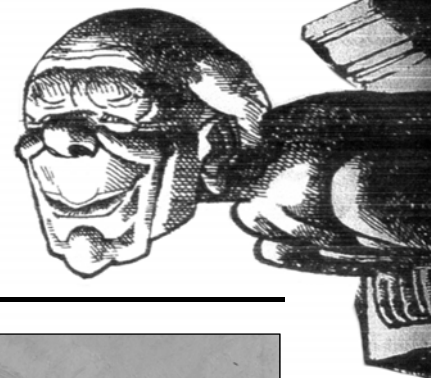


THE GARGOYLE

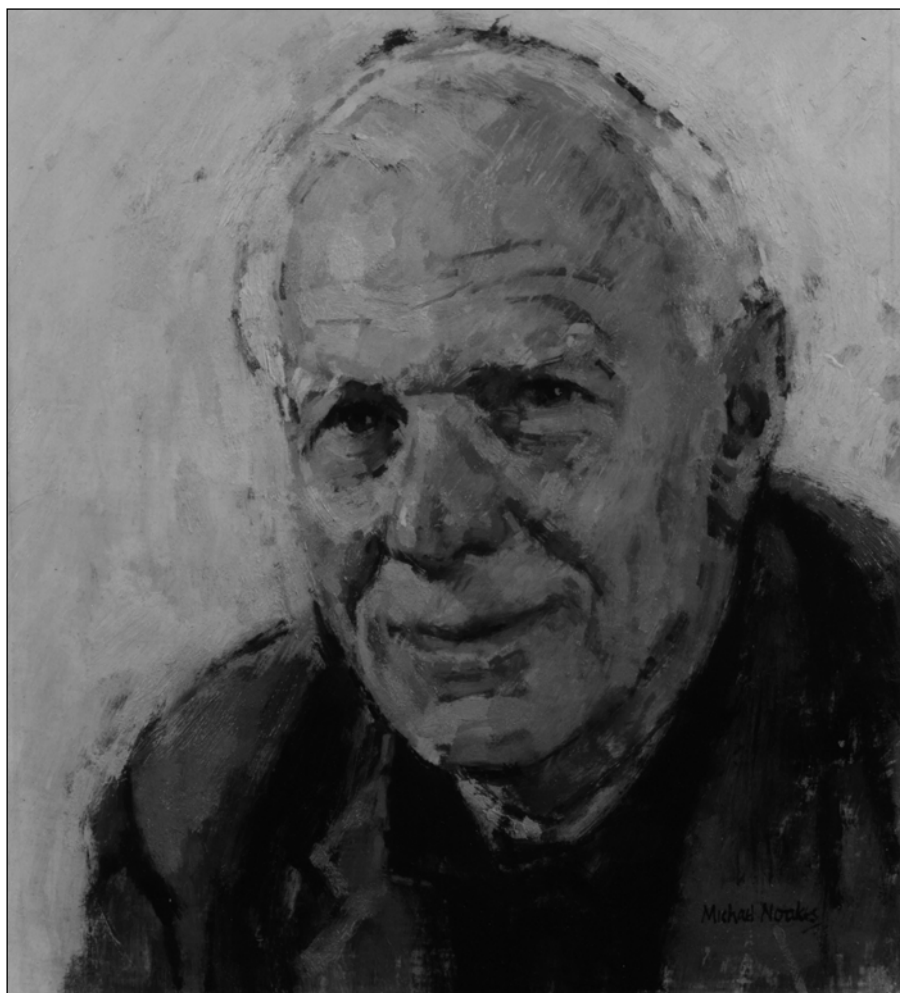
THE JOURNAL OF THE MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE SOCIETY
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“Clearly, the business of a humorous or satirical magazine must be to ridicule the age in which we live, and particularly those set in authority over us. It is the gargoyle grinning beneath the steeple; it is Thersites mocking at pomposity, pretentiousness, self-importance and all the other occupational diseases of the mighty in their seats.”

Malcolm Muggeridge
(Tread Softly for you Tread on my Jokes)



From a Portrait by Michael Noakes

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All with an interest in the work and the varied life of Malcolm Muggeridge are invited to join the Society. For membership details, see the Society's website:

www.malcolmmuggeridge.org

The Gargoyle is published quarterly and contributions from members are welcomed by the Editor on any aspect of Malcolm's diverse life.

The Malcolm Muggeridge Society, Pilgrim's Cottage, Pike Road,
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Letter from the President of the Society

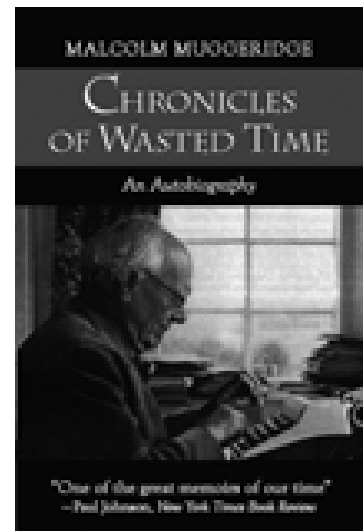
As the evenings progressively draw in, at least for those of us in the Northern hemisphere, here in Britain we can reflect on another particularly hot and dry summer, continuing even as I write. With the threat of an avian flu pandemic having apparently passed, global warming and climate change have taken over as the major issues for discussion and concern. I was particularly struck with the growing evidence of melting of glaciers and permafrost hitherto frozen solid for millennia, releasing trapped methane and thus further accelerating the atmospheric changes taking place. As always, I strive to think of Malcolm's likely approach to such controversial topics – with siren voice he always seemed to find an unexpected angle in considering man's apparent folly and disregard.



Over the past few months, the Society has been working closely with Regent College Publishing over the new publication of Muggeridge's **Chronicles of Wasted Time**. The book is now in print and I would express my particular thanks to our patron, Professor Ian Hunter, who so graciously agreed to contribute a foreword to this new edition. A close friend and biographer of Malcolm, there can be few better qualified than he to do so.

Completed thirty five years ago, **Volume 1: The Green Stick** and **Volume 2: The Infernal Grove** were a huge success for Muggeridge and received much critical acclaim. They went on to be published in many countries and several different editions were extant. Of course, the many fans of Muggeridge as well as his publisher eagerly awaited completion of **The Right Eye** covering the post war period.

Long out of print, for the first time **Chronicles of Wasted Time** is published as one combined book of three volumes, albeit that the third was alas never completed despite the meaningful start made. You can order this new extended edition of **Chronicles** online or through the Society – pricing details are on the back page. It would certainly make a wonderful Christmas present. Perhaps you could introduce a member of a younger generation to the joy of reading Muggeridge at his acknowledged best.



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Best wishes

Sally Muggeridge

President

The Malcolm Muggeridge Society

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Backward, Christian Soldiers!

by Malcolm Muggeridge (1965)

Some future historian, I suppose, will one day survey this curious time of ours with the ironic detachment of a Gibbon. He is to be envied. What a rare harvest awaits him! – always, of course, assuming that we do not, in obedience to the death wish which seems to possess us, destroy ourselves and all our records. Even if the records survive they will, in any case, be difficult to make out. Such a vast accumulation of lies and slanted information! Such contradictory conclusions and conflicting evidence! How will it ever be disentangled? A resident newspaper correspondent in Moscow was asked by a wide-eyed visiting leftist, when Stalin's purges were in full swing, how far the court proceedings were to be believed. Everything was true, he replied, except the facts. It might be our epitaph. Never have so many facts been accumulated; never have such ingenious and efficacious means of propagating them far and wide been devised, but only to weave a great web of deception. The Dark Ages were noontide compared with our light.

My future historian will certainly want to devote a chapter, if not a volume, to the Christian churches in the mid-twentieth century. Their performance is bound to strike him as hilarious. They were funny enough when with crazy gallantry they tried to defend the Book of Genesis against Darwin's *panzer*; they are even funnier now that, belatedly, they have decided to join the army of progress just when it is in total disarray, if not in headlong retreat. They are like a citadel which resists wave after wave of attack; whose garrison, besieged, starving, decimated, hold desperately on, only when the attackers themselves have lost heart and decided to abandon the struggle, to open the gates and sally forth bearing white flags. Contraceptives and copies of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* have been laid as propitiatory offerings on an expiring altar; the Red Sea opened, but the hosts of Israel, mistaking their direction, took the opportunity to return to Egypt and bondage.

Toward the end of the last century it would have seemed only too obvious that Christian institutions which bowed to the prevailing evolutionary current had the best chance of survival. Let them jettison their more ludicrous dogma and ceremonial, and take their place in the vanguard of progress – as it were, sell

out their Heavens for what they would fetch and buy in Earths on a rising market. Then they could be sure of finding themselves on the winning side. Where are they now? – those ethical churches, those pearly gates opening into the kingdom of heaven on earth, those hothouse blooms, nurtured by crossing the *Origin of Species* with *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, which made so fair a show in their day. All faltering and extinct. There is wind on the heath, brother, still, but it blows where it listeth, and is tainted with the stench of a charnel house.

As things have turned out, it is “enlightened” sects like the Unitarians which have withered on the vine, not “obscurantist” Roman Catholicism. The Little Bethels are closing down, but the Scarlet Woman, drunk with the blood of the Saints, has unaccountably thriven in the age of science and enlightenment. Shaw is today more dated than St. Paul, and poor old Wells turned his face to the wall and cried his eyes out in *Mind at the End of its Tether* just because the atom had been split, when he of all people should have offered thanks. One does not expect a Salvation Army band to throw away their instruments and turn tail and run on Judgement Day. Walt Whitman, Edward Carpenter, William Morris – how far, far away their voices sound, whereas the crowning of a Pope attracts almost as many viewers as a royal occasion, and even rates a Dimpleby commentary.

My historian's astonishment would be all the greater that the Roman Catholic Church itself, having witnessed the ruinous consequences to its Protestant rivals of compounding with contemporary trends, should now seem set upon following a like course. Just when the Reformation appears to be finally fizzing out, another, it seems, is incubating in Rome. Luther escapes from John Osborne's hands into – of all places – the Vatican. The church's profound pessimism about human life, miraculously preserved through the long false dawn of science, is about to be shed at the precise historical moment that it is most relevant and most urgently needed to save men's reason, if not their souls.

Pessimism has, indeed, been Christianity's great strength, and the reason for its survival. The concept of this world as a wilderness, and of human life as short and brutish,

fits the circumstances of most people most of the time. The contrary proposition – that earthly life can be satisfying within its own dimensions and on its own terms – leads to such mental strain and confusion as to be scarcely tenable, other than briefly and artificially. The kingdom of heaven in heaven may be a dubious proposition, but through the centuries it has appealed both to the sophisticates like St. Augustine and Pascal, and to the simple-hearted who, legitimately disappointed with their lives here on earth, pin their hopes in a future beatitude beyond the grave. To proclaim the kingdom of heaven on earth, on the other hand, is both deceptive and intrinsically absurd. The maintenance of such a notion requires mental gymnastics so extreme and so strenuous that they usually produce dementia.

If the kingdom of heaven on earth has dawned for us now, it is necessary to regard this age as exceptionally and increasingly humane, when in point of fact it has evidently been notable for slaughter, cruelty, and destruction on a scale rarely, if ever, exceeded in history. We have to offset the Health Service against Hitler's gas chambers, the Third Programme against the wanton destruction of many of the finest products of our civilisation like the city of Dresden, Parks of Culture and Rest against the monstrous annihilations of Stalin, Unesco against the millions of displaced persons (that blood-curdling term, itself an emanation of a lost mind reaching after a lost soul). We have to persuade ourselves that we are moving toward a condition of peace and enlightenment when, in fact, wealth and skills are being devoted on an inconceivable scale to making weapons capable of blowing us and our world to smithereens, such weapons being in the hands of tenth-rate demagogues like Lyndon Johnson and the hard-faced men, his opposite numbers, in the Kremlin who unaccountably succeed one another in power.

Above all, we have to persuade ourselves that we are happy. This is the most difficult and sanity-destroying operation of all. The psychiatric wards are full of patients guiltily conscious of having failed to be happy. The ever-increasing numbers of the mentally sick (20 million now, reportedly, in America, the happiest land) have cracked under the strain. Happiness in Scandinavia (another happy land, portrayed by Ingmar Bergman) often seems to fall out of the window, Hemingway's happiness was a bullet he fired into his brain. I gave my happiness an airing on the M1, and it collided with someone else's, splattering the tarmac with blood. I swallowed my

happiness in a little coloured pill, I read it in the *Reader's Digest*, I saw it on a glossy page. I even ejected it into my girl, but it gave her pain. So she had it cut out.

Deliverance from happiness would seem to be the greatest need of mankind today, and the Christian churches are an ideal instrument for bringing it about. The New and Old Testaments are full of the hopelessness of looking for anything but tribulation in this world, and the senses stand condemned as gross deceivers which enslave and ruin their addicts. We are to die in the flesh to be reborn in the spirit. One can carry so sublime a notion around with one like the picture of a loved face, taking it out from time to time to look at it with sick longing.

Yet, strangely enough, just at this moment when, of all others, such a message is desperately needed, the trend in the Christian churches is all the other way. One may, perhaps, leave out of account the Anglican Church, which has long been an object of derision. If it were to be disestablished it would be seen to have practically ceased to exist. Its lovely edifices are falling into decay; its superb Book of Common Prayer scarcely redeems its shambling services; its clergy are, for most part, forlorn and negligible. Words cannot convey the doctrinal confusion, ineptitude and sheer chicanery of the run-of-the-mill incumbent, with his Thirty-Nine Articles in which he does not even purport to believe, with his listless exhortations, mumbled prayers and half-baked confusion of the Christian faith with better housing, shorter hours of work, the United Nations and opposition to *apartheid*.

One may sympathise with the difficulties of comprehending within one body St. Paul, the former Dean of Canterbury and the present Bishop of Woolwich, as one looks in vain for any guiding light of reason, or even sanity, in equating the Pauline view of sex with D.H. Lawrence's. The outcome, in any case, is a shambles, amiable and well-meaning, perhaps, but playing virtually no part in the lives even of the few who continue to participate in Anglican worship.

That the Roman Catholic Church should now have embarked on the same road strikes a Protestant as more surprising. Through the years it has maintained its position, refusing to be stampeded by the claims and pretensions of an increasingly materialist world. The positions it has taken up have always seemed to be, within its own terms of reference, sound and logical enough.

Even on the highly controversial subject of birth control I find its attitude more convincing than the breast-beating among its opponents over the woes of excessive child bearing. Far deeper and more ignominious suffering, in my experience, comes of sterility. Moreover, my historian (returning to him for a moment) will surely note as a highly bizarre circumstance the fact that the strongest demand for birth control comes precisely when the possibilities in the way of food production are seen to be virtually illimitable, and when the whole universe is about to be opened up, providing space to accommodate a million, million times our present squalid little family.

The Roman Catholic Church is the one remaining, and far and away the strongest, bastion of Christendom. If it is now crumbling (as seems to be the case), and in the process of succumbing to the siren voices of material and fleshly well-being wafted across the Atlantic, then the game is finally up. The long tortuous path through history of this truly remarkable institution will have ended at last, and the story which began so strangely and momentarily in Palestine 2,000 years ago have finally lost its power to shape and animate our human destiny. Affluence broadening down from hire-purchase payment will not salvage it, nor the best of all possible birth-pills down the most amenable of all possible gullets, nor more and better education, nor even votes for

teenagers; none of the various panaceas which have or will be proffered. A light will have gone out which has illumined all our lives, shone through the art and literature of a long civilisation and served to hold at bay, if only fitfully and inadequately, the wild appetites to gorge and dominate which afflict all our hearts.

ENDS

*ED: This article was first published in the **New Statesman** in 1965 and subsequently appeared the following year in a collection of mildly satirical articles entitled **Tread Softly For You Tread On My Jokes**. In 1969 Simon & Schuster published practically the same content for the US as **The Most of Malcolm Muggeridge**.*

At the time, Malcolm was developing his increasing interest in writing on religious matters and starting to lean positively towards the Roman Catholic Church. In point of fact, one can reflect that the Roman Catholic Church was to retain a very conservative stance for the next forty years, perhaps remaining so to this day on the key issues. His fears were largely unfounded.

Mugg's Game

*from **The Pendulum Years: Britain and the 60's** by Bernard Levin*

The Sixties had a number of patron saints: Dionysus, Baal, Pelagius and Aphrodite according to one school of thought; Amos, Calvin, Savonarola and Joanna Southcott according to another. One group urged on their followers to live for themselves, for the moment; because the end of all things was at hand and only by doing so would they and the world, be saved. Their rivals also declared that the end of the world was nigh, or that it would be if people did not pull themselves together, but offered an altogether different, and far more rigorous, set of rules for conduct to meet the coming emergency. Both appeals were made without, strictly speaking, the permission of the impressive authorities cited, but one man combined the roles of the voice crying in the wilderness and the voice full of the most worldly relish.

He was Malcolm Muggeridge, who in some ways epitomised the riven nature of the decade, for as much as he was sinner when it started he was saint at its end, and although his formal canonisation was expected to be somewhat further delayed, many lived in the immediate expectation of his assumption into heaven as the Blessed Malcolm, while some claimed that the process had already started and swore they could see light under his boots.

On almost the last day of the previous decade Mr Muggeridge, appearing on an American television programme, had so conducted himself as to be charged by Han Suyin with the worst sin possible between the sexes: her accusation was 'of trying to brainwash us into thinking that our greatest aim in life is to be sexually attractive to men'. That was in the dying hours of the Fifties,

but as late as March 1963 Mr Muggeridge was being denounced in Britain as a mocker of religion, the scorner of sacred things, the destroyer of all that was pure and holy. 'Is this Mr Muggeridge,' asked one such critic, 'who has never disguised his attitude to religion, the explanation of why the BBC has so often flown in the face of Christianity and the Churches recently?'

Such charges may have been justified, at any rate in the most general terms (for nobody could believe that the BBC had abandoned its Christian stance on the mere say-so of Mr Muggeridge, however forcefully he might have demanded that it should); but long before the decade was half over Mr Muggeridge had experienced a conversion and put aside worldly things, and has spent his time since then urging others to do likewise, including many who had no worldly things to put aside.

St Mugg has declared that he experienced no dramatic Damascus-road revelation, that his new outlook on life had come upon him gradually; there is no reason to disbelieve him. But the cause of it, whether sudden or drawn out, and whether or not he recognised it, and whether or not he would admit it if he did, was the distaste he developed for the things of the flesh. This distaste, the growing power of which over him can be charted from his utterances on the subject, grew into a disgust, thence to a loathing, thence to an obsession, which eventually brought him to an edge of a cliff on the other side of which were only those poor folk who throughout history have scourged and mutilated themselves for the sins of their fathers. Mr Muggeridge, who had once been described as 'a religious maniac in search of a religion', had clearly found it in a creed which started with the extirpation of sex, from which all else followed. 'After sixty', he said, 'a man must decide either to curb his appetites or surrender to them. I have conquered mine.' Sex, and its handmaid, affluence, were now to be the cause of every evil, the worm in every wood, the cancer rotting beneath the apparently healthy flesh of every body. Sex leered at him from advertisement hoardings, from the television screen, from books and newspapers and magazines. In the streets he



was not free of it; assuredly, his dreams did not let him forget its hideous existence; the very air whispered its loathsome message in his protesting ears. 'Sex', he said, in a dreadful unconscious revelation, 'has come to be funny, and as I get older it seems to be funnier and funnier.'

The material comforts of life, which he came to regard as interchangeable with sex and every bit as objectionable (though he was not so eager to give these up), he denounced no less. The colour supplements of the Sunday newspapers excited his particular wrath, and to keep his thesis intact he affected to believe the whole country, from Warrington to Dover and from Mousehole to Whitby, lived in a haze of Drambuie, After Eight chocolates, Kosset carpets, Jaguar motor-cars, Swedish glass, Viyella blankets, Lanvin perfume and king-size cigarettes.

Nor was help anywhere to be found, at any rate in the traditional quarters. The Church had long since ceased to offer salvation. 'Words', St Mugg wrote, 'cannot convey the doctrinal confusion, ineptitude and sheer chicanery of the run-of-the-mill incumbent, with his Thirty-Nine Articles in which he does not even purport to believe, with his listless exhortations, mumbled prayers and half-baked confusion of the Christian faith with better housing, shorter hours of work and the United Nations.' As for progress, it was not only an illusion but a devil's snare: 'The world has come to a full stop in its efforts to achieve Utopia,' he keened, adding: 'The joke is that man has created an utterly diabolical situation and then called it perfection.'

Sometimes it seemed as though nothing would ever please Mr Muggeridge again. He was, however, destined to receive from Heaven one precious gift, surely brought by an angel especially for him, and it is to be hoped, duly acknowledged in his nightly prayers. At Emley Moor, in Yorkshire, the mast from which was transmitted the electrical impulses that became pictures on television screens tuned to commercial television throughout the area suddenly fell down, and at one blow rendered dark the television sets of four million people, and joyless in their lives. This would in itself have been enough to cause Mr Muggeridge to fall upon his knees and praise God by measure, for he had long been of the opinion,

and repeatedly declared, that television was a sin, a disgrace, an evil and a national disaster, and he was heard, it is said, to emit heartbroken sighs as he pocketed the substantial fees he was very properly paid whenever he appeared on it, which he did frequently. But there was more satisfaction still for Mr Muggeridge in the fall of the television mast, for it fell squarely athwart a Methodist chapel and smashed it to fragments, two men in the building at the time only narrowly escaping death or injury by diving beneath a pew.

O perfect symbolism! O awful warning! O if the things which were done in thee had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would long since have repented in sackcloth and in ashes! For too long, Mr Muggeridge had argued, the Churches had gone a-whoring after strange gods, gods which flickered and squeaked in darkened rooms, and which were propitiated with burnt offerings consisting of pre-frozen television dinners served on special trays that clamped to the arm of a chair, so that the eater need not cease for a moment to be a viewer also. Clergymen, as well as Mr Muggeridge, had appeared on those screens, some trying to appear bonhomie and ordinary, some speaking of anything except religion and reacting with embarrassment, if not active distaste, whenever any of the lay performers raised the subject, some anxiously inquiring of those who would in an earlier day have looked to them for guidance what they might do to be saved. Now they were punished for their heresy, now they would suffer for their idolatry. From the sky the idol had been flung upon the temple, and those within had been hard put to it to get quickly enough beneath a pew. The casting out of modernism with Beelzebub could not be ignored, the great darkness that had come upon four million people, so that some thought themselves, when it happened, struck blind, must not be forgotten. Mr Muggeridge, it seemed for a moment, was right; those who live by the media will perish by the media, and men looked anxiously upwards in case a bale of colour supplements should be hurling downwards from a passing aeroplane.

But not all churches were falling; one at least was rising, and it is strange that Mr Muggeridge has still not been observed trying to fit this into his scheme of things, the more so since it was an extraordinary attempt to go against the grain of the trees. This was the building of Coventry Cathedral. Had the building of the new cathedral, to replace the one destroyed by bombing in 1940 been delayed by another ten years, it seems hardly

possible that it would have taken anything like the shape which Basil Spence gave it, and even more unlikely that it would have been built at all, since it came at what must have been the very last moment at which affirmation of faith could be made, with general acceptance, in such a form. Coventry Cathedral therefore seems to be the last building of its kind to be built on such a scale in Britain, and to stand for future ages like a boundary-stone that marks the divide between one age and another. If, that is, it stands at all, for ever since the building was completed there have been rumours that the ground on which it is built suffers from subsidence, and that long before it has lasted as long as either of its predecessors (five hundred years in each case, the first being destroyed by Henry VIII and the second by Hitler) it will have collapsed more or less gracefully into a hole in the ground, though whether this catastrophe, if it happens, will be taken as a dreadful symbol of the collapse of the Anglican Church is another matter. Certainly if Mr Muggeridge is still about it will be.

Lenin and the Jesuits are both said to have believed, in the days of their greatest power, that if they were only enabled to teach the children their doctrines they would have believers for ever. (Both, to judge by what has happened since to the institutions they founded, were wrong.) St Mugg certainly seemed to share their view, but held it upside-down, for he came in the Sixties to regard education, particularly higher education, as the royal road to hell, and scarcely to be distinguished, in its vileness, from sex. Elected by the students of Edinburgh University as their rector, he took the opportunity of his rectorial address to denounce education in general, and the things he believed it led to in particular.

There is no doubt that we shall go on raising the school age, multiplying and enlarging our universities, increasing public expenditure on education until juvenile delinquency, beatniks and drug-addicts and general intimations of illiteracy multiply so alarmingly that, at last, the whole process is called into question.

In the same sort of way, the so-called 'permissive' morality of our time will, I am sure, reach its apogee. When birth pills are handed out with free orange juice, and consenting adults wear special ties and blazers, and abortion and divorce – those two contemporary panaceas for all matrimonial ills – are freely available on the public health, then at last, with the suicide rate up to

Scandinavian proportions and the psychiatric wards bursting at the seams, it will be realised that this path, even from the shallow point of view of the pursuit of happiness, is a disastrous cul-de-sac.

The curtain, indeed, is falling if it has not already fallen on all the Utopian hopes which have prevailed so strongly for a century or more. I personally rejoice that it should be so because I know that then, looking desperately into the mystery of things, we shall once again understand that fulfilment must be sought through the spirit, not the body or the mind, and will be realised, if at all, elsewhere than in this world of time and space.'

Not long after his installation as rector at Edinburgh, the council of the student body decided to ask that contraceptive pills should be available from the university's health centre. This request, which took account of the fact that many undergraduates did in fact go to bed together, whether Mr Muggeridge would or no, and preferred advertising this fact to increasing the numbers of unwanted pregnancies that resulted from the surprisingly high level of ignorance and inhibition about such matters in the young, Mr Muggeridge deplored. He after all, had summed up his view of the matter with the words: 'Human love only shines in all its splendour when the last tiny glimmer of desire has been extinguished' – and did not see why those in whom that last tiny glimmer had *not* been extinguished should follow the road he had at last forsaken.

He therefore took the opportunity to resign from the post of rector, announcing his decision from the pulpit of St. Giles Cathedral, the High Kirk of Edinburgh. The core of his sermon was as follows:

The students in this university are the ultimate beneficiaries in our welfare system. They are supposed to be the spearhead of progress, flattered and paid for by their admiring seniors, an elite who will happily and audaciously carry the torch of progress into a glorious future opening before them.

There is practically nothing they can do, in a mood of rebelliousness or refusal to accept the ways and values of our run-down, spiritually impoverished way of life, for which I should not feel some degree of sympathy or at least understanding, up to and including blowing up this magnificent edifice in which we now sit.

How sad, how macabre and funny it is

that all they put forward should be a demand for pot and pills. It is the most tenth-rate form of indulgence ever known. It is the resort of any old slobbering debauchee anywhere in the world at any time – 'dope and bed'. The feeling raised in me is not so much disapproval as contempt. This, as you may imagine, makes it difficult, indeed impossible, for me as rector to fulfil my function.

In fairness to the students, it should be pointed out that at no time had they put forward any demand for 'pot'; the belief that they had stemmed from the alarming fantasies which welled up from Mr Muggeridge's by now deeply disturbed psyche. But he left the post and the pulpit simultaneously, and left the rectorship neatly booby-trapped by saying that the ensuing election to fill his vacated post 'would show what calibre of candidate would come forward who would accept these views of the Students' Representative Council, and would also show what were the opinions of most of the students'.

From then on St Mugg became a well-known 'turn', much in demand from organisations that wanted a neatly packaged denunciation of other people's immorality. He denounced the practice of heart transplants, he visited Westminster Abbey and, finding it a-clatter with transient visitors, declared: 'If I were dean I would bar tourists' ('But I *am* dean,' said the dean, and continued to allow them in) and wrote the epitaph on his own decline in these scarcely credible words:

My greatest, indeed, as I grow older, my only earthly dread is that our present way of life should prove viable. I find in the bomb a welcome assurance that such fears are groundless ...If there had been no cliff the Gadarine Swine would have had nowhere to hurl themselves. The bomb constitutes a cliff, and we should be duly grateful for it.

How sad was that decline, how sad that one of the bravest and most astringent minds of the time should now cower so cravenly in a corner, begging the world to stop trying to inflame his withered desires, lest the attempt should prove successful! Yet the realisation of what lay at the bottom of his revulsion from the world and all that therein dwelt did not diminish, for those who admired him, the sadness at the spectacle of Mr Muggeridge, without even realising it, basing his entire new-found philosophy on the vain plea of Sir Thomas Browne in 1642:

I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the World without this trivial and vulgar way of Coition; it is the foolishness a wise man commits in all his life; nor is there any thing that will more deject his cool'd imagination, when he shall consider what an odd unworthy piece of folly he hath committed.

In the Sixties, Malcolm Muggeridge's imagination was cool'd indeed. And yet, Mr Muggeridge was not, even at his most extreme, speaking in a moral vacuum, nor was he addressing himself to matters in which other men professed no interest. On the contrary he was involved in one of the most important debates of the entire decade, and one which stressed yet again its two-headed nature, standing at the crossroads which lay at the heart of the territory the Sixties had to traverse.

ENDS

Bernard Levin CBE (1928 - 2004) was an English journalist, author and broadcaster in the generation following that of Muggeridge.

In 1955 Levin was offered a column in The Manchester Guardian and he wrote for

The Spectator from 1956 until 1962. He later wrote for The Daily Mail, and The Daily Express. His longest standing appointment was his column for The Times from 1971 to 1997. Levin was also a familiar face on television, appearing regularly on television, including the series Face The Music and That Was The Week That Was, in which Muggeridge also occasionally participated. In the latter Levin interviewed prominent politicians and influential thinkers of the day, usually with a lack of reverence which was the programme's hallmark. Renowned for his acerbic wit, he was awarded his CBE for services to journalism in 1990.

Levin began to have difficulty with his balance as early as 1988, although his Alzheimer's Disease was not diagnosed until the early 1990s. He died in August 2004.

The Pendulum Years: Britain in the Sixties, 1970 (2003 reprint, Icon Books ISBN 1840464186. Reprinted with the kind permission of Icon books)

G.K. Chesterton and Malcolm Muggeridge

by Gord Wilson

In June 2006 I had the great good fortune to attend the 25th annual conference of the American Chesterton Society in St. Paul, Minnesota USA. Chief among the pleasures was a talk by Adam Schwartz, author of *The Third Spring: G K Chesterton, Graham Green, Christopher Dawson and David Jones on "Chesterton and Muggeridge as Social Critics"*. The similarities between the two had previously seemed to me rather accidental: both British, both journalists, both eleventh hour Catholic converts—Chesterton in 1922, Mugg sixty years later in 1982. But Schwartz's line of inquiry proved exceptionally fruitful.

In his autobiography published months before his death in 1936, Chesterton wrote, "I have a notion that the real advice I could give a young journalist is simply this: to write an article for the *Sporting Times* and another for the *Church Times* and put them into the wrong envelopes."(p.179, Ignatius). If anyone ever followed that advice it was Muggeridge, who increasingly refused to separate life into the watertight boxes of "secular" and "religious", exalting the estate of the lowly in the public eye while journalistically casting down the mighty and sending them empty away. No doubt he would be amused at the fearful symmetry of these echoes from a similar firebrand some 60 years before.

Schwartz notes that Chesterton was early on a Socialist because of his “disquiet with the acquisitive society” and his inability to reconcile the contradiction of Capitalism: that public virtue arises from private vice. For G.K., Capitalism was not simply an economic theory but a social force which meant “the dispossession of the populace from all forms of real productive property; all instruments of production in the hands of the few; all the millions merely the servants of the few, working for a wage, always an insecure wage, generally a mean and inhuman wage.” (“The Last Turn” in *The Well and the Shadows*, *Collected Works* Vol. III, Ignatius). To many readers, that may sound like a description of Socialism; it did to Chesterton too, and he later championed a third alternative called Distributism, the goal of which was to “redistribute wealth rather than income”.



Schwartz points out that G.K. saw eugenics as a tool of Capitalist social control. It meant “the new tool of science as a weapon for the old tyranny of money”. “If you can make the family small,” Chesterton wrote, “no need to make the income large”. Eugenics cast social life as a struggle determined by heredity, whereas for G.K., heredity was a neutral fact. Capitalism was built on keeping workers dependent, whereas Distributism sought to “re-establish the family free from the commercial epoch”.

Then Schwartz moved on to Muggers. Malcolm, he said, saw “greed as the mainspring of Western civilization, and the modern west as beset by a death wish in which the pursuit of happiness became the pursuit of pleasure. Consumerism was anthropocentric idolatry with “food, beauty, drugs and gas as the four pillars of modern society”. You couldn’t have Capitalism without usury, and the result was not a consuming but a dispensing society. Muggeridge was impressed by the 1968 Papal Encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, which laid out two opposing views: the sanctity of life and the quality of life, and Muggers resoundingly chose the former. He was converted by Mother Teresa, who for him embodied that choice. “Welfare is for a purpose,” he loved to repeat, “but love is for a person”. “Worldly despair,” he came to believe, “could only be solved by otherworldly hope”.

While I cannot hope to emulate Schwartz’s engaging and illuminating style, let me nonetheless apply his method. These salient facts illustrate what might be called the light side of the two authors as social critics. Let me consider the dark side, as it were, of their public reputations. Both authors were accused of anti-Semitism. Muggeridge once quipped that Chesterton “made anti-Semitism fashionable”. Chesterton writes this in his autobiography: “Oddly enough, I have lived to have later on the name of an Anti-Semite, whereas from my first days at school I had largely the name of a Pro-Semite”. He refers to the fact that both at school and in later life some of his best friends were Jewish. Later he continues, “Our group (G.K., his brother Cecil and Hilaire Belloc) which was accused of fanatical anti-Semitism...was always more ready to excuse Jews than Gentiles.”

Anti-Semitism was rife in Chesterton’s time, largely because of a widely-circulated forged document, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, *The Da Vinci Code* of its day, which accused Jews of a worldwide conspiracy. In his novels G.K.’s targets were more often Protestant industrialists, most of them modeled on Henry Ford, who actually *was* anti-Semitic and used his fortune to print anti-Jewish tracts - later reprinted by the Third Reich. In columns in G.K.’s *Weekly*, Chesterton became a relentless foe of the rising Reich, prophetically warning Britain to oppose the Nazis. So how did he get tagged “anti-Semitic”?

In 1935 he wrote in *The Backward Bolshie* “the Jews are now being jumped on very unjustly in Germany itself and old Victorians like Mr. Belloc and myself who began in the days of Jewish omnipotence by attacking the Jews, will now probably die defending them.” In the late Victorian era, he says, these Capitalists were “imperial and immune”. In his view this forced the Egyptian War of 1882 and the Boer War (1899-1902). But responsibility for the Great War (World War I) lay not with the Jews but the Quakers. Chesterton’s reasoning went like this: a disproportionately large number of Quakers were millionaires. While Parliament didn’t care about Quaker votes, it did care about Quaker money. Since Quakers were pacifists, Parliament would

not announce to Prussia (Germany) that should the Kaiser invade France, Britain would certainly aid the French. G.K. felt that such an announced alliance between the British and French would have proved an effective deterrent to keep the Germans from attacking.

For his part, Muggeridge was convinced of the fraudulence of all power, and continually contrasted it with love. While he championed independence for India, in his autobiography he expressed his disappointment of seeing “white bully boys replaced by brown bully boys”, race not altering his distaste for bullies. As many in Chesterton’s time championed eugenics, so many in Mugg’s time promoted a philosophy of racialism. Both philosophies were racially-motivated and the result was largely the same. Margaret Sanger started Planned Parenthood to limit the number of “undesirable blacks, Jews and Irish Catholics”, and later traveled to Germany to give her stamp of approval to their eugenics program (see: *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* by Benjamin Wiker). Muggers merely noted that the Empire on which the sun never set was becoming one on which it never rises.

Chesterton began to see less and less difference between Capitalist Imperialism and Socialist Internationalism, both big and getting bigger. He was an early proponent of “small is beautiful” and exulted in limits, nations and borders. Neither could Muggeridge, having witnessed at first hand the forced famine of Soviet collectivization, strike the optimistic note and sing the “Internationale”. But Muggeridge did not, as

he was later accused, “cop out with religion”. Instead he became a prophetic and omnipresent voice warning against what he saw as the Gadarene stampede of modernity. He was so insistent and vibrant, and his mordant wit so attractive to common people, that even his critics had to rise to the occasion, one wittily calling him “the skeleton in all of our closets who simply will not stop clattering”.

Chesterton spent his last days fighting the rising tide of eugenics and the cult of what Nietzsche and Bernard Shaw called the superman, which would culminate in the Nazi obsession with Aryan Man as a master race. Muggeridge inherited that fight and I think would agree with these lines from G.K.’s autobiography: “The Shavians (followers of Shaw) believe in evolution exactly as the old Imperialists believed in expansion. They believe in a great growing and groping thing like a tree; but I believe in the flower and the fruit; and the flower is often small. The fruit is final and in that sense finite; it has a form and therefore a limit...And as applied to man, it means this; that man has been made more sacred than any superman or super-monkey; that his very limitations have already become holy and like a home; because of that sunken chamber in the rocks where God became very small.” (Autobiography, p. 220).

ENDS

Cartoon: GK Chesterton. For more notes on the Chesterton Society conference see www.alivingdog.com

The Humane Holocaust

by Malcolm Muggeridge

One of the most curious encounters I ever had in a television studio was participating in a BBC programme set up when the South African surgeon, Dr. Christiaan Barnard, had just carried out his first heart-transplant operation in the Groote Schuur Hospital in Pretoria. The program was billed as “*Dr. Barnard Faces His Critics*,” which, as I well knew, was BBC-ese for “*Dr. Barnard Faces His Adulators*,” as, indeed, proved to be the case. One of the great contributions of television to preparing the way for the collectivist-authoritarian way of life towards which all western countries

are, in their different ways, sleep-walking, is its capacity to present consensus in terms of ostensible controversy.

The studio was packed with medical practitioners of one sort and another, including distinguished figures like Lord Platt, all of whom were in a state of euphoria about Dr. Barnard’s achievement. As befitting such an occasion, the Church was represented, in the person of the appropriately named Dr. Slack, who on its behalf gave full approval, not just to the particular transplant operation that was being celebrated, but to transplants in general as and when required,

whatever the organ concerned. In the event, I found myself pretty well the lone representative of the critics Dr. Barnard had been billed as meeting.

When the time came for me to put a question, one shaped itself insistently in my mind. Was Dr. Barnard, I asked him, the first surgeon to chance his arm with a heart-transplant operation, whereas elsewhere there were still qualms and hesitations, because in South Africa the doctrine of apartheid had devalued human flesh, reducing it from something God had deigned to put on, to a mere carcass?

The question, when I put it, was extremely ill-received. Some of the doctors present went so far as to manifest their displeasure by hissing, while Lord Platt rose to apologize to Dr. Barnard, pointing out that I represented no one but myself, and that he, and he was sure all the others in the studio, would wish to dissociate themselves from my insulting question. Dr. Barnard himself, I should imagine deliberately, misunderstood what I had asked, assuming that what troubled me was a fear lest he had transplanted a black African's heart in a white African's body. In fact, the donor was a white girl.

As Dr. Barnard made no serious effort to answer my question, I persisted, to the further displeasure of the doctors, pointing out that his and their attitude showed little sense of the sanctity of life, which, in the Hippocratic oath they had all presumably taken, they had sworn to respect. As a Christian, I said, I worshipped a God who, according to the New Testament, could not see a sparrow fall to the ground without concern, and quoted Blake's beautiful couplet in the same sense:

*A Robin Redbreast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage.*

This caused a titter of amusement, and I lapsed into silence. It is the usual practice after such programs for all the participants to make for the hospitality room, there to continue the discussion over a drink. For once, I just made off, having no taste for any further contact with Lord Platt, Dr. Slack and the others. It was comforting subsequently to receive a letter from a doctor who had once worked at Groote Schuur Hospital but had left, he explained, because he found the attitude there to surgery to be more veterinary than medical.

Dr. Barnard's own attitude to his surgery is well conveyed in his autobiography, *One Life*. His account of his first post-mortem is almost lascivious; as are his first essays with animals, whose snug little abattoir, he tells us, "smelt of guinea pigs, rabbits and hundreds of mice. Yet it was like heaven, and even today those odours excite me with memories of our first days, so filled with hope and dreams." One of his dreams was to "take a baboon and cool him down, wash out his blood with water, then fill him up with human blood"; another, to graft a second head on a dog, as has allegedly - though I don't believe it - been done in the USSR.

All this was but a prelude to the great moment when the two hearts - the donor's lively one and the recipient's failing one - were ready, and all was set for the first heart-transplant operation. "This isn't a dog," Dr. Barnard reflected exultantly. "*It's a man!*" and then a doubt seized him; was he, after all, entitled to experiment with a human being? His hesitation lasted only for a few seconds, though; the excitement of the occasion, with, as it seemed, the whole world looking on, restored his confidence, and he got to work with his knife.

As it happened, there was one other moment of, if not doubt, then wonderment. The donor, Denise Darvall, was in a respirator; it would be necessary to stop the respirator, and take her heart, which was still beating. Another doctor, de Klerk, was participating in the operation; he wanted Denise's kidneys, but Dr. Barnard made it quite clear what were the priorities. His instructions were to "cut for the heart and let de Klerk worry about his kidneys afterwards." In the event, having stopped the respirator, they waited for the heart to stop beating before transferring it to the recipient, Washkansky. "What intermingling of mythology and ritual," Dr. Barnard asks himself, "prevented us from touching a heart in a body which had been declared clinically dead?" and, like Pontius Pilate on another dramatic occasion, does not wait for an answer.

Washkansky received Denise's heart and, presumably, de Klerk her kidneys. The heart worked, and the patient, in a manner of speaking, lived. Congratulatory messages came pouring in; the television camera rolled - exclusive TV rights had been disposed of, resulting in unseemly scenes in the hospital. Washkansky, but not Denise, was brought into the act; the arc lights shown on him, a meeting with his loving relatives was set up, and he succeeded in uttering a few

cheerful words into a specially sterilized microphone. At the end of eighteen days, he thankfully expired. "They're killing me," he managed to get out before he died. "I can't sleep, I can't eat, I can't do anything. They're at me all the time with pins and needles ... All day and all night. It's driving me crazy."

Washkansky's successor, Dr. Philip Bleiberg, a dentist, managed to survive for two years, though his private account of how he fared roughly coincided with his predecessor's. In the published version - these rights, too, had been disposed of - he was obliged to put on a brave face, and only three weeks after he had received his new heart, he was able to tell an expectant world that he had succeeded in having sexual intercourse. It was the twentieth century certification of being fully alive: *copulo ergo sum*. Behind the mania about the transplant operations, lies the mad hope that in due course genital transplants may become possible - new ballocks in old crotches - so that sated lechers can begin all over again.

The Barnard experience stayed in my mind, and as I thought about it, I realized that it amounted to a sort of parable illustrating a basic dilemma of our time, as between the sanctity of life as conceived through the Christian centuries, and the quality of life as conceived in a materialistic society. Those doctors in the BBC studio rejoicing in the new possibilities in surgery that Dr. Bernard seemed to have opened up, saw human beings as bodies merely, and so capable of constant improvement, until at last perfection was achieved.

No more sick or misshapen bodies, no more disturbed or twisted minds, no more hereditary idiots or mongoloid children. Babies not up to scratch would be destroyed, before or after birth, as would also the old beyond repair. With the developing skills of modern medicine, the human race could be pruned and carefully tended until only the perfect blooms - the beauty queens, the mensas I.Q.'s, the athletes - remained. Then at last, with rigid population control to prevent the good work being ruined by excessive numbers, affliction would be ended, and maybe death itself abolished, and men become, not just like gods, but in their perfect mortality, very God.

Against this vision of life without tears in a fleshly paradise, stands the Christian vision of mankind as a family whose loving father is God. Here, the symbol is not the perfected body, the

pruned vine, the weeded garden, but a stricken body nailed to a cross, signifying affliction, not as the enemy of life, but as its greatest enhancement and teacher. In an army preparing for battle the unfit are indeed discarded, but in a Christian family the handicapped are particularly cherished, and give special joy to those who cherish them.

Which vision are we for? On the one hand, as the pattern of our collective existence, the broiler house or factory-farm, in which the concern is solely for the physical well-being of the livestock and the financial well-being of the enterprise; on the other, mankind as a family, all of whose members, whatever physical or mental qualities or deficiencies they may have, are equally deserving of consideration in the eyes of their creator, and whose existence has validity, not just in itself, nor just in relation to history, but in relation to a destiny reaching beyond time and into eternity. Or, in simple terms, on the one hand, the quality of life; on the other, the sanctity of life.

The sanctity of life is, of course, a religious or transcendental concept, and has no meaning otherwise; if there is no God, life cannot have sanctity. By the same token, the quality of life is an earthly or worldly concept, and can only be expressed legalistically, and in materialistic terms; the soul does not come into it. Thus a child conceived in conditions of penury, or with a poor heredity, or against its mother's wishes, or otherwise potentially handicapped, may be considered as lacking the requisite quality of life prospects, and so should not be born. Equally, it follows, at the other end of our life span, that geriatrics unable any longer to appreciate what this world has to offer in the way of aesthetic, carnal and egotistic satisfaction, in other words, by virtue of their years losing out on quality of life, should be subjected to euthanasia or mercy-killing, and discreetly murdered.

On this basis, for instance, Beethoven would scarcely have been allowed to be born; his heredity and family circumstances were atrocious, a case history of syphilis, deafness and insanity. Today, his mother's pregnancy would be considered irresponsible, and as requiring to be terminated. Dr. Johnson, when he was born, was scrofulous, and already showed signs of the nervous disorders which plagued him all his life. He, too, under present conditions, would probably not have been allowed to survive. Indeed, a good number of the more notable contributors to the sanctity of life, like Dr. Johnson, would have failed to make the grade on qualify of life, the

supreme example being the founder of the Christian religion. Imagine a young girl, unmarried and pregnant, who insists that the Holy Ghost is responsible for her pregnancy, and that its outcome, according to a vision she has been vouchsafed, would be the birth of a long-awaited Messiah. Not much quality of life potential there, I fancy, and it wouldn't take the pregnancy and family-planning pundits long to decide that our Saviour, while still at the foetus stage, should be thrown away with the hospital waste.

These are hypothetical cases; near at hand, we have been accorded, for those that have eyes to see, an object lesson in what the quest for quality without reference to sanctity of life, can involve. Ironically enough, this has been provided by none other than the great Nazi holocaust, whose TV presentation has lately been harrowing viewers throughout the Western world. In this televised version, an essential consideration has been left out - namely, that the origins of the holocaust lay, not in Nazi terrorism and anti-semitism, but in pre-Nazi Weimar Germany's acceptance of euthanasia and mercy-killing as humane and estimable. And by one of those sick jokes which haunt our human story, just when the penitential holocaust was being shown on American, and then on German and other Western European TV screens, a humane holocaust was getting under way, this time in the countries that had defeated Hitler's Third Reich, and, at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, condemned as a war crime the very propositions and practices with which the Nazi holocaust had originated, and on which the humane one was likewise based.

No one could have put the matter more cogently and authoritatively than has Dr. Leo Alexander, who worked with the Chief American Counsel at the Nuremberg Tribunal:

Whatever proportion these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in the basic attitudes of the physicians. It started with the acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived. This attitude in its early stages concerned itself merely with the severely and chronically sick. Gradually, the sphere of those to be included in this category was enlarged to encompass the socially unproductive, the ideologically unwanted, the racially unwanted, and finally all non-

Germans. *But it is important to realize that the infinitely small wedged-in lever from which the entire trend of mind received its impetus was the attitude towards the non-rehabilitable sick* [my italics].

Surely some future Gibbon surveying our times will note sardonically that it took no more than three decades to transfer a war crime into an act of compassion, thereby enabling the victors in the way against Nazi-ism to adopt the very practices for which the Nazis had been solemnly condemned at Nuremberg. Then they could mount their own humane holocaust, which in its range and in the number of its victims may soon far surpass the Nazi one. Nor need we marvel that, whereas the Nazi holocaust received lavish TV and film coverage, the humane one just goes rolling along, largely unnoticed by the media.

It all began in the early twenties, in the decadent years in the post 1914-18 war Germany which has been so glorified by writers like Christopher Isherwood, but which, as I remember them at first hand, were full of sinister portent for the future. All the most horrible and disgusting aspects of the decades of the twentieth century - the pornography, the sadism, the violence, the moral and spiritual vacuum - were already in evidence there.

In this sick environment, the notion of mercy-killing was put forward in 1920 in a book entitled *The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value* by Alfred Hoche, a reputable psychiatrist, and Karl Binding, a jurist. The authors advocated killing off "absolutely worthless human beings," pointing out that the money spent on keeping them alive thus saved could be used to better purpose - for instance, on helping a young married couple to set up house. Frederick Wertham, in his scholarly and deeply disturbing book, *A Sign for Cain*, says that the Hocke-Binding book influenced, or at least crystallized, the thinking of a whole generation.

From these beginnings, a programme of mercy-killing developed which was initiated, directed and supported by doctors and psychiatrists, some of them of considerable eminence - all this when the Nazi movement was still at an embryonic stage, and Hitler had barely been heard of. Initially, the holocaust was aimed, not against Jews or Slavs, but against handicapped Aryan Germans, and was justified, not by racial theories, but by Hegelian utilitarianism, whereby what is useful is *per se* good, without any

consideration being given to Judeo-Christian values, or, indeed to any concept whatsoever of Good and Evil. Subsequently, of course, the number of the killed rose to astronomical figures, and the medical basis for their slaughter grew ever flimsier; but it should never be forgotten that it was the euthanasia program first organized under the Weimar Republic by the medical profession, which led to and merged into the genocide program of 1941-45. "Technical experience gained first with killing psychiatric patients," Wertham writes, "was utilized later for the destruction of millions. The psychiatric murders came first."

Can this sort of thing happen in countries like Canada and England and the United States? In my opinion, yes; in fact, it is already happening. Abortion on demand has come to be part of our way of life; in the world as a whole there are estimated to have been last year something in the neighbourhood of fifty million abortions - an appalling figure, which, however, with media help, did not loom very large, or throw any kind of shadow over 1979 as the Year of the Child. To quieten any qualms Christians might have about it, an Anglican bishop has devised an appropriate prayer for use on the occasion of an abortion which received the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It runs, "Into Thy hands we commit in trust the developing life we have cut short," though whether with the idea of God's continuing the interrupted development elsewhere, or of extinguishing in Heaven the life that was never born on earth, is not clear. In the case of euthanasia, a hymn may seem more in keeping with the occasion - "The life Thou gavest, Lord, we've ended. ..."

Euthanasia, it is true, has not yet been legalized except in some American states, but notoriously it is being practiced on an ever-increasing scale. Already among old people there is reluctance to go into government institutions for fear of being done away with. As for governments - hard-pressed financially as they all now are, and unable to economize on defence expenditure for fear of laying themselves open to the charge of jeopardizing national security, or on welfare expenditure for fear of losing votes - will they not look ever more longingly at the possibility of making substantial savings by the simple expedient of mercy-killing off the inmates of institutes for the incurably sick, the senile old, the mentally deranged and other such? With abortions and family-planning ensuring a zero population growth rate, and euthanasia disposing of useless

mouths among the debilitated old, besides mopping up intervening freaks, the pursuit of happiness should be assured of at any rate financial viability.

In Christian terms, of course, all this is quite indefensible. Our Lord healed the sick, raised Lazarus from the dead, gave back sanity to the deranged, but never did He practice or envisage killing as part of the mercy that held possession of His heart. His true followers cannot but follow His guidance here. For instance, Mother Teresa, who, in Calcutta, goes to great trouble to have brought into her Home for Dying Derelicts, cast-aways left to die in the streets. They may survive for no more than a quarter of an hour, but in that quarter of an hour, instead of feeling themselves rejected and abandoned, they meet with Christian love and care. From a purely humanitarian point of view, the effort involved in this ministry of love could be put to some more useful purpose, and the derelicts left to die in the streets, or even helped to die there by being given the requisite injection. Such calculations do not come into Mother Teresa's way of looking at things; her love and compassion reach out to the afflicted without any other consideration than their immediate need, just as our Lord does when He tells us to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked. She gives all she has to give at once, and then finds she has more to give. As between Mother Teresa's holocaust of love and the humane holocaust, I am for hers.

There is an episode in my own life which, though it happened long ago, provides, as I consider, a powerful elucidation of the whole issue of euthanasia - a study, as it were, in mercy-living in contradiction to mercy-killing. Some forty years ago, shortly before the outbreak of the 1939-45 war, the person whom I have most loved in this world, my wife Kitty, was desperately ill, and, as I was informed by the doctor attending her, had only an outside chance of surviving. The medical details are unimportant; probably today, with the great advances that have taken place in curative medicine, her state would not be so serious. But as the situation presented itself then, she was hovering between life and death, though, needless to say, there was no voice, as there might well be nowadays, to suggest that it might be better to let her go.

The doctor explained that an emergency operation was essential, and, in honesty, felt bound to tell me that it would be something of a gamble. Her blood, it appeared, was so thin as a

result of a long spell of jaundice that before he operated a blood-transfusion was desperately needed - this was before the days of plasma. As he said this, an incredible happiness amounting to ecstasy surged up inside me. If I could be the donor! My blood group was established, and found to be suitable; the necessary gear was brought in, very primitive by contemporary standards - just a glass tube one end of which was inserted in her arm and the other end in mine, with a pump in the middle drawing out my blood and sending it into her. I would watch the flow, shouting out absurdly to the doctor: "Don't stint yourself, take all you want!" and noting delightedly the immediate effect in bringing back life into her face that before had seemed grey and lifeless. It was the turning point; from that moment she began to mend.

At no point in our long relationship has there been a more ecstatic moment than when I thus saw my life-blood pouring into hers to revivify it. We were at one, blood to blood, as no other kind of union could make us. To give life - this was what love was for; to give it in all circumstances and eventualities; whether God creating the universe, or a male and female creating another human being; whereas to destroy life, be it in a fertilized ovum one second after conception, or in some octogenarian or sufferer from a fatal illness, was the denial of life and so the antithesis of love. In life-denying terms, as we have seen, compassion easily becomes a holocaust; garden suburbs and gulags derive from the same quest for quality of life, and the surgeon's knife can equally be used to sustain and extinguish life. Dostoevsky makes the same point:

"Love toward men, but love without belief in God, very naturally leads to the greatest coercion over men, and turns their lives completely into hell on earth." We should never forget that if ever there was a killing without mercy, a death without dignity, it was on Golgotha. Yet from that killing, what a pouring out of mercy through the subsequent centuries! From that death, what a stupendous enhancement of human dignity!

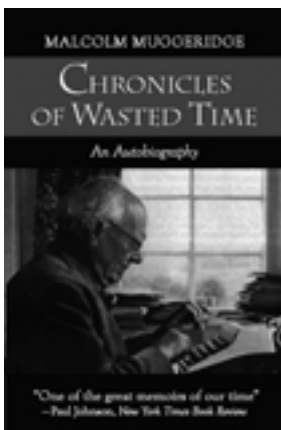
ENDS

*"The Humane Holocaust," by Malcolm Muggeridge first appeared in **The Human Life Review**, Winter, 1980. It was later included as an afterword in the publication of Ronald Reagan's "**Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation**" written whilst the President was still in office and marking the tenth anniversary of the controversial US Supreme Court decision in *Roe v Wade* which established the woman's right to an abortion taking priority over an unborn child's right to life.*

The moral and religious issue of "The sanctity of life" versus "the quality of life" continues to deeply divide opinion in the United States of America. Only recently we saw President George Bush veto a bill on ethical grounds aimed at increasing public funding directed towards embryonic stem cell research. Whilst the debate in the US clearly continues, such ethical issues fail to raise much public or political interest in the UK and Europe.

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