
Obituaries

Lord Goodman, FRCPsych (Hon)

Arnold Goodman, who died in London on 12 May, 1995 and who has been described as the most celebrated solicitor of his day played a creative role from the early years onwards in the establishment of the Royal College of Psychiatrists on a solid and secure basis. And had we not had his unfailing support and the help of a group of dynamic and beneficent men, such as Lord Rayne and David Astor among others whom he attracted to our cause, the development of our College might have proved more protracted and turbulent than it did.

By 1972, he was already serving as Chairman or leader of a multitude of organisations and causes. He was often being summoned for consultations at 10 Downing Street and other high places and was something of a celebrity. The alacrity and enthusiasm with which he responded to my first approach was surprising. At a later stage I concluded that our cause appealed strongly to him and that he seemed to be responding to some powerful inner urge.

He had attracted little public attention until the election of a Labour Government under Harold Wilson in 1964. Thereafter he was consulted regularly and to an increasing extent by the Prime Minister. He also became in the words of Dalyell "... the lifeboat to whom a swatch of incoming Labour Ministers turned in stormy seas". They included Dick Crossman. In 1968 he was sent with Max Aitken on a secret mission to try to establish in preliminary discussions with Ian Smith a basis for an understanding with Rhodesia. He returned with a document that had been signed by both parties and defined a certain amount of common ground. This collapsed when Smith and Wilson met on HMS *Fearless* in October 1968. In his autobiography, Goodman makes no apologies for immodesty in his belief that things might have turned out differently had Wilson not insisted on going alone.

In 1971 he undertook four missions to Rhodesia in a single year at the behest of Ted Heath. He has provided a cool objective and remarkably comprehensive and cogent record of what had transpired. There was an inauspicious prelude to the meetings which is recounted in characteristically comic fashion. The young diplomat sent to meet him lacked any sense of direction. Arnold was exposed to an excruciating journey circling the perimeter of Salisbury and noted at one point that he was being driven to Johannesburg. After hours of starvation and hypothermia he arrived at his hotel. He returned with an agreement. It met with hostility and suffered rejection by Parliament.

In 1965 he was appointed Chairman of the Arts Council and began a term of office that was to prove more creative and memorable than that of any previous holder. He assisted Jennie Lee, the widow of Nye Bevan, who was then Minister for the Arts, to create the Open University. Under his leadership of the Council, Music, the Visual Arts and Literature received an unprecedented boost both to morale and their finances. A cascade of further appointments followed. He became Director of the Royal Opera House, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the New English Opera and British Lion Films. From 1970–76 he was Chairman of the Newspaper Publishers Association, President of the Theatres Advisory Council. He also served the National Book League, and was Chairman of the Observer Trust, as well as President of the Institute of Jewish Affairs to name only a small proportion of his offices. In 1965 he was created a Life Peer on the recommendation of Harold Wilson, and in 1972, made a Companion of Honour during Edward Heath's term of office as Prime Minister. He was perhaps the only real life example of the position claimed for himself by the actor Raimu in the film *La Femme du Boulanger* in the peroration of his own nuptial address – *Président de la Société des Présidents*. In fact pomposity and pretension were conspicuous by their absence from his personality.

He often referred to an ambition to train in medicine and become a psychiatrist which had been a powerful urge in his early twenties. He was moved by the Honorary Fellowship the College conferred on him in 1974. Thereafter he would make jocular reference to his intention to put up his plate in Harley Street. He was unaware that during most of his professional life he had been employing a form of psychotherapy of his own.

He brought to his multitudinous tasks a sharp swift moving intellect, an ability to penetrate the centre of complex issues and above all, a natural intuitive insight into human personality. In interaction with those whose cooperation and commitment for the success of his committees were necessary he showed subtlety and skill. In closer personal relationships empathy emerged to forge bonds that were often lifelong. But there were faculties difficult to define that caused individuals at all levels of society to unfold and reveal themselves to him.

In disputes he was quick to discover the common ground between opposing parties and the steps required to achieve compromise. He made free use of an elemental sense of humour and a vocabulary all his own. His physical presence helped. Until late middle age he was

very tall, seventeen stone in weight with a huge head and bristling eyebrows. But he was a big man also in depth of moral conviction, generosity of spirit and, in dealing with major issues, a consistent and dispassionate realism.

His brilliance as a speaker derived from an eloquent mellifluidity that owed nothing to prepared notes whether speaking after a banquet or addressing the House of Lords. In other settings he would bring his distinctive brand of humour, a powerful solvent of acrimony and anger, into play. At one meeting of the Arts Council soon after a new poetry magazine had been given a small subsidy and a statistician had been employed at about the same time a tense situation arose. One Council member reported in great indignation that on a certain page of the magazine a four letter word beginning with 'f' had been reiterated forty-eight times. "My dear Sir," replied the Chairman at once, "that is undoubtedly a matter for our new statistician". The issue did not reappear.

His humanity, kindness, good sense, and the passion with which he espoused causes in which he believed whether they were major social issues like the Reform of the Law, the scope and limits of censorship, the need for expansion of research in Psychiatry and Medicine, the nurturing of the Arts, or some case of individual suffering or hardship became widely known. By the time he came to our aid in 1973 he was regarded as Britain's most distinguished citizen outside Government.

He acquired a legendary reputation as conciliator in disputes legal, political, social and industrial and it was said, the trusted adviser of the great and the good. This was inaccurate: he was stirred into action on behalf of many powerless victims of injustice and prejudice. His fame was illustrated by the ordeal of Francis Bacon the painter who had been charged with possession of cannabis. He was reported by a Police-Sergeant as having after his arrest asked to see Lord Goodman. Counsel for the prosecution asked "who is Lord Goodman?" and the Sergeant replied "I understand he is a solicitor". This exchange was widely quoted by the media. It was regarded as an example of an egregious judicial vacuity that deserved a place in the history of the Law.

At this stage one has to return to his origins and the earlier stages of his life. He was born into a moderately prosperous, respected middle class Jewish family. His mother appears to have been the most powerful influence on his development from childhood onwards and several pages of his autobiography express admiration and adoration. She was a powerhouse of energy, a wonderful manager, a superb cook, unequalled as a hostess, full of drive and confidence. Needless to say, the adoration was reciprocal. Of nothing was Mrs Goodman more certain than the talent or genius of her two sons. The father was more quiet and gentle, uncertain of himself and unsuccessful in

business. There is little doubt as to the source from which Arnold acquired or inherited his towering self-confidence.

From a local Grammar School in the East End he entered University College, London, and thence to Downing College, Cambridge. He gained a first class degree in Law at both Universities. After a period in a solicitor's practice he volunteered as a gunner and became, according to his C.O., Mortimer Wheeler, "the greatest Quartermaster Sergeant in the history of the British Army". He was renowned for giving the troops what they wanted. A Private Lazarus complained of starvation owing to aversion from the bacon he was forbidden to eat on religious grounds. He was supplied with generous helpings of kippers each morning until driven after some months to complain of dietary boredom and dissatisfaction. He was prescribed cornflakes and toast. Arnold left the Army with the rank of Major.

My first meeting with Arnold Goodman took place in his office near the Law Courts towards the end of 1972 with the help of introductions from Keith Joseph and Lord Platt. He listened with close attention to the urgency of our need for premises in which to develop our educational tasks, our plans for inspecting and accrediting hospitals as suitable or otherwise for training and so raising standards of care in hospitals and community. We spoke for two hours. His response to my plea for his help was immediate. Within a few weeks he had enlisted the support of Lord Rayne, David Astor at that time Editor of the *Observer*, the Managing Director of *The Times* and Evelyn de Rothschild among others. I was offered space in *The Times* for two articles devoted to contemporary psychiatry and some of the passages were cited in the media. Without the support given by him and Lord Rayne in particular and one of Marks & Spencer's charitable trusts, it would have been unthinkable for us to contemplate purchasing 17 Belgrave Square and repay the loan we were compelled to raise.

He never refused invitations to address meetings on our behalf. His contributions were usually memorable. In 1973 he attended and spoke at the Annual Dinner. He proposed the toast to the College and referred to difficulties we were experiencing in negotiating with some of the picaresque characters in the world of the property developers. He paid generous tribute to the efforts I had been making. He went on to express reservations about certain possibilities I had explored. Was it wise for example to enter bids for Wembley Stadium or the Albert Hall? For a few minutes until the laughter exploded he had our cautious Treasurer worried.

On another occasion, in 1974, he was able to organise a reception as part of our Appeal at the Guildhall through an approach he had made to the Lord Mayor of London. We had attracted a large and impressive audience. There were

politicians, academics, novelists, Judges, some from the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords. There were of course psychiatrists and staff from the College as also industrialists, bankers and others drawn from the financial world. After a brief Address of Welcome and an outline of our purpose I followed with an outline of the social consequences of mental ill health and some comments about the work of our new Royal College. I referred in my opening to the fact that about five out of ten women and four of ten men had to seek treatment for some form of psychiatric disorder during their lives. A stony silence followed. I quickly switched to another topic and some signs of interest and liveliness returned.

Arnold was to have spoken later, but he asked to speak next. He began with the statement "it is a remarkable fact that more than half the population in this country never needs to seek help for any form of psychiatric disorder". He went on to affirm that progress recently made by psychiatry and to be expected from the activities of the College could be expected to promote significant improvements in the mental health of the population in the foreseeable future. A loud and sustained burst of applause followed. I would not have dared to advance such a claim. But I learned never again to commence a public address with dire and unpropitious data about mental illness and suicide.

Another event related to the Goodman Lectures which had been named in his honour. In February of 1977 he invited me to deliver the Fifth Goodman Lecture. As the fourth had been delivered by Lord Scarman it was a tall order. I suggested the title of 'Mental Health and Illness in Old Age'. However, about six weeks before the event he suggested another topic. He had frequently expressed his total opposition to all forms of censorship in public addresses. I had countered these views in several previous discussions. I had cited the current sado-masochistic pornography which was permeating the media as socially dangerous and requiring control. He had disagreed. He was now suggesting however that my lecture should be devoted to a review of the psychiatric aspects of pornography. I finally gave in and suggested 'Sexual Pornography and Society - A Psychiatric View'.

In the mid and late seventies he was at the pinnacle of his fame. His speeches on Censorship, Divorce, Reform of the Law and the nurturing of artistic creativity were headlined in the Press. The House of Lords was nearly always filled when he was due to speak. Lord Denning, the famous Master of the Rolls described Goodman as one of the best lawyers and solicitors of his generation "He gave advice - and the best advice - both on political and legal matters. He was highly regarded everywhere". Belief in his authority in the corridors of power was such that one cleric sought his help to be made a Canon in the Church of England.

In 1975 he received the accolade of Mastership of University College, Oxford. He brought some rare qualities to his new role. Few of those elected to be Masters or Principals of Oxbridge Colleges had been directly involved as sole representatives of Government in political negotiations on the international stage or had occupied leading positions in a whole range of social institutions and been celebrated for the success they had achieved. The personality that had evolved after decades of full exposure to the outside world was a palimpsest with many layers beneath the surface, still manifest in speech and action. His advice was wise, constructive and often helpful in resolving refractory problems. The new Master made himself freely available to the undergraduates, delighted to entertain them and the Fellows in the Master's Lodge. His Mastership was an outstanding success as reflected in the entry in the *University College Magazine* for 1986 from which he quotes in his autobiography.

After the end of his Mastership in 1986 he commuted for a time between Oxford, where he spent his weekends, and London where he continued his legal work. He paid his last visit to the College in 1993 when he attended (in a wheelchair) the Annual Meeting and dinner of Honorary Fellows. He was deeply gratified by what he learned of the progress achieved in the work of the College and in the development of the building he had helped us to acquire.

Arnold Goodman was a quintessentially good man and his death is mourned by a host of institutions and individuals who have benefited from his generosity of spirit. He has earned a place of honour in the history of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in virtue of the help he gave us in our hour of need and the example he set in the dedication of his illustrious life to increasing if only by a fraction the sum of human happiness, welfare and justice.

SIR MARTIN ROTH

Richard Russell Prewer, formerly Principal Medical Officer, H.M. Prison, Parkhurst, Isle of Wight

Richard Prewer, Dick to his friends, was born in Woolwich in 1912 and died in Newport in August 1995. At the age of ten he gained a scholarship to Brighton College and from there a Kitchener Scholarship to St Bartholomew's in 1930, qualifying MRCS (BM) LRCP (London) in 1936. He joined the Prison Medical Service in 1938.

