

BRINGING DEMOCRACY CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE

REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES WILL TAKE DEMOCRACY FURTHER AWAY!

Jane Birkby writes: Some of you may have read about the Regional Assemblies making themselves into Limited Companies. So what difference will this make? It could have far reaching consequences for us, the country and local democracy and councils in the future.

As you know John Prescott has been nurturing his Regional Assembly "babies" since 1999 virtually unnoticed until now. He has had his flawed "soundings" exercises, and has passed his parliamentary bill for referenda on these unelected quangos, and **I believe that he sees he might fail the referendum vote.**

Originally his office told me the question would be, "Do you want an elected regional assembly?" This was open to other interpretations should the vote go against him, ie if the public don't want an elected assembly, maybe they want an unelected one!

However to impose something against a No vote, might be difficult, so how else could he achieve his goal?

Local Authorities have privatised some of their services to the public and so when you think about it, **it would be easy for a privatised regional assembly to bid for the contracts and take over by stealth**, drawing everything unto itself, until the whole region is run from this central hub.

This would be done without the people really being aware of what was happening, just as has happened with the EU itself.

Watch this space and be ready to guard against this method, or any other John Prescott may dream up, because the Regional Assemblies are the route to EU Government from Brussels through the Committee for the Regions.

The structure of the Regional Assemblies will not be more democratic or closer to the people, and will, like cuckoos in the nest, eventually kick out the present Council system and take over from it, with fewer representatives for the people.

They will implement Brussels policy directly, which is already proving to be alien and damaging to regional character, social heritage, traditions, and environment.

Bye bye Westminster, local government accountability, and democracy close to the people.

But we mustn't give up. Remember it isn't over until the fat lady sings, and I haven't sung yet!

Sovereignty subscriber **George Nicholson** comments: "As far as local government is concerned, there is nothing to beat the county and shire system. Of course it needs adapting, refurbishing and enhancing from time to time. **It does not need replacing.** We have the hierarchal system, County, District and Parish, and in this framework we can accommodate Town Council and even City Councils. **I want this system to evolve into something better, not degenerate or even worse, disappear altogether.**"

YES, WE CAN LEARN FROM EUROPE!

The following letter from **Doreen Crosby** was published in the *Hereford Times* of 6th November:

WITH reference to your correspondent newly returned to the area, we rarely visit the city because of the litter and state of the place.

On a recent visit to Southern Germany we were out one morning around 7am, only to see dozens of teenagers cleaning up the city.

They had no equipment, apart from a black bin-bag and household gloves, which ensured they had to pick up every individual piece.

On inquiring the reason for this we were told it was 'punishment' for dropping litter etc. and, together with their names and addresses printed in the daily newspaper, effected an immediate 'cure'. (The normal street cleaners continued after the youngsters had left for school.)

I will gladly send the postage to Herefordshire Council in order that they may write to the Obermeister of these towns to enquire how the system works.

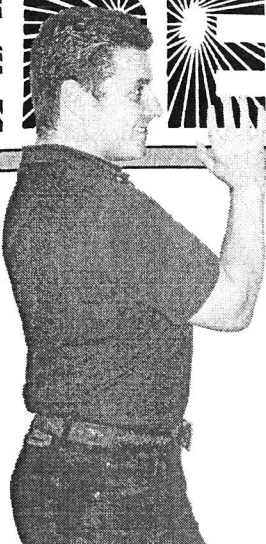
But I forget, silly me, we in the UK obviously have some law, which prevents us from upsetting the youngsters.

MARCHING THROUGH LONDON

Calling for a Referendum on the EU Constitution on Saturday **24 April 2004**. Marchers will assemble from 10.30am at Victoria Embankment, setting off between 12noon and 1pm. The route will be down Whitehall where six marchers will present a petition at Downing Street, and proceed to Hyde Park, to hear speeches from about 3pm. If you would like to help, contact **Diana Coad** on 01628 666456 or email petergtorg@aol.com

During times of universal deceit,
telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.
George Orwell

SOVEREIGNTY



**An editorial by
Alistair
McConnachie**

'Tis the season to avoid causing offence, apparently. What with government "Christmas" cards deliberately devoid of any Christian sentiments – for fear of "offending religious minorities". Of course, any offence caused by this attitude to the religious "majority" doesn't count – they're endlessly "tolerant".

What is it about this fear of "causing offence"?

For example, in more news this month, prison officer **Colin Rose**, 53, is claiming unfair dismissal after being sacked for making an "insensitive" comment about Osama Bin Laden.

What was his comment?

His job involves throwing keys down a metal chute, which hit the bottom with a clang. He told someone, jokingly, "There's a photo of Osama Bin Laden there."

Actually, there wasn't even a photo there. He was dropping keys on **an imaginary Bin Laden**, just like George Bush drops bombs on one.

However, Assistant Governor Andrew Rogers heard the comment and says, "I took offence. If the Asian visitors had heard that comment they may have taken offence."

After a "six month investigation" (!) ex-Guardsman Mr Rose was sacked from his job.

Now, this sort of comment is not against the law of the land – yet! However, it was enough to lose him his job at the hands of his sensitive prison governors.

What is this little microcosmic incident saying about our wider society at large?

Firstly, society is becoming overly sensitive to an excruciating, absurd and paralysing extent.

Mr Rose's comment was not "offensive" to Asians as Asians – although it might annoy some supporters of Bin Laden, but that's another matter.

Mr Rose's comment is not even offensive to Osama Bin Laden himself.

I mean, what would Bin Laden say? "You don't like me, heathen? Oh, I'm so offended! I think I'm going to cry." Yeah, right!

Secondly, it tells us that otherwise intelligent people are getting infected with the PC-virus.

After all, Governor Jerry Knight and Assistant Governor Andrew Rogers, are not, presumably, the sort of **twisted race-agitating lawyers who make an unhealthy living from exploiting this sort of thing**, but they are, presumably, reasonable intelligent men who attained their positions of responsibility as a result of their relative competence.

Thirdly, it seems we are always being expected to put other people's sensitivities before our own.

Of course, sometimes it is only **good manners** to do just that.

But we shouldn't extend it into a fundamental political principle, **unless we are prepared to concede that we have no beliefs and interests that are worth defending!**

We should be careful that we do not verbally disarm ourselves with misplaced sensitivity, and remember that some things are offensive *to ourselves!*

And fourthly, the case of Mr Rose makes it clear that a bonfire of PC-legislation is well overdue.

Even though Mr Rose did not break any law, the sensitivity of his employers is a result of **the PC-culture, which is driven by the "race-relations" and "human rights" industry, which is sustained by legislation and government money.**

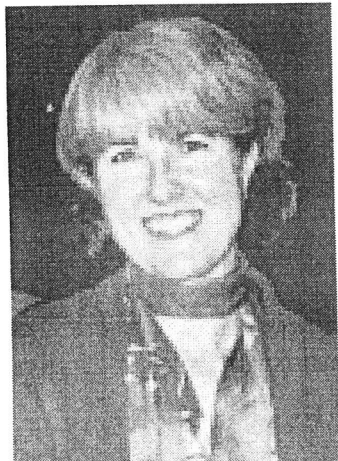
Almost all of this legislation should be crossed off the statute book, and the industry dismantled, with positive effects for everybody – of all races and religions.

This initiative is not going to come from any of the big parties, though. They're falling over themselves to see who can pander the most.

When it happens it will put a lot of race-baiting lawyers and race-agitators out of jobs. When it happens it will "cause offence" to a lot of powerful people.

But when it happens, it will free up massive political space which will allow Britain to breathe again.

COLLECTING SIGNATURES FOR THE **REFERENDUM 04** PETITION Judith Wallace explains



The **Referendum 04** Campaign is demanding that the Government holds a referendum on the proposed EU Constitution.

The proposals have far reaching implications and will so change the way that we are governed in this country that the matter should be put to voters for their approval before the Government signs us up: it is far from being the simple "tidying-up exercise"

that the Prime Minister would have us believe.

The first part of the Campaign is collecting signatures on a petition – obviously, hundreds of thousands of signatures must be obtained if we are to have any impact. **Referendum 04** is aiming to collect **1 million signatures** to present to the PM.

Many people are becoming worried about what is happening politically, and recent publicity in several newspapers has helped – in many ways, this Campaign is knocking at an open door, and the time is right.

Getting signatures can be done in several ways, and it isn't really difficult.

In the North East of England, a group of us (aged between 19 and 87) has taken the petition onto the streets over recent weeks, and many thousands of people have signed.

We can get between 500 and 850 signatures in a morning: sometimes, we've even had a queue of people wanting to sign. This can be replicated elsewhere; indeed many groups have already started.

We just put our posters up on walls and approach passers-by. Some are unaware of the situation, a few are in favour of the Constitution – *but none have been hostile to us and the majority are happy to sign.*

The following points, which we have learned from experience, may prove helpful and enable the most effective use of time.

- **Choose a busy spot with plenty of passers-by, and with convenient walls or monuments on which to put up the posters.** Place them to be seen from all directions. The posters state "The Government wishes to deny you a say on the proposed European Constitution. Please sign our petition to DEMAND your voice be heard" and they really get the message across. Without the posters, it is not so easy to explain what we're doing. Don't forget the blu-tak or similar: remember, you want to take the posters down when you leave, to use next time.
- **We don't take a stall** – which can be awkward to carry and parking can be difficult, and you can be stuck behind a table; we find it's easier to go up to people.
- **City centres, market places, outside railway stations all make good target areas.** Universities and colleges also make fruitful ground – students are generally well-informed. Try outside the University library or Union building – just check the campus plan for the location. Ask local tourist offices about market

days, or check, for example www.farmersmarkets.net and www.womens-institute.org.uk

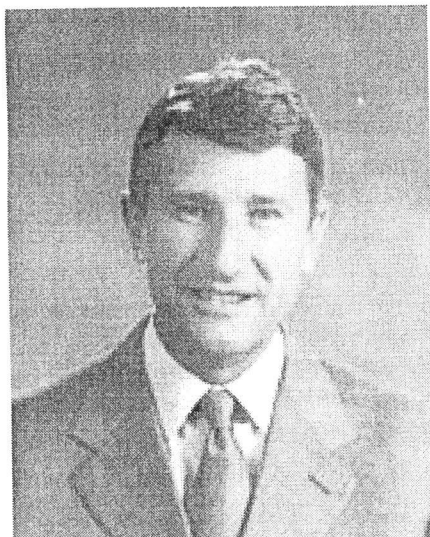
- **Once the posters are up in a prominent place**, get your clip-board out with the petition forms attached with a bulldog clip. Tie your pen on and start approaching passers-by. It is useful to have two clip-boards each – then, if you stop a couple of pedestrians together and they agree to sign, they can do so simultaneously, which doesn't delay them or you. If a sole pedestrian agrees to sign, while he is doing so, you don't waste time – you are free to stop another person with the spare clip-board. Also, people are often more willing to sign if they see someone else already doing so.
- **Don't start off by saying "I'm collecting signatures..."**, say **"gathering" instead**, for the word "collecting" makes people think you're after their cash, and they hurry past. Try, "this is a petition demanding we are given a vote on the EU Constitution".
- **With young people/students, say "We're trying to force Tony Blair to give us a say on the EU Constitution"**. This age group is generally very anti-Blair, (whether due to student loans, top-up fees or the Iraq war), and they are more inclined to listen if you immediately get the message across that we are trying to get the Prime Minister to change his mind.
- **Stress that the *Referendum 04* Campaign is non-party political**: many people are suspicious of party politicians, often with good cause. This is a genuine people's movement with no allegiance to any party, though we are happy to work with others with the same aim.
- **Take plenty of petition forms with you.** Often, people are very keen to sign, and vitriolic against the Government and/or the EU: offer such people a spare form or two to take away to get family, friends and colleagues to sign. The majority are happy to do so. The return address is on the form.
- **Have a few leaflets in your pocket to give to those who say they don't know enough about the subject** and haven't time to listen to your explanation. For those sympathetic but in a hurry, their signature, name, house number and post code is sufficient.
- **Collecting signatures can be done on your own, but it's more fun if there are a few of you.** If you're involved in a group, circulate a list of dates and locations. Fix the times you will definitely be there – we generally stay from 9.45am to 2pm – and ask others to join you: many people are happy to come along for an hour or two, rather than a whole morning, but when they realise how encouraging the whole experience is, the chances are that they'll come back again. Maximise your number of helpers by varying the day of the week, to avoid clashing with work and other commitments.
- **Forms and posters (in A2, A3 and A4) are available from *Referendum 04***, PO Box 526, Sunderland SR1 3YS; Tel: 0191 565 2004. mail@referendum04.co.uk

If this appeals to you, grab your clip-board and get going!

This is practical politics, engaging with the public and far more useful than just sitting in meetings of like-minded people – informative though such gatherings can be.

"Positively uplifting" was how one of our group described getting signatures. ***Referendum 04* is a campaign where everyone can do something.**

FIVE REBUTTALS TO THE EU CONSTITUTION FANATICS



*The following speech was delivered by **Philippe de Villiers**, Member of the French National Assembly, and President of the Movement for France (MPF), to the "Rally for a Referendum", held by the Congress for Democracy on Friday 7 Nov 2003 at Church House, Westminster.*

*Our thanks to **Sovereignty** subscriber **Harold Green** for bringing it to our attention.*

My friends,

For two decades, the European superstate has been advancing in disguise.

Today, it is casting aside its mask.

The current draft treaty, heavily influenced by the EU institutions which framed the Convention, is entitled – with admirable frankness – "The Constitution".

And in this constitution, we can pick out the shape – with, for the first time, reasonable clarity – a superstate.

A state with a single jurisdiction, a single institutional framework, a single legal personality.

A state whose laws over-ride our national constitutions, and before which our national statutes must bend.

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing asked the Convention: *"But is this entity we are creating a state or an international organisation?"*

He never came up with an answer; neither did the Convention.

But reading the text of the Constitution, we can discern the truth. Even if the new state is not completed yet, the important lines have already been sketched out.

We are dealing with a European superstate.

And that is why every good democrat in France wants the idea put to referendum. That was my own message to our President, Jacques Chirac, when I met him last week.

Yet French federalists seem to be doing all they can to stop the people from having their say.

They are terrified.

It is true that, according to the polls, most French people favour the idea of a constitution, at least in the abstract – it's a fine word, "constitution": we must concede that.

But that is because they don't know what is actually in it. Once they understand that what is being proposed is a superstate, they will surely turn against it.

And consider something else. Let us assume that such a referendum might realistically be held in the latter half of 2004. This would mean that it came just as the European Council was deciding whether or not to open accession talks with Turkey.

Now an overwhelming majority of French people oppose Turkey's admission.

If these two questions – the superstate and Turkish membership – become conflated in the minds of my countrymen, it would be explosive for the federalists.

All the more so when you consider that the new constitution, which accords voting weights by size of population, **would thus necessarily give Turkey a place in the first rank of decision making.**

Needless to say, the fear of mixing up the Turkish question with that of the superstate – however much it dominates private conversations in federalist circles – is never publicly acknowledged.

Officially, they use other arguments which I shall run through now, and answer in turn.

They fall into five categories:

1. THERE IS NO NEED FOR A REFERENDUM, BECAUSE THE PROPOSAL DOESN'T AMOUNT TO A REAL CONSTITUTION FOR A REAL STATE.

No doubt, even if the Constitution were adopted in its present form, the European superstate would not have been wholly achieved. Certain decisions would still have to be taken unanimously.

But the text contains a major innovation: it provides for unanimity to be abandoned by a simple decision of the European Council, without revising the constitution – in other words, without a new mandate from the peoples.

My party had pushed for Article One of the new text to read: *"The Union shall respect the national sovereignty of its Member States"*.

Obviously, we didn't get our way. All we got was Article Five, which says that *"The Union shall respect the national **identity** of its Member States"* – not the same thing at all.

2. IT IS A REAL CONSTITUTION, BUT IT DOESN'T CONTAIN ANYTHING NEW.

It is true that this text does what European Treaties usually do – that is, it confirms existing tendencies.

But at the same time it goes much further. Look at **Article Ten, which provides for the superiority of European over national law.**

Now the doctrine of the supremacy of EU law was developed by the European Court of Justice in the years 1963 and 1964. But Article Ten of the Constitution breaks new ground in two ways.

5. THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS CAN SERVE AS A REFERENDUM.

This argument first reared its head in Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's declaration in Rome on 18 July.

It holds that national parliaments should be free to ratify the constitution without direct reference to their electorates, taking into consideration instead the result of next year's European election.

Such a procedure would be completely illegal. For in this instance, it really would be the case that, instead of a single question being put, a whole series of questions would become intermingled.

What's more, from a strictly juridical point of view, MEPs have no authority over constitutional questions. Their election cannot be held to legitimise a constitutional revolution.

What Giscard proposed on 18 July would therefore hijack due process – and would do so on the gravest of subjects, one concerned with the subordination of national democracy.

Before I finish, I should like to underline what it is we are asking. We do not want a single pan-European referendum, but straightforward and honest national consultations, **carried out by each nation in accordance with its own traditions.**

To call for a single European referendum, to be decided by a majority in Europe as a whole, would be to assume that the nations no longer exist.

That would be to act as though the constitution and its consequences were already in force when, of course, it is the very adoption of the constitution which is in question. This would be quite monstrous from a legal perspective, and I hope it will never happen.

What we should be pushing for is for each nation to consult its people according to its own norms. For us in France, this means by referendum.

And, as I understand it, you in Britain are using similar arguments to ours.

Nevertheless, we must not remain separate during the campaign ahead. That would be greatly to the advantage of the European Commission which, like a spider at the centre of its web, has succeeded for decades **in playing one nation off against another.**

This time, we all share a great common interest: the preservation of our national democracies. This common interest should unite us despite our diversity.

In 1955, Jean Monnet set up an Action Committee for the United States of Europe, bringing together figures from different countries, with the aim of putting pressure on the authorities then drawing up the Treaty of Rome.

Today, we should create our own movement – the Action Committee for a Europe of Nations – to work together in the endeavour ahead. To develop our vision of a European concert, founded in respect for its nations. A Europe which is prosperous, democratic and free.

For one thing, the jurisprudential principle of the primacy of EU law has never previously been presented to, or ratified by, the peoples. It was never written into the Treaties. It was, rather, the result of a decision by the European judges of the day (then numbering six).

This creates a persistent misunderstanding between Europe and its peoples.

The EU lives by principles which it holds sacrosanct, but which the peoples have never been asked to ratify.

Secondly, in 1963, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice was concerned narrowly with the limited and technical fields of law necessary for the maintenance of the internal market. Within these strict confines, the supremacy of European law was arguably defensible.

But as the years have passed, the EU has steadily enlarged its own areas of competence – **even including competences which are the core of a sovereign state – without reconsidering the principle of its legal supremacy.**

We cannot now hand over to Brussels yet more fields of jurisdiction without tackling this question.

3. IT IS A REAL CONSTITUTION, BUT IT HAS ALREADY BEEN EXHAUSTIVELY DEBATED DURING THE CONVENTION.

Federalists would have us believe, by this argument, that there is no need for a referendum, because the relevant deliberations all took place during the drafting process. This is wholly and utterly untrue.

Discussions among selected representatives of governments and parliaments – who in any case had no mandate to draw up a constitution – are no substitute for popular approval.

If our governments really think it is a good substitute for referendum, then they should say clearly that we have changed our regime, that we are not any more in democracy.

In any case, I must tell you that the debates on the Convention were not honest: they were remote-controlled by the EU institutions.

4. IT REALLY IS A CONSTITUTION, BUT A REFERENDUM WOULD BE DANGEROUS, BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD DRAG IN A WHOLE LOT OF OTHER QUESTIONS.

This, of course, is a strong argument against holding elections at all. If people cannot be allowed to vote on issues as they please, why not do away with democracy altogether?

Obviously, in any set of elections, extraneous questions will, to some extent, enter the debate. But this happens far less in a referendum, where you are able to pose a single question clearly and precisely.

EU FISHERIES POLICY ENVIRONMENTALLY AND POLITICALLY FLAWED

The latest in-depth research paper by **Dr Richard North**, co-author of *The Great Deception: The Secret History of the European Union* (See **Sovereignty** October 2003) is entitled **Policy Options for Commercial Fisheries Management in UK Waters** and can be found on our website at www.sovereignty.org.uk/siteinfo/newsround/cfp.html

Anyone without access to the internet can obtain a print-out from us. Please send 6 2nd class stamps.

As Dr North's 3,800 word paper explains:

There is now increasing evidence that the core regime applied by the CFP is itself flawed, in terms of its appreciation of fish biology, the quality and treatment of data, and the treatment of fishermen.

So fundamental are these flaws that they are beyond reform. Therefore, the only hope of restoring British fishing grounds to commercial viability in the interests of all fishermen lies in returning control to the UK governments, and introducing entirely new management regimes.

Dr North examines in depth the reasons why the CFP is fundamentally flawed and sets out the options for a more rational policy. He concludes:

Reviewing the parameters for an effective fisheries management system, it seems clear that it must embody the following characteristics:

- *It must be designed for the specific fishery and be sufficiently flexible to account for the cultural and economic needs of the fishermen involved, and the characteristics of the fish stocks to be exploited.*
- *The fishery management must have absolute control of the fishing capacity, and be able to restrict the number and type of vessels permitted to fish.*
- *Overall fishing capacity should be controlled with regard to the levels of exploitable fish stocks.*
- *There should be a reasonably accurate assessment of fish stocks, which can only be determined with the active support of fishermen, who will only supply accurate data if they trust the management system.*
- *TAC [total allocated catch] systems are unworkable – fishing effort should be limited by use of 'input controls' such as 'days at sea', applied on an equitable basis to give all fishermen fair access to exploitable stocks.*
- *Fishing effort should be attuned to accord with population dynamics of fish stocks.*

Assessing the current policy applying to UK waters, ie. the CFP, it is clear that the nature of the CFP, embodying the treaty requirement for 'equal access', cannot and does not afford fisheries management the facility to control fishing capacity, and nor is fishing capacity attuned to the level of fish stocks available.

Nor, as a 'common' policy, can it allow for the flexibility required of an effective policy.

*Then, inherent in the system adopted under the CFP – the TAC/quota system – is a situation which mitigates against the collection of accurate fish stock data. **This is not a problem that can be solved, as it is an inherent failing of the system.***

*As to 'days at sea' limitations, these have been proposed by British governments, but the systems proposed have always been in addition to quota system, and were not to be applied to fishing fleets from other member states, **thus disadvantaging British fishermen.** Within the current CFP framework, 'days at sea' provisions cannot be equitable.*

Finally, as to the biological principles applied to the CFP, it is the case that, despite its obvious and transparent failures, the EU is committed to following ICES advice. Within that framework, it would not be possible to attune fishing effort to population dynamics in a realistic way.

On this basis, it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that the CFP is flawed and that, if an effective fisheries management regime is to be applied to UK waters, one of two things must happen: either the CFP must be reformed, or Britain must withdraw from the CFP and introduce its own policy, independently of the CFP, along wholly different lines.

It is a matter of political judgment as to whether seeking reform would be a realistic proposition, or whether – if it were possible – it could be achieved within a timescale that would be acceptable.

*Recent history, however, does not suggest that reform of something as acutely political as the CFP could be achieved, **in which case the only realistic alternative is withdrawal from the CFP.***

LAND EXODUS CONTINUES

According to the *Farmers Weekly* of 28th November, 17,000 farmers and farm workers left agricultural in England during the 12 months up to June 2003. Some 85,000 have left farming since the Labour government took office in 1997 – not including Scotland and Wales.

This exodus has a further negative impact upon rural economies in general. There is nothing mysterious about this. It happens as a direct result of political policy.

The answer is to support politicians who advocate an economic model – localisation – which promotes national self-reliance, who will invest appropriately, who will stand up to the EU, and who will make it a policy to encourage people *onto* the land, not off it.

For us, it is not enough that we complain, we must vote!



"THIS SHIP IS ENGLAND"

Alistair McConnell reviews *Master and Commander* and comments on some aspects of the popular culture this month.

Monitoring the popular culture – films, videos, music, magazines – is often a dismaying experience.

Occasionally, though, glimmers of light sneak

through the suffocating shroud which has been cast over our society by the masters of the mass media.

Glimmers which assure us that not every artist is wallowing in a dark, depressed and degenerate state of mind, body and spirit.

We spotted a couple of examples this month, and since our journal exists to encourage, rather than discourage, let us share them with you.

First up, the remarkable film *Master and Commander*, directed by **Peter Weir** and set in 1805, starring **Russell Crowe** as Captain Aubrey of HMS Surprise, which is being pursued around the coast of South America by the French Privateer Acheron, which is twice its size and twice its numbers.

That's basically the plot, such as it is, although it's more of an extended story with 2 major fight scenes interspersed with various nautical goings-on – including a chase, a storm, amputation, flogging, drowning, self-surgery, plus some slower, more reflective moments. As such, and at 2hrs 10mins, it's not going to be everybody's cup of grog.

And if you're expecting a film with lots of sex, unremitting coarse language, pounding rap music, domineering and cool black men, inadequate and evil white men, puerile and obscene humour, or gratuitously shocking violence, then you'll be disappointed.

However, if you want to see a film which is completely devoid of the above, and, amazingly for this day and age, devoid of any suggestion of "political correctness" then you'll like this film. If you like films which esteem heroism then you'll like this film. If you like period pieces with absolute attention to detail, then you'll like this film, and if you like extremely well-filmed sea battle and storm scenes, then you'll like this film.

And if you want to be reminded of a time when Britain was – dare we say it – "Great", then you'll like this film. And in that sense, this film is seriously off-message.

After all, today, the on-message is that British people should be "ashamed" of their past, that they shouldn't remember it, ideally they shouldn't even know about it, and they should keep their heads down, and they shouldn't stand up for themselves, and they should let everybody else, quite literally, walk all over them and their country, as some kind of penance.

That is the message which has been pounded into them like cannonballs from the Acheron, and it is the message to which – in the absence of a philosophy and political movement which has been able to express and harness opposition – they have been unable to fire back, and have temporarily succumbed.

Back to the film: Captain Aubrey is a self-confident, self-assured, patriarchal "King and Country" type of fellow, always ready for a fight. As such, he is already an unusual character for a modern film. The surgeon Dr Maturin, is more liberal, albeit somewhat of a "fighting naturalist". Both command the respect and admiration of the crew.

Political correctness would demand here that Aubrey be wracked and paralysed with self-doubt. Not a bit of it!

The ship is an organic world where everybody literally pulls together, or dies together. Everyone has his function, and everybody depends upon everyone else – a genuine "community".

The acting is excellent, and especially young actor **Max Pirkis** who must be about 13, and who played his age, as Warrant Officer **Lord Blakeney**. "Less of that cheek, Davis" he says to a seaman, at least 30 years his senior!

Another aspect of this film which we appreciated, is that there are no "take charge" blacks like **Denzil Washington** or **Morgan Freeman** put in deliberately, and ahistorically, to make white men look and feel inadequate and clumsy.

In a typical Hollywood film, you'd expect Captain Aubrey to be a confused wreck who can't command the ship properly and is only saved from his incompetence by his black slave who commandeers the ship and leads it to victory over the "racist" Frenchmen!

Amazingly, this doesn't happen.

Indeed, in this film, the black seamen we noticed are clearly chosen in their roles physically to resemble pure Africans – which, in this day and age, is a remarkable casting choice in itself.

American revisionist historian, **Michael Hoffman II**, has pointed out in his review at www.hoffman-info.com/wire5.html that many of the seamen would have been, essentially, white slaves who had been press-ganged into service, and that the class conflict and punishments were likely to have been more severe than suggested in the film.

But he also points to the film's virtues so eloquently that we reproduce some of his words here:

In his vigour, the captain displays the optimism and hope missing from many of the doom-dwellers in our ranks, who are exhausted by what they imagine to be an apocalyptic age.

Aubrey and his crew sail confidently into the future, amid whizzing cannon balls and immense adversity, marvelling at an age of wonders and invention, even as a "phantom" ship threatens to pursue them to a watery grave.

***Master and Commander* was filmed and is being distributed in what is reputed by our Cassandras to be a time so dark and so deadened by political correctness, that nothing like this movie was ever supposed to reach us.**

If we would have a future, we will train up a generation of Christian gentlemen like those which *Master and Commander* holds aloft for our admiration and emulation.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE IS FADING ... LIKE AN OLD DREAM

Although it is only one song on one album, *Age of Innocence* on the latest album by Heavy Metal rock band **Iron Maiden** is, to our knowledge, **a first in its genre**, and perhaps in the entire rock field.

We recently saw the band – which has been one of the world's biggest in this genre for the last 25 years – at the Glasgow SECC (a full review is on sovereignty.org.uk) and in the programme, bass player **Steve Harris** says of his song:

"This is me getting pissed off and angry at the judicial system, or rather the complete lack of it today in Britain. People today just don't think that they're being protected by the law anymore and they certainly don't believe that justice is being done.

"Obviously I've got kids and as a dad I don't think that my kids are as safe these days as what I was growing up. And that's a real loss, I think. We're not trying to be political, Maiden don't do that, this is just a personal view only, but I think what I'm saying is what a lot of people are thinking.

"If you take the law into your own hands then they come down on you like a ton of bricks for being a vigilante so I guess **I'm letting my anger and frustrations out as an Englishman who doesn't feel that safe anymore.**" Verses include:

*A life of petty crime gets punished with a holiday.
The victims' minds are scarred for life most everyday.
Assailants know just how much further they can go.
They know the laws are soft, conviction chances low.*

*You can't protect yourselves, even in your own home.
For fear of "vigilante" cries, the victims wipe their eyes.
So now the criminals, they laugh right in our face.
Judicial system lets them do it, a disgrace.*

*Despondent public worries where it all will end.
We can't protect ourselves, our kids, from crime, the trend.
We cannot warn each other of evil in our midst.
They have more rights than us, you cannot call that just.*

What is pleasing to this listener's ears is that the song is sung in Iron Maiden's usual aggressive and catchy style, giving those of us who like this band's music, easily remembered words which help us express our emotions **powerfully** in song – words which will be heard by, certainly hundreds of thousands, and **possibly millions**, of listeners. People who will keep the sentiment in their head, think about it, remember it, sing it and speak it, and as we always say, **without words there can be no action.**

If anyone knows of other rock songs from this perspective, please tell us.

We'd eventually like to have a regular page on the popular culture scene in an expanded journal. In the meantime, we'll keep you informed of more items, when we have the space.

ABOUT **SOVEREIGNTY**

Sovereignty is an independent monthly **Journal** edited and published by **Alistair McConnachie**. It is financed solely by subscriptions, advertisements and donations. It is not affiliated with any religious or political group, although it supported the efforts of **Independent Green Voice** at the May '03 Scottish Election.

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Sovereignty is committed to the consciousness-raising principle of **Free Speech, Debate and Enquiry**. We explore topics, develop and advocate **principles**, and publicise and campaign for **policies**, based around the broad theme of **Self-Determination** including: **National Self-Determination** – out the EU, and into the World **Sovereign Association for the Nations of Europe** – SANE, not EU **Popular Democracy** – not Plutocracy **Economic Democracy** – not Debt Slavery **Localisation** – not Globalisation **Food Sovereignty** – not Food Dependence. We advocate further related principles including Natural Farming, Animal Welfare, Pastoralism, Bio-diversity, Urban Farming, Permaculture, Opposition to Corporate Control, and Solidarity with Farmers Internationally.

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