REVIEWS

Tapio Nykänen, Tiina Seppälä, Petri Koikkalainen (eds.): *Civil Disobedience From Nepal to Norway: Traditions, Extensions, and Civility*

Routledge, 2022

Reviewed by **Julian Reid,** ***University of Lapland***

This is a very valuable new book which makes the reader think about a concept which is often used but not so often interrogated or opened up to critical discussion. As it reveals, both the spaces and practices of civil disobedience are incredibly diverse. The book takes us on a geographic journey, from Norway to Nepal and onto Taiwan, and in doing so discusses a wide range of different instances of civil disobedience, from practices concerned with issues of drugs harm, to indigenous struggles, to the contestation of regimes of immigration, as well as rights to refuge. It is also a book which destabilizes the traditional differences between the political left and right. Civil disobedience is not a pure concept or practice, as this book shows. It is not something we can either simply say 'yes, we need more of that' to, nor 'no, we don't need that'. For civil disobedience is a thorny and ambiguous concept and practice, and one that leads at the very least to further questions.

One of those questions is that of the relation of civil disobedience to culture, as well as to colonialism, and questionable distinctions between western and non-western cultures. In an early chapter of the book, Stellan Vinthagen and Jørgen Johansen tell the story of a group of Norwegians activists travelling to India in search of the holy grail of civil disobedience in the late 1960s. The development of civil disobedience in the Norwegian context owed a lot to the cross-fertilization of ideas and practices from East to West, and from India to the Nordic regions of Europe more especially. The influence of Gandhi was paramount in this story. Lest one get the idea, however, that civil disobedience was simply transferred from East to West, it is well worth dwelling on the arguments made by others that Gandhi developed his own ideas about non-violence, and resistance through civility and disobedience, on account of the influence of Christianity, as well as his

readings of Tolstoy, Thoreau, and other figures within nominally western canons of thought and practice. Howard Caygill's book on Resistance has conveyed these complexities of Gandhi very well, as well as the complexity of the relations of violence to non-violence (Caygill 2013).

One thing which it makes abundantly clear is that the practices of civil disobedience are much richer than the theory of civil disobedience. The existing theory of civil disobedience cannot possibly grasp the depths and riches of the phenomenon. In this context, the chapter by Neetu Pokharel, Som Niroula, and Tiina Seppälä on the case of a hunger striking couple in Nepal is really pertinent. As the chapter illustrates, people are capable of conducting civil disobedience without any direct knowledge of the theory or conceptual baggage of the practice. At their best theories and concepts of civil disobedience may well contribute to the development of political practices, but the practice of civil disobedience does not, ultimately, need the theory of it to exist and prosper.

Secondly, in detailing the development of civil disobedience, as both concept and practice, dating modestly from the 19th century, the book shows how civil disobedience testifies to a remarkable expansion in the powers of the political imagination. For so long the political imagination remained dominated by violence, by the belief as to the necessity of violence, and dissolution of law. Civil Disobedience, on the other hand, testifies to the ways in which political movements have discovered different ways of working; ways of using non-violence as opposed to violence; and ways of working with the limits of the law; upholding the law while breaking it; retaining and contributing to civility. These new ways of working have required new images of what it is to resist. In a way civil disobedience is always successful, in so far as it signifies a capacity to resist non-violently. This is always an expression of success.

In this sense, and the third lesson the book teaches its reader, civil disobedience testifies to a massive expansion in the tactical awareness and operability of resistance during the modern era. Movements are so much richer in their capacities for resistance, when they have at their disposal both the means of violence and non-violence, and the ability to exercise judgement as to when and where either violence or non-violence, civility or uncivility, are appropriate.

It is necessary to underscore the reality that civil disobedience should not be seen simply as existing in opposition to violence or uncivil methods

of resistance. On some readings of Gandhi, for example, it has been possible to get the impression that it is precisely this; and that movements using civil disobedience have made such a choice, to reject violence, out of strategic necessity. This is a mistake, and it is essential to retain an understanding of civil disobedience as a compliment to violence. Neither of the extremist interpretations of Mao or Gandhi are right. Power is neither necessarily always won from the barrel of a gun, nor is violence itself lacking in the 'soul-force' ascribed to peaceful means. In some cases, non-violence works and in others it does not. The same goes for violence. In many cases, and possibly all cases, some combination of the two probably works best.

Considering the Indian Independence movement, for example, the political theorist Ranabir Samaddar**,** has made this point very well, not least in his work, ***The Emergence of the Political Subject*** (Samaddar 2010). It was not the Indian National Congress, nor its leader, but many, indeed innumerable lives and acts of resistance, many of which were violent, which contributed to the end of British rule in India, and Indian national independence. The fourth chapter of Samaddar's book, dealing as it does with Ullaskar Dutta, details not just how violence but terror too has its place in theories and practices of resistance.

All of which is to underscore the need to question further the limits of the theory of civil disobedience, especially the overbearing influence of John Rawls. Rawls' notorious essay on civil disobedience, written in 1969, and in the wake of Paris 1968, was never intended for the problems faced by protestors or activists. It was a purposively conservative essay aimed at addressing the perceived 'danger of anarchy' then haunting the West's most advanced democracies (Rawls 1999: 188). It is obvious that Rawls was not interested in resistance as such. What he was interested in was preserving an existing order, and therefore in prescribing the limits of what can be done in and to an already existing constitutional democracy. Anarchy understood as a threat to democracy is the 'danger' which, after all, he ended that essay on.

But what if we start with the understanding that liberal democracy is not all that it is cracked up to be? Justice in the face of the many forms of violence perpetrated by constitutional democracies may well be seen to demand that we break the limits of the law. In this sense, the theory of civil disobedience does not necessarily resonate with the goals of the new social movements which emerged in the 60s and 70s, as argued in the first chapter of this book. Instead, it functions to discipline and block them. In the case

of Rawls, I would argue that this was its express purpose. And that as such it plays a functional role in US hegemony, to extrapolate a point made by Taru Haapala in her Arendt-inspired chapter of this book.

As such this book is valuable for its contribution to the further breakdown of the Rawlsian thesis. The chapter by Manohar Kumar on the roles of whistleblowers is excellent as a demonstration of the weakness of Rawlsian theory and its incapacities to accommodate important forms of civil disobedience such as anonymous whistleblowing. Secrecy is indeed a really valuable tool which should be exploited creatively for resistance; its existence does not reduce the value of resistance *a la* Rawls. Again, this is to emphasize the importance of getting over the division and distinction between civil and uncivil means of resistance, as well as violence and non-violence. The relation between civil disobedience and colonialism is also one that need a lot further thought. Civil disobedience has no doubt been useful as a tool of resistance to colonialism in some contexts, but nobody in their right mind would argue that it has been an adequate framework for organizing resistance to colonialism, either today or in the past.

There is another paradox here which reveals itself in the present context of the Russian occupation of Ukraine and growing Russian imperialism in Europe and beyond, which is the mainstreaming of civil disobedience into a 'technology of citizenship' to use a term employed by Tiina Seppälä in her chapter. By this I mean the ways in which civil disobedience is now promoted in those countries most vulnerable to Russian invasion and interference under the guise of a new doctrine of resilience (Reid 2022). This is not only happening in Ukraine, but in other countries, particularly the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, where citizens are already being instructed in how to practice civil disobedience in advance of their being forced to suffer a reimposition of imperial Russian rule.

The matter of resistance to Russian imperialism is an important case in point, also, for bringing to light the complexities of relations of violence to non-violence, aggression and violence to disobedience, terror to civility. For in such cases no meaningful resistance is going to be successful which does not involve the ability to do violence, to strike the enemy with blows, and to kill and maim. This is of relevance too to the Finnish context from which the many of the authors of this book hail as well as address. The chapter by Stellan Vinthagen discusses in fascinating terms the relevance of 'passive resistance' to nationalist struggles for independence in Finland and other

countries. However, again, it is important to stress the roles of violence and force in achieving independence for Finland as much as other peoples.

All of which begs the essential question of knowing when and how to choose between civil disobedience and other less civil means. What determines the success of a given use of civil disobedience and what determines its failures? Seppälä's essay on civil disobedience in contemporary Finland, and its relative failures is really engaging for that reason. How 'success' is conceived is a crucial question here.

Which bridges to another crucial point, present in the book but one which demands explicating a little further; the relative privilege of many of the subjects of civil disobedience. Often when we are considering a case of civil disobedience we are considering an act which is designed to both elicit and express empathy and solidarity. For example, the case discussed in this book of the Swedish and Finnish activists fighting deportation. However, civil disobedience as a method of resistance to the conditions of injustice suffered directly by the victims of injustice does not always make such good sense. For someone suffering deportation or another form of deprivation, there might be options of civil disobedience (hunger striking for example), but the strategic rationalities are inevitably different. That person or group may not have the same access to publicity as a citizen, for example. This is not to dismiss the use of civil disobedience by individuals and groups seeking to express solidarity and give support to the struggle of peoples suffering injustice. It is to point to the limits of civil disobedience and give context to the processes by which some people on the more brunt end of injustice may sensibly make other choices**.**

The relation of CD to publicity also makes it—often, if not always—essentially aesthetic and performative. This point is otherwise well conveyed in the chapter on the roles of artistic protests in civil disobedience by Nykänen, Lehtola and Vinkka. The performative and aesthetic turn in resistance is an interesting one. It is part of the wider development of a global attention economy in which spectacle is the essential currency. To be successful, resistance within this economy has to be visible and it has to be affective on the sensibilities of a global audience. Which is why the arts have become so politicized in recent years. However, one could argue that the key concept here is economy. There is an economy of power and of raw capital at work in the mobilization of these kinds of artistic protests. The economy around indigenous arts, celebrating the resistance of indigenous cultures and

peoples, for example (Reid 2019). Aesthetic and performative acts of 'civil disobedience' generate massive profits for those agencies who are able to exploit them. Witness the sports gear manufacturer Nike's capitalization on Colin Kapernick's disobedience in American Football, as another example of such commercial exploitation.

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating a central point made by Koikkalainen, Nykänen and Harjumaa in their chapter of this book, which is that civil disobedience is always a kind of moral and discursive claim; a way, that is, of justifying an action, to an audience, which is presupposed to possess a similar sense of justice as the agent of the act. It speaks on the understanding that in doing so it makes sense, and that it can and will be heard. However, in doing so it is haunted by that which it is not, that action which it defines itself against, theoretically and in practice, the uncivil, and not merely disobedient, but violent act by which another seeks to destroy the law, and violate the senses. The question we are left with is that of the precise relation of the one act to the other. Is it to dismiss and denigrate or deny the other as that which I am not that one uses the term civil disobedience to describe what it does? It is this problem which Arun Gupto addresses in his chapter's treatment of cultural versus political resistance. A cultured resistance is one that has learnt what not to do, whereas a political resistance always entails the possibility of a militant violence, not in the sense that it strikes out, with blows, to hurt the enemy, but that it does not conform to the law. It is an event in the proper sense of the term. It is violent in its form and not simply in its action. Of course, when we are considering the example of Gandhi, it is obvious that his was a very violent form. A form which made no sense in context of the then present languages and cultures of resistance. Over time it has become routinized into something which is taught and trained, a school of thinking and practicing into which people are educated and civilized. Yet to resist like Gandhi today ought not to mean to simply do as Gandhi did then, but to break the mould, to do violence to the mould, in the way that he precisely did. Such breaking of the moulds of the cultural and political present may well involve doing violence to the concept and practice of civil disobedience.

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Juha Suoranta: *Militant Freire*

DIO Press, 2021

Reviewed by **G. Brandon Swann, *Resistance Studies Initiative, University of Massachusetts Amherst***

Critical scholar and adult education professor Juha Suoranta's *Militant Freire* is an insightful text about Paulo Freire's radical life. In 112 pages, it is easy to devour in a day. As a Finnish professor at the University of Tampere, Suoranta writes for an international audience. In the introduction, he illuminates an essential aspect of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed:* 'Freire also taught me that education and social sciences were political phenomena and that a militant approach was needed' (p. 9). This helped me to understand the classic work on critical education better. It changed my life even more than my initial reading of the book.

After the introduction, the book has three parts: 'Action', 'Reflection', and 'Vorwärts! Forward!' In the book's first part, Suoranta reflects on Freire's childhood and radical thrust into international fame. In the second part—as the renowned critical scholar and one of the founding figures of critical pedagogy, Peter McLaren, describes in the Forward—Suoranta shows the application of Freire's 'militant methodology in social science research, critical pedagogy, and public life' (p. 5).

Under the subheading, 'Dangerous Freire', Suoranta writes of the need for a pedagogy of the oppressed in this authoritarian climate in which

we live. He also gives us more background on the early life of Freire. He demonstrates how important it is to do more than teach and research; it is necessary to be politically involved to bring about societal change. One of my misunderstandings was clarified, as the author writes:

> Freire's concept of dialogue has sometimes been misunderstood as a pleasant conversation between two seemingly equal parties. However, he thought of dialogue as a means of critically studying the difference between oppressed workers and the ruling class […] In the Freirean attitude of the militant, critical dialogue emphasizes the class conflict and antagonisms between the two classes, that of capital owners and the proletariat (p. 24).

Under the subheading 'Revolutionary Pedagogy', I was able to gain more clarity. In my initial readings of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, I was so enthralled with an alternative to the 'Banking System of Education', as Freire called it, that I missed what Professor Suoranta asserts: 'It is fundamentally about political revolution and a militant strategy'. Upon reading this, I felt a fire burn inside me to become more politically active. He goes on to write about the 'Four Pillars of Revolutionary Action: cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis' (p. 32).

Suoranta illuminates the two phases of revolutionary action that Freire describes—pre-revolution and the cultural revolution, and tells us about the strategies for each. At one point, he quotes Freire on armed resistance, which made me think of the pragmatic nonviolence of Gene Sharp. However, I believe that Freire was more principled than pragmatic. I appreciate Suoranta's assertion that while Freire believed in revolutionary change inspired by Marxist ideas and the need for leaders, he was against authoritarian leadership. This seems to be a mistake that has been repeated countless times in the macro and microcosm of revolutionary left-wing change.

Suoranta also writes that we learn from Freire that 'there is an absolute need for a revolutionary party, which also has a pedagogical role' (p. 41). This made me think of the importance of the Democratic Socialists of America's political education program. He goes on to argue that the 'Banking System of Education' cannot be dismantled within a capitalist system and that it is only possible under democratic socialism; he reminds us that 'critical pedagogues have pointed out (Giroux, 1988, 2005), teachers and cultural workers,

through their relative autonomy, can do a great deal as transformative intellectuals, even under capitalist conditions, by practicing the politics and pedagogy of hope' (pp. 42–43). Contrastingly, 'The revolutionary party which refuses to learn—with the masses of people, and by so refusing, breaks the dialectical unity between teaching and learning, is not revolutionary. It has become elitist'. As Peace and Conflict Studies become more mainstream, this is essential to keep in mind. For this reason, maintaining close ties with activists is necessary, as is not allowing our field to be co-opted by the neoliberal state.

Suoranta continues to the second half of his book ('Action') by talking about the militant spirit, pointing out that it is not a solitary endeavor but a collective one. I believe this is important to create worldwide connections amongst resistance scholars and activists. He quotes Iris Murdoch that any 'moral philosophy must be inhabited' (2014, p. 46). This is the importance of participatory action research. Therefore, resistance researchers need to work hand in hand with activists.

He also talks about a methodology for militants, where we are asked several questions following Norman Denzin (2016): What kind of research task do we want to do? For whom is it intended? What difference does it make? Who will do it? How do we want to do it? How do we know that it is worthwhile? Who 'owns' it? Who benefits from it?

These were critical questions at the European Peace Research Association conference, where I met Suoranta. These are questions that I have learned to ask from being an intern with the Resistance Studies Initiative (RSI), which made me realize that I am already on a team of militant researchers. Suoranta makes the case that by using qualitative methods, participatory action research, and activist research, combined with participation in active movements, we are rehearsing 'for "revolutionary awareness" (Berger, 1968) or Freire's (2005) conscientização—critical collective consciousness' (p. 68).

I agree with the author that militant research grows out of the researcher's lived experience, because I was raised in various narrow social movements, which inspired me to be with the (RSI). It was very thought-provoking to read that militant researchers should view ideas like 'sophisticated quantitative methods and big data […] as ideologies' and look for the power structures within these forms of methodology. They are only 'possible worlds' (p. 77).

Suoranta's short booklet shows the importance of groups such as the RSI at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the Resistance Studies

Network. It is a call to action for those tired of the neoliberal paradigm within education, specifically the Peace and Conflict Studies community. Suoranta uses the background knowledge of Freire's life to paint a picture of what it means to be a militant researcher and how to begin.

Suoranta writes from a human perspective, touching on feelings, needs, and methodology. I agree with the author that during this time of increased right-wing authoritarianism, we need an increase in militant researchers. I would add to the argument that there is an increase in neoliberal dictatorship, of which we should be equally critical. This inspiring text calls for researchers of the radical left to reclaim their power.

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Michael Randle: *Rebel Verdict*

Irene Publishing, 2022

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Michael Randle's *Rebel Verdict* provides a detailed account of his and Pat Pottle's 1991 trial at the Old Bailey, for aiding the escape of double agent George Blake from Wormwood Scrubs prison in 1966.

It is a credit to Randle and Irene Publishing that they have managed to bring together this text from the complexities of the accounts and official records available. An indicator of the scale of this endeavour is given by the fact that Roger Hermiston, writing in his 2013 book *The Greatest Traitor: The Secret Lives of Agent George Blake*, thanks Michael for generously giving him access to "some of his private papers and to a gripping chapter in another of his books, the as yet unpublished *Rebel Verdict*, an account of his 1991 trial on charges of helping Blake escape" (Hermiston, 2013, p.xv). The result is a book that is thoroughly engaging, if one requiring a higher level of concentration to keep the characters and legal wrangling at the forefront of one's mind, particularly with the profound moral considerations encapsulated by the case running alongside.

Using information that has come to light since 1991, the first three chapters update the story told in *The Blake Escape* (1990)—a fascinating book in its own right—of Blake's escape, the security service investigations, the late-1980s revelations of the involvement of Michael and Anne Randle as well as Pat Pottle, and the events leading up to Michael and Pat's trial. Some of the dates for events are clarified, while police reports and witness statements are drawn on. There are impressive details from these, showing that, even if the initial police and intelligence investigations were somewhat misdirected, Randle, Pottle and Bourke came very close to being fortuitously (for the authorities) caught in the months following Blake's escape.

Rebel Verdict is a very human and at times touching presentation of Randle's experiences, particularly given his magnanimity towards those who are not necessarily deserving of it. Randle is admirably even-handed about

Seán Bourke, despite Michael, Anne and Pat seeming to be expendable in Bourke's apparent quest for the notoriety of involvement in Blake's escape. For example, Bourke would ring the Special Branch officer involved in investigating the case. Blake sent a version of Bourke's book back to him with redacted passages, as a strong hint that the Randles and Pottle should have their identities protected: 'all to no avail, as it happened, since Seán promptly re–instated them'. Moreover, Randle conveys his disappointment in himself for reacting angrily to Inspector Bird serving the charging order on him, which would have seen both Michael and Randle having their homes repossessed in the event of being found guilty (p.137). This was a spitefully punitive measure—purportedly relating to the proceeds from *The Blake Escape*—particularly considering they had been motivated to write the book in response to innocent people being suspected of involvement (pp.134-136), and given that *Rebel Verdict* shows the British authorities were content not to prosecute for 20 years. The personal, career and family implications were already harsh (pp.138-139). It is worthwhile pointing out something not mentioned in *Rebel Verdict*, rather in Hermiston's (2013) *The Greatest Traitor*, that 'Blake had vowed that if his friends were imprisoned he would turn himself over to the British in exchange for their release. Whether the Home Secretary would have countenanced such an extraordinary offer was moot' (p.338). This surely raises further the contentiousness of any claims to the moral high ground on the part of the prosecuting authorities.

From Chapter 8 until Chapter 26, for 320 pages, *Rebel Verdict* then enters the territory of Randle and Pottle's court hearings and ultimately their trial. Some aspects are summarised, others take the form of reconstructions of exchanges from Randle's notes and substantial sections of the court transcripts. The latter makes for a dense text at times that may require perseverance, although which ultimately proves prudent; the back and forth between the defendants, witnesses, prosecution and the judges, alongside the defendants' (and witnesses') presentation of themselves, are illuminating as a potential approach for others—even if the leeway afforded to Randle and Pottle would not be guaranteed.

There are certain themes that emerge in relation to the trial. The information on the CID's Watts Report concerning the evidence in Bourke's book, in addition to an MI5 file note on the report suggesting a decision was taken not to prosecute the Randles and Pottle in 1970, shows how tortuous and drawn out the prosecution/ Crown made the release of

documents, and the obfuscation engaged in by the British authorities and their agents. Moreover, such evidence emphasises the political and right-wing media motivations underpinning the decision to prosecute in the late 1980s (p.268).

Chapter 17 on the 'Defence of Necessity' is a notable chapter, and refers to the theme that recurs in many parts of the book. The relevance of the defence of necessity to contemporary direct action—for example by Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil—is clear, as Paul Rogers' blurb for *Rebel Verdict* notes. The effectiveness of such direct action rests in part on whether it is deemed necessary or justifiable by the broader population, as Jørgen Johansen has considered further in the editorial to this issue. In arguing for the defence of necessity, Randle and Pottle asked 'for the merits of each particular case to be looked at' (p.343), and the ability to construct such defences both inside and outside the courtroom may become increasingly pressing for those involved in environmental activism. This should really be for far less controversial issues than Randle and Pottle's as well, given that state security and treachery are issues that can be easily manipulated by authorities. Therefore, it is worth reflecting on how Randle and Pottle were able to convince the jury to find them not guilty.

Randle notes his regret at not getting the contact details of the jury to follow up with them after the trial. In understanding the implications of the trial and successfully arguing for necessity, it would have been insightful to understand the extent to which the jury 'smelled oppression'—to borrow from the blurb of Richard Norton-Taylor this time—in relation to Randle and Pottle, empathising with their plight of mistreatment by the authorities, and to what extent they considered Blake's treatment to be oppressive, which was deeper at the root of the defence of necessity. 'Postscript: The Member of the Jury' touches on these issues, as Randle did manage to contact one member of the jury, who largely seemed to empathise with Randle and Pottle, although said 'she was impressed too by some of our broader points – in particular the fact that some spies are given immunity, others swopped after a short time, and still others made to serve out their sentence.' (p.477).

To my mind this raises two points. The first, to consider the broader issue, is the significance of being able to make a greater number of people in the population understand the injustice of the issue leading to direct action being taken and the law potentially broken. The second is related, although returns to the specific contentious issue of freeing Blake which is

at the heart of this book. Since hearing about this story a few years ago from Jørgen Johansen and on his recommendation having read *The Blake Escape,* I have been impressed by it and intrigued by the moral intricacies. In the chapter of that book 'Antigone Choice', Pottle and Randle present one of the profoundest, incisive and scathing critiques of espionage I have read, leaving me with the certitude that if you knowingly enter into a dirty game, you cannot complain if the other side plays dirty and wins. Thus, Blake's 42-year sentence was shocking, and his prison conditions related in *Rebel Verdict* (pp.330-331) convey the extent of the inhuman and degrading treatment.

However, I have always found the implications of Blake's actions jarring, specifically the possibility that many people died as a result of his double-agent activites. This makes Chapter 12 of *Rebel Verdict* particularly insightful, concerning Blake making a claim during the period of the trial that he was responsible for betraying 400 agents, and conceding it was impossible for him to know whether any agents were killed as a result (pp.218-220). Randle and Pottle were evidently nonplussed why Blake made this claim at this point, and Blake did apologise to them at the time. While Randle says he still considered it right to help Blake due to the inhuman sentence (p.226), he criticises Blake at the end of the chapter, including his fatalistic philosophy being a 'cop-out' for responsibility for his actions, as well as stating 'Blake's extraordinary boast, and his feeble defence of it, occasioned no final rift in our relationship with him. But it did leave a sour aftertaste' (p.226). Ultimately, Randle acknowledging this quandary felt satisfactory to me at a personal level, having thought much about this event over some years, although the far more significant point is that it is of further testament to Randle's consistent moral position in calling out the compromised positions of both sides during the Cold War.

Relatedly, Chapter 21 'Call Mr Blake', is brief yet significant regarding Blake's statement being heard in court and the defendants' satisfaction at the media attention it attracted. Considering how media attention can be garnered in other trial circumstances when moral arguments are being conveyed is crucial (see also pp.448), yet in this particular case it is curious the emphasis that Randle places on Blake saying they were not acting on behalf of the Soviets—particularly given the stress elsewhere in the book that the intelligence services' profession is lying and treachery. Randle's life is far more powerful a testament to his anti-authoritarian and anti-imperial stance than Blake's statement ever could be. Perhaps this is why the chapter is

only brief; chapter 22 covers much of Randle's inspiring activities facilitating dissident activity in the Communist bloc during the Cold War, and the Czech dissident exile and subsequent MP Jan Kavan even appeared in person as a character witness for Randle (Chapter 23: 'the Czech connection).

Towards the conclusion of the trial, Pottle and Randle both made final speeches which are reproduced in the book. Randle (pp.454-460) reiterated the double standards applied in how double agents were perceived, the defence of necessity, and the ability of the jury to return a 'perverse' verdict. This built on Pottle's preceding speech (pp.448-453) that is recalled as being 'a dramatic and fine performance', which also impressed the lawyers and barristers that had gathered. Reading the text one understands why. He implored the jury to refuse the judge's direction on the case, emphasised the 'dirty business' of espionage, and why Blake might have been singled out to be made an example of from all the other traitors to British intelligence:

> He was not really British, was he? Not of the old school, not one of us. Deep down he was a foreigner and half Jewish to boot. He was never part of that privileged undergraduate set at Cambridge in the 1930s. Not like dear old Kim, who was offered immunity, or dear old Anthony who was not only given immunity but allowed to continue his work as Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures. The law must act even-handedly.

Such an unsettling perspective still speak to the ingrained and unresolved issues in the British establishment, particularly the nexus of aspects of the political and media class—who were also instrumental in pushing for prosecution of Blake and Pottle.[1] This still resonates and shows the crucial need to explicate the case for moral and humanitarian action in many areas, even or particularly in places where the British establishment deem it unacceptable to do so on grounds of apoliticism, such as the civil service,

[1] On p.476, Randle includes a quote from Auberon Waugh that might still ring true in 2022 for observers of British political turmoil, who, after the rebel verdict was returned in 1991, 'had a splendid, swingeing attack on the "punishment freaks" in the Conservative Party who were in danger of losing it the next election. The 110 MPs who had called for our prosecution, he said, had made fools of themselves, and moreover "large parts of the Conservative Party – all the rows of clones of Kelvin Mackenzie, the editor of the Sun, who have been filling the back benches since 1979 – have miscalculated the mood of the nation"'.

yet where there is an impending risk that, for example, the Home Office will be used for the legalised abuse of refugees.[2] I read this text as a pressing need for more rebel morality, that will hopefully make further 'rebel verdicts' unnecessary.

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