All Institutions are prone to Corruption and the Vices of their Members

Morris West

Having railed for most of this week as pundits, government ministers, and any number of media luvvies have told us again and again that '**no one** wants Rangers to fail' or that '**everyone** want s a successful outcome to this tragedy', I am loath to be too inclusive in any statements I make on the situation at the Death Star.

Nevertheless I feel confident that the vast majority who visit this site or listen to our podcasts are, for the most part, wearing large, apparently painted on, smiles at this time.

I was almost glad yesterday when I decided to scarify the lawn, that I slightly ricked my back when starting up the lawnmower, thus causing a frisson of pain whenever I move. It means that my smile is not permanently fixed and I am in less danger of being carted off by the folk in white coats for the crime of being too happy.

For so many years when Celtic were in turmoil, the mantra of our support was: 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'. In fact this song which we sang in our darkest days apparently caused great irritation to the Dark Lord – (Sir)? David Murray.

There is a scene in the film 'Quo Vadis' in which a group of Christians are being burnt at the stake in the arena. Nero – played by the brilliant Peter Ustinov – goes into a rage because they start to sing a hymn. I always felt that there were echoes of this scene in the life of Dodgy Dave as we refused to be downhearted in those dark days. He pretended to be amused and saw our response to defeat as a sign of our simple mindedness, but in reality I think it really got up his goat – we really were faithful through and through.

It was around those times that 'Not the View' really hit its stride as a voice for the malcontents in our community, but while there was anger at the mismanagement of our club, there was also much humour. We were - if nothing else - able to laugh at ourselves. This model- as I see it this philosophy - has been the driver for almost all the Celtic web-sites and podcasts that I have

come across in the years since then.

Humour is the one emotion singularly lacking in the Rangers support as they face the biggest crisis in their history. Perma-rage is a much used term in Timworld when talking about our rivals and it has gone into overdrive as the reality of their situation dawns. There have been many comic moments from our perspective, but somehow I doubt if they see the potential for laughter. Even the 'Big House Must Stay' numpty is seen by them as an internet hero rather than the ridiculous figure he really was. My sainted Mother was prone to say that someone was: 'more to be pitied than laughed at' but somehow I simply can't help myself – what a clown.

These thoughts aside however, what has intrigued, but not surprised me in recent days, is the spirited defence in the media of this 'great Scottish Institution'; this 'important part of Scottish Culture', this ' part of our sporting heritage' which has to be maintained, although no one is quite clear how this is to be done without proper and fitting sanctions being applied to a bunch of unprincipled crooks.

Even the First Minister of the land and his counterpart from the Union, have thrown their tuppence worth into the great debate over Rangers' future.

Tony Blair, master of the meaningless sound-bite and political opportunist of the first order has clearly influenced his successors in power, and neither could miss the chance to offer their opinion, in neither case giving any real thought as to what he was actually saying. To be fair to Cameron – even though it grieves me to do so – he hadn't any real clue what he was talking about in his defence of the huns. The first Minister however, while normally as politically sure footed as it is possible to be, has no excuse for the nonsense which emanated from his mouth recently – unless that is, it was reflective of his real views, in which case we really are in trouble.

The idea that they should receive special case treatment from HMRC is frankly risible, but it was the comments that he made about this 'institution' and its history and culture which leaves one gasping with incredulity.

Are we really expected to believe that all those who have weighed in on these topics and of Rangers' importance to Scotland the nation are unaware of what these traditions and cultural associations really mean.

This is an organisation which for the best part of a century traded and prospered on a policy of prejudice and discrimination against a Faith community and an ethnic group, a policy which rewarded them with on the field success and economic benefits which set them above every other club in the land. That these policies for many years reflected the broad opinion of the society was an additional aid, in that the establishment – both football and political – ignored if not supported them and facilitated their advantage over all other clubs – most importantly in their eyes – Celtic.

No one can deny that they made the most of these advantages and success was seen as their birthright which led to an attitude amongst their followers which simply could not cope with any other state.

When Souness came in and the Lawrence Empire bank rolled the revolution, Lawrence Marlborough was on record as saying that the 'football club was not required to make a profit'. A consequence of this was the growth of a belief that fiscal responsibility was the province of lesser clubs.

The early years under Murray were successful from both a financial and a playing perspective, but when they were challenged by Fergus, the need to spend became even more acute and the debt began to spiral, but again the background of a massive commercial organisation – Murray International – precluded the need to count the cost.

In recent days much blame has been laid at the door of Dick Advocaat, but the gravy boat had already sailed even before he arrived with the grandiose notion that European success was possible so long as the money flowed unceasingly.

We knew about the spiralling debt, but the media were criminally negligent in their task of reporting the reality behind the bravura signings and fancy training complexes.

Fine wines and succulent lamb buy a load of silence – or rather they buy a load of sycophantic nonsense.

It would appear that while the Souness / Wattie mark 1 years created debt which was subsumed by the parent company – which we now know was actually incapable of covering these donations – the Advocaat years introduced the illegal mechanisms designed to avoid the payment of tax which now bring them to the door of the poorhouse.

The details of their behaviours are however of less importance than the hubris which led them to believe that the normal rules did not apply to them – the fruits of over 100 years of weearrapeepul. This stuff is well known – even though the Uruk Hai choose to live in an alternative universe in which they are above reproach, but it is astonishing that so many major figures are suggesting that this 'institution', this national treasure as some would have it, should be protected and empowered.

Their constant excesses – the sectarian songs, the regular riots at home and abroad which are a feature of this club and the overwhelming arrogance which they embody – appear to matter not a jot. The only important issue is that they survive and are allowed to continue without sanction or correction.

The notion that our country and our national game would somehow be impoverished by their absence would be regarded as comic by any sensible person who has not been indoctrinated by what has 'aye been' in our little country – and amongst the indoctrinated I would include ourselves. In any other context we would be convinced that due process of law would follow, but our experience tells us that somehow they will slip the noose and escape the punishment they deserve.