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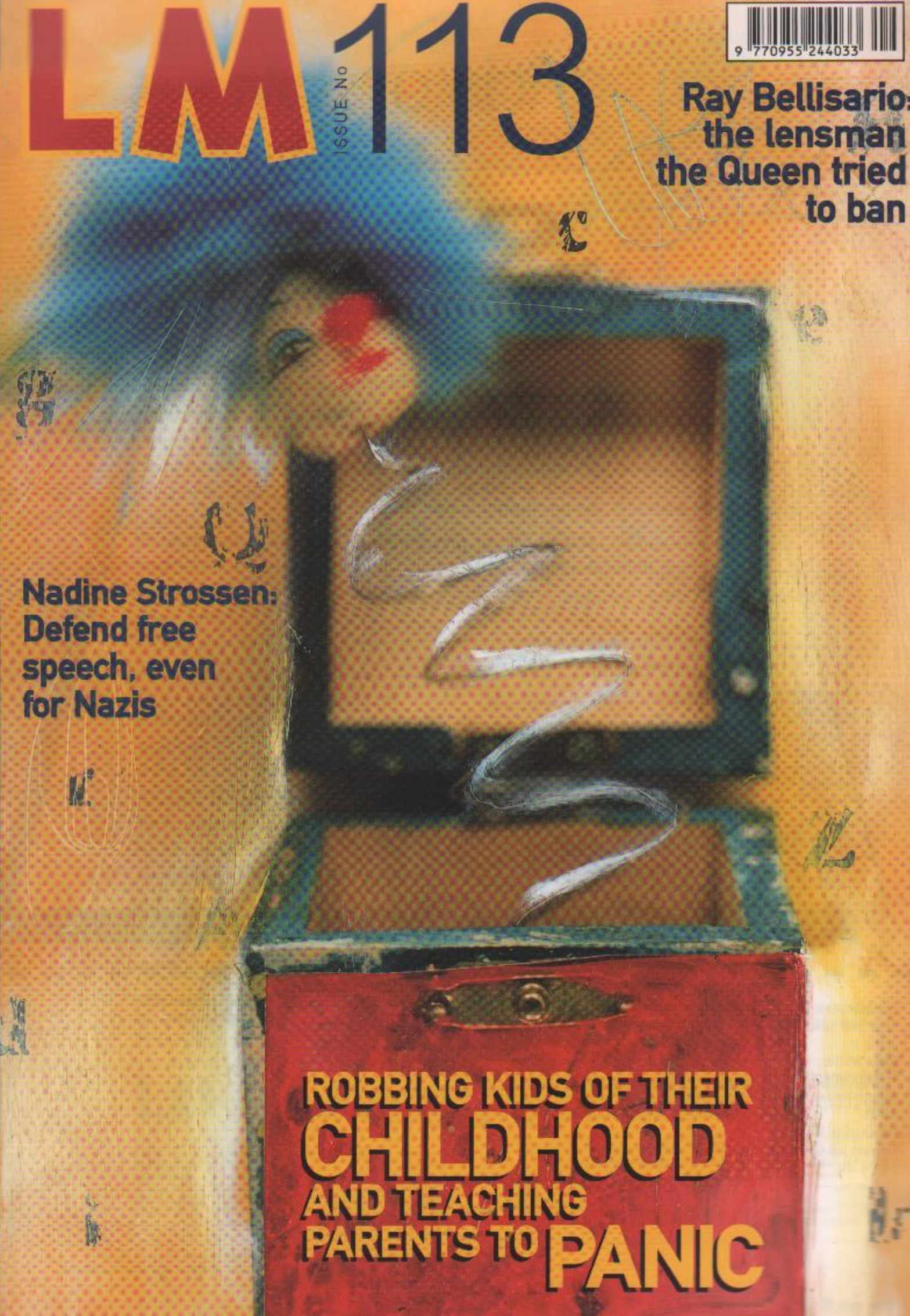
ISSUE No



**Ray Bellisario:
the lensman
the Queen tried
to ban**

**Nadine Strossen:
Defend free
speech, even
for Nazis**

**ROBBING KIDS OF THEIR
CHILDHOOD
AND TEACHING
PARENTS TO PANIC**



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ROBBING KIDS OF THEIR CHILDHOOD AND TEACHING PARENTS TO PANIC

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Mick Hume

Editor



EDITOR'S WARNING: ACCORDING TO RECENT REPORTS, THIS MAGAZINE IS AN APOLOGIST FOR MASS MURDER FUNDED BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT. NOW READ ON

As the libel case in which ITN is suing me and *LM* gets closer to trial, our opponents in the media are upping the stakes in the war of words. They have launched what used to be called a whispering campaign against us—except that these people tend to do their 'whispering' in the columns of the national press and on the internet.

Before dealing with the latest accusations we had better briefly summarise the issues at stake in the libel case. It centres on the article 'The picture that fooled the world', written by German journalist Thomas Deichmann, and published in the February 1997 issue of *LM*.

Deichmann's article investigated the circumstances behind the famous ITN pictures of an emaciated Bosnian Muslim, Fikret Alic, apparently caged behind barbed wire at the Bosnian Serb-run Trnopolje camp in August 1992. Ever since it was first broadcast around the world, this image has been the most powerful symbol of the war in Bosnia. It is widely seen as proof that the Serbs were (and are) the new Nazis, who ran concentration camps in Bosnia, and whom the UN and Nato have had (and will have) to punish with air strikes, sanctions and war crimes trials.

Deichmann's investigation—centred on a detailed examination of the uncut footage shot by ITN—alleged that this infamous image was not all that it seemed. Trnopolje was no Nazi-style concentration camp, but a refugee and transit camp on the site of a school and community centre. There was no barbed wire fence around the camp. Instead, the barbed wire fence in the picture surrounded an old agricultural compound adjoining the camp area. The ITN journalists had entered this compound and filmed Fikret Alic and the other Bosnian Muslims through the wire. Despite the impression given by the pictures, it was the British journalists, not the Bosnian Muslims, who were encircled by the barbed wire fence. (For the full version of the article and much more besides, see the website at <http://www.informinc.co.uk/ITN-vs-LM/>)

Deichmann's revelations were carried by prestigious newspapers across Europe. When *LM* published the article in Britain as 'The picture that fooled the world', however, ITN demanded that we pulp every copy, apologise and pay damages. When we refused to be gagged they issued writs for libel—an unprecedented attempt by a major news organisation to silence an independent magazine through the courts.

Eighteen months later, as the legal process drags on, we are still waiting to have our day

LOOKING FOR YOUNG WRITERS

LM is winning a reputation as a magazine that puts new writers on the map. If you are under 26 years old, and interested in trying your hand at investigative journalism or attending one of our young writers' courses, write to The Editor, *LM*, Signet House, 49-51 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JB.

in court. But some within the media have already found us guilty of heinous crimes. Throughout the past year and a half, *LM*, me and Thomas Deichmann have been branded as supporters of Serbian nationalism, Holocaust revisionists, and even the devil's agents. In recent weeks the campaign to discredit us and caricature our case has been stepped up a gear.

Ed Vulliamy of the *Guardian*, who was with the ITN team behind the barbed wire at Trnopolje, is almost as obsessed with what he has called the 'diabolical' *LM* as he is with the evil Serbs. Writing in the *Guardian* on 4 August (after the man the paper described as 'Serbian concentration camp manager Milan Kovacevic' had died of a heart attack in his cell at the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague), Vulliamy once again rounded on the 'gang of revisionists collected around the magazine *Living Marxism*, who contorted the [ITN] footage to concoct a grotesque and false claim that our camps story had been fabricated'. Two days later, in the *Independent*, Stephen Howe accused *LM* writers of 'apologetics for mass murder', because we apparently insist that, if they appear in the mainstream media, then 'stories of genocide in Bosnia must be fabrications'.

At the same time, more smears about *LM* and the libel case were flying around the internet. Some of these came to light when Michael Griffin, news editor of the journal *Index on Censorship*, sent Thomas Deichmann an unsolicited email on 29 July. In this extraordinary outburst, Griffin alleged that '*LM* is working to a Serbian agenda in this legal exercise in sophistry', that we are guilty of 'Bosnia-denial', and that 'the magazine *LM*...literally receives funding from Serbia's post-war propaganda machinery'.

It's a fair cop. And I would like other offences of throwing babies out of incubators, violating nuns and laundering money for the Colombian cocaine cartel through our Swiss-based subscriptions department to be taken into consideration.

The strange thing is that despite all of the thousands of words of vitriol poured on *LM* over the past 18 months, none of our critics has ever once addressed the substance of Thomas Deichmann's allegations, about the way in which those misleading pictures were taken at Trnopolje camp. Not one of them. Ever. Instead they have employed two diversionary tactics, both of which are evident in the latest round of mudslinging.

Tactic One: rather than deal with Deichmann's actual allegations, you credit him

and *LM* with some ridiculously exaggerated arguments which make an easier target. This is why our critics like to pretend that Deichmann says ITN 'fabricated' the camps story, or to claim that *LM* says everything in the mainstream media is a 'fabrication'. The language conjures up images of journalists bringing their own barbed wire with them, or hiring thin men to play prisoners, or perhaps building the entire camp out of papier mâché. Never mind suing us under the libel laws; if those are the kind of accusations we're bandying about, why not section us under the mental health acts?

Tactic Two: you ignore Deichmann's allegations and evidence altogether, and simply try to discredit the journalist and the magazine by association. Hence all of the recent smear stories about us being 'revisionists' denying the truth of genocide in Bosnia, or working to a 'Serbian agenda', or even being 'literally' funded by Serb gold. All of which, I cannot deny, is literally crap.

The agenda we are working to, in first publishing Deichmann's article and then standing up to ITN's libel writs, is our own and it's simple enough. We want to highlight the dangers of rewriting the history of the Holocaust. And we believe in the importance of press freedom.

The ITN picture of Fikret Alic apparently caged behind barbed wire at Trnopolje became the key image which finally persuaded the world that the Bosnian Serbs were running Nazi-style concentration camps. But as Deichmann's investigation showed, what legitimate comparison could there be between a ramshackle refugee and transit camp like Trnopolje, however grim, and a real concentration camp like Auschwitz?

Contrary to what Michael Griffin says in his accusation of 'Bosnia-denial', there is no evidence that 'a quarter of a million died' in that conflict. A more realistic estimate is 30 000 – 50 000 combined deaths on all sides in the Bosnian civil war; a figure which comes not from the 'Serb propaganda machine', but from the respected Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The Nazis killed perhaps 100 times as many at Auschwitz alone.

At *LM* we have insisted throughout that drawing loose comparisons between the Second World War and the Bosnian conflict ran a double risk. It risked distorting the real situation in Bosnia, by demonising the Serbs as the new Nazis; and, more importantly, it risked belittling the unique horror of the Nazi genocide against the Jews, by equating

it with the civil war in Bosnia. It is because we see the dangers in rewriting the history of the Holocaust in this way that we have sought to expose how ITN's pictures fooled the world.

It seems we are not alone in our concerns. John Simpson of the BBC has argued that 'the Serbs do not deserve to be branded modern-day Nazis', and that 'the identification with the Nazis came most strongly as a result of a single set of television pictures from the camps run by the Serbs at Omarska and Trnopolje in August 1992' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 15 March 1998). More recently, Christopher Dunkley has also highlighted how the evidence Deichmann has compiled calls into question the accepted media view of Bosnia (*Financial Times*, 5 August 1998). But then, perhaps the BBC's world affairs editor and the *FT*'s television correspondent are in the pay of the Serbs too.

The other issue at stake in this case is press freedom. For *LM* that means the freedom to go against the grain and challenge the orthodoxy of the day. We live in an age of conformism and emotional correctness in the media, when to step outside of the rigid framework imposed on discussion is to risk being accused of blasphemy; when to question the consensus on an issue like Bosnia is to risk being accused of 'revisionism'—and dragged through the libel courts.

At stake in the libel case is the right of a magazine like *LM* to tell our readers the truth as we understand it, to offer them the evidence and the arguments to back it up, and to allow them to judge for themselves, without being dictated to by ITN, the judges or anybody else. That is what makes the cause worth supporting for all of us who believe that our fundamental right to free speech matters more than their bogus right not to be offended. As our opponents turn up the heat with the approach of the trial, we are going to need the moral and financial support to match them.

Our libel defence fund is happy—no, desperate—to accept money from freedom-loving individuals of any and every nationality. As for the mythical Serb gold, I am tired of repeating that my magazine has never taken a penny from any foreign party or government, and anybody who says otherwise is a miserable liar. If it wasn't against my principles, I'd sue. ●

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FREUD WAS NO FAKE

Bruce Charlton's attack on psychotherapy ('The counselling cult', July/August) is facetious and indiscriminating. He fails to draw a much needed distinction between therapeutic methods which are based on a rigorous investigation of the human psyche, and counselling practice which simply reflects contemporary victim culture.

Freudian psychoanalysis proceeds on the assumption that the methods which have helped to uncover the structure and functioning of the human psyche can also be applied therapeutically to psychical disorders. It is this interaction between the investigative and the therapeutic which has characterised psychoanalysis during its more creative phases, and which sets it apart, even today, from the trite 'confessional counselling' that has proliferated in recent years.

Charlton elides this distinction by vulgarising Freudian theory to the level of a BT advertisement. He speaks of the 'Freudian notion that it is always beneficial to "talk through" feelings, experiences, opinions... of a kind which are supposed to be the cause of current problems'. It is easy to ridicule any body of thought when formulated at this level of banality.

Charlton's crude parody of psychoanalysis also loses any sense of the historically specific nature of post-Diana Britain. The result is that attitudes peculiar to the debased outlook of the 1990s are projected back on to the opening decades of the century, as though the intellectual and artistic ferment occasioned by Freud's discoveries could be assimilated without reserve to our own little world of victims and counsellors.

Louis Ryan London

WHO'S DUMBING DOWN?

The only wrong note in James Heartfield's otherwise excellent article ('Who's dumbing down?', July/August) is his counterposition of the Arts Council defending 'high culture' for the few to the politicians talking down to people.

The example he cites of talking down, 'the proposal to introduce Shakespeare to rave crowds in 10-minute gobbets', is in fact the New Audience scheme administered by guess who? The Arts Council. This follows hot on the heels of the other innovative new scheme that the Arts Council brought in this year, 'Arts for everyone', which included such projects as youth theatre workshops in Lancashire, watercolour workshops in Bridgnorth, local artists' exhibitions in Kettering and racism awareness workshops in Rednal. Worthy and community-based it is, but high art it ain't.

My point is that Heartfield underestimates how far 'talking down' has gone. There is no coterie preserving high arts, even if it is just for the few. The Arts Council is as desperate as the broadcasters, politicians and schools to find out where it's at!

Jane Sandeman London

James Heartfield is on the button when he describes the loss of faith by intellectuals in highbrow culture, and the mindless rush to cheap, pop (un-) Cool Britannia. Mind you, I do not think Italian opera and Russian Court ballet dancing and nineteenth-century orchestral music need Arts Council propping up—they must be in the market place selling their wares like the rest of us. But I was disappointed when he referred to firms buying my artwork for their lobbies *instead of* innovating in new technology—my work is innovation in the newest of new technology, the limitless human brain.

Patrick Hughes London

PS After all, Bob Zimmerman changed his name to Bob Dylan; Dylan Thomas didn't change his name to Zimmerman Thomas.

POPSICAL SUCKS

It was like a breath of fresh air to read Mark Ryan's criticism of relativism in music today ('Don't crossover Beethoven', July/August). An appreciation of classical music is something that has to be learned and this is no simple task. For me it took more than a decade, from a fondness for a few opera arias to an appreciation of the universality of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* or Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsenk*. It has been one of the most rewarding journeys of my life.

Ryan is right to say that 'unlike pop, classical music is not something that can be grasped by immediate sensation'. When I hear Rod Stewart's 'You wear it well' or some old Tamla Motown record it might remind me of a girl I once knew. But Shostakovich's *Eighth Symphony* or Schoenberg's *A Survivor in Warsaw* reinforce the highest achievements of mankind, like the heroic struggles against the savagery of the Nazis by the people of the Soviet Union and the Jewish resistance in Poland which inspired these pieces. This music is testament to the highest ideals of the human spirit that, in my opinion, could not be encapsulated by any other form of music. For that reason alone classical should not be equated with pop or jazz.

Dennis O'Driscoll Dublin

Mark Ryan ('Don't crossover Beethoven', July/August) makes some excellent and astute points concerning the way in which music is appreciated and its wider context in human history. A pity then that he makes the same mistakes in attempting to categorise music as he accuses the promoters of 'popsical' of making.

The massive shift in musical trends between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is due not to an onslaught of dumbed down populism, but to the invention of the recording studio, which relocates the definitive template for a piece of music in the musician's specific performance rather than in the composer's score.

'High' and 'low' musical distinctions have always existed, whether between the Beatles

and Shostakovich in this century or between Gilbert and Sullivan and Mozart in previous centuries. But the logical implication of Ryan specifying Schoenberg and Stockhausen as this century's contribution to the historical continuum of high art is that a freeform jazz improvisation by John Coltrane (just as difficult and demanding of the listener as a piece by Schoenberg) does not deserve canonical status, simply because it does not happen to exist on the Deutsch Gramophon label. Where do Ryan's simplistic categories leave freeform jazz, death metal or Buddhist chanting, none of which is necessarily of immediate intuitive appeal to the ear?

But Ryan's worst mistake is to take the recent ham-fisted attempts of a few accountants at blurring musical genre distinctions as being representative of all genre-defying music. This ignores at least a half-century of groundbreaking work, that extends from Walter Carlos' performances of pieces by Bach on a Moog synthesiser in the 1950s to Frank Zappa's revolutionising of almost every conceivable musical sphere, including the orchestral.

Sandy Slarr Oxford

THE DRUGS DON'T WORK

In response to Dr Michael Fitzpatrick's article 'The drugs campaign—just say no' (June), I would like to add some comments on his observations on giving methadone to heroin users.

I have been addicted to heroin for about three years and for the last four months I have had a methadone prescription. Although Dr Fitzpatrick mentions that methadone is not considered to be addictive, it is actually even more addictive than heroin, which means that prescribing methadone to a heroin user simply leaves the user with two difficult addictions to cope with, as a methadone prescription is no guarantee that a junkie will stop using heroin. I asked for my prescription in order to make my need for heroin less fraught and easier to control; I have very little desire to come off heroin at this moment in time. In fact the thought of being 'clean' fills me with terror and I think that it is this fear of life without heroin that needs to be dealt with, not any physical addiction.

Therefore, I am sure it is true that only major changes in lifestyle will persuade most junkies to come off heroin; the old cliché that you have to want to stop is surely true.

Name and address withheld

VIAGRA VICTIMS

I thought Timandra Harkness (LM-Mail, July/August) was being a bit hard on David Nolan's criticisms of Viagra ('Stiffening up', June). Although I agree that we shouldn't accept natural limitations on human experience, Nolan's piece pointed to the way in which a remedy for a fairly specific complaint has become a cipher for a wider non-medical anxiety about the status of men

in society. The irony, I suspect, is that the thousands of men apparently seeking a prescription are not all belatedly admitting to the guilty secret of impotence, but are doing so in order to achieve exactly what Harkness is in favour of; that is, the enhancement of normal sex through chemicals. That few will admit to this is unsurprising in a culture where purely hedonistic demands are treated with suspicion, and where your only claim to anything is as a damaged 'victim' claiming 'reparation'.

JJ Charlesworth London

MONOPOLY MAKES SENSE

Jason Walsh (letters, July/August) objects to Microsoft's monopoly position in computer software and wants more 'choices' in computers and computer systems. The difference between using a PC and a Mac nowadays is like the difference between driving a Ford and a Vauxhall—for this difference Jason wants everything to be developed twice and so higher prices, more bugs, incompatibility and less time spent on innovative new application software.

Monopoly makes sense sometimes Jason. Stopping the forward march of standardisation, of the sort that Microsoft is establishing, would send us backwards in time; software developers would become a bit like cavemen, this time having to reinvent the wheel.

Roy Lidster Chesterfield

1.1 MILLION TO ONE

Ann Bradley wonders how the *Guardian* got its figure of 1.1 million paedophiles at large in the UK. Presumably from the same statistical methods that allowed it to inform readers that a bus driver had received £1.1 million for the rights to a novel he wrote in between shifts (the actual amount was 10 grand for the book and 15 grand for the film rights, of which he has so far received just £5000). Still, 1.1 million is a good figure: big enough to look spectacular in a headline, but also with that impressive .1, which gives it that all-important authenticity. I for one will be sorry to see it sacrificed at the altar of so-called 'accuracy'.

Toby Banks London

WE WELCOME READERS' VIEWS AND CRITICISMS

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The what's NOT on guide

BURNING QUESTION: A book on the ordination of women has been banned on the orders of the Vatican. Copies of *Women at the Altar* by Sister Lavinia Byrne, a contributor to Radio Four's *Thought for the Day*, will be either pulped or incinerated. Be grateful that they are not burning witches any longer.

DAMNED IF YOU DON'T: After protests from 'leading Holocaust scholars', DC Comics apologised for the sixtieth anniversary issue of *Superman* in which the caped crusader travelled back in time to battle with the Nazis. Although Superman entered the Warsaw ghetto and met boys named Baruch and Moishe, the comic made no mention of the Jews. The editor explained that the word 'Jew' was left out to avoid the possibility of inadvertently promoting anti-Semitism.

NOISE POLLUTION: On behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), Sir Paul McCartney has written to the University of California demanding an end to experiments intended to help scientists retrain the human brain after hearing loss. Anaesthetised monkeys are currently exposed to a deafening 140 decibels; but at least the range of noises to which they are subjected does not include the singing of McCartney's late wife, and patron of Peta, the animal-loving Lady Linda. Meanwhile, the campaign which Linda led called for their lawyers when they discovered that somebody else had already registered an internet site under the name Peta. The rival acronym stands for People for Eating Tasty Animals, and the site encourages hunting with crossbows. A spokeswoman for the original Peta said it was 'not very funny'.

TOO SEXY: The sexual content of certain teenage magazines has been dubbed 'obscene' by broadcaster Anna Ford, who says she would 'like them banned'. Middle class teenage girls must be breathing a sigh of relief. At last there is something which their mothers' generation does not approve of.

SMOKED OUT: Smoking has been banned by Welwyn and Hatfield district council, whose employees may be disciplined if they are caught puffing either inside or outside their offices while on duty. The chief executive said: 'Smoking is unacceptable to this council—it is not the image we want to portray.' Passengers on a flight to Milan were not allowed to leave the plane for 40 minutes after landing, while captain Bryan Bliss demanded to know who had been smoking in the lavatory.

NOT AMUSED: A joke about foreign secretary Robin Cook's relationship with his secretary has been condemned by TV watchdogs. While hosting the National Lottery Show, veteran comedian Bob Monkhouse said of Cook: 'I can't blame him for putting it about a bit before his looks start to go.'

Andrew Calcutt provides a weekly 'What's not on guide' for Talk Radio on Monday mornings, MW:1053, 1089 kHz

NO PAPARAZZO

Ray Bellisario was the royal photographer the Queen tried to ban before Diana was even born. He put Tessa Mayes in the picture

Ray Bellisario pioneered the use of long-range lenses to take intimate pictures of the royals more than 30 years before 'paparazzi' became a dirty word. He prefers the title photojournalist. 'Paparazzo' conjures up the image of the photographer as immoral money-grabber, and Bellisario views himself as a man of principle. "The only reason I did things such as photograph over brick walls", he says, "is because I was pushed into it by the palace".

How did this mild-mannered photographer from aristocratic Roman stock come to be seen as such a nuisance to the royals that palace officialdom attempted to destroy his career?

It all started in 1961 when commander Richard Colville, the Queen's press secretary (1947-1968), accused him of intentionally breaching official protocol to cover the royal tour of India and Pakistan. Unused to travelling abroad with the royals, Bellisario had committed the cardinal sin of asking the Indian High Commission for press accreditation, rather than applying to the palace. When Colville discovered the photographer had not got palace accreditation, he assumed that Bellisario was trying to join the royal entourage unofficially.

'Colville accused me of lying and abusing the Queen's hospitality', remembers Bellisario. 'He said I was not going to get palace accreditation to follow the Queen's tour of India. He said that whatever accreditation I had got from the Indian High Commission, he'd cancel it, and furthermore he would see to it that I never got a pass again to photograph the royal family.' A friend and former *Picture Post* cameraman warned Bellisario that 'Colville is a bastard. Once he's got his knife in your back, he'll never take it out'.

Bellisario's banishment came out of the blue. 'Up to that point, the young princesses—Margaret, Alexandra and even the Queen—loved being photographed as trend-setting, beautiful ladies in their evening gowns and tiaras. They used to acknowledge me with a nod and smile.' Glitzy colour shots of these high society girls were in demand. His photographs adorned magazine covers and illustrated endless articles on the royals in the British and foreign press. On one occasion, the request for a photograph came from Princess Alexandra ('a friendly person') and he was happy to oblige.

But Colville kept his word. Suddenly Bellisario found that he was denied permission to photograph royal engagements not just in India, but in London. There were other incidents where policemen would walk over to obstruct his line of vision. Occasionally he would be dragged away.

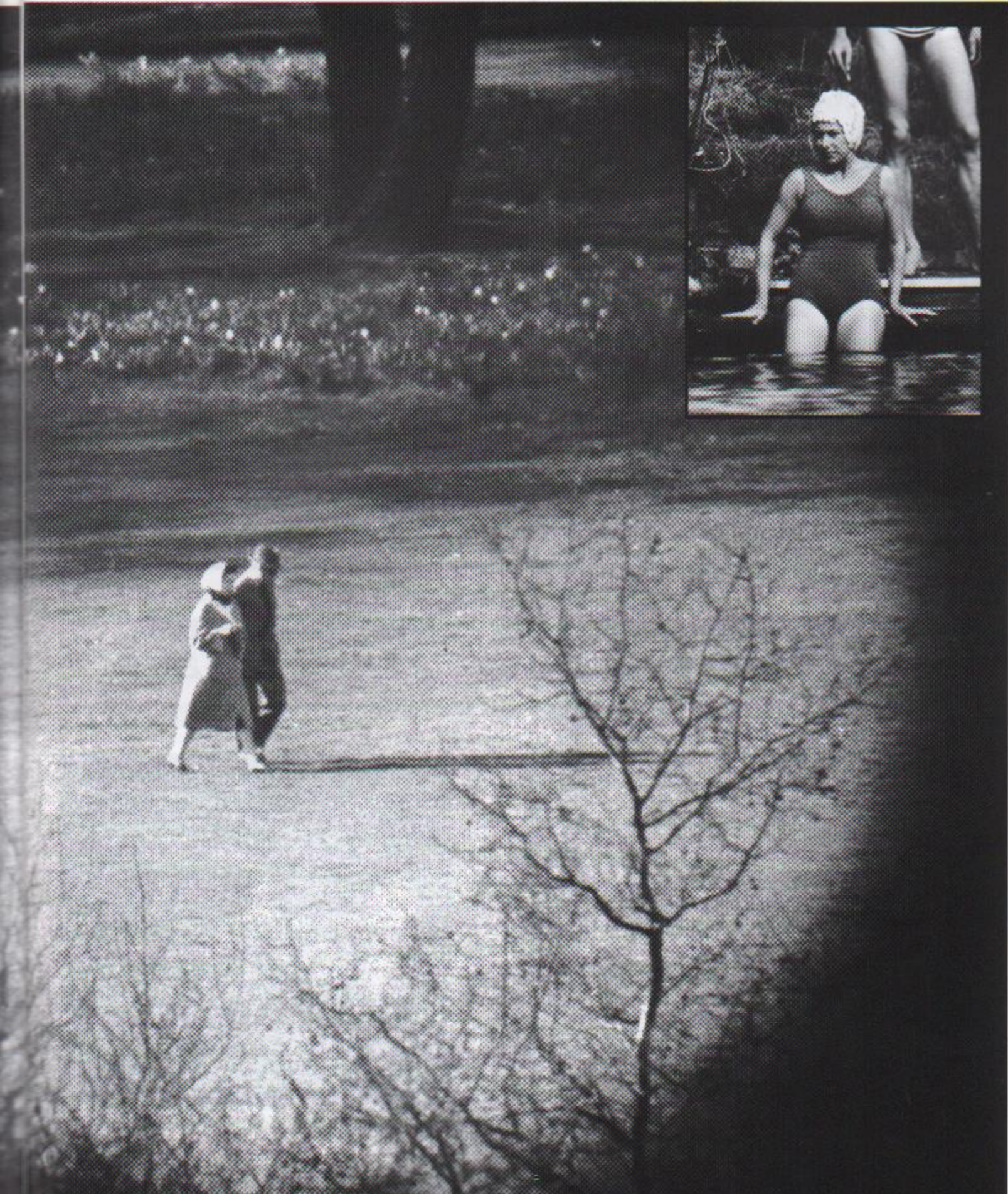
Finally, Ray Bellisario was summoned to meet a high-ranking police officer at Scotland Yard. 'I wasn't accused of anything, but I got a stern warning. He told me—in front of my solicitor—that I had gone around taking photographs of the royal family at any time I wished. He said, "It's going to stop. If it doesn't, I'll pin something on you and I'll see that it sticks".'

At the start of the sixties, press deference ensured that the royals could still impose draconian reporting restrictions without much protest. Little had changed, it seemed, since the thirties, when Edward VIII's affair with Mrs Simpson (which was all over the European papers) went unreported in Britain for six years before the abdication crisis. Once the palace had exiled him, however, Ray Bellisario had to make up new rules of his own.

Unwittingly, the photographer who had begun his career as a favoured royal image-maker became an image-breaker. He bought long-range lenses after being barred from the press enclosures, so that he could zoom in for close-ups. After his removal from the royal parks he bought all the ordinance survey maps for Windsor Park, Balmoral and Sandringham—'anywhere the royals ever went'—which detailed the public pathways that he was still entitled to use. 'I didn't care →



Despite official denials, Bellisario (top left) snapped the Queen's meeting with the disgraced



Duke of Windsor. This picture has never before been published in the British press

PHOTOS: RAY BELLISARIO



'SHE KNEW I WAS AFTER THAT ONE SHOT. SHE SAID "YOU'LL NEVER GET IT". BUT I DID'

↳ what the royal family did. If they did it within my view, I was prepared to photograph them.'

As a result Bellisario's collection of royal photographs became more intimate, comprising shots of private, unguarded moments, compared with the more posed official photographs obtained by others.

In December 1964, following a formal complaint by the Queen herself, the Press Council condemned Ray Bellisario's actions as an 'unreasonable intrusion on the private lives' of the royals. His crime

this time? Photographing the Queen and Princess Margaret in a park without their knowledge. Images of the Queen enjoying a picnic and Margaret in her swimsuit were splashed in the *Sunday Express* and the *People*.

In a statement the palace warned the whole of Fleet Street: 'It is Her Majesty's hope that the use of pictures taken under such circumstances may be discouraged, and these activities will therefore become less profitable to the offending photographers.'

Disclosure: media freedom and the privacy debate after Diana

edited by Tessa Mayes

Exclusive interviews with editors, journalists, photographers and lawyers concerned about the effect of privacy regulation on media freedom including:

Miguel Arana (paparazzo), **Ray Bellisario** (photographer), **Sholto Byrnes** (*Londoner's Diary*, *Evening Standard*), **Elizabeth Clough** (executive producer, *Rough Justice*, BBC TV), **Martyn Gregory** (documentary film-maker), **Ian Hargreaves** (editor, *New Statesman*), **Mick Hume** (editor, *LM*), **Phillip Knightley** (author and former Insight team, *Sunday Times*), **Stuart Kuttner** (managing editor, *News of the World*), **Ann Leslie** (*Daily Mail*), **Piers Morgan** (editor, *Mirror*), **Adam Porter** (*Loaded*), **Henry Porter** (London editor, *Vanity Fair*), **Mark Seddon** (editor, *Tribune*), **Ned Tempko** (editor, *Jewish Chronicle*)



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Newspaper editors responded by refusing to use Bellisario's work, or other similarly candid shots of the royals. In the popular press he was labelled 'royal pest', 'royal scourge' and 'royal pain in the neck'. One journalist even claimed that Bellisario had disguised himself as a bush.

If the palace officials hoped the young photographer would pack up his cameras and go home to Italy, they were to be disappointed.

'Bellisario comes from my Roman ancestor's name, Caesar's general Belisarius, which means warlike in Latin', he smiles mischievously. 'Somewhere in my blood there is something that will hit back when pushed so far. You can't let people in Colville's position push his weight around.'

Although a republican, Bellisario had originally taken his pictures in order to make a living, not to undermine the royals. Now this supremely privileged family was using its power not just to stop him taking pictures in officially sanctioned royal places, but to prevent him photographing what he liked in public places. 'When public figures do things in public places they cannot complain if somebody photographs them in that situation', he insists. He continued to record the royals' unguarded moments but sold most of his work overseas. It revealed a different side to the royals—and not always a flattering one.

A photograph he is most proud of is of Princess Anne falling off a horse in the seventies. 'I'd planned it for a long time, turning up to all the horse trials time after time', he recalls. 'She knew I had photographed her riding plenty of times and was after that one shot. She said "you'll never get it". But I did.'

In the aftermath of Diana's death, the methods Bellisario used to get some of his pictures are now widely condemned as unethical. Photographs obtained through persistent pursuit, unlawful behaviour, intimidation or harassment are banned under the Press Complaints Commission's revised 1998 Code of Practice. Even the *News of the World* now asks its photographers to sign a similar code of conduct.

When it comes to the private lives of public figures, the critics argue, do we really need to know all and see all? Ray Bellisario's view is simple. You never know when something significant will happen, so the best solution is to keep up the surveillance. Take Bellisario's black and white snatched shot reprinted on page nine. It looks like a woman taking a quiet stroll with a friend in a park. In fact it is the Queen walking with her uncle, the Duke of Windsor, in the grounds of Buckingham palace during the late sixties. This was the first meeting between the Queen and the Duke since he was officially cast out after abdicating the throne. The palace denied the meeting took place. The photograph has never been published before in the British press.

Even for Bellisario, however, there are limits to what photographs he will release for publication. Despite being happy to have sold the infamous swimsuit shots of Princess Margaret, he refused to release photographs of her then husband Lord Snowdon in his swimming trunks which were 'out of taste'; they revealed his emaciated left leg, the result of suffering from polio as a boy. Nor would Bellisario have photographed Princess Diana looking distressed. 'My own sense of dignity, decorum and self-respect', he explains, 'would prevent me from selling those kind of shots which invade somebody's private and personal life and are not of concern to the public.'

The monarchy continues to renegotiate public and private no-go areas for the press. Prince William issued a statement this summer criticising the *Sunday Mirror* for revealing the surprise fiftieth birthday celebration he planned for his father, and warning the press off invading his privacy. You might think that such details are not worth knowing about anyway. But to Bellisario the shift in image control back in favour of the royal family is a problem: 'They keep certain things hidden, whether it's about their money and investments in apartheid South Africa, or other shocking things that if people were to find out would be disastrous for the monarchy.'

Ray Bellisario's dark eyes look straight at me when I ask if he has any regrets about taking on the royal establishment. 'It was something I did out of a tremendous principle. The royals can't just push people around.'

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SUBSCRIBE see page 27

A year after her death, Dianaspoken is everywhere. Mark Ryan reaches out to fellow survivors

PARLEZ-VO

A few days after being arrested for lewd conduct in a public toilet in California in April, George Michael appeared on television to explain his behaviour to the world. By his actions, he explained, he had put himself in 'an extremely vulnerable position'. This was a particularly sly and inventive way of recounting events. Here was a man of immense wealth and fame who had gone to a well-known cruising joint with the purpose of getting some sort of exotic sexual pleasure. Yet he spoke of the incident as if he was somehow the victim in the whole affair, because he had put himself in 'an extremely vulnerable position'. Strictly speaking, I suppose, this is not untrue. One of the obvious side effects of exposing your backside to the public is that you do

make it more vulnerable than if it was covered up in a pair of trousers. In that sense, every crime puts the criminal in an extremely vulnerable position. But it is a perverse way of looking at the incident. George Michael was the prime agent in the case. He was a victim only in the sense that he was caught in the act.

George Michael was a close friend of the late Princess Diana, the most illustrious exponent of the language of the victim. Even though she lived at the apex of society, with a powerful publicity apparatus at her disposal, Diana often spoke of herself in terms which emphasised her own vulnerability. Her fame as a public figure became bound up in her later years with the way she projected herself as the hapless object of stronger forces, whether these

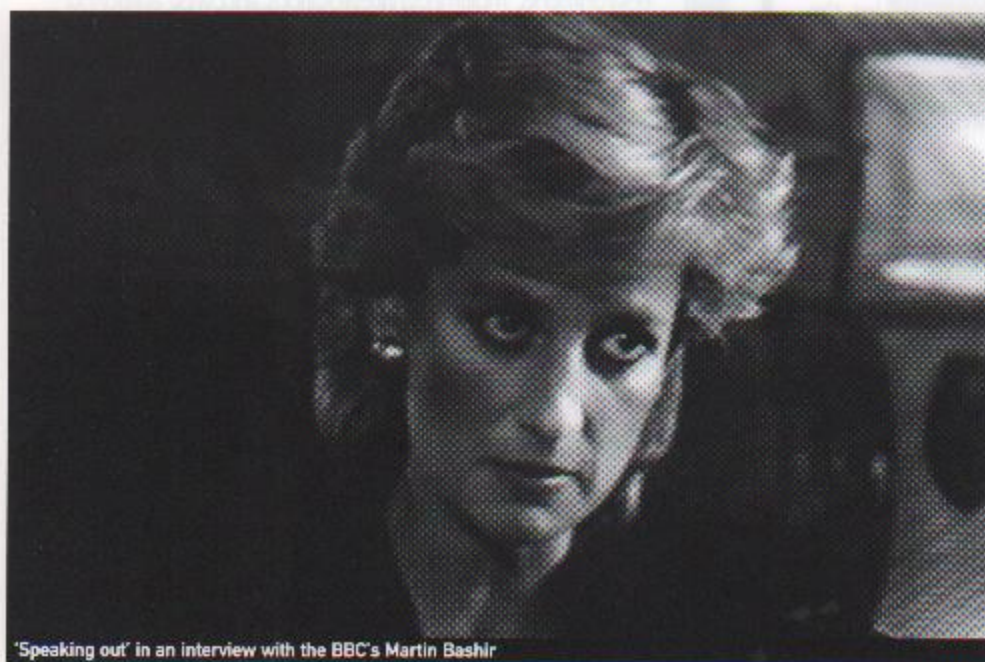
happened to be the royal family, the paparazzi, or her own digestive tract.

Michael's statement captured the two essential features of a new pattern of speech made common by the late Diana. The first is the sense of oneself as victim. The second is the almost solipsistic attitude towards the world outside oneself, which has no independent existence beyond its relation to one's own feelings. This twofold character explains one of the paradoxes both of Diana and of her mode of speech: on the one hand a low opinion of herself as the object of other wills, on the other, a ferocious narcissism. The result is that the world at large becomes reinterpreted from the standpoint of one's own hurt.

Exponents of Dianaspoken, however, do not like to see themselves simply as victims. The phrase 'I am not a victim, I am a survivor', amply conveys the image of a world which will only hurt if not held at bay by a state of permanent self-awareness and self-assertion. In order to justify this narcissistic state, the scale of the hurt must always be exaggerated.

A favourite method of dramatising or magnifying the hurt is the use of the emotional scar, much employed by Diana in relation to her bulimia. The statement 'the scars on your body heal; but it's the scars inside, the ones that you can't see, that never heal', is now repeated almost verbatim by people suffering the aftermath of the most diverse experiences, including sexual abuse, eighteenth-century colonial dispossession, or just not being treated very nicely.

By definition, an emotional scar can never heal, and can even be passed down through the generations. Like statements of religious belief, the doctrine of the emotional scar has a certain unchallengeable madness about it. Since the emotional scar has no mere corporeal existence, then it is plausible to suggest that it will never heal.



'Speaking out' in an interview with the BBC's Martin Bashir

US DIANA?

The emotional scar bears a striking resemblance to the doctrine of original sin in the way that it supposedly determines one's entire life. But where original sin can be nullified only on quitting fleshly existence for the next life, the emotional scar can be amply soothed by the balm of self-indulgence in this one.

The deeper the emotional scar the greater the need to 'speak out'. Ten years ago only feminists and the so-called loony left spoke out. The phrase tended to conjure up images of unkempt women venting their frustrations while their sisters gathered around to offer support. Now even the most banal ventilations of clerics, company directors or politicians are apt to be described as 'speaking out'.

'Speaking out' carries with it a host of connotations. It implies a grievance waiting to be aired, as well as a barrier standing in one's way which has prevented its airing up till now. Usually this barrier will be some incarnation of 'the powers that be', or, as Diana described them, 'the Establishment' (to which, of course, she never belonged herself). But who it is one is speaking out against need never be stated explicitly. It can simply be 'Them'.

Speaking out suggests a long prelude of smouldering anger and resentment which one never had the confidence to 'give voice to' (a related phrase), but which has finally erupted in a triumphant moment of self-realisation. This cathartic effect can be further enhanced if it is directed against 'a conspiracy of silence'. The perpetrators of sexual abuse, for example, are often said to be shielded within a larger social network, whether it be a religious order, a state institution or just plain old patriarchal society. Whatever form the network may take, it wields such power that it can create a cushion of silence around its activities, requiring a particularly defiant effort to speak out.

Those suffering terminal illness often speak out, implying either that a conspiracy exists to deny the scale of suffering caused by a particular condition, or even that the illness itself may be part of some gigantic conspiracy. Speaking out first migrated from the fringes when Aids victims 'found the courage to speak out about their suffering'. The implication was that some nameless group had been actively suppressing the scale of suffering endured by those dying of Aids, or even that the virus itself was somehow the work of sinister homophobes rather than a freak of nature. The way that certain 'lobbies' have been associated with the promotion of lethal illness—the car lobby, the smoking lobby and now even the caffeine lobby—has had the further effect of connecting the suffering

of the individual with some vast but intangible conspiracy.

Those who speak out rarely do so just for themselves. They often do it after hearing lots of voices. There was a time when only schizophrenics heard voices. Now, anybody planning to speak out should hear as many voices as possible. The voices are those of the silenced millions who have suffered in the same way but who lack the courage or confidence to defy 'Them' and speak out for themselves. It was Diana, after all, who gave voice to all those suffering in silence from bulimia, thereby promoting a more 'in your face' approach to bingeing and vomiting. In this way, while speaking entirely about yourself, you can convey the impression that what you are doing is an act of self-sacrifice performed on behalf of others. In the ⇒

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↳ same way, those who speak out often describe themselves as the 'tip of the iceberg'. To my knowledge, nobody has ever spoken out and said 'but I think my misfortune is just the luck of the draw', or 'this problem must be very rare indeed'.

Speaking out is closely related to reaching out, in fact very often you speak out for and reach out to the same people. It was Diana who turned reaching out into a public spectacle. Reaching out could be confused with old-style charity work, but there is an important difference. Whereas only those suffering some visible handicap are in need of charity, everybody needs to be reached out to. This is because reaching out assumes that we are all in some way emotionally scarred or damaged. People who are highly successful, for example, could be suffering from perfectionist syndrome as a result of bad childhood experiences—all of which will remain concealed unless somebody reaches out to them and gives them the space in which to articulate their vulnerability.

Like speaking out, reaching out is a very self-flattering thing to do because it shows off your powers of empathy. It can also be a great put-down if you are reaching out to somebody who does not particularly want to be smothered by your embrace. Ireland's former president Mary Robinson was great at reaching out, especially to Northern Ireland's Unionists, while her successor, Mary McAleese, wants not only to reach out, but also to build lots of bridges. Reaching out to those with strongly opposed views is one way of saying that you don't take their views very seriously.

There are of course certain recalcitrants who cannot be reached out to. Such people are described as being 'out of touch'. This used to mean somebody who was just not clued up or did not understand what was going on around them. Now it means anybody who criticises the sort of emotional excess associated with the Diana cult. By these standards *LM* would have to be considered a seriously out-of-touch magazine. The response to the publication of the book *Faking It*, which criticised, among other things, the emotionally excessive public response to the death of Diana, was also significant in this respect. The critics never simply said that the authors had got it wrong; instead, they were criticised for being 'out of touch'.

For Dianaspoken, this is another way of saying that the concept of being right or wrong about something has no meaning. Such categories are far too heavy and judgemental for their tender sensibilities. Instead of right and wrong, there are only different ways of feeling about the world, some of which are in touch and some of which are out of touch. People who are out of touch are generally those who place a high premium on the faculty of reason. Those in touch believe that reason is just a masculine phallacy (geddit?) from which we can all be liberated once we accept our vulnerability and recognise our emotional scars.



IN DIANASPEAK A STATEMENT LIKE 'I CARE' OR 'I AM AWARE' IS AN OBJECT-FREE PROPOSITION, A DISPLAY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

People who are out of touch will also be deficient in their capacity for caring, and in their general 'awareness'. Looked at more closely, the verbs 'to care' and 'to be aware' have undergone a curious transformation in recent years. For those given to Dianaspoken a statement like 'I care' or 'I am aware' is really meant as an object-free proposition. You are not meant to ask 'who or what do you care for?', or 'what are you aware of?', because the speaker is concerned with her own emotional intelligence, not with anything so banal as the outside world. In fact carelessness and awareness are so closely bound up with emotional intelligence, that they can sometimes coexist with a state of almost complete indifference to the world at large.

This attitude was strikingly demonstrated by Diana herself when she declared her semi-retirement from public life shortly after her divorce from Prince Charles. In retiring from the world she quite casually withdrew her support from most of the charities she had hitherto supported, an action which naturally enough upset

the charities concerned. But what was most interesting was that Diana seemed genuinely hurt and puzzled by their reaction. For a woman who prided herself on her ability to reach out and communicate with others, this obtuse reaction could perhaps be explained by the fact that, as far as she was concerned, she had already adequately demonstrated her capacity for caring. Once she had achieved that then why not go off doing other interesting things like toning her body or sailing around the Mediterranean? Little wonder, then, that she should feel the charities were being downright churlish in criticising her.

One of the more notable achievements (if that is the right word) of Dianaspoken is that while conveying an image of selflessness and devotion to others, it conceals in reality an attitude of narcissistic self-absorption well symbolised by George Michael's attentions to himself in the public toilet. It was unfortunate for him that it was an officer of the LAPD that should remind him of the existence of a world independent of his own sensory organs. ●

As the media departs from Louise Woodward's hometown, Brendan O'Neill and Emily Young report from the debris

Elton gone

Elton's Rigger pub made itself famous as the 'official Louise Woodward pub' during her original trial. But one week after her homecoming in June, punters of the lesser-known Wheelwright Arms were keen to stress the 'impartiality' of their local. 'That's why journalists didn't bother much with us', explained Paul, a local builder. 'They were only interested in people who wore yellow ribbons and got emotional in front of the cameras.'

But surely everybody wore yellow ribbons in support of the Louise Woodward campaign? No, according to Paul—the core of the campaign was 'five, six or seven women and the vicar'. His friend Russell agreed: 'It was a campaign for bored housewives, most of them didn't even come from Elton.' Maybe so, but who can forget those scenes of people holding hands and crying 'in solidarity with Louise'? This small British village put itself on the map by indulging in what the Americans would call a 'group hug'; something that Paul now claims was 'just embarrassing'.

The Wheelwright's customers have good reason to distance themselves from last year's popular Woodward campaign. When Elton became the 'capital' of post-Diana Britain residents were praised for closing ranks behind one of their own, for openly admitting how 'crying for our Louise' had helped forge a sense of community. Now the campaign is seen as a tired and discredited cause. Controversy over campaign funding, rumours about Paul Woodward's extra-marital affairs and doubt about Woodward's innocence have put the dampers on the town's fame. Elton has become divided; not only between the Wheelwright and the Rigger, but also between those who are embarrassed about what happened and those who look back with pride. Many of those we spoke to expressed this tension as they blamed somebody else for the 'Elton experience'.

Up there with the Queen Vic and the Rover's Return as one of the most famous pubs in Britain, the Rigger is an L-shaped room with a pool table and a television in one corner and drinking space in the other. How did the world's media fit into this small pub? 'They took the place over', said Andrew, with more than a hint of bitterness. Many at the Rigger talked about the role played by the media in 'blowing this thing out of all proportion'. They regaled us with stories about free champagne ('supplied by a

tabloid, you know'), about reporters who had wandered the streets desperately searching for lodgings, of how one journalist tried to get off with local women 'to get closer to the community', and how the Rigger had made a fortune out of its connections with the press, 'but don't tell them I said that'.

'The media fell upon a bunch of very naive people', argued one regular. 'We were very malleable.' Of course the media played a

exactly a spontaneous pub scene', Julie laughed.

Julie's version of events summed up the relationship between the people of Elton and the media. Many residents had been happy to display their emotions for all to see and the media, for reasons of their own, were more than happy to capture those emotions.

The media's coverage of events in Elton turned a story into a moral crusade, with grave consequences for the objectivity of the coverage. Some journalists seemed to be more interested in ingratiating themselves with the local community and finding some meaning in what was taking place, rather than reporting the facts. Those we interviewed often referred to journalists by their first names and seemed to have got quite friendly with them; particularly a man called Gary. Almost every Rigger punter who answered our questions about the media referred to him. It turns out they were talking about Gary Cotterill of Sky News.

Sky led the way in the coverage of Elton and the Woodward saga. It was the first major news corporation to spot that there might be a story to be told from Woodward's hometown, and was the only channel in Britain to show constant live coverage of her trial. And not only did Sky supply champagne and a huge TV screen for Rigger punters to watch the trial and verdict on, it also ditched the pretence of objective reporting and reported the story in a highly moral way. One local journalist bemoaned the way in which national journalists fought to be at the heart of the 'Free Louise' campaign: 'They were supposed to be here to tell a story, not to make one.' But Sky News and Gary Cotterill were not alone. Reporters and commentators from around the country descended on Elton not, it seemed, to report what was happening, but to seek out some 'meaning' that could be shared with viewers.

Today, as the 'Elton experience' becomes a memory, sections of the media look at the residents with disdain, accusing them of pettiness and of messing up the Woodward campaign. Residents criticise journalists and reporters for blowing things out of proportion. But both sides played an important role in putting this town on the map. Elton may have gone from the headlines; but the next time a victim and some teary journalists offer a town's inhabitants their moment of fame, we will witness a familiar scene on our TV screens.

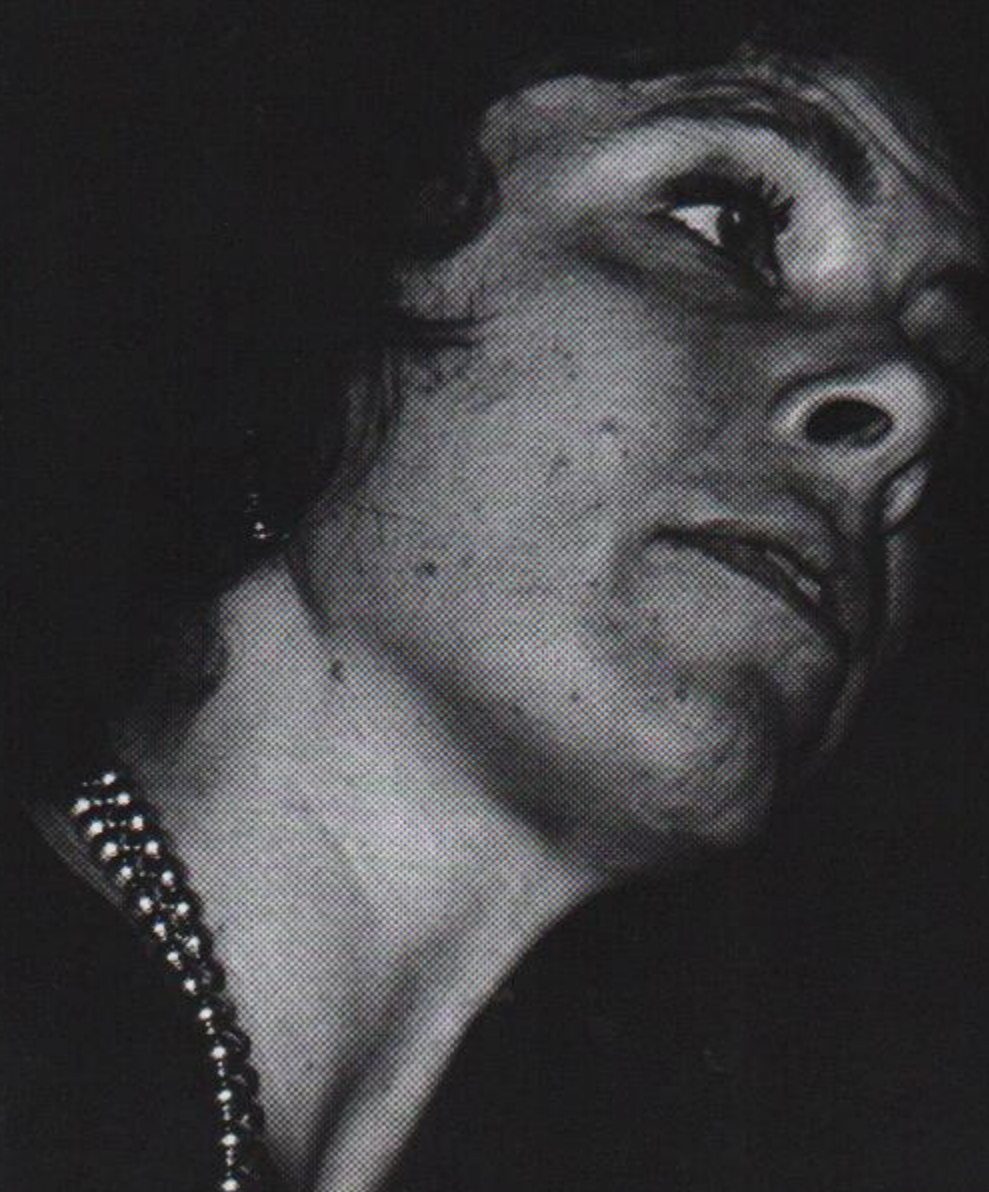


pivotal role in the 'Elton experience', but the Rigger and its drinkers invited much of the attention by playing the part of concerned community on cue. Julie told us how women from the Woodward campaign argued over who should sit in the front row in front of the TV cameras on the night the verdict was announced, when their anguished faces were broadcast around the world. 'It was like they were more interested in being on TV than what might happen to this 19-year old Elton girl.' She explained that cameramen and photographers spent ages getting the 'right angles' and asking the women to shift their seats so they could get a better shot. 'It wasn't

'FREEDOM FOR THE THOUGHT

Nadine Strossen is the president of the American Civil Liberties Union. She has won a controversial reputation as a 'free speech absolutist', for defending free speech even for racists and opposing the closure of New York's porn shops.

Here she argues that it is imperative to defend the right to free speech—even when we despise what is being said



THAT WE HATE'

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is a strong defender of free speech—even speech that expresses bias or prejudice, or that advocates violence or discrimination. Such expression is often called 'hate speech'. That is an apt term in two senses. First, the speech expresses hateful thoughts towards various individuals and groups—typically, racial or religious minorities. Second, as human rights advocates, we hate those thoughts.

But its 'double-barrelled' hateful content does not justify suppressing hate speech. To the contrary. To quote a famous statement by a revered US Supreme Court justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes (in 1929): '[I]f there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate.'

The ACLU position is not that government may *never* restrict speech, but rather that it may do so only under very limited circumstances. In a nutshell, government may suppress speech if—but only if—necessary to prevent a clear and present danger of actual harm. Examples of speech that would satisfy this appropriately tough standard are threats of violence, verbal harassment, and intentional incitement of imminent violent conduct or other illegal conduct, such as discrimination.

I will elaborate upon this speech-protective standard later. First, though,

I want to examine the important claims that are said to justify the relaxing of this standard—that is, allowing government to suppress hate speech that does not satisfy the intentional imminent incitement test.

While many minority group leaders in the USA have strongly opposed restrictions on hate speech, *some* advocates of minority group rights have endorsed such restrictions in response to racist incidents on university campuses. They argue that hate speech has led to an increase in violence against certain minority groups, or other groups that are relatively powerless in the political system, such as women. It is also claimed that hate speech has led to discrimination against these groups. Conversely, it is argued that censoring hate speech would reduce inter-group violence and discrimination.

Because the ACLU has always fought for equality of educational opportunities, we carefully considered arguments by advocates of campus hate speech codes. However, based on that analysis, the ACLU ringingly reaffirmed its traditional speech-protective position. And we did so not because we elevated free speech rights above equality rights. Rather, we did so because we concluded that censoring hate speech would not in fact foster equality; worse yet, such censorship might well be counterproductive to that critically important goal.

Alas, racial discrimination and other forms of discrimination and discriminatory violence are rampant in the USA, as well as

in many other countries. Therefore, I consider it tragic that so much energy has been spent on the most superficial manifestation of these deep-seated problems of racism and other prejudices: namely, a few words. I stress 'a few', because even advocates of suppressing hate speech recognise that they can punish only the most blatant, crudest expressions of racism; the more subtile, and hence the more insidious, expressions will necessarily go unredressed.

Instead of banning a few of the crudest, most superficial symptoms of discriminatory attitudes, I believe we should turn to more effective, constructive measures to deal with the root causes of such attitudes, as well as actual acts of discrimination and violence.

That is the overview of the ACLU's position on this important issue. I shall elaborate on some key points that underpin this position.

We oppose any relaxation of the traditional speech-protective First Amendment standards in this area. This does not mean that *all* speech is absolutely protected. Thus, in the campus context, we would not oppose a code that simply codified longstanding limits on speech that the ACLU has never opposed in any other context, consistent with the 'clear and present danger' concept. On this point, the relevant ACLU policy reads as follows:

'This policy does not prohibit colleges and universities from enacting disciplinary codes aimed at restricting acts of harassment, intimidation and =>

⇒ invasion of privacy. Although these are imprecise terms susceptible of impermissibly over-broad application, each term defines a type of conduct which is legally proscribed in many jurisdictions when directed at a specific individual or individuals and when intended to frighten, coerce, or unreasonably harry or intrude upon its target. Threatening telephone calls to a minority student's dormitory room, for example, would be proscribable conduct under the terms of this policy. Expressive behaviour which has no other effect than to create an unpleasant learning environment, however, would not be the proper subject of regulation.'

It should be noted that all of these traditionally unprotected types of speech are defined in terms of their context; their content alone is not enough to remove them from First Amendment protection. In other words, the mere fact that the idea conveyed by some expression may be deeply offensive or insulting does not justify proscribing or punishing that expression.

To allow restrictions on hate speech beyond these traditional, contextual limitations on all speech—in other words, to allow restrictions on hate speech because of its offensive content—would violate the two most fundamental principles underlying the First Amendment's free speech guarantee. The first such principle specifies what is a sufficient justification for restricting speech, and the second prescribes what is not.

I have already touched on the first cardinal free speech principle: that a restriction on speech can be justified only when necessary to prevent actual or imminent harm to an interest of compelling importance, such as violence or injury to others. As former Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes observed in a much quoted opinion, the First Amendment would not protect somebody who falsely shouted 'Fire!' in a theatre and caused a panic.

To be restricted consistent with this principle, the speech must clearly pose an imminent danger. Allowing speech to be curtailed on the speculative basis that it might indirectly lead to possible harm sometime in the future would inevitably unravel free speech protection. All speech might lead to potential danger at some future point. Therefore, under such a watered-down approach, scarcely any idea would be safe, and surely no idea that challenged the status quo would be.

Earlier in this century the US Supreme



Court did apply this relaxed, so-called 'bad tendency' approach; speech could be suppressed if it might have a tendency to lead to some future harm. All critics of government policy, and advocates of political reform, were at risk. For example, during the First World War era and the ensuing 'Red scare', thousands of Americans were imprisoned merely for peacefully expressing views critical of US participation in the war and other government policies. Likewise, at the height—or depth—of the Cold War, members of socialist and communist political groups were imprisoned merely for criticising capitalism or advocating Marxism. In light of this history, it seems particularly ironic that leftists would now champion a return to the censorial standards that were so long used to suppress their ideas. Yet that is precisely what the leftist advocates of hate speech codes are doing.

In the modern era the US Supreme Court has resoundingly repudiated this bad tendency rationale for suppressing controversial speech. Moreover, the High Court also has recognised the crucial distinction between *advocacy* of violent or unlawful conduct, which is protected, and intentional, imminent *incitement* of such

conduct, which is not. The court enshrined this distinction in a landmark 1969 decision, *Brandenburg v Ohio*. In that case, the court unanimously upheld the First Amendment rights of a Ku Klux Klan leader who addressed a rally of supporters, some of whom brandished firearms, and advocated violence and discrimination against Jews and blacks. The court held that this generalised advocacy was neither intended nor likely to cause immediate violent or unlawful conduct, and therefore could not be punished. Ironically, but predictably, this speech-protective standard has subsequently shielded inflammatory rhetoric in support of civil rights protests and boycotts.

The second basic free speech principle that would be violated by suppressing hate speech requires 'content neutrality' or 'viewpoint neutrality'. It holds that government may never limit speech just



because any listener—or even, indeed, the majority of the community—disagrees with or is offended by its content or the viewpoint it conveys. The Supreme Court has called this the 'bedrock principle' of our proud free speech tradition under US law. In recent years the court has steadfastly enforced this fundamental principle to protect speech that conveys ideas that are deeply unpopular with or offensive to many, if not most, Americans—for example, burning a US flag in a political demonstration against national policies.

The 'viewpoint neutrality' principle was also essential to protect expression by pro-civil rights demonstrators during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. In many of the Southern communities where Martin Luther King and other civil rights activists demonstrated and aired their ideas, their

ALL SPEECH MIGHT LEAD TO POTENTIAL DANGER AT SOME FUTURE POINT

views were seen as deeply offensive, abhorrent, and dangerous to traditional community mores and values concerning racial segregation and discrimination. Efforts to censor and punish these expressions, though, were thwarted by court rulings enforcing the viewpoint neutrality principle.

This principle reflects the philosophy, first stated in groundbreaking opinions by former US Supreme Court justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis: in a free society, the appropriate response to speech with which one disagrees is not censorship but counterspeech—*more* speech, not *less*. Persuasion, not coercion, is the solution.

Accordingly, the appropriate response to hate speech is not to censor it, but to answer it. This counterspeech strategy is better than censorship not only in principle, but also from a practical perspective. This leads to my next reason for opposing the censorship of hate speech.

Censoring hate speech is doubly flawed, because in addition to violating free speech principles, it does not constructively advance the cause of promoting equality and non-discrimination. In these important regards, censoring hate speech is at best ineffective, and at worst counterproductive.

This was the conclusion reached by the respected international human rights organisation Human Rights Watch, based on actual experience and observations in many countries around the world. In 1992 Human Rights Watch issued a report and policy statement opposing any restrictions on hate speech that go beyond the narrow confines permitted by traditional US First Amendment principles. It explains this position as follows:



THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO SPEECH WITH WHICH ONE DISAGREES IS NOT CENSORSHIP BUT COUNTERSPEECH—MORE SPEECH, NOT LESS

'[T]here is little connection in practice between draconian "hate speech" laws and the lessening of ethnic and racial violence or tension. Furthermore, most of the nations which invoke "hate speech" laws have a long way to go in implementing the provisions of the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination calling for the elimination of racial discrimination. Laws that penalise speech or membership are also subject to abuse by the dominant racial or ethnic group. Some of the most stringent "hate speech" laws, for example, have long been in force in South Africa, where they have been used almost exclusively against the black majority.'

Other illustrations of the unconstructive impact of censoring hate speech can be drawn from history. One situation is that of Germany under Hitler. Given the unparalleled horrors of the Holocaust, surely even the most diehard free speech champions would support censorship if we could be persuaded that it might have averted that tragedy. Speaking for myself, as the daughter of a German-born Holocaust survivor, that is certainly the case. However, the historical record makes clear that censorship was no more constructive a response to the rise of anti-Semitic hatred in the Hitler era than it has been in other circumstances. This point was discussed in a recent opinion of the Canadian Supreme Court, which was considering a constitutional challenge to Canada's anti-hate law:

'Remarkably, pre-Hitler Germany had laws very much like the Canadian anti-hate law. Moreover, those laws were enforced with some vigour. During the 15 years before Hitler came to power, there were more than 200 prosecutions based on anti-Semitic speech. And, in the opinion of the leading Jewish organisation of that era, no more than 10 per cent of the cases were mishandled by the authorities. As subsequent history so painfully testifies, this type of legislation proved ineffectual on the one occasion when there was a real argument for it.'

Given the unique horror of the Holocaust, it is not surprising that even many individuals who support free speech in general want to make an exception for Nazi

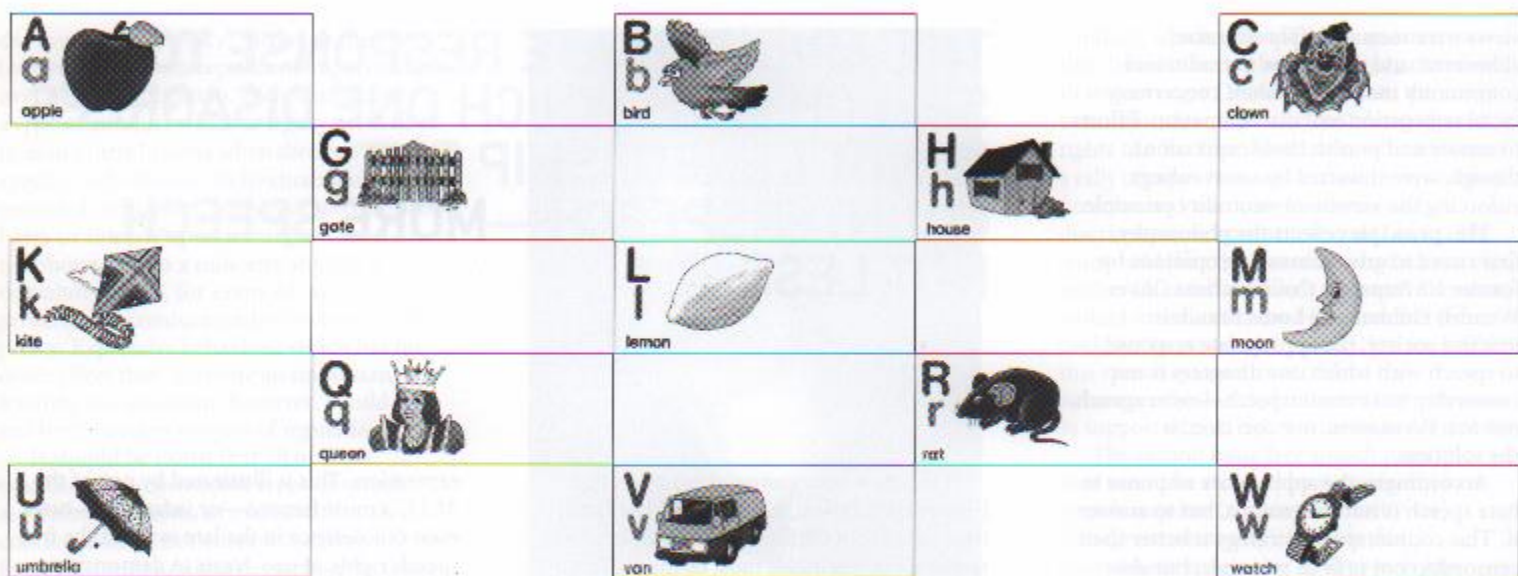
expression. This is illustrated by one of the ACLU's most famous—or infamous—cases ever: our defence in the late 1970s of the free speech rights of neo-Nazis to demonstrate in Skokie, Illinois, a community with a large population of Holocaust survivors. While the ACLU prevailed in the courts of law, our position was unpopular in the court of public opinion. Even many ACLU members—stalwart First Amendment champions in general—resigned from the organisation in protest over this position. Yet, along with many other American Jews, I support free speech for Nazis and other anti-Semites not *despite* the fact that I am Jewish and familiar with the evils of anti-Semitism, but rather, *because* of that fact.

The ACLU's executive director during the Skokie controversy, Aryeh Neier, a German Jew who fled to the USA with his immediate family, but whose extended family was exterminated in the Holocaust, has powerfully expressed this perspective:

'The most frequently repeated line of all in the many letters about Skokie that I received was: "How can you, a Jew, defend freedom for Nazis?"...The response I made most often began with a question: "How can I, a Jew, refuse to defend freedom, even for Nazis?" Because we Jews are uniquely vulnerable, I believe we can only win brief respite from persecution in a society in which encounters are settled by power. As a Jew, therefore, I want restraints placed on power. I want restraints which prohibit those in power from interfering with my right to speak, my right to publish, or my right to gather with others who also feel threatened. To defend myself, I must restrain power with freedom, even if the temporary beneficiaries are the enemies of freedom.' ●

Nadine Strossen is the co-author of *Speaking of Race, Speaking of Sex: hate speech, civil rights and civil liberties*, New York University Press 1995, and the author of *Defending Pornography: free speech, sex and the fight for women's rights*, Little, Brown 1996

SUBSCRIBE see page 27



The National Year of Reading will focus on the ABCs, but what we need is to encourage a higher level of literacy, says English teacher Joanna Williams

MISREADING THE PROBLEM OF LITERACY

I passionately believe that, after sex, literacy is society's most important tool. I haven't a clue what Phil Redmond, creator of *Brookside*, means by this. What I am certain of is that we are going to be hearing many more statements persuading us of the importance of literacy over the next few months. September marks the launch of the Department for Education's National Year of Reading, and the government is determined that 'the whole nation will be aware' of the initiative.

Over £50 million is being spent promoting the Year of Reading, and business, the media, schools, government agencies and charities have all been recruited to help. The northern town formerly known as Bolton will now become 'Bolton—the reading town'. Norfolk county council is planning Families at Work, Saturday morning reading workshops in workplaces for fathers and children. Trafford borough council's Reading to Children project will involve 6000 council employees in a scheme to read a story to every child in Trafford's schools, libraries, nurseries, leisure centres and playgroups—some 25 000 stories in total. Save the Children's Equality Learning Centre in Islington will be running a reading project for young boys and their fathers.

Phil Redmond is planning to exploit literacy storylines in *Brookside*. 'This will

happen on three levels', he says. There will be storylines designed to highlight the traumas suffered by people who cannot read, characters will comment on the benefits of literacy, and the soap will portray positive images 'which will involve male characters being shown reading to their children, or using one of those splash-time books you can read in the bath'. I must admit to being something of a *Brookside* addict, but even I could not stomach the prospect of pusher-turned-teacher Jimmy Corkhill in the bath, smiling away to a 'splash-book'.

The aim of the year is to raise standards of literacy and to 'create a more literate nation'. The glossy promotional brochure talks proudly of taking 'a giant step forward in transforming our attitude to reading'. It makes me wonder what exactly there is that needs so much transforming in the nation's attitude to reading. Surely everybody thinks an ability to read is important. How could we cope with a simple journey, a trip to the supermarket, or using a computer if we could not read?

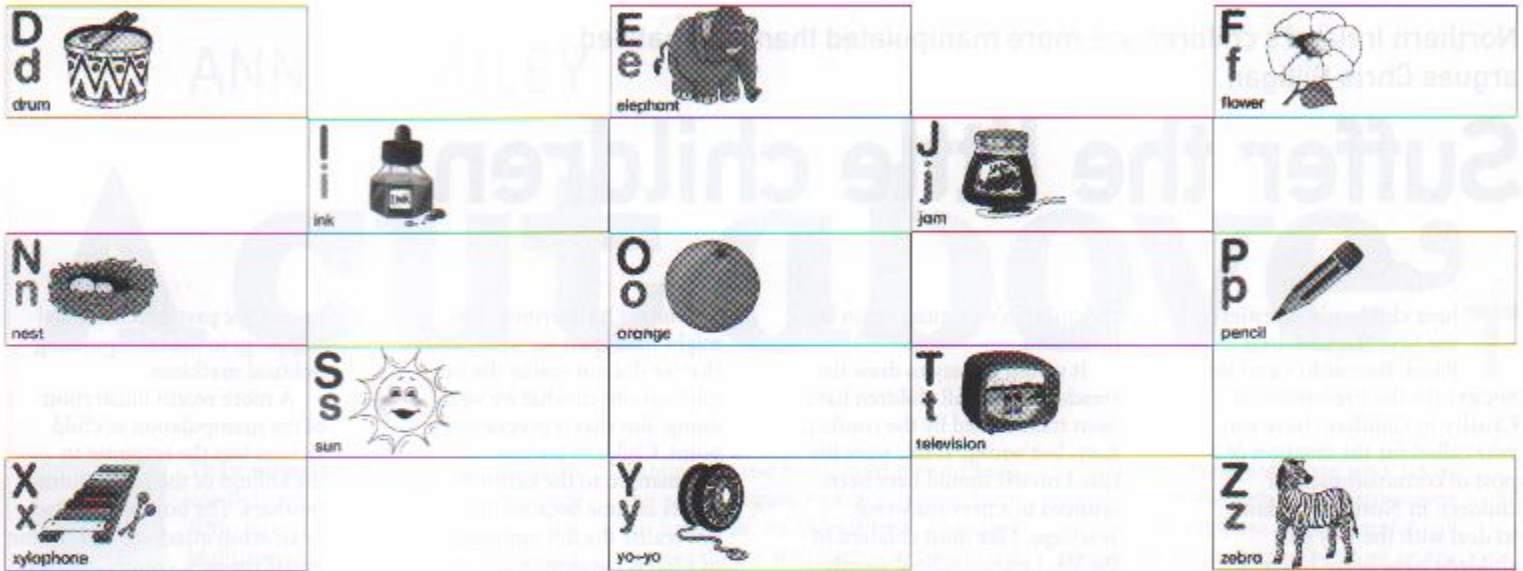
The fact is that virtually every person in the country has enough basic literacy skills to complete these simple tasks. Current statistics measure the UK's rate of basic literacy as being at about 100 per cent (*Social Trends*, 28, 1998). This is a significant improvement on the past. More people

in Britain have basic literacy skills than ever before.

When we move away from basic literacy to look at higher levels of reading ability, the picture is not so promising. The problem the National Year of Reading material merely hints at is that so few people have levels of literacy that enable them to do more than just the basics.

An Office for National Statistics survey shows that even four per cent of graduates only have the most basic levels of literacy, barely enough to get by in day-to-day life. Research reveals that schoolchildren nowadays are not as good at reading as they were in the recent past. A National Foundation for Educational Research survey claims that 'children today make slower progress in reading between the ages of eight and nine than they did a decade ago' ('Reading in recession', 1996). Leicester University's well-respected Oracle primary school project carried out identical reading tests in 1976/7 and 1996/7, and noted a fall in average scores from 63 per cent to 48 per cent.

In recent years there has been pressure to change reading tests, to make them more 'relevant'—which means out go words like perambulator and refrigerator, in come words like pram and fridge. These words are more widely used today, but if you can read



properly you would expect to be able to read more than just the words you hear every day. Examination boards are increasingly cautious in the wording they choose for exam questions, not wishing to penalise students who know the right answer but cannot read the question.

The problem is that it is not until people reach the higher levels of literacy that they can read in such a way that will actually enhance their life to any extent. Think of all the wonderful books that you have enjoyed reading: the sheer escapist, the thought provoking, the inspirational, even plain old instruction manuals. A transformation in the nation's attitude to reading would surely mean lifting more people up from the basic levels of literacy and getting them to read something more worthwhile. To talk about transforming the nation's attitude to reading is to suggest that perhaps the government wants to get everybody reading Shakespeare, or to introduce people to new and challenging texts.

However, the government seems to have no such notion of transformation. Its aim appears to be to promote an ability to read, on the simplest and most technical level. The National Year of Reading seems to promise

nothing more than a further promotion of basic skills, and it is my bet that it will not come anywhere near to raising standards of literacy. How can a focus on the basics improve matters, when nearly everybody has the basics of literacy already?

In fact, even to suggest that people should be reading certain kinds of books is to go against the grain of everything the National Year of Reading is about. The all-inclusive approach is stressed again and again. Ken Follet, author and chairman of a Labour task force on literacy, has explicitly warned against fostering an 'elitist idea of literacy' during the National Year of Reading and of excluding people, particularly adults, with low literacy skills. 'We have to emphasise the importance of being able to read without putting down those who have difficulties, such as dyslexics, and those with special needs', says Follet. 'To many of these people, not being able to read is embarrassing and we have to make them feel less embarrassed.' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 13 March 1998)

This all-inclusive emphasis has led to some rather bizarre suggestions for how to promote the Year of Reading. Plans include a campaign to get every new street created during the year named after a book,

a character, a poem or an author, the setting up of company-run 'readathons' for employees, and even to have extracts of writing printed on tissues and toilet paper!

A small proportion of the population does have a real problem with basic literacy. These people need help to learn a vital life skill. The last thing they need is to be patronised by the likes of Phil Redmond or Ken Follet. They do not need mock applause for achieving a skill that we would assume most 10-year olds would have. This would be to trivialise genuine attainment. And this is the crux of my problem with the National Year of Reading. It will patronise the (very) small number of people with real problems, and in the process of doing so will reduce the whole concept of reading to the most banal level. The bigger problem is that so few people can read at the highest levels of literacy—and yet the fear of excluding anybody from the National Year of Reading means only the most basic reading materials will get promoted.

As an English teacher concerned with standards in education, I want my pupils to be stretched and to read challenging material. My favourite lessons are the ones where pupils take a book they think will be too difficult for them or just too boring, and really learn to love it. I want my pupils to take pleasure in reading Shakespeare, Milton, the Brontës, Wordsworth and many, many more. They will find the texts challenging at first, but with the right encouragement will gain much more satisfaction and enjoyment.

I expect the secondary age pupils I teach to be able to read; I would be angry at the low expectations people have for them if they could not. I would see it as my job to teach them the basics, but not something they or I need to celebrate. Most of all, I want the pupils I teach to have high aspirations about what they can achieve. Reading is about so much more than decoding words printed on toilet paper. ●

A TRANSFORMATION IN THE NATION'S ATTITUDE TO READING WOULD MEAN LIFTING PEOPLE UP FROM THE BASICS AND GETTING THEM TO READ SOMETHING WORTHWHILE

Northern Ireland's children are more manipulated than traumatised, argues Chris Gilligan

Suffer the little children

Three children's charities, the Save the Children Fund, Barnardo's and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, have this year called for the creation of a post of commissioner for children in Northern Ireland, to deal with the way that children have been 'brutalised' by the militarisation of their communities. It has been estimated that between 1968 and 1993 75 children under the age of 10 were killed as a result of the conflict (just over two per cent of all conflict-related

the children's charities mean by brutalised.

It would be easy to draw the conclusion that all children have been traumatised by the conflict. Easy, but wrong. If this were the case I myself should have been reduced to a nervous wreck years ago. Like most children in the UK I started school shortly after my fourth birthday. But my school was in West Belfast and the year was 1968, just before the start of 'the troubles'.

Travelling to and from school I often passed makeshift barricades, and occasionally the

You might be horrified. You might think that we were naïve, that we did not realise the full implications of what we were doing. But that is precisely the point. Children are not traumatised to the extent that adults assume because they do not realise the full implications of what is happening around them. And as they do mature, they develop frameworks within which to understand events. Many of my peers grew up as Irish republicans, a few even joined the IRA.

The child as the 'innocent' is an idealised image. Much of the iconography of children is, in reality, little more than a projection of the hopes and fears of adults. In the uncertainty which pervades the peace process a lot of emotional baggage is being dumped on the shoulders of children. But even worse than this, the Anglo-American political elites are pushing the 'innocent child' image as a means to steamroller opposition.

The defining moment of Bill Clinton's 1995 visit to the province was when Catherine Hamill (aged nine) read her open letter. 'My first daddy died in the troubles', she said. 'It was the saddest day of my life.' Catherine spoke for millions when she said, 'My Christmas wish is that peace and love will last in Ireland for ever'. It was a touching moment. But it was pure theatre. Catherine was hand-picked weeks prior to Clinton's visit by White House 'advance man' Jamie Lindsey. She was paraded before the world's media for the benefit of US foreign policy (Tony Lake noted that the coverage would encourage Americans 'to support not just our efforts in Northern Ireland but our efforts in Bosnia and the Middle East'), rather than for the benefit of 'future generations'. But nobody complained about spin-doctoring. It would appear that when political elites invoke 'innocent children', critics

cannot see past the emotional trappings to the manipulating political machines.

A more recent illustration of the manipulation of child victims was the response to the killings of the three Quinn brothers. The boys were killed in an arson attack on their home in Ballymoney, county Antrim, in the early hours of the Twelfth of July. People were stunned, appalled and distressed. Almost immediately the tragedy was seized upon and used to demand that Orangemen in Drumcree end their protest. Nobody has claimed that the arsonists were returning from, or on their way to, the Drumcree churchyard. Nobody believes that the arsonists were members of the Orange Order, or acting on instructions from the Order. The argument advanced was that if Orangemen did not desist from their protest they would be condoning the arson attack. Reason says that the Orangemen did not kill the children, sentiment says that they should act as if they did.

Throughout the peace process this sort of sentiment has been used as a battering ram to demolish objections to the peace process run by the British and US governments. Myself and my peers are continually being asked to make sacrifices in the name of peace. Like the suffering little children in Mark's Gospel, the population of Northern Ireland are told that it is only if they receive the Kingdom of Peace as little children that they shall enter therein. If regression to childhood is the price of peace then I am unwilling to pay. I am not willing to trade my independence for the promise of a quiet life under parental supervision. I don't want to rest in peace.

Chris Gilligan is co-editor of *Peace or War?: understanding the peace process in Northern Ireland*, published by Ashgate



deaths). The three Quinn brothers, killed in an arson attack on their home in Ballymoney in July, are the latest tragic victims added to the death toll.

Hundreds more children have been injured and it is estimated that many thousands have been psychologically damaged. According to a recent study 20 per cent of children aged between 10 and 11 have been near a bomb explosion, and a similar proportion have had a friend or relative killed. Half of all schoolchildren have witnessed a shooting and 90 per cent have seen hijacked vehicles set on fire. Imagine the impact of these incidents on children and you have a picture of what

smouldering shells of cars and buses. I remember one morning masked men boarding our schoolbus and ordering the driver to turn back, because the IRA was laying an ambush for the British army up the road. Was this bus-full of primary schoolchildren traumatised? No. We were ecstatic! As the realisation dawned that we were not going to get to school, the bus erupted in cheers. 'Up the Ra, up the Ra, up the Ra!'

For us riots were not traumatic but carnivalesque. Cuts and bruises were badges of honour. Even at age seven or eight we were able to help out by finding and stockpiling bricks and stones for our older neighbours to use as missiles.

ANN BRADLEY

A cut above



This summer, the workshop I most wanted to attend was in Oxford at the Fifth International Symposium on Sex Mutilation. Who could resist the chance to join a discussion titled 'Our sexual organs—between God's hammer and the Devil's anvil? Unfortunately I failed to get there and so missed a chance to witness the British launch of a new men's pro-choice movement.

The meeting had been convened by NoHarm (National Organisation to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Men) and Norm (National Organisation for Restoring Men); both US inspired, but now international campaigns to outlaw circumcision. Norm also advises men on how to repair their damaged organs. Its founder, Dr James Bigelow, runs UnCirc

fighting for the freedom of men to keep the sexual organs nature intended them to have. Or as NoHarm's Louisiana representative eloquently declared: 'The men's pro-choice movement empowers men to fight to protect the rights of future generations. By saying "no" to circumcision, American men are saying "yes" to men's rights. We are wrenching the stainless steel scalpels from the hands of the circumcisors and beating them into silver spoons for our sons.'

The movement might be pushing at an open door. In Britain the popularity of the operation has declined sharply since the 1950s and now it is estimated that just three per cent of boys are circumcised. Even though about 30 000 procedures are carried out by the NHS

However, there are those who are as passionate in the defence of circumcision as those who oppose it. One careful and convincing review of the literature on the medical benefits of circumcision suddenly goes off the rails with a weird assertion that 'bacteria [under the foreskin] give off an offensive odour necessitating several showers a day by uncircumcised men, some of whom, together with their partners, find the stench so unpleasant that this smell has caused these men to seek a circumcision on this basis alone'. Concern is expressed for uncircumcised boys who are prone to trap their foreskins in their zippers. The results of an Australian survey are used to counter the claims by Norm and NoHarm that circumcision undermines men's capacity to enjoy sex. The Aussie research found that circumcised men had sex more often and were more likely to reach a simultaneous orgasm with their partner, and that women preferred the look (and taste) of a circumcised nob!

Personally I've never found the presence or absence of a foreskin to be much of an issue. Call me old-fashioned, but of all the things that matter about sex (and sorry chaps—size *is* one them), foreskins do not merit a nanosecond of consideration. And I find it difficult to see the growing concern about circumcision as anything other than the wailing of a bunch of insecure, self-obsessed guys in search of victim status. If they are socially and sexually inadequate it is not because they lack a foreskin, but because they lack an attitude to life which allows them to let themselves live it. But then this is easy for me to say; I don't have a foreskin. And I suppose in an age where a gold ring through the foreskin is regarded as high art in self-expression one can understand a man being peeved that he does not have that 'choice'.

I hope somebody told the guys at the Oxford conference that it is a sad day when men from all over the world gather to contemplate the end of their dicks—just marginally more interesting than contemplating their navels.

'We are wrenching stainless steel scalpels from the hands of the circumcisors'

(the Uncircumcising Information and Resources Centre) and has written a book, *The Joy of Uncircumcising*. This explains—in more detail than you will care to know—how 'victims' of circumcision can 'gently stretch' the remaining penile shaft skin to cover the glans. Apparently this restoration cannot give back the erotogenic nerves that Bigelow claims are concentrated in the foreskin, but it can recreate a more natural looking penis. This, the reconstructionists claim, is therapeutic in itself as it improves body image, boosts self-esteem, dispels feelings of victimisation, and empowers men to make choices about their own sexuality.

The men's pro-choice movement is, according to one self-proclaimed member,

each year, it is no longer routinely available. Even those who do not view it as a life-shattering mutilation tend to regard it as an unnecessary inconvenience for everybody concerned. Who wants to do anything to a newborn baby to make it even crankier than it already is?

In the USA, circumcision is still the norm but probably not for long. The health grounds that have been used to justify circumcision are generally accepted as spurious. Yes it may slightly reduce the risk of penile cancer, but that disease is very rare anyway. Female partners of the circumcised may have a lower rate of cervical cancer—but a close look at the studies suggests that other sociocultural factors may 'confound' the conclusions.

ROBBING KIDS OF THEIR CHILDHOOD AND TEACHING PARENTS TO PANIC

Let children be children and adults be adults, says Frank Furedi

Since my son Jacob was born almost three years ago, I have been reminded constantly that a life of peril begins at birth. At the hospital nurses were quick to explain the security arrangements made to thwart baby snatchers. Other experts were forthcoming with the latest cot death advice. One doctor informed us that an X-ray indicated a very small possibility that something was wrong with Jacob's kidneys. When pressed for further clarification, the doctor stated—in confidence—that he had only mentioned it to cover himself against future litigation. When we got home we were bombarded with leaflets and more professional advice on how to keep our baby safe from harm. Within a matter of one week we were fully informed about the countless risks which apparently threatened our son.

Time and again I am reminded that children are now regarded as a kind of endangered species. The veritable army of professionals staffing the child protection industry takes every opportunity to promote the message that children are permanently at risk. Safety campaigns around everything from child abuse and cot death to stranger danger and sunbathing all reinforce the belief that childhood is a uniquely dangerous experience. With all of this helpful information and advice, it is easy to forget that children are safer and healthier than ever before.

This summer it was announced that home secretary Jack Straw plans to issue safety packs to parents, advising them how to protect their children from paedophiles. The packs, to be drawn up in cooperation with child safety charities, will 'advise parents not to let their children play alone in quiet places, suggest ages at which they might be allowed to run errands alone, and tell parents how they can vet people who work with children' ('Parents told not to let children play alone', *Independent*, 20 July 1998). 'Supervise young children at all times', warns a leaflet on playing in the garden published by the Child Accident Prevention Trust. This message is echoed weekly by numerous campaigns on child safety. Predictably, parents have become increasingly paranoid about their children's safety. Surveys reveal a permanent

sense of unease among parents about possible risks facing children in public places.

The transformation of child protection into an industry has had a devastating impact on parenting and the quality of children's lives. Anxious parents have become more and more reluctant to allow their children the space and the freedom that previous generations took for granted.

Parental concern for the security of children has fundamentally changed the meaning of childhood. It is increasingly rare to see children roaming free with friends or walking to and from school. The proportion of junior schoolchildren that are allowed to cross the road on their own has halved between 1971 and 1990. When, on average, a British schoolgirl walks for less than seven minutes a day, it becomes evident that something has gone seriously wrong.

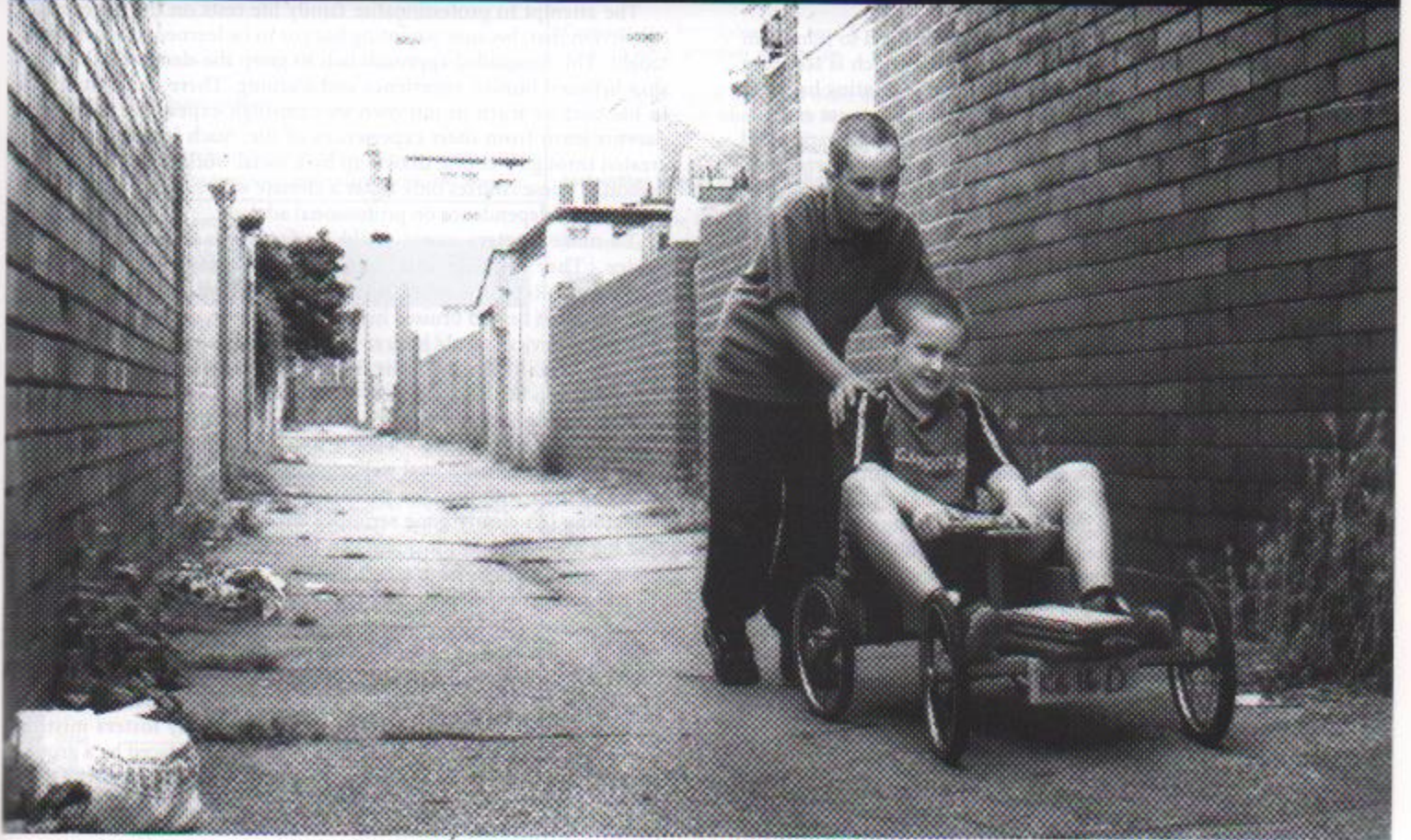
One unfortunate consequence of the contemporary panic with outdoor safety is the consensus that it is wrong to allow children to spend time on their own. If a child is left to play unsupervised it is now seen as a sign of 'neglect'. Indeed the very idea of unsupervised children's activity—which used to be called play—is now defined by child professionals as a risk. Those who question the merits of the constant supervision of children are accused of reckless parenting. Parents who allow their children to walk to school unsupervised can often become the subject of local gossip. Parental responsibility is increasingly associated with the willingness to supervise and chaperone children. 'Good parenting' now seems to mean protecting children from the experience of life.

The restriction on children's outdoor activity has predictable effects on their development. Numerous reports on children's health have warned about the negative consequences of their sedentary lives. Research has linked the decline in British children's fitness to the decrease in the amount of time they spend walking and cycling. The first national Travel Survey reported a fall of about 20 per cent in the annual distance walked and 27 per cent in the distance cycled ⇨



Play or neglect?

PHOTO: SARAH CHAPMAN



↔ between 1985 and 1993. The possible link between this decline in physical activity and the increasing trend towards obesity has been noted in the medical press.

Parental paranoia impacts on the very quality of childhood. Supervised play is virtual play. Children need to play on their own, and unsupervised activity is crucial for their development. Some of the most character-forming childhood experiences occur in peer-to-peer situations. Such unsupervised opportunities have allowed children to make mistakes, to learn from them, and to acquire important social skills.

For children to become responsible they have to learn to make decisions for themselves, something they can never do under a parent's watchful eye. Robbing children of their unsupervised activity hinders the development of their life skills. Why? Because when children are with adults they tend to remain 'childish' at precisely the time when they need to learn to grow up.

The current emphasis on creating a risk-free environment, where children's play can always be structured and supervised, is unlikely to stimulate initiative and enterprise. Probably the greatest casualty of this totalitarian regime of safety is the development of a child's potential. Playing, imagining and even getting into trouble contribute to that unique sense of adventure which has helped society forge ahead. A community that loses that sense of adventure and ambition does so at its peril; and yet that is where we can end up if socialising children consists, above all, of filling them with a fear of life.

So what is behind the panic? The level of parental paranoia has little to do with any increase in the real dangers facing children. And while numerous child protection organisations acknowledge that anxiety over children's safety has reached unprecedented levels to the detriment of both children and parents, they have little to say about its causes. This is not surprising, since they bear considerable responsibility for this tragic development.

Initiatives like the New Labour government's National Family and Parenting Institute can only serve to undermine the confidence of fathers and mothers in their ability to parent, reinforcing the notion that we all need outside professional help in order to cope with the basics of bringing up children. The paradox is that this professionalisation of child-rearing infantilises parents, who in turn end up treating their offspring as an endangered species.

The growth of the child protection industry has helped to transform parenting from a routine experience into something which is seen as a highly complex skill. As a result, every dimension of parenting has been turned into a problem. Even before a child is born parents are encouraged to study parent-craft skills. Every aspect of conceiving, bearing and raising children is subject to professional advice since, the experts agree, child-rearing is too important a task to leave to parents. Caring professionals now provide 'education for fatherhood' and run parenting workshops all over the place. These experts continually emphasise the 'difficulties' and 'complications' of parenthood. It is now widely assumed that parents are too incompetent to talk to their children about sex and other highly charged issues without an advice pack, a helpline or a counsellor on hand.

Raising children used to be seen as a routine expectation of what it meant to be an adult. Now parenting has been transformed into a skill. The implication is that, left to their own resources, most mothers and fathers are unlikely to cope today. Health minister Tessa Jowell now says that she wants the health, social services and education departments to intervene together 'to give children the best start in life'. The clear message is that a child left to be brought up by its parents is getting second best.

Child professionals continually inflate the problem of parenting. Everyday tasks are continually represented as difficult and complicated 'skills'. It appears that parents are too stupid to discuss sex and other emotional subjects with their children. And since parenting has been transformed from an intimate relationship, involving emotion and warmth, into a skill, involving technical expertise, the role of the expert assumes a special significance. From this perspective, the solution proposed is to take parenting out of the family so that enlightened professionals can put things right.

Those like the government who advocate parental training justify their proposal on the grounds that it helps to empower otherwise confused adults. In fact, despite the claims of empowerment, this

PLAYING, IMAGINING AND EVEN GETTING INTO TROUBLE CONTRIBUTE TO THAT UNIQUE SENSE OF ADVENTURE WHICH HAS HELPED SOCIETY FORGE AHEAD

approach can only have the effect of further undermining parents' confidence in their abilities. It is difficult to get on and parent when child-rearing has been mystified and recast as a skill. No doubt it has been assumed that all this professional advice and intervention would lead to a more confident and informed generation of proud new parents. Instead it seems that today's parents are more insecure and unconfident than their own parents ever were.

The reason why the professionalisation of family life weakens the effectiveness of parents is because the relationship it tries to regulate cannot be reduced to a series of skills. A relationship between a parent and child is a qualitative one which cannot be improved through the intervention of technical experts. Such intervention can, however, undermine the integrity of the parent-child relationship. When professionals encroach on this relationship it necessarily weakens the authority of parents. And parents with weak authority are unlikely to become confident at handling their children.

The attempt to professionalise family life rests on the bureaucratic conviction that, because parenting has got to be learned, it must also be taught. This misguided approach fails to grasp the elementary relationship between human experience and learning. There are many things in life that we learn in our own way through experience. Confident parents learn from their experiences of life. Such lessons cannot be created through a course drawn up by a social work or healthcare professional. These courses only foster a climate where the parent develops a relation of dependence on professional advice.

To make matters worse, child professionals do not merely give advice. They intrude into parents' lives and undermine their confidence. Recently, when my wife took Jacob to his nursery and explained that he had bruised himself falling over, one of the staff joked that social services would have to be informed. Everybody laughed—if a bit nervously. Afterwards, one of the mothers whispered to my wife, 'Amy had two bruises last week—you have no idea how nervous I was in case people jumped to the wrong conclusion'. This exchange of confidences is symptomatic of the temper of our times. Parental anxiety is not confined to the actual wellbeing of their children. It extends to a preoccupation with how the parents are seen by faceless professionals. Something has clearly gone seriously wrong when parents live in fear that the most innocent incident can be interpreted as malign and lead to intrusive enquiries from nosy officials.

The professionalisation of parenting is damaging to children and parents alike. The fundamental question it raises is this: who knows what is in the best interests of children? Today, the authority of the expert overwhelms the claims of competent parents. It is an authority that feeds on inflating problems and provoking panics about every aspect of childhood. It is an authority that actively fosters mistrust. Unfortunately mistrust produces more experts. And faced by a growing army of child professionals, parents are even less likely to trust themselves than before. In such circumstances, parents are quite entitled to panic about their children. ●

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TABOOS

The government's new proposals to prevent child abuse are more likely to end up harming children and parents, argues Tiffany Jenkins, director of Families for Freedom

HOW 'CHILD PROTECTION' CAN DESTROY FAMILIES

The Department of Health's recent proposals on child protection sound very caring and inclusive. However, despite its intentions, 'Working together to safeguard children: new government proposals for interagency cooperation' could actually hurt children and parents by encouraging more needless interference in family life.

The document acknowledges that some families have been wrongly investigated over suspicions of abuse, and notes the traumatic effects of such allegations. The new proposals are intended to 'give clear routes in and out of the child protection system so that children and families are not drawn into the net unnecessarily'.

This is a worthy aim. It is striking that while there is no evidence that the incidence of child abuse has risen, there is a worrying increase in the suspicion of abuse where none has taken place. Over the past 10 years action has been taken to disrupt and investigate families with no serious evidence of abuse.

Each social services department holds a central register which lists the children in its area who are considered to be at risk of abuse and who are the subject of an interagency plan to protect them. A child protection conference assesses the level of risk to the child and, in light of that, decides whether the child's name is placed on the register.

A significant proportion of children whose families have been investigated are found not to be at risk.

'Working together to safeguard children' admits that over half of the 160 000 annual child protection enquiries relating to children do not lead to action once investigated. In other words, more than 80 000 families were suspected of abuse, investigated and, once cleared, were left to repair the damage. The Audit Commission has reported that about two thirds of referrals to social services are dropped before being considered for registration at a case conference. Even of the 44 100 children who were the subject of initial child protection conferences in 1996, 15 830 were not put on the register. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that thousands of families are being investigated needlessly.

Some might say better a thousand families investigated than one child left abused, but this misses the very real effects of the investigations on family life.

The 1989 Children Act emphasises that government agencies are to consider the child's interests to be paramount at all times. This is often interpreted in such a way as unduly to counterpose the interests of the child to those of its parents. In practice this has meant that parents' rights have been removed, and government agencies have a greater say in regulating family life in the name of protecting the child.

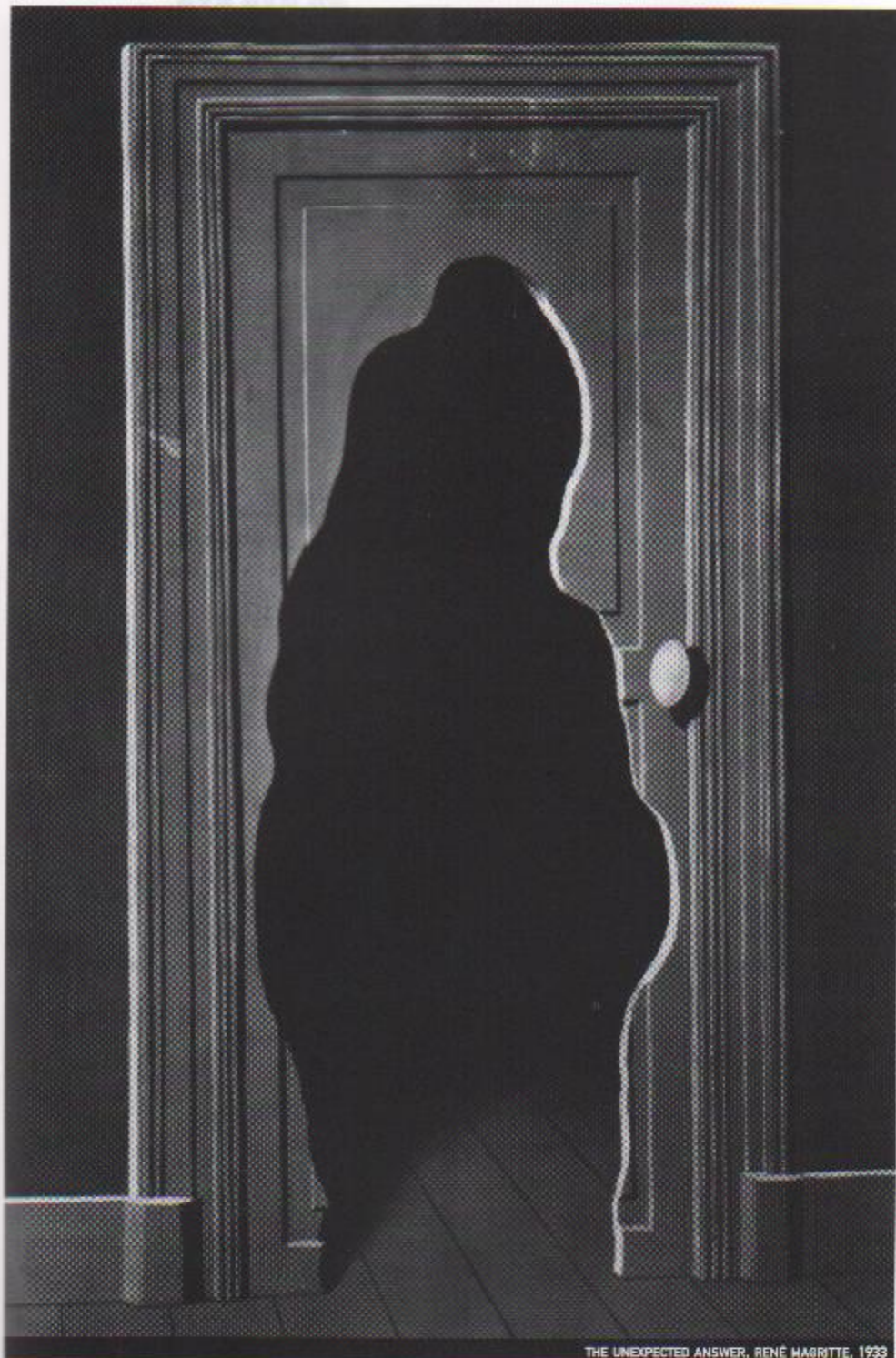
Government agencies promote the need to consult children over what is in their interests, but ultimately it is the courts that act on their behalf over the heads of their parents. After a single allegation of abuse is made, the wishes of the parent can be ignored, and they no longer have any decision-making powers. Their right to legal 'due

process' and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty is abrogated. Their family life is put under scrutiny and their parenting questioned. Their child can be wrenched away and placed in care where nobody knows them or loves them like a parent can.

Once others outside of the family are given the power to make decisions, instead of the parents, it can only serve to undermine the bonds between parent and child—damaging the child's trust in their parents (and possibly the parents' trust in each other), and shattering the confidence of the parent concerned.

The process of inspection blatantly infers to the child that they should not trust their parents—that a stranger from the social services department is actually the best protector of their interests, including, if necessary, protecting them from their own father and mother. Investigation is not a quiet process; the school, friends, colleagues, neighbours and other family members are consulted. Once accused, many spend years trying to regain the trust of these people. At a time when parental confidence is already low and people are more mistrustful of one another, the consequence of false accusations and investigations can be to wreck homes and lives.

The proposal in the introduction of the 'Working together' report to stop unnecessary



THE UNEXPECTED ANSWER, RENÉ MAGRITTE, 1933

intervention would be a valiant attempt, if the rest of the document did not go against this sentiment totally. In fact 'Working together' is a trigger-happy extension of the parameters for outside intervention in family life.

'Working together' makes an important but unsubstantiated claim—that it is possible to recognise people who will abuse their children before they even do it. The DoH suggests working with these 'types' and widening services for children they consider in need. This translates into intervening in even more family lives, when there is not even an allegation of child abuse: 'We have promoted the message that, rather than focusing too narrowly on alleged incidents of neglect or abuse, agencies should be taking (sic) a wider view of the overall needs of child (sic) and their families. It can often be more helpful to provide services and support to multiply disadvantaged families when problems first present rather than waiting for difficulties to escalate into abuse.'

Contrary to the report's assumption, there is no simple link between a 'type' of person or their circumstances, and their likelihood to abuse their own children. Trying to pre-empt abuse in this manner effectively means criminalising people who have done nothing wrong. Targeting families that the DoH deem as having difficulties will be less about stopping child abuse and more about blaming the parents whom the government considers responsible for all kinds of social problems today.

'Working together' claims, as a matter of fact, the existence of 'a growing body of research which confirms the links for some young abusers of being exposed to domestic violence, family breakdown and sexual abuse and then going on to perpetuate sexual abuse themselves'. But this 'link' is fiercely contested by experts who insist that there is overriding evidence that most parents who were abused do not themselves go on to abuse. Leading US researcher into child violence professor Sharon Herzberger, having reviewed the evidence, wrote in 1993: 'It is abundantly clear that not all people who have experienced violence will grow up to be violent. In fact, a minority of maltreated children grow up to maltreat their own children.' ⇨

↵ The government's proposal will widen the definition of child abuse to include potential abuse, and makes an unsupported claim to know who will abuse their own children. On the basis of this, and despite acknowledging serious problems with intervention into the lives of too many families, the DoH proposes greater intervention from more agencies than ever before.

The report lists the following agencies as potential interveners: healthcare workers, social services, people in education, the police, guardian *ad litem*, probation services, daycare workers, GPs/doctors, prison services, and, just in case they have missed anybody out, everybody in the community, voluntary and private sectors. The document stresses the importance of all of these professionals and agencies sharing information in the interest of all children. This marks a radical change in the responsibilities of some of these agencies.

GPs, for example, are supposed to have a commitment to patient confidentiality; yet the new policy insists that they should break that commitment and pass information on families to the authorities: 'It is important family doctors play a full part in identifying those families and children for whom early intervention may be needed to the (sic) prevent the development of longer term problems later on. The government is encouraged to see a growing awareness among GPs of the contribution they can make to children's welfare. However, levels of interest and awareness are not as yet uniformly high.' In short, not enough

THE 'PRIVATE SPHERE' OF THE FAMILY IS NOW THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS PARLIAMENTARY INITIATIVES

doctors are yet prepared to breach their traditional ethical codes.

The family is one of the few areas where people conduct their lives more or less on their own terms. Traditionally it has been a no-go area for the state—yet increasingly the 'private sphere' of the family is being eroded as the government takes more and more interest in people's private lives. 'Poor parenting' is now the subject of numerous parliamentary initiatives. The Home Office has its own family and parenting group to compliment an all-party parliamentary group on parenting, while Jack Straw has announced plans for a National Family and Parenting Institute, designed to set standards for parenting programmes and to establish a telephone helpline for parents. In this context 'Working together' can be seen as another

step by the authorities into the family home.

'Working together' strengthens the hand of those who wish to intrude into the private space of the family at a time when other government measures are ransacking the rights of people to raise their children as they think best. If these proposals go through, the lives of parents and children will be further eroded. Families will be threatened with being broken up, not just because of an unfounded suspicion of abuse, but because they are considered to fit into a certain officially defined 'type'. Such policies not only risk ruining the lives of those families subject to direct intervention; they also undermine the wider principle that parents have the authority and ability to bring up their children. When that principle is undermined, the family truly will become dysfunctional. ●



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DR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

MMR madness



One of the most difficult tasks for the doctors at our health centre is running the baby clinics. Parents of babies and young children are particularly vulnerable to health scares—and scarcely a month goes by without an upsurge of publicity about cot deaths, poisoned baby feeds, meningitis or some other terrifying disease. Immunisations are a recurrent focus of anxieties: recent reports of a fall in uptake of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine confirm the impact of scare stories about a link between the vaccine and the development of autism in children.

As one of my colleagues gasped at the end of a gruelling session, being interrogated by parents armed with anti-vaccination propaganda produced by pressure groups (such as Jabs or The Informed Parent)—or gleaned from the internet—is like enduring an old-style exam viva. A father recently presented me with a substantial 'information pack' on MMR produced by a firm of solicitors which is leading the campaign for compensation for children allegedly damaged by the vaccine, including some 287 cases of autism.

The information pack is a fascinating and shocking document. One of its co-authors is introduced as having an 'encyclopaedic knowledge of medical matters' and even a BSc (Hons), clearly a prestigious qualification in legal circles. It opens rather defensively—'we have ourselves been accused of being "ambulance chasers"' (no!)—and insists that the authors approach the subject, not only with 'an open mind', but with 'a completely open mind'. It then proceeds to the 'tentative conclusion', emphasising that 'our views are tentative', that if a child who was developing normally prior to receiving the MMR vaccine and subsequently became autistic, 'then in all probability the MMR vaccine has played a part in the cause of autism'. Not only is there virtually no evidence for this not very tentative conclusion, it is, as numerous commentators have pointed out, highly implausible.

Given the timing of the MMR immunisation—at around 15 months—it is not surprising that somebody should make a link with autism, which is usually diagnosed in the second year of life. But for this link to be established as one of causation, rather than a mere association, further evidence is required.

If MMR really causes autism, one would expect an increase in cases following the introduction and mass implementation of the MMR vaccine (in 1988, reaching more than 90 per cent of the target population) and after the intensive MMR campaign in November 1994 (when some eight million children were immunised). This is straightforward for the lawyers, because 'anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been a huge rise in cases of childhood autism throughout the country'. They present a series of anecdotes and opinions—from the Norfolk Autistic Society, from the internet, from a National Autistic Society newsletter—but no hard data.

By contrast, for international authorities in the field of autism (such as Lorna Wing in Britain and Christopher Gillberg in Sweden) the question of whether its prevalence is increasing is a difficult one to answer. Both acknowledge that it 'seems to be on the increase', but also point out problems of case definition, and improvements in the diagnosis of the condition. In a recent review of the literature, Wing concluded that there was 'no evidence for or against an increase in prevalence' (*British Medical Journal*, 312, 1996, pp327-8).

The case for MMR causing autism would be strengthened if, in individual cases, a clear relationship could be shown. But this is difficult because, while the MMR immunisation is a fixed event, the emergence of autism is, characteristically, an insidious process whose features become clear over months rather than weeks or days. The lawyers emphasise cases in which development proceeded normally into the second year, only to be followed by regression into autistic forms of behaviour. But it has long been recognised

that while some cases of autism are apparent from early infancy, many only become apparent at 18 months or later. It is clear that nobody would suspect a link unless they were predisposed to suspect the harmful consequences of immunisation.

How is MMR supposed to cause autism? The information pack speculates about immunological reactions (with a reference to a GP free-sheet published in 1967). It further suggests that the vaccine promotes antibodies to myelin, the lining of nerve fibres (with references to research findings in obscure US journals which appear not to have been reproduced). In the paper about MMR, inflammatory bowel disease and autism that launched the scare back in April, Andrew Wakefield and his colleagues at the Royal Free Hospital in London cite the 'opioid excess' theory (*Lancet*, 351, 1998, pp637-41). They believe that toxins leak through an inflamed bowel wall into the blood stream, leading to the familiar neuropsychiatric features. As an accompanying editorial points out, this theory does not well explain the fact that autistic behavioural features appear to predate the bowel inflammation which is supposed to release the toxins.

How is it that apparently open-minded people can endorse such absurd theories, and with such conviction? The legal information pack offers some clues.

In a revealing aside the authors warn that, in relation to the MMR-autism link, 'we have to proceed very carefully': 'There are many insults to the human body as a result of life in the last decade of the twentieth century. Pesticides, agricultural chemicals, antibiotics, preservatives, pollution or junk food may be responsible for the changing pattern of this serious and distressing childhood condition.' This litany of the fashionable preoccupations of the ecologically aware reveals an intense sense of personal vulnerability. But the selection of dangers is highly arbitrary: we might equally suggest that autism results from the exposure of babies to musical mobiles, bouncers and the *Teletubbies*.

In passing, the lawyers note that 'damage to children does not just happen'. 'There is always a cause', they continue, implying that somebody is always to blame—and therefore liable to pay compensation. One of the sobering aspects of working as a doctor is the realisation that damage does just happen—to children and adults—and in a bewildering variety of forms. To blame is human, but tilting at windmills is likely to prove a demoralising experience for everybody involved—except, of course, the lawyers. ●

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME?

False memory syndrome, where therapists encourage patients in the mistaken belief that they were abused as children, may have been exposed. But the dangerous assumptions behind the quest for repressed memories have yet to be challenged, says Jennie Bristow

'Anne Stone' went into therapy in 1982 feeling depressed. By 1990 she was convinced that she was a high priestess in a satanic cult. She had 'remembered' a series of bizarre rituals in which she was sexually abused, and where she herself sacrificed and ate children. Her own two young children were hospitalised, as therapists believed them to be members of the same cult. As Anne's family life crumbled, her mental state got worse and worse.

Her story is documented in *Making Monsters: false memories, psychotherapy and sexual hysteria*, an excellent critique of the US experience of recovered memory therapy written by Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters, first published in 1994. Their case study of George Franklin, convicted of first-degree murder in 1990 after his daughter 'remembered' seeing him kill her schoolfriend, confirms the horrendous consequences of recovered memory therapy in its heyday.

In April 1995 George Franklin's conviction was overturned. In November 1997 the US courts awarded 'Anne Stone' (really Patricia Burgus) \$10.6 million in damages against the two therapists who turned her life upside down. The techniques involved in recovered memory therapy have now been widely discredited. Yet the damaging assumptions which gave rise to it in the first place continue to inform public debate.

Recovered memory therapy took off at a time when society was becoming increasingly concerned about the prevalence of child abuse, particularly within the family, and the lasting effect of such abuse on its victims. Although the specific idea of recovered memories has fallen from favour, the notion that somebody would necessarily be 'scarred for life' by sexual abuse is still taken as common sense. To suggest that experience of abuse does not have to become

the defining feature of your life is presumed to be at best insensitive, and at worst an expression of sympathy for a paedophile.

From the widely accepted notion that the childhood experience of abuse can explain your problems in later life, it was only a small jump to the recovery of false memories. Therapists working on a presumption that a patient's problems could be linked to long-ago experiences of abuse used various techniques to encourage them to 'remember'. When confronted with the charge that they were implanting false memories into their patients' minds, therapists pointed to the suffering of people re-experiencing this apparent 'abuse' and retorted 'why would anybody want to be a victim of abuse unless they really were?'. But to be a victim—or 'survivor'—of abuse is more desirable today than anybody will admit.

Patients who have 'recovered' their memories of abuse will often say that, despite the trauma, realising their 'abuse history' has proved comforting. The continuum that a therapist establishes between their childhood and today means that everything suddenly 'makes sense': for the first time they have a seemingly rational explanation for what is wrong with their lives. Importantly, they realise that their problems and deficiencies are not their own fault. They are not responsible for the fact that their lives are less than perfect.

This displacement of responsibility on to other people or past experiences is a contemporary trend that, if anything, has been strengthened even as 'recovered memories' have been trashed. Child abusers in court will argue that they could not help what they did, because they had been victims of abuse themselves. Wife-beaters blame their violent childhoods for creating the idea that domestic violence was a normal part of home life. In a recent case a woman of 23 sued her former education authority

for its alleged failure to protect her from being bullied as a child; an increasingly common example of people trawling their past for something to pin their current problems on. In this context, is it really that surprising that somebody should want to find something dark in her apparently happy childhood that could explain the misery she feels today?

There is a well-established pattern of those who define themselves as survivors of abuse using that experience to avoid dealing with their current problems. But in recent years the transformation of child sexual abuse from an unpleasant experience into a defining feature of life has gone further. 'Being a survivor' has become the means through which some individuals try positively to create an identity for themselves.

The Courage to Heal: a guide for women survivors of child sexual abuse, by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, is widely regarded as the book most responsible for pushing patients of suspected abuse towards 'recovering' false memories. In this book 'being a survivor' is effectively presented as a love affair with oneself—an identity to aspire to. In the preface Ellen Bass says she first heard about child sexual abuse during a creative writing workshop she ran in the 1970s. Her book follows the creative writing format throughout: stories and poems by survivors about their pain and their healing are presented as proof that abuse makes you sensitive and creative.

The Courage to Heal set the standard for a flood of literature on incest survival. In Dillon's bookstore in Gower Street, London, there is a whole bookcase filled with literature for and by survivors, most of which seems to be poetry, fiction or artwork. Add to this the writers who have made a career out of recounting their experiences of sexual abuse, the hit TV programmes that feed off and dramatise experiences of victimhood, the true-life stories of suffering that feature monthly in teenage and women's magazines...and the reason why somebody might be attracted (consciously or otherwise) to the idea of presenting herself as a 'survivor' is suddenly less mysterious.

There is something about being a victim of a terrible experience today that seems to make you more interesting, more creative and definitely morally superior to a person who is simply boringly happy. If you have a past trauma, it pays to make the most out of it: at least you will get some sympathy, you may well get some status and you might even make some money, through the courts or through selling your story. If you don't have a past trauma, you may be tempted to make one up and create a survivor identity all of your own. In this twisted environment, the downfall of a few unscrupulous therapists with wacky techniques is far from the end of the problem.



PHOTO: SARAH CHAPMAN

A victim of memory recalls

After his children 'remembered' in therapy that he had abused them, Mark Pendergrast helped sound the alert about false memory syndrome in the USA

Early in 1995 the first edition of my book, *Victims of Memory: incest accusations and shattered lives*, appeared in the USA. 'I did not want to write this book', I wrote at the outset. 'It's much too painful. The truth is, I had to write it. I finally realised that what has been termed "false memory syndrome" was destroying not only my children's very identities and my relationship with them, but millions of other families as well.'

I was extremely nervous when the book came out. My family had urged me to drop the project. Why should I tell the world that I was accused of committing incest? Couldn't it ruin my writing career? Wasn't it possible that it would drive my children even further away? My literary agent was equally concerned. No major US publisher would touch the project. In 1993 I had published *For God, Country and Coca-Cola*, a social and business history of the soft drink, which had received rave reviews and sold in translation all over the world. Was I crazy? Why didn't I follow up with another business book?

But I really couldn't make myself think about anything else. I didn't initially intend to write *Victims of Memory*. I simply decided to apply my interviewing and research skills to understand how and why my children would think I had done something so awful,



when I hadn't. So I read books such as *The Courage to Heal*, by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, interviewed therapists who specialised in memory retrieval, and attended an incest survivors' group to interview people I met there.

It became crystal clear that my children had stumbled into a vast social phenomenon in which a sizeable number of therapists had adopted an unproven theory and applied it to most of their clients. 'Do you feel powerless, like a victim?' asked *The Courage to Heal*. 'Do you feel different from other people?...Do you have trouble feeling motivated?...Are you afraid to succeed?... Do you feel you have to be perfect?' These were supposedly symptoms of a history of sexual abuse. Not only that, it was entirely possible, according to the authors, for people to repress all memory of sexual abuse.

The interviews with therapists and 'survivors' were just as disturbing. Of course, I couldn't tell them of my personal involvement, or they wouldn't have talked to me, so I told them the truth as far as it went: that I was a journalist trying to understand the recovered memory phenomenon. The therapists told me how they hypnotised clients or used guided imagery (really a form of hypnosis), dream analysis, journaling, or the like. 'Following the memory', one therapist

told me, 'there's almost always denial. "I don't believe this; this didn't happen." When they deny it, I tell them, "It's understandable; who would want to believe it? It's hard to believe. If it's true, it will become more clear as more evidence comes up"'.

I realised what a terrible toll this form of 'therapy' took on those who came to believe they had suffered, all unknowing, a childhood of rape and torture. 'I've had to let go of the myth of what I thought my childhood was like', one woman told me when I interviewed her. 'It was like bursting a beautiful bubble, and it's very difficult to do.' She went on to tell me that she still loved and missed her father. 'He may not remember the abuse himself. He may have been in a trance state.'

This seems an outrageous notion, that terrible abuse must have occurred, but that everybody, including the perpetrator, forgot it somehow. Yet when you are accused of something so terrible by those you love, you question yourself. Paul Ingram, a Washington state policeman accused by his two daughters, managed to convince himself that he was guilty. A fundamentalist Christian, he 'prayed' to God to reveal what he had done, essentially performing auto-hypnosis on himself, and then confessed in glowing colour. I could have done the same thing. At first, I thought I might have done something that I forgot. So I went to a hypnotist to find out. Fortunately, I did not create an abuse scenario while in a trance state, but I could have.

Afterwards, my research revealed that hypnosis frequently results in confabulations—mixtures of fact and fantasy—and that hypnotic subjects are likely to 'remember' or visualise what is expected of them. In a trance people become highly suggestible.

The more deeply I looked, the more shocking and fascinating the entire subject became. I realised that it was not simply my children who were imperilled. My parents, who were active in the civil rights movement in the American South, had taught me that it was my obligation to try to do good in this world, to prevent injustice where I could. I could not simply walk away from this horror. I decided to write *Victims of Memory*. After rejections from major publishers, I found Upper Access, a tiny Vermont publisher, which did a wonderful job. Even though the book came from a virtually unknown press it received an incredible pre-publication review in the *New York Review of Books*, where Frederick Crews singled it out as 'the most ambitious and comprehensive, as well as the most emotionally committed, of all the studies before us'.

Still, I wasn't sure of its reception when it was published, or what effect it would have on my life or the recovered memory movement. As it turned out, *Victims of Memory* has had a major impact on this type of misguided therapy. I hasten to point out that other books have also questioned recovered memories, including those by ➔

← continued from page 33

Richard Ofshe, Elizabeth Loftus, Reinder van Til, Margaret Hagen, August Piper, Richard Webster, Tana Dineen, and others. Here in the USA, lawsuits brought by retractors—those who once believed in such 'memories' and no longer do—against their former therapists have made headlines with multimillion dollar settlements. The false memory societies in the USA and in Britain have made a great contribution to the debate.

Those who believe in massive repression are now in retreat, but there is still much to be done. In most of the USA and Britain, virtually anybody can set up a shingle saying 'therapist', regardless of training. Even those who receive advanced degrees do not necessarily learn about the hazards of hypnosis, human suggestibility or memory distortion. The worlds of the clinician and the scientist are still miles apart.

The recovered memory epidemic was just the most virulent and destructive in a long line of pseudoscientific psychological fads. Unless we change the way we approach messing with one another's minds, we will repeat the past, including its witch hunts, in other forms in the future. Right now, I am deeply concerned over the repeated

I COULD NOT SIMPLY WALK AWAY FROM THIS HORROR

questioning of young children who are bullied into 'disclosing' fictional abuse, even though they denied that it took place initially.

Looking back, I can say that *Victims of Memory* is probably the most important book I will ever write. I have heard from people all over the world telling me how much it meant to them, how it virtually told their own story. A few weeks ago, when I introduced myself in a public forum, somebody in the audience gasped. Later he came up and said, 'Your book saved my life'. He had been suicidal, believing in his recovered memories, before picking it up.

Now if only my own children would read it. They are still estranged. I love them. I miss them every day. ●

Victims of Memory: incest accusations and shattered lives is published in Britain by HarperCollins, £14.99

THE MEMORIES LINGER ON

Dr Michael Fitzpatrick asks why the professional reaction against this psychotherapeutic irrationality has been so slow and so muted

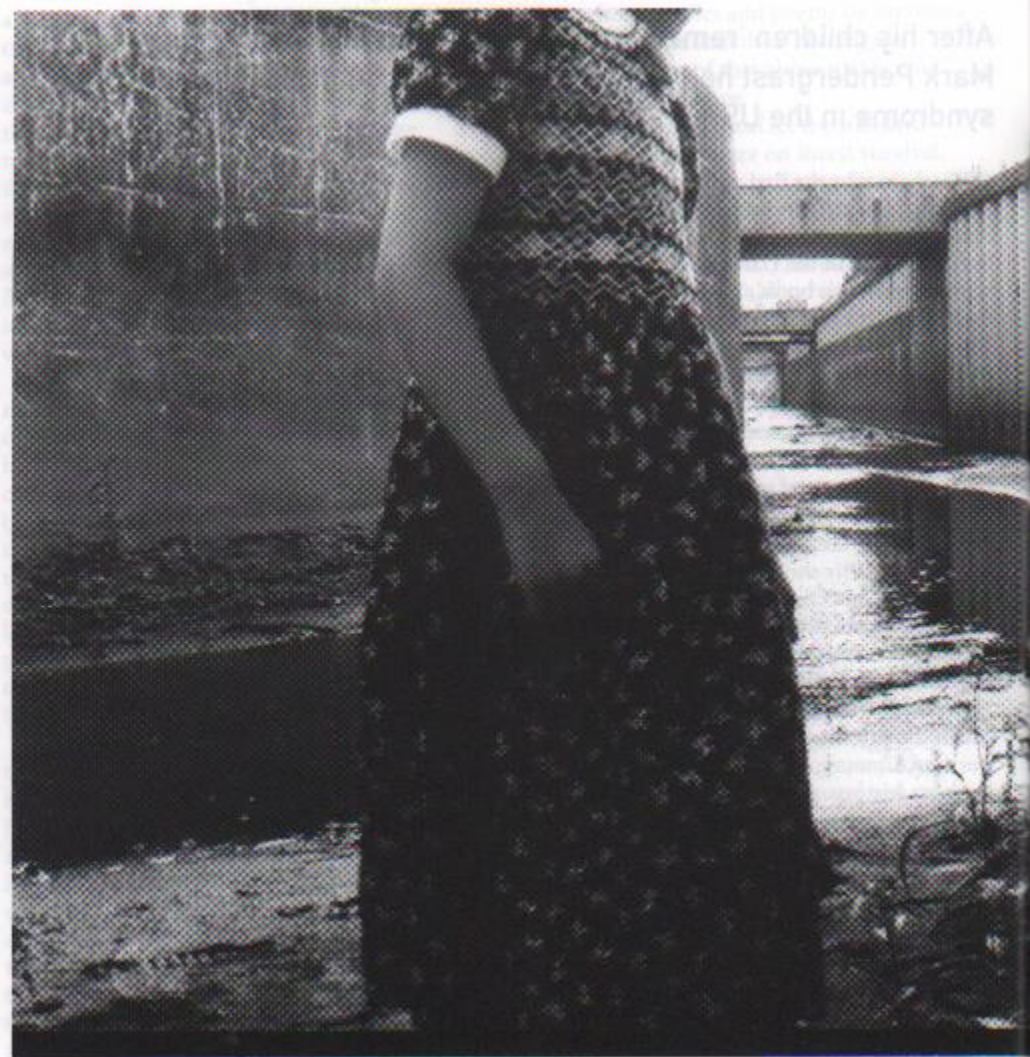
The Brandon report is widely regarded as the final nail in the coffin of the recovered memory movement.

Published in April this year in the form of an article ('Recovered memories of child sexual abuse: implications for clinical practice', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 172, S Brandon, J Boakes, D Glazer and R Green, pp296-307), the committee chaired by professor Sydney Brandon is categorical in its condemnation of the theory and practice of the movement.

Brandon's conclusion is that 'there is no evidence to support the wholesale forgetting of repeated experiences of abuse, nor of single episodes of brutality or sadistic assault, apart from the normal experience of

infantile amnesia'. Furthermore, the report insists that 'no evidence exists for the repression and recovery of verified, severely traumatic events, and their role in symptom formation has yet to be proved'. It describes techniques of memory recovery, such as hypnosis, drug-induced 'abreaction', age-regression, dream interpretation, and others, as 'powerful and dangerous methods of persuasion' for which there is 'no justification'.

Elaine Showalter, a campaigner against recovered memory and other manifestations of contemporary hysteria, greeted the Brandon report as 'stunning' (*Independent on Sunday*, 5 April 1998). Following Jean La



Fontaine's systematic exposure of the lack of independent corroboration of claims of widespread satanic ritual abuse and Joan Acocella's appraisal of the myth of multiple personality disorder, it seemed that the tide was turning against the wave of psychotherapeutic irrationality that had swept all before it over the previous decade.

The backlash against the recovered memory movement is indisputable—and it has been encouraged by successful litigation against therapists on behalf of former clients claiming for the damaging consequences of 'false memories'. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that the popular preoccupation with childhood sexual abuse as the explanation for the difficulties experienced by adults has come to an end. The extraordinary international impact of the recovered memory movement—on therapists and clients alike—reveals a deep emotional resonance for these morbid notions that is not susceptible to refutation by the cool analytic arguments of Brandon, La Fontaine and Acocella.

The history of the Brandon report itself reflects the powerful influence of the recovered memory movement even in the upper echelons of British psychiatry. In May 1995 the Royal College of Psychiatrists set up

a working party to investigate the recovered memory phenomenon and a report was submitted in summer 1996. As the introduction to the report, finally published nearly two years later, explains, 'for a number of reasons, the college eventually decided not to publish the report under its imprimatur'. Instead it published a three-page set of 'recommendations for good practice', apparently largely motivated by concerns that allegations about false memories and threats of litigation carried 'the risk of bringing the profession into disrepute' ('Reported recovered memories of child sexual abuse', *Psychiatric Bulletin*, 21, 1997, pp663-665). Though Brandon does not elaborate on the 'number of reasons' for this process of delay and equivocation, it is widely known that his outspoken critique of recovered memory was not popular with many members of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, who either supported the movement or were sympathetic to its approach.

Psychologists in the British Psychological Society had already run into similar difficulties. A survey of more than 800 members in 1995 revealed a high level of credulity regarding recovered memories ('Recovered memories', BPS, 1995; see also

believed had a profoundly therapeutic value. I have encountered therapists working with people with eating disorders and self-injurious behaviour who share these convictions.

The Brandon report notes that a significant proportion of abused children grow up to become well-adjusted adults, and that there is no evidence that childhood abuse leads to any specific pattern of symptoms in adults, or that recovering memories of abuse helps to alleviate such symptoms (indeed there is much evidence to the contrary). However, such dispassionate arguments have little effect on the prejudices of the recovered memory movement.

Perhaps the most important reason why the intellectual backlash against recovered memory has had limited impact is the fact that the movement enjoys its greatest influence in the sphere of popular culture. The movement's key text—*The Courage to Heal*, published in 1988—has become an international best-seller. Its authors, Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, are feminists with roots in the women's movement rather than in the psy-professions. Their notorious 'checklist' approach—'if you think you were abused and your life shows the symptoms, then you were'—is characteristic of the



PHOTO: SARAH CHAPMAN

THE EXTRAORDINARY INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE RECOVERED MEMORY MOVEMENT REVEALS A DEEP EMOTIONAL RESONANCE FOR THESE MORBID NOTIONS

'Recovered memory: a morbid symptom', *LM*, April 1995). As one critic of this report asked, if so many chartered psychologists believed in recovered memories, 'what about "unqualified" therapists?' (L Weisenkrantz, *Therapist*, Winter 1995).

There can be little doubt that the impact of recovered memory is even greater among the legions of therapists and counsellors beyond the ranks of mainstream psychiatry and clinical psychology. I well recall attending a talk given by a voluntary counsellor who ran a group under the aegis of a well-reputed mental health charity. The group aimed to encourage long-term consumers of tranquillisers to reduce and eventually end their dependence. It soon became clear that she firmly believed that virtually all her clients had been prescribed tranquillisers by GPs who had failed to elicit their experience of sexual abuse as children. Her objective was to facilitate disclosure of this abuse, a process which she also firmly

burgeoning popular literature of 'self-help' and 'personal growth' manuals. Like its close relations, satanic abuse and multiple personality disorder, recovered memory has become a familiar feature of contemporary novels, films, TV dramas, soaps and confessional shows (see *Hystories: hysterical epidemics and modern culture*, Elaine Showalter, Picador, 1997).

The backlash against recovered memory remains limited in its effect because the prejudices of this movement resonate with the deepest insecurities of our time. What is remarkable is not the fact of the backlash, but that such an irrational and demoralising trend has been so slow to provoke a response and that the response is so muted. As long as individuals seek to resolve the problems of the present by agonising over the experiences of the distant past, rather than by looking to the future, the key notions behind the recovered memory movement will continue to exert their baleful influence. ●

Jennie Bristow talked to Lynda Clarke, co-author of a controversial new report on why couples choose not to have children

No kidding

What is the 1990s' stereotype of the childless woman? Not a spinsterish singleton or an infertile woman who desperately wants a baby, but a go-getter whose child-free life is too exciting and whose aspirations are too high to fall into the well-trodden female role of wife and mother. And if this stereotype were right, the increasing numbers of childless women would represent a great step forward from the days when women spent their time engulfed by nappies and unable to have aspirations of their own. But is it true that childlessness today is necessarily liberating and positive?

In October 1997 *LM* columnist Ann Bradley sparked something of a controversy by arguing that, for some couples, 'the decision to remain child-free can be an act of extreme conservatism', representative of a general fear of the future and an unwillingness to take on responsibility for a new life. Almost a year on, a study supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that childlessness by choice is, at least for some couples, born more out of conservatism

than a radical decision. Of the women surveyed, 'most emphasised the individual responsibility that choosing parenthood entails. Their picture of childlessness versus parenthood is one of independence contrasted with constraint; material security with financial risk. Parenthood was clearly identified with disruption and change, which people considered ill-suited to their organised and predictable lifestyle'.

Lynda Clarke, co-author of the 'Choosing childlessness' report, published in July, explains that there is no one simple reason why women decide not to have children. 'In the study, few people made an early, irrevocable decision—it was a complex decision-making process over time.' And the study does not pretend to represent all voluntarily childless women: it was based on in-depth interviews with 45 individuals between the ages of 35 and 49 who were childless by choice. But what it does show, through the candid remarks of its respondents, is how changing social attitudes towards childlessness can be incorporated into the decisions made by individuals,

and the ways they explain these decisions.

As Lynda Clarke explains, many of the respondents 'didn't see themselves as childless': to be childless implies a negative state of being, whereas the respondents had a far more positive attitude towards the choice that they had made. Rosemary Kensit, certain that she did not want children, said that the term 'childless' gave an image of 'somebody poor who hasn't been able to produce... somebody who's actually missing out on life somewhere', and that if somebody were to describe her as childless they would be 'describing what I'm not, rather than what I am'. Others argued that they would rather be seen as 'individuals', as 'single' or, in the words of Lillian Waters, 'I've never had cause to describe myself as being childless... I'd probably say I'm free'.

If to be 'free' of children is viewed as positive by some of the survey's respondents, having children is sometimes described very negatively. Parenthood, for some, is viewed as involving significant sacrifices, some financial, others social. Tanya Moore cites the familiar parental lament of expensive teenagers as one of the advantages to remaining childless: 'When they're teenagers they just want you for taxi rides and for spending money, and children seem to live at home for a lot longer... I'm finding with people I know that their children are staying on to their early 20s.' For Isobel West, the free time afforded to the childless was a key factor, 'just being free and easy and not the constraints of like, you know, having to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner and not being able to go out'. The reluctance to commit to having children often coincided with an ambivalent view of the benefits children bring to their parents.

What is clear from the research is that, for most of the voluntarily childless couples interviewed by McAllister and Clarke, the decision not to have children came from a combination of their circumstances and their ideas about children and parenthood; not because, as the standard view would suggest, childless

women are taken over by an all-absorbing and totally fulfilling career. While the majority of women worked full-time, they were not, according to the study's authors, 'remarkably careerist', even those who were 'certain' that they did not want children, rather than the other groups who had a less definitive attitude. Many expressed that one of their goals was early retirement, and work was seen as a means to an end, rather than an opportunity for self-actualisation in and of itself. In fact, having a nice house and a particular lifestyle were the kind of things that many of the respondents cited as important, and as goals. When contrasted with the popular notion that childlessness denotes high ambitions about an individual's role in society or even in the world of work, the relatively narrow ambitions of those who choose disposable income and added leisure time over having children makes such a value judgement erroneous, if not impossible.

With the continuing improvements in reproductive technologies and changing expectations of women, individual choice will play an increasing role in determining whether or not people have children. With these changes, the stereotypical view of independent women making positive choices is easier and nicer to accept. But if the choice to remain childless can, as Lynda Clarke suggests, come from 'insecurity about one's future', it is important to question whether the aspirations of childless women have been raised by the circumstances of today, or simply lowered further. The fact that women were expected to raise children and considered capable of little else was once seen as the reason why their ambitions were crushed and frustrated. If some women now balk at even this responsibility, preferring to confine their ambitions to a new conservatory or the chance to go to the pictures at a moment's notice, it is time to reassess this new stereotype.

'Choosing childlessness', by Fiona McAllister with Lynda Clarke, is published by the Family Policy Studies Centre



FUTURES

Austin Williams is bemused by a government 'transport policy' which encourages us not to travel

ON YER BIKE

When the government launched its long-awaited White Paper 'A new deal for transport' at the end of July, everybody from Friends of the Earth to the Automobile Association agreed in principle that it was a positive step forward—but not, said Friends of the Earth, 'the Great Leap Forward we still need'. The imagery of a Chinese-style bikeocracy was not accidental. The White Paper has been described as the document that will literally pave the way for the future of transport in Britain, by downgrading the car and prioritising cycling and walking.

The White Paper is the result of months of consultation with interested and expert opinion, ranging from road hauliers to pedestrians, trainspotters to train operators. All of the contributions were accepted gratefully by the government for fear of offending any particular transport interest. In return, most lobbyists have fallen into line and accepted the White Paper. At the end of it all, John Prescott could plausibly boast that 'this is a White Paper that everyone can agree with'.

What does the White Paper offer? Not a lot, in short. The final delay in publication was to incorporate the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which allocated only a limited budget to the highway maintenance programme, and confirmed that there was no public money available for major new

transport initiatives for the foreseeable future. Yet it has been widely welcomed because there is a broad acceptance of the prejudices which underpin the proposals—specifically the prejudice against the motor car. The need to reduce reliance on the private car is the unquestioned assumption that runs through the whole document. Self-confessed 'petrol head' Quentin Wilson, of BBC TV's *Top Gear*, proclaimed that 'nobody can disagree that we have to do something about reducing the car', but complained that the proposals were being introduced too hastily. A curious criticism of such an overdue document, but if that's the level of criticism from a motoring magazine, no wonder the principle that car use is a problem is firmly established.

Hardly anybody demands more road infrastructure any more, since they accept the argument of the Standing Advisory Committee for Trunk Road Assessment (Sactra)—that more roads would inevitably result in more cars using them. Leaving aside the old-fashioned viewpoint that this was the very reason to build roads in the first place, acceptance of the Sactra position means conceding that we cannot build ourselves out of congestion. And if the 'natural' limits of road space are given, then any relief to

traffic density can only be achieved by reducing pressure at source; that is, by using the roads less. This is the philosophy behind the government's slashing of road bypass proposals one week after the White Paper was published.

Everybody is puzzling over why Britain, with fewer cars per head than most European countries, has greater car usage than the rest of Europe. It seems obvious to me. Most of Europe is known to have a well-funded, integrated, smooth and efficient public transport network, which allows people a choice. Surveys show that people drive so much in this country because alternative modes of transport are unsatisfactory. Yet now the government not only refuses to invest in public transport, it also rejects new road building.

Insisting that the White Paper is not anti-car, John Prescott said that 'Mondeo man can breathe a sigh of relief'. At one level this is ridiculous: the White Paper holds the car responsible for everything from children's lethargy to adult heart disease, from climate change to community breakdown, while the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) report argues that people should be 'cajoled' to travel less by private car. And lest we forget, measures have already been introduced to drive motorists off the road. ⇒



⇨ At another level, however, Prescott has a point: instead of simple anti-car policies, we now have a fully-fledged anti-transport policy. On closer inspection the White Paper is questioning whether we should travel at all. In the initial consultation paper the question was posed, 'what can we do to reduce people's need to travel?'. In the White Paper's response, the DETR states that we need to assess whether our trip is necessary in the first place. There is little guidance on what 'unnecessary travel' is, but there are plenty of clues: trips to the local shop, the school run, trips that you could have shared with others, etc. If our trip is unavoidable, we should consider doing it without the car, preferably by cycling and walking. It is bad enough to have an integrated transport document that marginalises one section of the travelling public, the car user. But to publish an integrated transport document that marginalises the concept of travelling...

INSTEAD OF SIMPLE ANTI-CAR POLICIES WE NOW HAVE A FULLY FLEDGED ANTI-TRANSPORT POLICY

At root the debate is not about transport policy at all, but about social policy. It is about encouraging responsible citizenry through the medium of transport. Britain's roads are in crisis, we are told, and in partnership with New Labour we can all lend a hand. The Dunkirk-style rhetoric culminates in John Prescott's disingenuous remark that 'we are

not asking for great sacrifices', while enjoying us to do our bit and walk to work.

Indeed, the DETR Walking Steering Group (I kid you not) recently explained that 'benefits flow to both individuals and to society when people walk'. Walking is 'conducive to neighbourliness and social interaction, thereby helping turn places into communities'.

The Freethinker

ARE YOU SICK OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AND EXTREMISM?

(Not to mention religion's undeserved privileges and its special pleading)

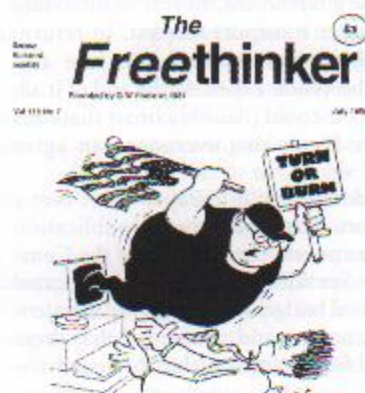
Then you should read the *Freethinker*, Britain's monthly magazine for secular Humanists and atheists. News and features from around the world sit alongside informed commentary and irreverent humour to produce one of the liveliest radical magazines around.

Recent topics covered include religion's attempts to exempt itself from the Human Rights Bill, the implications of a Hindu/Islamic nuclear race, whether *The Simpsons* are subverting America's religious revival, and an exploration of the effectiveness – or otherwise – of faith healers. There are reviews, interviews – and one of the most contentious and argumentative correspondence columns anywhere.

The *Freethinker* is also a campaigning magazine: it favours disestablishment of the Church of England, it opposes forced marriage, religious circumcision (of both women and men) and the state funding of church schools. It supports gay rights; the fairer treatment of animals and the protection of the environment. It opposes the Vatican's ban on birth control and its encouragement of superstitious nonsense. It has protested at religious murder in Algeria and the continued encouragement of sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

If you value free speech and worry about the malignant influences of religion around the world, you should read the *Freethinker* and get involved with the campaigns for a fairer world in which people have precedence over gods.

Annual subscription (12 issues) is only £10. Send a cheque, made payable to **G.W. Foote & Co.** to:
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There's something nasty on the WWW

See centre pages

The White Paper itself states that it wants transport to 'help to make a fairer, more inclusive society... (to) tackle social exclusion and improve neighbourhood management'. Professor Philip Goodwin, chair of the advisers to the White Paper, has set his sights even higher, likening the reduction in the car to the abolition of slavery. Cyclists of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains.

Keen to build on the unity of purpose generated by the enthusiastic participation in the consultation process, the DETR has announced at least nine other separate consultative documents on transport that we can all get our teeth into, from 'Road safety' to 'Bus re-regulation'. The process of consultation, it seems, is everything, the outcome irrelevant. Everybody will have an opinion, everybody will be encouraged to participate and everybody will be happy to have been asked. The fact that nothing will have improved as a result seems to have passed the transport groups by.

A recent article by the Policy Studies Institute's Mayer Hillman emphasised the 'vital importance of walking within any transport strategy', concluding that transport policy 'should be dedicated to enabling and encouraging people to lead more of their lives within their local communities'. A report from the Chartered Institute of Transport argues that government must persuade people 'to change both their current methods of filling their time and also their cultural symbols', so that children are not raised to believe 'that to do anything means to go out, and to go anywhere means to travel by car'. It seems the purpose of transport policy into the next century should be to create a situation where people don't travel outside their own parochial boundaries, if at all.

This is the biggest indictment of transport policy at the end of the millennium; a policy that encourages parish-pump values instead of broadening horizons, celebrates physical exertion over engineering, and tells us not to travel at all unless absolutely unavoidable. As we say in Newcastle, 'I've seen the future...and it walks'. [Try it in a Geordie accent—ed.] ●

Austin Williams is coordinator of the Transport Research Group



PHOTO: DAVID COWLAND

Cyclists and motorists, unite

Inner London boroughs decorate their roads with first red and now green cycle lanes. Lanes run between the kerb and the flow of traffic. A new innovation is a special cyclists' box at junctions that runs across the whole lane, forcing drivers to wait while we wobble off unsteadily.

With a quarter of a century in the saddle, man and boy, I can say that cycle lanes are no help to cyclists. Their real purpose is to snarl up the traffic. And that stops cyclists, too.

According to Islington council the lanes are a response to the increased numbers cycling, but it is also clear that the council is less sympathetic to motorists than once would have been the norm: 'We can't stop them, but we don't encourage commuter traffic.' The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions is equally coy about the real reasons. Its stated goal is to quadruple cycle use, saying cycle lanes 'make cycling more attractive—and if that makes traffic slow down that's an added benefit'.

Benefit for whom? Not cyclists. Once the traffic bunches up, cyclists cannot weave their way through. Most cycle lanes are irritatingly short, meaning that if the traffic has been jammed it is unlikely that any cycle lane will take you all the way past—even if it has reduced the available road width.

Doodling on the roads with green chromium (at a quoted cost of between

£8 and £45 a square metre) is no substitute for a real transport policy. The proliferation of information painted on road surfaces only confuses the issue. With green cycle lanes and red bus lanes, drawings of bikes, and special boxes, motorists can be forgiven for not knowing whether the instructions are compulsory, just advice or graffiti.

The unspoken cyclists' secret is that we are more susceptible to

road rage than anybody else. Put your back into it and the adrenalin starts pumping. Being more exposed to harm than any other road user, cyclists are outraged by cars pulling out, or (the cyclists' nightmare) doors opening into our path. All cyclists hate cars and their drivers, instinctively. That makes us a ready stage army for the government's campaign to reduce car use.

Leo Chapman at the Islington cycling campaign protests 'the motorists have taken over the roads'. But roads are built and paid for by motorists. Thirty million car users pay £16 billion worth of tax every year for, among other things, the upkeep of the roads. They subsidise our free cycling and much else besides.

Cycling in any city can be pretty frightening even to the most confident cyclist—and that fear breeds a hatred for the motorist. But the truth is that cyclists depend upon car users to look after them. More than most, cyclists rely on the unspoken social contract that lets 30 million people avoid death on the roads every day. Unable to protect ourselves physically, we devolve the responsibility for our safety on to motorists, announcing our vulnerability in Day Glo materials and blinking safety lights. On top of that we jump lights, overtake on the inside lane, and position ourselves at the head of the traffic queue at junctions.

The left-hand cycle lane and its junction box are an imitation of the bad behaviour of cyclists. But all that bad behaviour has been indulged by motorists out of a basic sympathy for the bike. That reservoir of sympathy will evaporate if cyclists are set up in conflict with the car.

London boroughs have rolled out first a red and now a green carpet to cyclists, inviting them to the front of the traffic queue. In themselves these privileges are worthless. As Leo Chapman says, existing cycle lanes offer little protection and lull cyclists into a false sense of security. Drivers put up with cyclists pushing in, wobbling all over the road and sneaking through traffic. But in instituting that behaviour as a right, London boroughs are only building up resentment. The authorities are using cyclists to hurt car users, but however unlikely it seems, drivers are our friends. ●

James Heartfield

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Rave on

Sheryl Garratt, author of *ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*, tells Andrew Calcutt how club culture has changed the world

'I was trying to weave it into a story where you'd want to read the next chapter.' Former *Face* editor Sheryl Garratt has taken 150 interviews, months of painstaking research and more than a decade of her own personal experience, and mixed them down into a HNRG account of raves, clubs and cultural shifts. Zooming from New York to London via Ibiza and a flashback to Northern Soul, *Adventures in Wonderland* is a ripping yarn about people having the time of their lives, and changing our times while they did it.

'Club culture is as important as punk but much bigger', says Garratt. She believes that the past decade of British club culture represents 'a seismic shift in attitudes which advertising is still chasing', and suggests that it played a key role in 'democratising pleasure' through new technologies of pleasure such as Ecstasy'. Recalling 'how quickly it spread to small country villages', Garratt reckons that 'this really was every kid on the street'.

Garratt is equally effusive about the 'communal experience' afforded by clubs and raves 'at a time when people were told there is no society. Clubs are all about belonging—it's going somewhere and saying "these are people like me"'. Garratt's kind of clubs are 'closed worlds' offering a communal experience for those who have been shut out of the wider world. Noting that 'the best clubs cater

never came round to see the baby'). But she maintains that 'it was quite reassuring, while it lasted', and compares favourably to the fractured sisterhood of the early eighties. During her days as a dj at a women-only club night at Brixton's Fridge, there would be complaints about the sexism, racism and disablism of every other record. Whereas in those days she was 'badgered by older women who'd been to consciousness-raising groups', the rave years of '88 and '89 were 'incredibly liberating for girls'.

Now 37, Garratt still buys 'enormous numbers of records and I still go clubbing, only not so often'. She is not ashamed to be part of 'the generation that won't admit we're middle aged', while recognising that 'it makes it harder for youth culture to have anything of its own, which must be bloody annoying if you're 19'. But Garratt has no doubt that youth will out. The last chapter of *Adventures in Wonderland* is imbued 'with the sense of an era coming to a close...the Es are so bad that without any help from the law the cycle is burning itself out'. But for Garratt that means a new one is about to start'. There is always something to rebel against, and there are always new kids coming up, so that youth culture 'is constantly renewed from the bottom.



PHOTO: KEVIN DAVIES

Signs of the times

Signs of the Times was away during the World Cup, but some things are better late than never...

'Now that we don't have a war, what's wrong with a good punch-up? We are a nation of yobs.

Without that characteristic how did we colonise the world? I get fed up with everyone saying how evil these

yobbos are. I don't agree with broken glass and knives,

but what an English tough guy does is to fight with his fists, which is a good clean fight. With so many milkshops, and left-wing liberals and wetties around, I rejoice in the fact that there are people who keep up our historic spirit'



Bombed out

...but counterculture veteran Jeff Nuttall reckons all that sex, drugs and rock'n'roll has degraded art and life

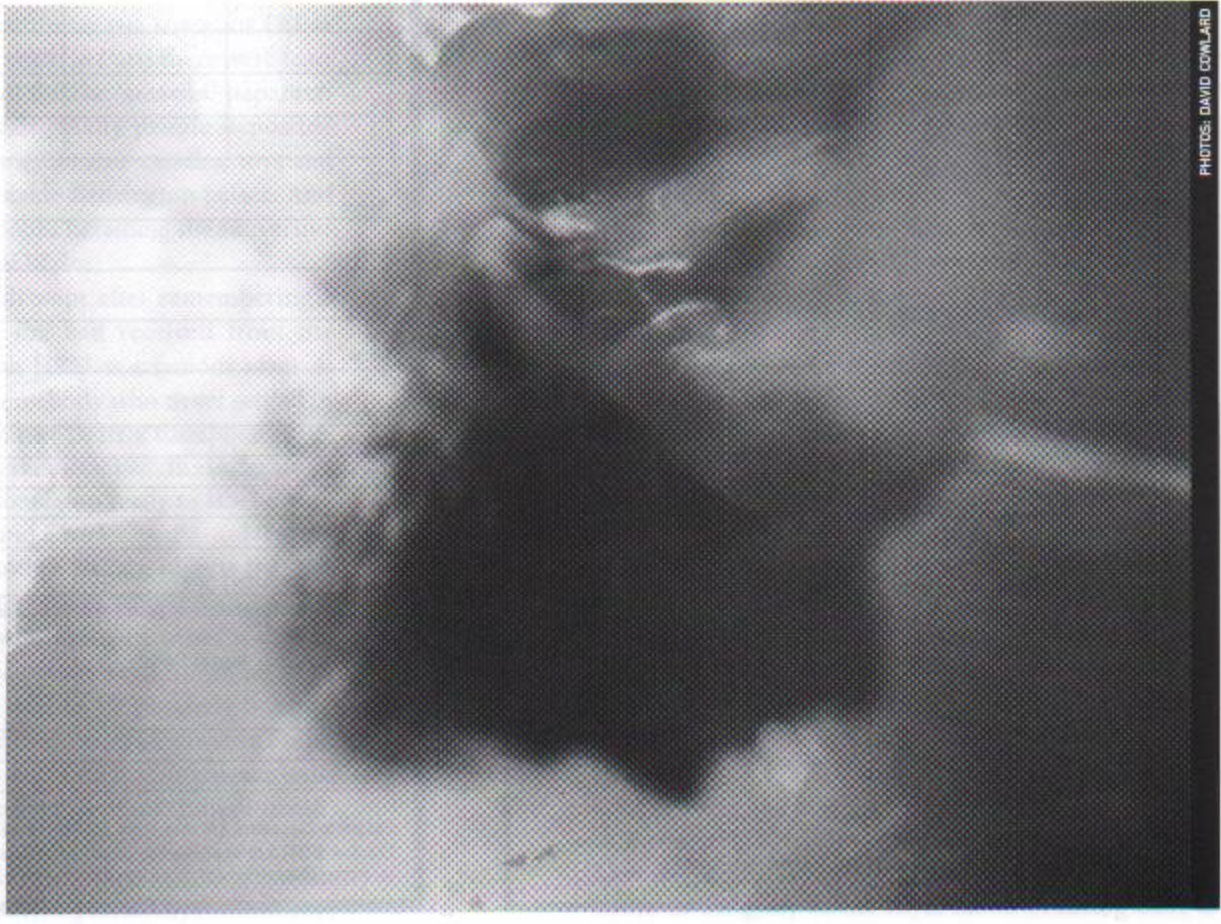
...wider world. Noting that 'the best clubs cater

for people on the margins', like the blacks and Puerto Rican gays who were the original constituency for house music, she concludes that clubs 'are about alienation and community, about excluded people coming together'.

Garratt concedes, however, that the togetherness of club culture may be 'an illusion in some ways'. The friendships of her clubbing years have often not withstood her transition to motherhood ('my soulmates

it's fluid and dynamic and can't be controlled from the top'. Noting that 'heaven can be the backroom of a pub' and that 'your dream club will probably be sanitised' in the time it takes to finance it, Garratt keeps faith with the underground and its capacity to break the prevailing consensus.

Adventures in Wonderland is published by Headline, £9.99



PHOTOS: DAVID COWLAND

Dowager Marchioness of Reading, 79, who doesn't have to hide behind 'self-defence' justifications for hooliganism, unlike Alan Clark MP and other wetlies

'I've seen the Barmy Army and don't want anything to do with the buggers. They make you ashamed to be British'

Tony Rider, MCC member and wetty

'In this country we've got to start cheating like the rest of the world. I'd rather win by cheating than lose and be brave and honest'

Rodney Marsh, whose cheating never won him much if memory serves

Paul Gascoigne was on a train from London to Newcastle during the England v Argentina game. When asked if he'd watched it he replied sarcastically, 'Aye, they've got satellite on trains now'

Meanwhile Jo Brand, supposedly a football fan these days, was sat downstairs at the Groucho club talking with another unfunny comedienne. (The TV is upstairs and was showing the match)

'A revolution that was turned on its arse, a vocabulary that was stolen and used against it.' This summation of the counterculture comes from a man who was there at the start. Born in 1933, Jeff Nuttall has been a poet, cartoonist, painter, performance artist, art lecturer and character actor. In 1968 he wrote *Bomb Culture*, which exposed the cynicism that complemented the naivety of the flower children and their predecessors. Three decades later he has just finished the follow-up, to be published early in 1999 either as *The Degradation of Art* or (Nuttall's preferred title) *The Degradation of Awareness*. Whatever the name, the message is the same: the countercultural triptych of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll has brought us to a new and degraded existence.

'We believed that violence was due to sexual repression', Nuttall explains. Hence the proverb 'fuck a bloke and stop a fight'. But it all went 'badly wrong'. Where 'people previously embraced politics, now [from the sixties] they merely embraced and went off into their corner'. Sex became mere masturbation assisted by others, 'preferably a stranger'. Counterculturalists, Nuttall recalls, 'compared orgasms like possessions' and craved bigger and better ones, 'borrowing a psychological pattern from narcotics addiction'.

'My pleasure is mine, my stash is mine.' For Nuttall, the drug experience was soon as solipsistic as the new sexuality. He thinks it is relevant that 'drugs are receptive of and productive of information that is not true' and he is wary of the falsehoods which they catalyse. He dismisses marijuana as 'a great postponer which silences all alarms and renders people incapable of punctuality'. He thinks cocaine is 'murderous', and that 'incontinence' was the only contribution made by the recreational use of barbiturates. As for LSD, Nuttall notes that, despite the separate character of each individual's trip, in the visions experienced by the tripper, 'each object is restricted to its genre, obscuring the unique character of unfolding events...each fuck is just a fuck'. In this respect the LSD mindset 'assists structuralism' and reduces experience to a mere cipher.

Nuttall believes that the counterculturalists, who were 'previously disdainful of anything commercial', bought into rock'n'roll because,

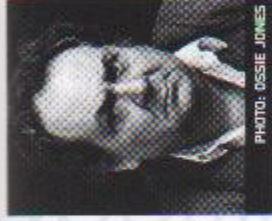


PHOTO: OSSIE JONES

convinced that mainstream society was on the road to destruction, they wanted 'instant survival, immediate inoculation' to put 'cultural distance' between themselves and the rest of the world. From then on 'you didn't have to read *Being and Nothingness* to step outside society; you could just turn on Jimi Hendrix and be nothing instantaneously.

Nuttall is scathing about the supposed revolutionary connotations of rock'n'roll. He remembers a meeting in 1969 with the music editor of *IT* (the premier underground paper) who told him 'if you want a revolution, Jeff, you have one'. He does not believe in the fabled optimism of the sixties either. In a comment which recalls the title of his first book, *Bomb Culture*, Nuttall maintains that the choice was 'to die in a nuclear holocaust or burn ourselves out like fireflies'; hence the 'feckless fashion for risk and self-destruction' and the absence of 'a vocabulary for old age' — or even adulthood.

By 1970, as Nuttall recalls it, rock'n'roll was the core element in a 'cultural package deal' that was simplistic (the promotion of 'Attitude removes the need to ask "what attitude?"'), conservative and repetitious, while peddling 'delusions of genius and historical importance'. While 'history was lost in a soup of generalisations', the alternative initiates 'munched afterbirth' and felt 'protected by the belief that they were the bearers of a new, explosive consciousness a special wisdom'. They were 'brave', in their way, he concedes, but three decades later their outlook has turned into a smug superiority along the lines of 'the world is damned but I am not'.

In a chapter in his forthcoming book headed 'Dumbing down the law', Nuttall describes how the cultural package deal has now been translated into new forms of social control which he labels 'ludic cruelty' — playpower as coercion. Describing himself as 'a very disappointed Marxist', he looks with fear and loathing at today's 'homogeneous consciousness' based on 'the suburban ethic of personal space', and asks, belligerently, how so much conformism can have come out of the rebellious aspirations of his contemporaries.

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TESSA MAYES listens in on Diana's mourners

'LOSER AND STILL CHAMP'

DIANA

Julie Burchill, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £20 hbk

DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES: HOW SEXUAL POLITICS SHOOK THE MONARCHY

Beatrix Campbell, The Woman's Press, £7.99 pbk

WHO KNOWS WHAT GOES ON INSIDE THE MINDS OF DIANA worshippers? After the car crash in Paris there were tears for her memory and vitriol for the 'assassin' paparazzi and the cold-hearted royals. Many people deposited flowers, sweet-smelling remembrance candles, toys and messages of condolence outside Kensington palace. And two others chose to write books heralding the subversive nature of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Columnist Julie Burchill wept after remembering a personal note of thanks she had received from the princess. She identifies with HRH as a famous woman, mother, divorcee, and as somebody who never settled in her situation. Veteran feminist Beatrix Campbell never met Diana, but critics have attacked these feminist accounts as being too personal, too ready to label everything about Diana 'good' and Charles 'bad'.

In the *Sunday Times* Anthony Clare objects that the duo read too much of themselves into the story. The 'agonised saga of Diana and Charles' becomes 'a clinical case history to be examined and re-examined, so as to help them find out how it is to be properly human' (14 June 1998). In the *Daily Telegraph* biographer Philip Ziegler writes that *Diana* contains nothing new about Diana 'but it reveals all too much about Julie Burchill' (13 June 1998).

In both books Diana is celebrated as a victim who used her femininity to survive patriarchy, monarchy,

sexism, abuse and her husband. In this icon of dissent the authors see radicalism everywhere: in Diana's being (a beautiful, witty, warm, young woman and mother with sentimental feelings), and in her doing (speaking about her tragedies, challenging her husband and the monarchy). In Burchill's words: 'Loser and still champ.'

It is not surprising that Diana is taken as a symbol of something new. After all, who wants to defend the Queen? Diana's tell-all style was different to that of the more secretive and reserved Windsors. In an unprecedented move for a royal wife she publicly attacked the future King's affair with another woman and the activities of his courtiers ('the enemy') in the *Panorama* interview in 1995. She embraced fashionable causes such as Aids and the abolition of landmines, while Charles attacked modern architecture and defended traditional values.

Although both authors are cautious about labelling the aristocratic 'thicky Spencer' a radical feminist and republican in life, they argue she had popular resonance, behaving as if she was 'one of the crowd'. In death Diana 'ignited a republican sentiment', according to Campbell (p3). Sexual politics had shaken patriarchy and the monarchy, she argues, something which even the Labour Party had failed to do.

For Burchill, the 'People's Princess' (she claims to have invented the term) had 'spirit'. We are asked to bathe in the glory of the royal taboo-breaking babe →

Diana

Julie Burchill

DIANA'S CONSTITUENCY—NEW LABOUR, AIDS CHARITIES, HOLLYWOOD CAMPAIGNERS AND FEMINISTS—SEEMS ECLECTIC. BUT THEY HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY SUPPORT THE CULT OF THE VICTIM

⇨ simply because she ruffled feathers. She out-royaled the royals by commanding more media airtime and opinion poll support than them. She out-Aided the Aids supporters by being the first high-profile woman to campaign with her gloves off and to touch the ill. In Australia she even managed to turn republicans into union flag-wavers, God bless her! It's almost as if it doesn't really matter what she did as long as this English rose did it all differently to those foreign, 'numb, dumb, dinosaur' Windsors (p86).

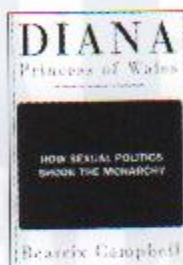
But Diana was no problem for the establishment. Although they may have recoiled from her new age excesses, her approach keyed into what the royals were already trying to do in their own awkward way: modernising 'the Firm'. Before Diana's death the Queen had already agreed to pay for fire damage to Windsor castle, sell the royal yacht *Britannia* and cut the allowances of some lesser royals. Now she visits McDonald's, while Prince Charles affects a concern for the homeless. Diana helped do some slick, stylish PR work for the new political values which has eased the establishment's transition into the twenty-first century.

The Queen's biographer, Ben Pimlott, questions too whether Diana was all that remarkable. In the *Times* he writes that the 'mass psychosis' aimed at supporters of good causes reappeared beyond Diana when Linda McCartney died this year. Both authors fail to consider 'Diana's dependence on the aura that surrounded the family she joined' (25 June 1998). They begin the debate about what made Diana so popular but fail to find the answers.

The answer lies in the fact that Diana was part of a new emerging establishment. For the Queen of Hearts to be applauded for her victim status requires an audience who already support those values. Her constituency—the New Labour government, Aids and homeless charities, Hollywood campaigners and feminists—is viewed as eclectic. But they all have one thing in common: they support the cult of the victim. And Diana was the uber-victim.

The Burchill-Campbell thesis—that women suffer in silence and Diana did them a service by speaking out—is a throwback to the fifties when discussion of women's suffering, such as domestic violence, bulimia or post-natal depression, was taboo. But not now. Victim-speak is fast becoming the main language in which social problems are discussed, rather than something that is kept private.

And Beatrix Campbell is the champion of a victim-centred worldview. 'By telling her story', she insists, 'Diana joined the "constituency of the rejected"—the survivors of harm and horror, from the Holocaust, from world wars and pogroms, from Vietnam and the civil wars of South America and South Africa, from torture and child abuse' (p203). So now it seems Diana's marriage difficulties were on a par with the Nazi gas chambers.



What was that Campbell was saying about the royals being out of touch with reality? ●

Disclosure: media freedom and the privacy debate after Diana, edited by Tessa Mayes, is published by the London International Research Exchange media group

FAKING IT

INTELLECTUAL IMPOSTURES

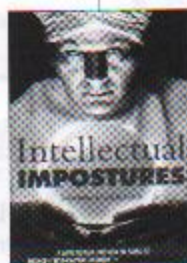
Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, Profile Books, £9.99 pbk

In 1996 Alan Sokal published a paper entitled 'Transgressing the boundaries: towards a hermeneutics of quantum gravity' in the US cultural studies journal *Social Text*. Famously, he then announced that the paper was a hoax: it was just a collection of fashionable jargon and quotations strung together without regard for sense or logic. That it could be accepted for publication was intended to show up the shoddy intellectual standards in 'postmodern' thinking about science. *Intellectual Impostures*, written with fellow physicist Jean Bricmont, is the book of the hoax. Emboldened by revealing Sokal's work to be nonsense, they now to do the same for a variety of other thinkers.

The goal is 'precisely to say that the king is naked (and the queen too)' (p5), but the book is aimed at a group of intellectual practices rather than a group of individuals; at impostures—acts of fraud and deceit—rather than impostors. Outside of mathematics and physics, which Sokal and Bricmont claim as their areas of competence, the authors make no claim as to the quality of the works they criticise, and formally suspend judgement except to point out that such sloppy thinking should provoke a closer study of the rest of postmodern thought to see if the same symptoms are present.

The original hoax hit the headlines and quickly became known as the 'Sokal affair', adding an air of Continental scandal. However, *Intellectual Impostures* goes much further than showing that the likes of Jacques Lacan and Jean Baudrillard don't know their quarks from their quasars. Certainly Sokal and Bricmont hand out accolades, such as that for 'the most perfect example of diarrhoea of the pen', a passage which 'as far as we can see means precisely nothing' (p165). All this is entertaining enough and is no doubt good for sales. But their 'criticism does not deal primarily with errors, but with the manifest irrelevance of the scientific terminology to the subject supposedly under investigation' (p11).

It is the failure to explain the significance of chaos theory to 'the end of history' (Baudrillard) or of Einstein's relativity to urban geography (Virilio) which



MEN HAVE A 'NATURAL' HUNGER FOR BEEF, WE ARE TOLD, WHILE WOMEN PREFER LENTILS AND FRUIT. MEN ARE BORN TO THRIVE ON COMPETITION WHILE WOMEN ARE BORN TO BE COOPERATIVE AND CAUTIOUS

leads Sokal and Bricmont to the conclusion that scientific theories are being invoked solely to impress the reader. The explanations of the (ir)relevant science given by Sokal and Bricmont do enough to show that it has nothing to do with the study of society. Anybody is welcome to draw analogies or use words in a new sense, but then they should explain themselves rather than rely on the ignorance of the reader to produce an impression of profundity. Gödel's theorem has no implications for the study of society, the axiom of choice cannot be used to study poetry, and topology has nothing to do with the human psyche. When it comes to these subjects the postmodernists should shut up.

The one area where it is legitimate (and important) for social scientists to concern themselves with natural scientific ideas is in the study of science itself. But on this ground Sokal and Bricmont's critique is at its best. They attack 'epistemic relativism'—the idea that science is just a 'myth', or one equally valid story among many others. They situate these ideas as a reaction against the attempt by Popper and the Vienna Circle to formalise scientific method, and divide them into two parts: 'either (a) valid critiques of some attempts to formalise the scientific method, which do not, however, in any way undermine the rationality of the scientific enterprise; or (b) mere reformulations in one form or another of Humean radical scepticism.' (p58) These two aspects are thoroughly mixed up in the writings of the postmodern sociologists and philosophers of science, and Sokal and Bricmont do a good job of separating them out.

Their starting point is a discussion of 'radical Humean scepticism', the position that logic alone can never allow us to draw definite conclusions about the world. We can always imagine some way in which we might have been deceived. But as Sokal and Bricmont point out, that is no reason to believe that our understanding of the world really is illusory. The main work that they undertake is to show that most radical scepticism is, at its heart, of this Humean sort. Through a critique of both Popper's formalism and of post-modernist relativism they are then able to present a coherent picture of the way in which science advances. Experience plays a key role in developing a scientific methodology, which can then be rationally justified.

Sokal and Bricmont are at pains to emphasise the specificity of their criticisms. To claim more would have taken a bigger book. Despite this, the assessment of the origins of relativist ideas and underestimation of their influence is a weakness in their book. If what matters to them is to win an argument for progress in science and in society then they have made a good start, but they will have to go further in exploring the connections between the ideas they take up here and wider trends in society. ●

JOE KAPLINSKY

'IT'S ONLY HUMAN NATURE AFTER ALL'

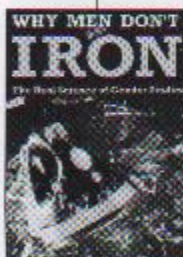
**WHY MEN DON'T IRON:
THE REAL SCIENCE OF GENDER STUDIES**

Anne and Bill Moir, HarperCollins/Channel 4, £12.99 pbk

Why Men Don't Iron, the book of the Channel 4 series, is intriguing and, as its jacket states, 'controversial' and 'funny' (although I tended to laugh more at it than with it). The strength of the book lies in its description of the ideological and cultural outlook of our times. The authors show how everything that can be associated with masculinity—from the competitive ethos to experimentation and risk-taking—is being derided today, while everything that is traditionally associated with femininity—from being emotionally literate to being cautious and having a commitment to safety—is being championed. But like the very people they criticise the Moirs take for granted the idea that there are great differences in behaviour between the sexes. And these differences, they say, can be accounted for entirely by nature.

Men have a 'natural' hunger for beef, we are told, while women prefer lentils, fruit and wholesome grains. Men are born to thrive on competition and risk-taking, while women are born to be cooperative and cautious. Men naturally seek to dominate nature and women are more likely to converse with nature. To force men to go against their nature, and act like women, we are told, is counterproductive. Men will only suffer, and as a consequence so will women, who have no interest in being surrounded by dysfunctional males. Basically, the authors expect nature to do their job of making the case for masculinity.

Their arguments about why it is in nobody's interest to encourage men to share responsibility for housework really take the biscuit: 'Men get bored more easily. His biology has equipped him with sensation-seeking qualities that build empires and take him to the moon, but also make him shy away from dull tasks. The low serotonin and high dopamine addiction that is so useful at his work can be a disaster in the home, because he simply cannot concentrate as well as she does. Domestic chores are simply not exciting enough a challenge to turn on his frontal cortex, and so he is ⇒



ELLIOTT AND ATKINSON'S *AGE OF INSECURITY* SHOWS HOW THE LEFT HAS SOUGHT OUT NEW FOREIGN SAVIOURS SINCE THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, IN THE TWIN FANTASIES OF CLINTONISM AND EUROPEANISM

↳ liable to burn the shirts as his mind strays in search of something to relieve his boredom.' (p252) Now there's an excuse for dodging the ironing if ever I heard one.

Of course, men and women are biologically different—with some differences more obvious than others! The sexes are also genetically distinct: men have an X and a Y chromosome and women have two X chromosomes—genetic differences that have been found to shape, but do not determine, biological differences. Men and women also behave differently. Whether the differences are as clear-cut and inflexible as the Moirs assert is a different question. But it is not necessarily the case that just because genetic differences between the sexes can explain some biological differences they can also explain behavioural differences.

There are a host of questions that would be interesting to explore in relation to how biology may impact upon society. But this book takes us no further in understanding this relationship. Rather than explaining any of the mediating links between genes and behaviour, the authors make assertions that demand great leaps of the imagination. The extent and the exact nature of the neurological differences between the sexes is open to debate. However, even if we were to accept the authors' descriptions of physiological differences between the sexes, such as differential serotonin and dopamine levels in the brain, they cannot be attributed directly to genetic differences. The brain's neurotransmitter levels are also affected by a host of environmental factors. The Moirs only pay lip service to this.

Another worthwhile avenue for exploration is the nature of the selective pressures that may have existed in our evolutionary past to give rise to the genetic differences between the sexes. The Moirs merely assert that men have lower serotonin levels and fewer serotonin receptors in their frontal brain due to the benefit it gave them as hunters in the past. This is a relatively convincing 'just so' story. But it is scientifically illegitimate to then make the point that 'men need challenges and, lacking mammoths to kill, he will satisfy himself with the exploits of Manchester United'.

To extrapolate directly from physiological sex differences to sex differences in everything from aggression to eating habits explains nothing. Natural differences between men and women may well be the raw material out of which behavioural differences are made. But if there are any mediating links between biology and society this book does not explain them. In fact, the arguments put forward by the Moirs are as anecdotal, unconvincing and banal as those of the cultural theorists that they so despise. ●

HELENE GULDBERG

RISK SOCIETY

AGE OF INSECURITY

Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, Verso, £16 hbk

THE CORPORATION UNDER SIEGE: EXPOSING THE DEVICES USED BY ACTIVISTS AND REGULATORS IN THE NON-RISK SOCIETY

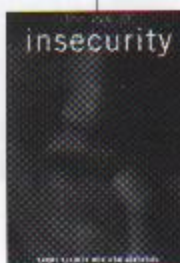
Mark Neal and Christie Davies, Social Affairs Unit, £9.95 pbk

Elliott and Atkinson's *Age of Insecurity* and Neal and Davies' *The Corporation Under Siege* both look at insecurity in the modern economy, but from very different points of view. Elliott and Atkinson write for the pinkish *Guardian*, while Davies and Neal are hardened cadres of the free market Social Affairs Unit.

There is a lot of sharp insight in Elliott and Atkinson's book, especially about the evasions of the left. They show how the left has sought out new foreign saviours since the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the twin fantasies of Clintonism and Europeanism. As *Age of Insecurity* intelligently argues, the implications of either a new Atlantic alliance of the left or of a 'social' Europe are both hostile to democracy: 'With its deflationary single currency and economic dictatorship of central bankers [the EU] is not and never could be the progressive internationalist organisation many on the left believe it to be.' (p180) Elliott and Atkinson are also critical of the way that the judges come to play an ever greater role in ordinary people's lives. Elsewhere they show how modern trade union officers are more likely to be using the law to tie down employers with equal opportunities legislation than fighting openly for their members' interests.

This is where *Age of Insecurity* is at its best, in describing the threat to civil liberties and democracy that are intrinsic to new forms of state rule. But the weakness of the book is contained in the formula 'freedom of capital, control of labour' (p184). This sounds plausible, with its echo of the old leftist formula 'free market, strong state'. However, as Davies and Neal more than adequately demonstrate, the European superstate is just as interested in tying up industry in red tape as it is the workforce. Their account of the environmentalist-driven and fear-provoking regulations is an insight into the current sources of state legitimation. Where Neal and Davies fail is that they do not understand that the pressure for regulation comes not from without, but from within industry. It is the employers' own failure of nerve that leads them to crave ever more state regulation. These regulations are not holding industry back, but providing a rationale for industry's own unwillingness to invest and develop. ●

JAMES HEARTFIELD



LM Special



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MICK HUME

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