

Edgeways Miscellany no. 9  
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*The Spectator* 2

The Colonel's Lady  
 and Judy O'Grady  
 or  
 "Shh. Don't 'Peep'."

Teresa May said the Conservatives had to stop being the nasty party, and the result—one of the results—is the present-day *Spectator*. If you write for it (and if you're not Rod Liddle, who—in order to make a contrast with everyone else—does the nasty bit<sup>1</sup>), you have to be nice. And if you write about something like the rise of political Islam, which someone else (Rod Liddle, say) might be nasty about, you have to be especially nice. The thinner the ice, the more lightly you skate. That's the challenge. And no one rises to it, remains airborne longer or lands with more gravity-defying grace, than Charles Moore, an ex-editor of the *Spectator* himself.

The challenge he set himself on March 22<sup>2</sup> was *huge*: to remain thoroughly nice and all-round acceptable not just while writing about the rise of political Islam and the problems of multiculturalism and terrorism (difficult enough in itself you might think) but doing so as a patriot who loves his country and believes that to ignore such matters carries the germ of a dangerous, Vichy-French-like defeatism. Now, to carry *that* off, you've *got* to be nice. Nice-ish won't do. Not some ordinary nice-enough-if-the-circumstances-are-right sort of niceness. You've got to be a Torvill-and-Dean of Niceness. A Nureyev. Houdini. You've got to be Mohammed Ali, floating like a butterfly and stinging like one too. You've got to be Charles Moore.

And he is.

The trick to being nice about such matters (and, perhaps, a trick, after all, is all it is, and not quite as honest as it should be) is to talk about the danger of Muslim extremism as if there were no dangers attached to Muslim ("Shh. Don't say 'Peep' ") i-m-m-i-g-r-a-t-i-o-n. Distinguish between "good people" and "bad people" only, and shut your eyes to differences of race and culture, and—Hey presto!—Rod himself could sound nice. Talk as if the problems and the dangers of the rise of political Islam have nothing at all to do with rising numbers of Muslim immigrants and you can be as nasty as you like about the "bad people" without being thought any the less nice yourself. The condition on which you are free to object to demonic Muslim violence and literalist Muslim rigidities, to Mawdudi, the Hizb ut Tahrir, the Wahhabis and Salafists, al-Qu'eda, Hamas and the Taleban is that . . . "You don't friggin' well mention immigration. Got it? And, no, it doesn't matter how many there are or how uneducated or how little disposed to adapt to the ways of the people they have come to live amongst."

And if anyone should wonder whether there's anything less than perfectly-nice somewhere near the bottom of your objection to Muslim extremism, you've some buns to throw him, three shop-bought and stale, one, cooked by yourself, which couldn't be fresher: (1) the great majority of Muslims are peaceful, worthy fellow-citizens with jobs and families just like anyone else (2) they are not truly represented by the extremists (3) they suffer from the extremists just like anyone else and (4) [the truly fresh bun straight from the cookhouse] *these* extremists—immigrants or the children of immigrants, who so hate the way of life of the people they have come to live amongst that, not for any definite, achievable political purpose but for mere love of the thing, they blow their fellow-citizens indiscriminately into pieces—may be likened to our own, native "Red" Robbos and Arthur Scargills of the '70s and '80s. Once the latter's power was broken, ordinary, moderate, native trade unionists learned to act responsibly in their own economic interests. Once the power of the Muslim extremists is broken, so too will ordinary,

moderate, Muslim immigrants. And then they'll be just like us. Like the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady, natives and immigrants, trade unionists and Islamists are sisters under their skins. Not *exactly*, of course but, still, *sort of*. What could be nicer?

#### NOTES

1 He supports Millwall and he don't care.

2 A version of the Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture he gave at the Centre for Policy Studies the week before.

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