

*Bonfire of the Liberties:
New Labour, Human Rights and the Rule of Law*

K. D. Ewing

Oxford and New York: OUP, £19.99

The Meaning of David Cameron

Richard Seymour

New Alresford: Zero Books, £6.99

The Return of the Public

Dan Hind

London and New York: Verso, £14.99

Death of the Liberal Class

Chris Hedges

New York: Nation Books, £14.99

Tom Easton

It feels unfair not to give more space to reviewing these four titles – all serious, thought-provoking, important books. But with Christmas holidays and possible book tokens approaching I hope even a brief notice will encourage further curiosity.

Keith Ewing is professor of public law at King's College, London, and an angry chronicler of the erosion of civil liberties under New Labour. He's travelled a fair bit of the world and knows a lot of law. He brings both together in a clearly written, heavyweight assault on Blair and Brown governments packed with lawyers with little apparent concern for either the legality of their actions on their far-reaching consequences for human rights and wellbeing. From surveillance and the national security state to the 'war on terror' and control orders and rendition, Ewing's solid, incisive work reaches out to lawyers and journalists, but also to a broader band of concerned citizenry.

Richard Seymour, who blogs at Lenin's Tomb,¹ has produced a short

¹ <http://leninology.blogspot.com/>

guide to David Cameron's politics, but crammed a lot into it in an accessible way. Those to whom the current crop of Tories are largely unknown will learn lots about 'Red Toryism', the Henry Jackson Society/neocon network and the 'wealth creators'. There's no index, but decent footnotes.

Lobster contributor Dan Hind has produced a mind-stretching plea to no longer leave politics to the experts – the practitioners and the gatekeepers who control access to what is going on in our name and with our money and leave most of us persuaded or confused into passivity. Literate, drawing on wide sources historically as well in philosophically, this is a bracing warm-up class for the overdue heavy lifting this country's politics badly needs.

Like *The Return of the Public Mind*, the latest book from Chris Hedges is well footnoted and indexed. Hedges has covered wars around the world, is a columnist for Truthdig.com and a widely published writer of power, passion and refinement. He marks the decline of 'the liberal class' from the time of the fall of the Wall when capital no longer needed it. His *Death of the Liberal Class* is not a book for faint hearts. It has much of the challenging force of those German anti-Nazis – Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Fritz Reck-Malleczewen are two names who come readily to mind – who steadfastly marked out the ground in earlier battles for rights, decency and integrity in a disordered world.