

the supposed majesty and quality of the BBC. During his encounter with Ross, the leader of the party of William Pitt, Robert Peel, and Winston Churchill submitted without protest to smutty, puerile questioning on whether he had teenage sexual fantasies about Margaret Thatcher.

A recent speech on foreign policy, in which he appeared to distance himself from the neoconservative stance embraced by his party some time ago, was cunningly nuanced—like much that Cameron does—to give a false impression of his true position. He knows that the neocon association is a liability. But the speech did not alter the party's ongoing support for the Iraq War or the increasingly questionable British intervention in Afghanistan. The prominent British neoconservative Michael Gove continues to be one of Cameron's closest advisers on this and other matters and appears quite undisturbed by his leader's behavior. Danny Finkelstein, a commentator for Rupert Murdoch's generally neoconservative *Times*, concluded rather cleverly that the speech "may be seen as distancing conservatives from neoconservatives. In fact it does nothing of the sort. Instead it was endorsing neoconservatism and then trying to distance it from the conduct of foreign policy by George Bush and Tony Blair."

In his former career as a corporate spokesman for a rather undistinguished commercial TV company, Cameron obtained a reputation for slipperiness in a world of very slippery people. Jeff Randall, one of London's leading business journalists, recently recalled, "To describe Cameron's approach to corporate PR as unhelpful and evasive overstates by a widish margin the clarity and plain-speaking that he brought to the job. ... In my experience Cameron never gave a straight answer when dissemblance was a plausible alternative,

**Details of the Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Customs and Border Protection's latest proposal to regulate international travel have been emerging.**

Homeland Security has asked the White House and Congress to approve a plan that would require all U.S. citizens to obtain prior approval before traveling internationally. The proposal, which has a targeted date for implementation of January 14, 2007, would require all air carriers, ships, and even commercial vessels like fishing boats to provide lists of passengers in advance to enable Homeland Security to determine if anyone on the list is blocked from entry into or exit from the United States. Something like this is already being done with air travelers, but the new program is a radical departure in that it would require that every traveler be positively cleared, whereas the current procedure only responds to "hits" and blocks a traveler if there are security concerns and he appears on a "no-fly list." The procedure will be administrative, but it will also be considered classified to protect the "integrity" of the travel-restricted lists, so the validity of its information cannot be challenged. Under the new procedure, even a U.S. citizen who has departed the country legally could be denied the right to return if Homeland Security either specifically denies that right or does not provide express prior permission. This suspension of travel rights is already being carried out administratively by Homeland Security in select cases, including earlier this year when Jaber Ismail, an 18-year-old native-born U.S. citizen from California, was denied re-entry into the States for six months while his case was being reviewed. Under the new regulations, it is not clear what the appeals process would be or whether an appeal would be allowed at all. The program will undoubtedly be challenged in courts, as it is unprecedented that a U.S. citizen should require prior clearance to travel, even in time of war. The United States Supreme Court has ruled that there is a constitutional right for U.S. citizens to travel internationally and also that it is an "unconditional personal right."



**Yechezkel Wells, a Florida student, pleaded guilty on Oct. 24 to making a phony bomb threat after he called 911 at Long Beach Airport, near Los Angeles.**

Wells claimed that he had arrived at the terminal on Aug. 26 too late to clear security for his flight so he made the call, hoping to delay the departure so he could board. Instead, the airport was shut down while the plane was searched. Wells will be sentenced on Jan. 29 and faces a punishment that can range from probation to five years in prison. The FBI reportedly has kept the case open as Wells, an Israeli citizen who claims to be a student but does not appear to be registered for a course of study anywhere, is suspected of working for Israeli intelligence in some capacity. If it is determined that he might be from Mossad, he will undoubtedly be quietly deported on immigration charges to avoid embarrassing the Israeli government.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.*

which probably makes him perfectly suited for the role he now seeks: the next Tony Blair.”

The story of how this curious individual became the great hope of British political conservatism has yet to be properly told. During the contest for the Tory leadership last year, Cameron was not—at least to begin with—seen as a serious contestant. He had no important political experience. Yet he somehow acquired the significant support of many in the British media, who greatly overpraised a speech he made and were excessively cruel about a speech made by his main rival, the more traditional conservative David Davies. Space does not permit me to speculate here on the reasons for this, interesting as they are.

Some attribute Cameron's success to the operation of a still potent old-boy network. The son of a wealthy stockbroker, he had been educated at Eton College, an expensive school so closely

joined the Bullingdon, a rich boys' drinking club once satirized by Evelyn Waugh as the “Bollinger” in *Decline and Fall* and still trying to keep alive a pathetic fantasy of pre-1914 aristocratic rakehell behavior. Its braying, landed founders were in fact even worse than their modern imitators. They would have scorned a stockbroker's son as “trade” and thrown him into the nearest fountain after depriving him of his trousers.

And while Blair took a rather poor law qualification—we are not allowed to know his official grade—Cameron stayed sober enough to win a first class degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. I should say that Cameron is by far the brighter and much more knowledgeable about history. This shows when the two have their weekly verbal pillow-fight in the House of Commons. There, Cameron often does well—but not always. He was wholly useless a few weeks ago when the British army's dis-

about Saddam's weapons because they wanted to. Thanks to their inability to escape from this mistake, Cameron missed one of the great Parliamentary opportunities of his life. The general, who under any previous government would have been fired on the spot for interfering in politics, has kept his job because he is so obviously right and because Blair is now too weak to get rid of him.

Yet that weakness has not benefited the Conservatives all that much. Before the Tory collapse, when Britain had a proper two-party system, Blair's troubles would have resulted in a surge of support for the opposition party. But all opinion surveys show that around 35 percent of voters are now so disaffected that they either refuse to say which way they will vote, don't know, or have given their backing to minority parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party, which has taken up almost all the policies once associated with the Tories but now dumped by them.

The poll summaries tend to leave out the army of the disgusted and so overstate what appears to be a modest Tory lead, nothing near enough to guarantee office in 2009. But even these figures may exaggerate Cameron's advance and may underestimate his problem in mobilizing his own side while wooing those who despise his party. At a recent special election to replace a deceased Tory member of Parliament, the Conservative vote shriveled so badly that the party almost lost one of its safest House of Commons seats. What a strange nation Britain has become, in which—under one of the worst governments and worst prime ministers in living memory—the voters register a protest against the main opposition party and its leader. ■

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

## **THE TORIES, ASHAMED OF HAVING DELIVERED THE COUNTRY TO RULE BY THE EUROPEAN UNION, ARE OFTEN ANXIOUS TO APPEAR NOISILY PATRIOTIC WHEN THE GUNS BEGIN TO SHOOT.**

associated with toffee-nosed aristocratic languor that its very name can inflame ancient passions of class hatred among Britons. Since the cultural revolution of the 1960s, such a background has generally been seen as a drawback in a political career—not that he had shown very much interest in politics at the age when such things usually appear, while he was a student at Oxford University.

In this Cameron is again very like Blair, who has always been thought to have had no political affiliations during his time at Oxford. But while Blair used up his energies as the Mick Jaggeresque lead singer in a rock band, Cameron

tinguished and decorated chief of staff, Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt, openly suggested that it was time for British troops to leave Iraq and added that Britain needed to rediscover its Christian roots if it wanted to resist militant Islam. The unelected, nonpolitical general had suddenly articulated national feeling better than the official leader of the opposition.

Cameron was quite unable to take advantage because of his own past support for the war. The Tories, ashamed as they are of having delivered the country bound and gagged to rule by the European Union, are often anxious to appear noisily patriotic when the guns begin to shoot and believed the feeble rubbish

# Return of the Native

The Left begins to recognize that it can't simultaneously fight for its working-class base and the multicultural agenda.

By Kara Hopkins

THE EDITORS of *The Nation* are confounded. "What's Fueling the New Nativism?" they asked. Their readers answered: we are.

"The roots of this xenophobic upsurge—fueled by economic frustrations and national-security phobias, and inflamed by voices of hatred—run far too deep ..." claimed the lead editorial of the Aug. 28 issue. (They were not discussing some sudden proliferation of KKK rallies but recent immigration-reform efforts.) "[N]o one could have foreseen the breadth and fury of the new nativism that has risen up from Middle America with an ominous roar."

Neither, apparently, could the old baron of leftist opinion have foreseen the breadth and fury of its audience's reaction. The Nov. 13 issue confesses to "an avalanche of furious mail":

"All who oppose illegal immigration are not right-wing racist extremists," a North Carolinian chastised the editors. "I myself am black. And those of us in the lower depths are definitely negatively affected—not only by the downward pressure on wages but by the fact that a requirement for many jobs now is the ability to speak Spanish!" Another reader responded, "Your characterization of people who are anti-illegal immigration as racists is unfair and untrue. Like myself, most are just working stiffs. I'm a plumber, trying to hold on to my job and a way of life I grew up with." Another went further: "By labeling concerns of American workers 'nativism,' you dismiss those concerns as reac-

tionary or invalid. Characterizing those concerns as racist or xenophobic allows you to ignore the economic impact on the working class while gallantly mounting your high horse in defense of the oppressed minority you prefer to focus on."

That's the flashpoint of the conflict, and Democrats' answer will define their political fortunes. The party long perceived as fighting for the little guy has taken on new charges whose demands increasingly clash with the interests of its historic base. Their discontent—dismissed as prejudice—is a legitimate reaction to being forsaken as the Left attempts to force broad populism, its most reliable electoral asset, into a narrow multiculturalist mold.

Populism is one of the more elusive themes in American politics—and in terms of electoral utility, one of the most potent in this country without kings. From the earliest days when patriots served tea and treason in Boston Harbor, deep in the national DNA runs a satisfying view of ourselves as combative idealists taking the fight to outsized opponents. Those who tap that current touch something primal—and for decades the Democrats did.

Drawing an urgent divide between "two great classes—tramps and millionaires" in the dust of westward expansion gone bust at the close of the 19th century, the People's Party platform surveyed the dark side of prosperity and found a "nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin."

These Populists—so called by an Ohio editorialist—failed to triumph under their own power. But they sufficiently defined an American sympathy to siphon one million votes and cost Republican President Benjamin Harrison re-election.

When the "Great Commoner" William Jennings Bryan ran the next cycle, the Populists sold out for free silver, and both lost. Populism would enjoy no revival as an organized political force—in pure form it is too easily caricatured as anti-capitalist, much as the original intent ran counter to the Marxist dream, arguing not for abolition of private property but for its protection against corporate consolidation. But the Democrats had acquired a political code key. From Franklin Roosevelt's "economic royalists" to "Give 'em hell" Harry Truman, fanfares for the common man became whistle-stop vogue. In rhetoric if not in action, Democrats were able to define themselves as champions of the producers versus Bryan's "idle holders of idle capital" and reaped political dividends from FDR to LBJ.

But then the populist persuasion began to undergo a near fatal mutation from which it has yet to recover. In 1964, George Wallace took to the national stage burnishing familiar credentials by blasting "eastern money interests" and "bearded bureaucrats." But he tweaked the old formula by refocusing "us versus them" to segregation's advantage: his little guy was white. By the time Wallace left the party—taking 10 million votes