

Through Gates of Fire – A Journey into World Disorder by Martin Bell.
Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2003.

Some might choose to label Through Gates of Fire as a ‘rant’, others, myself included, would prefer to call it a superbly argued, lucid and wholly convincing piece of writing by that all too rare combination, a journalist with authority and integrity.

Martin Bell, the man in the white suit, intrepid reporter for the BBC from the world’s trouble spots and war zones, and latterly an outstanding Independent MP for Tatton, applies his mind to the state of things that matter to him the most: the standards of television reporting, particularly of armed conflict, the hypocrisy and double standards operating in the conduct of international affairs, the cheapening of the British political system by its main parties, and the future of the world governed by a dominant and rampant United States.

There is much to agree with in this book, much to praise, and much to admire. Apart from anything else, even where one may disagree with Bell he writes compellingly and stirringly, and will leave most readers wishing that governments made greater use of independent-minded people like himself, both nationally and internationally. Martin Bell now occupies himself as a special representative for UNICEF, something that clearly matters to him hugely; having read Through Gates of Fire I would at least like to see him as the next United Nations Secretary General – that would be great for the UN and really exciting for the world community.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh