

The
Salisbury
Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The Third Marquess of Salisbury
1830-1903

Saving the Opera / Jonathan Sumption

Workplace Politics / Jane Kelly

Heroic Conservatism / Henry George

Putin's Global Mission / Mark Almond

French Rights / Theodore Dalrymple

National Trust Decline / Cornelia van der Poll

Expanding August / Daryl McCann

The New Elite / Alistair Miller





The
Salisbury Review

Editor: Mutaz Ahmed
Consulting Editors:
Merrie Cave, Alistair Miller
Founding Editor: Sir Roger Scruton

PO Box 81, Shefford, Beds, SG17 9AP

Tel: 01462 234279

E-mail: info@salisburyreview.co.uk

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

Articles

- 3 Editor's Statement
4 The Need for a Heroic Conservatism
Henry George
7 A Threat to English Opera
Jonathan Sumption
9 The Vanishing English
Alistair Miller
12 France over Britain
Theodore Dalrymple
15 Putin's Plan for Africa
Mark Almond
18 Restoring the Trust
Cornelia van der Poll
22 Educated, not Schooled
David Hein
24 The Rising Sun
Daryl McCann
27 Bully for You
Jane Kelly
30 Diagnose your own Cancer
Karol Sikora
32 Letter from Budapest
Gavin Duncan
34 The Myth of 'Russian Culture'
Gustav Fondlauen

Book Reviews

- 41 Jane Kelly
on How Nazis influenced business
43 Anthony Daniels
on Malawi
45 Rory Cranston
on Rachmaninoff
47 Celia Haddon
on Past pandemics
49 Martin Dewhurst
on an Eastern European backwater
51 Sean McGlynn
on Cézanne
53 John Jolliffe
on Russia Explained
54 Alistair Miller
on the state we're in
56 James Monkton
on Parliamentary Battles
58 Brian Easstty
on Essex
60 IN SHORT

Editor's Statement

This time next year, after three or four more editions of this magazine, we should be in the final throes of a general election campaign. The nation will look back on fourteen years of Conservative rule and ask – is that it? They may take note of the many opportunities the party has had to promote its supposed beliefs: the financial crash could have been the moment to transform our ailing services-based economy into something our forebears would at least have recognised, empowering communities to produce real, material products once more. Brexit was the time to exploit our regained sovereignty and make something of it, disentangling ourselves from the vast European hegemon. The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns would, under a truly conservative leadership, have triggered serious reflection on the atomised and selfish society we have become, followed by an attempt to reverse it.

No neutral observer can argue that any of these opportunities have been utilised. We “recovered” from the economic crash by pumping vast amounts of invisible money into the economy, keeping zombie and unproductive companies alive at the cost of entrepreneurialism. We repeated this mistake during the Covid lockdowns, to fund massive government spending, apparently blind to the inflationary spiral that any economist would have known inevitably follows. Forcing the population to isolate, to the detriment of the most vulnerable, and depriving children of much-needed social interaction and education, took precedence over almost everything else. Then there is

Brexit, probably the greatest lost opportunity. *De jure* it has achieved what the people voted for: the restoration of sovereignty. *De facto*, nothing of substance has changed. On the contrary, our politicians have already begun the process of handing power back to Brussels, while our politics have taken on a social-democratic European hue.

Besides vague fears of chaos under a future Labour government, the Conservatives will have no story to tell at the next election. The outcome, if our politics continue as they are, will be a crushing defeat – and perhaps a deserved one. Our attention must then turn to the question of what comes next, for the party, which by definition ought to represent the interests of traditionalists, will have to look inwards to find explanations for their abandonment of key values in pursuit of the latest ideological trends, from rewilding to transgenderism.

This process might well be influenced by small, external but sympathetic, platoons – including publications such as this – if we are forthright in defending conservatism as it was, against the Conservatism it has become. *The Salisbury Review* will continue to promote the classical elucidation of a Tory position, as espoused by Edmund Burke, an Irishman and parliamentary Whig, in response to events beyond our frontiers. Conservatism is not an international doctrine; it draws on attachments that are essentially local and historically determined. The Conservative Party today must look to our towns and villages, to the essence of Englishness, to find answers to modern problems.

The Need for a Heroic Conservatism

Henry George

Over the summer of 2023 there appeared a slew of essays and think-pieces prognosticating about the rise of new forms of masculinity among young men, particularly on the right, driven by figures grouped under the heading of Nietzschean Vitalism. Those like the pseudonymous social media personality Bronze Age Pervert (BAP) featured heavily. Amidst all the discussion, there was little done to convey what a conservative politics of a worthy life might have to offer that would provide an alternative avenue to the swirling currents of Nietzschean Vitalism. A conservatism that stresses fortitude, courage, action and vigour is indeed possible, if one knows where to look. I'm no fan of BAP or his worldview, but worrying about his appeal doesn't do very much if one doesn't offer a positive vision in its place. The lack of such a vision is unforgivable, particularly as there are examples to draw on. One of these is Sir Roger Scruton.

As the writer Titus Techera has said to me, young European conservatives feel a greater connection to Scruton as a result of his efforts in Eastern Europe during the 1980s. This gives his thought and philosophy a romanticism that points to the nobility of matching abstract thought with concrete action, of risking one's safety to put principles into practice. While less active in a physical sense in later years, Scruton still suffered the consequences for his refusal to toe the ideological line of our New Moral Order, again walking the philosophical

walk. He was far from a decadent aesthete who played with ideas and words, refusing to commit to anything.

Scruton was integral to the intellectual underground that went behind the Iron Curtain to rekindle the flame of Western learning and ideas, recounted by Barbara Day in her book, *The Velvet Philosophers*, giving illumination to the lives and worlds of those lost in the grey gloom of Soviet tyranny. He lectured in Poland, Hungary, and particularly Czechoslovakia, engaging in "the task of perpetuating Czech society and culture in defiance of the secret police". Through these actions, Scruton helped disseminate the best of Western thought, combining the classical, Christian and modern streams of philosophy, recovering the ineradicable dignity of the human individual as part of concentric communities, in the face of Soviet depersonalisation and domination.

As Scruton recounts in *Conversations with Roger Scruton*, Soviet Prague "was like descending into Nibelheim, finding yourself in a dark place where you are the *only* free person. You are the only person who has the right to walk out of the door. It was both oppressive and inspiring, because people turned towards you faces of a kind you never see in your life here: faces full of suffering, longing to trust but never sure that they can. It had an erotic side to it, because only something like erotic love – something both egoistic and violently other-directed – can break through the

barrier with which everyone tried to shield himself.” Meanwhile, in *Gentle Regrets*, Scruton describes how he groped his up the dingy stairs of a tenement block to a third floor flat: “In that room were the battered remnants of Prague’s intelligentsia: old professors in their shabby waistcoats; long-haired poets; fresh-faced students who had been denied admission to university for their parents’ political ‘crimes’; priests and religious in plain clothes; a would-be rabbi; even a psychoanalyst.”

Scruton went further by helping to establish the production and distribution of *samizdat* Western literature that enabled the underground university to survive and flourish as much as was possible under the terrible conditions of the time. He and other academics acted through the Jan Hus Educational Foundation to support the underground education network started by the Czech dissident Julius Tomin, kept functional by the dissident network’s node, Jiri Muller. As Scruton wrote in 2019, the Czech underground and their Western allies “offered courses in philosophy, Hebrew, history, musicology, classical architecture, fine art, theatre and anything else asked for. We supported a circle of composers in Brno as well as artists and sculptors who had lost the right to exhibit their work. Everywhere we were met by grateful people prepared to take the risk of meeting us purely for the sake of knowledge.” Through such efforts, Scruton helped establish what Jan Patočka called the “solidarity of the shattered” among his Czech compatriots.

These actions carried significant risk, both for those living in the captive nations, and for Scruton himself, who faced arrest, violence, and subsequent deportation. The esteemed philosopher Anthony Kenny had already

been arrested and deported for his efforts, which made the threat real. But, as Scruton put it, “I really enjoyed making life difficult for communists! It was a great pleasure in itself.” Such an attitude speaks to the taste for adventure that echoes with the glories of Britain’s past. Its expression in the language of a game, common in British culture, belies the depths of seriousness that characterised the great British men and women of history and their actions to uphold Britain’s place in history.

Scruton himself paid the price for making life difficult for the Communists, proving his willingness to put his safety in jeopardy to uphold civilisation itself. Arriving to give a secret lecture in Prague with Tomin, he attempted to enter the apartment where his audience were waiting, nervously, to hear him speak. However, there waiting for them were two members of the StB, the Czech secret police. They refused to let Scruton in, and ended by throwing him down a flight of stairs. Scruton gained entry on the second attempt, but now had a target on his back. Scruton was arrested when two policemen ambushed him from behind a bush in a park in Brno as he was joining Jiri Muller and his family.

As Day recounts, following a brief car chase back to the Muller’s house, Scruton was taken into custody, held for questioning, and then taken to the Czech border. As she writes, here he was strip searched, asked if he was a spy, and questioned about the samizdat copies of his 1979 book *The Meaning of Conservatism*. He was then taken to the border area, pointed back towards the Austrian side from which he had entered, and ordered to leave and never return. As Brona Mullerova recounts, “there was this broad empty space between the two

border posts, absolutely empty, not a single human being in sight except for one soldier, and across that broad empty space trudged an English professor, Roger Scruton, with his little bag into Austria ... and after that the Communist authorities never allowed him back.”

Roger Scruton offers a valuable lesson to conservatives: it's all very well to prate on about eternal values and timeless truths, but to live out these values requires taking risks that demand fortitude and vigour. It is perhaps no coincidence that those

who call themselves conservatives, but are constitutionally unable to engage in the agonistic combat of politics to enact their stated beliefs, threw Scruton to the leftist wolves in 2019. Before he died, Scruton showed the greatest heroism of all: preparing to meet his maker with gratitude in his heart for the life he had lived. A heroic conservatism has firm foundations on which to build.

Henry George is a young conservative writer and critic.

Archive: Lord Salisbury and the Dangers of Democracy

Andrew Roberts

Lord Salisbury's argument against enfranchising the working class was not based on snobbery; he did not argue that the rich were necessarily better human beings, as his criticisms of clubland and Mayfair society made clear. But he did believe that the leisure and education which the rich could afford, as well as the pecuniary disinterest they could show, made them more likely to be better legislators and choosers of legislators.

“Always wealth, in some countries' birth, in all intellectual power and culture, marks out the men whom, in a healthy state of feeling, a community looks to undertake its government,” he wrote in the *Quarterly Review* in 1862. “They have the leisure for the task, and can give to it the close attention and the preparatory work which it needs. Fortune enables them to do it for the most part gratuitously, so that the struggles of ambition are not tainted by... sordid greed.” After a long day's work, he argued, mechanics had little opportunity to develop the intellect and political knowledge necessary to make informed decisions. ...

When a private member's Reform Bill was defeated in the Commons, Cecil claimed it was because “English gentlemen will scamper off at the first sound of a demagogue's bluster as quickly as an English mob at the first sight of a red-coat.”

He was over-sanguine, and when Gladstone proclaimed himself in favour of universal suffrage in 1864, famously declaring that the working classes must be brought within “the pale of the Constitution”, Lord Salisbury knew that the battle he had long anticipated was just about to commence. He automatically assumed, however, that Derby, Disraeli and the Conservative Party would be staunch on the issue. They, surely, could be relied upon to recognise how, taken to its logical conclusions, Reform was only likely to stimulate what he called “the love of a good dinner which animates the garotter”.

At least the party of property could be trusted to remember that, as Lord Salisbury put it at its mildest, “the laws of property are not very safe when an ignorant multitude are the rulers”. Quite why Lord Salisbury should have had such faith in the political mettle of the Conservative Party is hard to understand, considering the contempt he exhibited for the vast majority of politicians.

A Threat to English Opera

Jonathan Sumption

Is “levelling up” a policy, or just a slogan? One way of answering this question is to look at one of the most egregious examples of the idea in action, namely the forlorn efforts of the Arts Council since November 2022 to expel the English National Opera from London.

On 18 February 2022 Nadine Dorries, then Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, “instructed” the Arts Council England (ACE) to reduce the allocation of funds to London organisations by £24 million, about a sixth of the then current allocation to the capital. Two thirds of this reduction was to happen by 1 April 2023, and the rest within two years thereafter. The justification for this was said to be that existing ACE spending in London was £21 a head, compared to £6 a head on average for the rest of the country.

ACE responded with brutal reductions to several London-based organisations. English National Opera is one of England’s most innovative, diverse and successful performing companies. Its reduced price ticket schemes have introduced countless young people to opera. Its outreach programs are outstanding. As a nursery of English professional musical talent, it is unequalled save perhaps by Glyndebourne (another victim of ACE’s cuts).

In November 2022, ACE acknowledged ENO’s strengths but reduced its grant from £12.4 million a year to zero. It was told that it could have £17 million of “transition funding” if it moved out of London by 1 April

2023, ie within five months. The decision was publicly defended by ACE’s chairman, Sir Nicholas Serota, as if he believed in it. But it has been ridiculed by every other serious commentator. The ultimate absurdity came when it was denounced by none other than Nadine Dorries herself, now no longer Secretary of State. She publicly attacked it as a subtle plan by ACE to discredit the whole idea of levelling up by making it look ridiculous.

I shall not try to arbitrate in this undignified bunfight. But when the originator and the executant of a decision start publicly rowing about which of them is to blame, it is clear that something has gone badly wrong. I think that I can offer at least a partial explanation of what that something was. ACE’s decision was economically and artistically illiterate for at least two reasons.

The first is that it assumed that a performing company can simply be pulled up by the roots and replanted somewhere else. ENO has a large theatre in London, held on a long lease from the Arts Council on terms which require it to have its main base and artistic centre there. It has 632 full-time employees who have mortgages and children at school in London, most of whom would have to be made redundant. It serves a market comprising about a third of the population of England living in or within easy reach of London.

In its new, unspecified location, ENO would have none of these things. It would have no theatre of its own, no permanent

orchestra or chorus and a much reduced market. All that Darren Henley, ACE's chief executive could say in answer to this was that the public preferred "opera in car parks, opera in pubs, opera on your tablet". I know of no authoritative survey which supports this bizarre notion. But it is worse than wrong. It is insufferably patronising. It assumes that London can have the real thing, while the provinces will be content with a poor imitation. Of course the provinces are entitled to a rich musical culture, just as London is, but that cannot be done on the cheap. ACE's proposals are simply a deceitful way of promising the provinces more than it can deliver and quietly getting rid of one England's major performing companies,

The second problem is that the decision misunderstands the proper role of a great capital city as a provider of amenity for the whole country. London has some of England's outstanding universities, four of England's six major music conservatoires, its greatest libraries and museums, most of its more important theatres and all of its national newspapers. It is England's only world city. It has a sixth of England's population and a GDP per head more than twice the nearest comer (Manchester).

There is no point in regretting any of this. It is an organic development which is entirely natural for the capital of an ancient realm. Arts subsidy per head is a useless measure for policy purposes. What matters is not the proportion of public funds spent in London, but the proportion of the population which can benefit by it, directly or indirectly. London is England's major transport hub, accessible to a much higher proportion of the population than any provincial city. To move a major performing company out of

London does not therefore enrich any part of England. It impoverishes at a stroke both London and the provinces.

What is a policy? It is a considered statement of intent, backed by a measure of forethought and coherence. A slogan, by comparison, is just a noise. By that test ACE's treatment of ENO never deserved to be taken seriously. It had no chance of achieving even its professed objects.

And so it has proved. The terminal date has been successively put back and the financial offer progressively increased, as each announcement followed the last. The whole affair seems likely to cost at least as much as leaving ENO in ACE's national portfolio in the first place. The obvious solution is for ENO to do occasional seasons out of London, with suitable financial support from major provincial cities, but to retain its base and most of its activity in London.

The present position is that it was announced at the end of July that ENO's grant will continue until at least 2026 and its base in London until 2029. It will be expected to have moved out of London by then. This implicitly recognises that forcing it out of London now is a ridiculous idea. But it will be just as ridiculous in 2029, for exactly the same reasons.

It is therefore difficult to regard the latest withdrawal as the last stage in General Serota's fighting retreat. It looks more like a face-saving formula imposed on ACE by the government to get the whole embarrassing issue out of the way until the plan can be quietly buried when no one is looking.

Lord Sumption was a Supreme Court justice between 2012 and 2018. He resigned from the ENO board over plans for the organisation to relocate

The Vanishing English

Alistair Miller

Many years ago, in the days when people could get away with expressing unorthodox views in public, the eminent historian David Starkey was involved in a discussion of our diverse inclusive multicultural society on the BBC's *Question Time*. Starkey began by expressing sympathy for a diverse tolerant society in which a multitude of lifestyles was permitted; as a gay man, he had no desire to turn the clock back. But he soon went "off message". Starkey had just returned from an engagement in Ludlow in Shropshire, a traditional English market town, and it was simply not true, he went on, that the move to a multicultural society entailed no cost or loss. Something *was* lost: the shared culture, the sense of social cohesion, of traditional English towns like Ludlow. A moment of uneasy silence followed, before the presenter moved the discussion swiftly on.

I have not heard this subject referred to since, at least not in the mainstream media. Such is the nature of our belief in the twin dogmas of multiculturalism and diversity, which now enjoy the status of a civic religion, that to suggest that our multicultural society is *replacing* a pre-existing society, and that something is being lost in the process, is tantamount to heresy. Even to broach the subject would run the risk of being branded an English nationalist, a racist and white supremacist. Yet, walking down Hounslow High Street, as I do from time to time, it is hard not to commit the thought crime of observing that there has, indeed, been a

"replacement". I have known Hounslow for fifty years and have witnessed a dramatic demographic transformation in that time. What was once an English town, admittedly not as picturesque as Ludlow but still recognisably English, is clearly no longer English in any meaningful sense. One rarely hears English spoken in the street, and one rarely sees anyone who would identify as English. There are some whites, but they are East Europeans. I do not feel uncomfortable – there is even a holiday feel about the place; merely that I am in a foreign town in a foreign country.

No-one would deny the unprecedented demographic transformation, fuelled by mass immigration, that is taking place in this country. The census data speaks for itself. The crucial question is: does it matter? One would have thought the subject was of high political, historical and cultural importance. Our national identity is at stake. Yet in the public arena and mainstream media, both Left and Right, one meets a wall of silence. Only one thought is permitted – *we are a multicultural society, and we welcome diversity* – a mantra that is broadcast daily and touches all aspects of our lives.

Equally perplexing is that the multiculturalism foisted on us is curiously asymmetrical in nature, something Eric Kaufmann observed in his book *White Shift*. Whereas we are enjoined to celebrate the cultures and identities of minority groups (including the Scottish, Welsh and Irish), the majority population, the "white British" – or English as they were once known – seem

to have been denied the same privilege. Instead, they must make do with a bland all-inclusive “Britishness”, a civic identity that celebrates tolerance and diversity.

To forestall these deviant thoughts, the orthodoxy that a multicultural society is an indisputable good has been buttressed in recent years with a full-blown alternative narrative of our past. The seminal marker in this development was the Parekh Report of 2000 into the future of multi-ethnic Britain, which argued that it made no sense to question Britain’s transition to a multicultural society, or the benefits of immigration, because Britain had *always* been a multicultural society composed of migrants. The English had never existed as a distinct ethnic group, and the idea of a distinct English culture or civilisation was merely “a dominant story” that needed deconstructing. Britain should be conceived instead as “a community of communities”, “a looser federation of cultures” held together by shared values of “tolerance, mutual respect, and the peaceful resolution of differences” – another now familiar mantra.

However, the existence of English history, which has been meticulously documented by generations of historians from David Hume to A J P Taylor, and dates to Bede’s eighth-century *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, would seem to disprove the thesis that the English have never existed. As recently as 1965, in his preface to *English History 1914-1945*, A J P Taylor justified his choice of “English” over “British” in the title, arguing “It is reasonable, I think, to talk about English feelings or English patterns of life” and document “thirty years in the history of the English people”. Taylor, a radical and a socialist, was neither a Whig

historian nor an establishment lackey; but he was, indubitably, an Englishman.

That the non-existence thesis is absurd is also attested by any foreigner. Whereas the term “British” is now so all-encompassing as to be virtually meaningless, the term “English” immediately evokes a host of associations – cultural, historical, and emotional. Countless visitors to our shores have documented the characteristics and eccentricities of the English. In the last century, George Santayana, Karel Čapek, André Maurois and Pierre Daninos have all observed the English with acute perception, mixed with sympathy and humour. My favourite is Robert Escarpit’s *L’Humour* in the iconically French *que sais-je?* series of encyclopaedic paperbacks, which contains a forensic analysis of “that key to the English soul, self-consciousness”. Reading this in my youth on the return coach from Paris, I felt as if my psyche were being operated on by a supremely skilful surgeon.

Yet the most flagrant denial of reality concerns that aspect of demographic transformation that has become known, controversially, as “white flight” – the exodus of the white British from the cities to the towns and villages of the countryside. A BBC News story from 2013 entitled “Why have the white British left London?” attributed it to dreams of rural life and concluded with the comment “It is a story of aspiration. It is a story of success.” But a proper analysis reveals there is much more going on than that. Not only is Britain “sleepwalking into segregation”, as Trevor Phillips warned in 2005, but the main driver is the white majority. In *White Shift*, Eric Kaufmann has analysed the data in meticulous detail, controlling for all the socioeconomic factors (education, class,

age, income etc.) that might otherwise explain demographic change, and concludes that white Britons are significantly more likely than any other ethnic group to leave diverse areas and move to heavily white and ethnically stable areas.

Moreover, it seems that bourgeois liberals are among the keenest practitioners of white flight, choosing to raise their families not in areas of hyper-diversity where the multicultural dream is being realised, but in areas which have what is euphemistically termed “a strong sense of community”. In other words, areas occupied by people like them, which are overwhelmingly white and English. Leafy enclaves in the outer parts of Greater London and quaint boutique villages in the home counties are packed with virtuous liberals who preach diversity for the rest of the population. Likewise, schools with a high proportion of white pupils attract more white pupils, and schools with a significant proportion of minorities lose them, wherever they are situated. And even in hyper-diverse areas, friendship groups among whites are heavily skewed towards other whites. So much for the multicultural dream.

Is disguised racism at play here? Kaufmann argues that it is no more than a natural desire for social cohesion, for being attached to those who share one’s “in-group” – a phenomenon that is hardly unique to the white British, or English. The tragedy, however, is that by banishing the idea of Englishness from public discourse, the very host culture that might have assimilated newcomers and their descendants has been eliminated from the scene. Newcomers might have been initiated into the riches of a common culture and historic community, offered a shared sense of place and of

home, the ‘love of what is ours’ that Roger Scruton identified as the foundation both of patriotism and conservatism. Instead, they have been offered cultural amnesia in the form of multiculturalism, a fracturing into ethnic and racial sub-groups, and a growing white backlash of ethno-nationalism which is genuinely racist. In fact, the term ‘white British’ is to be deplored for all these reasons. “English” is infinitely preferable because although most people who identify as English are white, for obvious historical reasons, there is no necessary racial dimension. Cultures are not transmitted in the genes. To be English is to belong to a civilization, into which newcomers may be assimilated, as they have so often in the past.

Of all the things wrong with modern conservatism, none is more depressing than the absence of any sense that our country is a historic homeland, a shared home – not just a global business park cum transit camp that welcomes inward flows of investment and cheap labour. Writing in the *Guardian* back in 2021, Andy Beckett identified an alternative form of Englishness to the traditional conservative one with its “dated Churchillian symbols”. This new-age Englishness, indistinguishable from Britishness, was “increasingly multicultural, globally connected and socially liberal, not reverent about the nation’s imperial past, and immersed instead in our cosmopolitan popular culture” – in other words, the by-product of a global amusement arcade.

He might have been describing the cultural vision of modern-day conservatives.

Alistair Miller is a teacher and regular columnist

France over Britain

Theodore Dalrymple

Anyone who regularly reads *Le Figaro*, the French conservative newspaper, will soon realise that the complaints and anxieties of French conservatives about their country exactly mirror those of their British conservatives. They see decline and decay everywhere. The journalists echo the sentiments that you can hear expressed in a hundred conversations, from the Café de Commerce to bourgeois dinner parties.

The country lives beyond its means; its national debt is enormous and rising fast and, so it seems, inexorably; taxes are so high that they crush initiative and lead to the emigration of the talented; France has deindustrialised and imports greatly more than it exports; its national identity has been undermined by mass immigration; there is rising crime, particularly violent crime; the police have low morale and are completely ineffectual; the criminal justice system is absurdly lenient; educational standards have fallen catastrophically; political correctness is nibbling away at institutions as mice nibble at cheese; the health system is worsening and it is increasingly difficult to get to see a doctor once, let alone twice; the quality of life is declining and the politico-bureaucratic class is ever more isolated from the problems that the rest of the population faces, and makes decisions in the name of some theory of other that add to the miseries of daily life.

But though the overall pattern is similar,

and familiar, there are significant differences, many, but not quite all, to the advantage of France.

Ghettoisation is far more advanced in France than in Britain, perhaps because, being a much larger country geographically, and with the same population, it is far easier to produce ghettos, or allow them to form. You can drive through hundreds of miles of France without realising that it has any social problems, other than the depopulation of small towns no longer with a *raison d'être*, which are therefore left to decay, their only life being the servicing of the old who are too poor or too attached to them to leave. In Britain, you can hardly go hundreds of yards, let alone miles, without encountering social problems.

Whether the situation is better or worse in France in this respect is moot. Most French towns of any size, and all the cities, are surrounded by Le Corbusian banlieues inhabited either by immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. Many of the latter in particular are profoundly antagonistic to the country in which they live, and whole areas have become not only virtually extraterritorial as far as control by the agencies of the French state is concerned but are tinderboxes waiting to explode. The main, and sinister, difference between the riots of 2005 and of 2023 is that, in 2005, the rioters did not dare enter the centres of the cities, because the riot police were waiting for them. This was not so in 2023; and, as

the communist regimes learned to their cost, once people lose their fear, anything can happen.

Riots in Britain, by contrast, are more likely to be multicultural because of the greater mixity of the general population. Whether this is an advantage or a disadvantage, I leave it to scholastic philosophers to decide.

French and British architects are equally criminal, the French possibly having the edge in this undesirable regard. One has only to see the new Philharmonie in Paris, or the Musée de Romanité in Nîmes, to realise that this is so. (The French intelligentsia has often had a kind of magpie weakness for novelty for its own sake.) One would laugh at these buildings, were it not that they were so costly that they are now indestructible.

The advantage of France, however, which makes it a much less ugly country than Britain (given the near-incapacity of modern architects even to build a graceful house, something that jobbing builders could once do), is that, because its population was for long three to five times larger than Britain's, far more vestiges of the past remain: and those that have remained have been better preserved and not so comprehensively smashed up by an alliance of ideological modernism and financial corruption. Horrible as everything that has been built in France since 1945 may be, much more from the past survives than in Britain.

Not only has more survived, but there is more pride in it, both local and national. This pride is evident even in matters not relating to preservation of the past, but to the care of the present. When I compare the French and the British municipality between which I share my time, it is obvious that the former works much better than the latter. In one, the roads are repaired, in the other potholes

abound; in one, the verges are meticulously kept and there is no litter, in the other they are overgrown and are giant litter bins. No doubt the bureaucracy in France is frightful – everyone in France calls it the land of paperasse, useless paperwork – but it seems to me no worse than in Britain, and at least there is usually someone intelligent in control who gets something done in the end. The sheer physical slovenliness of British public administration is very striking.

This brings me to an assertion that might surprise readers: Britain is a far, far more corrupt country than France: not in the crude sense that more money is passed under the table, but in the sense of the deep moral and intellectual rot of the public administration, which is far more susceptible to the idiocies of political correctness and wokeism than France. This is for two reasons: first there is nothing like them for job creation and the advancement into positions of power by ambitious mediocrities, and second because there is less sense of national pride to counterbalance them. The French bureaucrat has at least some sense of larger national purpose which gives meaning to his work; nothing like this exists in the British bureaucracy, as far as I can tell, which has its eyes firmly fixed on job preservation and an index-linked pension.

Much is made in France of cultural degeneration and the decline in educational standards, and I believe rightly so. The evidence is strong. When some years ago the education correspondent of *Le Figaro* complained of the declining standards of French taught in schools, he received many letters of protest from teachers, a substantial proportion of which contained spelling errors. This would have been inconceivable forty or fifty years earlier.

Another sign of degeneration in France is the sudden, and dramatic, increase in the number of people who are tattooed. An article in the Leftist newspaper, *Libération*, pointed out that the number of professional tattooists increased tenfold between 2002 and 2012. It must have increased yet further: tattoo parlours in French towns are on the way to becoming what charity shops are to British.

But decline or not, the general cultural level in France seems still to me to be much higher than that in Britain. In the small town in France near to which I live, there is a bookshop which is actually worth browsing in. There is evidently a sufficient cultivated public to keep it going. In Britain, in my town with twice the population, we have W H Smith, with at best footballers' autobiographies, TV chef books and accounts of survival of sexual abuse. You cannot buy a Shakespeare play in the town. As for magazines, the worst of the French are like the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* by comparison with the worst of the British.

The general cultural level is important, both for the quality of life and for the future of the country's economy. The French do not yet have the militant, ideological vulgarity of the British, according to which the more vulgar you are, the deeper and more sincere your democratic sentiment and virtue. In France, young people can still enjoy themselves without making a nuisance of themselves; in Britain, as I once discovered in Manchester, the sound of youthful enjoyment and of murdering or being murdered are indistinguishable.

French manners are better than British; probably half of British youth do not know how to address strangers politely because their parents have not taught them, or even how to answer the telephone intelligently: and what's more, won't be told.

France is perhaps nearer to serious civil conflict than Britain; but its quality of life will remain better. Its labour is a quarter more productive, which means the French have to work less to produce the same amount; intelligence and competence are valued more highly there, and more in evidence. France's national debt is a little higher than Britain's (for now), but at least they have something to show for it. They have infrastructure, we have obesity.

The mayor of Paris is the exact counterpart of the mayor of London. She destroys the environment in order to save it; she loves road schemes and concrete barriers to reduce traffic. The voting patterns are exactly the same: those who hope to obtain subsidies or privileges from the public purse vote for her, those who pay the taxes to fund those subsidies or privileges vote for her opponent. The aim is a permanent majority of the dependent.

Theodore Dalrymple's latest book is The Wheelchair and other stories, Mirabeau (Amazon).



Putin's Plans for Africa

Mark Almond

Everyone knows that in 2005 Vladimir Putin bewailed the break up of the Soviet Union as the “greatest geopolitical disaster” in modern times, “not least for the Russian people” divided by new frontiers. Few recall his warning that trying to restore the Communist superpower was “unrealistic”. Certainly, the flourishing of red Soviet army flags by his troops at the start of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine suggested that the spearhead of his attack regarded it as a Soviet Reconquista.

Even Putin himself may have forgotten how he used to temper nostalgia for an imperial past with pragmatic, if ruthless, realism. He has also been a harsh critic of what he regarded as naïve Communist global ambitions which sacrificed the self-interest of Russia and Russians to costly subsidies of revolutionary regimes from Eastern Europe to the Caribbean and Africa. Wars take on a dynamic of their own and the geopolitical irony of Putin’s frustrated invasion of Ukraine is that without giving up on the bloody attrition there, the Kremlin has opened new fronts far from that frontline.

Instead of his emphasis on reviving Imperial Russian traditions as the deep common memory of his people, Putin has reheated the anti-colonial revolutionary rhetoric of the Soviet era. In July, various African heads of government, not least of the newly-installed military regimes in the Sahel came to St. Petersburg to praise Putin for reviving anti-Western rhetoric.

Today, it is less Moscow’s Communist era allies in Africa from Angola to Ethiopia who

sing the praises of Putin as the new anti-imperialist champion (chopping off bits of European Ukraine) than the representatives of the West’s cold war era allies there from South Africa to Uganda and above all the frontline states in francophone Africa.

“De-colonisation” in Putin’s mouth is a synonym for shifting regime-dependence from Western states like France to his own arms-length mercenaries in the Wagner group. This is in contrast with the mid-1970s, after America’s retreat from Vietnam, when it was Fidel Castro’s largely Afro-Caribbean forces who acted as the Kremlin’s proxy spearhead in Africa. For instance, in their large-scale intervention in Angola against both the local Unita forces (supported by Washington and Beijing!) and the South African army operating out of still occupied Namibia.

With the fall of Kabul humiliating Washington two years ago, Russia felt emboldened not only to invade Ukraine but to increase its presence in Africa’s resource-rich regions. Sending in the Wagner group was more like inserting a protection racket than the kind of imperial projects of the British and French before 1914.

Putin is not the new Fidel trying to impose a communist utopia. Whatever the revolutionary rhetoric of his African allies like Burkina Faso’s new strongman, Ibrahim Traore, who has modelled on the radical putschist, Tomas Sankara of forty years ago, Putin is more like Leopold II of Belgium.

Wagner Group mercenaries are not remotely numerous enough to impose order across large territories from the Central African Republic to

Niger. What Wagner does is provide security across an archipelago of key mineral and other economic assets in sub-Saharan Africa. They are also trusted because they have no tribal loyalties and only work for cash in-hand. Just as the Soviets in the third world operated behind a smokescreen of anti-colonial rhetoric, in practice these Wagner deployments recall the kind of economic colonialism practised by Leopold II's Congo Free State company 130 years ago, where his agents ruthlessly extracted ivory and rubber wealth from a vast terrain which was left largely un-governed and un-developed, even under-developing.

But the real winner of Putin's pin-pricks to the West from Nicaragua to Africa is China. Russia's dependence on China is the inversion of what Stalin wanted from the Korean War seventy years ago. Then the Kremlin hoped war between China and the USA would bind the huge new communist state to Moscow out of military and economic dependency. Now Putin's proxy war with Nato in Ukraine has tied his hopes for the future of Russia to Chinese support.

It is very useful for China's vast economic interests in Africa, for instance, for Russians to take the military heat there by protecting the regimes with which it does business without requiring Chinese boots on the ground.

China's infrastructure-led "Belt-and-Road" imperialism needs protection. The web of railways, roads and pipelines being financed by Beijing and frequently actually built by Chinese labour – guided by Chinese experts – will be essential for transporting raw materials extracted from Wagner-protected locations. Whereas diamonds and gold can be flown out, bulk items like metals and lithium need either very good long-distance roads or railways. These need someone to ride shotgun. As the repeated experience of hold-ups and terrorist attacks in Pakistan has taught Beijing, relying

on local state security services can be a false economy. Yet the Dragon and the Bear are not natural partners.

Fear of Western democracy promotion brings their regimes together. A Russian defeat and collapse would be bad for Beijing. But they are geopolitical rivals, even if anti-Western allies. China is quietly undercutting Russian influence closer to Moscow, in its Central Asian backyard. Putin may have hoped to impose his own Monroe Doctrine on the post-Soviet republics but Xi has his eyes on Russia's waning empire.

It suits Beijing to let the Kremlin feel the heat of Western disapproval. Russia's bad behaviour tests our attention span. Can the West concentrate on two challenges at the same time? Even if Washington is anxious to contain China as it tries to roll back Russian aggression against Ukraine, France and Germany certainly want to limit themselves to finger-wagging when it comes to reacting to China's increasing assertiveness towards the countries surrounding its synthetic islands in the South China Sea.

Far from decoupling from China, Germany, for instance, has reacted to the sharp energy price rise for its manufacturing industries caused by cancelling its import of Russian gas by exporting car and chemical production to China. From Volkswagen to BASF, Germany has been off-shoring much of its manufacturing to the tender mercies of Xi Jinping to teach Vladimir Putin a lesson in economic warfare.

President Macron, too, may have abandoned his attempts to charm Putin over a telephone hotline, but his ministers have trouped to Beijing to reinforce his message that trade with China won't be a casualty of east-west tensions.

Still, Macron's ambitions to place France at the centre of a European "strategic autonomy" and turn the EU into a parallel pillar of the West

alongside the Anglosphere have taken severe knocks. His failure to mediate between Russia and Ukraine has raised fears in the EU's eastern members of being dumped by France in some "grand bargain" between Paris and Moscow. This has pushed Poland and Romania, among others, closer to Washington.

France's tarnished reputation as a reliable ally has not been helped by the sudden resurrection of its disgraced ex-president, Nicolas Sarkozy, as a would-be appeaser peacemaker in Ukraine. The disastrous consequences of Sarkozy's light-hearted cheating of his former under-the-counter donor, Colonel Gaddafi, in 2011 are now haunting France's shrivelled position in North Africa.

To be fair, Sarkozy's disastrous position on Libya, bombing the tyrant out of power with no plan for the aftermath, was shared by Barack Obama and David Cameron. But the blowback from releasing Libya's vast stockpile of AK47s and rocket launchers into the arms bazaar of the Sahel twelve years ago has been to facilitate insurgency, jihad and putsches across francophone Africa from Guinea on the Atlantic coast to Niger at the heart of the regional turmoil.

As I write, a Russian Ilyushin 76 heavy lift transport plane with a record of ferrying Wagner fighters to Syria and Mali has been spotted at Niamey airport, suggesting that Vladimir Putin has exported some of the troublemakers from Russian territory to the Nigerien capital. Meanwhile, Joe Biden's administration has tacitly recognised the new military regime in Niger by sending in a new US ambassador. Some of the nasty realities of Cold War competition between Washington and Moscow are reappearing in Africa.

Putin has disrupted the post-Cold War global order fatally. But its assassin is unlikely to survive to enjoy the consequences. China has been the big winner on balance.

Europe, meanwhile, has been hard hit by the severing of East-West trade. Even if China's current economic woes turn out to be deep-seated – and we should recall that our capitalist system has weathered periodic booms and busts – there will be no return to the cosy age when Western interests, values and global economics converged.

Last month's crash landing of Lunar 25, Russia's first moonshot since the Brezhnev era, may turn out to be symbolic of the fate of an over-ambitious attempt by Putin to mobilise nostalgia for past glory into a multi-dimensional project of superpower restoration. Nevertheless, the Russian president has shaken up the contents of the geopolitical kaleidoscope and there is a long time to go before they settle down again.

But of course, it was not the only object to crash land. For a jet said to be carrying the leader of Wagner, Yevgeny Prigozhin – who conducted, and then aborted, a coup against Vladimir Putin – was quite literally shot out of the sky. If Putin understands anything, it is how to serve revenge, and serve it cold. He made Prigozhin believe that he may have a route back into the inner sanctum, luring him to Moscow for meetings, before striking at his life at the least expected moment.

That example alone should be enough to warrant scepticism of the narrative that Putin can only fail. Despite the Kremlin's plentiful weaknesses, it has shaken up the contents of the geopolitical kaleidoscope and there is a long time to go before they settle down again.

Mark Almond is Director of the Crisis Research Institute, Oxford

Restoring the Trust

Cornelia van der Poll

For the first hundred years of its existence, the National Trust was the hero of Britain's tale of conservation. In decades gone by I used to recall with pride that this organisation to which I belonged had many more members than all the political parties put together. This was where those of us who wanted a more beautiful future for Britain found leadership. The triumphant re-opening of Uppark in 1995 after a devastating fire increased public confidence in an organisation that could do almost no wrong and did so many things very right.

The Trust saved a large number of country houses from destruction between the 1930s and the 1980s. The last hurrah was Tyntesfield, a glorious Victorian pile outside Bristol with its interiors faded, but remarkably intact. The Trust fearlessly raised money from supporters and persuaded the Heritage Lottery Fund to hand over millions more in a deal which saw off the threat of tasteful modernization by a pop star. This was a courageous and far-sighted rescue. Many people at the time thought that public money would be better spent somewhere else. Today Tyntesfield feels as much part of the Trust family as Lyme Park or Petworth. But even as Tyntesfield was being snatched from the jaws of disaster, confidence in the mission to save and open great, as well as small, houses to the public was faltering.

The running of Croome Court in Worcestershire was transferred to the Trust

a few years later, and something had gone wrong in the meantime. Interiors magazines enthusiastically feature country houses "with a twist", period drawing rooms with huge cornices juxtaposed with modern furniture. The Trust is not immune to trends. At Croome original Adam bookcases loaned by the Victoria and Albert Museum which were designed and made for the house sit in packing cases while the rooms are filled with strange and trivial objects: the surfboards of a previous Earl of Coventry and, perversely, a kind of sculpture consisting of a stack of white imitation Georgian hall chairs, while the real chairs which once stood in the room are in storage.

People have visited country houses for varied and mixed reasons; intellectual, emotional and aesthetic. These have been simplified and caricatured as nostalgia and a refusal to accept modernity. Prof. Corinne Fowler who leads the Trust's "Colonial Countryside Project" likes to remind us that nostalgia and a romantic vision of country houses and their surrounding countryside goes all the way back to antiquity. The cynical debunking of this romanticising also goes back to the Greeks and Romans and, later, William Hazlitt, Sherlock Holmes and Miss Marple. Such debunking has recently come back into fashion as a way of expressing disdain for the suburban middle class liking for days out in the country prompted by a straightforward desire for peace and quiet, fresh air and beauty, uncomplicated by

anxiety about “uncomfortable” history.

The Trust’s internal report “Towards a 10-year vision for Places & Experiences” published May 2020 claims that the “outdated mansion experience” appeals to a “loyal but dwindling audience”. For all that the Trust protests that the report was not adopted as policy and has no official standing, it reveals that there are members of staff who do not think that opening hundreds of historic houses to the public is something worth doing in itself. The sentence “*We will build a responsive, integrated national programming operation that will be the main focus for building our visitor business*” shows a mindset that has no sympathy for the emotional or aesthetic appeal of an historic house and all that comes with it.

Country houses are a combination of their architecture, gardens and parks and, typically, interiors that evolved with many generations of the same family. It is difficult to say exactly what they are, what they are for in the twenty-first century, or why we visit them in droves. They are certainly not museums where rare and fine objects are viewed in glass boxes, labelled and out of context, even if most of them are, officially, accredited museums. As we see from Adrian Tinniswood’s comprehensive and fascinating historical survey, *A History of Country House Visiting*, people visit houses for many different reasons, and what they get out of it cannot be succinctly expressed on a feedback form.

The Trust’s management does not show sympathy or understanding for this variety and complexity of experience. Under its stewardship country house visiting is no longer an immersive aesthetic experience, but an activity with a purpose. The burnt-out interior at Clandon is not being restored,

but will instead offer “a unique ‘X ray view’ of how country houses were made”, which appears to outweigh the aesthetic and cultural value of Giacomo Leoni’s interiors. This impulse away from aesthetic experiences and towards instruction shows the influence of current political trends. The label next to a family portrait showing a black servant tells us that his presence in the picture represents a moral evil which continues to the present day. The young man is treated as a type rather than an individual and there is a strange lack of curiosity about who he was and exactly what he was doing in the household.

A torchère in the shape of a handsome North African boy in a turban posing jauntily is accompanied by the warning, “Dehumanising African people was integral to the slave trade, the legacy of which can still be found in our society today”. A dish designed to hold sugar or even a mahogany Chippendale sideboard prompts a stern lecture on the evils of slavery designed to imbue the object with a sort of horror while checking that the viewer’s moral compass is set correctly. Sudbury Hall, a beautiful seventeenth-century house in Derbyshire featuring some of Britain’s finest plaster decoration, has been transformed with speech bubbles under the portraits, a disco ball, pop music and, in the bookcases, picture books with worthy messages for children. The Trust has decided that its purpose is play. Every visitor must be fascinated by something, feel empowered or face a moral reckoning.

While the Trust is increasingly presenting its houses as museums, with more objects in cases and more intrusive signs, it is unenthusiastic about the actual museums in its care. The charity is the custodian of

two collections of Indian art of exceptional interest, the Clive Museum at Powis Castle and the Eastern Museum at Kedleston Hall. The former collection, which contains items acquired by Robert Clive during his time at the East India Company, was further assembled by his descendants, and is now displayed in cases designed by the artist Alec Cobbe in the manner of a gentleman's cabinet of curiosities. The latter collection was put together by Lord Curzon during his time as Viceroy of India and displayed and catalogued as part of an exhibition designed to encourage Indian art and crafts at the Durbar of 1903. The collection was later transferred to the Victoria and Albert Museum and displayed at Bethnal Green. After Curzon's death in 1925 it was moved to his ancestral home, Kedleston Hall, which was subsequently given to the Trust. In a fit of poorly-informed embarrassment the Trust now talks of changing the way these collections are displayed.

The collection at Powis Castle belongs to the Clive family. They have from time to time sold items from the collection, as they are entitled to do. What is shocking is that the Trust has made no effort to buy these items as they have come up for sale. In 2021 Robert Clive's eighteenth-century silver-gilt durbar set was subject to a temporary export ban while a buyer was sought. The government committee commented that more research needed to be done on how and from where Clive assembled the set with its unique unbroken provenance going back to the later eighteenth century. The Trust made no attempt even to inform its members and supporters of the opportunity to secure it for the nation, and on the charity's watch the link between this important piece of heritage and its long history was broken.

The purchase price was three-quarters of a million pounds.

The Trust has not been frightened of spending similar sums on buying items for its collections in the past and is capable of being resourceful when it wants to acquire an item. An eighteenth-century painting of the Port of Bridgetown, Barbados, which had been sold from Dyrham park was bought privately in 2022 for "an undisclosed sum", supported by the Art Fund, donations and a grant from Arts Council England and the V&A. It is cheering that items sold from a house in the past can be reunited with its collection, but it is a pity that this seems to happen when the item helps to tell the story of a fortune built on slavery and does not happen when it doesn't fit the fashionable narrative.

Those at the helm of the Trust should not worry about the charity becoming irrelevant. As part of the Heritage Alliance, the Trust is doing exactly what it is supposed to do: explaining to local and national government and to the public the importance of heritage and the part it can and should play both in our future prosperity and in reducing carbon emissions. The restorations of Castle Drogo in Devon and of the Wellington Monument in Somerset have been triumphantly executed. The recent completion of the project to restore the Gideon tapestries in the Long Gallery at Hardwick Hall is a superb achievement.

The Trust has enabled us all to see something rare and wonderful: a set of sixteenth-century tapestries in their original condition displayed in the room where they have hung since 1592. This is of lasting value. The poorly-conceived display in the same room in 2019 of photographs of contemporary female celebrities in an effort

to make the four-times widowed landowner Bess of Hardwick into some sort of feminist icon was not.

It is enough for the Trust to believe in its mission. It will only become irrelevant when it stops believing. Lord Curzon, a passionate advocate for Indian art and craft and for Britain's heritage, wrote, "What is beautiful, what is historic, what tears the mask off the face of the past, and helps us

to read its riddles, and to look it in the eyes – these, and not the dogmas of a combative theology, are the principal criteria to which we must look." The Trust needs to stop masking the past with its fleeting anxieties and let us look our heritage in the eyes. What we make of what we see there is up to us.

Cornelia van der Poll is Chair of the Board at Restore Trust

A letter from the Editor

Dear Friend,

As a subscriber to *The Salisbury Review*, you will already be aware that its unique coverage of conservative political theory and analysis has established our journal as an irrepressible source of intellectual comment in this area. We do not have a vast marketing department or splendid credit cards, but a small and dedicated team that has nevertheless kept the show on the road for several decades.

I should now like to enlist your help in spreading our ideals to a wider audience. Encourage a friend to subscribe to *The Salisbury Review*, or perhaps they could buy the entire archive, which is now available on our website and features writings from FA Hayek among others. I am certain that they, like you, will find *The Salisbury Review* to be an essential source of comment and analysis.

Over the coming months and years, as the new editor, I will endeavour to expand our fundraising, upgrade our website, improve the quality of the physical magazine and reach far more people than we currently do. It is only through your help that we can achieve this.

Best wishes
Mutaz Ahmed

Educated, not Schooled

David Hein

The difference between being educated and being schooled is the difference between being equipped to ride a horse across open country and being led on horseback around a ring. Merely being schooled can take place in any academic institution. The core problem of this limited – and limiting – experience is its failure fully to engage heart and mind. The reason for this deficiency is schooling’s muddled mission, coupled with self-deception: its practitioners’ conviction that they know what they’re doing, and what they’re doing is “best practices”.

Both school leaders and their constituents need to step back from strategic plans, assessment devices, external reviews, competitive rankings, diversity definitions and formulaic mission statements for the sake of posing straightforward questions about vision and effectiveness.

If, let’s say, parents are attracted by a Church school’s commitment to nurture each child’s whole self, then they ought to ask: Given that this institution’s *raison d’être* is the development of every student’s body, soul and intellect, are this school’s promises being realised? Do its programs, including required chapel services and classes in religious education (incorporating study of the world’s major religious traditions), not only meet high standards but also enable all students to reach their potential? Are young scholars sparked by what’s on offer, finding their way in widening fields of knowledge and endeavour, or are they simply going through the motions of learning, performing

acceptably or even admirably, as they are led around the academic ring? Is sound moral and spiritual formation likely to occur? In brief, are intentions and processes in sync?

Most honest observers of schools – both secular and religious – would acknowledge a gap between what’s sought and what’s regularly accomplished. It’s a fault that cannot be put down solely to adolescents’ invariably incomplete, distracted natures or to teachers’ inevitable failure to reach all of their pupils all of the time. No one is demanding academic utopia, but schools can do better.

Which is where those of us who care about raising up young people as beneficiaries and trustees of the riches of Western civilisation might proffer a notion: in thinking about these little educational platoons, consider invoking some concepts from the world of political theory. Which balance of individual, community and nation is best? Which structure of order, justice and liberty is, if not ideal, then at least most propitious both for the good of each citizen and for the general welfare?

For solid reasons requiring no rehearsal in this space, most of us who share the general outlook of this magazine would affirm that “conservative liberalism” is a phrase that connotes both a realistic appraisal of human nature and a hopeful approach to human possibility. At its centre, conservative liberalism embraces fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and equality before the law; but liberal values and policies,

expressing individual liberty, are bounded and informed by tradition, comprising the accretions of practical wisdom and worthwhile experience over time, and prescription is ever open to prudent reform.

Notwithstanding manifest differences between them, the following thinkers may be taken as representative of conservative liberalism, for they bear at least a Wittgensteinian family resemblance to one another: Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville, Michael Oakeshott, Raymond Aron, Russell Kirk and Sir Roger Scruton.

The most salubrious option for the polity at large, conservative liberalism is also the most fitting and helpful, the most workable and inspiring, vision for schools today. Developmentally, boys and girls are still molten creatures, their judgement unsteady and their opinions unsettled. Within the limits of civility, students must be free to raise questions and to voice doubts. They should enjoy freedom of expression, necessary for academic inquiry and for forming reasoned stances.

Neither state schools nor Church of England foundations require religious litmus tests in order for applicants to gain admission; they believe in freedom of religious belief. In no schools is militant woke fundamentalism or militant Christian fundamentalism desirable as either policy or practice.

In a Church school, if a student wishes to raise questions about the role of a loving God in the face of a devastating natural disaster such as an earthquake, then good for them. If a student feels compelled to confess that, following the death of his younger brother to bone cancer, he has trouble believing in an active, benevolent Creator, then they should be supported in admitting this fact. Within the shared setting of intellectual inquiry, the atmosphere should be conducive to

conversation, which needs to be respectful, charitable, patient, nonviolent, noncoercive – and free. Hence each school, like good universities, must have a liberal grounding.

The problem that arises, however, is the poor fit – sometimes appearing as friction, sometimes as disconnect – between inner freedom and outer structure, between individual liberty and institutional tradition. Church schools in particular have much to offer, but they have trouble meshing church and school. How can an academic community integrate the two? Required chapel segregates religion in one time and space. Classes in world religions can imply a relativistic attitude toward all faiths, where non-judgemental pluralism is not viewed as a problem but as the ideal. The opposite position, dogmatic religious exclusivism, would strike most teenage students as epistemologically impossible and downright unfriendly.

Through concrete examples, however, teachers and coaches can make the traditional virtues come alive. They should directly relate the virtues to what students are doing and studying and thinking about, to their passions. Then the substance of the virtues will become not bare, boring theoretical truths but instead truths to live by; and the school's liberal and conservative planes will move together with greater ease.

A political analogy and a mechanical metaphor will not solve any of the problems of Church, let alone secular, schools in the Western world, but they might prove suggestive and lead to better thinking on the subject of being schooled and being educated.

David Hein is Distinguished Teaching Fellow at the Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal (Michigan) and Senior Fellow at the George C. Marshall Foundation (Virginia)

The Rising Sun

Daryl McCann

With the publication of Japan's 2022 National Security Strategy, and the intention to increase defence spending to 2 per cent, there are now potentially not one but two military powerhouses in East Asia. While China's army has experienced a dramatic build-up in the era of Xi Jinping, on the back of soaring defence budgets, the potency of Japan's Self-Defence Forces is now on a steep upwards trajectory. Rishi Sunak has referred to the Aukus agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia as "the most significant defence partnership in generations". And that leaves out the fact that Aukus is already, in all but name, Jaukus – potentially the most powerful military alliance in history.

Xi Jinping's "China Dream" (or Leninist-imperialism) is, from the perspective of Tokyo, an existential threat to the sovereignty of Japan. Chairman Xi, in 2013, established his self-styled East China Air Defence Identification Zone (Adiz) to enforce air control restrictions in the East China Sea, including the air space attendant to Japan's Senkaku Islands. In 2015, as a direct response to Xi's Adiz, then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a re-interpretation of Article 9 of Japan's 1947 "pacifist constitution". Japan's parliament asserted the right to counterattack any foreign power – be it Russia, North Korea (which had started firing ballistic missiles over Japan in 1998) or China – that threatened the security of the homeland. Everything in the discussion that follows, then, is a consequence of Emperor

Xi's hubris.

But what, exactly, has motivated Japan to embrace Australia as its best friend in the Asia-Pacific region? The answer is not only the disputed Senkaku Islands lying between Kyushu and northern Taiwan, but the fate of Taiwan itself. It can be argued and has been argued by Prime Minister Kishida Fumio (Shinzo Abe's successor), that the security of Japan and the security of Taiwan are inseparable. If Taiwan were to be annexed by the PRC, Japan's southernmost territory is going to be almost impossible to defend. Additionally, the Chinese navy would not only threaten Japan from the west but also from the east. Japan would be reduced to its pre-Meiji status as a tributary state of the Middle Kingdom. No wonder Kishida has pledged to massively increase military spending over the coming years. Concomitantly, Australia's membership of Aukus, and the promise of eight nuclear-powered submarines (SSN-Aukus) along with advanced capabilities in cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and undersea capabilities, doubtless explains why Japan's eagerness to embrace Australia as its best friend in the Indo-Pacific region.

But why, you might ask, is Australia so keen to embrace Japan? After all, in the Second World War Australia fought the Japanese on the Kokoda Track, at Milne Bay and in the Battle of the Coral Sea to prevent Imperial Japan capturing Port Moresby. Taking the capital of New Guinea, in the opinion of most of our historians, would not have led to the invasion of Australia, and

yet it might have resulted in our (grudging) assent to membership of Imperial Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Geacs). Japan, after its defeat in the Pacific War, became a manufacturing and exporting dynamo. My late father, who fought against the Japanese as a Royal Australian Navy radio operator on the HMAS *Wang Pu*, a ship leased, ironically enough, from China, would sometimes wonder out loud about who, exactly, had won the Second World War. My uncle by marriage and his twin brother, as another case in point, were captured by the Japanese in the Dutch East Indies in 1942 and forced to work on Emperor Hirohito's notorious Thai-Burma Railway, not inaccurately dubbed the "Death Railway".

The attitude of Australians to Japan in the post-war era was, admittedly, complicated. Japan's version of West Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* was in some ways irksome and yet Australia profited from the phenomenon. Our iron ore, coal, natural gas, minerals, seafood, beef, wool, timber, sugar cane and dairy exports all benefited from Japan's economic miracle. If Imperial Japan had won the Pacific War, doubtless we would have exported the very same goods to the resource-poor nation that is Japan. The difference, of course, is we would have transferred them to Japan as a more or less vassal state of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. As it was, Australia – as an independent, sovereign nation – sold these mostly at the market price, which in turn underpinned our own post-war economic miracle. The demise of Imperial Japan and the emergence of Democratic Japan, then, was not in vain. Moreover, Australia, as a Commonwealth occupying power in post-war Hiroshima prefecture, ensured that Japan's new constitution

was as liberal-democratic as possible, guaranteeing, for instance, female suffrage and independent trade unionism. Over time, the people of Australia and Japan decided they liked each other. For instance, today Australians make up the plurality of the foreign skiers in Japan's January snowfields, while Queensland's Gold Coast has become the top overseas destination for Japanese tourists. We even drive our cars on the same side of the road.

Our half-century love affair with the People's Republic of China is a different narrative altogether. President Xi's declaration of war on our economy in 2020, after Canberra called for an international inquiry into the origins of Covid-19, changed everything. It belatedly occurred to Australians that we had ensnared ourselves in Beijing's version of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Australians were stunned when Xi – who previously spoke of a "regional strategic partnership" with Canberra in our parliament – instructed his English-language mouthpiece, the *Global Times*, to warn us that we would be taking "a walk into the darkness" if we did not immediately cease all criticism of the People's Republic of China. A year later, in its infamous *Fourteen Grievances*, Beijing demanded that Canberra forbid our independent media from reporting any "unfriendly and antagonistic" articles about the Chinese government. The term "kowtow" did not originate in China without reason.

It was at this historical moment, with the benefit of hindsight, that Australia's relationship with Japan went into overdrive. In truth, Australia and Japan, as discrete military partners of the United States, had been de facto allies since 1951, the year that saw the signing of the Japan-US Security

Treaty and the Australian, New Zealand and US Security Treaty (Anzus). Throughout the Cold War, Australian spy agencies were given the mission by Washington to monitor the western perimeter of the South Pacific, while Japan was tasked with scrutinising via aerial reconnaissance the western perimeters of the North Pacific. Thus, since 1951 Tokyo and Canberra have been, in practice, military partners even if this was not something about which most Australians and Japanese were cognisant. That said, the signing of the 2022 Reciprocal Access Agreement (Raa) between Canberra and Tokyo, allowing for the seamless interoperability of Japan's and Australia's armed forces in military and humanitarian missions, took things to a whole new level.

Today, as a consequence, the security alliance between Australia and Japan is as formal as our accord with America. This historical development had little influence on the 2022 national election, which saw the conservative coalition parties defeated by the progressive Labor Party. Nevertheless, the new Labor government has unreservedly endorsed the Raa – only old-time China apologists, such as former Labor prime ministers Paul Keating and Kevin Rudd, oppose stronger military bonds between Australia and Japan. We might note, at this point, that on January 11 Tokyo and Westminster signed their own Reciprocal Access Agreement. Additionally, Japan and the UK (in partnership with Italy) are now collaborating on a fifth-generation fighter jet to be known as the Tempest. For modern-day Japan, as distinct from post-war-Japan, national security means not only national security but global security.

Kishida's Japan is now at the heart of everything. As the host of the January 2023

Hiroshima G-7 Summit, it gave Ukraine's President Zelensky a pulpit. At the July 2023 Nato Summit, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg recognised Japan as the North Atlantic alliance's closest partner. Japan has also been the driving force behind the Japan-India-US-Australia Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. Even more surprisingly, perhaps, PM Fumio Kishida (in collaboration with South Korea's President Yun Suk Yeol) has begun a process of thawing Japan-South Korea relations. Who knows, in time Aukus may become Jaukus. We might fairly say, at this point, that Xi Jinping has – to paraphrase Napoleon's adage – awakened a sleeping giant.

Daryl McCann is an Australian journalist

“It's a striking fact that around seven out of ten of those arriving in small boats last year were men under 40, paying people smugglers to queue jump and taking up our capacity to help genuine women and child refugees.

“This is particularly perverse as those attempting crossings are not directly fleeing imminent peril as is the intended purpose of the asylum system. They have passed through manifestly safe countries, including many in Europe, where they could – and should – have claimed asylum.

“It is this rank unfairness of a system that can be exploited by gangs, which risks eroding public support for the whole concept of asylum.”

Boris Johnson, speaking almost two years ago

Bully For You

Jane Kelly

Was Dominic Raab a bully or was he just a hard boss, trying to “deliver for the British people”? There used to be a difference between the two but can such a nuance continue as our US-style corporate culture incorporates “wellness” and woke “kindness”. As we move from vertical to horizontal power structures, based on identity, even “making colleagues feel uncomfortable” can get you shown the door. Not that long ago, education and work were a lot more straightforward; when there was always someone very much in charge and he didn’t have to be polite or even sane.

Most of my career was spent in a newspaper office, pre-corporate therapy influence, where individualism within a distinct hierarchy was still accepted. “Never let them [the execs] get between you and the door,” a fellow reporter warned me, only half joking. Staff were largely united in fear of the editor who was built and sounded like a maddened grizzly bear. My own boss passed the pressure downwards but I fondly remember some of her words to me: “You are a ridiculous woman”. And, menacingly with narrowed eyes, “Don’t curl your lip at me, Jane,” causing my mouth to freeze. I saw a diary editor hurl a volume of *Who’s Who* at his secretary.

Picked for their looks in an escalating rivalry between what would now be termed, “culturally toxic” male bosses, these secretaries had to be nimble. We never saw the ladies from “personnel”, until they morphed into HR. They weren’t called in

when a man leaving to join a rival paper and was punched in the head. I was amazed and disappointed that, as both men were tiny and he had another job to go to, he didn’t hit back or go for defenestration. In those days windows still opened.

The editor was thumped by a news-desk reporter. He was dismissed but quietly re-employed by Foreign Desk, freelance on a distant continent. Unfortunately, one day the editor saw his name on a list of stories. “What’s he still doing working here, he’s mad,” he bellowed. “He hit me. He’s mad!” Stony silence from all around him. I once hit him myself, beating my fists on his chest but as I’m small he hardly seemed to notice, just made his usual roaring sounds. The general atmosphere was a creative scrum, where everyone was out for their own survival, fuelled and soothed by drink.

Only one boss, who was just a senior writer, was a classic bully. In a pub on Fleet Street, he was regaling his cronies about how he’d deliberately killed a cat. He relished his story and so did his audience. Being young and foolish I told him what I thought about it, and him. Never stand up to a bully if you can’t take the consequences. I was harassed by him for the next two years. He had certain characteristics that are common for bullies; repeating abusive words which act like a code causing panic in the victim, and spreading false stories. He told a senior executive that I belonged to a bizarre cult, unfortunately for him the man went to the same standard CofE church as me and put him right.

Mostly though people let the bully get away with it on the principle that if he wasn't doing it to them, it was OK. He went for my looks, marital status and background, once asserting that no one successful had ever come from the Midlands. To this day I suffer esprits d'escalier, where I shout back, "Shakespeare, George Eliot, A.E Housman, Tolkien you bastard!"

I was home in Staffordshire with my parents when he ordered me to the north of Scotland to interview a chef who'd apparently once worked at Balmoral. I flew to Glasgow, hired a car and drove through the night to the Great Glen. The chef admitted he'd never cooked for or set eyes on the Queen. The bully told me to return straight to the office without collecting my car, still in Wolverhampton. "Be here by 5pm today," he said, "or you're finished." I made it back and found that no one knew anything about the story or where I'd been. He was up for a promotion and before he went to see the editor stood in front of my desk, swinging a metaphorical cane. Obviously when he came out again, as an editor himself, I was toast.

After the interview he returned without a word or a new job. He looked dejected and vulnerable, as he often did. Feeling powerless themselves, bullies enjoy scaring others, but are often inconsistent. He could be chummy and confiding, as if he'd forgotten he was supposed to be the school bully. There's that element of Sado-Masochism where a twisted relationship can form between bully and victim.

The rough and tumble of that world seems as far removed from life now as a Hogarth cartoon, and strangely, for all new corporate conformity and burgeoning power of HR and "occupational health", no one in school

or work seems to be any happier, and I hear many are choosing to stop at home. Children can now be harassed by their peers 24 hours a day on social media making older people like me wonder why their parents don't remove their phones, but authority figures are very different these days from the exacting, fearsome figures my generation knew. This rejection of traditional authority figures is changing the definition of bullying so that it has never been easier for children to get away with bullying or for adult workers to get rid of someone they don't like.

British and American youth are now extraordinarily fragile. On a recent visit to a top private school, in the boy's kitchen I saw a line of photos, not of the first IX or prize winners, but pupils with allergies and multi-various vulnerabilities, presumably all memorised by the teachers. It must be terrifying to deal with them. Education is now also very much a commodity, and the people paying demand good results. In the adult education art classes I attended, the teacher is paid to turn up and tell everyone their work is "fantastic" and "wonderful". Teachers are there mainly to provide wet-wipes and tissues should their students become "uncomfortable".

Employers, or "leaders", are asking for advice online, on how they can "lead their team", when members, particularly the young, "can't take feedback". "They aren't bad employees," writes one frustrated boss. "But when I try to give them constructive feedback they curl up in an emotional ball." In education and work, it seems that the emotions rather than the brain are now the priority. Being frank with a student or employee is a risk as omnipresence HR are on the lookout for victims with undiagnosed mental health issues. People hit on the head

by copies of Who's Who didn't seem to have them, but now they are proliferating.

The inability to take criticism now has its own acronym, Avoidant Personality Disorder. Employees with this are very sensitive to anything critical, disapproving, or mocking because they constantly think about being criticised or rejected by others. They are vigilant for any sign of a negative response. You can easily meet sufferers. Approach almost any young shop worker, make a mild complaint or ask for a product that you can't find. They will bridle or become as upset as if you've accused them of injecting poison into the Purina.

This extreme national delicacy, makes even the idea of upbraiding anyone as unthinkable as returning from lunch drunk,

putting your hand on someone's knee in a taxi or using androcentric language. Once popular reproofs, such as "Pull your socks up, lad" or "Put your back into it, boy", or even "Would you mind awfully doing this ASAP?" have been replaced by, "I am happy you are on my team", "You have great potential", "Let's try and figure out what you're best at", and most useful for all teachers and leaders, "You're awesome."

If only Dominic Raab had used a few of those when dealing with his civil servants, he would not be the toxic outcast that he now is.

Jane Kelly was a leading feature writer at a national paper, and is now a regular columnist in the Review.



Diagnose Your Own Cancer

Karol Sikora

Stephen Barclay, the Health Minister, wants to bypass your GP and let you make your own cancer diagnosis. For once I agree with the minister.

Every day in Britain over a thousand patients are diagnosed as having cancer. The UK falls behind nearly all European countries in overall survival at 5 years – the key international metric of cancer outcome. The reasons for this are complex but increasing evidence points to delay in the diagnostic process being the single most important factor. Data looking at one year survival shows even greater disparity from Europe. The one-year survival statistic is mainly determined by delays in diagnosis and not the quality of cancer care for the four commonest cancers: breast, lung, prostate and colon.

Cancer survival data are driven by how far the cancer has spread when it presents. This is called the stage of the disease. For all four of the major cancers Stage I disease has a nearly 90 per cent 5-year survival. Stage I disease is confined to the primary organ in which it arose. Stage 2 disease represents extension of the cancer to neighbouring lymph nodes or surrounding tissues whilst stage 3 and 4 are the increasing spread of cancer around the body. Staging systems are slightly different for individual cancers, but the principle is the same. The outcome drops precipitously as the stage increases. Any delay is likely to result in upstage migration (jargon for increased spread) and therefore will result in poorer survival. More advanced

cancer is more expensive to treat as it may involve significantly more radiotherapy and chemotherapy and so achieving an earlier diagnosis could well be cost effective.

There are three causes for delay in cancer diagnostic pathways. The first is the timing of a patient's decision to seek help and seek medical advice. The threshold to seek help is complex and determined by multiple factors including age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and educational background. Educational campaigns have been successful in changing behaviours and are the responsibility of public health. The £blood in your poof campaign was a good example. But for many, access to the NHS is becoming increasingly difficult and therefore the threshold for seeking help may be increased.

The second problem is getting to see your GP. Traditionally in the UK the GP has acted as the gatekeeper to referral of a patient to hospital. This system has worked well in the past but the considerable changes in primary care over the last two decades have impinged adversely on getting an early cancer diagnosis. Many GPs are now part time working defined sessions, so patient continuity is no longer a feature. They just don't know you from Adam. The lack of 24/7 cover and the use of other agencies such as urgent care, walk-in centres and NHS 111 mean that many patients are unable to name their own GP. This means that when new symptoms arise there is no knowledge of the patient, their past medical history, or their psychological background by

the assessing doctor.

But there are currently significant problems in GP access for patients and getting an appointment may take several weeks. The now abandoned two-week wait system was introduced as a pragmatic measure in 2000. I was on the committee, and I know it was just meant as a stopgap until better diagnostic facilities could be created. Cancer symptoms are vague and over the last 20 years multiple studies have demonstrated that only 25 per cent of cancer patients are diagnosed through this pathway. Creating a fast-track in a resource-constrained environment reduces the speed of the routine pathway, just like in an airport, so may not necessarily enhance the benefit to the overall patient group. Although excellent NICE guidelines on recognition and referral were produced in 2015 and updated in 2021, even experienced GPs cannot distinguish the myriad of symptoms caused by cancer rather than less serious temporary problems.

The third and often biggest delay is within the system after referral to hospital. Investigations and specialist opinions are ordered sequentially often over several weeks. Patients often disappear into a quagmire. The capacity may not be adequate for imaging by CT or MRI and endoscopy services are very over-stretched. The target from diagnosis to first definitive treatment is currently a generous 62 days. This is being increasingly breached because of capacity problems.

Speeding up the diagnosis of cancer requires a whole system approach. Unfortunately, different agencies are responsible for designing the strategy and funding of the three causes of delay. But how about something heretical and radical? A novel patient referral route for cancer using the established NHS 111 system by

passing the GP. We can create diagnostic algorithms that will initiate and book imaging and laboratory investigations and make specialist appointments directly.

Let's begin with the four common cancers. NHS 111 already has sophisticated systems using modern freely available technologies integrated with a growing knowledge system to provide a suitable logistic framework for advice, booking and information. We can correlate uptake and speed to making the diagnosis with stage distribution. This will provide an early surrogate for overall survival for each cancer so any outcome benefit will be detected early in the project.

So, for once, I'm on side with the minister. Let's stop talking and get on with it – I've been trying to for over a year now.

Professor Karol Sikora is a leading oncologist consultant and former head of the World Health Organisation's cancer programme.

To Our Readers

The Salisbury Review welcomes letters, proposals and discussions. We are on the front line of the battle for free speech and free opinion, and need your contributions.

If you would like to feature in the next edition's Letters page, please write your letter to info@salisburyreview.co.uk. We are eager to publish our readers' thoughts once again, as we had done for decades. This is as much a space for you to react to our arguments as it is for our writers to express them.

You may also comment online in response to the articles published on our website: www.salisburyreview.co.uk.

Letter from Budapest

Gavin Duncan

In the Western media and thus in the Western world, Hungarians are perennially presented as rebellious, contrary, and awkward. Hungarian defiance is a source of pride for the nation, but foreigners rarely, if ever, seek the reasons behind Hungarian wilfulness.

A quick glance at Hungarian history provides some explanation: the Hungarians were occupied by the Turks for 150 years. The Turks were finally sent packing but were replaced by the Austrian Habsburgs in a misleadingly-named “partnership”. Hungarian dissatisfaction with this arrangement led to the freedom fight of 1848-9.

The attempt to secure independence was crushed when the Russians stepped in to help the Austrians. The rebels were outmatched and the rebellion failed.

The Hungarians, still tied to the Austrians as the minor partner in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were dragged into WWI which ended worse for the Hungarians than for others. The Hungarians were subjected to a cruel and unusual punishment which included having two-thirds of their territory given to neighbouring countries. Some 3.3 million Hungarians found themselves second-class citizens of other countries overnight. It is often recalled that these citizens didn't cross the border, rather the border crossed them. Hopeful of a chance to regain their lost territories, prior to WWII the Hungarians sided with the Germans.

At the end of WWII, once more on the

losing side, the Hungarians were thrown to the Soviet Union by a West unable to refuse Stalin's demands. The latest revolution in Hungary took place as recently as 1956. Hungarians rose up against the Soviet dictatorship. This revolution, like the one in 1848-9 was crushed by the Russians who then occupied Hungary until 1989.

From that brief introduction, it's quite obvious that Hungary's history has been turbulent, to say the least. This, in no small part, gives us an insight into why the Hungarians can be prickly at times, and why they appear most reluctant to toe the line.

Hungarians are well aware that not only are they a third of the size they once were, but that they are located on the fault line between East and West. Lacking the geographical features and banking system of, say, Switzerland, the Hungarians are unable to protect themselves from the fallout of any dispute between East and West. As the incumbent Hungarian prime minister has repeatedly pointed out, when the East and the West are at loggerheads, it's the small, Central Europeans who tend to bear the brunt of things. This is why anyone seeking explanations of what Western media dismiss as Hungarian contrariness should think first about the history of the country.

Sadly, in the West, history seems to have fallen out of fashion to the extent that not only do we not know the history of other countries, but we're very much in danger of raising all future generations with a meagre knowledge of their own histories, to say

nothing of how global history has developed.

Recently, the US ambassador to Hungary highlighted the grasp of history Hungarians have compared to citizens of the USA. Hungary, as the world's media revel in belabouring, is a traditional conservative country. In the Hungarian constitution, marriage is defined as existing exclusively between a man and a woman. This statement more than irritates the West. As far as the increasingly atheistic West is concerned, Hungary's attitude is "sacrilegious". Irony is dead.

Having forgotten a time in the West when political opinion was not only closer to, but for the most part, *based on* public opinion, Western media and politicians continue to get their knickers in a twist about Hungary. According to the politically correct, now marching under the banner of "woke", we should forget the times when political opinion and public opinion were more closely linked. This is an elitist position, rejected by the Hungarians. In Hungary, the government

regularly organises mini-referenda with the explicit goal of ascertaining public opinion on matters considered contentious. The Western approach is, conversely, to tell people from the top down what they should be thinking and doing.

As far as the Hungarians are concerned, they've had quite enough of that, thank you very much. The Hungarians (and other Central and Eastern Europeans) were held under the heel of the Soviets for decades, and in those decades they were told what to say, think, and do. They were forced to publicly accept that which they could see to be false. Fast forward a few years and, finally free of their Soviet shackles, the former Soviet satellites are given their chance to embrace the capitalist West.

It's hard to comprehend today just how much the former satellites of the Soviet Union craved all that they associated with the capitalist West. But in the interim the West went bonkers.



The Myth of ‘Russian Culture’

Gustav Fondlauen

Often, when it comes to the wildness and underdevelopment of Russia, I hear: “But the Russians have created a great culture” – by which, in this context, is meant art. A logical question arises, how a nation that is distinguished by its underdevelopment and is an example of how not to live could create something great.

There are no people who would be talented and great in only one occupation, but in everything else would be absolutely ungifted. Often men of genius cannot cope with some kind of work that even non-talented people can cope with, which is explained by a certain structure of the nervous system. But geniuses are never absolutely talentless in everything except their only activity. Always a person, who is great in one area, is talented in many other occupations, maybe not as much as in his main business, but nevertheless talented. And the development in the profession is often accompanied by the development of the personality.

That is, development in one thing provokes development in something else. This law applies both to an individual and to a whole country.

So where did the so-called “Russian culture” come from? How could it have arisen from scratch, which does not imply the emergence of any great culture? Real culture is the embodiment of the mentality, original ideas, creative abilities, aesthetic needs, worldview of the nation that creates it, such as Greek, Italian, German cultures. That is, true culture comes from the very essence of the nation

and grows from its characteristic features. Of course, all cultures borrow something from each other, this is a natural process of the development of mankind, but any real culture creates something ideologically original, which reflects its peculiar properties.

Also, any real national culture has prerequisites for its emergence within the nation itself. Borrowings from outside can complement it, give ground for accelerated development, enrich it, but they can never be the only basis for its emergence.

Let’s consider what was the culture among the Russians in a historical perspective, focusing on the field of music. Until the middle of the 17th century, the only examples of painting and music, with the exception of folk art, were icons and church music – monophonic “Znamenny Chant”, recorded with neumes. Both were complete repetitions of the tradition of Byzantium. The Russian musicologist-mediievalist, palaeographer, professor, one of the leading experts and researchers of Russian church music Antonin Preobrazhensky wrote:

“Regarding, at least, the form (not only the text, but also the tune – and this is of great importance for us), the Russian songwriters did not create anything new, having completely borrowed it from the Greek songwriters. ... Ancient Rus’ adopted Greek worship and ritualism in a ready-made form, developed in all its details, and the singing of liturgical chants in the Slavic language passed to it from the neighboring Slavs... who, before Russia, adopted Christianity according to the Greek rite, that is, mainly [from] Bulgaria.

“[Russian] art, which originated under the mighty alien influence of a higher culture, did not develop in itself, over a long history, independent artistic movements that could lead it to the creation of its own artistic type, capable of supplanting the borrowed and alien type. ... The original, outwardly assimilated musical-singing type remained the only possible one in Russian chanting and dominated undividedly, at least until the end of the 17th century. The concept of an echos as a mode never existed among Russians; the echos was determined by a singer by the presence in the tune of found only in this echos, typical turns, which he called “popevkas”. ... They did not even develop the concept of a scale.”

In other words, the only type of music in Russia supported by the authorities and having at least some form of record was completely copied from the Byzantine culture. In folk music, which was a simple accompaniment to the activities of peasants, the presence of mode and record, even the most primitive one, was out of the question. Thus, over the seven centuries of existence in Russia of music copied from Byzantium, it has not undergone any essential changes.

Logical questions arise. If the Russians as a nation have not been able to invent anything in art for so many centuries, is it possible for them to create some kind of their own culture in subsequent centuries? Only in the middle of the 17th century, again, copied, this time from Italy, polyphonic “partesny singing” with Italian musical notation appeared in Russia, which came through Poland and was introduced in Russian churches by Patriarch Nikon with the approval of Tsar Alexis, which was very much opposed by church ministers and the Russian population.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Russian Tsar Peter I invited a lot of specialists

in art and science from Europe to Russia. This marked the beginning of the myth of “Russian culture”. By this time, in Europe, there existed such composers as Pachelbel, Bach, Handel, Purcell, Sweelinck, Vivaldi, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, Couperin, Rameau and many others. In Russia, there was nothing in music except monophonic singing copied from Byzantium seven hundred years ago and also copied “partesny singing” recently introduced in churches.

The same situation was with painting. Specialists from Europe were brought in, but the Russian nation and the principles of its structure remained unchanged. Just as the only thing they could do during the previous seven centuries was to copy the art of another country, so since the beginning of the 18th century this principle has remained unchanged, only the Russians began to imitate Italian, German, French and English art. Apparently, this seduced the Europeans, who were subsequently fooled, having believed in the emergence of some “Russian culture”.

It is noteworthy that Peter I carried out all these changes and reforms with the strongest disapproval from both the upper and lower classes of Russia, and he managed to bring it to life only thanks to the totalitarian consciousness of the Russians, only thanks to the fact that he was the tsar. There was no mass support for the turn towards enlightenment, the emergence of new ideas and new art in Russia, even among the privileged classes.

So, the Europeans began to build the first higher educational institutions in Russia, the teaching staff of which, naturally, consisted of non-Russians. Having learned from European masters, Russians began to emulate them and create works of art, copying genres, form, imagery, ideas, aesthetics in art that was already created by Europeans and came from a

world completely alien to the Russian nation, with alien values and an alien mentality.

Due to the fact that educational institutions were built on the territory of Russia according to the European models and, thus, a favorable environment appeared for creating art that had long flourished in Europe, the most talented residents of Russia got the opportunity to join European cultures, only partially supplementing them. I want to note: not creating their own one, but only partially supplementing the already created and formed cultures.

The work of Pushkin, who is the most revered poet among the Russians and the founder of what is known as “Russian literature”, is based entirely on French and English literature – La Fontaine, Voltaire, Molière, Byron, Shakespeare, Sterne and others. French was Pushkin’s native language, which gave him the opportunity to read books in French in the original. In fact, his compositions are a translation into Russian of the style, ideas, imagery and genres of poems by European poets.

The themes of his works, ranging from ancient Greek images to modern English, German and French romantic and liberal ideas, are borrowed from the life of European countries and European literature. In the life of Russia and Russian writings, there were no grounds and prerequisites for the emergence of romantic or, even more so, liberal ideas. All styles and philosophical movements were copied from other countries by individual intellectuals who were not lucky enough to be born in Russia.

And Pushkin, as one of such intellectuals, created literature, which in Europe had long been known and created in all details, but only in Russian. In France, Italy, Germany, or Britain, he would have been one of many poets

who were talented but did not create anything fundamentally new.

Later writers, including Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, also continued to follow all the trends, ideas and styles that arose in British, German, French, Scandinavian cultures. And the characters of Walter Scott, Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, Honoré de Balzac, Charles Dickens, August Strindberg get Russian names and are imbued with the philosophy of Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer.

Sometimes in the works of authors from Russia there appear views that the wildness and backwardness of Russians in the moral, technical, economic and other spheres are not something that needs to be overcome and something to be ashamed of, but a special mission, a purpose bestowed from above, that it is these properties of backwardness that make Russians outstanding and give them the basis and the right to change the world at their own discretion. This is very reminiscent of Cesare Lombroso’s definition of mattoidism, a “combination of imbecility and megalomania”. And, of course, such unhealthy concepts as Dostoevsky’s “Russian Idea” are nothing but antivalue. Is it worth saying that even these ideas are not Russian, but came from the Ancient World?

Sometimes authors from Russia turned to motifs or plots from Russian folk art or Russian history. But the inclusion of folk or historical plots in literary works and folk songs in musical compositions built according to European principles does not make them Russian in the same way as if you paste over with birch bark or paint in the Gzhel style a Mercedes and give it a Russian name, it will not become a Russian car. Works created by people with Russian surnames, in following with European traditions, do not become a new culture because of a small decorative change.

Beethoven has works in which he uses Russian folk songs (the 7th and 8th string quartets), Gauguin executed many of his paintings in Polynesia, using local myths in their plots (Mysterious Water, Day of the God), however, their art is not Russian and Polynesian, they remain a German composer and a French painter, since their oeuvre is part of the German and French cultures. Vivaldi, Bizet, Puccini and many other composers wrote operas on historical or fictional subjects related to other countries, nevertheless it cannot be said that Motezuma is an Aztec opera, Djamileh is an Egyptian one, and Madama Butterfly is a Japanese one.

Now let's turn to the question of who created the various genres in professional art. Let's consider this issue on the example of musical and musical theatrical works. Often, many genres have a very long history and have changed greatly over the centuries, as composers from different countries introduced significant modifications, naming with the same word, in essence, already different genres (such as a symphony or sonata). Therefore, I will point out the cultures that created them in their classical meaning, when the later transformation did not change their main, defining features. So, the following genres were created: by Italian culture – opera, oratorio, cantata, madrigal, ballet, concerto; by German culture – symphony, string quartet, sonata, concert overture, symphonic poem, singspiel; by French culture – motet, suite, opéra-ballet, vaudeville, operetta, féerie; by Spanish culture – tonadilla, zarzuela, flamenco, villancico; by English culture – ballad opera, musical. What genres of professional music were created by the “great” so-called “Russian culture”?

Not a single one. In order for a new genre to arise in art, the creative abilities of an individual author-genius are not enough; for

this, an environment is needed that provides prerequisites for the emergence of a new genre and opportunities for its creation. The Russian nation has not created such prerequisites and has not given such opportunities; authors from Russia simply completely followed the traditions of European cultures. The same goes for other arts.

If any person from a particular culture manufactures a product using another's technologies, on another's equipment, according to another's projects and from another's materials, he is not the original creator of this product, he is simply an operator using someone else's equipment. And it is in no way possible to call the manufactured product a part of the culture to which the operator belongs. We cannot call the work of Juan Luna, despite the fact that this artist was Filipino, a part of the Filipino culture, and the music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor a part of the Sierra Leonean culture.

Thus, the composers who worked in Russia are only an addition to the following cultures: Glinka – to Italian culture (by style, form, melodic structure of Italian operas). Borodin – to German culture (by the use of themes, images, texture, which are characteristic of Beethoven and German romanticists) with the influence of French culture (the style of grand opera). Mussorgsky – to French culture (by a tendency to realism, which stood out as a special art movement in France, a realistic depiction of characters and situations) with the influence of German culture (by the use of leitmotifs, naturalistic declamation that brings singing closer to conversation, which are characteristic of Wagner, by the use of the musical language of Liszt's program music) and Byzantine “Znamenny Chant”.

Rimsky-Korsakov – to French culture (by the emphasis on the colorfulness of

the material, expressed in the features of orchestration, which are based on the work of Berlioz, by interest in Oriental themes, which have become a trend in French art since the beginning of the 19th century). Tchaikovsky – to German culture (by the simplicity and clarity of Mozart’s music, the dramatic development of Beethoven’s symphonic works, the imagery of the music of German romanticists) with the influence of Italian culture (sentimental themes of Italian arias). Rachmaninoff – to German culture (by dramatic development, a deep appeal to the personal side, which is typical for German romanticism) with the influence of Chopin (by piano texture, melodic structure).

Stravinsky and Prokofiev – to French culture with the influence of German culture (as a continuation of the style and aesthetics of impressionism and Satie’s late work with the influence of expressionism on the musical language). Shostakovich – to German culture (by dramatic development, the influence of imagery and technique of Bach, Mahler and expressionists) with the influence of late Satie (by imagery and orchestration).

These composers created musical masterpieces, but their work is not a new national culture; they followed traditions, ideological content, genres, forms, harmony, instrumentation, which were born, grew up and formed in another world, in European cultures, with aesthetics and mentality alien to Russians. The work of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff is to Russian culture the same as the graceful buildings of the Sacred Heart Cathedral and the Government House in Suva, Fiji, are to the culture of local tribes.

This applies to all other arts as well. Thus, if we are talking about these masters, it would be correct to say “composer from Russia” or “artist of Russian origin” and about their work – “painting produced in Russia” or “music

written by a composer of Russian origin”, but it is incorrect to say “Russian music” or “Russian painting”. It is more correct to say “literature in Russian”, but incorrectly – “Russian literature”. It is remarkable that most of the art figures who worked in Russia in the 19th century had a lot more than only Russians in their pedigree, and sometimes had no Russian ancestors at all (such as the painter Karl Bryullov or the poet Wilhelm Küchelbecker), and many of their works were created outside of Russia (like Gogol’s *Dead Souls* or Tchaikovsky’s *The Queen of Spades*).

And there’s one more very important fact. As I wrote earlier, real culture is the embodiment of the mentality, original ideas, creative abilities, aesthetic needs, and worldview of the nation that creates it. If any nation has creative abilities, has a request for aesthetics and contains original ideas that, through the most talented people, result in the creation of its own culture, then this culture is created everywhere, in different regions, wherever this nation lives. We know the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian orders in the architecture of Ancient Greece, Florentine, Roman, Venetian, Neapolitan schools in music history of Italy, Jena, Heidelberg, Berlin romanticism in the literature of Germany.

These styles, creative groups and movements have the names of the tribes, regions or cities of the countries in which they originated. But when it comes to works of art created in Russia from the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century and having artistic value, the area of their creation or the place of residence of their creators in almost all cases is only one city – the capital of Russia at that time, Saint Petersburg – a city with a German name, built by European architects, with educational institutions copied from Europe, and European specialists. Even Moscow, which at that time

was the second most populated city in Russia, was much inferior in terms of the intensity of cultural life.

In the 19th century, the expression “Moscow is a big village” was popular. Smaller cities in Russia as centers for creating works of art were out of the question. This is despite the fact that the population of Russia was much larger than the population of European countries. The approximate number of the population was in 1835: in Russia – 60 million, in France – 34 million, in Germany and the German-speaking part of Austria – 38 million (32 and 6 million, respectively), in Italy – 21 million; in 1904: in Russia – 144 million, in France – 41 million, in Germany and the German-speaking part of Austria – 68 million (57 and 11 million, respectively), in Italy – 33 million. The fact that highly artistic works arose in Russia mainly in only one city means not only that it was, with a few exceptions, the only place for their creation, but also that the overwhelming majority of the Russian population did not hear, did not see and did not read these works.

The masters who came from Europe created the “Russian culture”, and the vast majority of Russians did not even know that they had such a culture. The Russians not only did not create this culture en masse throughout the country, almost all of their population did not even seek to find out about it, and those who knew did not seek to share it with their compatriots. This speaks to the indifference, little receptivity and disinterest of Russians as a nation regarding the aesthetics brought by Europeans. As one of the numerous confirmations of this, one can recall the befouling by Russian soldiers of the Winter Palace, designed by the Italian architect Rastrelli and occupied by them during the revolution of 1917, in the interiors of which they were leaving their faeces. It was not only a display of hatred for the tsarist regime, which

Russians are very willing to express to each other too at the slightest opportunity, but also their attitude to beauty.

What is erroneously called “Russian culture” is, essentially, a Gzhel-style painted Mercedes, which European specialists, together with some residents of Russia trained by them, produced on its territory on equipment brought from Europe and using ready-made technologies, was declared a Russian car – a car of a nation that never produced even quality carts.

So what can be called Russian culture? The real Russian culture is birch bark handicrafts, Gzhel and Khokhloma painting on clay and wooden ware, peasant tunes that accompanied peasant everyday life and holidays, and “blatnaya pesnya”. This is a culture of despondency, primitiveness, cruelty, stupid vulgar buffoonery, lack of individual and creative self-awareness. Russian culture is a culture that is at the level of primitive society, and the worldview, mentality and notions of aesthetics of Russians as a nation are at the same level. If this is understood, everything falls into place and the logic of their behavior becomes clear. It becomes clear that a nation that demonstrates the lowest level of culture in business and political life could not and cannot have a great culture, which comes from the very essence of the nation.

The creation of myths and belief in them, like the creation of any lie and belief in it, can cause grave consequences for humanity or its separate parts.

Gustav Fondlauen is a composer, who graduated with honors from the Saint Petersburg Conservatory in the class of Professor Mnatsakanyan, who was a student of Shostakovich, he is a laureate of several international composers competitions, the author of symphonic and chamber music.

Archive: Orkney Days

Roy Kerridge

Landing at Kirkwall Airport on a bright autumn day was for me the last stage of journeying in Britain, as I had long yearned to see our old and mystical country from end to end. Kirkwall is the capital of the Orkneys on the so-called Orkney Mainland. When I boarded the plane, I was frisked along with all the other passengers, in case I intended to blow the whole place up. Nothing could have been further from my thoughts!

Before setting off in search of a taxi, I had a cup of tea and sat watching the other passengers. A tiny red plane from North Ronaldsay taxied down, and two passengers emerged and five got on. This was a private service run by a father and son. The son, who must have been all of eight years old, swung himself down from the side of the plane with great assurance. He was a child of the air. His father delivered a number of parcels to people waiting, took some more aboard, and they were off again to some other tiny island. By the time I had read a paper, found a hotel by telephone and located a taxi, the daring partners had returned, reloaded and soared away once more.

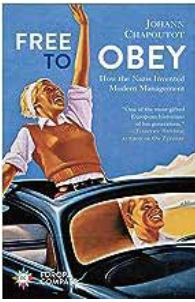
“Now then!” the taxi driver greeted me in a business-like way. He swung my huge suitcase into the boot and said, “That’s lovely!” in the same tone, and we were off.

Kirkwall’s High Street, the one and only shopping street, would be called an alley in any other part of Britain. Tiny shops faced one another, with a walkway in between, that to my surprise was open to traffic as well. Cars just had room to drive along it, honking at the housewives with shopping baskets. At night they drove down it quite fast, although Orcadians, as Orkney-ites proudly call themselves, were still ambling in twos and threes in and out of brightly lit chip shops and chapels. Side streets were smaller still, with very old houses painted in vivid colours and having only one door and one window each, facing the cobbles, and with a chimney apiece.

Several funny little grocer, fish and curio shops later, the High Street opened out, as if to a fanfare of old trumpets, to the wide-open Town Centre, dominated by the enormous and magnificent St Magnus Cathedral, with the ruined Earl’s Palace nearby, both rich in Norse legend, history and poetry.

After this grandiose interlude the High Street turned back into a shopping alley again, homely and picturesque as it wiggled its way from left to right among wares of every kind, and eventually found its way to the harbour. Halfway along this second alley stood a big tree, a rare sight on Orkney, and clearly a local landmark and rendezvous. A shop next to it was called “The Tree Bakery”. Actually, there were some more rather tattered trees, full of jackdaws, just behind the cathedral. The Orkneys are very windswept, and I was told that the Island of Hoy had no trees at all. None are visible from the coast, but someone else told me that a few fir trees had been planted in a sheltered spot inland.

Arts and Books



A Legacy from Nazi Germany

Jane Kelly

Free To Obey, How the Nazis Invented Modern Management, Johann Chapoutot, Europe Compass, £12.99, 2023.

Since the war bad ideas have left Germany, sometimes via Paris, to America before bouncing over to us: Structuralism, post-modernism, child-centred education, and even, as French historian Johann Chapoutot has noticed, ‘An impressive continuity of ideas’ between the ideologically driven managers of the Third Reich and the methods employed by modern business. He traces the inexorable evolution from Nazi Germany with all its fun-loving management quirks, to the present-day office, and the vast Internet warehouses where, ‘Human Resources’ seem as expendable as ever.

It’s a shock to think that a 20th century death cult could still be organising our daily lives, but from his introduction, with copious detail, Chapoutot makes that highly feasible. He focusses on the influence of SS Obergruppenfuhrer Herbert Backe, and SS General, Reinhard Höhn who after the war, built on the methodology of Henry Ford and US technocrat, Frederick Taylor, inventor of the ‘time and motion study.’ Höhn founded the internationally successful, *Bad Harzburg*

Management Institute, which between 1956 and his death in 2000, trained nearly a million managers in Europe and the US. In 1941 Backe, Minister for Reich Food, wrote a three paged handbook, organised into twelve points, giving instructions to German administrators. He wanted ‘Performance’ from administrators, who were to, ‘make decisions rapidly,’ without worrying about bureaucrats and their scruples. Supervisors should establish their ‘mission’ or ‘objective’ and achieve their ‘outcomes’ asap. That might sound familiar to anyone who has recently joined the UK public sector, including teaching, or picked up a self-help book on management.

We know the Nazis were tyrants but paradoxically, different from their Wilhelmine forbears, was the lack of centralised control. Despite being a police-state, managers were to act alone, locally, using their initiative. Bismarck had introduced a welfare State, but in the Third Reich, Germans no longer needed a ‘state’ instead they were part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a communal bund of ‘race comrades,’ pulling together for the greater good of the ‘right race’. For Nazi gauleiters, this ‘reactionary modernity,’ gave, ‘The greatest elasticity in the methods, left to the discretion of each individual.’ Based on ideas from men like Backe, Oswald Pohl, head of the SS’s Economic Office, who wanted to ‘fulfil a call beyond mere economic interests but one based on communal concerns,’ and Hans Kammler, head of the SS ‘Construction Department,’ Germany was soon full of small managers or ‘leaders,’ acting for the benefit of the

‘master race’.

Backe committed suicide in 1945, but Hohn with other high-ranking SS officers fled west to become part of the German post-war economic ‘miracle.’ Among them most famously was SS officer Hans Martin Schleyer. In 1949 he became secretary of the chamber of commerce of Baden-Baden. Later he sat on the board of directors of Daimler-Benz. In the 1960s he was simultaneously president of the Confederation of German Employers’ Association and the Federation of German Industries. He had been one among many young lawyers, academics, technocrats and managers of the Third Reich who ‘thought a great deal about managerial questions,’ as they ran a complex concentration camp system across Europe. Chapoutot suggests that, ‘It has been possible to see that there was something criminal in the very notion of the management and administration of ‘human resources’, the objectification of human beings, seen as ‘material’ and ‘production factors’. He makes a more subtle point, that, paradoxically, the Nazi enterprise, ‘promoted a non-authoritarian conception of labour in which employee and worker accepted their fate. After 1945 Hohn perfected a methodology that is now called ‘project management’. After running a war machine that needed impossibly high levels of production, he continued with the idea of a decentralising bureaucracy, believing that the state is inert, but individual business is dynamic. To improve efficiency the manager establishes a relationship of trust and delegates as much as possible, using participation and consensus rather than repression. Directives became, ‘objectives’. The Nazis had provided, labour, ‘through joy’. After 1945 ‘joy’ became the satisfaction

of doing your bit for ‘The office team,’ and possibly becoming a ‘team leader’. ‘Leadership’ courses can be downloaded on line, although in reality as Chapoutot points out, workers are rarely allowed to set any ‘objectives,’ although they may be seen as responsible for ‘outcomes’.

That model with its ‘freedom to obey,’ has seemed acceptable for seventy-five years but the author is depressed about the future feeling that the whole system was based on a lie or ‘perversion’, a continuing pretence that the aims and condition of the workers are the same as those of the employers. The constant calculating of ‘means’ and refusal to consider real ‘ends’ is bad for people creating an ‘alienation on the job’ and ‘psychosocial symptoms,’ such as ‘anxiety’ and ‘burn out’. Hohn’s ideas about work is based on the ideal of community which Chapoutot sees being replaced by something just inequitable with people being reduced again, in the internet age to nothing more than, ‘human resource’ and ‘productive capital’. Workers in shops like Aldi and supra-national internet markets are monitored and harassed. Recently challenged by a former manager, Aldi boasted that it had kept to the Bad Harzburg method of management, to its ideas on ‘objectives’ and the ‘time frames’ needed for carrying them out. This is capitalism at its worst; objectives imposed on workers who are then subject to constant ‘monitoring,’ with every failure recorded, working under constant fear rather than consent.

Though little more than an essay, the book is remarkable for the way it allows us to think about modernity with its continuing disconnect between the theory of production and most people’s experience of it. He believes that the organisation of labour has now become a ‘sole reality,’ and

‘management is king whose most painful problems are the very ones that it seems to create’, the reason perhaps why the UK now has two and a half million people of working age sitting idle due to ‘mental health issues’. He offers a vaguely Green solution ‘Training people to obey by considering them simple production factors, and devastating the Earth, go hand in hand.’ He sees the end of the old Reich/US economic model because of the ‘completely unrealistic character of our economic organisation and our ‘values’, meaning our obsession with growth. He doesn’t seem to have noticed the possibility of a future where human labour is dominated and eventually replaced by mathematical, rule-based codes, and machine learning, (AI) which may soon render HR and management issues as remote from us as the Third Reich.



Learning from ‘the Dark Continent’

Anthony Daniels

Goodbye, Dr Banda: Lessons for the West from a Small African Country, Polygon, £17.99.

It is a deeply ingrained prejudice in both Europe and America that we have nothing to learn from, and everything to teach, Africa. But if the good life is more than technical accomplishment, this may be far from the case. Certainly, my own time in Africa taught me a lot, not only about itself, but about Europe, not all flattering to the latter.

Openness to the idea that technological

superiority does not necessarily translate into superiority in the art of living gives this book its unusual charm and depth. The author, Dr Chula, went to teach Latin and Greek in Malawi, in Central Africa, after a classics degree in Oxford, and before training as a doctor. He taught for a time at what must be the most eccentric school in the world, the Kamuzu Academy, which was founded by Dr Hastings Banda, the first president of Malawi.

Dr Banda, who made himself President for Life, was a most extraordinary and inspiring figure. Born in rural Malawi in the last years of the nineteenth century, he walked fifteen hundred miles to Johannesburg and worked first as a miner, then as a clerk, on the Rand. Obtaining a place to study humanities in America, he developed a deep respect for classical learning and then switched to medicine.

He came to Britain, where he had to qualify again, became an Elder of the Church of Scotland and was for many years a highly respected general practitioner in London, before he returned to Malawi (for the first time in forty years) to lead the struggle for independence which, after he was briefly imprisoned, was soon granted. He turned out to be more philosopher king than democrat.

He was immediately recognisable in his dark suits and homburg hat, wielding a splendid fly-whisk as a symbol of his authority, while women, clad in cloth bearing his portrait, sang and danced in his praise. Many of the first generation of African leaders had an inferiority complex towards the former colonial masters, which led them simultaneously to exaggerated imitation and enmity, but Banda was sufficiently confident to attempt a genuine fusion of the two cultures that had made him

and which he deeply respected, the African and the European.

The Kamuzu Academy, once known as the Eton of Africa, was his most singular legacy. At first a genuinely meritocratic establishment, and elitist rather than socially exclusive, it consumed a third of the country's educational budget. Banda insisted that all its pupils should learn Latin and Greek, for he held the classical tradition was the foundation of the culture which he revered far more than does the average professor of humanities in the west today. A man who knew no Latin, he held, was not an educated man.

This may seem bizarre in an African nationalist leader, but Chula, whose book is part memoir, part history, part meditation, portrays Banda with deep sympathy, one might say with empathy. It is likely that no one will ever be better qualified than he to do so. Himself of part-Thai, part-English extraction, he must know what it is to be not entirely of one culture or world; and like Banda himself, he is enthusiastic about both classics and medicine. Banda was fortunate in his posthumous biographer.

Chula does not in the least deny or minimise the more egregious aspects of Banda's long dictatorship, yet no one can read this book, at least no civilised or sensitive person, without developing a respect and even a love for Banda. Moreover, for quite a long time he brought a modest prosperity to his country; by the standards of African dictators, admittedly not those by which we should often judge people, he was almost reasonable.

This is a very rich and subtle book, for it is also about imperial history, missionary endeavour and contemporary European attitudes to Africa and the world. Chula does

not indulge in the crude four-legs-good-two-legs-bad historiography that is *de rigueur* in almost all universities today, and which has been insinuated into the minds of our youth. He describes the life and work of the early missionaries to Malawi, mostly men who united almost superhuman strength of character with great intellect and humanity. We who do not share their faith are inclined to sneer at them, but this book is a perfect antidote to such ignorant and unjustified dismissal. Incidentally, in this respect the Malawians are vastly superior to us: they still remember these godly, devoted, learned men with reverence and are untouched by our default cynicism.

Chula describes the extremely hard lives of most Malawians, who are still much at the mercy of the elements, but who carry on their lives with a good humour and dignity which most of us cannot manage when the train is five minutes late. The author is not starry-eyed about Malawians, and they seem far less attractive once they move into the cities: but one has to remember that they do so voluntarily, so that even squalid impoverishment in the city must seem attractive to them by comparison with their previous lives.

This book stimulates reflexion on many subjects, perhaps the most painful is the nature of what we, the westerners and in particular the British, have become. Chula describes the young Europeans in Malawi, particularly the British, as ignorant, undignified, unscrupulous, and arrogant. They are the new imperialists, because they think they have reached final enlightenment about how life should be lived and about all matters of morality, past, present and future. The old imperialists and missionaries in Malawi had their faults and their vices, but they also had, great virtues. Chula depicts,

with mordant irony, the later generations – I suspect that he is a very acute observe – and they have no virtues, only vices.

Goodbye, Dr Banda is a two-way mirror, beautifully reflecting both Africa and Europe.



“Music should speak from the Heart” Etude
1941

Rory Cranston

Goodbye Russia, Rachmaninoff in Exile, Fiona Maddocks, Faber, 2023, £23.

Billy Wilder’s 1955 film *The Seven Year Itch* features an amusing scene in which Tom Ewell’s character, seated at his piano, fantasises about seducing ‘The Girl Upstairs’, Marilyn Monroe. Her ghostly entrance is accompanied by Ewell’s skillful performance of a series of liturgical tollings and rapid arpeggios. Leaning against the piano, she sighs “It’s not fair ... Every time I hear it I go to pieces”. The piece in question is Sergei Rachmaninoff’s *Piano Concerto No 2*.

The stature of the work and its composer is not lost on audiences, for Rachmaninoff is a figure celebrated and criticised in equal measure. Much like Monroe’s ephemeral presence in Ewell’s fantasies, Rachmaninoff was a ghost in his lifetime: an enigmatic relic of a Romantic past, and, for the last twenty-six years of his life, in exile.

It is Rachmaninoff’s quarter-century of displacement which Fiona Maddocks

recounts in *Goodbye Russia*. Neither a typical biographical account nor a strict musicological analysis, the book is a “broadly chronological set of impressions and excursions” into the late life of a man caught in the clash between worlds. Starting with a brief vignette of his first forty-four years in Tsarist Russia, where, despite creative “blockages” and crippling self-doubt, he established himself as an acclaimed pianist, composer, and conductor. Readers are then transported to Petrograd’s Finland Station where months before Vladimir Lenin had returned to lead the Bolsheviks to the halls of power. With Lenin, a new Russia had arrived – one that was intolerant of White Russian aristocrats like Rachmaninoff. In December 1917, he would flee, never to return.

In a sometimes roundabout fashion, Maddocks pens a sympathetic tribute to a composer whose final years were haunted by a melancholic yearning for the homeland and cultural milieu he had left behind. Drawing on numerous diary entries, letters, interviews, and critical reviews, the author captures Rachmaninoff’s search for a lost ideal.

Rachmaninoff had inherited the bucolic estate of Ivanovka through his wife Natalia Satina. Located southeast of Moscow, it provided the composer with a much-needed balance between the practical considerations of land-owning and the invigorating atmosphere of the Russian countryside. He wrote much of his oeuvre there, including his first three concertos. The loss of Ivanovka at the October Revolution shattered Rachmaninoff’s fragile creative constitution, for he produced only six works after 1917. Two years before his death in 1943, he confided to a journalist, “I am

a Russian composer, and the land of my birth has influenced my temperament and outlook. My music is the product of my temperament, and so it is Russian music.”

With the benefit of hindsight, the story of Sergei Rachmaninoff’s move to the West offers a reflection on his works and the destiny of a world thirsting for change. Set on regaining his lost wealth abroad—not only had he left behind his horses and his beloved automobiles at Ivanovka, but most of his manuscripts, complete and incomplete – he first settled in Copenhagen before moving to the United States in 1918.

Arriving in post-War America amid the Modernist wave, Rachmaninoff was praised for his orthodox interpretation of the *Star-Spangled Banner* – Stravinsky, another exile, was criticized for his WWII version due to its inclusion of a “jazzy dominant seventh chord”. Nevertheless, Rachmaninoff’s clinical approach earned him critical hostility in America. His pianism was described as “cerebral” by both critics and contemporaries alike, emphasising phrase groupings and marked rhythms, with a touch likened to “a boulder of granite”. With performances focused on Chopin, Beethoven, and other classics, one contemporary commented, “Not even Woodrow Wilson himself could have held the academic balance so dispassionately.”

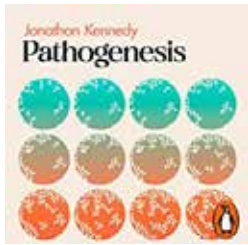
In 1920, the critic Paul Rosenfeld birthed a sentence that would stick with Rachmaninoff for the rest of his life: “Rachmaninoff comes among us like a very charming and amiable ghost”. *Goodbye Russia* could have benefited from a deeper examination of the origins of such criticism, but Maddocks leaves it to the reader to determine the composer’s awareness of his precarious position as both archaic traditionalist and

renowned performer. On the one hand, he was fixed in the minds and expectations of the public due to their admiration for his *Prelude in C Sharp Minor* – a piece he hated. On the other, he confessed that he understood “nothing of the modern music” of fellow exile Stravinsky, nor Prokofiev or Shostakovich. “I am a ghost wandering in a world made alien,” he said to a journalist in 1939: “Unlike Madame Butterfly, with her quick religious conversion, I cannot cast out my musical gods in a moment and bend the knee to new ones.”

Rachmaninoff was a man of contradictions: he demanded complete silence when working, yet he loved cars and power boating; he claimed not to understand modernism, yet he constructed a Bauhaus villa on the banks of Switzerland’s Lake Lucerne and incorporated jazz inflections into his fourth piano concerto. He also had no issue with his own music being taken over by popular modernist entertainers; telling a journalist that in James Reese Europe’s foxtrot version of the *Prelude in C Sharp Minor* he had “never before heard such a rhythm”.

Maddocks’ triumph is not in an analysis of Rachmaninoff’s works, nor in an answer to whether the label of ‘low-brow populist’ cast upon him to this day is deserved. Instead, *Goodbye Russia* captures a unique historical era: Interwar America; the displaced émigrés and the cultures they brought with them, and the oscillating favour Rachmaninoff and his ilk found in the Soviet Union, despite their defection from it. We are introduced to friends such as the Chaliapins, Nina Koshetz, Nikolayevich Scriabin, Alexander Glazunov, and Sergeyevena Shaginan, all of whom paint a picture of the man himself. He was, as Stravinsky described, a “6 ft scowl,”

but also a kind and generous man, with a depth of feeling for life and music that has immortalised him in the minds of many as one of the last great Romantics.



How bugs made and unmade us

Celia Haddon

Pathogenesis: How Germs Made History, Jonathon Kennedy, Torva, £25, hdbck, 375pp, illus.

Those apparently hygienic Roman baths were full of scum and germs because the users all shared the same bath water! The Empire's efficient road system merely hastened the spread of diseases, according to *Pathogenesis: How Germs Made History*. No wonder that the Roman empire suffered successive waves of plague. The empire recovered from the Antonine plague of the second century AD, but the next plague, possibly Ebola arriving from Africa in the third century, severely weakened its whole structure. The beginning of the decline and fall of Rome was because of disease, not the enervating influence of Christianity as proposed by Edward Gibbon.

These plagues, however, may have helped the spread of Christianity. The everlasting life in heaven offered by Christians became more attractive than the shadowy joyless underworld offered by traditional pagan Romans. This tempting hypothesis, however, does not explain how Christianity outcompeted other more attractive pagan afterlives like those of the various cults

such as the Orphic, Eleusinian and Mithraic mysteries. There isn't room for a detailed examination, in a book that covers a huge swathe of history starting with migration of *Homo sapiens* from Africa 50,000 years ago.

The spread of modern man into Europe and the subsequent disappearance of the resident Neanderthals lends itself to the supposition that a wave of infectious diseases may have led to their extinction. The prevailing theory was that Neanderthals, once considered *Homo stupidus* by an early writer, were wiped out by the superior brain power of *Homo sapiens* which alone allowed modern man to outcompete them. Recent archaeological discoveries of Neanderthal art and burial practices, however, have shown that the Neanderthals may well have been the intellectual equals of *Sapiens*. They even had slightly bigger brains, albeit that brain size *per se* is not conclusive evidence of higher intelligence levels.

Probably the invading *Sapiens* brought with them a highly infectious disease, like Ebola, out of Africa. Earlier modern man incursions out of Africa, which included some interbreeding with the Neanderthals, seem to have failed. But in 50,000 BC, the Neanderthal population in Europe was already weakened by the Ice Age. The ice cover did not affect *Sapiens* in Africa. Kennedy argues that the African humans may have carried a high load of tropical diseases with them. These infections could have wiped out the remaining Neanderthals who would have had no immunity from them. As Covid19 has shown, any new disease cuts a huge swathe among populations which have not been exposed to it before.

Fast forward to the fourteenth century AD and the *Yersinia pestis* bacteria is making its

way along the silk road from China through to Kaffa (now Feodosia) on the Black Sea. Mongol soldiers besieging Kaffa are said to have catapulted plague victim corpses over the city walls, spreading the plague to the Genevese traders within. From there the Black Death, as we now call it, started to spread through Europe. Sixty percent of the European population died.

Was the Black Death responsible for the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans? It may have helped the Turks to triumph, for the Ottomans were still relatively nomadic, moving from one area to another, thus less susceptible to the spread of disease than the static populations in towns. By the time the Turks gave up their nomadic habits and settled, they became as susceptible as their conquered peoples and their advance halted. But the disease had set up another train of consequences. The Genevese traders had to turn away from the East and look for new ways to reach the Indies. One of these was the Genovese explorer, Christopher Columbus, who reached North America in 1492.

Many of us were taught at school that the Black Death depopulated England and led to the collapse of feudalism. The shortage of people to work the land meant that serfs were eventually no longer tied to working on their lords' estates. The author, with a touch of romantic leftism, suggests that enfranchisement was not entirely benign in the long term as "most of the population could no longer grow their own crops and had no other option but to work for someone else," though he admits the changes made agriculture more productive.

It is possible to make a rather tenuous link between the Black Death with the growth of Protestantism. The bad behaviour of

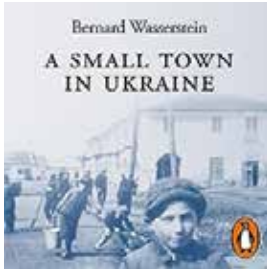
parish priests during the Black Death, when they deserted their flocks, was to produce the Lollards. But was the advent of the printing press really the result of the new labour shortages? *Pathogenesis* makes these suggestions, as it speeds its way through the Black Death, onwards towards the colonial plagues.

The Spanish invasion of America brought new diseases on a population without immunity. Smallpox, to which the indigenous people had no immunity, killed between a third and a half of the population of Central America within a few months. Measles followed and waves of influenza took a further toll. When Cortez first arrived the indigenous population of central America was about 20 million. A century later it was down to merely one and a half million. Indigenous Americans in their turn, however, passed on only one disease to their European conquerors - syphilis.

Immunity to disease has not always been an advantage to its human carriers in human history. In the states of Virginia and South Carolina, malaria arrived via the Caribbean from West Africa. The indentured agricultural workers from Europe, who had made up much of the early work force on plantations, had no immunity and sickened. This made slaves from West Africa, who had immunity, a much more cost-effective labour force for the plantation owners. Thus, slaves who came from a malaria-ridden regions of Africa therefore sold at a higher price than those who did not.

Whizzing through about 60 millenniums of human history in only 298 pages is an impressive feat, and the author pulls it off with panache. Fifty-one pages of references and a good index gives weight to this broad-brush approach even if I occasionally wanted

to quibble at some of the propositions, particularly those about Covid19. This history of how the horrendous effects of viral and bacterial disease influenced human history is a surprisingly enjoyable read.



An Unknown Homeland

*Martin
Dewhurst*

A Small Town in Ukraine: The place we came from, the place we went back to, Bernard Wasserstein, Allen Lane, Penguin Books, Random House, UK, 2023, £25.00.

The illegal invasion and occupation by Putin/Russia of parts of Ukraine in 2014, followed up by the expanded invasion and occupation in 2022 have caused incalculable misery and tragedy, but they have, or should have, taught us at least two invaluable lessons. First, at least a few of the more obtuse ‘Russia experts’ now realise that the Cold War didn’t *end* in about 1989, but was merely *suspended* by ‘Moscow’ for a few years and was then resumed, with a brutish vengeance, notably by Putin, who is *even* more ‘Soviet’ than Yel’tsin and *much* more ‘Soviet’ than Gorbachev. Secondly, Russia has *not* become *post*-Soviet but has stubbornly and steadfastly remained *neo*-Soviet, and is extremely unlikely to change until some time after Putin has left the scene. I would claim – and this is relevant for drawing any conclusions from the book under review that Ukraine had completed the transition from neo-Soviet to post-Soviet by 2005.

The ongoing war of Putin and many other deluded Russians against Ukraine has had one other very welcome by-product: it has greatly increased the interest all around the world in Ukraine (only a very few English-speakers now occasionally, out of long habit, talk about ‘the Ukraine’), its people, history and culture, although not everyone is very sure about its geography: where exactly does it now begin and end? Books in English about this ancient part of the world (Kyiv is many centuries older than Moscow) are currently being published every month, and Wasserstein’s is one of the most unusual and rewarding. He is a very professional historian and writes extremely clearly. Apparently, he felt no desire or need to anglicise his surname – after all, there are plenty of Waterstones around already.

His memoir describes a small, ‘ordinary’ Ukrainian town where the previous few generations of his family lived but where, in 1993 (his first visit), there was apparently only one Jew left. The place is here called Krakowiec (pronounced Krakovyets). If all history is, in a way, local history, this place, as I think Chekhov realised, is as worthy of our attention as anywhere else. I couldn’t help thinking of his 60-page novella, enticingly entitled ‘A Boring Story’. Krakowiec is first mentioned in the local records in 1423, and in the intervening 700 years only one high-profile person, as infamous as he is famous, appears to have been born there.

Some readers might be rather surprised to learn that Krakowiec is located in Galicia, as we think of Galicia as an integral part of Spain. The real Galicia is currently in Poland and partly, since 1991, in the supposedly independent Ukraine. Towards the end of WWI, there was even a Galician Soviet Socialist Republic! Another problem

for understanding the situation is that there were a lot of Ruthenians in this region, and many of them began to regard themselves as Ukrainians only towards the end of the nineteenth century. For many of us, this is a faraway part of the world about which we know next to nothing.

Wasserstein's dispassionate, well-constructed account, with several excellent maps, takes us into a world that has almost disappeared, and yet is bound to play an important part in the future of Ukraine, no matter how the current war ends. The key city in this area is Lviv/Lwów/L'vov/Lemberg, some 43 miles to the east of Krakowiec and definitely worth more than a single visit. Perhaps the most promising time for Krakowiec was the 18th century, the last years of the first Polish Republic and the early period of Habsburg rule over Galicia, when the lord of the Krakowiec estate, Ignacy Cetner (1728-1809), built an impressive palace with splendid gardens, a guardian angel, musicians and painters, but after his death it gradually degenerated and, apart from the angel, nothing now remains. Perhaps, if a genuinely new Ukraine appears, a restoration could be attempted?

By the early 19th century, Jews had taken over from Poles as the dominant part of the population, so the language you were likely to hear in the streets was Yiddish. 'An Austrian officer found Galician Jews "indisputably the filthiest, most ignorant, superstitious, poverty-stricken, and yet most numerous of this unfortunate nation that is spread over the entire earth"'. Nonetheless, even in the late eighteenth century, 'Jews were granted something close to equal rights, including the right to vote in local elections, provided they met stiff property criteria and other qualifications. They might

even be raised to the nobility.'

However, almost a century later, a 'majority of children of school age in Galicia in 1880 did not attend [school] at all. As late as 1900, the census reported that 75 per cent of men and 83 per cent of women in the Jaworów district, which included Krakowiec, remained illiterate. The rate was highest among Ruthenians, lowest among Jews.' 'In the mid-nineteenth century, average life expectancy in Galicia was under thirty years for both men and women, one of the lowest rates in Europe.' Even later, Krakowiec had no doctor and no hospital. By 1900 it had become, 'in large measure, a Jewish town', and 'the protective imperial umbrella shielded Jews from the resentments of their neighbours.' 'Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Jews of Krakowiec, as elsewhere, became the most fervently loyal subjects of the Habsburg emperor.'

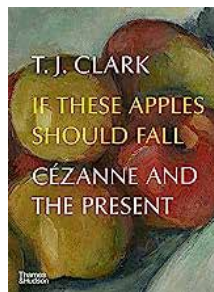
And yet, an estimated 55,000 people a year died of starvation in Galicia in the late nineteenth century. This was regarded as a likely area of war between Russia and Austria, a gateway for the invasion by either of the two. Not surprisingly, there was massive emigration, by non-Jews as well as Jews. 'No fewer than two million people, including 350,000 Jews, left Galicia between 1880 and 1914.' In spite of emigration, however, the Jewish population of Galicia rose from 687,000 in 1880 to 872,000 by 1910. Many Galician Ruthenians began to regard themselves as, Ukrainians and 'increasingly made common cause with their kinsmen under Russian rule.' There was also an increase in Polish-Ukrainian dissension, with Jews in 'an uncomfortable intermediate position', though they had officially gained full equality in 1868. Who,

back then, were more antisemitic, Poles or Ukrainians? Now, I would say, relations between both of them, and between both of them and Jews, are extremely good, but one can understand why official Israel, which simply has to remain on speaking terms with official Moscow, is not being quite as helpful to Ukraine as outsiders like me would like.

During WWII, the Waffen-SS Galizien (Galicia) Division very efficiently finished off at least 60,000 Jews there, ably assisted by Ukrainian militias. In 1944, Roman Shukhevich (1907-1950, perhaps the most (in)famous person ever to have been born in Krakowiec) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) got down to work on other enemies. 'In view of the success of the Soviet forces it is necessary to speed up the liquidation of the Poles; they must be totally wiped out, their villages burned ... only the Polish population must be destroyed.' 'Tens of thousands of Poles were killed by Shukhevich's ethnic cleansers and thousands of Ukrainians were victims of Polish retaliatory attacks.' At this time, 'a complex war of all against all was being waged in which the UPA, the Polish Home Army, German security forces and Soviet partisans all battled for supremacy.' A little later 'the Red Army captured Lwów. The pre-war Jewish population of the city had been 104,700. The Soviets registered 1,689 survivors. In Krakowiec one Jew, who had hidden in the town, emerged alive.' (The same number as in 1993, as mentioned earlier.) At that time there were plenty of 'Polonized' Ukrainians and 'Ukrainized' Poles. Western Galicia is now in Poland and Eastern Galicia is in Western Ukraine, with Krakowiec right in the middle. 'What had for several centuries been a multi-ethnic community was now almost entirely

Ukrainian.' And it has a freely elected Jewish President. As of 2021, 2,673 Ukrainians had been honoured by Yad Vashem as 'righteous among the nations'.

Reviewing this book at the end of June, I naturally wondered how the ongoing war of Putin against Ukraine would end. I wrote 'Putin', not 'Russia', because this is his very *personal* war. If Russia loses, Putin, as a result of his perverse and twisted view of Russian history, knows that he will go down in posterity as a loser, the ruler of Russia who, through his own stupid fault, finally 'lost' Ukraine for Russia for ever. A failure, a nonentity. What can he do to prevent that? One dreads to answer that question.



The man who made paint into fruit

Sean McGlynn

If These Apples Should Fall: Cézanne and the Present, T J Clark, Thames and Hudson, 2022, £30.

Towards the end of his life, Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) explained his art 'To see God's work! That's what I am attempting'. In this book does the prominent art critic T J Clark invite us, by extension, to see the divine at work in Cézanne's paintings? Probably not, given Clark's Marxism, but he does describe his book as 'an invitation to look again at Cézanne, to look and be taken aback'. He emphasises how Cézanne renders the ordinary and familiar as being 'on the other side of something', not least through the

artist's dedication to injecting just enough disorientating oddness and disjointedness into his work.

The title comes from Ernest Bloch's commentary on Cézanne from 1916: 'The [famous] apples of Cézanne are not fruit any longer, nor fruit made over into paint; instead, all imaginable life is in them, and if they should fall, a universal conflagration would ensue'. That's somewhat overstated, but it encapsulates a truth about Cézanne's work. Equally, though, a Cézanne sceptic is more likely to consider the book title as a reference to apples precariously placed on flattened tables and about to roll off. There is often a question over the forces of gravity in Cézanne's art.

The book is structured around five informal chapters on Pissarro's influence, materials, *en plein air* environments (a late development in his career), peasants (centred on the five versions of *Card Players*) and finally Matisse and gardens the first and last approach Cézanne's apprenticeship under Camille Pissarro and his own legacy on Matisse. Some of the analogies can be slightly strained even if they work in a laboured fashion; I am thinking here of the Pissarro-Cézanne relationship being compared to that between Socrates and Plato. This opening chapter is one of the best, capturing Cézanne's formative tutelage under Pissarro, whom he referred to as 'humble and colossal'. 'Cézanne came to Pissarro to unlearn his first style, and, seemingly, to change his mind about Courbet, Manet and Delacroix'. While Pissarro is regarded as the 'Father of Impressionism', as in last year's, large-scale exhibition at The Ashmolean, some of his pupils outshone him, as Cézanne did, on his way to collecting his own epithet as 'Father

of Modernism'. Even when Cézanne copied Pissarro's paintings as practice, the visibly same scene is very different, with Cézanne often improving his mentor's work. But that is not surprising, as Clark notes, Cézanne's 'strangeness of vision' which 'refuses to take anything for granted'.

One notable difference – and a mark of Cézanne's approach – is that his landscapes are devoid of people. This is a simple but brave step away from a landscape trope. While people might humanise and romanticise the scene, they can dilute with the presence of nature. They can also imbue a transient quality into the painting that Cézanne abhorred he wanted to portray the landscape and its geological presence as immemorial and timeless, as in numerous studies of Mont Sainte Victoire. For Cézanne, nature was quite sufficient in itself. This attitude is one to applaud and appreciate.

Clark describes much of his Cézanne's works as 'groundlessness, airlessness, absence of contact, lack of distance but also of proximity', noting its 'uncertainty' and 'strange false witness'. But here Clark is purposefully capturing much of what is so intriguing about Cézanne, who said that 'light does not exist' – something that is both true and yet untrue, like the representations on his canvases. And 'strange false witness' is a brilliant way of summarising Cézanne's works. The artist was not much interested in reassuring the viewer with comfortable accuracy. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the French philosopher, reinforces this in his perceptive essay 'Le Doute de Cézanne' from 1945: Cézanne's works are 'so strange' not least because 'nature itself is denuded of those attributes that prepare her for animistic communion: the landscape without wind, the

water of Lake Annecy without movement, the objects frozen hesitant [...]. It's a world without familiarity, where one is ill at ease'. For many art lovers, this undermines Cézanne's works; for others, including Clark, it is what makes him an artist of genius. The result is a tension in Cézanne's *oeuvre* that persists to this day.

Like most art critics, Clark is not exempt from pretentious statements that can often grate, not least when indulging in meandering metaphysical musings and psychoanalysis. He also breaks out into poetry which, while showing an emotional response, is out of place, but his insights on Cézanne are many and often profound.

Clark is right to claim that Cézanne 'knew what modernity felt like'; 'modernity is loss of world. Cézanne is the painter who makes that cliché draw blood'. He declares that without Cézanne he 'wouldn't fully have known what it was to be modern'. However, while Cézanne might have paved the way to modernism and the sterility of Cubism, he was not responsible for them. In this sense, Cézanne was not Father of the Modern at all – just the gateway to it. As Clark says, Cézanne probably did not value modernity.

Clark, for all his problematic approaches, brings out the difficulties and rewards of Cézanne's art: 'The balance of oddity and accuracy is hard to hold unto in words'. That could also serve as a summary of the book's approach to its subject. Like Cézanne himself, this book will divide readers.

This is a beautifully produced volume with gorgeous reproductions. By studying them, we are still left to make up our own minds on the 'uncanny' nature of Cézanne's art. I have recently immersed myself in his work – and I am still not quite sure what to make of it.



The Enigma Revealed

John Jolliffe

My Russia War or Peace? Mikhail Shishkin, (Riverrun, 2023, £18.99).

This excellent book is divided into two parts. The author's aim, achieved with great skill, is 'to disclose my country to Western readers, to explain Russia and its past, present and future'. First, a quick but illuminating rundown of the country's history from earliest times to the recent past, when we learnt how 'to say one thing, think another and do a third ... behind the barbed wire of this prison camp called Russia'. It lights up the great spirit of awakening, and the struggle which followed between the old autocratic regime and enlightenment that followed the Liberation of the Serfs by Alexander II, roughly speaking between the Slavophiles and the Westernisers, but which was followed, after his assassination in 1881, by a backlash of reaction. 'Each time my country tried to build a democratic society, (ie for a few months in 1917, and a very few years in the 1990s) it has found itself back in a totalitarian regime.' Peter the Great might have opened a window into Europe, but Stalin ruthlessly locked it up. The lasting result is that until recently, very few Russians travelled outside their country, and their idea of the West was largely restricted to superficial television programmes.

An important early element was the desperate fear of Russia being overwhelmed by another Mongol invasion from the east, and the few natural boundaries from behind

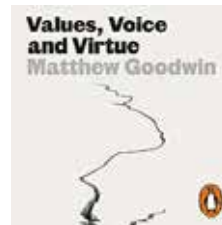
which the country could seek shelter. This fear had become ingrained in a country where change occurs, when it does, at a glacier-like speed, before anything like a civilised system can emerge. For the foreseeable future, barbarism is still here to stay.

The author Mikhail Shishkin's mother is Ukrainian, his father Russian. Obviously, this gives him a special insight into the events of the recent past, which he expresses with clarity and vigour. He is the only writer to have received all of Russia's most important literary prizes, including the 'Russian Booker' in 2000 and the 'Big Book Prize' in 2006 and 2011. As a fearless critic of Putin, he wisely now lives in Switzerland. His books have been translated into no less than thirty-five languages, and many important truths are thus being circulated round the world. The present one first appeared in a German translation in 2019, but he brings it up to date with a ten-page afterword which comments on the more recent past, and explains among other things the extraordinary popularity which until the latest atrocities Putin achieved, above all among his own people, to many of whom he gave a feeling that at least they knew where they were.

His main platform was to attack the Americans, which went down well not only in Iran and North Korea but also in India and parts of Latin America. At home, there may have been huge corruption, but at least it was a corruption that people were familiar with, and Gorbachev had given them the feeling that they were being 'liberated from the spell cast by communist witchcraft'; whereas what followed was an organised kleptocracy, which has nothing to do with old communism with a whole range of

national assets disappearing and stolen from public ownership and being stolen. The old system has converted political power into the unrestricted power of money, now in the hands of the old *nomenklatura*

My Russia War or Peace? is not a long book, by Russian standards. If you are only going to read one book about the current horrors and their crucial historical context, let it be this one.



Rise of the new elite

Alistair Miller

Values, Voice and Virtue: The New British Politics, Matthew Goodwin, Penguin, 2023, £10.99.

Even Matthew Goodwin confesses to being taken aback by the outpouring of vitriol this book, has provoked in the liberal left media. That the book has become a bestseller, despite its amorphous title, has only compounded the outrage. There has also been criticism, tinged with resentment, and not only on the left, that Goodwin, who is Professor of Politics at the University of Kent, has morphed into a public intellectual, a money-earning pundit, instead of a serious researcher. His new book lacks the scrupulously impartial air of *National Populism*, which was written with Roger Eatwell, or the scholarly analysis of Eric Kaufmann's *White Shift*, on whose research Goodwin collaborated. Nor is the theme especially original – David Goodhart's *Head Hand Heart* and Michael Sandel's *The Tyranny of Merit* have already described the

rise of the cognitive meritocracy and its destructive consequences. But as a polemic, this book is splendid.

Goodwin argues that party politics and political discourse in this country have been hijacked by a new synthesis of economic and cultural liberalism which plays to the interests and values of a self-serving self-righteous cosmopolitan ‘woke’ graduate elite. The majority population are excluded and left to suffer the economic and social consequences of hyper-globalization; traditional values and sense of identity are scorned. This ‘cultural chasm’ provoked the populist revolt over Brexit, and may yet produce an even greater upset.

The new graduate elite thrives in the knowledge economy and dominates nearly all our institutions – in politics, government, academia, the media, the arts, and even corporations. This might be no bad thing, except that it embraces progressive values, incubated in the universities, which are at odds with the traditional values of the non-graduate majority. The old elite, although privileged, had ‘an instinctive desire to defend Britain’s national identity, culture and ways of life’.

The liberal beliefs of the elite are profoundly destructive for they confer social status at no cost to believers, but impact negatively on others. Although the hyper-globalization ushered in by economic liberalism has benefitted the elite, by providing free movement and abundant cheap labour, a combination of de-industrialization and mass immigration has ‘hollowed-out’ communities across large swathes of the Midlands and the North. By the 2010s, at least half the country was living ‘in regions whose prosperity is no better than the poorer parts of former

East Germany’. Moreover, as the ‘cultural guardrails’ that once strengthened families and communities have weakened. Higher rates of suicide, alcohol and drug addiction, family breakdown et al have all resulted. The new elite who preach looser cultural norms and alternative family structures, are the more likely to get married and enjoy stable family lives.

Whereas the children of the new elite reap the benefits of education at private schools and elite universities, and ethnic minority children benefit from their favoured victim status, white working-class children have been ‘completely cut adrift’, with fewer going on to higher education than any other ethnic group. Funding is lavished on academic education and universities, which benefit the children of the elite, while vocational and adult education go begging. While the new elite live in ‘highly segregated urban elite zones’, workers and non-graduates ‘are pushed to the margins of the big cities or left in the small declining towns, where they are forced to compete with immigrants for housing and jobs.

Woke ideology, which favours fashionable victim groups, confers a superior moral status on its believers; any dissent is blasphemous and must be censored. When this moral self-righteousness is combined with the elite’s sense of meritocratic superiority, conferred by its superior education and achievement, ‘a new snobbery’ emerges in which it is socially acceptable to despise working people. After Brexit commentators labelled Brexit voters ‘bigots’, ‘clowns’, the ‘lumpen mass with half formed thoughts and fully formed prejudices’, ‘gammons’ and ‘Nazis’.

A cadre of identikit university-educated careerist politicians now dominate politics while . Labour is now ‘a party for the

brahmins’, with non-graduates and workers banished from its parliamentary ranks. Political appeals to the working class have correspondingly disappeared, even though most of the population still identify as working class. With Labour embracing the economic liberalism of the new right and the Conservatives embracing the cultural liberalism of the new left, only 22 per cent of people can now tell them apart. Political discussion has been reduced to ‘a tightly controlled spectacle’ in which politicians only ever debate issues that do not challenge the liberal consensus. Policy decisions of public interest are increasingly mediated by a ‘defensive barrier of regulating bodies’, national and transnational, like the Monetary Policy committee and the World Trade Organisation, which are managed by expert elites technocrats.

Most of the population, who lean right on cultural issues but left on economic issues, are left powerless and voiceless. Although the Conservatives swept to power in 2019 by appealing to the traditional majority, they have since alienated many of their supporters by their continued support for mass immigration, and by favouring a liberal ‘Davos-on-Thames’ agenda. The danger, warns Goodwin, is that unless the political landscape changes, there will be a ‘full-blown rebellion’ against the new elite and the wider system, the tremors of which we are already seeing elsewhere in Europe.

Goodwin is spot on in his analysis of the new elite, but some crucial questions are left hanging in the air: ‘What is the alternative to a meritocratic liberal graduate elite?’ and ‘Can a genuinely conservative party or movement emerge in this country?’ Nevertheless, Goodwin has identified the problem, and for that we can be grateful.



When Parliament let itself down

James Monkton

The Parliamentary Battle Over Brexit, Meg Russell and Lisa James, Oxford University Press, 2023, £25.

Britain experienced two huge political upheavals in the late 2010s. The first was the vote for Brexit in 2016; the second, quite sinister, was the extraordinary spectacle of “the mother of Parliaments” spending the following years attempting to stymie that huge democratic vote. *The Parliamentary Battle Over Brexit* is an important book, promoted as the first authoritative account of events in the post-referendum parliaments as MPs sought, to implement the vote. The calm and thorough treatment of events is handled thoroughly and admirably by the authors in spite of their thinly disguised partisanship.

After the referendum vote, Theresa May became the calamitous choice of the Conservatives to replace David Cameron their leader and Prime Minister. May (who voted Remain) faced two key obstacles in overseeing Brexit: her own limitations and a parliament that was overwhelmingly Remain: 479 out of 637 MPs publicly backed the Remain campaign. Immediately, many MPs planned to thwart Brexit entirely: delay it or water it down into insignificance (to BRINO – Brexit in name only). The authors vouch for the good faith of parliament and its genuine wishes to see Brexit accomplished, while with equal frequency they relate its explicit efforts to

overturn Brexit, not least through a second referendum (the euphemistically Stalinistic “People’s Vote”) and, in the words of one senior Labour politician, “stop the whole caboodle”.

One method employed by Brexit saboteurs was the despicable use of parliamentary procedure, in order to disguise anti-democratic intentions behind the democratic but opaque processes of parliament, obscuring Remainer goals through obfuscating methods that the public would not understand. This behaviour was an abuse of position and privilege and led to John Bercow resorting to dusting off measures from over four centuries ago and Remainer MPs seeking what the authors call (over-politely) “innovative procedural mechanisms”. These disingenuous machinations resulted in the Hilary Benn and John Burt Act (termed the “Surrender Act” by some Brexiteers) which further tied the hands of government in its negotiations with the EU and resulted in what has rightly been called a parliamentary coup: the legislature was attempting to act in place of the executive. Most people have never understood the frightening implications of these events. Indeed, as the authors correctly, and alarmingly, note, even “few MPs will have followed the details of these complex procedural arguments”; much later on an MP interviewee states: “many of my colleagues had actually no idea what the Single Market or Customs Union was”. Ignorance abounds in Westminster. It took Boris Johnson and his stunning December election of 2019 to refresh parliament with new blood and a genuine desire to “get Brexit done”, despite further setbacks like the cynically manufactured hysteria over his attempt to prorogue parliament. Some of us

think that it still has not been achieved.

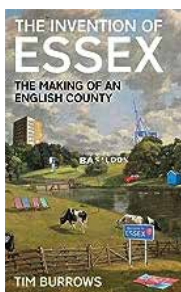
The commendable clarity and focus in the book, is its major strength, but the authors are so assured of their even-minded fairness, they fail to recognise their own biases (and even prejudices) that run through their work. Russell is a Professor of Politics at UCL and James a Research Fellow at the Constitution Unit there. Both are well-enveloped by the folds of the establishment Blob and approved academic research funding. The most common adjective in this book is “hardline”, used endlessly to describe clean Brexiteers. MPs wanting to implement the democratic referendum result hold “extreme” positions. However, BRINO and Brexit-blocker MPs, even the likes of Dominic Grieve, are everywhere “moderates”. Ignoring a huge democratic plebiscite was the real extremist position.

Populism is dismissed as are the occasional citing of academic sources with a lack of scrutiny, especially not least when those sources are EU-funded or Jean Monnet professors of politics for Euro-imperialism stretches wide. EU-sceptic academics are under-represented in citations and bibliographical references, even when high-profile.

With Northern Ireland, they endlessly trot out the concerns over the Good Friday Agreement and the dangers of a hard border. This is a mantra among Remainer commentators as they confirm that Brexit will endanger the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Sir David Trimble correctly stated that there are two separate issues, but, being a Leaver, his commanding view is selectively ignored. The GFA says nothing about a hard border one way or the other, only that in loose terms it would be good if circumstances allowed the border to be

demilitarised. Disgracefully, Remoaners and EU politicians have deliberately weaponised the issue, attempting to conflate the risk of armed conflict with Brexit. The authors have ignored, the position of the EU-bargaining team and the likes of Martin Selmayr who have declared that “the price of Brexit is Northern Ireland”. Thus, the deplorable Windsor Agreement of 2023 leaves the province as a partial fiefdom of the EU. And nowhere do the authors show awareness of the possible GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariff) implications that might have required a hard border quite separately from Brexit negotiations.

“Brexit was largely a battle inside the Conservative Party, for which parliament got the blame”. This argument is wholly unconvincing and excuses parliament’s reprehensible actions. The internal shenanigans of the Tories were indeed one factor, but of far less significance than parliament’s shameful obstructions to the democratic process when MPs arrogantly appropriated political mastery for themselves and tried to trample down the sovereignty of the people.



The Misunderstood County

Brian Eassty

The Invention of Essex, Tim Burrows, Profile, £16.99.

Few counties can have so many cultural reference points as Essex. On the cover of this book, two men from a Constable

painting sail past the house of Grayson Perry’s Essex Everywoman while a Ford Escort from Dagenham plant nestles next to Basildon’s Hollywood sign.

Tim Burrows is the ideal author to take us around the variety of ways in which Essex has impinged on the national consciousness. He clearly loves the area where he grew up and where he has chosen to settle. He is also drawn to the wild marshland of the county’s south as much as the picturesque villages of Constable country.

He laments that Essex is looked down on and the adjective “much-maligned” is appended to it almost unthinkingly. This is nothing new. Even Jane Austen took aim at Southend in comparison to Cromer. In *Emma* The Knightleys opt for Southend’s proximity to London and Isabella protests that they “never found the least inconvenience from the mud”. Had they come to Southend, they would have been “visitors” rather than “excursionists”. This distinction led to the council proposing a segregation between the former, who enjoyed the pleasure gardens west of the pier, and the latter, drawn by the Kursaal amusement park to the east. Southend was considered a zoning arrangement, mirroring the East End – West End of London.

The relationship between Essex and London is a theme of the book. Burrows reminds us that Middlesex was swallowed up by London in 1965, a fate Essex has managed to avoid though developments in the capital often affect the county. He comments on two different migrations from London. He approves of Orthodox Jews from Stamford Hill moving to Canvey in search of “better air quality”, but he characterises Londoners in a documentary about “white flight” as “people moving away from an

area deemed too diverse”. Newham today is hardly diverse. It is not diverse to have schools with only one or two white children in each year group. If that tiny minority are then told by teachers in thrall to critical race theory that they are beneficiaries of white privilege, it is understandable that their parents try to move.

Burrows’ *Guardian* background soon becomes apparent. He is open to hearing from people with different views from his own but reluctant to convey what they say. He seeks out Harwich MP Bernard Jenkin, quoting a mere couple of sentences from him, only to dismiss him as “the son of a lord”. Jenkin, the son of a life peer rewarded for service in the Cabinet is easier to disregard if he is portrayed as the scion of some aristocratic dynasty.

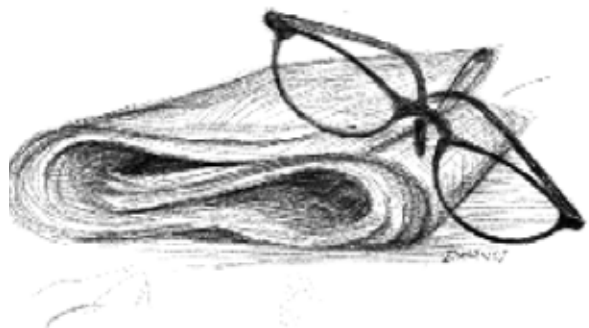
It is hard to know from what kind of background Burrows thinks the Essex electorate should choose as their elected representatives. He tells us that Sir David Amess, from a more humble background, had to walk two and a half miles to school, but then patronises him, asserting that Amess was “in awe of ... so many colleagues who were more eloquent”. Elsewhere Burrows uses the favourite ploy of the modern Left – assert hard enough and you won’t need evidence. On the pioneering privatisation of refuse collection in Southend, he claims it was fuelled by “outlandish” claims that council unions were corrupt.

Burrows “public good private bad” dogmatism prevents any discussion about privatisation of the railways, a rare success in South Essex. Anyone living on the C2C line from Fenchurch Street to Southend who does not fear re-nationalisation is too young to have commuted in the 1980s and suffered the hopeless service then deemed acceptable

by British Rail.

Burrows has something more worthwhile to say in the chapter on Essex’s historic role as a dumping ground for London’s refuse, a genuine revelation. Huge tips have been set up, covered over and left, indicating that the problem of waste disposal had been forever solved. An academic, Kate Spencer, tells Burrows of the danger posed to these tips by climate change, coastal erosion and even remarkably by “the mudlarking community”, as Burrows calls them, looking for historical artefacts, naively unaware of the potential dangers of noxious stuff leaking from these tips. Spencer would like to see this problem much higher on the government’s environmental agenda.

Burrows also visits the locations of *The Only Way Is Essex*, the show which apparently made the county a laughing stock by playing up to its stereotypical tasteless materialism. There he finds almost a TOWIE theme park where the joke is being turned on the fans who are charged vast sums for a night in an Essex pub. There Burrows meets a hairdresser and invites her to indulge in the Socialist vice of envy. Her reply “No it just makes me want to work harder to achieve what they have. It is nice to see people who have done good...It gives you a boost...” is probably the most typical Essex sentiment in the book.



In Short

Colditz. Ben MacIntyre, Penguin pb 2023 £10.99.

In April 2015 I spent the day singing Second World War popular songs in the forecourt of Colditz among the cardboard cut outs of its escape heroes. The very welcoming management wanted an English choir to help celebrate the liberation of the castle which was transformed in 2006 into a tourist venue. There is now a youth hostel, café, lecture and concert rooms. Only the theatre and the little museum on the top floor remind you of grim days.

Forget the TV programmes and the old books; MacIntyre breaks new ground, and describes what *really* went on; his narrative is crammed full of fascinating stories about the many eccentric personalities in the castle like the chief guard, “a bristling martinet” – nicknamed Franz Joseph, who wore his medals in bed.

Colditz was a microcosm of the pre-war class system with its unpleasant public school ethos. Officers and men, many of them already escapers, could not fight the enemy and were forced to live with each other, while the orderlies suffered the most as they had to obey German officers as well. Douglas Bader, a hero, but a horrible human being made his batman carry him up the stairs every day for his bath.

After the Poles discovered that Colditz was not impregnable but full of holes and friendly locks, planning escapes and executing them dominated life and prevented its inmates going crazy while Red Cross parcels kept

the men better fed and then alive at the end of the war. Each nationality formed its own escape committee, but cooperation and camaraderie flourished although the British were dismayed to discover that some of the French were as antisemitic as the Nazis for Leon Blum’s son was horribly persecuted by some French officers. Some of the guards were up for bribes so cigarettes and other Red Cross goodies were exchanged for turning a blind eye.

Several of the most interesting prisoners deserve their own biographies: Birendnarath Mazundar was a multi-lingual Bengali doctor, and an Indian nationalist but disliked by both the British and the Germans. He refused to help the Germans via Chandra Bose the nationalist leader because he had taken an oath of allegiance to Britain. After he was moved to another prison, he made his first real friend (from the Punjab) and the two made a magnificently successful escape, trudging 900 kilometres to Switzerland, a “great untold story of the Second World War”.

Julian ‘Toothy’ Green, a Glaswegian Jewish dentist spent the war in different prison camps reaching Colditz in 1944. Many men owed their faces to his innovative surgery in ghastly conditions. But he also worked for British intelligence and passed on important information about German troop movements, U boats etc mostly gleaned from his patients.

The end was dramatically bizarre: Germany was in chaos, bombed to smithereens with the roads full of desperate

refugees while the SS occupied the town. As the American army edged closer. German officers and guards were in great danger for the castle would have been a fine place for a Nazi last stand. Roles were reversed, for Allied officers now overruled their jailers but they continued “pretending to be prisoners while they were protecting their jailers against the SS and the advancing American troops.” Liberation finally took place on April 16th when some inmates would have enjoyed meeting the amazing lady war correspondent Lee Carson.

Merrie Cave

Aung San Suu Kyi, Politician, Prisoner, Parent Wendy Law-Yone. TLS. 2023, £9.99.

This little book starts with a flourish as the author sees Aung San Suu Kyi enter a room, something Law-Yone calls, ‘A quasi-religious experience’. The gracious stateswoman, known to the people of Burma as, ‘Mother Suu’ glided in, a vision in silk the colour of old polished silver, her ‘signature hair ornament of fresh flowers’. The audience, including journalist Joan Bakewell, ‘gasped and rose to their feet’. Suu Kyi, she writes, exuded the Burmese word, ‘Awza’ or ‘a special charisma, exuding authority’.

That was 2014 when Suu Kyi had been liberated from another bout of house arrest. She’d had fifteen years of it, a third of her life, imposed by Burma’s hated military regime. Her struggle for democracy had attracted world attention and a Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Law-Yone vividly describes how Burma’s alternative national leader

and martyr was, ‘mobbed by ecstatic devotees’ her security men representing the future generation in her political party, the National League for Democracy, which had given her a landslide election victory in 1990. UK Foreign Secretary William Hague commented that her appearance, ‘Achieved more for freedom of speech in one afternoon than most of us manage in a lifetime’. Yet when she finally got into power, instead of years of benevolent rule and progress her ‘mantle of national motherhood’ was torn away replaced by something ruthless and brutal.

At Law-Yone’s first and only close encounter with the living legend, she claims to have detected that chilling change. A brave journalist asked her about the ‘escalating anti-Muslim violence stoked by Burmese Buddhist fundamentalists’. Suu Kyi responded curtly that, ‘Christians misbehaved too’. In 2019 as nearly a million Rohingya fled for their lives, she warned against, ‘Emotive words like persecution. There was communal violence, crimes committed by both communities’.

I learned some fascinating facts about Burma from the author who comes from Rangoon. Who knew that Carnegie’s self-help book, ‘How to Win Friends and Influence People’ was a ‘mandatory textbook’ in Rangoon schools in the 1950s, or that as a child Suu Kyi wanted to ‘dress like a general’ and once made a birthday cake for her son in the shape of a tank. We are given some of her background, her Theravada Buddhist culture with its intense kinship links and deep belief in ‘mindfulness’ but not much more about the mysterious woman at the heart of it. It seems that the ‘The Matriarch of Myanmar,’ was really trying to be the mother of her father’s nation. ‘Absent

and omnipresent' he was the nation's hero, siding with the Japanese against the British in World War Two, then switching sides to win his country's independence, but was assassinated by a rival in 1947. By the time his daughter became a politician in 1988, Burma had lost any hope of peaceful progress or democracy, so the cake story is a rare offering from the author into Suu Kyi's personal life. She writes nothing about the relationship with her abandoned English family left behind in Oxford. Her husband died in 1999, leaving their sons effectively orphaned. How could the lady with the flowers in her hair do that to her children, why did the international queen of social justice turn genocidaire, surely 'The Lady'

was not just a selfish xenophobic bigot? The answers are lost in a dense Rangoon mist.

The book is beautifully produced. It starts as a gossipy page turner, a racy sceptical tell-all, but the conclusions are as oblique and enigmatic as 'The Lady' herself. Added to that mystery, where exactly is Suu Kyi now, aged seventy-seven this June, sentenced last year to thirty-three years in prison. Is she really living on an army base in solitary confinement, charged with crimes never heard in open court, if so, shouldn't something be done about it. How are her sons reacting to their mother's plight. Shouldn't we all be told a great deal more?

Jane Kelly

The
Salisbury
Review

*The quarterly magazine of
conservative thought*

Published quarterly in September, December, March & June, volume commencing with September issue.

Annual subscription rates:

UK £27.

Europe £38.

Airmail rest of world: £41,

Digital copy £10 .

Single issues £6+p&p

ISSN: 0265-4881. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or other without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Copyright ©The Salisbury Review

Printed in the UK by The MANSON Group Limited

Typesetting — DASH



“There is a deep human need for beauty, and if you ignore that need in architecture, your buildings will not last, since people will never feel at home in them.”

Roger Scruton



To purchase a book or to discover more of Roger Scruton’s work please visit

www.roger-scruton.com