

unifying the party.

"A conservative government is an organized hypocrisy." Disraeli's definition was directed originally against Sir Robert Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws. A few weeks earlier he had remarked that Peel had "caught the Whigs bathing, and walked away with their clothes," meaning that Sir Robert was determined to hold power at the expense of his party's principles, just as Disraeli was to do later, when he reformed the franchise; as Churchill and Macmillan and Heath were to do, when they allowed Britain to turn socialist; and as Ronald Reagan and George Bush were to do in abandoning the white middle class.

Peel's "accomplishment" was a self-inflicted wound on a party whose great principles were its defense of the Crown, the church, and the land. One by one the Tories, in becoming "conservative," abandoned their principles (although I discover with pleasure that Charles Moore, a Catholic convert, opposes disestablishment on good Tory grounds). Over the years the Conservatives stole the clothes of the Whigs, the imperialists, the Liberals, and the socialists. In returning the party to its liberal phase, Mrs. Thatcher did her party and her country a great service, but classical liberalism, perhaps even more than socialism, is an internationalist ideology, and the Tories—if they are to be anything—must be the national party, the party that stands for the real England, the historic England, the England

for its own sake. Even if European Union were the best thing for everyone in the world, it should not be the achievement of a Tory government.

Unwilling as I am to admit it, Mr. Major has many fine points. He has a shrewd mind, and he is willing to stick to his guns, but—speaking with the recklessness of an outsider who does not have a right to an opinion—I really hope that his government falls and leaves it to Mr. Blair to tie the knot with Europe. The Conservatives have grown too fat in their years of plenty, and it will be a good thing for them to go out into the wilderness of opposition. (American conservatives, too, need to be disciplined by at least four more years of Democratic misrule until they can learn not to get in bed with the gentiles.) If the Conservative Party is to belong to Mr. Major and Mr. Heseltine, then it is of no more use to Britain than the Republican Party is to the United States.

Whether any of my English friends will agree with me, I do not know, but the conservative embrace of Europe has done nothing to endear the party to the voters. While I was there in the spring, the Tories lost control of all the local councils in Scotland. Hearing that I am on my way to Scotland, Bill Cash jokes over dinner: "Tell me if you see any conservatives in Scotland." I did, and he told me he was voting for the Scottish National Party, but that is another story. c

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## Lie Down and Die

by Peter Russell

I never visited my Father's grave,  
I never visited my Mother's.  
I thought it better (time's to save)—  
And left it to the others.

Well, you may say that I was right—  
What's in a dusty grave  
But clay-stopped ears, eyes without sight  
Back to the soil they gave?

The putrid flesh, the dried out bone,  
Features once loved, but not enough;  
Loveless, unloved and housed alone  
The soul grows taciturn and gruff.

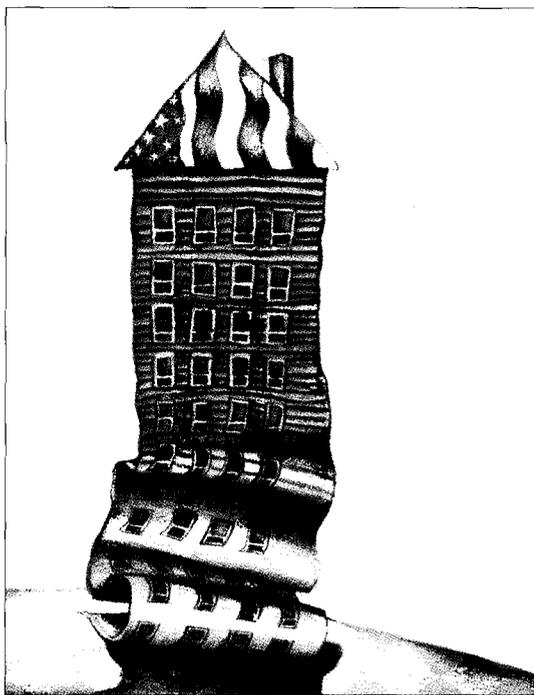
Larval appearances, forgotten voice,  
Stage entrances, oneiric scenes—  
Life goes on, a buzzing noise,  
A crass idolatry of means

World without end, *in saeculorum*  
*Saecula*,—life without ends,  
Ask of the sacred quorum,—  
What ends? And what amends?

*Amens, Amens, Amens!*

# Cobden's Pyrrhic Victory

by Alfred E. Eckes



Bill Clinton and Richard Cobden, a 19th-century English anti-Corn Law crusader, have more in common than consonants in their surnames. As economic internationalists, both trumpeted commerce as the panacea for attaining world peace and prosperity. In their own ways, both bear responsibility for the new international economic order which rests on the twin foundations of universal free trade and world economic government.

"Democracy and free trade go hand in hand," Bill Clinton asserted at the Miami Summit of the Americas in December 1994. He promised that "free trade will yield dramatic benefits in terms of growth and jobs and higher incomes." In the use of free-trade hyperbole, few other than Cobden surpassed Clinton's rhetorical excesses. In 1835, the Manchester cotton manufacturer praised commerce as "the *grand panacea*, which, like a beneficent medical discovery, will serve to inoculate with the healthy and saving taste for civilization all the nations of the world." An evangelical free-trader, Cobden envisaged free trade "drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonism of race and creed, and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace."

Not until Clinton's presidency did Cobdenism finally triumph in America. It took 150 years—and along the way free-trade crusaders experienced a number of defeats. One occurred at the end of World War I, when President Woodrow Wilson submitted his grandiose plan for the League of Na-

tions. That design, involving free trade and the surrender of some sovereignty to the league, failed to overcome congressional resistance.

Cobdenism began to make gains after the Great Depression and Roosevelt's 1932 landslide removed the last Republican obstacles. During the New Deal, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, a monomaniacal tariff-cutter, successfully planted the seeds for the free-trade revolution. In 1934, he persuaded a Democrat-controlled Congress to authorize a reciprocal trade program. In practice, reciprocal trade proved a misnomer. It succeeded primarily in opening the American market to imports. After World War II Hull's initiative metamorphosed into a multilateral tariff-cutting effort, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Bipartisan support emerged when both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower touted tariff liberalization as a substitute for foreign aid.

During Ronald Reagan's presidency the Cobdenites pursued the bilateral path. Reagan concluded free-trade agreements with Israel and Canada, both relatively high-income countries. These pacts had little adverse impact on high-paid, unskilled American workers. In particular, the pact with Canada demonstrated that removing trade barriers between advanced industrial nations with similar legal and business systems could prove mutually beneficial.

In George Herbert Walker Bush, the Utopian free-traders found a friend. Bush launched negotiations for NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the first such pact with a low middle-income country, Mexico. Eager to help his friend President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico, Bush rushed ahead, pursuing free trade with a religious zeal that resembled

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