

"THE TWITTEROCRACY REBELS".

FROM BILL CLINTON TO DONALD TRUMP VIA BAGHDAD.

WHY A "FACULTY OF URBANITY"?

My proposal for a new Faculty of Urbanity has a longer time-frame and more complex background than the one I now outline. But this narrative will give it the urgency of a call for action.

In its outline it proposes that, just as Stalingrad on February 2nd 1942, became the graveyard of the integrated machine assault that was the German 'blitzkrieg' so was Hiroshima, on August 6th 1945, its riposte. If a city will not surrender, the Bomb can just wipe it off the map leaving the wide open spaces, albeit slightly radioactive, where machines can still dominate an infantry. What is common to both is the ruins of a city. Historians argue about whether Hitler did not lose his Russian campaign in 1941 by diverting away from encircling Moscow to acquiring his mythic 'lebensraum' in the rich soils of the Ukraine. He missed the prize of the symbolic capital city of Communism. It is curious that, even today, a half-century later, there remains nothing between losing a war in the ruins of your enemies' city, as the British Army did in Basra, and the USA took rather longer to do in Baghdad, and just wiping it off the map.

My proposal in this essay, is that there is a 'third' way. Its ideas, however, do not originate in contemporary military theory. They were invented elsewhere. But I will argue, with some historical reason, that they are by no means foreign to the realms of 'conflict'. Allow, me therefore, to 'set the scene' to this unfamiliar proposal.

Act One: *The 1990s Clifton Administration orders the American Banks to open branches in the poorer sections of its cities and offer mortgages to clients whom these Banks would not normally consider 'safe'. Clifton is a Democrat. The American Democrats have always been in agreement with the British Labour party, ever since its accession under Attlee in 1945, in believing that a synthesis between capitalism and socialism was possible. The Democrats of the 1990's, after several years of economic boom, and the expansion of domestic debt fuelled by house price inflation, wanted to believe that these mortgage-based, middle-class 'good times' could be extended to include the much reduced fragment of the old weekly-renting working class. So the cheap, under-secured mortgages were signed and packaged and 'welshed-on' and the 2007 credit crisis ensued.*

And it was all, I would propose, because of Pruitt-Igoe and the loathsome incompetence of my useless profession in refusing to build anything for the poor except the most sordid trash.

Act Two: *The brilliantly reorganised American military took-down the second-biggest military in the Middle East in a mere three weeks - between March 20 and April 9 2003 - a blitzkrieg of extraordinary virtuosity. Almost infinitely more lives were lost and treasure spent in the ensuing 'pacification' - a campaign that most judge a catastrophic failure.*

The proposition that would be made by my Faculty of Urbanity is that, given the War in the first place, the failure of the Pacification was due to the sixty years of the inability and incompetence of my profession (I use every word with deliberate exactness), to succeed in modernising its own proper medium to serve its proper uses.

Act Three: *The Brexit of Nigel Farage and the rise of similar regressive and localistic political movements in the EU under such as Marine Le Pen. These movements extend to the USA under Trump. The movements share a base in the working class and lower middle class. They are not supported by the exam-passing bureaucrats who run the EU and the complex administrative systems of government by fiscal profiling and 'performance standard' regulation. These 'spoiling' movements seek to reverse the 'globalising' tendencies of the 'free trade' ethic. This newly-powerful class have seen their standard of living decline. It powers their resentment against the more educated citizenry and it explains their political advocacy of civil violence.*

Their years of exclusion from influence have also now ended. The computational devices that augmented the ability of the bureaucratic fraction to exercise their 'invisible' systems of governance have now become mass-media items. Anyone who can work a smartphone can now be called-out onto the streets. A good example is the recent Army coup against Erdogan. The first call that Erdogan addressed to his street-mobs was on Facebook - a call they received and viewed on their phones. The conscript soldiers refused to fire on Erdogan's crowds of flag-bearing youths - many of their own sort and age. A 'twitterocracy' brought down the mighty Turkish Military. Populism now has its semi-autonomous, quasi-anarchist war-fighting machinery. Erdogan's 'underclass', aided by a clash between Islamism and Secular Westernisation and Erdogan's deliberately inflamed religious and ethnic differences, have achieved the installation of a despotism whose ethic of 'direct action' satisfies their need for a Representative, a leader who will act on their behalf to provide the goods that their lack of capability in the bureaucratic ways of the Middle Classes have so far denied them. Turkey has been, ever since Woodrow Wilson and WW I, the pride of America and the exemplary Middle Eastern state. Yet, today, its well-educated, exam-passing, white-collar Westernised class are fleeing their homeland, being arrested in their thousands and deprived of position, power and living. Erdogan has even deliberately emptied the jails of thousands of convicted felons in order to fill them with his proscribed 'enemies': degree-bearing Western Humanists!

The 'Twitterocracy' existed more as the Bazaar rumour-mill when Saddam Hussein personally executed his Baath-Party colleagues in Iraq. But the effect of Saddam's despotism on Iraq's Westernised, educated Middle Class was the same. Video-phones make calling out the mob much easier. De-colonised regimes of Socialistic inspiration, some even with the Western 'Separation of Powers', have collapsed backwards into extended-family despotisms. These have, over the last decades, become the norm in the Islamic Middle East.

There is, however, a warning, which should accompany these 'hints'. It is contained in the ending of the Introduction to Volume Three: "The Summer Campaign". It proposes that "before one conquers others one should conquer oneself". The proven techniques that I illustrate in these '44 Lectures' are unlikely to work for Asia until they have been successfully employed by the West. On the other hand, it could be that their introduction will be reversed. Britain had settled-down, prior to Brexit, as the Atlantic Hong-Kong, fuelled by Asian capital. Maybe Asia will bring the "Ontic Constitution" to Britain. Who can tell anything after Brexit?

“FROM ‘T’-WALL TO CITY-WALL”.

HOW THE MILITARY WERE DENIED THE “TOOLS FOR THE JOB” THAT EVERY ARMY HAS USED FOR MILLENIA”.

A FROM ‘Tee’-WALLS TO CITY-WALLS.

It was when I read, back in late 2014, about the ‘T’-walls of Baghdad that I saw that the ideas of an 82-year old architect could advantage our brilliant, yet very bruised and confused, military. How could getting to Baghdad in three weeks, in March 2003, have ended up with the Baghdad City Council (unaided by Gen. Petraeus et.al.), voting in February 2016, to build an 100 km. T-Wall around the North of the their city? How after the fall of Russia and the liberation of the Balkans, could Anglo-America, so catastrophically fail to persuade Iraq, Afghanistan, (a posting of both my Father and Grandfather), and the whole M.E. (now including Erdogan’s Turkey), to adopt our Anglo-American ways?

It is a rebuff which, after the expenditure of Three Trillion Dollars on a mainly fruitless effort, has had a profoundly depressing effect on Anglo-American morale. It is not uncommon to believe that the ‘field of insurgencies’ has been left worse than it was before Op. Iraqi Freedom. Trump and Brexit are its direct consequences. Anglo-America, angry at being rejected, wants to run back home, lick its cuts and bruises and pull up the drawbridge.

I recall reading after the abandonment of Saigon that although North Vietnam won that war the sheer extent of the destruction wrought by America’s firepower, backed by her vast industrial capacity, would deter any further attempts to defy the West. And then we had those video-game-playing boys from Saudi who thought an eye for an eye was the geometry of Justice and executed 9/11. It is extraordinary to think that there are seemingly well-educated youths who have not understood that the USA is a giant who is generally happy to be left alone in the vast continent it came to occupy. The Japanese attacked the Giant and were horribly punished. Kruschev put a barking dog to fly over its peaceful, semi-tropical back yards. The Giant awoke, shot some men onto the moon, invented Star Wars and wiped Western Communism off the map. Neither the Vietnamese nor the Iraqis actually attacked the USA. But after 9/11, the first major blow to the homeland itself, the USA developed the idea of the War on Terror and the pre-emptive strike.

It is the extraordinary asymmetry between the success of the Strike upon Iraq and the failure of the Pacification, or the conversion of the ‘defeated’ to the right and true ways of Constitutional Democracy that provide the instance of the offering of my ideas, which have quite other origins and ambitions, to the eyes and ears of the Practitioners of War, aka. the Military.

I have read the following books in order to discover if any of them had any sense, any intimation at all, of the role of anything like the subjects which I will raise.

- 1. LOSING IRAQ: “Inside the Postwar Reconstruction fiasco”, David L. Phillips. WESTVIEW PRESS 2005.*
- 2. THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ: “Winning the war and losing the Peace”, Ali A. Allawi. YALE 2007.*

3. *WE MEANT WELL: "How I helped lose the battle for the hearts and minds of the Iraqi People"*, Peter Van Buren. METROPOLITAN BOOKS 2011.
4. *THE ENDGAME: "The inside story of the struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama"*, by Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor. VINTAGE 2012.
5. *WRONG TURN: "America's deadly embrace of Counter Insurgency"*, Colonel Gian Gentile. THE NEW PRESS. 2013.
6. *THE GOOD WAR: "Why we couldn't win the war or the peace in Afghanistan"*, Jack Fairweather. JONATHAN CAPE 2014.
7. *WHY WE LOST: "A General's inside account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars"*, by Daniel P. Bolger. MARINER 2015 (1st Ed. 2014).
8. *HIGH COMMAND: "British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars"*. HURST & Co. 2015.

Unsurprisingly they did not. It only confirms, by the reports of the participants, why the "Three Trillion Dollar War" was such an extraordinary POLITICAL failure while the three-week blitzkrieg was such an outstanding MILITARY success. It was not, really, that, as Napoleon observed of the Russians as they burnt Moscow: "these people do not know when they are beaten". It was that no one on the Allied side knew how to win the "War of the Arts of Peace".

I have no intention, no intention at all, to lay the blame on the Military for this failure of 'pacification', and even more ambitiously, Nation-Building by means of a 'Western-type' Constitution. I do not see how one can criticise a military after such an extraordinary success in 'blitzkrieg' war-fighting. The failure, and I cannot emphasize this too much, is entirely on the side of the post-conflict administration. I will go further still, and even brandish the inoffensive 'T'-wall as my pointer to accuse, very specifically and directly, my own Profession of Architecture.

Of course it will strike, especially Architects, and most probably everyone else (including soldiers) as ludicrous to blame the lowly, inoffensive providers of mere (and mainly pre-cast concrete) domestic accommodations for the failure of such a gigantic enterprise. Where were these 'Architects' at the time? Who asked them for any 'Architecture' anyway? What has 'Architecture' to offer when suicidal fanatics want to kill you in any way they can?

I will offer one clue - and a deliberately imprecise one. Every treatise written on Architecture, for thousands of years, always included Military Engineering. One may quote from the time of the Vitruvius Pollio who appealed with his 'books' for a job from Octavian Caesar, to that of the British Royal Engineer Captain Francis Fowke who designed and built, in the later half of the 19C Kensington's magnificent Albert Hall and the accomplished Northern side of the Central Courtyard of the Victoria and Albert Museum - London's Greatest (if somewhat over-furnished), Palace. It was only the ability to deliver munitions at very long range that rendered walled fortifications an ineffective defence against major military efforts. But when it comes to facing-off the entry of a suicidal terrorist a nice solid wall still does the job!

Beyond this merely 'positive' force Architecture, as presently conceived, and indeed both theorised and practised in the sphere of Anglo-America, offers no further aids at all. That this was NOT always so is a historic fact. That it need not be so is a PROVEN technical fact. That it, however, will ALWAYS REMAIN so is an almost certain fact. For what else can explain or justify the extraordinary fact that,

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notwithstanding the long association of Architecture with Military Engineering the furthest forward that Military Engineering could progress in recent years (pace Iraq), even after the expenditure of some three trillion dollars, were thousands upon thousands of these wretched bits of pre-cast concrete called "Tee-walling"! I lay no blame upon any soldiers. My impulse is, rather to commiserate with them that they have been burdened with the tasks of pacification, reconstruction and so on without one of the essential aids available to the Military in every period of history but our own.

For I can confirm that, at no time, in my education as an Architect between 1955 and 1961, or my education as a City Planner between 1963 and 1966, or as a Practitioner from 1961 until the present day, was there ever even the faintest echo of such a thing as a "call to arms" in the sense of being a part of the practice of 'War'. It has to be said that this is curious because part of being trained to be a foot-soldier is being persuaded to obey orders unthinkingly. And the very first thing my cohort into the Central London (Regent Street) Polytechnic were told is that "Architecture is no longer a literary subject". By this was meant that the whole 9,000 year history of our medium was now "off-limits". The Polytechnic issued no reading-list to its neophytes. In fact we Polytechnicians were to be trained as the foot-soldiers of the new (very new in 1955), Welfare State. We were to go out and build boxes of different sizes in which to package Universal Health, Education, Housing and Work. This was an essentially physical, mechanical, chemical and practical project. It could, if thought necessary, be decorated with some splashes of colour - either inherently material or merely painted. But this 'decoration' was in no way alike to the symbolically mediated ornaments and inscriptions which had 'told a story' in the ways employed in any building erected prior to the fall of the Atom Bomb.

WWII, Hiroshima and Belsen were taken as signs that everything had so entirely changed that nothing of the Past (as History became re-badged), could be tolerated. One must begin anew. In actual fact, this consignment of "Architecture" to history, and its replacement by meccano-type boxes divested of all symbolic form or ornament may have been a deeply-felt response to military events. For if Stalingrad had proved the graveyard of the German cult of 'blitzkrieg' then Hiroshima was, only three years later, its response. If a city will not surrender, then the atom bomb will remove it from the map and replacing it with those flat open places, albeit a bit radioactive, over which tanks and planes can still dominate an infantry. What was the point of 'Architecture' in such a world?

In fact our introduction by 'Headmaster' John Walkden to his 'revolution back to a sort of super-primitive 'architectural' physicality' was not at all hard to stomach - at least in the culture in which I now found myself. I had been raised in British India until 1946. I had then spent nine years in two boarding schools and my military service before commencing my 'higher' education at the age of 21. Architecture was not considered, in the mid-1950s, to be a subject worth restricting to an intellectual elite. No school certificates at the Advanced level were required at all. This was fortunate as my four years in the leafy grounds of Wellington College had supplied me with nothing higher than a rather generous collection of Ordinary Level subject qualifications. I was top of the "General Sixth", a motley collection of boys suited for the more active sides of life, especially when allied to the dangers of illegality.

My essay "Into the Void", whose 'clickable' connection lies a few lines below that for this little essay, argues that, notwithstanding the great number of fine buildings

erected by the long-departed imperial wealth of this island, the British have never understood Architecture at any level profounder than that of the 'picturesque'. This cannot be said to have been of great consequence during her centuries of imperial dominance. But when the Empire was destroyed, and under the shocks of WWII, this fragile comprehension served Britain ill. For the island, and indeed the whole of the 'Free West', proved incapable of so comprehending the "Paradigmatic Medium of Civilisation" as to render it of service to their Post-WWII ambitions. I argue that Britain's Achilles Heel proved to be her inability to employ the darkness of the 'Architectural' Interior for its ancient and original purposes.

If this incapacity is accepted then the second injunction issued by John Walkden to us neophytes of 1955 will also be understood as "no loss" and therefore quite painless. This was "That Architects lost their charisma when they gave-up using THE ORDERS". Walkden's third, and possibly most extreme pronouncement was "that my son is likely to be chosen for the Olympic Swimming Team". This last, complete non-sequitur, encourages me to conclude that Walkden was a disaffected Classicist who had, now, to teach 'architecture' under the new 'Welfare Socialist' regime. We never saw him again after this introduction. None of us knew either of "The Orders", or our "lost Charisma". What can one say except that he saw the way the wind was blowing and proved completely useless to his ignorant young charges in either resisting its cretinous puffery or to his own interests in extending his own convictions and knowledge.

So it was not until many years later that I finally understood the function of the massive and ample members of the 'Architectural Order' (or Ordine, as I prefer - Architecture is not a native island invention). They serve to so oppress the spirits of those their heavy frameworks harboured as to encourage (and even compel), their imaginations to reach out through the 'Picture Planes' of the 'scripted' walls, ceilings and floors that their 'trabeated architectures' framed. This "reaching-out" was strongest during the periods in which Science and Naturalism were epistemologically dominant - such as at the transition from the Mediaeval to the Humanist 15C. Naturalism repelled the transcendent world and prioritised the immanent. Brunelleschi and L.B.Alberti are endlessly nominated as the advocates of naturalistic perspective in painting. But the way it was used in Architecture was, via the Orders, to seamlessly join the quotidian world to that of Christian and Classical transcendence. This is never mentioned in the world of the 'Polite Modernism' that rots the minds of Anglo-American Architectural culture. I can confirm, therefore from personal experience, that whatever understanding there may have been, even in the mid-20C, of the potential uses of Architecture, City Planning and Ornament in the general sphere of the 'political' (within which as Clausewitz remarked "war is diplomacy by other means"), it was not so much 'lost' as deliberately "tabooed" after 1946.

So when I propose, as I do in the closing pages of "Into the Void", a strategy for the use of what one might still call "walls" to to inscribe an "Ontic Constitution" into Baghdad I am hoping that my Reader will understand why I attach this seemingly disconnected essay on Iraq to a general and wide-ranging condemnation of the failure of my natively British Architectural culture to 'functionalise' the Building Interior to its properly epiphanic employment. It is precisely this contempt for the employment of metaphysics in ritual and ceremony, a contempt reinforced by long centuries of the imperial rule of 'subject peoples', that has let Britain down, and particularly our ability to introduce and persuade Asia of our Western ideas in the

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way that WE understand them. I will quote only two instances from this end-part of my essay. One is the spray-painting to a polished gold of the initial 'Handy-Square' pre-cast concrete 110M x 110M city-blocks with their planted-up mortar-proof roof gardens. In Basra's 53.9°K afternoons they would shine like suns. The second is the painless appropriation of the "body politic" of the conquered and its reification as her new "Ontic Constitution". Reason too must have her rites, her rituals and her epiphanies.

My Military Reader may also like to consult my essay "From Basra to Brexit" which describes the long history of the deliberate paralysis, instituted by the Attlee Administration, but stemming from Cambridge, of Architecture's political usefulness. The 1945 Welfare Labour Administration instituted the Post-WWII destruction of the city and the suburbanisation of Britain - a demonstration, contrary to received opinion, of Britain's political immaturity. Cambridge proposed, in its support, and formally from the mid-1950's, to treat this novel lifespace, via its 'architecture', as if it was a field for deliberately meaningless formal transformations. It seemed to work for muons for why not for humans?

Dame Alison Richard, in 2004, as Vice Chancellor of Cambridge, proposed to the Senate that the Department be closed for lack of ordinary (aka. 'humanistic'), animation. Its response was to bury itself even deeper in the magical mists of mathematics that have become Cambridge's passport from donnish rags to electro-mechanical riches. The Department had its chance to change. Alison Richard is an anthropologist, one of the globe's authorities on the lemur, to whose study at Yale she has now returned. She saw nothing in the work of this mathematised Department which had relevance to what she understood as the culture of animate communities. The Department failed to rise to her invitation, albeit roughly offered. Architecture lost 'real estate', always a sign of departmental decline, and became even more positivist. It seems pointless to imagine that it could ever escape from Cambridge's compulsion to compute.

A NEW START: THE "FACULTY OF URBANITY".

A new start is required. I propose that one might combine the Department of War Studies in King's College London with the Courtauld Institute next door along with the Bedford Square Architectural Association. The Bloomsbury AA is a private school. It has always prided itself on being able to entertain outrageous ideas in the mild and dull field of the provision of rentable accommodation. Art and War have, intrinsically, enough inherent exposure to the outrageous to face a radical idea. The ambition would be to put together a teaching curriculum as well as a 'design' research project that brought the powers of Urbanity, Architecture and Ornament to the project of installing the Ontic Constitution as incarnated by a Body Politic mediated through the Event Horizons of the Valley of the Republic aka. the Fluvial Narrative of Somatic Time. We would work our way towards a new scheme whose title, I might suggest, could be the "Faculty of Urbanity" (perhaps within Kings), as a locus at which one developed how to win the "War of the Arts of Peace".

