

This is a gross distortion of what took place, to say nothing of the conclusions that Caldwell draws from it. Though many of the protesters did have refugee status, Caldwell does not mention that Sudanese refugees in Egypt are often subject to vicious discrimination and social exclusion which makes a mockery of their asylum status. According to Barbara Harrell-Bond, a specialist in refugee studies at the American University in Cairo, the protesters wished to be resettled in a country where 'their rights would be respected and where they would not face racial discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse'.

This background does not fit with Caldwell's depiction of asylum seekers as devious parasites in search of the softest touch and the country with the best welfare system. His book is littered with similar evasions and distortions. Discussing the phenomenon of emigration from Europe, he suggests that Europeans are fleeing their immigrant-dominated countries in a transnational version of American 'white flight' to the suburbs. He also suggests that Jews are leaving the continent in large numbers as a consequence of anti-Semitism, even though Europe remains the preferred destination not only for Russian Jews, but increasingly for Israeli Jews, who according to *Time* magazine in 2004 were 'flocking to European embassies to apply for EU passports'. Caldwell's depiction of a continent engulfed by anti-Semitic violence is contradicted by various sources in various countries, including an Anti-Defamation League report in 2004 that described a ten per cent drop in anti-Semitic attitudes in Europe for that year. For Caldwell however, European anti-Semitism is an essentially Muslim phenomenon and a product of 'the ideology of diversity and racial harmony' through which 'anti-Jewish fury was reinjected into European life'. Even an egg thrown at Oona King during a war memorial service in 2005 is described as an anti-Semitic act against a 'Jewish parliamentarian' rather than a response to her outspoken support of the Iraq invasion.

Caldwell is not a writer to allow a fact to get in the way of a good argument. To illustrate the absurdity of political correctness, he quotes a tabloid story in 2005 that Dudley town council 'banned certain toys and images from its municipal offices after a Muslim employee complained about a colleague's keeping a picture of Piglet on her desk'. In fact the original story referred to a complaint about a pig-shaped stress remover, not a picture. Though one Muslim employee did complain about the toy in the run up to Ramadan, a cursory glance at the internet could have found an email from councillor Les Jones of the controlling Conservative group, which denied that any action had been taken beyond an informal request to employees to keep such toys out of sight. Councillor Roberts also condemned the 'media exaggeration' that had 'given any extreme racist group another flag to pin to the mast and may well have created an impression among sections of the white population that there is some hidden agenda within the establishment to pander to prejudice from one section of our community at their expense'.

This certainly seems to apply to the *Sun* and the *Express*, and Caldwell's uncritical interpretation of this episode suggests that he belongs to the same category. On this issue, as on so many, Caldwell fails to get his basic facts