

tinued, referring to the man with the pistol. Communist-bloc reproductions of the picture looked overexposed, dark, or awkwardly retouched with a brush to make the couple look repulsive and frightening, according to Balázs and Casoar. Hungarian books put the pictures in Soviet historical context, describing how imperialist and fascist opponents of the Russian-backed government had been plotting since 1948, waiting for the right moment when Hungary would become the “battlefield of the international class fight.” Photos of young fighters taken during the rebellion were used as conclusive proof of treason during later trials, and one young woman was hanged. Gyuri’s fate is unknown, but Jutka was listed in Hungarian records as a “prohibited person” until 1989. She died a year later, in exile in Australia.

PRESS & MEDIA

The Dodgy Sex Dossier

THE SOURCE: “The ‘Dodgy Dossier’: The Academic Implications of the British Government’s Plagiarism Incident” by Ibrahim Al-Marashi, in *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, June 2006.

FOUR YEARS AGO, TO BOLSTER support for an invasion of Iraq, British prime minister Tony Blair released a dossier titled “Iraq—Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception, and Intimidation.” Nineteen paragraphs had been copied almost verbatim from the work of an Iraqi-American Ph.D. candidate at Oxford University. And that was only the beginning.

Ibrahim Al-Marashi’s thesis was

based on 300,000 declassified Iraqi state documents abandoned in Kuwait when the American-led international forces launched the first gulf war in 1991. In 2003, when the dossier was being written by Blair’s “spin doctor,” Alistair Campbell, Al-Marashi was on leave from pursuit of his doctorate to work at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California. Four days after the dossier was slipped to journalists in the final buildup to the war, the doctoral candidate got an e-mail from a British academic: Had he collaborated with the government on the dossier? Al-Marashi hadn’t heard of it, but when he placed it side by side with an article he had adapted from the second chapter of his thesis, he found long sections of his own words in the 19-page document. It wasn’t just outrage that he felt. As a young scholar hoping to teach in the Middle East, he feared that the use of his research to justify a war against his native Iraq would blackball him forever. But while the British government’s plagiarism caused considerable concern, to say the least, writes Al-Marashi, “I found the media’s coverage of the incident even more disturbing.”

In the press frenzy surrounding the incident, the Blair government’s plagiarism of two other authors was largely forgotten. “It was far more incompetent to plagiarize a California ‘student’ than a published author,” Al-Marashi explains. The media played the story as if he were “an undergraduate in shorts and sandals whose ‘homework assignment’ was copied by the British government.”

Alexander Cockburn, in an arti-

cle for *The Nation*, accused Al-Marashi of writing a “politically inspired document” for an “Israeli think tank hot for war.” Within a week, *The Guardian* had promoted him to postdoctoral status. *The Washington Post* wrote that the plagiarized material was 12 years old, though it later issued a retraction. The London *Observer* relayed “mutterings” that the French could not be expected to back a war on Iraq justified only by a “failed doctoral thesis.”

Even worse, Al-Marashi had written that one of the responsibilities of the Iraqi intelligence service was “aiding opposition groups in hostile regimes.” That was juiced up in the dossier into an assertion that the Iraqi intelligence services were “supporting terrorist organizations in hostile regimes.” Al-Marashi’s work had opened the door to the charge that Saddam Hussein supported Al Qaeda.

The Al-Marashi dossier was not the only one produced by “spin doctor” Campbell. In an earlier document, he had claimed that Iraq could deploy chemical munitions in 45 minutes, inserting the short time frame into the separate study in order to “sex up” the document, Al-Marashi writes. This became known as the “sexex-up dossier,” while the “Al-Marashi” paper was called the “dodgy dossier.” Many people lost the distinction, and Al-Marashi repeatedly had to decline responsibility for the “dodgy sex dossier.” Then he was enshrined for posterity as a grammatical lout when a misplaced comma in his original thesis was reprinted in a best-selling

punctuation book, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*.

Saddam Hussein, in the end, did not—as Al-Marashi had feared—retaliate against his relatives remaining in Iraq, although his family has since fled the country

following a kidnapping attempt. Al-Marashi got his Ph.D. on schedule in 2004, and he is now an international policy fellow at Central European University's Center for Policy Studies. He is often asked why he didn't sue the British government.

He responds: "The ramifications of two governments making an argument to invade a sovereign nation based on evidence that was essentially taken from a journal article, in my opinion, makes the thought of money meaningless."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Conservatism Marches On

THE SOURCE: "Is Conservatism Finished?" by Wilfred M. McClay, in *Commentary*, Jan. 2007.

THE REPUBLICAN LOSSES IN the 2006 midterm elections are just the latest news to have set many conservative pundits to sounding the death knell for their movement. The title of one of the many recent books in this vein labels the lead culprit: *Conservatives Betrayed: How George W. Bush and Other Big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause*, by Richard Viguerie. According to Viguerie, Bush may have "talked like a conservative to win our votes, but never governed like a conservative." Bush's foreign- and domestic-policy stumbles, most notably the war in Iraq, have sabotaged "the idyllic spirit of unity at home and cooperation abroad that allegedly prevailed during the Cold War years under [Ronald] Reagan," writes Wilfred M. McClay, a history professor at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. But does all this mean that

the conservative movement is really finished?

McClay believes that the "modest" election victory for the Democrats, which yielded only a narrow majority in both houses of Congress, does not "justify the claim that *conservatism* lost." He points to the easy triumph of independent senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut "over his more liberal antiwar challenger" and the victories of "such relatively conservative Democrats as James Webb in Virginia and Robert Casey Jr. in Pennsylvania" as signs that no major ideological shift is underway. Indeed, McClay says, "the American electorate has . . . moved slowly but steadily in a conservative direction since 1968."

McClay also questions the validity of the conservatives' charges against Bush, each of which "rests on some a priori definition of what conservatism is and what it is not." Jeffrey Hart, for instance, author of *The Making of the American Conservative Mind* (2006), speaks of conservatism "as a realistic and non-ideological approach to gov-

ernance," and chides Bush for overstepping his authority. But McClay cites many instances when leaders took actions "that involved the transgression of a 'conservative' principle for the sake of broadly conservative ends," such as Abraham Lincoln's suspension of basic civil liberties during the Civil War. Nor is Bush's "insistence on the universal appeal of free institutions out of line" with conservatism of the past. His justifications for his Iraq policy echo Reagan, who once said, "It would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy."

To some conservatives, Bush's evangelical Protestantism—"the source of his involvement of the federal government in promoting educational reform, his faith-based initiative, his African AIDS initiative"—"reeks equally of dogoodism and unlimited government." McClay points to the words of one of conservatism's founding voices, Russell Kirk, who said, "There exists a transcendent moral order, to which we ought to try to conform the ways of society." Even Reagan, McClay reminds his fellow conservatives, frequently quoted Scripture, and favored making inauguration day "a day of prayer."

It's "ridiculous," McClay adds, for conservatives to recall the Reagan