years of underfunding, ignoring reviews and ministerial incompetence have driven me to write this book.' I would like to hope that those making decisions are listening.



Rival to Ancient Rome

Charlie Hall

Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe, Judith Herrin, Penguin, 2020, £22.99

Judith Herrin's powerful book is a knowledgeable exposition as well as an understanding of a living city that was home to some of the most influential rulers of Europe in the early days of Christendom. In her introduction she describes a romantic drive from Venice to Ravenna which cemented her love of that city, and its history. The road takes you along the edge of the vast lagoon from Venice past Mestre and Marghera to Chioggia at the southern edge. To the right are the flat floodplains and to the left the great open reaches of the lagoon, still worked by countless tiny fishing boats; then past Chioggia and the great graveyard of Venetian *vaporetti* and down, crossing the river Adige, diverted

in the middle ages by the Venetian authorities to stop the silting of her lagoon, the gigantic stretch of the Po, then to pause at the Romanesque Abbey of Pomposa. From there it's a straight run to Ravenna.

Ravenna now is a quiet backwater. The city centre is lively as Italian cities are, but there is no evidence of its importance between the 4th and the 9th centuries. Wandering through the streets, you seldom realize that you are walking through an ancient city: there are no signs of Imperial splendour, no triumphal arches, the forum has vanished as has the circus, not even many signs of medieval architecture.

That is, until you enter the remaining ancient buildings which house the exquisite mosaics which have left an indelible impression on Herrin, and every visitor. Indeed, most of them are heavily restored, but that does not detract from the magnificence of the work that began over one and a half thousand years ago. They are some of the keys to the extraordinary and complex history of this city.

In the third century, the emperor Diocletian decided to move the administrative centre of the Roman empire to Milan in order to maintain his northern armies; he himself went to Nicomedia in northern Turkey, divided the empire and appointed four 'tetrarchs' to rule and concentrate on their appointed regions. Those were in turn subdivided and Ravenna emerged in 297 as the capital of Flaminia, the coastal region of north-eastern Italy. Julius Caesar rested there before his crossing of the Rubicon and Octavian, his nephew, had a vast port, Classis, constructed a few miles down the coast which became the great hub of northern Italy. When emperor Honorius decided to leave vulnerable Milan, threatened by Alaric and the Visigoths in 402, for a city that had both the benefit of access to the sea and protection from the marshes and swamps, there was already plenty of life in Ravenna.

From Emperor Honorius' move from Milan to the end of the rule of Charlemagne the Great in 813 and then the tail end of that era, culminating in the reign of Louis II, Holy Roman Emperor and King of the Franks, in 875, she draws a vivid and entertaining picture of not only the chaos of this tumultuous age, but also the visual culture that successive rulers and archbishops created. The city rose to prominence as a Christian centre for the invaders and rulers, from the Empress Galla Placidia (425-437), the great Germanic King Odoacer, Theodoric the Ostrogoth, to the retaking of Italy by Belisarius and Narses, the generals commanded by the Emperor Justinian I, all decorated the city in ways that reflected their desire to beautify the buildings they had commissioned. Some of the ancient churches and palaces were bombed during World War II, but the treasures in the heart of the city were saved through an

agreement between the Germans and the Allies. Eight of the buildings still standing are listed as a World Heritage site.

Each of the historical chapters (The Rise of the Bishops or the Expansion of Islam) are illuminated by smaller headings like 'Living in Ravenna in the Mid-Sixth Century' that examine some of the daily lives of the city, drawing on papyrus records of marriages, donations of wealth to churches, appointments of administrators. In this way she moves from the macro to the micro, bringing us an image of a complex and well-organised city.

Unfortunately, the great moments of Ravenna's history came too early for documents to be written and preserved, so Herrin devotes several chapters to the great historians of the time, whose writings are only known by later commentators or historians. Another problem faced by those researching Ravenna's history is that the first two great Gothic kings, Odoacer and his nemesis Theodoric followed the Arian version of Christianity that denied The Holy Trinity, believing instead that Christ became a god after his death. As a result, in the fervour that followed Ravenna's acceptance of Catholic Orthodoxy, many Arian texts were destroyed.

Ravenna became a junction between the Eastern Empire of Constantinople and the largely abandoned, but still influential, city of Rome. As soon as Constantine I moved all the administration and pageantry of the Roman Empire to Byzantium, Rome suffered at the hands of a stream of 'barbarian' invaders. But they were Christians, so as the centuries passed, Rome began to claw back influence, culminating in the arrival of the Frankish kings, Pepin and his son, Charlemagne the Great.

Rome's relationship with Constantinople and with Ravenna fluctuated, but Herrin suggests that one of the critical moments was when Levantine views on what was appropriate in art followed the dictum of the Second Commandment that tells us '*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,*' The emperor in Constantinople at the time, Leo III, had already defeated the Islamic forces but supposed that idolatrous behaviour, the worship of icons, was weakening Christianity and iconoclasm took hold, rejected by Rome and to some extent by Ravenna. This created a schism that has never healed, and Herrin describes it as momentous:

By raising questions about the legitimacy of figural representation and the potential of idolatry and future punishment, iconoclasm hastened the division of the ancient Mediterranean world, setting Muslim areas in visual rivalry with both Byzantine and western regions, and preserving the rich narrative and figurative mosaics in Ravenna as nowhere else.

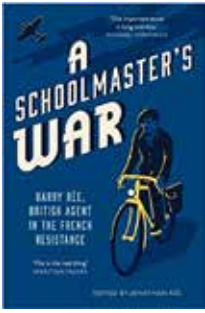
Ravenna was rich in religious buildings, decorated by the best artisans, coming from Constantinople, Rome and latterly from northern Europe, her libraries were stocked with writings on everything, from science, technology, history and geography, and her unique position between the east and west meant that there were many Latin translations of Greek texts.

Herrin describes in detail the work of a man she calls 'the Anonymous Cosmographer', who created a literary map of the world, studying the books in Ravenna and creating an extraordinary geographical description of the universe in five books. We do not know when he was writing but Herrin has deduced that it would have been in the late sixth or mid seventh century when there was a wealth of knowledge among the scribes and experts who lived in the city. Long before The Council of Florence in the fifteenth century, when thousands of texts from Byzantine libraries travelled to Italy, the works of the ancients were being read and translated in Ravenna. Those ended up lost for nearly a thousand years deep in the *scriptoria* of monasteries like San Cassiano or St Galen.

However, as Rome reasserted herself as the centre of the Catholic Christian church and Charlemagne the Great drove out the Lombard kings, the last wave of invaders, Ravenna gradually settled into irrelevance. Charlemagne, astonished and impressed by the wonderful art and architecture of Ravenna used the magnificent church of San Vitale, built in the sixth century, as an exact model for his palace chapel in Aachen. He also removed countless columns and pieces of furniture, as did rulers and tyrants for hundreds of years. In the 15th century Sigismondo Malatesta stripped the great church of Sant Apollinare in Classis to decorate his buildings in Rimini. Nature provided the final closure of the city, as silt from the Po blocked up the canals and rivers that had fed into the Adriatic and inexorably the great ports became landlocked, so that now Classis is almost fifteen miles from the sea.

For about two hundred and fifty years, from the rule of Theodoric, an Ostrogothic king who had been educated in Constantinople and who established Ravenna as the Eastern Roman's capital city in the West to Charlemagne, Ravenna remained pivotal. As Herrin describes it:

Charlemagne has traditionally been hailed...as the 'father of Europe', as if he acted alone. But the foundations of western Christendom that he exemplified were laid in Ravenna, whose rulers, exarchs and bishops, scholar, doctors, mosaicists and traders, Roman and Goth, later Greek and Lombard, forged the first European city.



A Very Good War

Merrie Cave

A Schoolmaster's War: Harry Ree - A British Agent in the French Resistance, ed Jonathan Ree, Yale University Press, 2020, £20.

‘What was it that made an Englishman want to parachute into occupied France, in civilian clothes? Harry Ree was well known in post-war educational circles, a gifted language teacher, he was an inspirational headmaster at Watford Grammar School. Like many others in 1940 he discarded his pacifist baggage – he had signed the pledge at Cambridge – and joined the army, eventually joining SOE, because this controversial outfit provided the freedom to make your own mistakes; that ‘if you were killed or arrested, it would quite likely be your own fault rather than the fault of a superior officer’. He got through all the training well but his final report described him as ‘highly strung and nervy and ‘not temperamentally suited’ for the work. Nevertheless, Colonel Buckmaster despatched him to the Jura by way of Clermont Ferrand to start building a new SOE circuit where he proved his mentors wrong. After the war an official investigation in 1945 reported that HQ officers realised ‘the immense authority which Captain Ree wields in the Doubs, where his name is legendary.’

In 1991 Harry was thinking of writing his autobiography, ‘putting my experience of the century into words’ but had a sudden heart attack a month later and died. His son Jonathan Ree, the philosopher, knew very little about his father’s exploits in the war, for it was typical of that generation not to brag; indeed many of them wanted to forget, but after a visit to the re-dedication of a memorial plaque in Belfort and meeting some of his father’s comrades, he became fascinated by his father’s story. He has skilfully blended his memoirs, writings, and post-war broadcasts, but most of the text is in his father’s own words so the reader feels that he is beside the author, sometimes like a holiday cycling down a hill in the Doubs, then frightened when danger from the Germans emerged unexpectedly, or at the outset, enduring the tedium of unsuccessful landings..

Agents had to rely on private houses for shelter and he like others, often became one of the family. ‘I have adopted you as another son’ said Marguerite who died in Ravensbruck in 1945. The people he stayed with

risked everything by putting him up; they fed him well too, for rural regions unlike the towns still enjoyed enough food. The local butcher once showed him his refrigerator, piled with cream cakes, heaps of veal and sausages before feeding him up ‘Voila quelque chose que les boches n’auront pas’.

Resistance was founded on trust and those in it had to develop a sixth sense about those who were betraying them. John Starr was on his second operation and had worked in Paris before the war, but he lacked Harry’s superior judgement. When Harry went to find him, the house was ominously shut. The proprietor from the café next door asked him if he trusted Pierre Martin who had a shady reputation as a car dealer. ‘Not much, I think he’s sold Bob (Starr)’. A note from Martin explained that he and Starr had been arrested but released after two hours. ‘Are you sure you’re not being followed? Meet me tonight’. So, he wants to get me too, Harry thought and decided to get away but also to make plans to dispose of Martin. Another comrade Andree Jeanny went to the café to look for Martin but saw the Gestapo chief from Besancon sitting outside. Both of them had to trek across country to evade arrest and Harry to travel to Switzerland where the authorities did not object to his returning to France, as long as he pretended to escape from the hotel to go back to England. A successful assassination was arranged for the double agent in mid-November ’43 in a restaurant.

After he returned from Switzerland, he organised sabotage at the Peugeot factory in Sochaux which was very successful. He told London that the RAF had repeatedly missed the factory but bombed houses causing casualties, so it was suggested that they should keep away for the rest of the war, and in return the Resistance would carry out effective sabotage. Shortly afterwards he had a brush with the French speaking Feldgendarmarie which sounded like Laurel and Hardy, but was so badly wounded, he had to be helped over the border and then directed operations in Switzerland for the Franche-Compte while he was recovering.

In his broadcasts and writings after the war Harry regretted the glamorization of the French Resistance as well as disliking both the Gaullist and Communists versions. He had worked with at least four hundred supporters half of whom were arrested and in many cases imprisoned and tortured; always amazed at his luck at surviving, he was grief stricken about his comrades who hadn’t. Any return to France was bitter sweet when he remembered the ordinary people who had sacrificed their lives ‘who had let us transmit messages from their garden sheds and had fed and befriended us’ and therefore much worthier of admiration than the spectacular exploits of the maquisards depicted in books and films.



How the state stifles invention

Alexander Adams

How Innovation Works, Matt Ridley, Fourth Estate, 2020, £20.

‘Innovation is the most important fact about the modern world, but one of the least well understood.’ So starts Matt Ridley’s new book, which provides a concise survey of the human race’s endless ingenuity. Such a dose of positive news should be a mandated antidote to winter blues. Part popular science, part scientific inquiry and a mild rebuke to our neophobic inclinations, this book approaches technological innovation in transport, agriculture, power generation, domestication of animals, medicine, computers and the internet.

Innovation is ‘turning ideas into practical, reliable and affordable reality’; invention is the discovery of new ideas and materials. Innovation is often not the invention of a new good, simply a way of manufacturing or distributing it in a way that makes it affordable to more people. It turns a luxury into an everyday item; it allows us to devote less time to acquiring food, shelter, clothing and warmth and allows us to turn our productive work to other aspects, exponentially expanding humanity’s capacity for thought, creativity and progress. Ridley outlines key aspects of innovation. It is gradual, collaborative, inexorable and serendipitous. Much progress is incremental, diffuse and parallel, so that in some fields a single figure cannot be named as a critical innovator.

Innovation is driven by need and opportunity. Ridley takes up the puzzle of why wheeled suitcases did not begin to be manufactured on any scale until the early 1980s. The technology was not new and the idea had been attempted as early as 1925. Such a design was not needed because of the provision of cheap porters at hotels and transport hubs. Only with the growth of stations and airports, disappearance of porters and the redesign and adaptation of spaces for wheelchairs did the wheeled luggage become practical.

Nuclear power has stagnated because the usual engine of efficiency (trial and error) would be so dangerous that it is regulated out; safety costs escalate yet are unavoidable. When fracking provided cheap

and plentiful natural gas (less polluting than oil or coal), the environmental lobby initially welcomed it as a bridge fuel, providing an interim before renewal energy became cost-viable. Only when it became clear that fracking provided a rival source of power did the renewable-power lobby begin circulating data on fracking’s (relatively mild) environmental side-effects.

‘Innovation happens when people are free to think, experiment and speculate. It happens when people can trade with each other. It happens when people are relatively prosperous, not desperate. It is somewhat contagious. It needs investment.’ The necessary corollary – capitalism, freedom of association, rule of law, protection of private property and the ability of inventors to own and profit from their designs – may not come. Capitalism under a government that is accountable (rather than necessarily democratic) is the setting most fertile for innovation. Why the author does not state this more explicitly is peculiar for as he writes, trade (domestically and internationally) is a stimulant. Not only does it spur the drive to innovate, it allows individuals to encounter new ideas and technology. He does cite the failure regarding the development of the two British airships in 1929-30 as a test case of market efficiency. The private ship was finished first, most effective, cheap and safe. The government ship was expensive, faulty, late and exploded, killing a minister on board. Ridley is scathing about the stifling of creativity caused by EU legal regulation.

There are rules that seem to apply to technology. Moore’s Law asserts the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles about every two years. ‘Amara’s Law states that people tend to overestimate the impact of a new technology in the short run, but to underestimate it in the long run.’ Ridley points out that the linear model of science leading to invention leading to innovation is often not accurate. Innovations solving practical or economic problems often precede investigation of the theory that explains how a machine or system works. Mankind has exploited natural laws and medicines from prehistory onwards, never needing a theoretical understanding. ‘The ‘linear model’ is actually a bit of a straw man. Though politicians are wedded to it, no economist or scientist really believes in it.’

Innovators have to battle against entrenched interests – commercial, political and religious. Government can slow or misdirect endeavours. Ridley notes that government diktats – even motivated by the best of intentions – are disruptive, inefficient and counterproductive. A prime example was the forced phasing out of incandescent bulbs for costly compact fluorescent bulbs, subsidised in the UK at a cost of £2.75bn. ‘The reign of the compact fluorescents lasted

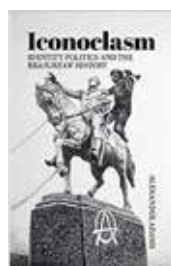
just six years before they too were rapidly abandoned and manufacturers stopped producing them because of the falling cost and rising quality of LEDs. It is as if the government in 1900 had forced people to buy steam cars instead of waiting for better internal-combustion vehicles.’ It is a warning of the dangers not so much of a hyper-anxious populace, powerful lobbying groups or corrupt politicians, but a system which permits such influences to distort the free market.

There is a chapter on fake innovations (non-functional mine detectors and Theranos blood tests) and near failures (Amazon). Large companies and government departments are poor at innovation because of size, inertia and fear of upsetting established systems and products.

There are a handful of unimportant slips. ‘There is little doubt that filter bubbles [on social media] and cable television are responsible for political polarization all around the world, with left-leaning people moving left and right-leaning people moving right.’ Surveys have actually discovered that American Democrats have moved dramatically left, Republicans have virtually not moved and the centre has hollowed out. The afterword addressing the Covid-19 outbreak treats the virus more seriously than evidence has shown it warranted, owing to Ridley taking early projections literally. His general points are valid though.

Ridley states that empires tend to induce ‘declines in inventiveness’ but the British and Roman Empires were noted for implementing new technology. Much of Ridley’s book is devoted to British advances through the Industrial Revolution and the Victorian era. As for the Romans, I believe Monty Python had a sketch about that... Ridley’s error is that he sees empires as single entities which contravene his rule of foreign trade stimulating innovation through competition. He betrays his lack of historical knowledge here; the Roman Empire was far from being a single bloc culturally and technologically even if its citizens shared certain legal equality. That India, Canada and Great Britain shared the same monarch made no difference to the inventors of London, science professors of Cambridge or mill-owners of Bradford. Empires are closer to trading blocs than single countries; they provide secure and low-tax markets for innovators. Autocracy and theocracy impede innovation, empires do not.

Ridley’s easy-going style and clarity make his tour of the trivia and touchstones of technology a pleasure to read. In a year when all the news has seemed bad, *he* provides a positive antidote to 2020’s catastrophism.



The slashing of the canvasses

Dinah Kolka

Iconoclasm, Identity Politics and the Erasure of History, Alexander Adams, Imprint Academic, 2020, £14.95.

By censoring the past, we leave ourselves vulnerable to conspiracy theories of the future

The events following the killing of George Floyd in May 2020 were both sudden and shocking. The violent reaction from the mob: toppling statues, burning down cities, and attacking businesses, was frighteningly reminiscent of revolutionary France, Bolshevik Russia, or Maoist China. Along with the millions of dollars of damage to property, and the lost lives, many were left asking: what does it all mean?

In *Iconoclasm, Identity Politics and the Erasure of History*, Alexander Adams answers this question. He masterfully recounts the history of defacement, iconoclasm in art, and the meaning of the events of 2020. Adams argues that the recent iconoclasm is essentially nothing out of the ordinary in the historical timeframe – it simply accelerated the existing anti-traditional action and disruption.

Adams takes us through the long and scandalous history of defacement, laying out biblical and historical precedents that help us contextualise the events of 2020 which are unravelled in the second section of the book. He emphasises the importance of art and provides insight into the destructive mindset of the iconoclast and often goes back to his main conclusion – ‘property is speech’; he suggests that iconoclasm silences the dead as it destroys the evidence of past actions and behaviours. If we topple our Edward Colston statues, the next generation may lose the chance to learn about men like him, removing nuance from the discourse.

Adams also points to the collective hysteria of the French Revolution which led to secularism, compelled speech, and iconoclasm for ‘the greater good’. This paints an oddly foreshadowing picture of the recent events. He goes on to cover similar ground to Douglas Murray’s *The Madness of Crowds*

and Jonathan Haidt's *The Coddling of the American Mind*, but taking a fresh angle, focusing on art and its relationship with iconoclasm. This means that Adams arrives at a different conclusion. A lot of material covering the peculiarity of Wokeness fails to deliver solutions to the existing issues. However, Adams not only provides solutions, but he also spells out why the iconoclasm should be opposed. He suggests that it reduces empathy and increases intolerance which will affect our daily lives making us insensitive to others and their values. It also impoverishes our heritage, which should resonate with those who wish to keep our society rich and complex.

What makes the book even more important in the times of Covid-19, is that it deals directly with the way the pandemic has influenced the protests and iconoclasm. Adams reiterates points from Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff about the untruths and learned fragility through safetyism, arguing that society has progressed even further into both polarisation and societal infantilisation. This means that people are encouraged to feel threatened by historical symbols and statues which makes it easier for them to progress to destruction. Normally, people come together during a national crisis. But the pandemic has become a divisive political tool. The lockdown could be forgotten by the 'morally superior left' once people virtuously took to the streets to protest, whilst on the other side of town, someone may be dying on their own without their loved ones.

Iconoclasm and mob rule have always been easily justified by its supporters who believe their cause is righteous. Adams argues this attitude can be identified in universities and other institutions, now dominated by the left's 'long march', and frighteningly out of touch with mainstream opinion. A recent example is the recent backlash against The National Trust, a charity entrusted with caring for historical sites after their misguided production of a leaflet expressing interest in decolonising their collections. This example raises the same question as iconoclasm: to whom do we give the privilege of policing the past?

Overall, *Iconoclasm, Identity Politics and the Erasure of History* is a timely and beautiful document defending the importance of history and art, while also providing an important guide to understanding the iconoclasm of 2020. It will speak to those who value history and art and are concerned with the development of recent events. I found this book to be fascinating, educational with compelling solutions to restoring art, and history.



The joys of a pre-digital childhood

Jane Kelly

British Summer Time Begins, the School Summer Holidays 1930-1980, Ysenda Maxtone Graham, Little, Brown, 2020, £18.95.

If you were in St Margaret's, Bushy, any July in the 1970s, you might have seen girls waving their 'navy outer-knickers' out of the car window. At the same time the girls of St Leonards in Fife were throwing their school hats into the sea, while at Benenden, the Headmistress's dog was suddenly dyed pink. Such was the national exhilaration of children, from private and state schools, at the start of the long summer holidays.

In joyful detail Graham explores what British children used to do at finding they had six weeks free time on their hands. She uses this to explore, 'A Britain scarcely recognisable today,' a time when adults were often, 'so out of touch with the daily lives of their children,' that they frequently got the date wrong for collecting them from school, leaving them sitting on their trunks.

Private Eye lampooned the book as elitist, too focussed on girls with names like, 'Phoebe Fortescue,' the knicker waver, and 'Marianne Lucia Perronet Thompson-McCausland,' (Aunt of 'Pointless' TV host Alexander Armstrong,) and there are those like writer Jonathan Meades, who sneer and refuse to believe that children ever had such holidays outside Mallory Towers. But Graham spent eighteen months travelling the UK, 'buttonholing market traders, visiting men and women in day-care centres, farms, castles, suburban houses and council estates. The great difference she found between then and now, was that many parents never knew, or cared where their children were. Little was planned, 'entertainments weren't laid on,' 'summers were more a matter of stasis than travel.'

As Sir Nicholas Soames told her, 'In the 50s no one went abroad except to fight a war.' Stuck at home, left to themselves, children became resourceful, imaginative and skilled. Knives were 'viewed as improving, wood-whittling or rope-cutting tools, something every boy should carry'. Aged eight, in Ayrshire, Alice Renton was given a .22 rifle by her mother. She began to shoot rabbits. Her grandfather gave her a penny for every tail

she brought him. ‘Golden summers,’ says Alice. ‘All out doors, doing things by ourselves with gun, rod and pony. Terrific freedom.’ Jilly Cooper remembers, aged eleven, going off on her pony for the whole day. ‘My mother didn’t expect me back until seven.’

Children of all classes benefited from house doors being open, the back one into the yard or on to the lawn, the front one on to the street. To test this, she interviewed Lord Innes who grew up in a castle, and Dennis Skinner MP, the son of a coal-miner. Aged nine Skinner started running 300 feet up the nearest slag heap, then in circuits around the backs of houses, aiming to become a long-distance runner. Innes roamed freely on his estate and says that even their London home was never locked, even at night. Frankie Devlin, an ex-boxer brought up in Belfast remembered: ‘No one came into steal anything because we had nothing. All doors were open all day.’ ‘From the age of four it was normal to be out all day intermingling with the world,’ remembers Alice Allen, from Lancashire. ‘We roamed around knocking on doors asking if we could take the baby for a walk. The mothers always said yes.’

This didn’t just create a symbiosis between the generations and neighbours, ‘This was beanpole Britain,’ notes Graham, ‘a nation of children who hadn’t an ounce of fat on them because they were running around in the same place all day.’

The author doesn’t shy away from the ‘dark and tragic side,’ for those trapped in caravan holidays with warring parents, and although scabs and scars ‘were tokens of fearlessness,’ there were some bad accidents. There were also the uncles and strange men who were best avoided, ‘proper flashers in those days with raincoats,’ remembers Libby Purves. ‘We failed to be traumatised.’

No dangers seemed overwhelming enough to restrict childhood freedom and this charming book leaves a sad after-taste, after all, where are children now in comparison; supervised twenty-four hours a day, safe, fat and staring at screens. It’s not surprising that some refuse to believe in accounts like Graham’s; disappointment at how things have changed for children is almost too painful.

IN SHORT

The King of Nazi Paris, Christopher Othen, Biteback, 2020, £20.

‘The truth is always fantastic’ exclaimed the philosopher Ortega Y Gasset. There are some episodes of history which are much more exciting than fiction; indeed, the whole narrative of the Second World War with its sudden reversals of fortune and its supreme wickedness but amazing heroism is a good example.

The thirties was a miserable decade for France with the loss of life from the Great War, the threat from Nazi Germany, home-grown Fascism and economic depression. Politicians did not rise to the challenge and failed to imbue the army with the necessary resolve to resist the German invasion in 1940. The occupation was even worse and poisoned politics nationally and locally for many years. How lucky the British were to escape that fate.

Criminals always exploit tragedy and misery. Henri Lafont/Chamberlin, a petty criminal who managed to escape from prison in the wake of the invasion, went to the Hotel Lutetia headquarters of the Abwehr and asked for work. At the same time, he met Pierre Bonny who had been thrown out of the police force and was as crooked as the crooks he had chased. The two joined forces and set up shop in Rue Lauriston where they attracted the cream of the underworld and set up gruesome rooms for torturing resistance members. The Nazi authorities gave

them German identity cards and licences for guns and by ’43 Chamberlin was the most powerful Frenchman in Paris and lived a luxurious life with plenty of the best food and drink while the general population starved. Chamberlin gave and returned favours – Maurice Chevalier was one of many who came to ask for some – and he kept some cronies from gaol, deportation or execution. Perhaps one of the most curious criminals, Dr Petiot, promised escape routes to South America when the war started going badly, but he was a serial killer; his victims, many of whom were Jewish, were never seen again after visiting his premises, for he had injected them with poisons disguised as vaccinations.

Chamberlin refused to believe that the Germans were losing the war and in the end was content with his ‘four years with the most beautiful women, orchids and champagne; I lived the equivalent of ten lives’ but accepted his eventual fate philosophically.

Patrick Modiano established a successful literary career writing about the minutiae of the war probably because his parents refused to talk about it. He was particularly interested in Chamberlin’s career and he and Bonny appeared under their own names in several of his novels. He also collaborated with Louis Malle on the film *Lacombe Lucien* about a teenager in a small town who failed to become a resistance member and joined the local Gestapo auxiliaries by accident. This film like *Le chagrin et le pitie* struck a collective chord with the

French conscience which for too long had accepted the extremes of heroic resistance or wicked collaborators.

Merrie Cave

Greed Is Dead, Paul Collier and John Kay, Allen Lane, 2020, £16.99.

Collier and Kay contend that post-pandemic, the selfish ethos we've had since the 1980s is 'no longer intellectually tenable'. It has destroyed the stable, centrist politics our parents enjoyed post-war, based on a 'communitarian consensus'. Since then, individualism has eroded community-based organisations from trade unions to building societies. Two groups are blamed: Economic Man, the 'repellent' invention of market fundamentalists who believe people only get out of bed to maximise their self-interest and must be bribed with bonus payments. They insist that a successful business is not a free-for-all but a successful community where people draw on collective knowledge and work towards a common goal. Secondly self-righteous activists who loudly assert an ever-expanding set of entitlements and rights.

Most fascinating is their analysis of how the Labour party became infected with individualist ideas and lost the trust of the working class. They show how on a former Yorkshire coalfield and at Stoke, heart of the former potteries, the whole base of the Labour Party has dissolved, along with 'organic links between trade unions and their social clubs, welfare and rugby clubs.' Old class-based allegiances have been replaced by age and education. Young (left-wing) graduates now make up almost half the population, as in America, where uneducated blue-collar workers abandoned the

Democrats for Trump. Labour became 'too detached from the values of ordinary people,' but strangely the impact of mass immigration is only given one line.

Unrestrained capitalism, and meritocracy is a blind-alley for most people, so power must return to communities, autonomy to city regions, with tax-raising powers. They believe this will spread good jobs and prosperity around the country, developing a network of regional banks committed to looking after their local area. The authors believe these changes will return us to political compromise, where cultivated 'Pericleans' see discussion not as a stumbling block but as 'indispensable to any wise action'.

Both men have tried to tame the market for a long time: Collier, an Oxford Professor, also serves on the advisory board for Academics Stand Against Poverty. He was senior advisor to the Blair Commission for Africa, remember that? Multi-millionaire Blair is now a Chief of the Kuffa Bulam tribe in Sierra Leone, where the people have not grown noticeably wealthier. John Kay, the first dean of Oxford's Said Business School, has spent the last decade trying to answer the knotty question: why are so few rich and so many poor? In 2012 he reported to the government on reform of the stock-market, suggesting it exists to provide companies with equity capital and to give savers a stake in economic growth. 'That simple truth has been forgotten.' The *Economist* concluded, 'his report is unlikely to change much'. Like poets, some of the kindest economic theorists find they can change nothing. We hope that their ideas reflect an increasingly shared view; These two academics are prescient, if not entirely practical.

Jane Kelly

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