

The
Salisbury
Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



The Third Marquess of Salisbury
1830-1903

Modern Antisemitism / David Abulafia

War on our Civilisation / Henry George

Real Conservatives / Alistair Miller

The Criminal Justice System / John Beveridge

Our Lords in Government / Vernon Bogdanor

Not Multicultural / Eric Kaufmann

A Plague of Concrete / Jane Kelly

The National Diet / Theodore Dalrymple





The
Salisbury Review

Editor: Mutaz Ahmed
Consulting Editors:
Merrie Cave, Alistair Miller, Jane Kelly
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

- 4 The Woke Roots of Modern Antisemitism
David Abulafia
- 7 Israel and the War on our Civilisation
Henry George
- 9 Are the SDP the Real Conservatives?
Alistair Miller
- 12 Australians Say 'No!
Daryl McCann
- 15 The Beginning of the End?
Alan Sked
- 16 Our Criminal Justice System
John Beveridge
- 22 Deglobalisation and its Discontents
Brian Bolger
- 25 British, not Multicultural
Eric Kaufmann
26. A Plague of Concrete
Jane Kelly
- 28 Our Lords in Government
Vernon Bogdanor
- 30 An Atrocious National Diet
Theodore Dalrymple

Columns

- 33 Conservative Classic – 85
Georges Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*
Sean McGlynn

Book Reviews

- 35 Laurent Lemasson
on Marshal Pétain
- 37 Celia Haddon
on Anna Sewell
- 39 Anthony Daniels
on Poison Pens
- 40 Virginia Bainbridge
on the 100 years War
- 42 Jane Kelly
on Jihad
- 43 Martin Dewhirst
on George Orwell
- 45 James Monkton
on Modern Heretics
- 47 Alexander Adams
on Artists' lives
- 50 Music
Rory Cranstoun on Radio 3
- 52 IN SHORT

Editorial

We apologise to our subscribers for the late arrival of the winter magazine. As well as logistical difficulties courtesy of the Post Office, we have suffered unforeseen problems here at the *Review* including serious illness.

As we witness the dying gasps of a Conservative government bereft of purpose or direction, the belief is gaining currency among many on the right of the party that what is needed is a dose of Thatcherism – a combination of tax cutting and the unleashing of our entrepreneurial spirit. Liz Truss was right. This, they argue, is real conservatism.

Yes, we need lower taxes, along with better managed public services and an overhauled welfare system. And yes, enterprise plays a vital part in any market economy. But Britain is more than just a business, and most of us are not risk-taking, go-getting entrepreneurs. Nor are we especially driven to excel in our chosen calling by working all hours of day and night. Our sources of satisfaction lie elsewhere: in an honest job well done, family and friends, leisure pursuits, home and garden, public service, and in the small pleasures and unexpected encounters of everyday life. We want to know, ‘What is in it for us?’

It is questionable even on business grounds whether everything should be left to market forces. Countries from Germany to Switzerland, from Japan to Singapore, have industrial strategies precisely to ensure that markets work in their national interest – that workers are skilled, infant industries are protected, and long-term investment is promoted. Our strategy, by contrast, is to leave it all to global markets, with the result that investment decisions are the by-product of a financial casino managed by hedge fund managers and private equity firms in search of a quick return.

For those who voted Brexit, ‘Global Britain’ was not at all what they had in mind. Theirs was not a vote for the mass import of ‘the brightest and the best’ from around the world to ‘grow the economy’, nor for the sale of our national infrastructure to foreign investors under the catchline ‘Britain is open for business’. Theirs was a vote to take back control. They wanted

to feel at home in settled communities, to safeguard traditional patterns of life, and to share experiences and memories rooted in a common culture – all things that conservatives used to care about; they wanted their children to be able to earn a decent wage and afford a home to live in; and they wanted, above all, to stem the tide of mass immigration which they saw as threatening all of this. However, with immigration last year reaching record levels, as a deliberate act of policy, these hopes have been grotesquely betrayed.

Nor was Brexit a vote for that inevitable accompaniment to globalism, the ideology of diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism, the poison of identity politics or ‘woke’. People were fed up with the host culture, *their* culture, being branded irredeemably racist. They also wanted back something they held especially dear, and which their forbears fought for: the right to express their thoughts freely without being criminalised for causing offence. Here, again, their hopes have been betrayed.

This is the context of the proposed sale of the *Telegraph* and the *Spectator* to an international investment fund financed by the United Arab Emirates. The threat posed to our free press, and to our wider democratic life, is obvious. But the irony is that the *Telegraph* and the *Spectator* are victims of the very global markets and neo-liberal dogmas that they have long espoused. Whether it be the sale of national newspapers to Russian billionaires, our defence industries to American private equity firms, semiconductor producers to the Chinese, or property and commercial assets to the Gulf states, everything is up for grabs. Even the plane which guards the entrance to Heathrow Airport, once a Concorde proudly emblazoned in British Airways livery, is now an Emirates airbus.

Of course, the sale should be resisted. But it is symptomatic of a deeper malaise, and we should not be the least surprised if our Conservative government welcomes it. If global Britain is ‘open for business’, why not, indeed, the *Telegraph* and the *Spectator*?

We wish all our subscribers the joys of the festive season and hope that the New Year might bring some hope for us all.

The Woke Roots of Modern Antisemitism

David Abulafia

Around 300,000 people are said to have marched through London on Remembrance Day, not in memory of the fallen in Britain's wars but to protest at Israel's legal use of force against an enemy that intends to eradicate the State of Israel and, to judge from its past statements and its recent actions, eliminate its Jewish inhabitants – and indeed Israeli Arabs who were caught up in the Hamas raid on 7 October. Numbers at these events are always exaggerated, but almost 300,000 people are also said to have marched through Washington DC on 14 November, and their minds were on the same conflict. They, though, marched in sympathy with Israel and in condemnation of the upsurge in antisemitism that has resulted from the Hamas attack, and that could already be detected within hours of the atrocity.

The United States, like Great Britain, has experienced a surge in hostility to Jews, and, as in Britain, the focal points have been universities. Even so, it is striking that before the gathering in London on 26 November there has been no great march in the UK comparable in scale and significance to the gatherings in support of the Palestinians. There have been public events in Germany; the French Prime Minister led a march in Paris in condemnation of antisemitism. Why then have those in Britain who are sympathetic to Israel failed until so late to

show their feelings in public, beyond small-scale gatherings that are in any case largely ignored by the BBC and ITN?

Fear of physical violence is certainly one factor, though its corollary is doubt whether the police have the ability or indeed the appetite to control violence against groups waving Star of David flags. The Campaign against Antisemitism website has shown video clips in which the police tried to stop a van advertising the names of child hostages held in Gaza from moving through central London, and have refused to clear its obstruction by demonstrators – even though they have eventually taken action against obstruction of the streets by Just Stop Oil. For there is a sense that something has changed for the worse in attitudes to Jews within Britain – not among the great majority of the population, and not even, probably, among many of those who join the Palestine marches out of understandable concern at the number of lives lost in Gaza (even then they are often strangely quiet about the number of lives lost during the Hamas raid, and seek silence about the hostages carried away by the invaders).

Those who have been photographed with virulently antisemitic placards are not all Islamists. Some of the most vociferous are clearly white British activists. In the most extreme cases they espouse revolutionary violence and therefore regard the attack on

Israel on 7 October as a legitimate act of resistance, while some take the view that all revolutions carry with them death and destruction, in order to build a supposedly better world. Whether that destruction includes the elimination of eleven million Israelis is a question Hamas has already answered. President Herzog of Israel displayed a copy of *Mein Kampf* that one of the Hamas raiders had apparently brought into Israel. The (anti-)intellectual origins of Hamas ideology are not difficult to find, here and in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. British television reporters have found individuals willing to opine that Hitler was right, but that what he got wrong was his failure to finish the job.

In Britain there has long been an ambivalence about Israel that contrasts sharply with nearby countries in Europe. German chancellors have tried to face up to their country's terrible past, and one way they have done that is by emphatically defending the right of Israel to exist. The Balfour Project is an organisation led by Sir Vincent Fean, a former British Consul-General in East Jerusalem, and, in effect, the ambassador of the UK to the Palestinian Authority. Its mantra is the two-state solution, with which I happen to agree very strongly; I share the group's detestation of the West Bank settlements. But there is also a sense in which it speaks for a very different view. A recently posted article by an expert in international law argued that the Balfour Declaration, the establishment of a British Mandate and subsequently the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine breached international law. Setting aside the point that international law as we know it is really a phenomenon of the post-war period, it is hard to see how the delegitimization of Israel helps promote the idea of a State of

Israel and a State of Palestine living side by side – something that, in any case, the United Nations, in important respects the fount of modern international law, originally planned to implement. Moreover, the Balfour Project has published online articles denouncing Israel for stealing Arab cuisine – admittedly, the best hummus I have ever eaten was in Israel, but it was at Said's famous hummus restaurant in the market of Akko/Akka (mediaeval Acre), and its proprietor is an Israeli Arab.

The delegitimization argument is in reality a variant on the cancellation arguments that have become more and more insistent in the last few years. Cancelling a long-dead national hero commemorated in a statue is one thing, but cancelling an entire state takes this act to an entirely new level. Not merely should it not have existed but it should, in this argument, be blotted out. Where that leaves its existing inhabitants is not, of course, explained. 'From the River to the Sea' expresses this view concisely and memorably. In the minds of some the phrase no doubt envisages Jews and Arabs living side by side in harmony in a single state. Alas, all those decades of strife, and in particular the undoubted hardship of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, have made that into a pipe dream. One wonders whether those advocating this solution have heard of a country called Yugoslavia, which collapsed before many of them were born, amid exceptionally violent inter-communal strife that was exacerbated by ethnic, religious and linguistic identities (sometimes bogus).

The protestors do seem to have heard of South Africa, or at least of the Afrikaans word apartheid. Even so, they betray their ignorance. It would be wrong to claim that Israeli Arabs have been treated completely

equally, particularly in the early years of Israel; but the area to which the term arguably applies is not Israel proper but the Occupied Territories, and even then it hardly applies to Gaza following the withdrawal of Israeli forces and settlers in 2005. Yet “From the River to the Sea” clearly applies to the entirety of Israel-Palestine, even though the Arab countries with which Israel has diplomatic relations have accepted the boundaries of 1948 to 1967 as the country’s borders. The real point is that those marching against Israel have no idea how and why Israel came into existence, as a refuge for Jews after the murder of six million of their number, an event that, if rarely actually denied, becomes strangely detached from how critics of Israel’s existence [mis-] understand the country’s origin. That is not to deny the displacement of maybe 750,000 Palestinians, mainly in 1948, at a time, it has to be said, when population transfers were seen as a neat solution to problems of borders, as can be seen in the case of Germany, Poland and neighbouring countries. It is also right to take into account the arrival in Israel of maybe 800,000 Jews from Arab countries. The idea of Israel as a refuge for Jews suffering from antisemitism gains added force when hostility to the Jews is increasing.

This strength of feeling against Israel is a predictable outcome of woke notions about how society operates. Israel is portrayed as a “settler-colonialist” society rather than as a community largely made out of refugees and their descendants. Which European nation led this colonisation is never quite explained. A concomitant is the notion that Jews are not just white but privileged – indeed, they are the archetypal capitalists, because all those traditional stereotypes of Jews worshipping

money and power resurface here. As Simon Sebag Montefiore has pointed out in a recent article in *The Atlantic* these accusations owe much to the vehemently antisemitic tract on the Jews by none other than Karl Marx, himself of Jewish descent. As for whiteness, this description cancels out the idea that Jews suffer racist discrimination, since in this world view white oppression of people of a different skin colour is an eternal feature of global history. If you walk the streets of Tel Aviv you will see plenty of dark-skinned Jews whose families originated in Asia and Africa, but they are conveniently ignored. In other words, race and racism are back at the centre of the argument about Jews, but the argument is tuned topsy-turvy, with the Jews – and not just the Israelis – as the racist oppressors.

Naturally there is neither logic nor consistency in the attitudes that are displayed. Israel is compared to Nazi Germany by some; the Holocaust is denied or downplayed by others, as when Gaza is compared to Auschwitz. Life in Gaza may have been hard for many, but such comparisons reveal astonishing ignorance about what happened to those who lived and the greater number who died in the industrial killing machine of the Nazis. The ultimate irony is that the very people who support unlimited migration by refugees have no time for the refugees who found a home in what became the State of Israel. People who say that they deplore racial prejudice are guilty of a form of racial prejudice that in its most violent form has taken six million lives. Nor, one can be sure, will they heed these words of warning.

David Abulafia CBE is a Meritus Professor of Mediterranean history

Israel and the War on our Civilisation

Henry George

Now we know. Now we know what the violence of which our human nature is always capable looks like when equipped with modern weaponry and communications technology. It looks like Hamas terrorists rampaging through southern Israeli communities, raping, murdering, and mutilating as they go, all filmed for the global public's consumption. This modern Rape of Nanking was an atrocity for the civilised world, and a victory for barbarism.

It is asinine to say, as Penny Mordaunt did, that "Israel's security is our security". Israel, Britain and America are sovereign countries with their own interests and capabilities. Israel occupies a singular military and geopolitical situation, and has a unique historical and political past and present. To conflate our security with Israel's security demonstrates a collapse of perspective into a form of provincial solipsism. It diminishes Israel's own problems, challenges, and achievements, and dissolves its particular circumstances into a bland internationalist soup based on "values" and "right side of history" vibes.

This may all be true, but what we can say is that the forces arrayed against Israel are also arrayed against us here, in Britain and the wider West. The threats we face are not identical in their expression or the actions taken. But they are varying notes within a larger theme.

Israel faces the sharp end of this conflict, in blood and broken bodies, requiring the employment of the state's monopoly on violence and its role as the guarantor of security for its citizens. This hard edge of what it means to be a state is something we have

forgotten in the senescent West of Europe and the Anglosphere. Much of the weak-kneed protests against Israel actually trying to win any conflict at all stems, in part, from this.

The rest of the opposition to Israel is rooted in the same forces that hate what and who we in the West are, and wish to destroy us. This is not to repeat the idiotic verbal flatulence from George W Bush that "they" hate "us" for our "freedoms". Bush, like all who are possessed of a romantic attachment to an abstract universalism, was blind to the fact that other cultures and civilisations actually view the world differently, occupy a different moral horizon, and won't be swayed by appeals to a politics of rational calculation. We have forgotten this. Decades of peace efforts in Israel and the Middle East are based on such delusions.

We have also assumed that those who come here and live in Britain will inevitably adopt our national home as their home, our ways as their ways, our sacred things as their sacred things. Indeed, many have. But many others have not and will not. We saw this on full show in the week following the Hamas slaughter of Israeli men, women, children, and babies. Thousands demonstrated in the immediate aftermath, before any Israeli response, in celebration of what Hamas had done. The massacres were presented as a blow in the great war for liberation from colonial oppression. Some described what had happened as "beautiful to see". A graphic of the hang-glider murderers was created, imitating that of the Che Guevara prints so popular in the past.

This excusing or outright celebrating of anti-Jewish butchery continued. A hundred thousand marched through central London on Saturday, 14th, 21st, and 28th October 2023. Chants like "Free,

Palestine” were heard. There were also chants of “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free”, and “from Gaza to London, globalise the Intifada”. Fake, bloodstained babies were bounced on Palestinian flags. A protest held by Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir witnessed calls for jihad against Israel, next to banners about Muslim armies. No closing one’s eyes or ears here: these are calls to genocide via the destruction of the Israeli state and its people. Further evidence was provided by the chanting of “Khaybar Khaybar, ya yahud, Jaish Muhammad, sa yahud”, translated as “Jews, remember the battle of Khaybar, the army of Muhammad is returning.” This references a massacre of Jews by Mohammed’s forces.

We must not be under any illusions. This venom and genocidal rhetoric is directed at Israel on our streets because those screaming it see Israel as part of the West. Why is this a surprise? Israel represents the religious part of the triptych of Athens (philosophy), Rome (law), and Jerusalem (morality) that our civilisation is built on. Our morality, rooted in Jewish tradition and Christian faith, is fundamental to our very existence, as historian Tom Holland has shown. Of course those who see us as an enemy seek to destroy this. We are either too arrogant or ignorant (really the same thing) to think such things really matter anymore. Others in the world are simply more honest than we are.

The rhetorical attacks on Israel should not be a surprise. The academic left allies of the Islamist theocrats have for decades portrayed Israel as a white supremacist, settler-colonial apartheid state that has engaged in ethnic cleansing and an ongoing genocide, all enabled by Western imperialism and as recompense for European guilt over the extermination of its Jews in the Shoah.

This academic left reportedly only made up a minority of the march on the consecutive Saturdays. The majority seem to be from ethnic minority backgrounds, many if not mostly British Muslim supporters of

Palestine, along with diaspora agitators. The foundational goals of these factions are different (global Caliphate enforcing *shariah* versus global enforced equality) but their means are similar. The Islamists and their sympathisers who rally in support of the destruction of Israel may do so based on an ideology comprising a particularly bloody form of extremist Islamism infused with Nazi ideology. But their animus against Israel and the West accords with their leftist comrades of convenience. The Red-Green alliance ended with the Red wiped out by the Green in Iran in 1979. Something similar would happen here.

The point is, when these marches proclaim the need to decolonise the West, they’re talking about *you*, they’re talking about *us*. They see no difference between Israel and us. We are all part of the same malign power structure that stands in the way of global enforced racial egalitarianism, or global enforced submission to an Islamist conception of God’s law. If they had the chance, the same nightmare witnessed in Israel would happen here. Anti-colonial wars were some of the bloodiest of the post-war world. Decolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon saw violence against colonial powers as a form of revolutionary catharsis, essential for the psychological, and therefore political, health of liberated peoples.

The assault in the West so far has been on the metaphysical, philosophical, cultural, and political foundations of what makes us who we are, as a distinct country and culture with its own history and identity, part of a distinct civilisation. But it is well past time to wake up. We must accept that the imposition of what I call the woke New Moral Order comprises the intellectual and cultural equivalent of the attack that saw its bloody reality in the terror assault faced by Israel. We cannot remain in denial any longer.

Henry George is a young conservative writer and critic.

Are the SDP the Real Conservatives?

Alistair Miller

In May 2019, not long before his untimely death, in conversation with Douglas Murray on the future of conservatism, Roger Scruton remarked of our conservative government that he could not think of a single conservative policy or thought that distinguished it – indeed, it seemed to devote its time and effort to avoiding conservative policies whenever it could.

If this was true in 2019, how much truer it is now. But Scruton was not referring to unleashing the spirit of free enterprise, or to “delivering Brexit”, or even to reducing the tax burden – the usual articles of faith of conservative politicians and the mainstream conservative media. Indeed, he wrote in *The Meaning of Conservatism*, first published in the early 1980s in part as an antidote to Thatcherism, that there was *no necessary connection* between conservatism and capitalism, a sentiment that would be incomprehensible to most modern-day conservatives.

What Scruton meant was that at the heart of conservatism lies, not the market, nor even our individual liberties, but the sense of belonging to a community. Conservatism is about traditions, customs, attachments, and loyalties; and it centres on our natural affections for family, home, community, and nation.

It is, in short, the love “of what is ours”. Of course, conservatives also believe in the freedom of the individual, in private property and free markets; but they recognise that our freedoms are rooted in a framework of

laws, institutions, customs and practices, the fruits of a moral and cultural tradition that has evolved over centuries. When our freedoms are detached from this tradition by rationalist liberals and reconstituted as inalienable human rights that can be multiplied indefinitely, the result is not liberty but tyranny.

This ought all to be obvious from the term “conservative”. To be a conservative is to want *to conserve*, not out of some misplaced curatorial desire to preserve the past, but, as Scruton put it, “the sentiment that good things are easily destroyed, but not easily created”. It ought also to be obvious from that great tradition of conservative thought that runs from Burke, through Tocqueville, Disraeli, T S Eliot, and Oakeshott, to Scruton himself. But for modern-day conservatives, conservatism boils down to markets and little else.

They are globalist neo-liberals, whose dogmatic belief in *laissez-faire*, combined with a keen interest in personal financial gain, justifies the fire sale of our national assets to foreign-owned private equity funds, and mass immigration to provide cheap labour to “grow the economy”, regardless of the consequences for long-term business investment (ours is the lowest in the G7), national security, training up our own people, housing and public services, or the effects on social cohesion of rapid demographic change.

As for our traditional loyalties and affections, our preferences for the local

and familiar, and family life in settled communities, these are merely hindrances to the free play of market forces. Which perhaps explains why conservatives have been so relaxed about the post-Marxist project to deconstruct our civilisation, to subvert it from the inside, that has become known as “woke”. No organisation, public or private, can now operate without a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategy, complete with obligatory references to critical race theory, decolonisation, social justice, LGBT rights etc. And no school can survive an inspection unless it indoctrinates children in the same principles.

There is the occasional glimmer of hope within the Conservative party. All credit to Suella Braverman and Kemi Badenoch for their uncompromising stance on “woke”, and their opposition to mass immigration. But both remain wedded to the dogma of global markets and unfettered free trade, which would reduce our country to a business park managed by the Chinese.

Outside party politics, there are signs of a conservative revival in the form of the National Conservatism movement, whose conference in London back in May attracted an impressive array of socially conservative thinkers from Britain and America. But aside from the handful of renegade conservative politicians who spoke at the conference, the movement is studiously ignored by the party establishment.

As Eric Kaufmann, former professor of politics at Birkbeck, remarked in his speech, conservative politicians are happy to confine themselves to economic issues and avoid “the culture wars” because it means “they are not going to be called racist”, which allows the woke left “to steamroller its way through the institutions with no resistance”.

Yet there is genuine Scrutonian

conservatism abroad in the political world. The Social Democratic Party, or SDP, might not seem an obvious wellspring of conservative thought. One thinks of Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins of the original SDP, who were diehard liberals. Indeed, it was Roy Jenkins who in 1966 in a speech on immigration proclaimed the new religion of cultural diversity. Social democratic parties in Europe, like the German SPD, are basically democratic socialist, and advocate a mix of social justice and individual freedom. And then there is our own SNP, distinct of course, but easily confused by voters confronted with a ballot paper – something the SDP might consider before the next election. But look at the substance of the SDP, and it is hard to find a single policy or thought that is *not* conservative – that is, conservative in the deep Scrutonian sense of the term.

True, the SDP’s centre-left stance on economic policy, the idea of a social market, will give free marketeers the jitters; but there is nothing alien to the conservative tradition about protecting strategic national assets from foreign ownership, returning natural monopolies like the utilities to public ownership or at least properly regulating them, or pursuing an “active industrial policy”, like most of our competitors. However, when it comes to social and cultural issues, the SDP’s conservatism is impeccable. Scruton himself could have penned the SDP’s New Declaration entitled ‘The Common Good in the National Interest’, which is not so surprising given the striking number of members, and speakers, who know this magazine and profess to admiring Scruton – something I discovered when I attended the SDP conference last Saturday.

Try these excerpts for size: “The national home we have built and defended over centuries, reflects a

deep and genuine need for belonging”; “We will vigorously resist the naïve ambitions of both ‘open border’ zealots and neoliberal ideologues”; “We believe a stable and secure family life to be the foundation of society”; “We reject the current obsession with grievance and identity”; and “We pledge to uphold the values of freedom of thought and speech which lie at the heart of British democracy”. They are music to the ears.

William Clouston, the party’s leader, developed these themes in his conference address. Our dependence on mass immigration, he argued, resembled an addict needing his fix; there had been no thought given to its social impact or to integration; transwomen were not women – if they were, the prefix would not be necessary; and bourgeois identity politics was serious because it threatened our very civilisation. Clouston finished with a call that was utterly Scrutonian: “Vote for a party which sees our country not as a shop, or as a charity, but a home – the place we love.”

There are currents in the SDP that are distinctly social democratic in spirit, most evident in an over-emphasis on democracy as the be-all and end-all of political life. For example, I was surprised that the abolition of the House of Lords was party policy, because it runs against every conservative and old liberal instinct. As Burke, Mill and the architects of the American constitution all recognised, conferring unlimited power on the executive is a sure recipe for tyranny. However, a motion to keep the House of Lords was carried, and hopefully wiser counsels will prevail.

Must we vote Conservative to stop Labour getting in? Is a vote for the SDP a wasted vote?

These are difficult questions. But for those of us who can no longer stomach voting for the official Conservative party, the emergence of a party with genuine conservative instincts – instincts probably shared by most of the population – is a welcome development.

Alistair Miller is a teacher and regular columnist.



Australians Say ‘No!’

Daryl McCann

One conservative pundit here described the defeat of “the Voice” referendum on October 14 as “Australia’s very own Brexit moment”. Almost 60 per cent of Australians, against the expressed wishes of our political class, rejected the proposition that our constitution be changed to allow for the establishment of a permanent body to represent the opinion of Aboriginals to the Federal Parliament. The Albanese Labor government, mainstream media, celebrities, universities and schools, corporations, cultural institutions and even national sporting associations dominated the airwaves in support of the Voice. As recently as six months ago, the polls had the Yes vote at 60 per cent, but then it all changed. What caused the Australian people to change their mind?

For the powerful progressive forces in Australia, at least, the lesson to be learned from the October 14 debacle is simple: Australians are not only selfish but downright racist. Expecting them to do the right thing in the privacy of a secret ballot was naïve. It would have been better to use Labor’s current majority in the House of Representatives to legislate into existence the Voice and avoid the bother of changing the constitution. One problem with that, however, is that a future conservative government could have rescinded that legislation and dissolved the Voice. Enshrining it in the constitution made it permanent.

Claiming to be a “conviction politician”, Prime Minister Albanese has expressed no regrets about spending an estimated \$450

million on his botched referendum initiative. Now it has been defeated, he is against establishing a version of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Voice through Parliament. Albanese wanted his legacy to be historic, and a referendum win would certainly have been historic given that they rarely succeed. Not only does a referendum victory require a majority of the population to vote in favour of the proposition but a majority of states.

Like so many progressives throughout the West, Albanese and the Yes campaigners spoke of unity and inclusivity in the lead up to the referendum but have only managed to create division and resentment. After irresponsibly promising that a Yes vote would close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, Albanese – with a mind to winning the next federal election – abruptly announced that Australia had to “move on” once the result was known. Having implied that the promoters of the No vote were racist or at least indifferent to the plight of Aboriginals, Albanese’s about-turn shocked Indigenous Yes activists. Commented Allira Davis, Uluru youth dialogue co-chair: “Our mobs are devastated. Imagine saying tonight that you are proud of being Australian when First Nations people are in mourning after a relentless campaign of lies and racist abuse... He’s already moved on.”

What Davis has misunderstood – due to the dishonest tactics of Albanese and the Yes campaigners – is that Australians did not vote No on racist grounds. Moreover, once the Yes campaign was crushed in such a dramatic

fashion, Albanese could hardly accuse 60 percent of the voters of being racist. Our “conviction politician” suddenly discovered he had other convictions – such as being re-elected in 2025. Albanese will have to find another way to leave an historical legacy. There is some talk of holding a second referendum on the republic – the last one was in 1999 – but Albanese will be wary about ever again pursuing the referendum route to glory.

If, as I am suggesting, the Australian people do not hold racist attitudes towards Aboriginals, then why did so many of us reject Albanese’s referendum? The answer, paradoxically enough, is that we are *not* racist. For many, the idea of inserting into our constitution a parallel government/representative body for Aboriginal Australians sounds too much like apartheid. South Africa’s system of governance, with its various racially based chambers, denied the universality of citizenship. A person’s political rights, Australians protested at the time, must not be determined by racial (or gender or religious) criteria. And yet that is exactly what the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Voice was proposing to do. It did not help matters that the proposed power of the Voice remained a mystery.

The biggest mistake of the Yes campaigners, as is often the case with progressives and modern-day leftists, was characterising Aboriginal people as members of a single monolithic entity rather than as unique individuals with disparate opinions. Thus, Aboriginals who supported the No vote, including the eloquent Senator Jacinta Nampijinna Price, were demonised by Yes activists as identity traitors. Why? Because belonging to a single monolithic entity means having the same politics as every other member of your allocated group. It is

no stretch to see this as akin to antisemitism – that is, presupposing the worldview of someone with a Jewish lineage. Negative discrimination and so-called positive discrimination rotate upon the same collectivist axis.

This was certainly the point Price made in her maiden speech to the Senate in 2022. She railed against the “Indigenous Industry gravy train” that encouraged “opportunistic collectivism” among Aboriginal communities, especially in the northern half of Australia including in her hometown of Alice Springs. For instance, the granting of land rights, a cause beloved by Australian progressives, has not brought prosperity to the Indigenous people of northern Australia. Although almost half of the Northern Territory is now controlled by “traditional owners”, life for many Aboriginals has become one of welfare dependency with all the dysfunctionality attendant upon that. In her maiden speech, Price spoke of the “normalised alcohol abuse, domestic, family and sexual violence” that now pervades Aboriginal communities in the NT.

What every Aboriginal individual needed – as every individual Australian needed – was a job, not positive discrimination in the form of special welfare payments and a special Indigenous Voice to Parliament. The tragedy of all this contrasted sharply with the Aboriginals who had good jobs in the south of the country and had effectively integrated into mainstream society.

The genuinely unifying message of Jacinta Nampijinna Price, daughter of Warlpiri community leader and former politician Bess Price, has resonated with Australians in the wake of the referendum, especially with conservatives and moderates fed up with the divisive identity politics of our political and corporate elite. The fact that many of them

now see the 42-year-old former deputy mayor of Alice Springs as a future prime minister should be proof enough that conservative-leaning white Australians are not racist. Senator Price certainly shares the view that Australia is not “systematically racist” as radical Aboriginal activists (and radical white activists) claim. The great divide in Western societies, according to modern-day leftism, is not class but race, a belief that can serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy and, in the opinion of Price, only cause division and make matters worse for those on the margins of Australian society.

This goes a long way to explain why she has opposed the change to Australia Day, the national holiday which commemorates the landing of the First Fleet and raising of the Union Flag by Arthur Phillip on January 26, 1788. Over the past decade or so, Indigenous activists and non-Indigenous wokeists have tried to persuade us that Australia Day should be renamed Invasion Day. Back in 2018, when Price joined the “Save Australia Day” movement, she made the same point she made throughout this year’s referendum campaign – how, exactly, would changing things improve the lives of Aboriginal people? In any case, she added, Australia Day is “magical”. And it is, being the occasion in which migrants often choose to have their Australian citizenship ceremony.

There are a host of reasons why October 14, 2023, might be considered “Australia’s very own Brexit moment”. In both cases, ordinary people refused to bend to the will of a power elite who claim to know what is best for everyone. In both cases, too, the elite disparaged ordinary people as racists or “deplorables”.

In both cases, finally, we see a realignment of political alliances. Conservatives – in the case of Australia that means the Coalition

parties, which includes Price’s Liberal National Party – have been presented with a chance to represent “the battlers”, regular people who are unsympathetic to the New Racism of identity politics; people who have a moral sense that identity is derived from our humanity and not the other way around. Jacinta Nampijinna Price, more effectively than any other conservative politician in the country, has made the case that national unity is in the best interests of everyone, the underprivileged no less than the privileged.

Daryl McCann is an Australian journalist.



The Beginning of the End?

Alan Sked

The spectacular achievement of Geert Wilders in winning the Dutch general election has sent shock waves throughout Europe. Not only does Wilders want to stop all immigration into the Netherlands but he is in favour of a so-called “Nexit” referendum to end his country’s membership of the EU. In this context it should be remembered that Capital Economics here in London in 2014 examined the pros and cons of such a move, concluding it would be to the advantage of the Netherlands. The latter would save on contributions to the EU budget, could rescind EU regulations, would save on its share of bailouts of poor, Southern European, could run its own monetary and fiscal policies and could develop trade links with economically more dynamic countries around the world. Last but not least, it could run its own immigration policy.

All of these things Britain has been able to do since we ourselves left the EU although one might hope that the Netherlands would do them better. Certainly we have failed spectacularly to control immigration as the most recent figures clearly demonstrate.

Uncontrolled immigration is now increasing the vote of right-wing, Eurosceptic parties everywhere in Europe. Wilders has just proved this in the Netherlands. Yet the Brothers of Italy and the League are now running Italy, the Swedish Democrats control government policy in Sweden, while in France the National Rally under Marine le Pen looks set to win the European elections there next year. In Germany meanwhile the AfD or Alternative for Germany is now polling almost

as many votes as all three governing coalition parties combined while on the Left another Eurosceptic anti-immigration party led by the maverick politician Sahra Wagenknecht has just been founded. The chances are therefore that the entire EU political arena is about to undergo radical changes. And immigration will be at the centre of these.

The trouble is that the EU as a whole cannot agree on any policy to stem immigration. Countries like Germany want to keep the tide of illegal immigrants penned into Italy, Spain and Greece. And countries in Northern and Eastern Europe frankly refuse to accept any immigrants at all. Meanwhile Bulgaria and Romania have been refused admission to the Schengen Area to prevent migrants coming in from Turkey who have used the land route. It has also proved impossible since 2015, when Germany bribed Turkey to quench the flow of immigrants from Turkey, to make any arrangements with third countries to take in illegal immigrants to process. Yet everyone agrees that since Angela Merkel accepted 1.2 migrants into Germany in 2015 and some compassionate countries like Sweden followed her example, mass immigration has been a disaster.

Unfortunately for the EU the apparently insoluble problem of immigration is hardly likely to go away. Climate change plus wars in Asia and Africa are likely to increase the numbers of third world refugees, perhaps exponentially. The EU of course has no navy to stop them and its boasted adherence to human rights and refugee conventions means that it would lack a legal basis to do so even

if it had. So any solutions might have to be national ones. And that could only mean the break-up of the EU.

In the meantime, the EU is no longer the cosy bloc of equals that it was supposed to be when it was first established. In fact, it is run more or less by Germany. Our former ambassador there, Sir Paul Lever, entitled his memoirs *Berlin Rules. Europe and the German Way*. An Oxford's Professor of European Politics has written: "Crucial decisions are being made in an informal mode in Berlin, with little input from formal institutions in Brussels." As long ago as 2012 Professor Ulrich Beck's "German Europe" warned Southern European states to get used to

German "neo-colonialism". Since then Franco-German dualism is more or less a joke.

So what incentives would populist parties have in order to keep the system going should they win power? They could control immigration outside. They would save money outside. They would lose no international influence outside. They would lose German dominance outside. What possible reason would there be, save nostalgia or a fuzzy internationalism, to allow the EU to continue?

The Dutch election results could indeed therefore signal the beginning of the end for the EU.

Our Criminal Justice System

John Beveridge

"An effective criminal justice system is central to the operating of a functioning state – protecting its citizens is one of the first responsibilities of government". Policy Exchange Report 2023.

It is generally considered that every branch of our current criminal justice system is sub standard and deteriorating. The Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Judiciary and the Prison Service and system of non custodial punishment are all the subject of justified dissatisfaction. I approach this large subject from my personal vantage point, which limits the scope and purpose of this article, but, I hope, gives it a factual value. From 1963 to about 1970, I had some experience of criminal cases, as a barrister, and, from 1973 to 1995, I had six weeks' annual experience of them, as a part time judge, in the Crown Courts. That past gives me perspective.

I think the worst performing sector, in the dismal collection, is the CPS, so I shall start with

that. I was always a commercial practitioner, but, in my early years, I appeared in some criminal trials. In those days, major crimes were dealt with by the Director of Public Prosecutions and other crimes by local solicitors, appointed for the purpose, in every part of the country. The DPP was a senior criminal barrister, not an administrator, who was highly capable in prosecutions and ran an office, of modest size, of people he knew and oversaw, turning to the Bar, for extra help with court work. The solicitors were under general observation and could not survive, if incapable. For example, in Exeter, where the criminal courts sat at the Castle and Guildhall, the appointed solicitor had his offices at the Castle, took personal responsibility for each case, and relied on the Bar for advocacy. I recall that his office staff was tiny and that he knew, not only the local Bar, but the policemen, probation officers and even the frequent offenders. He was a modest man, who did a modest job well, at low cost and

without delays.

When the CPS was formed, in 1986, local prosecutors and the DPP were supplanted by a huge, national organisation, necessarily run by a bureaucracy, operated by employed solicitors and barristers, remote from the coal face and dominated by rules and internal regulation, in place of direct knowledge and individual judgement. Today, only some third of its staff are lawyers. I remember its then director, in about 1990, making a speech to judges, in which she asserted that the recent failure of her Service, to achieve reasonable rates of success, in getting convictions, was because they were prosecuting cases which had too low a prospect of success and that she would cure this by mandating that no case should be prosecuted, unless it had at least a fifty percent chance of success. It seemed not to have occurred to her that the failure rate could have been caused by low level work by her team, nor that her mandate would mean that a minor criminal, assessed at a fifty percent chance of prosecutorial success, would be prosecuted, but, for example, a child rapist and murderer, assessed at a forty nine percent chance, would not be prosecuted.

Not long after its establishment, the CPS earned a reputation for gross incompetence. Papers are lost, witnesses are not given notice of trial dates and advocates, if they turn up, can be lamentable. One obvious problem, apart from the unsuitability of legal work to be institutionalised, is that capable and ambitious lawyers go into private practice, where prospects are better than with the CPS, which cannot match the returns from successful private practice. One particularly bad feature of the CPS is that, being an institution, it lives off paperwork, especially statistics, from which it can promulgate rules, so it makes significant demands on police time, in filling out forms. Much of such form filling is time wasted and none of it is of value equal to time spent in actual policing.

There have been several attempts to improve the CPS, but its problems are inherent in the fact that its size requires it to be a bureaucracy,

dominated by rules, in which personal professional standards are hard to develop, or maintain. Ideally, we would return the position to the status quo ante, but improvement might be achieved by splitting it into smaller structures, in some way. Without some fundamental effort, this rotting albatross will hang about the neck of our criminal justice system, indefinitely.

I turn next to the judiciary, where, again, I have some personal experience and in relation to which there have been changes, since I first sat. The change I notice is in the outlook and personality of the bench. I know of two possible factors at work, here. In my early days, judges tended to be traditional and to have few of the doubts, now prevalent, about the need for punishment and the value of prison. In this connection, although I don't know when it was introduced, the new method of appointing silks may be relevant. I took silk in 1979, when one's application was supported by two referees, senior judges, or silks, and little more. Now, applicants fill in a form and one question asks what the applicant has done for equality and diversity. I am told that, without some positive answer to that question, the application is unlikely to succeed. It is lucky for my career that nothing of that kind was required, in my day, as my answer would have been curt. What possible relevance can that issue have to fitness to take silk? But, as almost all senior judges are appointed from silk, it will have an effect on the constitution of the bench. The more suggestible may respond to this wokery and suppose that such political issues are for their concern, which they emphatically are not. The other factor is the education of judges. When I was appointed, there was no judicial education. One was expected to learn on the job. Later, even as a part time judge, I was required to attend residential conferences, consisting mostly of lectures. Many of these were delivered by experienced probation officers, psychiatrists, reformers and such like, with no love for the imposition of punishment. I was surprised at how well these talks were received by the judges, who seemed to soak

it all up, without filtering. Perhaps becoming employed makes them biddable. I believe it is right that judges should receive some education, but its character will influence their work, not always for the better, if it is one sided.

When I was just ten years in call, I received an invitation from the Lord Chancellor, in charge of the judiciary, in those days, to sit as a part time judge in the Crown Court and try crime. This was unusually early in a career and I was unsure what to do, as almost all my experience was in civil work. In the event, I replied that I would be happy to sit, but to try civil work. I had no response, but, a few weeks later, I received an invitation, identical to the first. Again, I replied that I would prefer to try crime. No answer, but, a few weeks later, a third, identical invitation, to try crime. I thought that if either I, or the Lord Chancellor, had to back down, it had better be me, so I accepted to sit for two weeks, trying crime, in Gloucester Crown Court. I borrowed a standard outline summing up to a jury and made sure I reached court early. My plan was to warn the court clerk, in advance. I sent for him and, as he walked into my room, he apologised and said that it was his first day of sitting and would I keep an eye on him. I asked if anyone else would be sitting, that day, and he said, yes, Judge Bulger. I asked who would be clerking him and was told, the senior clerk. I asked him to go to the senior clerk, explain the position and see if the Judge would agree to switch clerks. The answer came back “No”. I sent a message to the robing room, warning the Bar of the problem and hoped.

It happened that I had a series of similar offences to try, affrays in pubs, in Chelmsford. I looked up the sentencing in Archbold, the leading criminal law book, and found that Borstal – about two years in a young offenders institution – was available. The fortnight went well, the Bar was kind to me and I made no obvious mistakes. We had some convictions and some pleas of guilt and, in all, I sentenced 16 youths, giving Borstal to all.

Before leaving, I was tidying up in my retiring room, when I was told that a deputy assistant

Chief Constable was outside and wanted to see me. My horror at what blunder of mine could warrant such a senior figure was intense, but I invited him in and put on my best poker face. He stood before me, covered in silver braid, accompanied by another officer, almost as well covered, both carrying caps and gloves. He looked at me with adoration. “16 offenders and not one probation, Your Honour” he gasped. “Usually, the pubs are full of laughing offenders, the day after sentencing, but, within a few days of your sitting, there was no violence at all, in Chelmsford. I just wanted to thank you.” In that I was never thanked again, that was the peak of my judicial career, but, when I hear it said that prison does not deter, I remember that moment.

A report by The Policy Exchange was published, a few days ago, on the subject of sentencing. It contends that the system “is failing to protect the public from the depredations of these prolific offenders” and cites the case of a man with more than 100 previous sex offences, convicted of a further 15 against children, who was given a suspended sentence and the case of a man with 343 previous offences, found guilty of a further 15 thefts, given a community service order. During the course of my sittings, I became accustomed to seeing, from the history provided to me, that offenders before me had been given last chances more often than the Rolling Stones have given concerts. Most judges are decent people and dislike imposing punishment, but it is their duty to do so, when appropriate, and it is quite clear that many do not perform that duty as they should. In this, they are encouraged by the constant barrage from reformists, asserting that prison does not work. What does that mean? In what respect does it not work? It provides a significant deterrent, as my story shows. It keeps criminals away from the public, for a while. Of course, it rarely “cures” criminals, although it can and should retrain them. And it does not stop all crime, but nothing will do that until human nature can be changed. Most people comply with generally accepted behaviour, as a matter of natural inclination, but some, for genetic or

acquired reasons, don't. Even in my day, there was such a shortage of prison cells that judges were told to avoid imposing imprisonment whenever possible, because of the lack of places. Bearing in mind that few prisoners serve more than half of their sentences, due to remissions, this predicates a terrible failure by governments, over the past half century. I suppose there are no votes in building prisons.

I now turn to the prison system. I have made the first point, already. There are not enough prisons and our governments have known this, for decades. Of course, this means the second point arises, the prisons are over crowded. And the third point, that many are old and dilapidated. We cannot have an effective criminal justice system, without a proper prison system. So successive governments have known that they are failing in this first responsibility and what they had to do to put it right. Political parties have been so engaged in buying votes with unaffordable levels of welfare, health and pension expenditure that they have neglected their first duties. There can be debate about the best prosecution system and best approach to judicial training, but no debate is possible as to the need for adequate prisons. Not only are prisons too few, overcrowded and run down, but, partly as a consequence, understaffed. I shall not go into the figures, as they are easily available, but those facts are incontrovertible. In the recent Kings' Speech it is proposed that the problem of prison capacity may be reduced, or cured, by sending convicts to prisons abroad. This proposal is too new to evaluate, but I see no objection to the idea, in principle, although numerous problems may arise, in practice, and, of course, little, or nothing, may actually be done. In the same speech, noise was made about longer sentences, a proposal without meaning, when it was announced alongside a directive that tens of thousands of prisoners should be released ahead of time, due to lack of prison accommodation.

I have not heard it asserted, but I have always believed that, while the state may arrogate to itself

the right to deprive citizens of their liberty, it has a duty to see that the punishment is measured and defined, not haphazard and at large. This would mean that prison accommodation must be of a set standard and not overcrowded. It must also mean that, when the state confines a criminal, depriving him of the ability to look after himself, it must look after him properly, in other respects. In particular, it means he must be governed in an orderly manner, by appointed officers, not ruled by the most violent of his fellow inmates and bullied. I have no personal knowledge to offer on these issues, but it is a matter of general knowledge that the keeping of prisoners does not conform to any such standard. Since inmates are, by definition, likely to be ill behaved, there are obvious difficulties in achieving that standard. However, the process needs to begin with sufficient and proper accommodation and staffing. It is a grave reflection on the priorities of successive governments that the expenditure, which is all that is necessary to supply these things, has not been forthcoming.

One burden imposed on prisons, from which they should be freed, is the housing of the mentally ill. There can be no adequate figures on the point, as many who ought to be treated, rather than just confined, are not diagnosed, nor recorded. However, I had an instance of what can happen, in a case before me. A heavily built and obviously powerful man, of about 20, stood in the dock, charged with impeding a burial. I forget his mental age, but it was that of a young child. He had been living in an open mental hospital, behind the grounds of which was a mortuary. The offender had broken into the mortuary and removed a head from a corpse. He took to coming up to nurses, saying that he had two heads, a proposition which they ignored, until he produced a plasticine head, in which there were two human eyes. Asked about this, he proudly lead the nurses to a shallow hole, in which the eyeless head was held. The Chairman of the institution had refused to accept the young man back, saying his establishment was unsuitable for him. In consequence, he had

been held in prison, until trial. I asked counsel to where I could order him to be sent, but was told that enquiries had been made and no place was available to him, anywhere. I was told that it had to be prison, even by his own counsel. I said that this was not good enough and put the case back to the next day, for enquiries to be made of the relevant department, which – I don't recall – may have been the Department of Health, or the Home Office. The next day, I had the same story. I said that I would not imprison a man who may not understand that he had done wrong, who would have an appalling time in prison and who would be incapable of caring for himself, after his release. I would have released him, had he been fit to survive in society. I issued a summons for whichever secretary of state it was, to appear before me, two days later, to explain why he could not provide a place for this man-child, and informed the appalled prosecutor that, if the Secretary of State did not appear, I would issue a warrant for his arrest. I don't know what would otherwise have eventuated from my stand, but, the next day, I was asked if I would hear an application in the case and was told that a place in a secure mental hospital had been found for the offender. I had other cases, less extreme, which indicated that, sometimes, when there seemed to be nothing else to do with someone, they ended in prison, it being ever available.

The boundaries of mental health and illness are variable and treatments for mental problems, on either side of the boundary, are often unavailable, or ineffective. This is a problem in daily life, but the more so, in the criminal world, where mental problems abound. There is psychiatric help in prisons, but it is marginal in quantity and effect. I think consideration should be given either to establishing psychiatric wings, on prisons, or specific centres, to which offenders can be sent, as part of terms of imprisonment.

I don't know enough about sentencing alternatives to prison, to say more than that none are notably effective, as alternatives to prison. Often, a convicted person cannot pay a

fine. Often, they will do little, or none, of any community service, to which they are sentenced. Probation officers can do nothing for those who will not cooperate. One can only say that there are some genuine alternatives to prison for some offences, especially minor offences, and some offenders, but nothing which makes prison redundant.

Lastly, the Police, who have become a major problem. There are different forces – or “services” – for each county and for the metropolis, but the same problems afflict them all. I have no special knowledge to report, so I will just run through the most notable matters of general knowledge. One almost never sees police on patrol, except in cars, trapping motorists. Street muggings have become so common in London that many men will not wear expensive watches in the street. Knife crime is no longer rare and schoolchildren are among those who frequently carry knives. In some parts of the country, almost no burglars have been prosecuted, for several years, let alone thieves. Bands of violent shoplifters maraud in Oxford Street. More often than not, even when a shopkeeper has arrested a thief, the police just won't come to pick him up. Overall, the apprehension of any kind of offender is at critically low rates, unless it is a matter of rebuking someone for hate speech. Public confidence in the police is at record lows. These are grave matters. If the public cannot rely on the police to protect them, they will – rightly – seek to protect themselves: there are instances of neighbourhoods patrolling, to do just that, which is the first sign that a society is lawless.

How did things come to this? It seems that senior officers have either been convinced by fashionable wokery, or give it priority, from the belief it will advance their careers. For whatever combination of reasons, there has been a neglect of basic police duties, but adoption of concerns with minor issues. Since when is it right to give priority to a minor instance of “hate speech” over burglary, or street violence? When so few burglars are arrested, why was a lady arrested,

recently, for praying silently outside an abortion clinic? How was there police time to arrest a Christian couple because they would not sell a cake for a marriage between homosexuals? How was it that numerous Pakistani men were allowed to make a large scale practice of subjecting numerous young English girls to grave abuse, for several years, when this was known to the police? Police foot patrols are the shop window of the force – sorry, service – without which the police are faceless. Whereas, everyone was once familiar with an amiable and protective patrolman, nowadays few people ever see a policeman, unless they are regulating crowds. Whereas, once a call to the police was always answered by the prompt appearance of officers, now, it seems, they just don't come to many calls for help. Many crimes are simply disregarded by the police. Some of this may be due to the inadequacies of the CPS, since the police must be frustrated, to the extreme, by the difficulties in achieving successful prosecutions and, if they charge anyone, they are buried in paperwork, to satisfy the largely pointless demand for statistics. Perhaps the senior officers are influenced by Home Office civil servants, who are notoriously left wing.

Some commentary on the issues is provided by the recent report from the Victim's Commissioner. Charging rates – note, not conviction rates, which are much lower – have fallen from 15.5%, eight years ago, to below 6%; only 44% of those who reported crimes would do so again and over 80% said – rightly, in my view – that they had no confidence in the CPS in bringing people to justice.

What can and should be done? The Home Secretary needs to meet the leading group of every individual force and instruct them on the priorities. Foot patrols need to be reinstated. The police should be freed from excessive paperwork. They should have the right to decide on some prosecutions, instead of the CPS. They should be freed from fear that arresting coloured people will be laying themselves open to censure. They should be encouraged to stop

and search people likely to be carrying knives and complaints that they disproportionately stop youths, black, or white, should be disregarded – who should they search, little old ladies? They should be encouraged to monitor enclaves of Muslims, where Sharia law currently applies. They must be given real confidence that, if they carry out their duties properly, the Home Office will fully support them. These few basic matters, if accompanied by improvement in the other areas of the criminal justice system, would affect substantial improvement in police performance.

As things are, the present Government, along with the previous several governments, stands condemned by the dire state of our criminal justice system. If nothing is done, at the highest level, things will deteriorate even more. This is a real issue, which can be addressed and which would be appreciated by the electorate. One wonders why the Government, so in need of electoral support, continues on its failing path, disregarding its first duty.

John Beveridge was a barrister and a judge.



'Excuse me, sir - have you paid for that machete?'

Deglobalisation and its Discontents

Brian Bolger

There seemed to be an inevitability in the talk of globalisation and the ‘end of history’ which ushered in the twenty first century. This emanated from the post-World War II era of New Deals and free trade, and of a dollar hegemony supposedly built on a dichotomy of liberalism and democracy. There was a broad consensus amongst academics and liberals, combined with a myopic belief in the progressive benefits of technology, that a brave new world consensus was forming and that war and discontent was ebbing away like the tide from an old broken Empire.

Economists tend to measure globalisation in ‘Trade in Goods’ and FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) flows across borders. Yet this is like sailing a passenger ship in the North Atlantic with ‘Icebergs’ disabled from the navigation system. There are Icebergs floating around... and lots of them. ‘Trade Openness’ (calculated as Exports plus Imports as a percentage of GDP) grew steadily from 1945 onward. It reached its peak in approximately 2005 and has since begun to tumble. There is now a trend to onshoring with the dual impacts of Covid and Ukraine. There are declining rates of return on investments and the problems of geopolitical uncertainty. The world, effectively, is splintering into blocs (grossraum) and the result is chauvinistic assertion manifested in military conflicts. But the reasons for the collapse of interrelated economies goes deeper. It is not purely economic. There is an underlying shift in what Carl Schmitt called the ‘*Nomos of the Earth*’. Whilst the twentieth century may have been one of globalisation and trade,

it was also one of a ‘total mobilisation’ of resources and human resources for a system of capital accumulation- which heaps excessive demands on international relations.

In political philosophy it often takes a period of nuanced reflection to assess the real ‘telos’ or ‘nomos’ of what occurred before or what is transpiring. At first Colonialism appears as a philanthropic and mercantile escapade. The ‘nation state’ appears to be the solution to the Holy Roman Empire and the despots of monarchical Europe. Democracy appeared to be the solution to the woes of the nineteenth century. However, when the dialectic unfolds, we are left with the real ‘Nomos’ (law, ‘lex’ in Latin or ‘right to the land’). The ‘Nomos of the Earth’ was the concept which Schmitt outlined which, having begun with the discovery of the ‘New World’, the Americas replaced the ‘Old World’ of Europe and Asia. The ‘nomos’ is the real title to land, to a culture, and it is beyond International Law. In this however came the ambivalent nature of US policies of interventionism and isolationism. Establishing an American ‘*Grosssraum*’, as in the Monroe Doctrine, becomes problematic. The maritime Empire of the British was another ‘*Grosssraum*’. The nation state, however, works in contradistinction to this reality. It only works out in an international system of agreed law, of equal liberal nation states. When this breaks down, we have the polarisation of ‘*grossraums*’ and the casualties of diminutive nation states. So ‘nomos’ means the real original title to land and when conflicts arise, it is usually a consequence of this disputed title, as in the Ukraine or Israel, or in Taiwan.

From the Middle Ages there developed a code of civil and ecclesiastical law to regulate conflicts of Church, Republic and Prince. The Holy Roman Empire acted as a type of 'Katechon' or protector against the antichrist. It was therefore more of a guiding ethos, or telos regarding Empire, an ideology even. The ascendancy of nation states in the nineteenth century sees the demise of the 'Katechon' or ethos. As in Washington's final address the emblem of the modern era becomes 'As little politics as possible, as much trade as possible'. So, nation states become largely conduits for trade, for globalised trade. Such a myriad of conflicting interests, mostly economic, has resulted in a 'forgetting' or rational/technical society without an underlying ethos. Now civilisational states, such as Russia's 'Holy Rus', Chinese 'Tianxia', or Islamic states see themselves as unified (however corrupt). The American 'grossraum' on the other hand, consists of liberal contradictions, the weakness of representative government, a confusion of foreign policy and an anarchic domestic world of anomie. Yet the liberal elites act as though they hold some higher moral 'progressive' framework. Hegel had said that there was no real American 'state', in the sense that any purpose abroad, is merely on economic terms.

It is not in effect a process of deglobalisation which is occurring, but the fundamental dissolution of the de facto independence of nation states and its replacement with regional Grossraums, akin to Empire. The current dying pains of economic globalism are ringing around the world. Notions of International Law break down when its implementation is unequal and sporadic or when the civilisational states and empires resent encroachment. Schmitt envisaged, presciently, a world, not of globalisation, but one of differentiated 'Grossraums'. He contrasted fixed 'culture' states such as Germany with flighty mercantile sea empires such as Great Britain. Land based

realms, close to the soil, to nature are more stable. Again, there is a contrast between Kantian notions of universal international states based on a system of International Law and its opposite in civilisational Eurasian states who emphasise local and particular cultures. The Westphalian world, which ushered in the modern notion of nation states is under threat. The problem for modern nation states is that the sovereign no longer is able to wield the 'exception', to secure the safety of the state. This is due to the decadent form of liberalism which runs amok *inside* nation states. The absolutely sovereign Hobbesian state is in abeyance. The liberal state, based on economy, rationalism and progressive universality is unable to defend itself. The Katechon is under threat, not ostensibly from warring civilisational states, but from inside.

The liberal and Marxist world envisaged an unfolding progress to a Utopian end of history schema and its naivete is now visible. It is more akin to Hegel's development of spirit but one rooted in nature and culture. The liberal world must accept the particularity of cultures and their equal jurisdiction; there is no universal human rights, no good and evil. Man has moved from land to sea to air, to space. Yet we need to return to the land and a '*jus gentium*' (law of nations) based on natural law rather than positive law which protects peoples rather than land borders. This, in itself, involves a sea change to real democratic participation in the polis and a move away from nationalism, to community. In the middle ages there was a recognition of an authority that existed, be it the Emperor or the Pope, and an informal common law. There were no wars between states, only competition between nobles. They largely concerned the pushing out of terrain rather than defending 'borders'. We are now encompassed by borderlands and all its ensuing strife and war. Modern globalisation only concerns matter rather than

spirit. Competition between modern states is delineated by a type of economic piracy. We have a version of maritime colonialism dressed up as globalisation. It is merely the naming which has changed.

This international sea like empire is rootless. It imagines ownership of titles rather than ownership of culture. It is extractive rather than productive or creative. It provokes 'ressentiment' from the poor and disenfranchised. It creates borders and division because it has no underlying theology. The theoretical underpinning of the Chinese 'Tianxia' (all under heaven') of a cultural Chinese empire is its, according to the Chinese, opposite. In this argument the empire must understand the relevant cultures it ascribes to. It is not one-off dominion but understanding, however far-fetched that might seem with the present Chinese incumbents.

War has an economy of its own. When the underlying 'telos' to nation states is economic only, then this permeates all aspects of life. It is like a plague of sorts jumping from one realm to another: it invades healthcare, education, and war. So, war has become Keynesian in an era of diminishing capital rate of returns. Capital follows a pattern of osmosis - seeking any host. Stocks in defence industries are booming. There seems to be no limits on technology and capital. War is not incidental to the modern era - it is a fundamental part of the 'wealth of nations'. An International Court of Justice should be based on fundamental natural law, not allied to political institutions and particular states. Multicultural states are unrooted and their capital elites unmoored. There is in essence a dysfunctional quality to modern occidental states. Economy must be subservient to theology and telos.

Kant, optimistically, had penned 'On Perpetual Peace' in a naive belief that there is a universal method to international states and law, that there will arrive an economic peace;

that we all share the same liberal values. That presumption is in tatters and the tide is in retreat, as in Matthew Arnold's Dover Beach:

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round
earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle
furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast
edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Kant believed that the moral adjuration of international law implied a universal law. This however, destroys the older concept of the 'just war' between states, based on a concept of fundamental law unconnected to a particular state or universalism. The '*justis hostis*' (just enemy) was possible in the chivalric middle ages as a law *before* sovereignty. International Law, even domestic law, like political economy, lacks any theological underpinning. It has no seeds in natural law. It is based on universal reason; the bastard child of the Enlightenment and it demonises the enemy so that anyone can be labelled 'terrorist' or 'rogue'. The tide of theology no longer washes up on the shores of the Anglo-American diaspora; there are only blurred moral lines and total wars signal the sunset of modernity.

Brian Patrick Bolger has taught Political Philosophy and Applied Linguistics in Universities across Europe. His new book, Coronavirus and the Strange Death of Truth is available now in the UK and US.

British, not Multicultural

Eric Kaufmann

Do progressive pundits genuinely misunderstand the meaning of the word “multiculturalism” or are they just pretending to be stupid?

After the former home secretary, Suella Braverman, criticised the “misguided dogma of multiculturalism,” the great and the good piled on in outrage. “Remarkable to hear Braverman say multiculturalism has failed,” tweeted *The Times’* Hugo Rifkind. “She’s... descended from Goan Indians from Mauritius and Kenya, married to a Jewish husband, in a government headed by Britain’s first Hindu PM. What would successful multiculturalism look like?” The BBC’s John Sopel reiterated the same point, suggesting that if Braverman isn’t an example of multiculturalism, nothing is.

Curiously, the fact that Angela Merkel, David Cameron, Nicolas Sarkozy, John Howard and Jose Maria Aznar said the same thing as Braverman after the Munich Security Conference of 2011, or that New Labour emphasised integration over multiculturalism after 2001, seems to have been memory-holed. As far back as 2004, the black British New Labour appointee Trevor Phillips said the term “multiculturalism” should be scrapped.

Having taught about multiculturalism and its definition at the Masters level, I would fail any student that used it to simply refer to a society comprised of multiple ethnic groups or the view that multiple cultures can successfully coexist. This describes some 90 per cent of the world’s countries – even though 7 in 10 of them also, like Britain, contain an ethnic majority.

If essentially all societies are multi-ethnic

and involve group coexistence, what does multiculturalism actually mean? The term is really about how to manage ethnic relations in a society. Do you recognise groups and use the state to help maintain them? If so, you believe in multiculturalism. Do you emphasise commonality and seek to use the state to promote integration, which facilitates assimilation? Then you are an opponent of multiculturalism.

What Suella Braverman – who has married across ethnic lines and is attached to the mainstream British identity – represents is assimilation, not multiculturalism. Much to the chagrin of Rifkind and Sopel, her life and words are not in contradiction, but in concord.

The classic cases of multiculturalism are multi-ethnic polities such as Austria-Hungary or the Ottoman Empire, in which ethnic groups were explicitly recognised as the constituent cultural-political units of society. Likewise in Northern Ireland, where members of the Assembly must declare as Nationalist, Unionist or Other, and legislation can only pass with at least 40 percent from each community. The proportional representation electoral system and multi-party cabinet, alongside 50-50 Protestant-Catholic recruitment to the police and funding for Gaelic and Scots-Irish language and culture forms the basis of this officially multicultural society.

Ditto in Lebanon. Federalised countries such as India, Belgium, Switzerland or Canada allow minorities controlling federal units (ie Quebec) to have power over language and culture. Scottish and Welsh devolution is a soft form of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism has also been mooted as

a way of organising immigrant societies. This was invented in the polyglot urban America of the 1910s, when Horace Kallen envisioned the US as a “cosmopolitan federation for national colonies” because, in his view, “men cannot change their grandfathers” and ethnicity does not break down over time. His vision came to inform cultural pluralism, the ancestor of the ideology of multiculturalism.

This is the credo of some immigrant societies, such as Canada, which explicitly emphasise immigrant cultural preservation, encoded in the country’s ill-conceived 1971 Multiculturalism Act. This compels the country to not only tolerate, but celebrate, ethnic difference. Money was disbursed to self-appointed ethnic leaders to further their own group projects. The 1971 Act emerged as a way to fend off Quebec nationalism and placate non-British and non-French ethnic interests, but the reality on the ground continues to be one of assimilation to either an

English- or French-centred national identity and culture. In the US, multiculturalism takes the form of affirmative action quotas for groups in contracting and university admittance, as well as multilingual education in schools.

Britain has few multicultural policies beyond some faith schools. On the ground, minority groups vary in their average degree of cultural, religious and linguistic assimilation, with Afro-Caribbeans at the assimilated end, and Salafi Mirpuri Pakistanis at the other. The Jewish-American sociologist Milton Gordon devised a seven-step schema, beginning with economic integration and culminating in “marital” and “identificational” assimilation. Braverman is Exhibit A for what happens when someone has gone through the process.

The fact that sections of the commentariat could view her as a poster-child for multiculturalism reveals that their conception of who is truly British is narrower than they care to admit.

A Plague of Concrete

Jane Kelly

While others worshipped ABBA, I was obsessed with reinforced concrete, and spent hours sketching structures like the Pirelli Tower, born the same year as me, 1956, which hurled the foamy stuff 127m into the air before draping it around a single spine.

My approval may have been a reaction to delving through nearly 2,000 pages of Sir Banister Fletcher’s classical *History of Architecture* for A Level, but then all the trendy people liked concrete, relishing what looked like giant bars of shortbread, or in the case of RAAC, (air concrete) overhead

Crunchie Bars. The arrival of the “brutalist” National Theatre in 1976 seemed to promise, well, brutalism and nihilism, so obviously more exciting than anything bourgeois and sweet.

Moving to London aged twenty-four, was partly about visiting brutalist theatres and tube stations, but as a nursing auxiliary trudging around the Stockwell Park Estate in Lambeth, built in 1970, it became unpleasantly clear that the narrow-covered walkways were a hideout for muggers. Inside 1,400 tiny grey boxes, my clients, mostly old ladies who’d once lived in terraced streets, were afraid to venture out.

Their environment terrified them. In 1986, two of them, aged 84 and 94, succumbed to the “Stockwell Strangler”, who claimed about eleven victims.

Stockwell forced me to wonder about the men who’d designed that ocean of concrete where elderly women silently drowned. Engineers rather than real architects, had created a laboratory model for anyone studying urban crime. After experiencing the fear the place engendered, I realised, to my dismay, that I was no longer radical about design or anything else. In Britain, building is always about class, politics, and stinginess.

An architect speaking on Radio 4 recalled one of her tutors saying that of course modern building design is boring. “It’s like a current loaf, if there were too many currents there wouldn’t be enough boring bread.” The question is, who gets the currents? As my youthful love of modernism collapsed, I figured that the designers were probably living in leafy Hampstead or Georgian Bath. Only the poor lived entombed in concrete, apart from architect Erno Goldfinger, builder of the Trellick Tower and offices for the British Communist Party, who gave his name to a Bond villain after he destroyed ancient Hampstead cottages liked by Ian Fleming. He was perhaps unique for choosing to live in a concrete box himself.

Choice of building materials is also about ideology. From the 1950s schools had to be changed from Victorian gothic high-mindedness into low, flat and friendly play areas, rooves of RAAC allowing a wide “span”. No more sitting in rows listening attentively, space was needed for children grouped at little tables finding things out for themselves, or not. Concrete was an example not just about building decent homes for the proletariat, but having the right ideas even if the outcome was poor.

Hillingdon station was rebuilt in reinforced

concrete in 1992 for the widening of the A40, with a “deconstructed design” in steel bridging the tube line. I was shocked when I saw it. How could anything that bad be allowed? I walked along the platform asking people their reaction. No answer. It was just somewhere to stand in the hope that your morning train will take you all the way to central London. No one was critical, but why would they be; Hillingdon won “Underground of the Year” in 1994, a Civic Trust Award for its design in 1996, and was listed in 2011, despite attempts going on at the time to improve the rotting, rusting lump, including cleaning the mouldy glass canopy, which when I saw it, had been subsumed by bird muck and moss. The form was terrible but it functioned, and that was, and is, all that mattered. In 2019 there was a nasty murder there which seems appropriate to such a harsh, impoverished environment.

Unless there’s a headline – one hundred RAAC flat roofs threatening to fall on children or motorway viaducts likely to collapse – it’s rare for British people to bother about buildings, which they seem to see beyond their responsibility, like an old war crime which everyone regrets but no one can do anything about now. That refusal to look and evaluate, is also about national parsimony. After the war there was a belief in “progress” for its own sake, no matter the cost to the environment, along with an ingrained respect for economy.

Nothing represents that penny-pinching better than concrete. Moving from London to Oxford in 2015, I’ve been shocked that wealthy Colleges always seem to build on the cheap. In 2012, barrack-like blocks of student flats destroyed a large swathe of the ancient Port Meadow. New concrete and glass blocks are constantly appearing, flagrantly out of scale with the narrow old streets. Beyond the historic centre sprawl crummy, crumbling shopping precincts.

After 1945 there was a lingering warmth

for the Soviet style design. Stalin had been our ally. Regarding nasty foreign tyranny my mother would say indifferently, “Well, you get the government you deserve.” That judgement is surely also true of our built environment

and national architecture.

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

Our Lords in Government

Vernon Bogdanor

Can a country’s foreign policy be conducted from the House of Lords? Before 1914, the question would have been put the other way round. When Sir Edward Grey was appointed Foreign Secretary in 1905, he was the first since 1827 to be neither a peer nor the son of a peer. Many indeed wondered whether the affairs of a great empire covering around a quarter of the world could be conducted amidst the prying eyes of ill-informed and ignorant MPs.

Since 1914, however, as befits a more democratic age, just four foreign secretaries have sat in the Lords – Lord Halifax from 1938 to 1940, Lord Reading briefly in 1931, Lord Home from 1960 to 1963 and Lord Carrington from 1979 to 1982.

Rishi Sunak is by no means the first post-war prime minister to appoint a senior departmental minister from the Lords. Churchill’s 1951 peacetime government had no fewer than seven; and when Gordon Brown became prime minister in 2007, he sought to create a “government of all the talents”, believing that success at campaigning and winning elections required quite different qualities from running a government department. Brown accordingly appointed Peter Mandelson as first secretary of state and business secretary in 2008 and Andrew Adonis transport secretary in 2009. In

addition, he created nine peerages for various experts outside Parliament whom he made junior ministers.

Of course, these appointments raise the constitutional problem that ministers in the Lords are not subject to scrutiny by members of the elected chamber. When Lord Home became foreign secretary in 1960, that problem was resolved by creating a second Foreign Office minister in the Cabinet – Edward Heath, Lord Privy Seal – to answer Commons questions. More recently, it has been suggested that ministers in the Lords should appear regularly in Westminster Hall to be questioned by MPs.

Whatever method is adopted, it is vital that such ministers remain in touch with the feelings of MPs. Both Lords Halifax and Carrington failed as foreign secretaries through failing to do so.

Lord Halifax had to implement Neville Chamberlain’s policy of appeasing Hitler and Mussolini, a policy arousing strong feelings amongst MPs. When appeasement collapsed, so did Halifax’s ministerial career; and at the end of 1940, Churchill despatched him to the Washington embassy.

Carrington, like Halifax, was to be the victim of a failed policy. His tenure of the Foreign Office was bedevilled by Argentina’s

claim to the Falklands. Carrington's junior in the Commons, Nicholas Ridley, proposed a leaseback by which Argentina would gain sovereignty but would lease the islands back to Britain, as with Hong Kong where, in 1898, a 99-year leaseback had been agreed.

Ridley, however, could not sell this proposal to angry MPs. A foreign secretary in the Commons with greater weight might just possibly have done so. And Carrington also lacked the authority to pursue an alternative policy which might have avoided war. He failed to prevent withdrawal of the nuclear submarine, *Endurance*, and failed to institute a Fortress Falklands policy to defend the islands. Instead, he sought to string Argentina along, a policy doomed to failure, and when, in April 1982, Argentina invaded, Carrington felt impelled to resign.

David Cameron, however, has advantages which Halifax and Carrington lacked. Halifax had been out of the Commons for 13 years before becoming foreign secretary, while Carrington had never been an MP at all. But Cameron, an MP from 2001 to 2016, will have far greater understanding of likely Commons reactions.

Of course, Tory Brexiteers blame Cameron for being a Remainer, while the diminishing band of Tory Remainers blame him both for calling the referendum and for losing it. But Brexit is yesterday's argument. If Tories continue to argue about the past, they will certainly forfeit the future.

As a former prime minister, Cameron will have particular advantages in terms of international reputation and knowledge of the world's trouble spots. And he is by no means the first former inhabitant of No 10 to become foreign secretary, being preceded by A J Balfour from 1916 to 1919, and Sir Alec Douglas Home from 1970 to 1974.

But Cameron may well be called upon to play a wider role. The Tory party, after all, is

in desperate trouble. Cameron is in a strong position to help Rishi Sunak pull it together. His 2010-15 coalition with the Liberal Democrats was marked by good feeling and cordial relations between No 10 and the Treasury, something not always apparent in other governments; and by increasing the Tory vote in 2015 he won a general election against the odds. Cameron, therefore, is in a strong position to ensure that the Sunak government understands the worries of the electorate and prioritises the cost-of-living crisis and crisis in the health service.

And it was Cameron who initiated reforms in candidate selection so ensuring that women and members of ethnic minorities enjoy fair representation in Parliament. "My pitch," he said, was "not for positive discrimination, but positive action. The party of meritocracy needed to accelerate meritocracy".

So Rishi Sunak's bold reshuffle could yet rescue the Conservatives from what until recently has looked like inevitable defeat.

Sir Vernon Bogdanor is Professor of Government, King's College, London. His books include The Strange Survival of Liberal Britain.



'You do not have to think anything, but it may harm your defence... anything you do think may be given in evidence...'

An Atrocious National Diet

Theodore Dalrymple

Few would dispute that the variety of food widely available in Britain has increased dramatically in the past half century, thanks to immigration and our entry into the Common Market (as it then was). Cooking in Britain used to be almost comically awful, a kind of war on culinary pleasure.

It took a certain determination to produce food so bad, devoid of taste and of unpleasant consistency; it was as if the pleasures of the table were of the Devil, who was believed by cooks to lead us astray by tempting us to enjoy ourselves and forget our religious duties. Food was fuel and eating a regrettable necessity. How this attitude came about, I am not sure; the English were never known for their cuisine, and their eating habits were frequently regarded as gross by more refined nations; but Victorian cookbooks had recipes for a very wide range of dishes and suggested also a taste for strong flavours. Perhaps the First World War wrought a change.

All that has changed again: culinary puritanism, whatever its origin, is no more. It is now possible to eat well even in provincial towns and cities: indeed, the best Korean food I have ever eaten was in Manchester, followed closely by that in Southsea. I was astonished by the quality of Chinese food available in Coventry and Edinburgh. Foods unheard of in 1970 are now commonplace and are available even in small local supermarkets (though I have noticed a decline in the variety

and quality of what is offered in them since the recent Great Inflation set in, suggesting a real decline in living standards).

But in an age when many people are so fat that they would have been circus freaks two hundred years ago, waddle in our streets like the giant herbivores of the Cretaceous period, one cannot say that all is well with British nutrition. With regard to the food it consumes, the British population has split into two (as it has in many other respects), though I cannot give the precise proportions of the two parts.

The first part takes pride in its culinary sophistication and openness to all influences, having a taste for the cuisines of many lands and often being eager to combine them. Menus in restaurants offer dishes with ingredients of which clients are too ashamed to admit that they have never heard, and of which they are reluctant to make enquiry for fear of losing caste in front of others. But instead of dismissing them as “foreign muck”, they are eager to try them, like an exhibition-goer who is delighted to try an exhibition of a painter of whom he has never heard. One might even say that the culinary is the only branch of aesthetic experience which has improved of late years in Britain and, indeed, it is the only one in which much of the population is really interested.

But it is to the other part of the population that I now turn, the part that is now most liable to monstrous obesity. Its eating habits

have changed, but not in the same way or direction. Of course, I am about to draw a caricature: but the whole art of the caricature, where it is not intended merely to reinforce a prejudice, is to extract and display an essential feature of current life.

This part of the population does not eat, and even mistrusts or fears fresh food. It does not know what to do with it in any case; it cannot cook, and in many of its homes, there are not the means to do so. Children growing up in such homes are domestic hunter-gatherers; they do not eat at set times with other members of their family, or household, but forage in the fridge as and when the mood takes them, which is often. What they find on their expeditions is high in salt, fat and carbohydrate, and gratifies immediately, leading to a fleeting satiety.

This is the land of the takeaway: the *Sunday Times* recently found an area with 98 takeaways and only 2 greengrocers. It is true that in some things supply creates its own demand, and no doubt the supply of chicken nuggets, chow mein and kebabs created the demand in a population that had previously not heard of them. But the absence of greengrocers, or greengrocery, is a response to absence of demand rather than the cause of it. If there are so-called food deserts, districts in which it is all but impossible to find fresh food, they are created by absence of demand.

Is that absence a consequence of raw poverty? It is always easy for the well-placed or prosperous to lament or reprehend the choices of the poor, whose hardships and difficulties in life they do not share. George Orwell long ago remarked on the desire of the poor (who, of course, were then poor in the rawest of senses) for something “tasty” which, from the point of strict nutrition, was a waste of such money as they had. Rationality in expenditure is far easier for those who

need it least.

Yet I could not help but observe, when I lived very close to relatively impoverished areas, that whether or not fresh food was available in them depended on the nature and origins of the population that lived in them. If that population were of Indian subcontinental origin, vegetables were available very cheaply in large quantities. If the population were native British, you would be lucky to find a shrivelled carrot. I doubted that the difference was primarily economic: I thought it was mainly cultural.

The Indians lived in large family and multigenerational households in which women, especially those too old for education, spent a lot of time cooking and also, as I observed them, shopping, choosing with discrimination and paying close attention to what they bought. This was not the case with native British women. They shopped for convenience and for the first thing that would do.

It was not a matter of time, either, with the native British women being too busy to choose properly. The least careful were often those with the most, not the least, time. Cooking and a proper diet was simply not a priority for them, with disastrous results.

More evidence that raw poverty is not the explanation, certainly not the whole of the explanation, of the division in eating habits of the two parts of the population can be gathered from popular events. Recently, I attended a couple of Christmas fairs in different parts of the country, and observed what people ate: burgers, chips, and the like, that they wolfed down, seemingly almost without awareness of what they were doing. The smell of food fried in repeatedly re-used oil suffused the air. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the proportion of grossly fat people was high, and most distressingly many of the

children were fat, a state from which they will struggle to recover, if they ever do. (I have noticed, incidentally, that fat people tend to have fat dogs, as if they were cross-species evangelists for over-eating.)

But good and varied fast food is not necessarily expensive: in Singapore, for example, one can eat excellent fast food for no more than the atrocious, coarse variety in England costs. Cheap food in Spain is often excellent.

When one sees in the British high street a significant number of people in their forties who walk with sticks simply because they are too fat to walk without, or worse still are in motorised wheelchairs for the same reason, one cannot but lament and shudder for the future. Moreover, such people cannot be happy with their lives; one feels a pang of sorrow for them, irrespective of the provenance of their condition. But if the metaphor doesn't seem absurd in circumstances, they are but the tip of the iceberg.

Can anything be done (assuming that the situation is bad and that something should be done)? It seems to me that there are two mind-forg'd manacles that might obstruct any possible or merely theoretical solution.

The first is the idea that obesity is straightforwardly a disease that can and will be cured by taking pills: that is to say, eat a ton of burgers and take a pill to control yourself afterwards. But if there is a treatment for the results of coarse gluttony, why try to avoid it in the first place?

The second mind-forg'd manacle is cultural relativism. Who are you to say that one kind of food is better than another? One of the rarely noted corollaries of the doctrine of multiculturalism is that it induces a complete complacency about one's own culture. If all cultures are equal, then gorging on coarse fast food (if that is our culture) is no worse

than eating a different and aesthetically more refined diet. We have nothing, then, to learn from others. Leave us alone – except, of course, when we require help for the consequences of what we do.

We have to steer the narrow and difficult course between censoriousness on the one hand and indifference and denial masquerading as tolerance on the other. Judgment, as ever, is needed, as is compassion for human weakness.

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



'But the good news is the Board are quite happy with all your other misconduct.'

Conservative Classic – 85

Sean McGlynn

Diary of a Country Priest Georges Bernanos

Little known today outside France, Georges Bernanos became famous from his 1936 novel, *Diary of a Country Priest*, which built on his first success *Sous Le Soleil de Satan (Under Satan's Sun)* a decade earlier and which earned him a deserved prestigious French literary award. That both novels are based on parish priests is a reflection of the author's religious preoccupations: a devout but independently minded Catholic and monarchist, he is a clear archetype of French conservative writing in the first half of the twentieth century.

Bernanos, born in Paris in 1888, served with distinction in World War One, being wounded several times. The carnage he witnessed did not destroy his faith; instead, it precipitated his views on Good and Evil, a constant theme in his writing, often explored through the extreme actions of his characters. A robust right-winger and conservative – the two are not necessarily the same, he deplored Franco's actions in Spain, despite the Generalissimo's defence of Catholic clergy against the persecution of the Communists, and despaired at the rise of Nazism. Like the better-known Stefan Zweig, events in Germany prompted him to emigrate to Brazil with his family. From there, he supported the actions of Charles de Gaulle, his former classmate. Returning with honours to France in 1945, he was offered a career in political service from which he soon retreated, disenchanted by his country's failure to renew itself spiritually in the wake of the war. Indeed, he blamed France's collapse in 1940

on its "spiritual exhaustion".

Many of the author's proclivities present ingredients for conservative fiction. But what makes *Diary of a Country Priest* stand out as a conservative classic? Humility, service, endurance and courage to overcome one's fears and doubts all help; it is also so well written that the dangers of turgid moral didacticism are deftly avoided; Bernanos is painfully aware of the role of moral ambivalence in everyday life. We are absorbed into the world of the narrator priest and expected to rise to the challenge of meaty theological and ethical dilemmas, while never losing sight of the characters enveloped by them.

The plot is simple: one, merely a framework for the shy, sickly young priest who writes a diary of his interactions with protagonists through improbably philosophical conversations, the world-weary and experienced devout priest of Torcy, the more pragmatic and materialistic dean of Blangermont, the prosaic count and his much more interesting wife, the doubting and permanently grieving countess, their troubled and somewhat sinister adolescent daughter Chantal and the altruistic atheist friend and doctor Delabende. Remarkably, but with a convenient simplicity, these characters rarely mix together: the priest encounters them separately, one at a time. This is perhaps an artificial device, but it works well, allowing Bernanos to reveal each character to their fullest, especially within their moral parameters.

The introverted, skeletally-ill priest

struggles not so much with his faith, as one might expect, but with ways to believe and how best to serve both God and his parishioners. The parishioners are mostly a resentful, spiteful and uninterested lot, from whom he even receives anonymous poison pen letters. When he attempts to reassure an old man that he will be rejoining his loved ones in the afterlife, the response, “that seemed to come from the depths of time”, is: “When you’re dead, everything’s dead”. The priest is also told that a priest should be like a notary: “He’s there in case you need him. He shouldn’t bother anyone”. But the young cleric perseveres against his own ill-health and the resistance of his flock to carry out his duty – a central theme of the novel.



He does so despite supportive illusions being stripped away from him. Even the children mock and aggravate him; there is little of their innocence shown. “Why are these girls so hostile? What have I done to them?” “The impurity of children, above all, is something I am familiar with” He is resigned to the fallen nature of mankind.

Throughout the novel, Bernanos reminds us of the futility of perfectionism. The admirable priest of Torcy tells the story of a female sacristan obsessed with cleanliness: “Her mistake, of course, was not to fight dirt, but to try and wipe it out completely, as if that were possible”. Sin is the perennial state of mankind. The narrator observes that “we preserve in order to save” and that society carries an evil within itself, and evil that, even if somehow abolished, would simply reappear immediately, “so that the same infernal circuit begins all over again”.

This sense of inevitability is juxtaposed with societal change. One priest remembers his misplaced excitement for Pope Leo XIII’s famously radical encyclical of 1891, *Rerum Novarum*, which addresses the needs of justice and dignity for workers in the

new industrial age. But religion remains a constant, if only as a tradition, one parishioner declaring: “Everyone is born this way or that way, and dies the same way. In my family, we’re all Church people. My grandfather was a bellringer in Lyon, my mother was a servant for the priest of Wilman, and none of us ever died without the sacraments. It’s in the blood and there’s nothing you can do about it”.

It is not a cheerful tale. The only time that the narrator priest makes a positive spiritual difference is the result of a long and intense discussion with the bitter countess. But at the very moment she rediscovers hope, she dies suddenly that evening. The amiable doctor’s suicide is passed over as accident and the stomach ailment of the narrator himself finishes him off. At his death, a moving climax to the novel, he is at peace with his faith, failings and those of others – the end of a perceptive and humane piece of literature, full of wisdom and understanding of human nature and spiritual yearning.

 THE EDITOR
AND STAFF OF
THE SALISBURY
REVIEW WISH ALL
OUR READERS A
HAPPY AND A
HOLY CHRISTMAS 

Arts and Books



The Fracture of France

Laurent Lemasson

France on trial: the case of Marshal Pétain,
Julian Jackson, Allen Lane, 2023.

The history of France is full of deep fractures, never completely healed, whose effects continue to be felt centuries later. The most recent of these major fractures is undoubtedly that produced by the defeat of May-June 1940. This defeat and its consequences were the decisive experience that, more than any other, gave birth to contemporary France. We overcame that defeat but, in a way, we never recovered from it. The Resistance and Collaboration were the two main options open to the French after this staggering defeat. Two men embodied each of these options: Charles de Gaulle and Philippe Pétain. Those who chose the path of the Resistance ended up, willy-nilly, rallying around General De Gaulle; those who chose to follow Marshal Pétain gradually sank down the path of ever closer and more infamous collaboration with Nazi Germany.

For reasons that have as much to do with its history as with that mysterious yet enduring thing we call the national temperament, France has always contained within itself powerful ferments of conflict. An eminently political nation, talkative and reasoning, France always seems ready to tear itself apart for reasons ranging from the most trivial to

the most serious. This ‘Gallic temperament’ was brilliantly caricatured by the comic strip ‘Asterix’ (the first volume of which appeared in 1959, just after de Gaulle’s return to power). In it, the inhabitants of the only small village that the Romans were unable to conquer stop fighting each other only to unite, temporarily, against the invaders, whom they repel thanks to a ‘magic potion’ that gives them superhuman strength.

After publishing *The fall of France: the Nazi invasion of 1940*, in 2003, and what is arguably the best English-language biography of General de Gaulle, in 2018, it was almost inevitable that Julian Jackson, the great British historian specialist of contemporary France, would publish a book on Pétain. In it, Jackson describes the last weeks of the Vichy regime, followed by Marshal Pétain’s trial for ‘high treason’, with his customary sense of narrative and mastery of detail. Although we know the ending, *France on Trial* reads like a detective story, full of suspense and colourful characters.

Pétain’s trial ended on 14 August 1945 when he was sentenced to death (the sentence was immediately commuted to life imprisonment), and Pétain died on 23 July 1951 in his prison on the island of Yeu. But, as de Gaulle had predicted to George Pompidou, his future Prime Minister, the Marshal’s death did not definitively close the Vichy case: ‘It was a great historical drama, and great historical dramas never end’.

The final third of the book is devoted to the way in which Vichy’s actions and legacy have continued to be defended to this day by a handful of ‘Maréchalistes’, whose motivations range from simple adherence to the reactionary policy of ‘national revolution’ implemented

by Pétain to an irresistible attraction to lost causes, another typically French character trait. So, since 1945, at irregular intervals, France has been re-enacting the great historical drama of the Collaboration and the Resistance, tirelessly asking itself whether, during those years when it lived under the boot of Nazi Germany, it was enduring and heroic or cowardly and grovelling, and even criminal, in aiding the Nazis in their policy of exterminating the Jews.

Julian Jackson points out that during the last presidential election, one of the candidates, Éric Zemmour, made a name for himself by his stubborn defence of the Petainist argument that, through its policy of collaboration, Vichy had helped to protect French Jews. He writes that it is not clear what prompted Zemmour to defend Vichy in this way, and this is perhaps the only point in this excellent book where Jackson seems to lack judgement and finesse. Because what motivates Éric Zemmour is perfectly clear, and he has stated it himself several times (and Jackson quotes him, by the way). According to Zemmour, for the past fifty years or so, Vichy and the Collaboration have been misused to make the French feel guilty, to persuade them that France is an intrinsically racist and anti-Semitic nation that must atone for its crimes by consenting to policies whose logical outcome is its own demise: whether it be the ‘construction européenne’ or the massive and uncontrolled immigration of populations largely coming from the African continent.

Zemmour clearly considers that a certain rehabilitation of Vichy is the necessary condition for breaking the evil spell of ‘repentance’ that leads the French to accept their programmed erasure. This position is very probably both a historical error and a political dead end, and I think it is, but it is at least entirely understandable. And it reveals an unexpected and interesting reversal of the

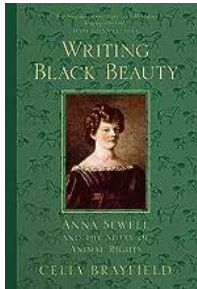
situation., to say the least.

If being a Gaullist means believing that France is ‘like the princess of fairy tales or the Madonna of frescoed walls’, ‘destined for an exceptional and eminent destiny’, as de Gaulle says in the opening lines of his *Mémoires d’espoir*; if being a Gaullist means uncompromisingly defending the sovereignty and greatness of France and believing that it is first and foremost ‘a European people of white race, Greek and Latin culture and Christian religion’, as de Gaulle once told Alain Peyrefitte, who was his Minister of Information, then Éric Zemmour was without doubt the most Gaullist candidate in the 2022 election. Perhaps he was even the only Gaullist candidate.

Conversely, what does it mean to be a Vichyist today? According to de Gaulle, Marshal Pétain’s essential fault, the one that led him to cover up all the crimes of which his government was guilty, was to have asked for the armistice. Of course, at that point, the battle of France was lost, and de Gaulle knew this as well as anyone, but the armistice that Pétain wanted and imposed had above all a moral significance: it meant not just acknowledging defeat but accepting it; in a way, consenting to it. It meant considering that, in 1940, France was a definitively fallen nation that had earned its downfall. It therefore had to make do with a diminished and servile existence within a Europe dominated by Germany. The Vichy position is one of renunciation, whereas the Gaullist position is one of refusal to renounce, of a constantly renewed effort to rally the French around the political and spiritual independence of the nation.

Seen in this light, the true heirs of Vichy are today on the left, not the right: they speak the language of anti-racism, multiculturalism and the dissolution of France into European ecstasy. Conversely, those who claim that ‘*La France n’a pas dit son dernier mot*’ which is

the title of Éric Zemmour’s latest book, are the spiritual heirs of De Gaulle, even if they clumsily try to defend Marshal Pétain.



How we became animal lovers

Celia Haddon

Writing Black Beauty, Anna Sewell and the Story of Animal Rights, Celia Brayfield, History Press, 2023, £20.

“Black Beauty,” a first novel by a little-known author, has sold 50 million copies in 50 different languages since it was first published in 1877 and in online lists of non-religious best-selling books it is usually in the top 25. *Black Beauty* is still in print and has been read by generations of little girls who want (or have) a pony. And unlike many of the best sellers like *Tale of Two Cities* or *Don Quixote*, it is a book that directly changed the world for the better – for some horses, at least.

Writing Black Beauty is the story of how this book became popular enough to change the way people treated carriage horses. Anna Sewell was not an established author when she wrote it: indeed, it was her only published book. It was her mother who was a prolific author, with titles like *Walks with Mama*, *Patience Hart’s First Experience in Service*, *Mother’s Last Words* and *Thy Poor Brother*. These were books with a message about improving the lot of the working class and they sold many copies at the time. Yet it was her daughter’s book, *Black Beauty*, also a book with an improving message, that remains in print today.

On the face of it, this book was an unlikely

success. Anna was the invalid of the family. Although like most middle-class people of her period she could ride and drive a pony and trap, she was not a particularly talented horsewoman. She had little or no experience in writing for publication either in journalism or books, though she had acted as a kind of unofficial editor of her mother’s work. Although the family had connections with the animal welfare movement, Anna Sewell herself was not one of those in the forefront of the humanitarian campaign.

The extraordinary success of her only book is the theme of *Writing Black Beauty*, which skilfully moves between the biography of Anna Sewell, herself, and the history of the animal welfare movement. The book’s mention of *Animal Rights* in the subtitle, is perhaps a bit of a stretch. The concept that animals might have rights was first suggested in 1892, some years after *Black Beauty’s* publication. Most Victorian humanitarians, trying to get better conditions for animals, were more concerned with human moral duties towards animals than any idea of animal rights.

In the book, *Black Beauty* himself tells history in the first person. Anthropomorphic animals in literature were nothing new. Talking animals in published tales go back to Aesop and the sixth century BC, but most of talking animal stories before *Black Beauty* are narrated in the third person rather than narrated by an animal, itself. Often the animals in these stories resemble human prototypes. In *Watership Down*, for instance, though the rabbit ecology is accurate, General Woundwort or Bigwig, are in my opinion more reminiscent of Hitler or Biggles than rabbits!

As Celia Brayfield points out, Anna Sewell deliberately chose an animal narrator to give her readers an insight into the horse’s mind. The subtitle to her book (not used in the modern Wordsworth paperback edition) was *the Autobiography of a Horse Translated*

from the *Original Equine*. Though obviously anthropomorphic, the book nevertheless was a big step forward towards the modern academic acknowledgement that horses, and other animals, both feel and think. When the book was written animals were mainly thought of as dumb beasts without emotion, cognition or any form of consciousness, making cruelty towards them justifiable.

Rereading the original book, while writing this review, I was impressed by Anna Sewell's good knowledge of how horses then, and sometimes even now, were mistreated. Unlike the other companion animals such as cats and dogs, ponies and horses are sold on when their owners have no further use for them. *Black Beauty* charts the slow downward progression from being a high-status riding or carriage animal, to becoming a decrepit beast of burden, from which the final months of work would be extracted by constant cruelty. So true to life was this portrayal, that some readers thought the book must have been written by a vet or a groom rather than by a 58-year-old disabled invalid.

The publishers, who had bought the whole copyright for a mere £20, cautiously printed only a few copies costing two shillings (10p) each. But a year after publication, while Anna Sewell was dying, it was clear that this was going to be a best seller, not just because readers loved it but because it also fitted into the growing campaign for better animal welfare.

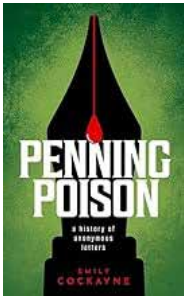
Originally intended as a book for adults, animal welfare societies seized on it as a way of influencing young people. The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, paid the British publishers £1000 and got 10,000 copies printed in the USA. They hoped that it might have the same influence in abolishing cruelty to horses, as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had on the abolition of human slavery. Nowadays I find *Uncle Tom's*

Cabin unreadable due to the preachy writing and depiction of Uncle Tom as a passive suffering figure. *Black Beauty*, however, while equally didactic in its aim, is far less preachy in tone and since much of the basics of good horse care have not changed, the vivid detail in the story is still relevant. I was impressed by its realistic detail, even if I no longer wept at the fate of Ginger, the horse whose suffering makes most children cry.

The book's early popularity, however, owed much to its use as a welfare campaigning tool. "I hope to live long enough to print and distribute a million copies," wrote the MSPCA's founder George Thorndike Angell animal welfare. By 1890 he claimed it was the best-selling book in America after the Bible, and copies were distributed in bulk to various welfare institutions who handed them out for free.

Change can be slow. When Anna Sewell's body was being taken to the grave in 1878, the undertaker's horses were harnessed with bearing reins, which her mother had to insist were taken off. In the following years, however, the bearing rein disappeared from carriage horses. But it did not, however, entirely vanish among horsey folk. An equally cruel equivalent, hyperflexion, where reins force the horse's chin to touch its chest, lingered on in dressage training. Many of the blogs and social media posts in the recent campaign against hyperflexion referenced *Black Beauty*. In 2010, extreme hyperflexion was officially banned by the international dressage authorities. The influence of *Black Beauty*, traced by Celia Brayfield's enjoyable book, is still a force for good.





Venom before Twitter

Anthony Daniels

Penning Poison: A History of Anonymous Letters, Emily Cockayne, Oxford University Press 2023, £25.

We live in a golden age, if that is quite the term for it, of anonymous denunciation, insult and menace: or perhaps I should say another golden age, since in Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany and Vichy France such anonymous communications were sent and received by the million. The social media give the so-inclined an unprecedented opportunity for the expression of their bile, though it is possible that the ease of expressing it helps to create it in the first place.

The social historian Emily Cockayne examines the history of anonymous letter-writing in Britain from the end of the eighteenth century to the end of the last war. No grand theory of such epistolary activity is possible because the surviving records do not permit anyone to estimate how representative of the whole phenomenon they are. Many people who receive anonymous letters must simply have thrown them away; writing a history of anonymous letter-writing is a bit like trying to write a history of hospital medicine by examining the letters of complaint received by hospitals.

The author does not tell us how or why she chose certain examples to examine closely. To judge by her bibliography, she has clearly done an immense amount of research, and all honour to her for that. Her industry has been formidable but throughout the book, the question recurs to the reader as to why this case

rather than that is being brought forward. Is it a matter of completeness of record, largely of chance, or is the case exhibited as emblematic of something in general, in which case how is it known to be emblematic?

Nevertheless, the history seems to fall into two main periods. In the first, up to the end of the second third of the nineteenth century, most of the letters seem to have been by men who were mainly interested in trying to get land or factory owners to treat their hands more generously. Some even had a distinctly revolutionary flavour. Factory owners who introduced labour-saving machinery into their factories, were thought to be promoting unemployment and therefore starvation, and you could hardly expect the victims of such a policy to know or to believe the abstract arguments of political economy that such technical advance would in the long run raise everyone's standard of living. They were not living in the long run.

In the second half of this book, much the more interesting half, most of the anonymous letters seem to have been written by women, for more opaque reasons. Many of the women, but also some of the men carried out veritable campaigns of such letter-writing, lasting for years and sometimes running into hundreds of letters. Often, they were women of the respectable but frustrated type, but it is impossible to pin down their motivation for certain. Whatever characteristics they had in common would have been shared by many more women who did *not* write anonymous letters. There is always an ineradicable mystery at the heart of much human conduct. Personally, I am glad of it.

Sexual frustration was a common explanation, but social frustration also. Why, for example, did a woman called Winifred Simner conduct a scurrilous anonymous campaign against Wimbledon councillors, particularly the prominent members, in the

late 1930s? She was a respectable woman who did much charitable work and had held a responsible position during the First World War, having charge of 1600 typists. A picture shows her to be of the rather rigid moralistic kind – or so one would have imagined.

But, according to the author, ‘Simner now found herself without a position as the next war approached’. She had failed to take advantage after the First War of the new opportunities for women. ‘Against this backdrop of frustrated ambition and stunted potential, a crisis in Winifred’s life apparently had a dramatic effect. The letter campaigns had started around 1935, when Winifred’s younger sister, Eadith May, died.’

Is this a satisfactory explanation? On reading it, do we exclaim, ‘Ah, now we understand!’? I do not think so; but in our daily lives, we often resort, indeed we *have* to resort, to such explanations of the behaviour of others. We delude ourselves if we think they are satisfactory.

There is a very interesting chapter on the means employed to capture the writers of anonymous letters. The introduction of the penny post in 1840 was feared to have given a boost to such writers, as the social media have given a boost to them today. Postage stamps with invisible ink were used to track down the miscreants, and police watches on pillar boxes. Anonymous letters were important in the rise of the handwriting expert, an expertise which is still mistrusted to this day. One of the fascinating facts I learnt from this book is that a fifth of anonymous letter campaigners included themselves in their campaign, mostly to divert suspicion from themselves but perhaps also to make confession of their sins.

Unfortunately, the writer is not a gifted storyteller and renders interesting or dramatic stories so convoluted that they are sometimes difficult to follow. There are occasional

irritating quirks, for example when she writes ‘*Sir*’ *Archibald Bodkin*, as if he used a title to which he was not entitled. He had, however, been knighted, and so was plain Sir Archibald Bodkin. Her habit of using *their* as a singular possessive pronoun irritates me, but I suppose this now puts me in the dinosaur class.

The book is best as a kind of anthology of cases, interesting in themselves in a mildly prurient way, and though the author tries to derive some larger general significance from them she fails to do so. The book is not as good as a read as it could or ought to have been.

One last point, about the poor production standards employed by the Oxford University Press. The paper is rough, the print small, the margins narrow, and the reproduction of letters of mediocre quality. It is an unpleasant artifact and therefore the Press has no reason to be proud of its efforts.

How we lost France

Virginia Bainbridge

Triumph and Illusion: The Hundred Years War V, 1422-53, Jonathan Sumption, Faber, 2023, UK £40.

The Norman Conquest of 1066 created enduring links between England and France. French, the common language of the ruling elites enabled English kings, nobles and churchmen to move with ease between territories straddling the English Channel. The two realms gradually diverged: the English lost French provinces and estates, and the French monarchy expanded its reach. England’s moment of realisation that the balance of power had tipped towards France came in 1337 when Philip IV invaded Gascony, a region centred on its lucrative wine trade. Thus

began the Hundred Years War which ended in 1453. Jonathan Sumption has produced the fifth and final volume in his epic panorama of the Hundred Years War which has been compared to Steven Runciman's history of the Crusades. It is supremely well-written and the complex power struggle between Europe's late medieval superpowers, England, France and Burgundy is explained with great clarity. The book is a gripping read and reflects the return to *narrative history* popular with general readers.

Sumption provides deft character sketches of political leaders from contemporary sources, Henry V and VI of England, Henry's brother John Duke of Bedford, Charles VII of France and Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and important cultural figures including Joan of Arc, Charles, Duke of Orleans, who turned to poetry in his 24 years of English captivity, and Sir John Falstaff the unwitting patron of Magdalen College, Oxford. Sumption's work is based on prodigious learning and the forensic study of historical records and commentaries by historians. His scholarly achievements run parallel to his other career as a leading lawyer and justice of the UK's Supreme Court. Undoubtedly, skills he developed in the practice of law, his shrewd insights into human nature and ability to summarise large volumes of material inform this work.

The title *Triumph and Illusion* is an apt description of the final thirty years of the war, from the victories of Henry V, a *flower of chivalry*, to near total loss of his gains under his son Henry VI. The book proceeds chronologically and is neatly divided into separate sections on the three principal realms and neighbouring Scotland and Savoy. The structure carries the reader through the detail of military operations and their political background. This book will be greatly enjoyed by military historians: Henry V's triumph at the battles of Harfleur and Agincourt in 1415

mirrored Edward III's earlier victories at Sluys, Crécy and Poitiers. Henry pressed on to conquer Normandy and to take Paris where he married Catherine, daughter of Charles VI of France. Although Charles and Henry both died in 1422, English triumph seemed complete when the infant Henry VI was crowned king of both realms in Paris. Henry V's victories embodied the medieval spirit of chivalry and inspired generations of nobles and retainers to seek glory in France. Manuscript illuminators envisioned the dream of chivalry in their brightly coloured depictions of armoured knights and horses, tented encampments and military engagements. Combatants also had more base desires for riches from plunder, the ransom of noble captives and French estates.

For the French, the situation was different: the catastrophic loss of large swathes of Northern France to England and Burgundy came during Charles VI's bouts of madness. He was even compelled to disinherit his son Charles the Dauphin, whose cause was damaged by the 1419 assassination of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. The Burgundian Dukes held the balance of power between England and France in the Hundred Years' War. The extraordinary wealth of this cadet branch of the French royal family came from the taxation of trade in the Low Countries, present-day Belgium and the Netherlands. Burgundy had consolidated its power over buffer states and after two decades of French civil war, residents of England's French territories accepted the stability of English local government. John, Duke of Bedford made Paris the administrative centre of the French territories and his competence as both military leader and administrator enabled England to hold onto Henry V's gains until 1429.

In that year Joan of Arc, a peasant girl from Domrémy in the Burgundian theatre of war, turned the conflict decisively in France's

favour. She was one of several women prophets in the century after the Black Death who took on political roles when male leaders were seen to have failed. Joan believed her inspiration was God-given; she broke the siege of Orléans and inspired the Dauphin to march on Rheims, where he was crowned Charles VII of France. Beneath the dream of chivalry, which so bedazzled medieval combatants and historians alike, lay harsh economic realities. After half a century in which scholars have pored over trade and taxation records, Sumption can place English and French military failures in the context of state finances. When Henry V died he was bankrupt and as customs income declined in wartime, so did the capacity of Henry VI's councillors to achieve further success. At the start of this phase of the Hundred Years War, the English army was the best in Western Europe. However, it depended on nobles and gentlemen funding their men in advance of pay from parliamentary taxation. The vagaries of military recruitment and funding led to the stop-start nature of England's engagement in France and increased use of mercenaries. Joan of Arc gave Charles VII the confidence to become a capable military leader at the head of a reformed French army. 1435 was a decisive year when the French recaptured Paris and the Burgundians returned to their traditional alliance with France. Philip the Good was not alone in wanting to be on the winning side and English support crumbled as Charles VII advanced. England's losses were compounded by debilitating sieges and military destruction of rural agriculture. They refused to accept terms which would have allowed them to retain Normandy. The end came with the French conquest of Normandy in 1450 and Gascony in 1453. Sumption concludes by outlining some long-term consequences of the War. It signalled the decline of feudal society and the emergence of nation states in England

and France, parliamentary and autocratic respectively. English monarchs retained the title of 'king of France' until the reign of George III. Perhaps the English dream of a lost homeland in France survives today in the popularity of French holiday homes.



The Word we Fear

Jane Kelly

Jihad A Short History, Terry Bushell, Pen & Sword History, 2022, £20.00.

Reading this in September, the word 'Jihad' belonged to history: 9/11, London bus bombings and the murder of priests and teachers in France had faded from memory, eclipsed by the threat of Mr Putin. This small book, published last year is suddenly horribly topical following the recent massacre of Israeli civilians by Hamas, and the savage response in Gaza instantly reuniting Islamic extremists who wish to conquer the whole world for Islam. Many see the current trauma as yet another skirmish in a seventy-year struggle between Muslims and Jews but Bushell takes us back to the start, 627 AD and the massacre of Jews in Arabian oasis, by 'a new intolerant religious cult' the Hanifiya. 'A new kind of tribe, based on religion not kinship,' with no obligation to outsiders who did not share their religion, and the author adds perhaps with hyperbole, 'With frequent animal sacrifice, slaughter was a big part of the Arabs' lives. They lived with butchery.'

According to Bushell, 'The cult was not called Islam until decades later,' with the name 'Hanifiya' written into early Koranic

texts. The new sect lived by waging ‘Jihad’ against all unbelievers. This involved siege, massacre, burning and beheading men, then selling camels, goats, women and children into slavery. Raiding and looting in the name of Allah they cut through Arabia using what Bushell calls, ‘Shock and awe,’ a clunky cliché if current events in Israel hadn’t made it forgivable. Many tribes including the Bedouin and Ghassanids, who were Christian, converted or paid a new tax called the ‘Jizya,’ to keep their own faith and stay alive.

The Jihad went on, across Arabia into Palestine, Syria, Turkey and Sicily into India, and Malta, finally reaching the gates of Vienna in 1683. He has an extraordinary ability to recreate complex battles in exciting detail and touches on fascinating facts; ‘Assassin’ comes from the Arabic, ‘Asasiyyun,’ meaning, ‘People who are faithful to their faith’. There was an Assassins’ state in 1090 in Iran. Both Saladin and Edward I narrowly escaped their daggers. The Jolly Roger black flags on pirate ships came from an Arab flag. Muslim forces met strong resistance in Rumania, where troops were led by prince Draculea, whose son was Vlad the Impaler. He explores the term, ‘Dhimmitude’ a current term for middle class elites and institutions which bow down to Islam. In all lands conquered by Muslims, Bushell writes, non-believers had poor status, or Dhimmitude, even having their doorways built low so they had to stoop using them. Jews were first made to wear yellow stars in 9th century Iraq, while Christians were always encouraged ‘to speak of themselves in disparaging terms’. Something multiculturalism and secularism have achieved again.

He also writes about Muslims deliberately spreading plague among non-believers by firing infected bodies from battlements into towns which sounds like propaganda, but Bushell is passionate about getting his

message across; Islam is very dangerous. There’s murder and cruelty on every page. He notes that, ‘All Muslim states shared one characteristic, whenever they felt strong they invaded other lands.’ First by migration then by conquest, as if that was a ‘sacred duty’. A thousand years of Jihad have passed and he’s determined to make us aware that it isn’t over, perhaps just beginning as, ‘Western Europe has forgotten history,’ which he ably demonstrates is dangerous folly.



What Orwell Knew

Martin Dewhurst

George Orwell and Russia, Masha Karp, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023, £21.99.

I’ve always been in two minds about Orwell. Many people in the USSR and in today’s neo-Soviet Russian Federation also have two minds, one for the public and the other in private.

Back in the 1950s, like many teenagers at grammar and public school, I read many works of great literature which included both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. I thought that Orwell had always considered himself to be a Socialist, and I had read that even Lenin, for a time, had pretended to be merely a ‘social democrat’. The second chapter of Masha Karp’s book is entitled ‘We’re all Socialists nowadays...’. In 1959, as an undergraduate, I visited the USSR, and on my first evening in Moscow a Polish friend took me to see some of her acquaintances. On leaving their communal flat I was given a home-bound book of then unpublishable Russian poetry, took it with me to Stalingrad and Leningrad, and had

no problems during the customs procedures on my way back to London. I had become an anti-Soviet Russophile for life: things in Russia really had changed, I then mistakenly thought, and had Orwell not died in 1950 at the age of 46 he would have had to admit that he, never having visited the USSR and knowing only a few words of Russian, had got it wrong. Later I became a teacher of Russian and told everyone that it was impossible to understand Russia if you didn't know Russian, Orwell being the only irritating exception to that assertion.

How right Orwell was should have become clear to everyone at least by the spring of last year, and how timely Karp's book is. Russia is currently post-socialist but still basically neo-Soviet, whereas most of Ukraine and most Ukrainians had become genuinely post-Soviet about twenty years ago, as I know from my recent visits this century. Even on my first trips in 1960 and 1964, I recognised the differences from Russia. This is why Putin, a typical *homo sovieticus*, had no alternative but to re-invade Ukraine in a desperate attempt to avoid going down as one of the greatest losers.. Karp's last chapter is entitled 'To arrest the course of history', and she rightly asks whether Russia will continue to move further backwards from a merely autocratic political system to a full-blooded and literally bloody totalitarian regime. Should an admirer of Orwell today be optimistic or pessimistic about the chances of Progress – and, indeed, about how best to define that word?

Its author hasn't the space to tell us much about Eric Arthur Blair's first twenty years. He didn't see much of his father; his mother was half-French and he was not happy at his Eastbourne prep school, nor was he one of the more outstanding scholars at Eton (1917-1921). Russian was first introduced there at that time, but he evidently didn't or couldn't choose it as an option. From an early age he

had wanted to become a professional writer, and evidently to fulfil his vocation he felt no need to go to university. His father worked in Burma, and the future Orwell went there on leaving College and served for five years in the Imperial Police, which made him very critical of imperialism.

Back in Europe, he moved to France in 1928 and met supporters of Esperanto, an artificial language, quite easy to learn, which, it was hoped, would help to unite the whole of humanity. For a time it was tolerated by the Soviet regime, about which he learnt quite a lot from various people in Paris who had supported it but who were already beginning to have their doubts. In 1933 he began to use the pen-name George Orwell in his first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, not, I think, because he was an ardent monarchist, but because it is a very *British* name. And he loved the English countryside, and not only that around the River Orwell.

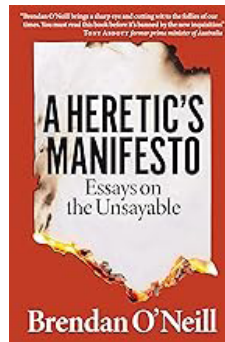
But the most important influence came a little later when he risked his life fighting on the side of one of the anti-Franco forces during the Spanish Civil War and personally experienced the cynicism of Soviet tactics and strategy there, which 'objectively' helped Franco to win. Stalinism was no better than Nazism: 'The two régimes, having started from opposite ends, are rapidly evolving towards the same system – a form of oligarchical collectivism', he wrote in 1940, during the Nazi-Soviet Pact. 'Russia is the totalitarian country *par excellence*; Communism the purest and most logical form of totalitarianism.' Curiously enough, however, – in my opinion – Orwell wrote in 1946, '*Nor was I ever... – supposing I had had the power – anxious to interfere with the USSR's internal affairs. I merely object to Russian interference here*' – in Britain. Perhaps this explains his refusal to learn Russian? However, towards the end of the 1940s he was very anxious and willing

to help with the publication and distribution – and not only to émigrés now living in the West – of the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian translations of his two most famous works.

As we learn from Part 2 of this monograph, his use of the word ‘totalitarian’ gradually becomes more frequent, and the time ‘when he was “emotionally drawn” to socialism in Britain had passed’. But had it? Because ‘rejecting it [socialism – md] altogether would be for him tantamount to rejecting humanism – “the basis of Socialism”, and this he could not do.’ The aim of *Animal Farm*, he wrote, was ‘the destruction of the Soviet myth, “essential”, he insisted, ‘for a revival of the Socialist movement’. I suspect that Orwell didn’t know that Russian has two words, with very different roots, for the concept of ‘truth’, and two words, also with very different roots, for the concept of ‘lying’. Yet he wrote, in 1946, that ‘*Totalitarianism demands ... a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth*’. Indeed, it does, and this is a danger today, when we are living in a ‘post-truth’ world in which 2 + 2 might well sometimes equal 5. As Karp writes, ‘With Putin’s propaganda [about Ukraine] it was not even so much about memory, but about a new kind of cynical impudence, which seemed to mock the very notion of truth and celebrate its own impunity.’

This danger, she concludes, today affects the whole world, where *Western* ‘politicians, business people and commentators, fifty years after Orwell’s death, were happy to tolerate lies for the sake of their own greed: their countries receiving advantageous terms when buying Russian oil and gas or they personally getting some private benefits, like, lucrative positions on the boards of Russian firms.’

Whatever we think of socialism, Orwell is as ‘relevant’ today as he has ever been, and we disregard his warnings at our peril.



In Bed with Doctrine

James Monkton

A Heretic’s Manifesto: Essays on the Unsayable, Brendan O’Neill, Spiked, 2023, £12.99.

Strange times bring strange bedfellows. Crusty old reactionaries can now find allies on the left in the contest against woke liberal progressivism. Brendan O’Neill is the former editor of *Spiked* online magazine, and now its chief political writer. He started out as a Trotskyite and writer for *Living Marxism*, although he now regards himself as a Marxist libertarian, the emphasis is very much on the latter, while wearing a well-starched blue-collar Labour shirt. He is a regular contributor to *The Sun* and *The Spectator* and his views – often brilliantly and trenchantly espoused – will bring strong nods of approval from liberal antagonists who are pro-Brexit, pro-Trump and anti-open borders. His book comes with a cover endorsement from Tony Abbott, the former conservative PM of Australia.

Best of all, he is pro-free speech. This is his great cause in this powerful collection of essays. His forceful polemic against political censorship and cancel culture is expressed with great logic through ten essays, leaving no doubt that in today’s messed-up world, there is nothing more illiberal than a “liberal progressive”. His exposure of a long litany of liberal lunacy covers transgenderism, concocted islamophobia, white shame and much else. With every subject, he finds that

debate has been disallowed by the great and good. O'Neill quotes John Stuart Mill's observation that every effort to silence speech is an "assumption of infallibility".

We encounter the almost insurmountable difficulties to engaging in constructive dialogue with extremist progressives, such as the mind-bending distortion of reality and established facts. It can be likened to trying to have a rational conversation with someone out of their head on LSD. O'Neill encapsulates the transgender issue with the phrase "her penis", used frequently by such organs of record as the BBC and *The Times*. Here, and elsewhere, Orwellian Newspeak has become the order of the day. If two plus two now equals five, we are told to "get over it". As Chesterton's presciently commented: "We shall soon be in a world in which people will persecute the heresy of calling a triangle a three-sided figure". The author contests the point often made that political correctness is about institutionalised politeness. It is not: "It's about submission. It's about forcing people to surrender to new orthodoxies". wokeism is all about worshipping the adjective; surely real politeness is treating everyone with respect as an individual person, not as an imposed identity.

O'Neill is right to be affronted at the woke establishment's "assault on our inner lives", a "1984"-style intrusion into our personal sphere and, indeed, personality. It is now not enough to conform in deed: one must also conform in thought. This is true across the woke ideologies challenged here, not least climate change. "Climate change" should be a neutral and indeed obvious term – climate is, of course, always changing – but we are all programmed to understand this is a euphemism for apocalyptic global warming. Indeed, "climate change" is now being replaced with the more urgent "climate crisis" and "climate emergency", reported as fact and without

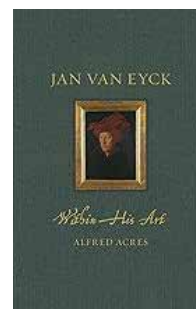
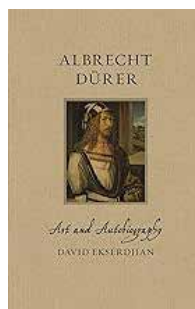
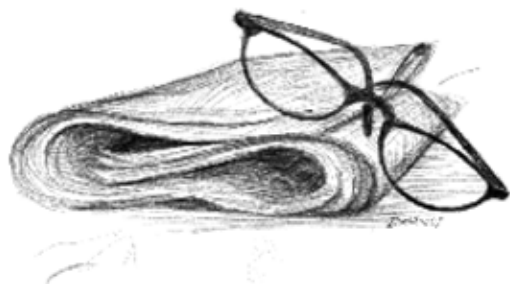
questioning. What proof is needed anyway? Hurricanes and flooding are present to witness before us. That they have always been regular phenomena is neither here nor there. O'Neill makes the pertinent comparison with late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century witch-hunting, another period of climate change, this time global cooling, which saw poor women killed in their thousands as sorceress scapegoats. Today the religious punishment for global warming scepticism is the same as for other heresies against the woke orthodoxy: ostracization, loss of funding, loss of employment and ritualistic public shaming. New science is the new religion, replacing the old spiritual one.

It seems that Gaia is not only taking her revenge on the parasitical nuisance that is mankind through the weather, but also through pandemics such as Covid. Despite all the emerging evidence exposing the media hysteria around Covid, it remains an awkward subject to broach, so all-encompassing of society as it was. O'Neill takes it as a metaphor for society's political ills, noting how commentators and mouthpieces of the great and good soon began speaking of populism as a "disease of democracy", the "virus of populism" and the "pandemic of populism". We can't have those pesky hoi polloi infecting *our* established supremacy.

The startling dismantling of democracy by the elites is the most pressing concern of this book. In the essay "Rise of the Pigs", O'Neill examines the savage liberal pejorative term of "gammon" for those vile white Brexiteers to reveal the true nastiness of the elites and their anti-democratic agenda. A few pages explores how the term was used in the past, especially in eighteenth-century England, and, indeed taken on as a badge of pride by dissenters, rather like Clinton's Trumpian deplorables in recent years. Edmund Burke's "swinish multitude" has biblical overtones, as in casting pearls

before swine; it is now adapted to suggest that voting is wasted on those who are either not educated or enlightened enough to vote the way our socially privileged betters require us to, high as they are on the thermogenic fumes of their moralistic *amour-propre*. Voters in 2016 clearly made the “wrong” choice, *The Times* columnist Matthew Parris fretting that we are no longer keeping “the mob from the gates”. A pro-EU Tory party adviser warned of “democratic extremism”, prompting a typical riposte by O’Neill: “What an interesting concept – democracy going too far”.. But hyper-liberals can believe that it has, as seen in the popular reception (in their gilded circles) of Jason Brennan’s book *Against Democracy*, an utterly shameful title that the anti-democratic elites use as pseudo-intellectual grist to their technocratic mill. Their hatred for the masses – us – is palpable, and demonstrated page after page while they are enabled by many useful idiots in the managerial classes, feeding off the bureaucratic sinecures dished out to them in service of their superiors.

Towards the end of this impassioned book, O’Neill refers to Kant’s 1784 essay on the Enlightenment, in which he excoriates those who would impose their personal opinions on him to the extent that thought and inquiry are rendered quiescent, so “I have no need to exert myself”, he wrote; the “guardians” treat us like “cattle”. 250 years on, they are treating us as gammon.



The Northern Boys

Alexander Adams

Jan Van Eyck within his Art, Alfred Acres, Reaktion, 2023, £17.95, **Albrecht Dürer: Art and Autobiography**, David Ekserdjian, Reaktion, London, 2023, £17.95.

Although we know more about Jan Van Eyck (c 1390-1441) than his contemporary painters, we have scant personal details to reconstruct the life of the man credited as the greatest master and founder of the Netherlandish Northern Renaissance. A superb new biographical study gathers what we know of Van Eyck’s life and his few surviving paintings. This (and the following book) are part of the series exploring the lives and achievements of early modern European men. The books in the series are excellent blends of intelligent analysis, clear writing, latest research and fresh perspectives, carefully distilling the best information about the subjects.

The brothers Jan and Hubert Van Eyck were credited with inventing oil painting technique; although they did not do that, they brought it to perfection with fine materials, exemplary technique, fine detail and lucid naturalism. Hubert is a shadowy figure, whose only secure work was the *Ghent Altarpiece*, completed by Jan after his death. Professor Alfred Acres of Georgetown University devotes a chapter to discussing the meanings of this large complex 24-panel polyptych painting, teasing out its unparalleled sophistication.

The wordplay found in the inscriptions indicates a keen and playful intelligence, perhaps enabled by a scholar of classics who might have supplied translations and allusions. The double meanings and references would have been appreciated only by the best educated of viewers but the richness of colour and profusion of detail would have dazzled all on the special days when the altarpiece was fully opened.

Van Eyck came from a family of painters, originally from Maaseik, with Jan being based in Bruges, at the court of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (c 1419-1467). Van Eyck was so highly regarded that many of the constraints that limited his colleagues did not apply. He was able to make art in Ghent and undertake private commissions; he did not have to enrol in the painters' guild. He was of such high rank he performed a diplomatic role, attending the Congress of Arras in 1435. At an earlier festival at Tournai (in 1427) he met Rogier van der Weyden and Robert Campin, two other towering figures of Netherlandish painting – a rendezvous that tantalises historians. Payment was made to him for secret missions abroad on behalf of the Duke, possibly in the Holy Land, something apparent confirmed by his accurate depictions of Alpine peaks and Jerusalem.

Nothing about the Van Eyck's character can be determined from scant court correspondence, receipts and legal documents. One newly published document is a successful petition to the Vatican for a confessional letter on behalf of him and his wife, which excused him annual confession to his parish priest, which could be difficult to arrange if one was travelling extensively. It was requested in the year of his death, so it may be that he was already mortally ill at this time, aged around 50 years. Van Eyck's few surviving paintings include religious paintings and portraits. The portrait of a man in a red turban in the National Gallery is supposed to be a self-portrait, an identification to which Acres is receptive. He was also a masterful draughtsman,

attested to by two beautiful detailed drawings made in metalpoint. *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) is interpreted by Acres as a record of the wealthy Italian merchant Giovanni Arnolfini and his recently deceased wife, who had died aged 20, the year before Van Eyck completed the painting. It seems to be a commemoration of the couple's contentment and material comforts before Constanza's untimely passing.

Less than a century later the situation could not be more different. In the age of the High Renaissance, artists were now elevated to the heights of the great man, leaving the stigma of the artisan far behind. None rose higher than Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). David Eskerdjian notes "[N]o other artist of the day begins to compare to northerner Albrecht Dürer in terms of the almost obsessive interest he displays in himself, even including his dreams, and his surroundings." He executed a fine self-portrait aged 13 and later drew himself nude. He drew buildings, landscapes, people, plants and animals, annotating details which could help him understand the subject and perhaps contribute to a future work of art or treatise.

Born the son of a goldsmith in Nuremberg (an important cultural, manufacturing and administrative centre), Dürer chose to train as a painter. His familiarity with engraving on copper plates would have been natural in a famed centre of metalworking. Dürer's prints were revolutionary in terms detail, sophistication, spatial depth and ingenious composition. His engravings (including *Melencolia I* and *St Jerome in His Study* (both 1514)) had spread his name across Europe. He even travelled to Venice to stop pirated editions of his prints, in what was a precursor to copyright infringement action. A workshop of apprentices and master printers produced the prints, allowing the master to concern himself with design rather than mechanical production.

As a Renaissance-specialist, Eskerdjian is in a good position to adjudicate attribution

and dating of pictures, as well as influence between artists. He is also commendably forthright in admitting that, while Dürer was a marvellous draughtsman, printmaker and watercolourist, his corpus of oil paintings is very mixed. The author admits the need “to acknowledge the unevenness of his painted oeuvre and to examine why these works are sometimes disappointing”. He observes that Dürer, so scrupulous about detail, was strangely indifferent to the nuances of lighting – something that is not a drawback to line-based prints but limits his oil paintings.

An exception to that blind spot is *St Jerome in His Study*, which depicts the saint in a sunlit room, set in a deep pictorial space; curled on the floor are a dog and lion (the latter one of the saint’s symbolic attributes).

The true purpose of this engraving is to pay homage to the wonder of home, which is why it arguably represents the birth of genre painting. [...] The saint is nearly lost in the midst of a whole host of meticulously recorded objects [...] that reveal what a masterly still-life artist Dürer would have been at a later date.

In terms of modern taste, the religious paintings may leave many cold, whereas the prints and drawings elicit a warmer and more immediate response from today’s viewers. The many illustrations include some lesser-known pictures.

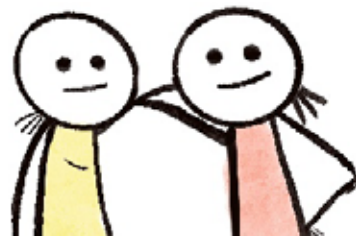
Eskerdjian is very good on the drawings, suggesting that the artist considered them not merely tools or records but works of art in themselves. He signed many and added descriptions to them, making them more likely to be highly regarded and preserved after his death. He was restlessly expansive in terms of using many techniques and a greater variety of materials than needed, as he could have confined himself to a few trusted techniques. The plentiful illustrations, footnotes, bibliographies and indices, in addition to the content, earn these two titles unreserved recommendation.

Treat a Friend to a Half Price Subscription

Introduce a friend to the wonders of ‘The Review’ and they’ll get the first year half price.

Contact our friendly staff
01462 234279

or email info@salisburyreview.co.uk



Only available for friends in
the UK due to prohibitive
postage costs

Music

The Decline of Radio 3

Rory Cranstoun



October 26th was a date of consequence for radio across the country. RAJAR, the UK's joint audience measuring bureau, unveiled its figures for the third quarter of 2023. BBC Radio captured the ears of a combined 31.7 million individuals each week, securing a national market share of 44 per cent. The ascent of the BBC's digital offering, Sounds, launched just five years ago, was striking, with the service boasting over 600 million plays over the summer months. The data paints a positive picture for the state broadcaster: Chief Content Officer, Charlotte Moore described the numbers as "incredible", hinting at the BBC's resilience in the face of an increasingly competitive and adversarial marketplace.

But for classical music fans, the situation is not all sunshine and rainbows. Fledgling station Scala Radio, despite launching to great acclaim in 2019, witnessed an 18 per cent decline of 44,000 listeners: more than a third of its pre-pandemic audience of 310,000. Meanwhile, longstanding leader Classic FM faced another record low in its listenership, shedding an additional 8,000 listeners on top of the 1 million lost since the onset of the pandemic and putting the station below 5 million listeners for the first time since its launch in 1992.

As to why is debatable. One industry source, speaking to *The Telegraph* earlier this year, suggested that Classic FM was beginning to "feel just like the BBC: while diversity and variety on the radio is of course important,

stations risk haemorrhaging listeners if they keep turning their backs on that core audience." The buzzwords 'diversity' and 'variety' have indeed been echoing through the corridors of the BBC since the days of Tony Blair, but when this particular commentator referred to the BBC, it was no doubt Radio 3 in his crosshairs.

When it comes to alienating classical music fans, Radio 3 takes the cake. A programme dedicated in its entirety to video game soundtracks? Radio 3 did it first. A steadfast commitment to maintaining a 50-50 gender balance in their repertoire of living composers, coupled with a concerted effort to amplify the 'voices' of non-white composers post-George Floyd? Again, Radio 3 took the lead. One might attribute such changes to progress and even argue that they are beneficial. Yet, for fervent Radio 3 aficionados, the issue is not the infusion of so-called "woke" ideals into their beloved station; it is the station's ever-expanding struggle to define its identity.

Launched less than a year after the Second World War, Radio 3's predecessor, the Third Programme, set out to serve a niche yet discerning audience hungry for the fine arts. Radio 4 predecessor The Home Service and Radio 2 predecessor The Light Programme both featured orchestral concerts. The Third Programme, in contrast, catered to a "high-brow," minority audience eager to engage with the complexities of music, poetry, and academic talks. Radio 3 was conceived as an 'intellectual' counterpoint to the BBC's more

populist offerings. It was aimed towards “the refinement of society” and the cognoscenti, and this remained its guiding principle for most of the 20th century.

In recent years, the station that was once a stalwart among classical music enthusiasts has experienced a palpable and continuous decline, at least among those who consider themselves ‘in the know’. *The Guardian* attributes this decline to “budget cuts,” a spectre they blame for the deterioration of everything from the NHS to local authorities to the foreign aid budget, despite these institutions appearing to receive ever larger infusions of taxpayer funds year after year.

But for Radio 3 aficionados it is not a question of money: the station has always had a small listenership when compared to BBC mainstays such as Radio 1 and Radio 2, and as the sole patron of the BBC’s various orchestras and singers, whose public performances are broadcast on the station, and with its budget accommodating every Proms concert during the season, it is expected that its budget is used wisely. Indeed, Radio 3 provides all this – including jazz, world music, arts and music reviews, discussions, and interviews – for less than the budgets of radios 1, 2, 4, and 5. The question is not one of quantity but of quality.

When tuning in to Radio 3, listeners expect to be transported to a bastion of high culture. They expect thoughtfully curated, well-recorded pieces of music, handpicked by erudite presenters like Rob Cowan, Petroc Trelawny, and Donald Macleod, and presented in programmes that match the intellectual depth of Anthony Hopkins’s *Talking About Music* or Stephen Johnson’s beloved *Discovering Music*. They do not expect, as one critic from the *New Statesman* lamented during Roger Wright’s tumultuous tenure, “a few bars of insipid rubbish or the sort of jazz one might encounter in an establishment where the view from the window is the sole attraction”. They

do not expect, on the one hand, the kind of ‘easy listening’ and mass-appeal programming that some BBC bureaucrat has decided will entice ‘young people’. On the other hand, they do not want video game soundtracks and the kind of pseudo-avant-garde pretentious material one might expect to hear at a university ‘concept art’ performance in South London. They do not desire to hear composers’ names and basic musical terms mispronounced, delivered in a manner unbecoming to the station’s heritage, nor do they wish to endure the laddish prattle of presenters like Tom McKinney or the ramblings of Katie Dereham.

Immanuel Kant wrote that classical music was a “glimpse of the infinite and the divine” and that such an experience is “essential for the cultivation of the human spirit”; young people, like myself, are in dire need of such cultivation. However, assuming we are ‘daunted’ by classical music and Radio 3’s traditional style, and thus “dumbing it down” in an attempt to appease newcomers and trendies at the expense of one’s traditional audience, is a bullet in both feet. As the *New Statesman* writer lamented, “Radio 3’s slide into mediocrity or worse is like watching an old friend becoming a rather conventional bore.” The BBC should realize that young people also do not appreciate bores.

To end on a high note, the incumbent controller, Sam Jackson, former Classic FM boss, will be elated with the latest RAJAR figures. Radio 3 has bucked the trend among its competitors, gaining 299,000 listeners since June 2023, marking a 17.6 per cent increase to reach 2 million listeners. Putting the factor of the Proms-season boost aside, I hope that Jackson will seize the initiative, reverse the decades-long trend of dumbing down initiated by Wright and continued by Davey, prune the superfluous, and restore Radio 3 to its unapologetic, elitist glory. I remain sceptical.

In Short

A Child and a Country at the End of History
Lea Ypi Penguin 2022 £9.99.

Most of us have sometimes known even as children, that we were living through critical moments of history: the end of the Second world war and the passing of Soviet communism spring to mind. Living through the metamorphosis in Albania was extraordinary and much worse.

This country was the least known and weirdest in the Red Star's constellation, even stranger than North Korea. An Albanian poet, Sejfullah Maleshova, became the Minister of culture after the communist takeover but soon fell out with the regime. Sentenced to years of imprisonment, he was freed because his persecutor had himself been purged. He worked as a stock clerk in a remote town but was not allowed to publish or speak. If anybody spoke to him he mimed and nobody dared to recite his poems. When he died no one attended his funeral except the grave digger and his sister.

This is the story of a very intelligent child seeing the regime through a child's eyes and growing up within a loving family to experience the end of communism in her adolescence. Unlike in other Eastern European countries families didn't discuss politics and channelled their frustration into other activities. The children enjoyed looking for the debris of western visitors' sweet wrappers and coca cola tins while the adults were kept busy with the endless queuing for basic groceries. The most popular subject of conversation at parties and family reunions was higher education and the differences between the degrees, but Lea never understood what this topic really meant.

After the change she was shocked to discover that her parents never supported the party and that freedom didn't have to mean communism. They told her that Albania had been an open-air prison for half a century and the graduation of friends and relatives indicated the end of their sentence. Her grandmother also told her about *her* life: she came from Salonika the daughter of a senior provincial governor of the Ottoman Empire and by the time she was 40 many of her relatives had been executed. "Things were one way and then they were another. I was someone then I became someone else." Lea's highly educated father got a good job running the port but was forced to apply the World bank's reforms which brought unemployment while capitalism in a hurry evaporated solid values. Her mother reclaimed family property that had been nationalised but like many others lost their savings in a phony pyramid scheme which started a civil war. Thousands like the author fled the country making Albania a country with one of the highest emigration rates.

An academic at the LSE, Ypi is a serious but fluent writer and the book is laced with wit and insights about freedom under both systems; she condemns both Stalinism and the World Bank and attempts to define the concept of freedom: "Is it equality or free elections" I'm sorry she is still a Marxist; all systems are flawed but capitalism the least.

Merrie Cave



High Caucasus Tom Parfitt, Headline, 2023, £25.

This is the story of a remarkable trek on foot from Sochi on the east coast of the Black Sea all the way to Derbent on the western shore of the Caspian, not less than 800 miles, and probably further, in mountainous conditions about as arduous as could be found anywhere. Food and drink were basic, cups of tea and mutton broth, and a floor to sleep on. But they were willingly offered to the passing stranger. The landscape was superb, though more photographs would have helped.

Far more dangerous than the mountains themselves was the prevailing state of murderous warfare. The small countries of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had been annexed by Georgia. They were theoretically supported by Moscow, but this only led to savage resentments and reprisals, each bloodier than the last. Equally dangerous were the outbreaks of haphazard warfare further east, in Ingushetia and Chechnya. There had been sudden massacres, kidnapping of hostages and the subsequent ruthless murder of men, women and even children. The understated courage and patience of the author were phenomenal, but perhaps hardened by all these horrors, he moves on from describing the sudden tortures and burnings of houses to say that at the end of the day 'it was the sheer grandeur of humanity that captivated most of all'. Well, all right if you were not on the receiving end.

So far, so good, if that is the right word. Unfortunately, the style of writing often spoils things for the reader. Attempts to be vigorous and compelling often turn out to be clumsy and obscure, sometimes incomprehensible. The road was 'tremoring', whatever that means, unless it is a (rare) misprint. And what exactly is 'slathering'? It would be unkind to record other jarring notes. The jacket of the

book provides some surprisingly favourable quotes including one from the wholly admirable Philip Marsden, who knows part of the area well. Are these from friends of the author, as seems probable, or do they betray tin ears? Parfitt mentions that both Lermontov and Tolstoy had described their adventures in the area, but apart from the stylistic gulf that separates them from him it must be said that they served in a Russian army that sought to dominate and suppress these ruthless but endlessly hospitable tribes rather than support them. The sad fate of another regional hero, Imam Shamil, who fought the Russian invaders against fearful odds and died in captivity in Russia in 1859, is another poignant memory.

Things improve a bit in Dagestan where the end suddenly comes in sight. By the time the waves of the Caspian were caressing his ankles, in spite of obscurities and a few loose ends along the way, one is left with considerable respect for the author's grasp of the insoluble troubles of the whole vast area, and above all for his stamina and determination.

John Jolliffe

Writing Straight with Crooked Lines, Jim Forest, 2020, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York.

This autobiographical memoir is relevant to today's needs and problems. I corresponded with, and briefly met, the author, when he directed the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, at a time of aggressive nationalism in Bosnia and Kosovo, on the part of many Serbs and Russians, most of them at least nominal Orthodox believers.

Jim Forest was born in the US, served briefly in the American Navy and became a war resister and peace worker from the time of the abortive American invasion of Cuba. Both his parents were active members of the American

Communist Party, but became disillusioned after the Russian invasion of Hungary. Jim moved from the Anglican, to the Catholic, and finally to the Orthodox communion. For some years he edited the Catholic Worker in New York, which brought him into close contact with its founder, Dorothy Day. He developed a deep friendship with Thomas Merton, and later with the brothers Daniel and Philip Berrigan, both priests – the former a Jesuit and the latter a Josephite. He linked with the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and worked for the Catholic Peace Fellowship. Later he went on to found or revive the Orthodox Peace Fellowship. The movement against the Vietnam war soon gained support from many faiths. Jim wrote several books, including the lives of Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton.

If Jim were alive today he would point to three Orthodox principles that seem relevant to most faiths and to all who struggle with today's needs and issues. Sobornost is the equivalent of Conciliarity, the way of valuing and consulting all God's people. Miloserdia describes the corporal works of mercy (as practiced ever since the Apostles' care for widows and orphans). Dukhovnost is the spiritual life of the People of God, expressed in their lives and actions. It embraces moral capacity (ie moral imagination embodied in virtuous behaviour), courage, wisdom, mercy, social responsibility, willingness to forgive, and in general a life centred on love.

Raymond Hylton

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 .

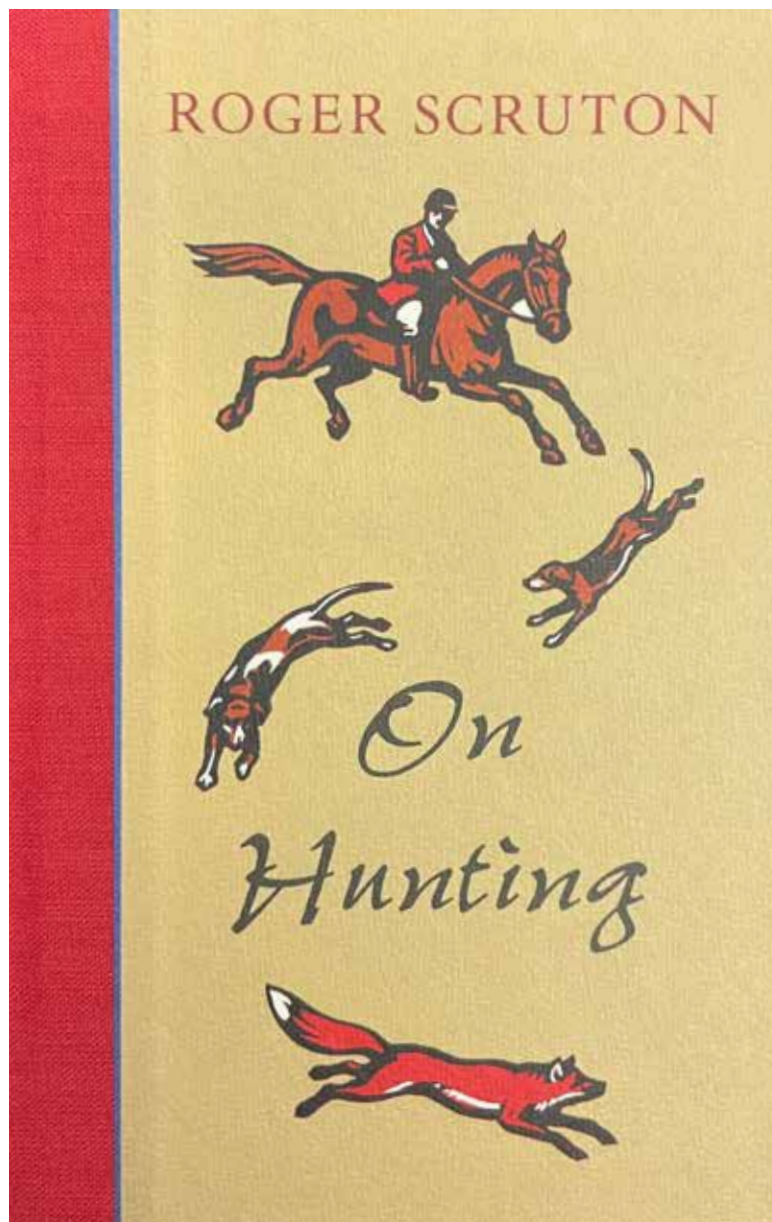
Single issues £6+p&p

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



“My life divides into three parts. In the first I was wretched; in the second ill at ease; in the third hunting.”

Roger Scruton

To purchase a book or to learn more about Roger Scruton’s work please visit

www.rogerscruton.com