

Dealing With the Devil

I do not normally take pronouncements from show-business folk seriously—they are almost always publicity ploys—but in the Mia Farrow and Steven Spielberg case against Beijing's "Genocide Olympics," I will gladly make an exception. We all know that there is something rotten at the heart of modern sport, starting with the Olympics, which was, once upon a time, a meeting of gifted and courageous amateurs vying for glory, and is now reduced to a festival of corporate greed and nationalistic jingoism.

As China scours the world for raw materials—soya beans and iron from Brazil, copper from Chile and Zambia, oil from Venezuela and Sudan, natural gas from Iran and Burma—she does not exactly demand a clean sheet where human rights are concerned. And why should she? Giant American corporations will deal with the devil, so long as the profits keep rolling in. But there are limits. The one black spot that has isolated communist China is the sale of weapons to Khartoum, as bloodthirsty a regime as Robert's Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and one that has killed 200,000 people while forcing a further 2.5 million from their homes in a classic case of ethnic cleansing. China, of course, turns a blind eye to the genocide, because Khartoum delivers two thirds of its huge oil reserves to Beijing.

Back in 1957, my father had been approached by two "gentlemen" while exiting his house in Athens. They had a crumbled piece of paper with my name on it, and their English was described by my father as Brooklynese. He immediately got the message. He told them to follow him to his office and paid them \$4,000 on the spot. "They were very polite," he told me later, "and I thanked them for helping me decide that my younger son was an idiot and very stupid to boot." Two weeks before, I had borrowed \$2,000 from them in New York in order to continue my pursuit of a fa-

mous Hollywood actress in style. I had signed a note guaranteeing them double in 15 days. In the throes of romance at age 20, two weeks can seem a lifetime. I also planned to skip town as the weather was hotting up. That evening, my father announced at dinner that my punishment for my recklessness would be exile to Khartoum, where he owned the largest textile factory in Africa, providing 5,000 air-conditioned jobs to grateful Sudanese.


It was some punishment. I was installed in a large house by the banks of the Nile, with two servants and a chauffeur, and in no time was introduced to President Abboud, a benevolent general (and a favorite of Jackie Kennedy) to whom I would give a monthly stipend of £100 as a gesture of good will. I played tennis with the great German Baron Gottfried von Cramm, a three-time Wimbledon finalist, rubbed shoulders with the Kroups, who were building a bridge between Omdurman and Khartoum north, and fell madly in love with Grace K—, a beauty who may have been the model for Justine, in Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*. On weekends, we would all fly privately to Alexandria for more cosmopolitan high jinks, with Bill Wilde, the CIA station chief and a Yul Brynner lookalike, providing the transport. Every night, we'd meet at Gordon's, an outdoor nightclub that provided the ultimate in Arab pre-war hospitality, if you know what I mean. The European contingent was straight out of Durrell, if not Fitzgerald.

My idyllic lifestyle was not to last. The descendant of the Mahdi, the slayer of General Gordon in the siege of Khartoum 60-some years before, overthrew General Abboud, nationalized our factories, and sent me packing. Having won the Sudanese tennis championship two years running, I was not detained at the airport as my father feared. (The German contingent had cleared out earlier, but I was



in love and had stayed behind.) Ten years later, on my way to Kenya on a photographic safari, I stopped in Khartoum and visited the factory. It was a burned-out shell. So much for "foreigners out" nationalism.

Which brings me to the point of my story. Between 1983 and 2005—well before the killings in Darfur—Muslims murdered two million Christians and other "infidels" in southern Sudan and displaced four million more, with thousands sold into slavery. This genocide was ignored by the West. A peace agreement between north and south left the capital Khartoum as a stronghold of *sharia*. Furthermore, the north has been Islamicizing the south by coercion, offering housing and medical help in exchange for conversion. There is an ever-widening push by Muslims to control the Horn of Africa, and in Nigeria, 12 states are now governed by *sharia*. This is the outcome of a systematic plan funded largely by Saudi Arabia in cahoots with Khartoum. The great prize is a new continental front in the war to Islamicize the free world. Africa will soon be what Afghanistan was to terrorism in the turn of this century.

Sudan, like Zimbabwe, should be classified a pariah state, shunned by all nations who belong to the useless United Nations. But China needs oil, and Sudan needs guns to kill Christians and Africans—hence, the Farrow-Spielberg protest. For once, it is not a cynical ploy for publicity but a decent gesture against the cynicism of the Chinese commies. But I have yet to hear from the Bush White House. In fact, in response to Sudan's genocide, it might invade Malta. 

Prejudice Made Plausible

by Jack Trotter

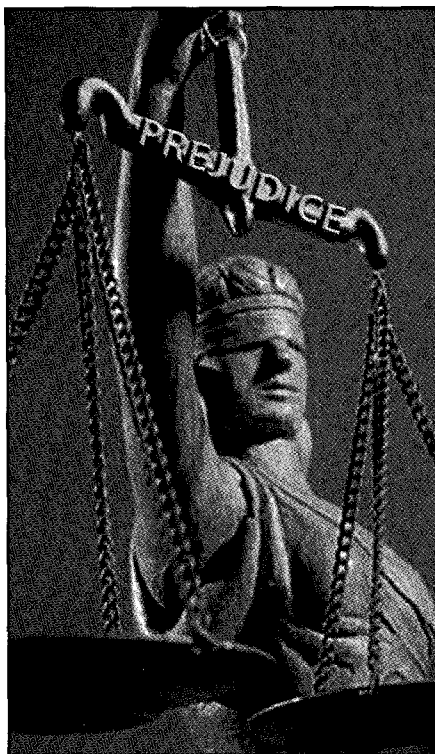
"Without the aid of prejudice and custom, I should not be able to find my way across the room."

— William Hazlitt

In Praise of Prejudice: The Necessity of Preconceived Ideas
by Theodore Dalrymple
New York: Encounter Books;
129 pp., \$20.00



The "prejudice against prejudice," as Theodore Dalrymple ironically terms it, has become so culturally pervasive that many—perhaps most—people are completely unaware that the term has not always been exclusively pejorative. The Latin *prejudicare*, in its primary sense, meant simply to "judge or rule beforehand" (as in a legal proceeding), though it could also signify an injurious action. Eric Partridge, in his etymological dictionary *Origins*, cites Tertullian as an early example of one who employed the term in this latter sense. Moreover, it is also true that the OED's citations, dating back to the 13th century, are weighted heavily on the side of injury or "hasty judgement." Yet in its most inclusive meaning (most relevant for present purposes), *prejudice* is simply "a feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward any person or thing, prior to [sic] or not based on actual experience; . . . an unreasoning predilection or objec-



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tion" (OED). Please note that "unreasoning" need not in itself imply anything malicious or hurtful. I have a prejudice against Brussels sprouts; I have never actually tasted them. I am put off my feed by the odor alone. I have never subjected my prejudice to empirical enquiry. When it comes to the odious sprout, I am anything but Baconian, yet my prejudice against the pale cabbage is perfectly harmless.

Whether I prefer broccoli or Brussels sprouts, Bach or Beethoven, is, of course a matter of "taste," or prejudice. Everyone recognizes that in matters of aesthetic judgement, prejudice is an inescapable factor. I will no doubt believe until the day I die that Bach is superior to Beethoven, but I do not (unless my unreasoning predilection

has become fanatical) stigmatize the lover of Beethoven as somehow an inferior being. There is no malice in my prejudice. And I would be the first to admit that I can never "prove" to the satisfaction of any but lovers of Bach that *The Musical Offering* is a finer work than anything Beethoven ever composed. But when we move from the purely aesthetic realm (if there is such a thing) into the realms of morality, politics, jurisprudence, or even scientific judgement, most of us are apt to suppose that prejudice not only can be but should be eliminated from our deliberations. Yet, as Theodore Dalrymple attempts to demonstrate in his *In Praise of Prejudice*, prejudice plays an indispensable role in all judgment and is closely allied to the formation of character. Thus, Edmund Burke once wrote that "Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit. . . . Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature." For most of our contemporaries, Burke's apothegm is virtually incomprehensible. How, we might ask, can a prejudice be just? Isn't that simply oxymoronic? And doesn't Burke reveal the injustice of his own prejudices by employing sexist language ("a man's virtue") and by assuming that there is such a thing as human nature? And what about that hurtful word "duty," which implies some external code of behavior that may do injury to our pursuit of per-

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