

reminds us that in addition to meetings with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, both Bush allies, in order to try to stave off the war, the pope also sent Cardinal Pio Laghi to the United States as a special envoy for the same purpose.

For his opposition to U.S. wars, John Paul II earned the withering contempt of so many of the neoconservatives who can be heard to praise him now. "The Bush Administration," wrote Joseph D'Hippolito in a charming little article for David Horowitz's FrontPageMag.com in May 2004, "should consider placing the Vatican on the list of rogue states that support terrorism." After all, what reason other than support for terrorism could anyone have for opposing the American Jacobins who control U.S. foreign policy? The neocons had better get used to it, however, since the next pope is certain to have the same views on international affairs as John Paul and by virtue of being younger and more physically vigorous will be an even more formidable opponent.

Only the passage of time will reveal how religious historians will evaluate the pontificate of John Paul II in terms of its legacy for the Catholic Church. Yet it is clear enough how historians of the 20th-century will evaluate him as a global statesman. He will be remembered the way the media portrayed him: as a defender of unfashionable moral principles before a world determined to flout them. And even his toughest critics have to concede, as the secular world does, John Paul's role in lighting the fire that culminated in Solidarity and the eventual collapse of the Soviet empire. It is for these traits that Catholics, looking back on the third-longest pontificate in church history, rightly honor him. ■

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[fall of the House of Windsor]

Courting Disaster

Monarchy has served England well, but now her prince hastens its decline.

By Peter Hitchens

THE LAST GREAT MONARCHY in the world is in the process of cutting its own throat. Should anybody care? Or is the proper response to shrug, smile, and pass by? Many conservative Americans are unable to understand Britain's continued adherence to this strange institution, seeing it as a survival from our national childhood that we have not yet found the courage to put away.

They may be right about the appeal of crowns and thrones to the child in us, in one way. All nations first seek to make their citizens love them in infancy, and the country that has no appeal to its children is unlikely to be much liked by them when they grow up. There is something about the word "king," with its echoes of chivalry and honor, that touches the heart in a way that the word "president" never can.

But they may also be dangerously wrong in an era in which the expression "democracy" is coming more and more to be used to describe a dogmatic, intolerant ideology frequently indifferent to liberty and often hostile to it. It is worth noting that, of the six longest-surviving law-governed democracies on the planet, four are constitutional monarchies (Britain, Australia, Canada, and Sweden) and two (Switzerland and the United States) are republics. The 49th parallel has long been the most interesting frontier in the world because it marks the division not between two hos-

tile and distinct peoples or two rival empires but between two different English ideas about how to be free.

Seldom has the United States' choice seemed so beset with difficulties, with the great republic's unending state of proclaimed war serving as a pretext for monstrous executive power and the blithe spurning of supposedly sacrosanct principle. This might be a good moment to examine the strengths of America's only real rival in the continuous preservation of ordered liberty, if only because the world will sooner or later recover from its present delusions, and civilized people will once again be seeking the essence of the good society. Such a society, once discovered, does not necessarily endure. Those who are in it do not always understand what is good about it, why it survives or what should be done to defend it. In attempting to save it, they can easily destroy it.

The grandeur and mystery of the English monarchy departed long ago, blasted away by familiarity and by television's greed for fake intimacy. This is an appetite that can never be satisfied, especially by an institution whose majesty has to be maintained by very ordinary mortals. Brilliant and charismatic beings could never stand the humble, middle-class drudgery and plain duty required of the British royal family. Its dignity was ruptured by the mad soap opera of Princess Diana's

vengeance, a revenge that continued to rage beyond the grave and that still fills the breasts of the princess's partisans with righteous fury against Prince Charles and the Wicked Woman he preferred all along, Camilla Parker Bowles. A wise fear of raising Diana's ghost, and of inflaming the mob of her sympathizers, had until now prevented the prince from marrying his mistress.

If that were the only obstacle, it would have been bad enough. But there are others that could never possibly have been overcome. This is a pity. Many conservative-minded people heartily wish that Charles had married Camilla Shand (as she was when they originally met) in the first place. Diana shimmered amid a miasma of costly scent, was adored by the camera—in real life she was far more angular, plain, and awkward than pictures suggest—and wore clothes so beautifully that she might have been designed for them rather than the other way round. This was not very British of her. The women of our damp island have traditionally been built for comfort rather than elegance. Diana broke so completely with this tradition that she might almost have been a foreigner of some kind. To those who yearned for the old style—shapeless cardigans, broad behinds, and sensible shoes—Camilla was much more the thing. She brought with her a whiff of damp dog, and that richer waft which comes from stables and honest English mud. In photographs and on TV, she looks alarmingly like the horses she rides so well, and her attempts to be chic are engagingly hopeless. She might have been an excellent queen.

But she cannot be queen, except in name. It will never stick. The absurd, bureaucratic nuptials of Charles and Camilla had become a source of merriment in Britain long before they took place. This was partly because of Charles's constant Eeyore-like luckless-

ness and the unfortunate impression he gives of thinking that being a prince is all so jolly unfair. It was partly because of the unending practical problems. The queen wouldn't attend, the location had to be changed, and then the whole thing had to be put off so as not to coincide with the pope's funeral. But it is really because he has broken rules that he is obliged to keep. When the existence of your future post depends entirely upon ancient custom, precedents, and tradition, you cannot really dispense with such things because it suits you personally.

But Charles has done so, and by this action he has destabilized his own throne. Under proper English law, it was probably illegal for the heir to the throne and supreme governor of the Church of England to wed in a civil ceremony. Many of the country's keenest legal brains certainly thought so. He is supposed to be joined in holy matrimony

first pretended that it did not exist. Then they acknowledged that it might, when a legal opinion written by one of England's greatest jurists, the late Lord Kilmer, was unearthed from the archives. Finally, wreathed in joyous smiles, they proclaimed that the wedding was validated by the Human Rights Act, a pestilent new law under which liberal judges can permit almost anything they like and prevent almost anything they don't, much as the U.S. Supreme Court misinterprets the Constitution. One day, this act may be used to invalidate the monarchy itself, which with its male line of succession and rules against Roman Catholics is a great boiling mass of "human rights" violations.

Prince Charles, in a clear breach of his supposed political neutrality, has in the past condemned the act that now permits him to marry. He said it would "only encourage people to take up causes which will make the pursuit of a

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according to the sonorous rites and ceremonies of his own church and in no other place. But he cannot be so married, mainly because his bride's divorced husband is still living and the Anglican Church is still technically opposed to the remarriage of divorced persons. (Do not be misled by the common historical error of supposing that the church was founded to give Henry VIII a divorce. What Henry wanted—and eventually got from his archbishops—was an annulment. He remained, in his own eyes at least, a good Catholic.)

When this serious problem was brought to the attention of the covertly republican Blair government, they at

sane, civilised and ordered existence ever more difficult." It must have given Blair particular pleasure to inform the heir to the throne that this very law was the only thing that would allow him to marry his intended. The New Labour government delights in "supporting" the monarchy in such difficulties. They provided similar support when all the wronged women of Britain—seemingly millions of them—had taken Diana's side against Charles after her death. Blair's advice to the royal family then was that they should humble themselves before the infuriated mob, a mob that Blair had helped to create by his use of the phrase "the People's Princess" to

describe this privileged aristocrat. Such help, as Vladimir Ilyich Lenin once said in another context, should not be welcomed by its recipient. It is like the support that the rope gives to the hanged man.

The prince has made matters even harder for himself by his commendable enthusiasm for the church's 16th-century prayer book, which in hard, shining Shakespearean English insists unambiguously that those who wed must forsake all others and that marriage ends only with death. It contains no rites for weddings such as Charles's second one, and by clear implication views them as breaches of a solemn oath. It is quite certain that Charles understands all this.

This marriage will eat away at the monarchy for years to come—the seemingly small breach of the rules that makes it impossible to insist upon those rules at a later date when it matters, the ever-dangerous precedent lurking in the shadows. The patient enemies of the British throne will always be waiting for an opportunity to exploit that precedent.

That is the nature of the danger, though of course it is only the latest in a long chapter of sad failures by the crown of England that within living memory was almost universally revered by the people of England. There is a haunting photograph that sums this up better than anything I have ever seen, an extraordinary glimpse of a world simultaneously immensely old and very recent. It is a somber afternoon in 1952, and the funeral train bearing the remains of King George VI on his last journey from London to Windsor is passing a group of platelayers. The locomotive bears the ancient royal crest on the front of its boiler, the lion and the unicorn, heavy and archaic. A great plume of steam and smoke darkens the sky. The railroad men are standing by the track, their heads bowed and their caps

in their hands. I do not think this picture was posed.

In the recently rediscovered "Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain, 1942," the perceptive anonymous author warned GIs, amid much other sage advice about cricket, beer, tea, girls, and swearing, "Be careful not to criticize the King. The British feel about that the way you would feel if anyone spoke against our country or our flag. Today's King and Queen stuck with the people through the blitzes and had their home bombed just like anyone else, and the people are proud of them." The booklet adds that within a seemingly old-fashioned framework, the

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British "enjoy a practical, working twentieth-century democracy which is in some ways even more flexible and sensitive to the will of the people than our own."

Both pieces of advice were right at the time. The British monarchy was and remains like a complex knot, tied with such skill and ingenuity that few can understand how it holds together, and it is almost impossible to undo. It is absolutely not a survival of feudal absolutism. On the contrary, it has been a subtle device that, used properly, both permits democracy and keeps it from turning into tyranny. To be a British subject is in many ways to be more free, less loaded with obligations and duties to the state, than to be the citizen of even the most enlightened republic.

It contains several paradoxes. From very early in its history, the English crown came to be seen as the protector of the common people against the arbi-

trary authority of the mighty. George Orwell noticed during the celebrations of King George V's silver jubilee in May 1935 that in the desperately poor East End of London there were banners proclaiming "Down with the landlords. God save the King," a faint echo of the ancient belief that the king would defend the peasant against the rapacious baron, if only he knew what was really happening.

England was free long before it was a democracy. This is because we like to enshrine our quarrels in unpredictable and sometimes ungovernable adversarial systems. Magna Carta, *habeas corpus*, jury trial, the presumption of

innocence, common law, the right to silence, freedom from torture, limited punishment, and plural government all grew in the shadow of the throne, fertilized and nourished by quarrels between king and nobles, Norman and Saxon, crown and church, gentry and merchants, city and countryside, Whig and Tory. The same conflicts produced a lively, balanced, and bicameral parliament, *de facto* judicial independence from the executive, freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, the bar on the existence of a standing army, the protection against double jeopardy, and the establishment of an impartial civil service. All these things predated the arrival of universal suffrage, which the modern ideologues of benevolent invasion seem to believe is the necessary and sufficient condition for liberty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many of these precious possessions have recently been dismantled or

restricted by our enthusiastically democratic “People’s Government,” which stated in 1997 that it was the “political arm of the British people as a whole,” and which is the most republican administration in modern British history.

Cromwell’s 1649 experiment with a British republic ended with arbitrary rule and military government and was for centuries afterwards regarded with shuddering horror by sensible Englishmen. What they most disliked about Cromwell’s commonwealth was its lawlessness: the discovery that the toppling of a lawful throne led to a far worse autocracy than what had gone before. The extraordinary historic compromise of 1689, when England obtained its bill of rights, united Tory squires and former Cromwellians in support of a crown founded on continuity, Protestant Christianity, and the law.

The beautiful coronation service, a pivotal part of Britain’s written but unorganized constitution, is amongst other things a great hymn to the rule of law, a law originating in the Bible. As trumpets sound and cannon are fired from the Tower of London, the new monarch promises above all to defend “law and justice in mercy,” all originating from the Gospel of Christ. Saint Peter’s exhorta-

used to the “terror and punishment of evildoers” and the defense of the righteous. There is no official version of the British national anthem (itself an interesting fact), but one of its most significant lines contains the hope “May he defend our laws.”

Enthusiasts for republican government in America rejected the establishment of religion mainly because of the intolerance and persecution long ago abandoned by the Church of England. Yet they have found it harder than they might have thought to keep God out of the state. He will keep slipping in, presumably because the mechanism of free government often works better when it calls on the divine for help, and the general sovereignty of God over the human conscience is the best formula ever devised for ordered liberty. The apparently more enlightened idea that power originates with the people, and that God has nothing to do with it, can be a dangerous staircase to climb or descend. There is no doubt that it goes both up and down.

It may sound very inspiring when a defendant is arraigned by the “People of the United States.” But who is to say who the people are or what the people want, and what if the people can be per-

mended constitution of the extremely enlightened Weimar Republic. Vishinsky’s source of authority was a revolution against a despised autocracy, a utopian political theory, and the apparently impeccable 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union.

Patriot Acts and wars against terror are obviously not the modern equivalent of Hitler’s Enabling Act or the use of the Reichstag fire as a pretext for the crushing of opposition. To make such a claim would be to devalue language and lose all sense of proportion. But can we be wholly sure that a system that can tolerate this much constitutional vandalism and this level of political dishonesty is proof against such dangers in a worse future?

For there is another great strength in a system based upon heredity and history, as monarchy is. It enfranchises the dead and enthrones experience. It acts, first of all, as a reminder that political leaders are tenants on a short lease. The crown was there before them and will be there when they have gone. What they do may be undone and they cannot bind their successors. It enshrines the importance of the married family as the principle fortress of private life and of inheritance as the foundation of private property. It diffidently whispers that justice and equity may have a divine source that cannot be amended. Above all, it provides a focus of loyalty that is not the government of the day.

The British police officer serves the crown and the law, not the government, and is free to refuse an illegal order from a political superior. The same is true for an officer in the armed services, a judge, or a civil servant. A British patriot may oppose a war he believes is wrong and yet remain loyal to the crown. It is not so easy for an American, whose president is party leader, commander in chief, and temporary monarch. The importance of this distinction is only underlined by the

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tion to “submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” and Christ’s advice to “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s” are pointedly read out from the King James Bible, which is presented to the new sovereign as the “lively oracles of God.” The great sword of state is granted on condition that it be

sueded to desire something very nasty indeed—as they can be? There have been other people’s courts, notably those presided over by the National Socialist Roland Freisler and the Social Democrat turned Bolshevik Andrei Vishinsky, which were not so creditable. Freisler’s ultimate source of authority was a democratic election and the una-

alarming fact that Britain's current government has made so many cumulative attacks on these aspects of the monarchical constitution.

Unelected political appointees have for the first time been given the legal power to command impartial officials. A new "Serious Organised Crimes Agency," ludicrously dubbed the "British FBI" though we have no federal structure, will be staffed by officers employed by the state rather than sworn to uphold the law. Large numbers of Community Support Officers, likewise state employees responsible only to their superiors, are rapidly replacing sworn constables as the basic patrolling unit of the police. The prime minister has become fond of posing among soldiers he plainly regards as his army. Meanwhile Mr. Blair's colleagues, in what may be Freudian slips, have taken to referring to him as head of state. Downing Street press conferences, with their lecterns and coats of arms, have clearly been modeled on White House practice. At the same time, the hereditary members of the House of Lords have been almost wiped out, leaving the crown exposed as the last part of the government still based upon inheritance. And the prime minister has developed a habit of seeking prominent positions at what used to be exclusively royal occasions, from the state opening of Parliament to the funerals of Princess Diana and the queen mother.

The signs are all there for those who would read them. Just when we need the crown most of all, and when we should be rallying round its besieged standard to defend it, the heir to the throne strikes a heavy blow at the foundations of the throne, and all we shall be left with in the end will be a parcel of useless "human rights." ■

Peter Hitchens is a columnist for the London Mail on Sunday. He is the author of The Abolition of Britain.

Lights Out at GE

Bloomington's jobs are going south—with taxpayer help.

By Timothy P. Carney

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA—"There was a time you couldn't find a place at the plant to park," says Joy Finley, who works at the Local 2249 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), which represents the manufacturing workers at the local General Electric plant. "Folks were getting towed."

On Thursday, March 31, however, the scene is starkly different in the GE parking lot just off Curry Pike on the outskirts of Bloomington. The lot is mostly empty. Nine out of every 10 autos here are American, which contrasts with the part of town near Indiana University, where about half of the cars are Japanese. Bumper stickers range from "Bush-Cheney-Daniels" to "Kick that son of a BUSH out." More than one car's bumper declares, "Jesus is Life: the rest is just details."

Many of those leaving the first shift after 3 p.m. (they started at 6:30 a.m.) are carrying empty crock pots or casserole dishes they brought for the retirement of someone on their line. About 70 were lucky enough to take retirement the day before the layoffs came. Friday would be the last day for another 470 workers.

According to the official story, the April Fools' Day layoffs were happening because GE planned to "discontinue production of mid-line, side-by-side refrigerator models that are not competitive on cost or product features." While that is technically true, a very similar new line of refrigerators is being started up at the GE plant in Celaya, Mexico. All the workers in Bloomington understand

that their jobs are being sent south of the border. And they all point the finger at the same two targets.

"Free trade and NAFTA are the worst things that have happened to the working man," says Tracy Pritchard, who worked at GE for 10 years until he was laid off April 1. He plans to go to school and maybe become an electrician. "I'm gonna stay outta factory work—not much future there." The other culprit? "Corporate greed"—a cliché at the plant and the union hall.

Pritchard, like his coworkers, didn't know it wasn't free trade, strictly speaking, that has helped GE move their jobs to Celaya. The corporate welfare state—specifically, the Export-Import Bank of the United States—played a role.

In Celaya, a General Electric joint venture named Mabe makes appliances, including the side-by-side refrigerators that had been made in Bloomington. As part of another joint venture called Qualcore, GE built a separate plant in Celaya to supply parts for the appliances made at Mabe. That's where the U.S. taxpayers got involved.

To reduce the cost of the Qualcore factory, GE called on the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im), a federal agency. Ex-Im provided a subsidy in the form of a \$3 million loan guarantee because the new plant would include components made in California and Illinois.

At the IBEW's office right behind a pawnshop, Joe Adams sits down to talk to me. He's the local vice president, but he's getting laid off by GE on Friday, after 10 years. He tells me about when