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Rage, Revolt & Reformation

Peter Marshall

ROAD TO HIROSHIMA
Philip Snow

WHO'S AFRAID OF FREE SPEECH?
Jonathan Sumption

GILBERT & GEORGE GO EAST
Stephen Smith

ADICHIE'S ADVENTURES
Maria Margaronis

TARGET: BALTICS • ZOLA'S TRIALS • COLERIDGE INTERRUPTED
THE DIAGNOSIS CRISIS • HAIR UNTANGLED • OCEAN-GOING ELEPHANTS

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another kind – that which is inherent in violent disorder. Modern statutes, at any rate in Britain, have generally adhered to this principle. Part 3A of the Public Order Act 1986, which criminalises certain hate speech, contains a broad exemption for discussion, criticism and expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse, even if some police forces have yet to notice the fact. Dabhoiwala rejects the distinction between words and actions. Yet the difference is obvious and rational. Words, even if offensive, are not coercive, except in cases where they are calculated to provoke violence.

In a world of free expression, some of what people say will be wrong, hurtful or even objectively harmful. We can all point to public statements that are untrue, mischievous or absurd, sometimes manifestly so. But manifestness is not a very useful criterion. Nearly every received opinion that rational examination has discredited was once regarded as manifestly true by those who held it. The principle that we would have to accept in order to justify censoring such statements is more damaging than the statements themselves. We cannot have truth and wisdom without accommodating error and folly because the boundary between the two is usually a matter on which people may legitimately differ. In the end, we have to accept the implications of human inquisitiveness, creativity and imagination. The alternative is to entrust significant parts of our intellectual world to public authorities whose capacity for objectivity, truthfulness and wisdom is no greater than our own.

JONATHAN RÉE

Take Back Control

Citizen Marx: Republicanism and the Formation of Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought
By Bruno Leipold
(Princeton University Press 418pp £35)

A new idea is haunting the political world: republicanism. It does not feature much in the propaganda of political parties, even those that call themselves republican, but it has begun to play a role in political theory. Republicanism boasts a long pedigree, harking back to Aristotle's notion of public participation in the *polis*, and to Machiavelli's and Montesquieu's writings on the rule of law, as well as to the activist patriotic citizenship associated with the American and French revolutions. In the 1970s, the republican notion of vigorous participation in public life (or 'civil society') provided inspiration to opponents of tyranny in the crumbling Soviet empire. Since then, it has emerged as a substantial alternative to the dreary dogmas that stretch across the conventional political spectrum, from state-inspired collectivism to market-based individualism.

Bruno Leipold is an evangelist for republicanism, and in his informative and enjoyable new book he examines the political opinions of Karl Marx and their place in the rather neglected field of 19th-century republicanism. Marx became entangled with republican ideas, according to Leipold, when he was a young liberal grappling with the political legacy of Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel in the early 1840s. Marx was impressed by Hegel's majestic narrative of social progress, in which the inchoate idiocies of primitive society lead to centuries of strife which give way, ultimately, to a harmonious social order where public affairs are administered by professional civil servants and national unity is guaranteed by a constitutional monarchy. The young Marx maintained, however, that sovereignty should be vested in 'the people' rather than some royal personage. This goes to show, in Leipold's view, that he placed himself firmly in the republican tradition.

In 1847, Marx cast in his lot with the London-based Bund der Kommunisten, and when he moved to London two years later he got involved with various other political movements, including Chartism and the International Workingmen's Association (known as the International). In some of the most illuminating passages in this highly original book, Leipold shows how these allegiances put a strain on Marx's relations with prominent republicans. He offers a delightful sketch, for example, of the Chartist William James Linton, who subordinated his exceptional talents as a wood engraver to the noble cause of creating an 'English republic', inspired by Oliver Cromwell and John Milton. Linton deplored the incendiary rhetoric of communists like Marx, saying that their calls for the 'abolition of property and family' were repugnant to ordinary men and women, but Marx responded by arguing that social change was going to depend not on the sympathy of 'the people' ('a broad and vague expression') but on the fearless resolve of the industrial proletariat. In the first book of *Das Kapital* (1867), however, Marx denounced capitalist employers for treating their workers with the 'pettiest, most spiteful despotism' – an expression which, as Leipold points out, could have come straight from a republican phrasebook.

The same could be said of many of the policy positions that Marx advocated on behalf of the International. He denounced indirect taxation, for example, on the grounds that it 'destroys all tendency to self-government'. He also called for the 'general armament of the people' and the abolition of standing armies, and denounced 'education by the state', saying that 'the state has need, on the contrary, of a very stern education by the people'. He pursued a similar line in a popular pamphlet about the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871. Writing in the name of the International, Marx argued that it should be remembered as a valiant attempt to create a 'social republic' that would be free of capitalists, landowners, soldiers and police, a place where civil administration would be conducted by 'removable servants' rather than – as he put it in fruity republican English – 'haughteous masters'.

Leipold welcomes these remarks as

proof of a 'return to Marx's own early republican thought', but while he makes the case with verve, he is not entirely convincing. In the first place, he risks opening the notion of republicanism so wide that it will include everyone from Immanuel Kant and Hegel to Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill, and even William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli. Secondly, by focusing on what he calls 'the political institutions Marx supported', he overlooks the fact that Marx never took political activity at face value: he thought that political power was never much more than 'the organised power of one class for oppressing another', and that society was going to evolve in its own time and according to its own logic, following the imperatives of economics rather than the vagaries of politics. He also believed that history would eventually culminate in the total dissolution of classes, so that politics, having no purpose, would fade away and never be missed.

Leipold devotes some fascinating pages to a 19th-century phenomenon he calls 'anti-politics', meaning the anarchistic idea that a happy world will have no need of political institutions, and argues that, despite appearances, Marx never went along with it. He may be right: perhaps Marx was looking forward to the end of state-centred politics, but not of politics altogether. At any rate, Marx lambasted his anarchist opponents within the International for getting carried away with 'political rhetoric' and expecting social change to come about through 'willpower' rather than 'economic conditions'. Indeed, he seems to have regarded politics as little more than a game of chance, where gamblers take credit for gains and lie about losses, though they have no influence over either. But he also thought that the odds were stacked in favour of the eventual emergence of a classless society. In a rather tactless after-dinner speech in 1871, he told leaders of the International that the overall course of history could not be altered by them or by 'all the politicians in the world'. Progress depended, he said, on 'circumstances over which [they] had no control' and above all on the simple fact that 'the work-people were more and more oppressed' and could not put up with it much longer.

RICHARD BOURKE

Finding Freedom

Liberty as Independence: The Making and Unmaking of a Political Ideal
By Quentin Skinner
(Cambridge University Press 332pp £35)

Quentin Skinner's remarkable new study surveys 'the history of rival views of liberty from antiquity to modern times'. The book's extraordinary scope is matched by a bold thesis, which is ethical and historical at once. The work's central claim is that the idea of what Skinner calls 'liberty as independence' played a dominant role in the intellectual culture of Europe from Roman times to the 18th century. Skinner further argues that this reigning conception was supplanted in the aftermath of the American and French revolutions by a new one: a vision of freedom as the 'absence of restraint'.

Skinner's handling of his material is meticulous throughout. *Liberty as Independence* is built on a lifetime of original scholarship that began in the 1960s. Cumulatively, these labours have made him a leading authority on late-medieval and Renaissance political thought. With this new book, Skinner widens his field of expertise to encompass the 18th century. He does this with singular skill and industry, covering a wealth of sources, from philosophical tracts to political pamphlets and literary fiction. On display throughout is the author's characteristic lucidity.

Skinner begins with republican Rome. One important influence among the Romans was the Stoic equation of freedom with self-mastery, which led to the opposition of liberty and licence. For Cicero, this contrast carried political implications. Civil freedom entailed living in a condition of 'independence' (meaning freedom from the arbitrary will of another). The aspiration was to live according to the government of laws, not men. As Cicero developed this thought, liberty came to imply existence under a constitutional regime.

This nexus of values is reflected in the narratives of the Roman historians. In accounts of the past relayed by Livy, Sallust and Tacitus, liberty is identified with release from 'domination'. Domination was defined as 'arbitrary' power or subjection to the capricious rule of unaccountable governors. Freedom, on the other hand, was achieved through citizenship. A citizen – or free person – enjoyed self-government under a system of regular laws.

This interpretation of freedom has often been put in the service of a narrowly republican vision of politics. But, Skinner argues, the basic idea of liberty as independence was taken up in the assorted legal traditions that stemmed from Justinian's codification of Roman law. From these, it passed into medieval and early modern Europe and was adopted by thinkers of various persuasions. One of the main planks of Skinner's argument is that this conception of freedom remained dominant in Britain for roughly a hundred years after 1688.

One of the most striking aspects of this book is the number of writers claimed by Skinner as adhering to this concept of liberty. The list includes James Tyrrell, John Locke, Jonathan Swift, Viscount Bolingbroke, David Hume, Catharine Macaulay, Richard Price, Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft. While Skinner recognises the differences between these figures, he also assimilates their thinking to a monolithic ideal. However, his principal preoccupation is with the rejection of their world view, which gathered momentum around the time of the American Revolution and triggered what Skinner dubs an epochal 'transformation' that shaped the politics of the modern world.

The doctrine that would eventually succeed that of liberty as independence first flourished among theorists of natural law, including Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes and Samuel von Pufendorf. They understood freedom as the absence of impediments. In their thought, the enjoyment of freedom was prised from the attendant political circumstances. With the rise of utilitarian ideas, as articulated by William Paley and Jeremy Bentham,