

FREE LIFE

A Journal of Classical Liberal and Libertarian Thought

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Potential contributors are urged to write to the Editor for a "Style Sheet and Guidance for LA Writers" – though it is worth adding that nobody ever has asked for one, and the Editor has not seen one since November 1991.

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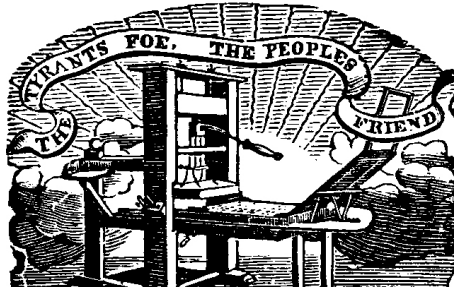
A Note on Contributors

Sean Gabb is the Editor of *Free Life*. His new book, *Cultural Revolution, Culture War: The Real Battle for Britain*, appears later this month. Please buy a copy.

Ilana Mercer a US-based columnist for WorldNetDaily.com. Her forthcoming book is *Broad Sides: One Woman's Clash with a Corrupt Culture*. More at www.ilanamerger.com

Rebecca Baty is a farmer, IT project manager, and Conservative activist.





Welcome Back, My Dear Readers!

I seem to relaunch *Free Life* as often as the Conservatives acquire a new leader. My last relaunch was in the spring of this year. Having lost my printer, and not having the means or inclination to go looking for another, I decided in future to publish on the Internet. As often as I produced an article for *Free Life Commentary*, I promised, there would be a *Free Life* within about a week—this to contain the republished article and any comments made on it by others.

I did bring out eight issues last spring, which is more than I had ever produced before in one year. That is an achievement, and I ought to feel happier with it than I do. But I quickly grew bored with the new appearance of the journal, and unable to justify the effort of producing it. Html has much to commend it, but it cannot match the neatness of a printed page. Moreover, about four fifths of its content, these being my own articles, were already available on the same site in the same format. As it emerged from its last relaunch, *Free Life* had neither the immediacy or concision of a blog, nor the physical attractiveness or authority of a journal. It was something in between, and amounted to nothing very much. It had no future.

Then there was the war with Iraq. During its approach and throughout its course, I produced a stream of denunciation sufficient to fill a small book. In the event, I turned out to be right. There were no weapons of mass destruction: certainly, there was nothing capable of use against this country—not within 45 minutes, or days, or perhaps even years. As I had insisted, it was soon clear beyond reasonable doubt that we had been taken to war on the basis of lies. And, if the military side of the war went better than I feared, it is now plain that the occupation of Iraq will be quite as bloody and interminable as I predicted. I was right, and my opponents were wrong.

But rather than unleashing from me a flood of self-congratulation, these facts left me unwilling for several months to write anything at all about politics. I think it was the revulsion and despair at the outcome of the war. I had put the case against war, and so had many others with greater fame and ability. We won every argument. It was all for nothing. The blood was spilled anyway. And while it soon emerged that Mr Blair would have no advantage from the failure of the war, and while the scandals mounted surrounding his lies to get us into it, the absence of a credible opposition left him firmly in office. Not even a small heart attack seemed to be able to loosen his grip.

Now the political scene may have altered with the election of Mr Howard as leader of the Conservative Party, and I suddenly feel willing to look again at the future of *Free Life*. Granted, it could no longer work in hard copy. Regardless of whether I might find someone else to print it, the age of hard copy is passing for small political movements. The cost is too great for the circulation involved. But this truth may not require the complete break with paper that html involves. Perhaps there is a viable middle way.

As an experiment, I propose to gather my *Free Life Commentary* articles, and anything else submitted to me, and format them in the old manner as if for hard copy publication. But I will not bother with printing the finished product. I will instead upload it to the Internet as a pdf file, and allow others to download and print and distribute it for themselves. Most people I know have either broadband or unmetered Internet access, and so large files are now routinely downloaded that might once have sat untouched on a web site. Also, most people have either laser printers or colour inkjet printers. And I think people are beginning to sort out a rational balance between what they are happy to read on screen and what they will print and carry about with them to read.

I will not charge for the new *Free Life*. Instead, I invite those of my readers who feel grateful or merely generous to sponsor me. Setting all this in type and adding appropriate pictures all use up my time, and I have little of this to spare. And so I shall be very happy to receive the occasional £5 note or any other donation via the Internet..

I should add that the acceptance of money does not commit me to producing issues of *Free Life* with anything approaching regularity. Whatever promises I may from time to time have made as Editor of this journal, I have in fact brought out issues whenever I felt inclined. This I will continue to do. However, this is now issue 48, and the 24th of my stewardship. Though i shall continue to make changes to the format and distribution, I do not think myself likely to give up on a project that, if intermittently, has become so established a part of my life.

Therefore, my dear readers, welcome back to *Free Life*. Download, print, read, distribute, enjoy—and please do consider paying.

Sean Gabb

An Afternoon with Tony Martin

Sean Gabb

Editor's Note: This article was first published on the Internet as Free Life Commentary No.112 on the 19th September 2003.

Since time immemorial, on the third Thursday in September, Thame in Oxfordshire has hosted what is now the largest agricultural fair in the country. From all over England people come to buy and sell things and to see one another. There are tractor displays, and cows, and horses, and stalls selling clothing and food and drink, and vast car parks for the thousands of people who attend.

I was there yesterday at the invitation of the BBC. Bill Heine, a populist libertarian from America, has a show with Radio Oxford, and is in the habit of getting me on air every week or so for five minutes at a time. Yesterday, he wanted me not on the end of a telephone, but in person. Without offering the usual fee that I charge for leaving home, he wanted me to drive for a round trip of 300 miles to spend an hour live on air discussing rural crime and the right to self defence. For that distance and that time, regardless of fees, I would normally have refused. However, this was different. One of the other guests was to be Tony Martin.

The Persecution of Tony Martin

He is the farmer who shot two thieves in August 1999, killing one and wounding the other. He was put on trial for murder and convicted. On appeal, his conviction was changed to manslaughter, and he was eventually released on Friday the 8th August this year, having spent more than three years in prison. He could have been released last year, but the authorities argued at the parole hearings that his lack of repentance made him a continuing danger to any thieves who might try to break into his home. He is presently facing a tort action for damages from the thief he neglected to kill—the man is claiming for loss of earnings and for reduced sexual function. His legal fees are being charged to the tax payers.

This is a case that has at times filled me and many other people with incandescent rage. It is the perfect summary of all that is wrong with modern England. Now, I was invited to meet the man at the centre of the case. Let alone driving—I might have walked the entire circuit of the M25 to be with him. So off I went.

The radio show was by design an anarchic affair. Bill Heine took us off the stage that had been set up for the broadcast, and had us mingle with the large crowd that stood around. He darted here and there with his microphone, every so often taking calls from the listeners. His guests were Tony Martin, I, and a Bill Bradshaw, who used to be the Vice Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority. I think he had been given a peerage by Tony Blair—which is, of course, to be regarded as null and void; and so I will call him Mr Bradshaw. He sprayed us with the usual junk statistics—burglary is unusual and diminishing; we are likely on average to be attacked in our homes once every 285 years; and so on and so forth. All I can



say in his favour is that he showed courage in turning up to a debate in which he could not possibly get the sympathy of his audience. I have done that, and it can be unnerving—even when you believe what you are saying; and I cannot believe he was entirely persuaded by the truth of some of his claims.

Sean Gabb Speaks

I do not intend to fill this article with an account of my own doings. In any event, I am to be sent a recording of the broadcast, and I will make this available on my website for anyone who wants to listen. However, I do need to explain how I came to be seen as a minor hero at the fair, and how I was able to speak so freely with people. I made my own introductory statement roughly as follows:

There is in any society an implied contract between state and citizen. We give up part of our right to self defence—only part, I emphasise—and all our right to act as judge in our own causes. We resign these matters to the state and obey its laws. In exchange, it maintains order more efficiently and more justly than we could ourselves. In modern England, the state has not broken this contract. If it had simply given up on maintaining order, that would be bad enough—but we could then at least shift for ourselves. No, the state in this country has varied the terms of the contract. It will not protect us, but it will not let us protect ourselves. If we ignore this command, we can expect to be punished at least as severely as the criminals who attack us. That is what the Tony Martin case is all about. This is not just a matter for the country. The towns have it just as bad, if not worse. If you are a victim of crime anywhere in this country, you are in it alone and undefended. Call for the Police, call for a home delivery pizza—see which arrives first.

Mr Bradshaw insisted I was talking nonsense—that the response times for burglary was excellent; and that the law on self defence was “plain” and had not changed in “hundreds of years”. I poured scorn on this:

The modern law says we may use “proportionate force” to defend ourselves. What does this mean in practice? It means this: You wake at 3:00am. Someone is moving about downstairs. You must go down and ask—“Excuse me, but have you come to tie me and my wife up and torture us slowly to death? Or are you here just to lift some cash and the car keys? If the former, I will consider what force to use that will be proportional. If the latter, I will retire upstairs and wait for the police. What nonsense! Anyone who is unlawfully in your home should be regarded as taking his life into his hands. If you kill him, that is his tough luck.

That got a big round of applause, and—as said—made me a hero for the day in Thame.

A Normal Man

After the broadcast, I fell into conversation with Mr Martin. I was no sure what to expect. His coverage in the media has been almost wildly hostile. The usual picture of him shown is of a man with staring eyes and a morose look about his mouth and lower face. He is described as a “loner” with incoherent and nasty opinions about the world. This can all be discounted as the smears of a controlled media. The man I met yesterday—and I have photographs which I will publish to show it—was a cheerful, rather stolid farmer, though with an unusual fluency of speech. Far from avoiding company, he went into the crowd and mingled as if he had been doing outside broadcasts all his career. At least once, he carried on a three way conversation with someone in the crowd and with a telephone caller.

What most impressed me most, however, was his modesty. I come across many people who have been plucked from obscurity to face some public injustice inflicted by the authorities. Quite often, they come to regard themselves as people of immense importance, and take on airs and graces that sit ill on them. Now, Mr Martin has suffered more injustice than anyone I have ever met. He was treated as a common criminal and spent years in prison for doing what in any sensible country would be regarded as a public service. One of his dogs died while he was inside. His remaining dog—a lovely black Rottweiler called Otto—had not at first recognised him after a three years absence. He is a continuing victim of persecution because of that law suit, and may lose still more before it has ended. To suffer all this would send many people mad. Mr Martin, though, behaved throughout yesterday’s appearance with quiet good humour. People came up to him in

a continual stream, to shake his hand and give him their thanks and best wishes. He smiled. He gave as well as accepted sympathy. He had a kind word for everyone. I may have been a minor hero, but he was the main attraction. And it did not turn his head. I have met half mad loners. This was not one of them. I thought of John Hampden. By an odd coincidence, I later read that he had gone to school in Thame. So did John Wilkes.

We spoke for about an hour. Again, it was a chaotic affair, interrupted by other people and an interview he did with a rival broadcaster. We shook hands and said goodbye three times before we did part. We spoke about the shootings at his farm in 1999. He said that, after so much discussion of what happened and what he was supposed to have thought, he could no longer recall what had really happened. He said he was angry about his treatment by the Police. In particular, they had made much of the fact that he was fully clothed when the thieves broke into his home. They used that as evidence of intent to use violence. “If I was sleeping in my clothes” he asked, “what business was that of anyone? Surely what I do at home is my business alone. Ask any farmer if, after a hard day’s work, he always bothers to get changed for bed.”.

I asked if he was worried about further attacks. He showed me his mobile telephone. It had a red button on the top. “If I press this” he said, “a police helicopter will be overhead in five minutes. These people do not want still more bad publicity. But”—he smiled—“I don’t know what good a police helicopter can do me after five minutes. A lot can be done in that time”. Of course, he no longer has a shotgun licence. He reminded me of the motorcycling injury from his younger days that left him with a propensity to deep vein thrombosis. Had those thieves in 1999 taken him by surprise, they would have tied him up. That might have finished him there and then. Next time, without effective means of self defence, he might not be so lucky.

His opinions can be described as old-fashioned Tory. I can understand why these are so shocking to the media and political classes. But I heard nothing yesterday that any reasonable person could have found objectionable. “Democracy is dead in this country” he told me emphatically.

It was good while it lasted, but it’s now gone. The Government doesn’t care about ordinary people. The Police treat us with contempt. The way things are going, there will one day be a revolution in this country. Then, we shall need a benign dictatorship. I don’t mean this present lot will have more power. I mean a benign dictatorship that will give ordinary people back their rights.

Nothing eccentric there, I think, regardless of whether I agree with it. We exchanged addresses and parted—he back to his farming, I to look around the fair. Bill Heine had passed on to a debate about tractors that drive very slowly down country lanes. The debate was heated, but did not touch me.

Widow’s Warning

Over by the Countryside Alliance stall, I fell into conversation with an old woman. She was 87, and had lost her husband and both brothers in the War. One of her sons was settled in America with his family. But another had a farm in Oxfordshire. He had been threatened repeatedly by intruders. He had lost crops and machinery to them. The Police had told him they were unable to help, but had warned him not to “take the law into his own hands”. She was safe in her own home.



She had good neighbours who kept an eye on her. But she looked about her with quiet despair. "I have been coming to this fair and to others like it all my life" she said. "I used to think it would go on forever—always changing with the times, but continuing generation after generation. It will see me out, I suppose. But I don't believe it will go on much after that. You should think yourself lucky you have seen it while you can. There will be nothing for your children. They will have neither country nor freedom. Sometimes nowadays, I almost regret I survived the bombing."

I tried to assure her that even this Government could not last much longer, and that the forces of reaction were swelling in both numbers and conviction. But her own conviction had been too much for me. Perhaps this is the approaching end. All nations die eventually. Why should ours be different? If the present collapse can be dated to the appointment of Tony Blair as Prime Minister, it was not without advance warning. It was preceded by a long corrosion of values and of the institutes that

embodied them. Mr Blair's Government did not take power by any *coup*. It was elected and re-elected by regular process. We retain a freedom of speech and constitutional safeguards that would be formidable in any nation still inclined to make use of them. Nothing has been done to us yet that we could not have stopped had we only the will as a nation to resist. For doing hardly worse, Charles I was put to death by a revolutionary tribunal. His son James II was run out of the country for doing far less overall. We live in a country where the majority are inclined to grumble, but are more interested in voting people out of the Big Brother house than in getting rid of the cast of traitors and buffoons who run our lives. My words of assurance were hollow, and we both knew it.

Still, I did see one of the last English heroes yesterday, and I did see a little fragment of the old England. My thanks to bill Heine—and, oddly enough, even to the BBC that made it possible.

No Right of Self-Defence in Blair's Barbaric Britain

Ilana Mercer

A British *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer recently took a shot at tracing the "providential themes" present in George Bush's political rhetoric. Indeed, the interminable war on "tyrants and terrorists" is laced with evangelical zeal. The American president, however, is not alone "in the redemption business."

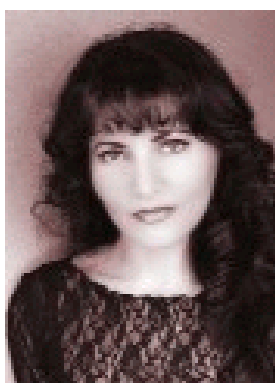
British Prime Minister Tony Blair fancies himself every bit the redeemer of mankind. Etched all over Blair's address to Congress was the devotion to the "mystic [and, might I add, malevolent] idea of national destiny."

One particularly chilling dictate was this: "I know out there there's a guy getting on with his life, perfectly happily, minding his own business, saying to you, the political leaders of this country, 'Why me? And why us? And why America?' And the only answer is, 'Because destiny put you in this place in history, in this moment in time, and the task is yours to do.'"

The tyranny implied in Blair's maudlin grandiosity should be obvious.

First, the little guy back home ought to be the one calling the shots, not Messrs. Messiah and Company. Second, before Blair joins Bush in rousing the 'vision less' middle-class American from his uninspired slumber—The Great Redeemer thinks it's below contempt to harbor a civilized desire to mind one's own business and live in peace—he ought to take a look at the little guy back in England.

Tony Martin, for one, is not having a terribly tranquil time. Blair's blather to Congress about "the spread of freedom" being "the best security for the free" must ring hollow to the elderly, law-abiding, English farmer, who would no more advocate the spread of British-style freedom than he would the bubonic plague.



Tony Martin was recently released from jail after being arrested for the crime of defending his home—he killed a career criminal by the name of Fred Barras and injured his accomplice, Brendan Fearon, when the two broke into the elderly man's homestead. Martin was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison, the court finding that he had no freedom to use force to defend his property or his life.

The traditional "Rights of Englishmen"—the inspiration for the American founders—are no longer cool in Cool Britannia. The great system of law that the English people have long held dear, including the 1689 English Bill of Rights, which entails the right to possess arms, is in tatters. The British elites, many of whom enjoy taxpayer-funded security details, have disarmed law-abiding Britons, who now defend themselves against the protected criminal class only at their own peril.

A right that can't be defended, however, is a right that exists only in name. In Britain today there is, in effect, no real right to life or property.

In Blair's Britain, the law has been turned around to break and subdue proud and self-sufficient people like Tony Martin. The Crown rejected his self-defense plea, although his conviction for murder was commuted to manslaughter once Martin capitulated and agreed to accept a diagnosis of mental illness. In other words, to defend your home in Britain is to evince a paranoid personality disorder.

Martin's case, unfortunately, is far from unique, and the consequences of this policy have been appalling. According to a recent UN study, writes Historian Joyce L. Malcolm, author of *Guns and Violence: The English Experience*, "England and Wales have the highest crime rate and worst record for 'very

serious' offences of the 18 industrial countries surveyed." Whereas violent crime in America has been plummeting for 10 consecutive years, criminal violence in Britain has been rising.

Since Blair's 1997 total ban on armed self-defense, things have gone from very bad to even worse. "You are now six times more likely to be mugged in London than New York," notes Malcolm. "Why? Because as common law appreciated, not only does an armed individual have the ability to protect himself or herself but criminals are less likely to attack them....A study found American burglars fear armed homeowners more than the police." The most dangerous burglaries—the kind that occur when people are at home—are much rarer in the United States, only 13 percent, than in Britain, where they constitute 53 percent of all such home invasions.

How far has British barbarism gone? Malcolm's evidently garden-variety accounts include the story of an elderly lady who fought off a gang of thugs "by firing a blank from a toy gun, only to be arrested for the crime of putting someone in fear with an imitation firearm."

Similarly, when Eric Butler was brutally assaulted in a subway, "he unsheathed a sword blade in his walking stick and slashed" at one of his assailants. Butler was added to the lineup—he "was tried and convicted of carrying an offensive

weapon."

Tony Martin was almost denied parole because he failed to show sufficient contrition for killing one of the creatures that invaded what was supposed to be his castle. In the words of a probation officer, Martin continues to be "a danger to burglars." In a truly civilized country, of course, that would be a compliment.

To add insult to injury, after having been robbed of three years and five months of his life for the crime of self-defense, Martin's ordeal is still not over. The surviving ruffian, who has more than thirty convictions to his name, has been granted permission to sue his victim, even given legal aid to so do, for the injury he suffered on the 'job.'

In addition, the criminal protection and reinforcement program that is contemporary British justice also entails honoring career criminal Brendan Fearon's 'right' to know where his victim, the old farmer, will reside now that he's been released.

Tony Blair has gone to great (and dubious) lengths to make a case for Britain's right to defend itself from perceived threats in the international arena. He ought to be reminded that self-defense, like charity, begins at home.

Not Socialism, but Post-Socialism: The Nature of the Enemy Sean Gabb

Editor's Note: This article was first published on the Internet as Free Life Commentary No.113 on the 13th October 2003.

Preface

Around this time of year, I give much of my writing time to complaints about the Conservative Party. There is little directly on this matter I have not already published; and I see no reason for saying it all again with a present set of examples. What I will do instead is to provide a sociological analysis of why the Conservatives are doing so badly. I begin this with an abstract that summarises a longer argument.

Abstract

The problems now faced by the Conservative Party are not fundamentally a matter of policies and personalities. They are instead the effect of a set of assumptions—more or less accepted by all involved in politics—that makes the advocacy of conservative ideas almost impossible. Using the terminology and analysis of Antonio Gramsci, the Italian



Marxist thinker, this set of assumptions may be called a "hegemonic discourse". Propagated by all the instruments of administration and law and education, it sets the terms of public debate—what questions may and may not be asked, and how those allowed may be answered.

The discourse is not supported by overt propaganda of the kind used by the totalitarian states of the middle and late 20th century. It is instead imposed by three primary methods. There is the control of terminology—"left" and "right", "progressive" and "outmoded", and so forth—thereby enabling arguments to be conducted in terms already biased to one side. Periodic shifts in terminology—"gay" for homosexual", for example—also allows one side to come to any argument from an already established position of moral superiority. There is control of the news media. This does not involve actual lying. It is rather a matter of selection and emphasis of true facts: articles and news items can be

constructed that in the formal sense are wholly neutral, but that create an entirely prejudicial effect on their audience. Then

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Interested persons may apply in writing to the Editor of *Free Life*.

Following a series of European Union Directives – one of these assented to by Francis Maude – all enacted into the laws of this country, it is a criminal offence to offer goods for sale in English weights and measurements. The maximum penalty for disobedience is six months imprisonment.

There are some laws that it is our public duty to disobey. Compulsory metrication is one of them. And this advertisement will be varied and repeated without limit. By the way, it is placed by the Editor of *Free Life* with the knowledge and consent of the Proprietor, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of anyone else connected with the Libertarian Alliance.

there is control of the entertainment media. Again, this does not involve the crude propagandising of the National and Bolshevik Socialists. It is the use of drama and comedy to normalise attitudes previously regarded as unusual or even offensive, and to associate their opposites with all that is bad.

Conservative opposition to the New Labour project is based on the assumption that it is essentially about economic policy. But it is not about economics—or is so only at the periphery. This project is one of cultural deconstruction. Socialism of the familiar kind is for the moment dead. This project is its replacement. The established order of liberal democracy is still to be overturned, but not by the traditional means of seizing the means of production. Though not socialists in the traditional sense, the directors of the project were all influenced—at university or by example—by the writings of Gramsci and Foucault and Althusser, and the various other philosophers of the “New Left”.

To understand what is happening needs an understanding of these philosophers. Indeed, to understand their writings is of the greatest importance—just as understanding those of Karl Marx was in the earlier debates over socialism. The critiques of liberal democracy contained in these writings are all variously false or questionable. But the analyses of how the ruling class gains and keeps power—through the control of culture and the construction of hegemonic discourses—may be seen as a set of instructions for how the new non-economic socialists can themselves gain and keep power.

These writings are also useful to the opponents of the project. For over a generation, the enemies of liberal democracy have been complaining about “repressive tolerance” and “labelling” and “moral panics” and “hegemonic ideologies”. All these terms and the analyses they express can now be used with far greater justice against these enemies of liberal democracy. They can be used to spread embarrassment and confusion, and also to recapture the moral high ground of debate.

For this to be achieved, however, it is necessary to educate conservatives in general—and Conservatives in particular—so that they can understand the nature of the present threat, and to

use these captured tools of analysis and attack. Arguments based on the economic calculation debate won against the socialists from the 1920s onwards are for the moment largely useless. It is now accepted that the State cannot bake bread better or more cheaply than the private sector. It is still useful to complain about high taxes and the growing burden of regulation. But these complaints must be grounded on an understanding of the reasons why these taxes and regulations are being imposed—their purpose being to advance an agenda of cultural transformation.

How this education is to be achieved is a matter for further discussion. Briefly put, is there anyone out there who will give me the money needed to buy the time for educating the conservative movement?

I can be reached by the usual means.

Sean Gabb

13 October 2003

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Introduction

For at least a decade now, the British Conservative Party has been in serious trouble. It has lost two of the past three general elections, and does not seem likely to win the next one. The reasons for this collapse of support can be divided under two headings. There are local and general reasons. The local reasons are obvious. Since Margaret Thatcher was forced from office in November 1990, the Party has had three more or less ineffectual leaders. At the same time, the Blair Government has been reasonably able and very lucky. It has faced no serious challenge to its authority, and has done little immediate harm to the strong economic position inherited from the Conservatives in 1997.

If these were the only reasons for Conservative weakness, the solution would be fairly easy. It would be a matter of looking for a better leader, or waiting for the recession to hit, or both. The problem is that, behind these local reasons, there are general reasons for weakness that make it very hard for any Conservative leader to be effective, or for any but the most serious failure by Labour to bring its legitimacy as the governing party into doubt. Indeed, even given some unexpected upset that might bring them back into office, it is unlikely that the Conservatives would find themselves in power. For all they might be able to form a Conservative Government, they would not be able to pursue conservative objects in defence of liberal democracy. The great problem for the Conservatives, regardless of whoever leads them, is that they are the target of a highly effective Gramscian project, and they show not the smallest sign of understanding the nature of their enemy.

A Gramscian Project

The administration of this country should not be regarded as a neutral machine, to be directed as the elected politicians please. It is instead best seen as a web of people and institutions. There are the civil servants. There are the public sector educators. There are the semi-autonomous agencies funded by the tax payers. There are journalists and other communicators. There are certain formally private media and entertainment and legal and business interests that obtain



power, status and income from the policies of government. Together, these are the true government of this country. The elected politicians are not unimportant parts of the administrative web. But they are required to work within limitations imposed by the web as a whole. These limitations are set by the ideas that hold the various parts of

the web together.

These ideas may be called a hegemonic ideology. They set the agenda of debate and policy. They determine what questions exist, how they can be discussed, and what solutions may be applied. They provide a whole language of debate. Ideas outside the range of this hegemonic ideology—as especially those hostile to it—either have no words at all for their discussion, or can be discussed only in words that implicitly discredit them in advance. Once achieved within the administrative web, ideological hegemony can be spread, through education and example, to the rest of the population.

The function of ideological hegemony is to legitimise the power and status of the ruling *élites* in a society, and to marginalise dissent where it cannot altogether be prevented. It supplements—or can even entirely replace—the more overt forms of repression.

These functions were first analysed in systematic manner by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist imprisoned by Mussolini. By the early 20th century, it was clear, in spite of what Marx had predicted, that the industrial working classes in Western Europe and America would not rise in spontaneous revolution. Rather than conclude that the whole theory had been falsified by events, Gramsci and his followers developed the “rescue hypothesis” that the workers had been prevented from understanding their real interests by their acceptance of the dominant bourgeois ideology. Because they thought in terms of national identity and the amelioration of hardship through social reform, they more could not see how exploited they were, and how no true improvement was possible within the existing mode of production.

The purpose and use of this analysis has tended to limit its reception among conservatives. However, once developed, any set of ideas can be detached from the circumstances that produced it. It makes no more sense for non-socialists to reject the concept of ideological hegemony because of its origins than it did for the German national socialists to reject the theory of relativity because it was originated by a Jew. Where ideas are concerned, all that matters is whether they are true or false.

Now, when applied to the institutions of liberal democracy, the analysis was false. These were reasonably open societies, with a high degree of toleration of dissent, and economic institutions that had raised and were raising the living standards of all social groups. Nevertheless, it does exactly apply to those people who have taken control of the administrative web and are using it to impose their own, profoundly anti-conservative hegemony in Britain and throughout the English-speaking world.

A Quasi-Marxist Ideological Hegemony

In a sense, the administrative web has been dominated for at least the past three generations by ideas hostile to conservatism. Ever since the 1940s, conservative governments in both Britain and America have found it necessary to govern mostly within the assumptions of the administrators and of their allies. However, the old anti-conservative *élites*—headed by people like J.M. Keynes and Paul Samuelson, and Roy Jenkins and Warren Christopher—by and large accepted the assumptions of liberal democracy. There was a commitment to open and reasonably fair debate, and to the proposition that justice should remain separate from politics. It was bound together by a belief in its superior wisdom and goodness and by a contempt for opposition. But its hegemony was rather mild and amateurish, and little attempt was made to preserve that hegemony after its claims had been falsified in the 1970s. Since the 1970s—even as conservatives were celebrating the death of socialism—a new and far more professional and ruthless hegemony has been established within the administrative web.

This hegemony proceeds from the progressive domination of the universities by radical socialists. From Sociology and the other social studies, they spread out to colonise virtually every other discipline with the exceptions of Economics, Mathematics and the natural sciences. They are particularly strong in most departments of Education and in teacher training programmes. Since the 1960s, they have been turning out generation after generation of graduates exposed to the ideas of Marxism and quasi-Marxism. Few of these graduates, of course, became committed activists. But, from early middle age downwards, there are now hundreds of thousands of intellectual workers—the key personnel of the administrative web—whose minds have been shaped within radical socialist assumptions.

How the Death of Socialism Has Strengthened Socialists

When socialism collapsed in the 1980s as an economic ideology in the West, and as the legitimisation of tyranny in the East, it seemed at first as if the world had been made safe for liberal democracy. Francis Fukuyama, for example, felt able to argue that the next century would see the progressive triumph around the world of capitalism, democracy and the rule of law. More than a decade later, though, we can see that his optimism was at least premature.

If we look at the leading personnel in the Blair and Clinton administrations—and, perhaps more importantly in the administrative webs below them—we see an almost unvaried hold on positions of importance by people whose minds have been at least shaped by the general ideas of radical socialism. They may no longer be socialists in the economic sense. But their most basic assumptions—from which their old economic analysis had proceeded—has remained intact.

The Relevance of a Gramscian Analysis

What makes the various kinds of Marxist and neo-Marxist analysis so peculiarly appropriate to their actions is that these analyses accurately describe how their minds work. Speech in the old liberal democracies was reasonably free. There was an attempt to separate news from comment. Justice was fairly impartial. But since our new rulers spent their younger years denying these truths, they are quite willing, now they are in power, to act on the belief that they are not true. Because they believe that tolerance is repressive, they are repressive. Because

they do not believe that objectivity is possible, they make no attempt at objectivity. Because they do not believe that justice is other than politics by other means, they are politicising justice. Because they believe that liberal democracy is a *façade* behind which a ruling class hides its ruthless hold on power, they are making a sham of liberal democracy. In this scheme of things, the works of a whole line of Marxist and neo-Marxist philosophers, from Gramsci to Foucault, are to be read not as a critique of liberal democracy, but as the manifesto of their students.

What the Socialists Want

That these people cannot clearly describe the shape of their ideal society, does not at all weaken the force of their attack on the one that exists. The old socialists were notoriously vague about their final utopia, but this did not stop them from producing mountains of dead bodies wherever they took power. We may doubt if the present generation of socialists are sincere when they talk about justice, peace and good will between all people. But we can have no doubt of their immediate end. This is the destruction of the old social and political order—the overturning of its traditions and norms, its standards and laws, its history and heroes. Every autonomous institution, every set of historical associations, every pattern of loyalty that they cannot control—these they want to destroy or neutralise.

The Lack of Conservative Response

As said, this is a Gramscian project carried out by Gramscians. These people spent their younger years reading and thinking about ideological hegemony, and they are now, in their middle years, trying to achieve it. Again, as said, conservatives do not understand the nature of the attack. They understand armed terrorism, and know—at least in theory—how to deal with it. They also know about economic socialism, and are fluent in all the necessary modes of refutation. But the anti-conservatives are not really interested in armed violence—why should they be when they dominate the administrative web? Nor are they really interested in nationalising the means of production, distribution and exchange. No doubt, the Blair Government has raised taxes

since 1997, and has imposed a mass of regulations on business. But the tax rises have not been high enough, nor the regulations heavy enough, to give serious inconvenience to the important big business interests.

The real area of conflict is cultural. That is where the engines of destruction are now most concentrated. And this is a conflict in which there is no overall strategy of defence. There are local defences, and these sometimes succeed. But there is no strategy, nor even the realisation that one might be needed. The engines of destruction may be ranged against fox hunting, or unfashionable humour, or Remembrance Day commemorations, or the Churches, or the nuclear family, or received opinions about the past, or national independence, or the Monarchy, or standard English, or private motoring, or whatever else—but the object is always to delegitimise dissent where it cannot be made impossible.

The strategy of attack is easily described. It involves controlling the language of public debate, control of the news and entertainment media, and the use of these to control perceptions of the past and thereby to shape the future. As Orwell said in *Nineteen Eighty Four*, “who controls the present controls the past: who controls the past controls the future”.

The Control of Language

Most obvious is the control of political taxonomy. The distinction between “right” and “left” is an extraordinarily pervasive force, shaping general understanding and judgement of political concepts. Hitler was on the “extreme right”. Conservatives are on the “right”. Therefore, all conservatives partake of evil, the extent of evil varying with the firmness with which conservative views are held. Any conservative who wants to achieve respect in the media must first show that his conservatism is of the “moderate” kind—that intellectually he more of a social drinker than an alcoholic. Equally, libertarians and those called “neo-liberals” are on the “right”. Therefore, they must be evil. The humorous accusation that someone is “to the right of Genghis Khan” serves the same function.

The use of this taxonomy allows the most contradictory views on politics and economics to be compounded, and all to be smeared without further examination as disreputable. Therefore, the “extreme right-winger” David Irving, who is a national socialist and holocaust revisionist; the “extreme right-winger” J.M. le Pen, who wants to reduce the flow of immigrants into France, but is not a national socialist and who apparently has much Jewish support in his country; and the “extreme right-winger” Enoch Powell, who was a traditional English conservative and a notable champion of liberal economics—all these are placed into the same category, and hostile judgements on one are by natural extension applied to the others.

At various times and in various ways, the trick has been played with other words—for example, “reform”, “progressive”, “modernisation”, and “outmoded”. This first is among the earliest modern examples. From around the end of the 18th century, concerted efforts were made to alter the qualifications for voting in parliamentary elections. The advocates of change were arguing for the abandoning of a system that had been associated with the rise of England to wealth and national greatness, and that had allowed a reconciling of reasonably



stable government with free institutions. In its place they wanted a franchise that had never before been tried—except perhaps in some of the revolutionary upheavals in Europe. Perhaps they were right. Perhaps they were proved right in the event. But their way was made easier by calling the proposed changes “reform”—a word they charged with positive associations—and leaving their conservative opponents to argue against “improvement”. Modern politics are less intellectually distinguished than in the 19th century. Therefore, less effort has been needed to play the trick with “outmoded”—which allows ideas and laws to be rejected simply on the grounds that they are old.

Then there are the periodic changes of permitted terminology. Every so often, conservative newspapers report that a new word has been coined to describe an established fact, and laugh at the seeming pedantry with which use of this new word is enforced within the administrative web. For example, homosexual became “gay”, which became “lesbian-and-gay”, and which is now becoming “LGBT”—this being the acronym for “lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgendered”. Words like mongol, spastic, cripple, single mother, and many others, have likewise been replaced and replaced again. In a sense, this is a misguided but well-meaning attempt to mitigate the hardship of the thing by finding new words that contain no added hurt. But its effect—and therefore part of its intention, a Granscian project being granted—is to remove conservatives from the moral high ground in any debate over policy on such people. When conservatives must think twice before opening their mouths, consulting their opponents on what language of description is now appropriate, they have conceded a very important part of the agenda of debate to their opponents. They have conceded an authority over words that must be gradually extended to a general authority. Conservatives may laugh at the clumsy acronyms and circumlocutions that are coined to replace existing words. But the intention is far from comic; and the effect is highly dangerous.

A similar effect is achieved with the frequent and often seemingly arbitrary changes of name given to ethnic groups and to places. Gypsies must now be called “Roma” or simply “Rom”, and Red Indians must be called “Native Americans”. Ceylon has become Sri Lanka, Dacca has become Dhaka, and Bombay has become Mumbai. Again, words are no longer the neutral means of discussion, but are charged with a political meaning, and judgements can be made on whether or not they are used as required.

Sometimes, words are imposed with a more immediate effect than forcing the deference of opponents. Take a word like “underprivileged”, which has largely replaced the older word poor. This came into general use in the 1970s, and was soon used without apology or comment even by Conservative Cabinet Ministers. It carries a powerful ideological charge—the message that anyone with money in the bank or a good set of clothes has somehow received an unfair advantage, and that those who lack these things have been deliberately excluded from the distribution. Though frequent use has tended to blunt its effect and make it no more than a synonym for poor, its acceptance in any debate on social policy puts conservatives at an instant disadvantage.

Control of the News Media

Noam Chomsky, another radical socialist, is useful to an understanding of how the news media are controlled. There is no overt censorship of news—no bureau through which news must be cleared, no restrictive licensing of media outlets, no closed order of journalists, or whatever. Instead, only those journalists and media bureaucrats are ever appointed to positions of public influence who already share the hegemonic ideology. They censor themselves.

Again, the Chomsky analysis was intended to apply to the media in a liberal democracy, and was false. When liberal democracy was in its prime, there was a truly diverse media in which all strands of opinion found open expression. But, as ever, his analysis does apply to any media dominated by those he has influenced. Nobody tells BBC reporters how to cover stories. Instead, all BBC positions are advertised in *The Guardian*, and most are filled with graduates from the appropriate Media Studies courses.

Now, the propaganda thereby spread by this controlled media is not usually so overt as that of the great totalitarian tyrannies of the 20th century. Techniques of influence have much improved since then. News is reported, and with seeming accuracy. The propaganda lies in the selection and presentation of news. To take a notorious example, everyone knows that the overwhelming majority of interracial crime in Britain and America is black on white. Yet this is not reflected in the media coverage. When the black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, was killed in South London back in 1992, the story received lavish coverage in the media; and the story continued through failed trials, a public enquiry, and the official and media harassment of the unconvicted suspects. The much larger number of black on white murders—known rather than suspected murders, and containing an obvious racial motivation—are either not reported at all or covered briefly and without comment in the local media.

Then there is the presentation of news. A skilled journalist can cover a story in such a way that no fact is untrue, and dissenting views are reported in full—and still manage to produce an article so biased that it amounts to a lie. It is a question of selecting the right adjectives, or suggesting doubts or motives, of balancing quotations, of carefully taking words and opinions accurately reported but framing them in settings that suggest the opposite. The greatest single exposure of these techniques is the 1993 article “How to Frame a Patriot” by Barry Krusch. But, to give a brief example, look at the way in which almost all coverage in *The New York Times* and on CNN of the Oklahoma bombings include some reference to the American militia movement. No connection has ever been proven between the bombings and any militia, yet the connection is still made in reporting of the bombings—without making any overt accusation, the association is still made out. Or look at the way in which nearly all media coverage of the British Conservative Party smuggles in some reference to the personal corruption of several Ministers in the John Major Cabinet. The exception to this rule is Kenneth Clarke, the leading Conservative supporter of British adoption of the Euro: his role in the arms to Iraq scandal is forgotten. Equally, any reporting of the far worse corruption in Tony Blair’s Cabinet is usually accompanied more by pity than condemnation. Without any actual lies told, the impression conveyed is that the last

Conservative government was so corrupt that the known examples may have been a fraction of the whole, while the present Labour government is a model of virtue compromised only by the Prime Minister's inability to realise that not all his colleagues reach his own standards of honesty.



Control of the Entertainment Media

Control of the entertainment media is an area almost uncovered in Britain, except for the radical socialist analyses of the 1960s and 1970s. But it is probably far more important than any control of the news media. Fewer and fewer people nowadays pay much attention to current affairs programmes on the television, or read anything in the newspapers beyond the sports pages—if they still read newspapers at all. But millions watch the entertainment programmes; and these have been recruited as part of the hegemonic apparatus.

Look at the BBC soap *Eastenders*. This is a programme in which almost no marriage is happy or lasts for long, in which anyone wearing a suit is likely to be a villain, and in which the few sympathetic characters are worthless but presented as victims of circumstances. While they may not have invented them, the scriptwriters have introduced at least two phrases into working class language: “It’s doing my head in”, and “It’s all pressing in on me”. These are usually screamed by one of the characters just before he commits some assault on his own property or another person. It means that the character has lost control of his emotions and can no longer be held accountable

for his actions.

Then there is its almost comical political correctness. One of the characters is a taxi driver and his mother is an old working class native of the East End. Neither of them raised the obvious objection when one of his daughters decided to marry a black man—not that such a marriage would be in any sense wrong: what matters here is the deliberate absence of the obvious objection as part of a project of delegitimisation. But this is a flourish. The longer term effect of the programme is to encourage intellectual passivity, an abandoning of moral responsibility, and an almost Mediterranean lack of emotional restraint.

Or look at how the BBC treats its own archive. Every so often, black and white footage of presenters from the 1950s is shown, with parodied upper class voices talking nonsense or mild obscenity added in place of the original sound. Is this meant to be funny? Perhaps it is. But its effect—and, again, its probable intention at least in part—is to sneer at the more polished and sedate modes of communication used before the present hegemonic control was imposed.

It is possible to fill up page after page with similar examples of the use of popular entertainment as a reinforcer of the hegemonic ideology—the careful balance of races and sexes in positions of authority, the vilification of white middle class men, the undermining of traditional morals and institutions, the general attack on all that is targeted for destruction. Any one example given may seem trifling or even paranoid. But, taken together, the function of much of the entertainment media is to subvert the old order. Hardly ever are people told openly to go and vote Labour. But the overall effect is so to change perceptions of the present and past that voting Conservative or expressing conservative opinions comes to be regarded as about as normal and respectable as joining a Carmelite nunnery. And barely a word is raised in protest.

How to Win the Battle

I do have a complete strategy of opposition, but have none of the financial means needed to implement it. This analysis is offered, therefore, in the hope that someone will agree with me sufficiently to fund the strategy.

“Nej till Euron” Fighting the Evil Empire in Another Province Sean Gabb

Editor's Note: This article was first published on the Internet as Free Life Commentary No.110 on the 25th August 2003. The No Campaign won the referendum. Sweden is still free to choose its future.

Adlon Hotel, Stockholm, Monday 25th August 2003

With Mrs Gabb, I am in Sweden for two reasons. The first is to address the summer conference of one of the main libertarian movements in Scandinavia. The second is to help strengthen the no campaign in the closing stages of the Swedish

referendum on the Euro. It was my intention to write a long account of the things seen and done during this past week, together with observations on the Swedish people and their architecture and language. But I am presently short of time, and the glare of the television lights has dimmed all else but the events they illuminated. I will write at more length when back in England. For the moment, though, I will concentrate on the second reason for my visit.

Late last year, the Swedish Prime Minister—some vain creature whose name escapes me, but who likes to get himself



photographed in company with Tony Blair—decided to try pushing his country into the Euro. He announced a referendum, and doubtless imagined that a year of campaigning would so wear out everyone else that he would have his way in the end. Sadly for him, though most of the parties and media and most of the Swedish establishment in general were in favour of giving up the Crown, the Swedish people have so far shown unwilling. With three weeks to go before the vote, the opinion polls continue to report strong opposition. The yes campaign seems to have more money and a better co-ordination of effort than the diverse coalition of movements against joining. But truth and greater commitment have so far been decisive.

Not surprisingly, the campaigners for a yes vote have descended from vague generalities—peace in Europe, more investment and jobs in Sweden, and so forth—to specific falsehoods. The claim at present is that Sweden cannot escape the Euro, since just about every country in Europe either is a member already or is about to become one. Even Britain, they insist, will join within the next few years. This being so, Sweden has no choice.

It was with these claims in mind that one of the more vigorous groups campaigning against the Euro—*Medborgare Mot EMU*, which is Citizens Against Economic and Monetary

Union—decided to bring over some British Eurosceptics to explain that Britain was in fact very unlikely ever to join. This group is led by Margit Gennser, a former Conservative Member of Parliament in Sweden, and has Erik Lakomaa as its Campaigns Director. Together, they chose to invite me, Madsen Pirie of the Adam Smith Institute, and Bernard Connolly, former civil servant with the European Commission and author of *The Rotten Heart of Europe*. We made our presentations this morning at the Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, before an audience of bankers and politicians and virtually all the main Swedish media.

Madsen Pirie Speaks

We began at 10:00 am. After a brief introduction by Professor Kurt Wickman, who was chairing the meeting, Madsen Pirie went first. What I like most about listening to Madsen is that beneath the entertaining surface of what he says is a logical structure of argument that lets whatever he says be reconstructed from memory days or even months after the event. I first noticed this at a conference in 1988, when I was able to sit down two days after he had introduced us to the concepts of an internal market and diversity of funding in the National Health Service—dull stuff now, but exciting when explained by one of the people who had just helped think of it—and write three pages without a single note. Today was no exception. Madsen began thus:

I was first in Sweden 35 years ago. While I was here, you changed from driving on the left of the road to driving on the right. I well remember the endless confusion during the weekend of the change—the traffic jams, the young men and women with their yellow jackets and flags, and the general excitement of the change.

In retrospect, all Sweden got was to put itself at a disadvantage in a car market that still includes, Britain, Japan, India, and various other important places. I am here again during what may be a process of change, and I can tell you this with pretty near certainty—whatever you may decide in the next few weeks, British driving will continue to be on the left and its politics on the right.

He now moved to explaining the “five tests” set by Gordon Brown—that is, the political device for ruling out British membership of the Euro until it could be shown not to be bad for the economy. This had not been shown. He dwelt on the considerable differences between the British and European financial economies. For example, 70 per cent of British families owned their homes. 80 per cent of mortgages were advanced under variable rate agreements—that is, payments rose and fell with changes in the lending rate set by the bank of England. This was often very unlike the rest of Europe, where people either rented or bought on fixed rate mortgages. In Europe, a change of interest rates could take 18 months to have an effect on consumer spending. In Britain, the change was almost immediate. This made the activities of whoever is in charge of monetary policy far more important in Britain than elsewhere.

Again, he said, the British economy was far more open and flexible than those on the Continent. Even after six years of Gordon Brown, Britain remained by European standards a country of low taxes and light regulation. This had allowed the



country to attract up to 40 per cent of all direct inward investment to the European Union as a whole. "In terms of geography" he said, "Britain is just off the coast of Europe. In economic terms, it is somewhere in the mid-Atlantic—half way between Europe and America." Nothing that might seriously damage these facts could be considered.

From this, Madsen passed to the political consequences of joining the Euro—how it would increase the regulatory pressures from Brussels. He concluded:

At the moment, let me assure you, there is an 80 per cent probability that Britain will not join the Euro. If you vote no to the Euro next month, that probability will rise to 100 per cent. Voting no will not leave you isolated in Europe.

Sean Gabb Speaks

Madsen spoke for about 15 minutes, which was just right for the audience. I saw two campaigners for the Euro looking concerned as they discussed his speech. Next, I spoke. For those who are interested, a recording of my speech will soon be somewhere on the Internet. For those who cannot wait, or do not care to endure my loud, flat voice, what I said went roughly as follows:

Dr Pirie has explained very convincingly the reasons why, on both micro and macroeconomic grounds, Britain will not join the Euro. I will now explain why, on political grounds, this will not happen.

You can never under-estimate the vanity and stupidity of politicians—look, for example, at your own Prime Minister.

However, what politicians usually want above all is a quiet life. It is perfectly obvious that trying to get Britain into the Euro will give no one in government anything but trouble.

As in Sweden, there must be a referendum before Britain can join the Euro. The first difficulty with this will be the question. This will inevitably cause an argument. No matter how fair the questions seems to one side, the other will claim bias. Probably, the matter will end up in court, and there is no certainty of what the Judges will rule. The politicians may well find themselves going into a referendum with a question not of their choosing.

Then there is the matter of funding. The State will give money to both sides, but this will be greatly supplemented by wealthy activists. The result will be a disadvantage for one side. This might also end in court.

Though the Government might win all cases brought against it, the mere fact of being taken to court would make many of the electors suspect they were being tricked—and this would incline them to vote against joining even if they could think of no other reason.

Then there is the matter of public opinion. For years now, there has been an overwhelming majority against joining the Euro. No campaign is likely to change this. Most likely, the Government would lose. In theory, it could stay in office having lost a referendum. But the moral damage would be immense, and it might destroy the Government.

Even assuming a victory, there would be trouble. In the first place, the opponents of entry would not just go away. They would make loud accusations of cheating. Many would turn out to even louder street demonstrations. Some might even start campaigns of civil resistance. In the second, whatever government took us into the Euro would be made to accept the full blame for the next recession. At present, we all know there will be a recession, but no one seems much inclined to blame Gordon Brown. After all, the Conservatives won elections in 1983 and 1992 as the country was bottoming out in very deep recessions. They lost an election in 1997 about half way through one of the most spectacular booms in British history. Since Margaret Thatcher retaught us our economics, we have learnt to regard politics and economics as largely separate matters. In the Euro, we would blame the politicians for any recession. They took us in, we would insist. The Euro caused the recession, we would assert. We would crucify them.

So what is in it for the Government? The answer is nothing. Tony Blair might look for some reward in Europe—the Presidency, perhaps—but what about Gordon Brown and Jack Straw and David Blunkett, and all the others who would expect to stay behind and live with any resulting mess?

One should never say never. But assuming some understanding of their self-interest, the various members of the British Government have no reason to lift a finger to get the country into the Euro. It will not happen.

Now, I was warned before giving this speech that—to quote John Cleese—I should not mention the War. I do not think I have. But if I have, I do not think you noticed.

I put in this rather odd final point because some other British Eurosceptics had recently visited and had given credibility to the yes campaign by insisting that the European Union was exactly the same as the Europe intended by the German National Socialists. It seems that most Swedes know the scripts of *Fawlty Towers* by heart, and we decided to throw in the reference so we could head off the usual boring questions about paranoid xenophobia and whatever. It got a big laugh and a round of applause.

Next came Bernard Connolly. He spoke at much greater length—nearly an hour—and concentrated on the details of which he was a master and Madsen and I were not. He spelt out the corruption and incompetence at the heart of European decision making, giving examples of how economic decisions are made for political ends, and how these are made to work no matter at what cost to productive and allocative efficiency. It was a speech worth hearing, but was too long and involved for me to retain the full threads.

Then there was questioning from the floor, but this produced nothing new and is not something I feel any duty to report.

A Job Well Done

I will not report the comments I received. But I know I did a good job. I looked smart in my suit. I spoke clearly and fluently. I conformed closely to the Madsen Pirie school of public speaking—“stand up, speak up, shut up”. I also handled a long interview for the television rather well. I had been willing to bet money that no one in the Swedish media would have bothered to find out who I was. But the researchers had been set to work, and I faced a polite grilling about the Candidlist, about the Libertarian Alliance, and about my reasons for not wanting laws against drinking and driving. I answered all questions honestly and dully—that is, I killed any story that might have been under construction. My experience is that straight answers are always the best. This was no exception.

The efforts today of the three British visitors—and mine were less than a third of the whole—have tended to help the no campaign in Sweden. We have not in ourselves made a great difference. But we have helped to knock down the claims that Britain is about to join the Euro, and that Sweden ought to hurry to avoid being left out.

I would normally be dubious about getting involved in the internal politics of another country. But referenda on the Euro



are a different matter. The European Union is a threat to all the peoples of Europe. In the face of this common threat, we help ourselves by helping each other. I am sure the Swedish politicians do not intend to take no for an answer in this referendum. As in Denmark and the Irish Republic, their intention, if they lose, is simply to keep holding new referenda until they get the answer they want. However, this may not work. The Euro is an economic disaster. All the promises made in its favour have come to nothing. If the Swedes vote against joining, the British will not even be asked. If Britain stays out, the whole project may begin to unravel.

The Europhiles often call people like me “narrow little nationalists”. We are encouraged to visit other member states of the Europe Union, and to get involved in issues of common importance. We are told to learn that our fellow citizens of the European Union are people just like ourselves, with similar problems and similar hopes. Well, I have taken that advice—and I hope its results will not be pleasing.

In Search of a Randian Collapse: *Atlas Shrugged* as Fiction or Prophecy?

Rebecca Baty

In *Atlas Shrugged* the capitalists strike in silent protest against the rising tide of regulation and taxation that effectively prevented them from either running their enterprises or else benefiting from the investiture of capital into the same. At the start of the book society is already collapsing, a state of economic emergency emerging and the regulators throwing more regulation at business in order to achieve “fairness”.

What I propose to do in this short essay is to take two steps back and examine the road to the Randian Collapse.

Regulatory Interference

Once of the first key events in the book is the restricting of competition “in order to protect the public good”, more on that



later. The three industries that Rand focuses on are the railroads, steel and oil. Very much a sense of the time that the book was written since these were probably the key industries in the States at the time.

In the book various entrepreneurs have made strides ahead of their competition by innovation and hard work. In Oil the extraction of oil from surface shale, in Steel the creation of a new alloy, harder, stronger and more corrosion resistant than those of the competition and in Rail, by the use of better diesel engines at a time when the competition is still heavily reliant on steam. The illustration that Rand gives us is that the inefficient, supported by unions with unparalleled greed, lobby the government to introduce freight limits to suit themselves for “safety” and “to

allow for free competition". The result is that the more efficient industries are hampered by only being able to use a fraction of their capacity, while the inefficient are able to have advantage by not dis-benefitting from their lack of investment. Dagney Taggart has to run her most profitable spur at 1/3 capacity, ruining the value of the investment and crippling supplies to the industries that have grown up in dependence of the infrastructure that she has built.

If one were to draw a modern comparison one might take the Banking, Insurance and Farming sectors as modern equivalents. In recent estimates the figures for regulatory compliance add up to some 20 per cent of the costs of banks. They have to go through most extraordinary loops to be able to conduct the most basic of their functions, gaining new customers and taking deposits. In the name of tracking down drug dealers and perverts, the "authorities" have crippled the industry to such an extent that for a British Citizen returning from an extended stay abroad must find an employer prepared to write a banking reference, as well as a person of good standing with the bank to provide a reference for them. All this to open an account that has over the counter deposits and withdrawals.

And the reason for this? The "regulators" have decided that in order to find those who deal in pharmaceuticals outside the state sponsored cartel, that every transaction over a certain amount should be justified and every customer should be identifiable to their state registration number and state monitored address. The Banks are forced to become unpaid policemen at the penalty of extreme fines. The reality is that this is not to track the transactions of alleged drug dealers, or indeed to prevent frauds and mis-selling. Unfortunately not, this is to ensure that every penny of taxation is squeezed from the general public, by a tax enforcement agency that measures success on the number of convictions and not on the volume of tax that escapes their clutches.

The worst result of this is that the drug dealers, who are well able to deal outside of this framework, the terrorists who run rings round the authorities that now admit that they cannot catch them, and the big tax defrauders are all able to avoid this system. Instead the tax department is chasing people for sums as little as £50 (at a cost of many times this) where they may have quite reasonably forgotten some minor deposit. It leaves us in a position where every citizen lives in terror of the letter from the tax man claiming they have not paid enough. It is arbitrary law.

Competition

One of the key themes in the book is the way that the inefficient and those who did not invest, got round the resulting drop in market share by lobbying the government to restrict their competition from operating and gaining the benefit of their investment and research. At one point the Steel magnate is told



by a shifty competitor that is easier and cheaper to lobby government than to invest. This is sometimes dressed up as safety regulations, the blanket regulations to cover the dangerous railways of Taggart's competitors, or the regulation of supply that benefits the Steel Magnates competitors. This required the building of ever larger regulatory bodies, some to regulate the bodies themselves, and a resulting increase in tax to pay for them.

We have two really dangerous drifts in this vein, firstly the stream of "competition" regulations from Brussels and the over enthusiastic implementation of

them by the authorities in the UK. Whilst some of the more ridiculous have been highlighted and opposed in the media, aka the British Sausage, straight bananas (benefiting France's dependencies) and the eternal struggle of fishing nets to benefit the Spanish Fleet.

In effect, between regulation and competition laws, and the subsidies paid to competitors, our coal, farming and fishing industries have effectively been driven out of business. The attack is clearly being targeted at the banking system.

Labour Law

Another key theme of the book is the way that control of employees is effectively removed from the corporate. This is illustrated by the way that Rand's Steel Magnate is forced to take on incompetent employees, through an employment specialist appointed by the state. This fundamentally undermines the companies ability to be effective and to employ people best suited to deliver the objectives of the organisation. In the case of Atlas Shrugged, the state crony deliberately sabotages the steel magnates business.

We are seeing a resurgence in Union activity. Certainly the presence of "fairness" laws, forcing people to take on "ethnic minorities" is constantly abused. Should someone from an ethnic minority be rejected, then accusations of racism are levelled, so it becomes easier (and cheaper) to employ the person from the minority. Indeed, despite White Anglo-Saxons making up some 90 per cent of the population, the representation in the media would tend to indicate that they are in the minority.

At this stage the Government appears hell bent on destroying union influence, but whether a similar set of events to the strikes of the seventies (and the control on employment the unions exerted in the seventies) occurs will depend on how long Blair's nerve holds in the face of his paymasters.

Corruption of opposition, media and politicians

Rand's exploration of the influence of the media is far better illustrated in *The Fountainhead*. In this the magnate is interested in "issues", single point campaigns that gain populist support and therefore circulation. The influence of the looters and saboteurs was more through suggesting the issues to be fol-

lowed. Atlas shrugged has a more subtle approach, where the media becomes dependent on the state and therefore becomes subject to the state's will. The duty of observation and challenge is thus negated.

To a certain extent this can be observed. Sometimes it is better to read PA newswire or the *Washington Times* on the net, rather than trying to glean what is happening in Britain from either the broadcast news or the printed papers. The corruption is more subtle. The observation of the media is that it has been subtly perverted through the lack of libertarian thinkers entering the media. There clearly are right wing thinkers, and also some libertarian thinkers (note the distinction) but given the BBC's expulsion of Frederick Forsythe, apparently due to his right wing leanings it is clear that the influence of the statist left is very deep.

Additionally, reading the papers it is also apparent that whatever is put forward by libertarians, even in the mainstream in the form of the Conservative Party, are buried. Their successes are dressed as failures and the slightest wavering is blown up to front-page news. This is even evident at a local level where the devastating reduction of the vote in a local bye election is shown as a success for the statist left. (Tottenham Hale result 23/1/03 showed a 11 per cent swing from Labour to Conservative. If this had been the other way it would have made front-page news, but none of the papers even reported on the result in any meaningful form.)

In the meantime, bribes, dubious sexual practices, criminal behaviour and allegations of nepotism and corruption on the statist left go ignored by the mainstream media, to be reported only as an aside by satirical magazines.

Taxation

One of Rand's observations was the need to increase taxation to pay for the masters. "The oppressed paying to be oppressed". Under Nouvelle Labour, tax has increased by some 25 per cent of the starting point. Notwithstanding the points made below, the CBI reported some 15 months ago that they were not able to pay any more tax, there simply was no more money. Industry and Business were then inflicted with increases in the cost of employment and have been shedding staff ever since. The only reason this has not been reflected in an increase in unemployment is a combination of crackdowns on illegal immigrants working, an increase (to 25 per cent) of government employment and a resultant increase in public borrowing. Not a good recipe for long term success in government.

Abrogation of Property

Various writers have observed that the basis for trade and money is the recognition of absolute property rights. Sticking the Rand theme, in *Atlas Shrugged*, towards the end industry was placed in the hands of state regulators who rationed output and supply to the whims of their corrupted departments. Notwithstanding the obvious, the result of this was that nothing was in the right place at the right time, so cattle starved because feed was stockpiled in the wrong place, and eventually bridges collapsed because spares could not be delivered owing to backed up paperwork.

Increasingly we see this taking effect. The concept that someone's vehicle can be taken and sold at the whim of petty officialdom should have brought cries of outrage from those

whose responsibility it is to hold the government to account. Yet customs officers can seize and destroy vehicles without compensation, whether or not they find anything. Local authorities can take vehicles away and destroy them for the "crime" of not displaying a tax disc. A motor vehicle represents a significant investment on the part of the owner, yet this arbitrary seizure carries on unopposed.

At a worse level, the fundamental rights to property are undermined. If a property is not used for 30 years, then a squatter takes transfer with no reference to the owner. Property is taxed on the basis of arbitrary value with no reference to the ability of the owner to pay the tax, or the use. Indeed various leftie organisations want "windfall" taxes for the "benefit" of infrastructure improvements, already paid for through the excessive taxation of earners.

Finally, there are rumblings amongst certain councillors in left controlled councils, that empty property be seized to house "the poor" and "refugees". No doubt a repeat of the scramble by favoured councillors for the more desirable property will be repeated, no doubt again with "right to buy" looting of private property.

Fernando De Soto observes that the basis of paper money is the fungibility of property. If the basis for loaning money and securing property against loans is undermined then fiat (paper) money becomes worthless. In our time we need to look no further than the benighted land of Zimbabwe to see the result. It is now so poor that it cannot buy the paper to print more money.

Observations in the Modern Sense

Ayn Rand was writing in the 40's and 50's, and to a certain extent we have to look at some more modern indicators to see the evidence of the Randian Whiplash. For example there were no coffee bars, the internet café did not exist and people did not use credit cards to run up unsecured debt.

Borrowing and Retrenchment of Debt

Recent articles in the *Telegraph* and *Times* (January 2003) point to borrowers striving to reduce their borrowing. Borrowing is averaging over £10,000 per person, getting on for around half their average take home salary. At the terrible rates of interest charged on this debt, it is no wonder that they struggle to repay. Indeed the observation has been made that the only event to save these people has been the rise in house prices, and the evidence is there that much of the current round of selling has been to enable people to settle the debt. One only has to see

If you like *Free Life*, you might also like
another journal of libertarian thought called

The Individual

Edited by Nigel Meek and published by the Society
for Individual Freedom,

6 Swan Terrace, Hastings, Sussex TN34 3HT

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E-mail: editor@individualist.org.uk

the vast array of lenders seeking to “reschedule” debt by taking it out as long term secured loans to get a feel for the extent of the problem.

The only light is that while an army of economic migrants is housed in rented accommodation, the prices are going to continue to drift up. However the evidence is that the Christmas period was poor for retailers, despite starting sales and offers in November. The movement of money is slowing down with the downstream effect on the economy.

The Tax Free Day and The Tax Take

Rand observed that despite increasing the amount of taxation, the effect was to reduce the number of dollars received. This is in accordance with the Laffer curve which stated that there are two points of zero receipts in taxation, 0 per cent where the government takes nothing and 100 per cent where it takes all and no one works. Therefore there is a point where the actual amount of money received is maximised, reckoned my most who study this to be about the 35 per cent mark. This is influenced by the cost of regulation, where practically all the cost of regulation can be taken off the tax take. High regulation and the level goes down, low regulation and the level of taxation goes up. Britain is in trouble, High regulation and High Taxes.

Observations on the day in the year at which the average tax payer becomes free are now in the latter part of June, and Gordon Brown, Tony and the Cronies have passed over 20,000 new regulations into force in the 6 years since taking power.

Observable Stock and Infrastructure

In *Atlas Shrugged*, one of the final signs of imminent collapse is the reduction of available goods. Except for the political elite supplies dwindle, indeed there is one scene where some of the statist protagonists dine in luxury while there are people begging outside. Finally the people of the capitol pass into the countryside, as there is neither the infrastructure to transport it or the goods in the countryside.

The most tragic example can be seen in Zimbabwe, where the political elite shop abroad for food and material goods no longer available to the general population. Yet in the UK, we can observe a gentle reduction in the stock in shops. Where shelves were once stocked to the back, they are filled at the front. The reader should take the time to observe this, they will find it

shocking.

The Infrastructure is also failing, delays on all the tube-lines everyday. Wrong type of snow on the track, wrong type of train in the yard. Probably wrong type of management in the headquarters as well. For the south east to be gridlocked in as parlous a way as was seen in the final week of January 2003, despite days of warning of the incoming snow shows an extraordinary breakdown in the most essential infrastructure.

The Coffee Bar Syndrome

The final nail is the coffee bar syndrome. As in *Atlas Shrugged* the deli's and café's emptied, now we can observe shorter queues in the morning for that skinny latte. One major chain is said to have some cash flow problems. It is an obvious observation that when people start to abandon the more basic luxuries then the economy is in bad shape indeed.

The Economic Event Horizon

In *Atlas Shrugged* Rand refers to a complete breakdown of society, with people practically returning to the Stone Age at the end. Whilst I do not suggest that this is going to be the fate of Britain, I believe that we have passed the point of no return for economic disaster, similar to the recession in the late 70's. By this we have a position where people are unable to spend money, having bough and bought on the never never. Debt is at an all time high. Industry is shedding jobs as if they are going out of fashion. Finance, the biggest industry in the UK, has shed some ½ million jobs over the last 3 years. Farming has all but collapsed and the government is now the biggest employer of all with 25 per cent of the working population directly employed by them. This does not take into account contractors, temps, consultants, indeed quangos local authorities and NGOs. A dangerous situation indeed. Oh and even the Europeans have noticed that spending is out of control with a warning to Gordon Brown on the size of his current, and projected, deficit.

Another key set of differences is the presence of terrorists posing as refugees, the lack of any meaningful industry to start making that added value contribution to the economy and the rather movable nature of the one industry, banking, that would enable it to relocate elsewhere should things go horribly wrong.

Add to this the dash to war and this author fears for the future of this country.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

Don't have any money, I'm afraid, but I must congratulate you on an excellent article ["Not Socialism, but Post-Socialism: The Nature of the Enemy", published as *Free Life Commentary*, No 113, 13th October 2003].

Note that the other euphemism for “poor” is “deprived”, implying that somebody has taken something away.

Note also in dinner-party conversations the routine efforts by left- liberals to neutralise rational criticism, which, of course, the Gramscian project you outline could not withstand. “That's your opinion.” “Yes, but it's all subjective, isn't it?” “What

right have you got to say that?” (As though I needed the law's permission to have a particular opinion!)

Note the use of the old-fashioned term “Establishment” to imply that aristos still have all the power - I think conservatives have made some progress here by bringing “liberal establishment” into currency - also “political correctness”, of course, though that has rather lost its sting: people now say, “Not politically correct, I'm afraid,” *apologetically*.

Then there is the assumption that whatever isn't directly the agent's fault is somebody else's fault, current in soap operas, unscrupulous psychotherapy, & most obviously in the law. A

bad example at a dinner party the other day: discussion turned to that girl who proved an unreliable witness in the Damilola Taylor case: everybody seemed to think that the court had treated the girl wrongly - "They would have taken somebody from Surrey more seriously" etc. - missing the point that somebody from Surrey wouldn't have been a moronic liar. Even if it wasn't the girl's fault she was a moronic liar, it wasn't the court's either: their job was to find out the truth. Not according to the dinner party, apparently - the court's job was to know all & forgive all about every witness that came its way.

Then there's the way that "tolerance" has changed its meaning from "permitting things one disapproves of" to "disapproving of nothing". Also the way that any adverse opinion about anybody (except the "Far Right") is stigmatised as "judgmental". Then there's the way that stating the date is used as a substitute for argument ("Can we, in the 21st Century..."); this depends on the assumption that the present should be better than the past, i.e. on the Left-wing idea of Progress.

Then there's the BBC *Today* programme's mode of criticism of the government: take some interest group, preferably a politically correct one, that wants government money, & demand of a minister why the money isn't being spent. Much more rarely does it critically examine an already-existing item of public expenditure.

Also the subjects of programmes. One the other day was *female* accordion players in France. Why? A perfectly interesting programme (for those who like that kind of thing) could have been made about accordion players in general - but no, there had to be a feminist slant.

Then there's the way "elitist" is used to stigmatise any idea that anybody or anything is better in any respect than anybody or anything else.

I could go on, but I'm already feeling depressed.

Hadrian Wise
England
HJ_Wise@hotmail.com

Dear Sir,

Thanks very much for this piece ["Not Socialism, but Post-Socialism: The Nature of the Enemy", published as *Free Life Commentary*, No 113, 13th October 2003]. I agree with every word of it.

Some time ago, on the weblog *Samizdata*, I made reference to the sheer awfulness of nearly all British-based soap operas. But pretty much most British drama, such as the staple fare of cop shows, hospital dramas, etc, all give off the same tragic sense of life, as Ayn Rand would say. They all convey the idea that "we are all victims", apart from the occasional stalwart character and villain.

I think the scriptwriters do this deliberately. And yet I wonder how many of the scriptwriters are actually from the traditional working class backgrounds of London's old East End or the north western cotton mill towns? Hardly any, I would guess. In fact, I think it true to imagine that most genuine Eastenders are probably proto-Thatcherites who are eager to better themselves and get out into a nice suburban area in nearby Essex, send their children to college and so forth. These are definitely not what the Islington types who run the BBC and other channel

drama teams have in mind.

Indeed, suburban life is hardly ever portrayed in television dramas these days unless it is to be the butt of a joke, such as in *Keeping Up Appearances* or that old favourite, *The Good Life*. A whole swathe of the British middle class does not exist as far as dramas are concerned.

Defeating this cultural trend will take decades. But your recommendation in an earlier LA pamphlet of scrapping the BBC would be a most excellent start. I also think that nothing will seriously change without the destruction of our main teaching colleges and education bureaucracy, since this is where most of the damage has been done, in my opinion.

On a more positive note, I would add that the popularity of American dramas like *Friends*, the *Simpsons*, *Frazier*, and so forth, shows there is a place for drama with a more life-affirming theme. But then America is, to an extent which may surprise some, a more conservative country than people give it credit for.

See you at the conference in November,

Best.

Tom Burroughes
England

Sir,

Aha! Excellent, Sean, this project is a very important contribution ["Not Socialism, but Post-Socialism: The Nature of the Enemy", published as *Free Life Commentary*, No 113, 13th October 2003]. Also, although I don't always agree with your analyses of some other issues, I think you're spot-on with this one.

We do indeed need a much better understanding of the New Left's thinking. Just as we ourselves left the Old Left floundering and uncomprehending for a generation, the New Left are now trying (and largely succeeding) in doing the same to us. I note, however, from my friends on the Left, that most of them (like most of us) have not yet caught up with what their own leadership are doing.

We propagandised and explained the New Right project quite well to our own activists, and thereby achieved a solid base of reliable support. It remains the case that about one third of the "Conservatives" are fundamentally opposed, and to that extent could be argued no longer properly to belong with us other than as a tactical alliance, but the division was brightly illuminated by the internal debate and we thereby know where we stand with our internal dissenters.

The New Left leadership do not yet seem to have convinced and converted so much of their own support, and this surely gives us a window of opportunity to catch up with the current parameters of debate more rapidly than the Left evolved to counter our own movement.

Note on sources: I think you'll find that the architects of the hegemonic replacement strategy are mostly people who have been greatly influenced in policy development by Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* and in tactics by Packard's *Hidden Persuaders*. I assume you're familiar with both works, but I don't know if you're aware of the dramatic effect which both had on the background thinking of the middle-class pseudo-intellectuals of

the Left. Packard's "exposure" of the psychology of capitalist marketing strategies deeply horrified the Left, and the reaction of the hard core of the Old Left was (and remains, although they don't talk about it much in public) to favour the entire prohibition of all marketing and advertising, but the New Left has instead adopted the same tactics - indeed some (especially the Old Left) might argue that this is the defining characteristic of the New Left, although I agree with your argument that the New Left are much more Gramscian than the Old Left will admit (since the latter, interestingly, regard Gramsci as one of their own).

Schumacher's work was the first popularisation of the "alternative economics" which characterise their (unpublished and currently unadmittable) ideal society.

I'd help to fund your project, but I'm not a rich man. I could probably be persuaded to subscribe a small contribution commensurate with my limited means, but I'd like to see more of your "complete strategy of opposition".

Best regards,

Huw Shooter

England

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Dear Sean,

Thank you for the abstract of *Free Life Commentary* 113: Not Socialism, Not Post-Socialism: The Nature of the Enemy. I've now read the full text and offer these varied comments.

1. You have identified an important issue, indeed a vital one.
2. The fate of the Conservative Party is surely of little concern (in itself). If it can see the light and if it can help to save civilisation, fine. However, the "message" is one needed by not only all c/Conservatives but all liberals too, and others including even some Labour voters.
3. The part about "the progressive domination of the universities" could usefully be expanded with more explanation and some examples. Perhaps a few sentences could be added somewhere specifically mentioning other areas such as Churches and even sports, to emphasise the all-pervasive nature of the cultural cringe.
4. There are a few typing mistakes. The main one I noticed is the omission of a word in the first sentence of the third paragraph under "Control of the News Media": "... is not usually so overt and [?] as that of the ...".
5. The accented letters in "élite" (twice) and "facade" (but the c with a cedilla) were disruptive when the text was printed using Internet Explorer 5. Looking at the source, I see that it does not use the coding recommended for such letters in HTML documents - for these two letters they should be "´" and "ç" (without the quotation marks).
6. What do you propose and what would it cost? I am interested in contributing and keen to know more. What support has there been so far?

Thanks to cheap flights (£35 return!) I'll be in Venice for four days next week, but I look forward to hearing from you before or after.

Robert Carnaghan.

England

100024.1005@compuserve.com

Dear Dr Gabb,

I have just read your piece ["Not Socialism, but Post-Socialism: The Nature of the Enemy", published as *Free Life Commentary*, No 114, 13th October 2003].

It is all there!

Everything I have felt and believed inside, but could never articulate.

All the niggling frustrations and the vague sense of knowing.. deep down. All the rage and the nasty suspicion that I was going mad!... I could never put my finger on what.....

Thank you.

You are brilliant, but then, you knew that, hey?

I run a small anti-EU campaign in NE Lincs. We have the magnificent sum of £275 in our account. Would that be enough??

JO

p.s. And please may I have your babies?

Sir,

You asked me to say more about my experience in court. Here it goes:

My brother was in the magistrates court today for not paying his TV licence. As he doesn't have a car I drove him in and went in with him. Quite an eye opener...

Firstly almost everyone waiting were there for TV licences. How any politician can complain about lack of court time when they are tying up a magistrate with such a none crime is ridiculous.

Secondly, the people in there who the licence inspectors obviously target: A group of black women, who apparently spoke very poor English, a complete simpleton who seemed desperate to talk to anyone who would listen, a couple of drug addicts, an old lady with apparently no idea of what was going on...

Basically these thugs had picked on every poor downtrodden bastard they could find and were attempting to wring some money out of them.

The court itself was a typical modern but grotty state building, how I imagine an East German court would look, and full of the predictable left wing morons and do gooding middle aged women that you'd expect to find in such a place, doing such a contemptible job.

Now I never imagined that TV licence inspectors were anything other than the kind of low life goons upon which dictatorships are built. I never really expected magistrates courts to be bastions of liberty either. But seeing the whole nasty set up in operation just made me angry!

Not only did I lose any remaining respect for the law, I'm actually losing respect for other people in general. Once I was back outside the court I was angry with everyone I saw. How can you live like this, you mewling drones? Don't you have any

self respect? Don't you know that it's your world, your country, your money. Why do you let these pompous cretins order you around like this?

The passive resignation of the British people to subjugation by the worst of the worst is a far greater problem than anything the politicians say or do. Their sheepish fear damages us all far

more than any EU *diktat* could.

On a happier note he got away with a £50 fine - which is half the cost of a TV licence. For shame, he paid it.

Alex Anon

Reviews

The Secret Policeman

Shown on BBC Television on Tuesday the 21st October 2003

Editor's Note: This article was first published on the Internet as Free Life Commentary No.114 on the 2nd November 2003.

I have just watched a recording of *The Secret Policeman*. This is a documentary programme first shown by the BBC on Tuesday, the 21st October 2003. In this, a reporter posed for six months as a police cadet and then as a police officer, while secretly filming his colleagues. Some of the language caught on film expresses strong dissent from the established opinions on race and immigration. One of the officers put on a white hood and discussed the merits of burying a "Paki bastard under a railway line". He also insisted that Stephen Lawrence—a black youth whose death ten years ago led to a report all about "institutional racism"—had deserved his end. He added:

Isn't it good how good memories don't fade? He fucking deserved it, and his mum and dad are a fucking pair of spongers.

Another officer said of his Asian colleagues:

Truthfully? Fuck them all off. I'll admit it—I'm a racist bastard. I don't mind blacks. I don't mind black people. Asians? No.

Another said of Asians in general:

A dog born in a barn is still a dog. A Paki born in Britain is still a fucking Paki.

As soon as the programme was shown, the chorus of disapproval swelled to full volume. The Acting Deputy Chief Constable of the North Wales Police said:

I felt physically sick as I watched *The Secret Policeman*.¹

The Deputy Chief Constable of the Manchester Police said:

I was shocked, sickened, ashamed and saddened by what I saw.²

The newspapers and the electronic media not only reported, but joined in the expressions of outrage. Five of the officers filmed resigned the day after the showing. Another was suspended.

¹ Jaya Narain and Adam Powell, "Five racist policemen quit force in disgrace", *The Daily Mail*, London, 23rd October 2003.

² *Ibid.* One police officer claims it took him over a week to recover from the shock of watching the programme. See Bryn Lewis, "Police racism is a challenge to the ethnic minorities", letter published in *The Independent*, London, 30th October 2003.

Even forgetting the nature of the language used, it is hard to feel sorry for these officers. They are police officers. They are "the pigs". They are the unintelligent, semi-literate dregs of their section of the working class, who have been given a supervisory power over everyone else, including their betters—and who use and abuse this power to the full. They are inefficient. They are incompetent. They are corrupt. So far, only five of these people have resigned. It would be a better country by far if they could all be persuaded to resign. We could then save on the costs of their well-padded salaries. As for crime control, we could go back to the good old days of arming ourselves and otherwise relying on the hue and cry and private prosecutions.

We need, however, to look away from the beastly nature of the people concerned, and look instead at why the programme was made and why the responses to it were so emphatic. Look at the response of that Welsh police chief—he described himself as "physically sick" at what was said. "Physically sick"? When was the last time any of us felt that about something read or heard? For myself, cat droppings, rotten meat, certain medical conditions—these can set my stomach heaving as if I were some teenage anorexic. But I really doubt if, once in the past forty years, I have read or heard anything that came near to provoking a physical response. And these were the words of a senior police officer. It has long been his professional duty to acquaint himself with matters that require a greater than average firmness of mind. "Physically sick"? I somehow doubt it.

But what those police officers said was not merely tasteless and uncharitable. Nor was it merely embarrassing to their senior officers. So far as their senior officers were concerned, and so far as the authors were concerned of virtually all media and political comment, what they said was the equivalent of heresy or treason. It was a duty not merely to deplore what they said, but to denounce it in the strongest terms that came to mind. Any faintness of utterance, it seems to have been felt, might leave one open to suspicions of agreement oneself with what had been said.

Marxist Theory Is Marxist Practice

At this point, I must beg the indulgence of my readers. In my last article for *Free Life Commentary*, I wrote at some length to show the usefulness of neo-Marxist sociology in analysing the nature of any social order ruled by Marxists or by those influenced by Marxism. Here, I will continue the theme, using this present case as an example of how the analysis can be made to work.

According to Marx himself, the political and cultural shape of any society is determined by ownership of the means of produc-

tion. There is the economic base, and piled on top of this is the superstructure of all else. Let the base be changed, and the superstructure will be changed as surely and automatically as the appearance of a forest is changed by the varying distance of our planet from the sun. I know there are inherent ambiguities in his theory and many possibly varying interpretations of it. But this summary is accurate enough for our current purposes. As here summarised, there is a rough grandeur to his claim. It is, however, false. We have now been waiting over 150 years for the inner contradictions of liberalism to reveal themselves, and so bring on the next stage of human development. There has been no immiserisation of the proletariat, and no general overproduction crises.

Aside from dropping the whole system as a failure, two responses to this problem emerged in the early 20th century. The first was to look around for some half-convincing rescue hypothesis—see Lenin, for example, on how exploiting the colonies had replaced exploiting the workers at home. The second was to keep the messianic fervour of the original ideology while dropping its economic determinism. The three most important projectors of this change were Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), Louis Althusser (1918-91), and Michel Foucault (1926-84).

According to their reformulation of Marxism, a ruling class keeps control not by owning the means of production, but by setting the cultural agenda of the country. It formulates a “dominant” or “hegemonic” ideology, to legitimise its position, and imposes this on the rest of society through the “ideological state apparatus”—that is, through the political and legal administration, through the schools and churches, and through the underlying assumptions of popular culture. There is some reliance on the use or threat of force to silence criticism—the “repressive state apparatus”—but the main instrument of control is the systematic manufacture of consent. At times, this hegemonic ideology can amount to a “discourse”, this being a set of ways of thinking and talking about issues that makes it at least hard for some things to be discussed at all.

Though much ingenuity has gone into proving the opposite, it is hard to see what value even a reformulated Marxism has for analysing the politics and culture of a liberal society. In this country, between about the end of the 17th and towards the end of the 20th centuries, there were ruling classes, and there were what can be called dominant ideologies. But the rulers legitimised their position by reference to standards which were not imposed by them, but had largely emerged spontaneously throughout society as a whole. The function of the ideological state apparatus was not to enforce values on the governed, but to reflect and thereby reinforce values that were already taken for granted. I remember once seeing a print of the Queen and Prince Consort sat with their family round a Christmas tree. This was not a creation of values, still less an imposition of them. It was instead a royal identification with ideas of family stability that were already accepted—ideas that were accepted even by those who, for whatever reason, chose not to take them up, and that had not been noticeably accepted in several earlier reigns.

There were strong disagreements—over religion and land ownership and the extent of the franchise, and the extent of state intervention in the economy, among much else—but the

underlying values of society were generally shared and did not need to be imposed. The neo-Marxist analysis only becomes useful for providing a terminology to discuss what happens when a ruling class turns oppressive. Such is the present case.

The Ideology of the New Ruling Class

We have in this country a new ruling class. It is no longer the Monarchy and the network of land-owning and mercantile interests that clustered around it, or anything identifiable as the old—alleged—working class movement that competed with them. Instead, we are ruled by a coalition of politicians, bureaucrats, lawyers, academics, media people, and businessmen who look to an enlarged state as the source of their income or status. When it came to power is hard to say with precision. It had taken over the ideological state apparatus long before the 1997 general election that gave it formal political office; and that election result more intensified than redirected the course of events. Undoubtedly, though, it is now supreme.

The ideology this ruling class has taken up to produce internal unity and to justify itself before the ruled has nothing to do with the national past or the currently perceived interests of the majority. It is incidentally about regulating everything that moves in the interests of health and safety, and sometimes banning them, and incidentally about preventing alleged dangers to the environment, and incidentally about making us all into the subjects of a centralised European state. But these are only incidentals. They are not the core ideology. Though it has not entirely broken with the past, and though it may appeal to tradition as convenience requires, the new ruling class defines its basis of legitimacy lies in the proclaimed right and ability to bring about a transformation of the country into something entirely new. The old ethnic and cultural homogeneity are seen as evils. In their place, we are to have “a rich diversity of communities”. Some of these are to be sexual, some religious. But the real passion is for ethnic diversity.

To take one instance of this, in 1998, the Government set up a Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. Its purpose was

to analyse the current state of multi-ethnic Britain and propose ways of countering racial discrimination and disadvantage and making Britain a confident and vibrant multicultural society at ease with its rich diversity.³

Chaired by Bhikhu Parekh, an academic placed in the House of Lords by Tony Blair, the Commission was a sub-division of the Runnymede Trust, a formally private body “devoted to promoting racial justice in Britain”. Its Report can be seen as a digested expression of the transformation intended for this country. Among the recommendations were a formal declaration by the State that Britain was now a “multicultural society”, and a commitment that

deep-rooted antagonisms to racial and cultural differences [should be] defeated in practice, as well as symbolically written out of the national story.⁴

³ *Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, published in 2000 by the Runnymede Trust—Introduction available at www.runnymedetrust.org/projects/meb/reportIntroduction.html

⁴ *Ibid.*

. There was also some discussion of giving the country a new name:

[The Name Britain] has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations.... Englishness and therefore by extension, Britishness, is racially coded.⁵

No new name was suggested, though it was emphasised that the country from now on should be regarded not as a community, but as a “community of communities”.

“Multiculturalism” and “Anti-Racism” As Hegemonic Discourse and Legitimation Ideology

The ruling class has yet to take full notice of Dr Parekh’s recommendations. However, its behaviour and language all proceed from the same assumptions. See the endless official fussing over criminal conviction rates and examination passes, the emphasis on “diversity”, the careful blending of races and sexes and appearances in all official photographic opportunities, the changed emblems and mission statements of governmental agencies. In the neo-Marxist terminology, the ruling class and its ideological state apparatus are imposing a new hegemonic ideology of multiculturalism.

The great apparent problem with this new ideology is its impossibility. It is a false ideology. It is easily possible for small alien minorities to be accepted into a country. Orthodox Jews are a good example. They live in the nation, but do not regard themselves as of it. What makes them acceptable is that they do not make nuisances of themselves and can never by their nature be other than a small minority. Even hardened anti-semites have little objection to the Orthodox, being more concerned about the alleged doings of the assimilated. It is also possible for large numbers of aliens to be accepted into a nation so long as they assimilate and embrace its culture as their own. The United States in the century to about 1970 is a good case here. During this time, settlers of British ancestry went from being the majority to a large minority, but the American nation they had created continued to exist and to prosper by just about every reasonable standard. But a large and rapid immigration in which the burden of adjustment is thrown not on the newcomers but on the natives—in which, indeed, the newcomers are positively discouraged from assimilating—that is an obvious cause of resentment and even disorder.

There cannot be one society made up of widely different communities each of which loves and respects all the others. There cannot be a society in which the ethnic composition of every group—from university vice chancellors to hairdressers, from lunatic asylum inmates to fashion models—exactly parallels that of the census returns. Instead, there will be a retreat into ethnic nationalism among all groups.

In this context, the words of that police officer quoted above—“A dog born in a barn is still a dog. A Paki born in Britain is still a fucking Paki”—take on a grim significance. The words show a hardening of spiritual boundaries more typical of Eastern Europe or the Balkans or Africa than of the Britain we have known for many centuries—a nation of which membership has been more defined by allegiance to the Crown and adherence to certain norms than by race or colour. Given

such attitudes, most of our constitutional arrangements must tend to become unworkable. What is the point of democracy—national or local—or trial by jury, or any public service, when decisions are made not on their merits but on differential group voting power?

Dual Consciousness and the Coming Crisis of Multiculturalism

The ideological state apparatus can be set to work on proclaiming the joys of diversity. But the result is at best what Gramsci calls a “dual consciousness”—a situation in which values are imposed but only partially accepted. Multiculturalism is a discourse, so far as many now cannot find neutral terms to oppose it: see more of the words quoted above—“I’m a racist bastard”—where the immorality of an opinion is conceded even as it is expressed; but the discourse cannot secure plain consent.

The inevitable result is a sharper use of the repressive state apparatus. We cannot be made to love and respect each other. But we can be made to act as if we did. Therefore we have a frequently absurd but always searching inquisition into matters regarded until just recently as private. There are laws to censor speech and publication, laws to regulate hiring and promotion policies, and to regulate the selection of tenants and membership of private bodies, and increasingly stiff criminal penalties for breach of these laws⁶. Every few days, the media gives space to some official expression of rapture at the benefits we have gained from multiculturalism. Its most notable fruit, however, has been the creation of a police state.

In a sense, though, the falsehood of the ideology is not so much a disadvantage as a great benefit to the ruling class. Because it is false, it can only be accepted on faith; and faith can give rise to more passionate attachments than any sober acceptance of the truth. And with passionate attachment goes passionate rejection of the opposite. In the word “racism”, the ruling class has acquired a term of venomous abuse that can silence most criticism. That the word has no fixed meaning makes it all the better as a weapon of ideological control. It can mean a dislike of people because of their race or colour. It can mean a belief in differences between people of different races. It can mean a propensity to violence. It can mean no more than a preference for one’s own people and values—even a belief that one has a “people”. As “institutional racism”, it can exist in the structures and assumptions of corporate bodies without

⁶ See, for example, this from 1998:

“A couple of weeks ago, the Commission for Racial Equality recognized what black actors have known for a long time; namely the ‘unjustifiable under-representation of ethnic minorities in theatre, opera, cinema, television drama, etc.’ The Commission announced that it will press for legislation to close a loophole in the Race Relations Act which allows directors to use ‘authenticity’ as an excuse for all-white casting. A black Nelson Mandela or a white Winston Churchill will be acceptable; but an all-white production of Hamlet will be in contravention of the act. In this, Britain is merely catching up with the USA, which has had a quota system long enough to ensure that black faces are now run of the mill across the media.”

(Lesley Downer, “Theatre: Wanted: a brand new caste”, *The Independent*, London, 2nd September 1998)

⁵ *Ibid.*

the intent or knowledge of those employed within.⁷ Or it can arise when every effort is being made to avoid it.⁸ It can mean a mental disorder⁹ or a sin.¹⁰ It can

⁷ On this point, see *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny*, HMSO, London, 1999, CM 4262-I&II:

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.” (6.34)

⁸ *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*:

“Such failures can occur simply because police officers may mistakenly believe that it is legitimate to be “colour blind” in both individual and team response to the management and investigation of racist crimes, and in their relationship generally with people from minority ethnic communities. Such an approach is flawed. A colour blind approach fails to take account of the nature and needs of the person or the people involved, and of the special features which such crimes and their investigation possess.” (6.18)

⁹ See this from America:

“Dr. Alvin Poussaint, a Harvard Medical School professor and perhaps the nation’s most prominent African-American psychiatrist... urged the American Psychiatric Association [in 1999] to ‘designate extreme racism as a mental health problem’ by including it in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.....

“Poussaint gets support from Dr. Walter Shervington, president of the National Medical Association, an organization of more than 20,000 black physicians. When he took over leadership of the NMA last year, Shervington, a New Orleans psychiatrist, called for a discussion of adding racism to the APA’s list of mental disorders.

““When (racism) becomes so severe in its expression, should it not come to the attention of a psychiatrist or someone working in the mental health field in relationship to identifying what some of the core struggles are around it?” Shervington asks....

“Sabina Widner, a clinical psychologist who teaches at Augusta State University, is blunt about the human rights implications of classifying racism as a mental illness.

““When I hear these types of things, I think about Russia,” she says, ‘where people who are dissidents, people who don’t hold majority views, are subjected to psychiatric treatment.’”
(Extracted from John Head, “Can racists be called mentally ill? Debate strikes a nerve”, *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Atlanta, 23rd January 2000)

¹⁰ See:

“The [Roman Catholic] church has come close to acknowledging the problem. Earlier this year, guidelines for

mean any of these things or all of them¹¹. Whatever it means in any particular context, it soils and discredits all who are labelled with it, placing them outside any claim to respect or tolerance or fair dealing. Modern English contains no greater instance of the power of words to terrify and subdue.

As for the police state laws, these are welcomed. At the very least, the various inquisitions set up provide jobs and status that would not otherwise exist. They are also enjoyed for their own sake. Governments by their nature like to oppress, and the

parishes to review their practices described institutional racism as ‘a form of structural sin and primarily a sin of omission’.

(Stephen Bates, “Racism in Catholic Church ‘driving minorities away’”, *The Guardian*, London, 16th October 2000)

“The Pope, clad in purple as a sign of penitence, said sorry on behalf of his flock for all past wrongdoings, from treatment of the Jews to forced conversions, the Crusades and Inquisition, and more contemporary sins such as discrimination against women and racism.”

(Frances Kennedy, “Pope confesses 2,000 years of Church sins”, *The Independent*, London, 13th March 2000)

“The Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday apologised for wars, racism and other sins committed in the name of Christianity.”

(Laura Clark, “Christian leaders say sorry for wars”, *The Daily Mail*, London, 30th December 1999)

¹¹ In conversation, Dr Chris R. Tame says this about racism:

Anti-racism is a useful ideological tool since the contemporary concept of racism is a portmanteau one, that combines a large - and apparently ceaselessly growing - number of quite distinct ideas. “Racism” is used to describe or mean, amongst other things:

- the scientific view that important aspects of human intelligence and/or emotional disposition vary according to racial group and are transmitted genetically;
- the attribution to anyone holding such views that their belief is held on the basis of prejudice or blind hatred;
- that believing that there are average/general differences in IQ/emotional disposition between racial groups means that one hates other races, or seeks to deny them equal rights or just treatment;
- the denial of just, fair and meritocratic treatment to individuals on the basis of their race, ignoring their individual character, IQ or achievement;
- the practice of violence against, or denial of individual rights to, individuals of different races.

As soon as we look critically at the varied meanings associated with the word “racism” it is clear that one is dealing with what Ayn Rand calls an “anti-concept”, a word designed to actually confuse distinct meanings and ideas, and to smuggle all sorts of unjustified assumptions into political discourse.

degree of their oppression is limited only by the prospect of resistance and their own beliefs about what is seemly. As an article of faith, multiculturalism obliterates regard for old conventions. Just look at the self-proclaimed “civil libertarians” of the past behave now they are in positions of authority. In the 1970s, they could be trusted to demand every refinement of due process when some picketer was in the dock, or someone accused of revealing official secrets. Now they have incorporated “racial aggravation” clauses into the law which in effect make opinions into crimes. They are calling for the abolition of the double jeopardy rule because it prevents their vendetta against the alleged killers of Stephen Lawrence¹². Multiculturalism also undercuts the old grounds of peaceful opposition to misgovernment. Arguments from ancestral right can be delegitimised by a mere raising of eyebrows and a polite question about whose ancestors are being invoked. Everyone knows the next response will be an accusation of “racism”. Therefore, the argument is dropped more often than not, while those who dared raise it must go about protesting their belief in the official ideology.¹³

Nor is the destruction of accountability unwelcome. Democracy has always been something of a fraud in this country—and

¹² *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, Chapter 49, Recommendation 38:

“That consideration should be given to the Court of Appeal being given power to permit prosecution after acquittal where fresh and viable evidence is presented.”

¹³ For an interesting case of bold heresy, followed by immediate recantation, see:

“A village bonfire society has been accused of racism and divided a community after burning an effigy of gypsies during a Guy Fawkes celebration night.

“The Firle Bonfire Society in East Sussex put to the torch a caravan with images of children at the windows just days after gypsies were evicted from fields near the village.

“The caravan was paraded through the streets as part of a procession before it was set alight. It had the registration number P1 KEY painted on the side. ‘Pikey’ is a term of abuse for gypsies.

“According to local people who saw the parade, the organisers encouraged bystanders to shout ‘burn it, burn it’.

“The society was last night facing calls for those responsible to be prosecuted for incitement to racial hatred -an offence that can lead to a jail term of up to seven years.

“Richard Gravett, chairman of the Firle Bonfire Society, defended its actions yesterday, claiming that they were not racist. ‘There was no racist slant towards any of the travelling community. If anything, it’s actually completely the other way,’ he said.

“‘It was done to try to make people realise that these people obviously, as we all do, need somewhere to live.’ (Thair Shaikh, “Villagers burn an effigy of gypsies”, *The Times*, London, 30th October 2003)

perhaps with good reason. But rulers were vaguely answerable to the ruled, and could, given the right provocation, be removed. Multiculturalism turns us from a nation to which ultimately the rulers had to defer into a gathering of mutually hostile groups—all with different ambitions and complaints, all capable of being turned against each other in the manner that imperial ruling classes throughout history have used to nullify opposition. In the words of Margaret Thatcher,

Thus the utopia of multiculturalism involves a bureaucratic class presiding over a nation divided into a variety of ethnic nationalities. That, of course, looks awfully like the old Soviet Union.¹⁴

Thought Crime and the Police State

And so we find ourselves living in a country where conformity to the dominant ideology is imposed by threats of force accompanied by an increasingly hysterical propaganda. It is as if the ruling class were waving a stick and turning up the volume on a television set—so it can stop others from talking about something else and give them no choice but to watch the programme. And it is still not enough. Dissent has been driven out of the establishment media and out of respectable politics, but it continues to flourish in private and on the Internet. We live in a country where almost no one would describe himself openly as a “racist”, but where the British National Party seems to stand on the edge of an electoral breakthrough.

That explains the chorus of outrage when those police officers were exposed: there could be no public expressions of sympathy for them—indeed, the knowledge that there was much private agreement with at least the sentiments expressed, if not with their manner of expression, required the public denunciations to be all the more unsparing. It also explains the demand for still greater supervision of speech and action. As in some gentle parody of Stalin’s Russia, it is accepted as necessary for conformity of speech and action to be so generally compelled that even the slightest expression of dissent stands out like a black swan among white.

This is the wider significance of the undercover filming of those police officers. It is worth asking why only white officers were filmed, when black and brown officers might not in private be oozing love and respect for their white colleagues. It is also worth asking in what context the words were uttered, and to what extent the reporter had made of himself an agent of provocation. And it can be asked whether the opinions expressed could be shown to have had any effect on actions. But, while it would be useful to have some on the record, the answers are obvious. Witch hunts need witches. When none can be found in public, they must be searched out in private. When none can be found at all, they must be invented.

However obtained, such dissent from the multicultural ideology can be used to justify its more intrusive imposition. Therefore, these words from the Home Secretary:

What’s been revealed is horrendous. The issue is... what we can do to ensure police services across the country adopt the new training programmes on diversity to root out racists before they

¹⁴ Margaret Thatcher, “Resisting the utopian impulse”, *American Outlook*, Spring 1999; quoted in “Culture, et cetera”, *The Washington Times*, Washington DC, 22nd June 1999.

can get through the training programme.¹⁵

In other words, he promised to make it impossible for dissidents to be employed as police officers.¹⁶ His theme was immediately taken up by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police:

[h]is force intends to plant informers in its classrooms to root out racist recruits. It will also allow community representatives to sit on recruitment panels to prevent racist applicants entering the force. At the Met's training school in Hendon, which trains 3,500 new officers a year, one recruit in a class will be secretly selected to inform on colleagues. Their identities will remain secret for the rest of their careers and they will act as intelligence gatherers. If racism is discovered by undercover officers, it may be used to provide evidence for a criminal prosecution for incitement to racial hatred.¹⁷

Police officers are already bad enough. But the known presence among them of informers—and perhaps also agents of provocation—can only tend to remove them still further from the rest of the population. They will become a sort of Janissaries, quite separate in outlook and perhaps in nationality from those they are employed to coerce into obedience.

Nor will these undercover means of gathering information be confined to the police. Once they are established as normal, they will be used against other targets. One of the recommendations of the Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence was

[t]hat consideration should be given to amendment of the law to allow prosecution of offences involving racist language or behaviour, and of offences involving the possession of offensive weapons, where such conduct can be proved to have taken place otherwise than in a public place.¹⁸

This was rejected as unworkable. However, the use of undercover filming to gather evidence makes it workable. The informers and agents of provocation will spread into every area of private life. New friends or partners taken to dinner parties will constrain discussion even when no one intends to discuss the forbidden issues. We shall have to start learning the rules of private conduct that East European have been forgetting since 1989. Life will become grimmer and more oppressive.

How will all this end? Not, we can be sure, in Dr Parekh's "confident and vibrant multicultural society at ease with its rich diversity". I see one of two outcomes. The first is that the ruling class will keep control until it has finished remodelling the population. According to the 2001 returns—and these probably

¹⁵ Jaya Narain and Adam Powell, "Five racist policemen quit force in disgrace", *The Daily Mail*, London, 23rd October 2003.

¹⁶ A friend to whom I showed the draft of this article took exception to my use of the word "dissident" to describe racists. My answer is that these are the real dissidents in this country. What other ideology or set of opinions or prejudices make someone dangerous to know? What else can get him the sack from his job, and prevent him from booking rooms to hold meetings?

¹⁷ Helen Carter, "Informers will be planted at training colleges", *The Guardian*, London, 23rd October 2003.

¹⁸ *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, Chapter 49, Recommendation 39.

understate the truth—the non-white population of England rose by 40 per cent in the 1990s.¹⁹ According to an anonymous demographer cited three years ago in *The Observer*,

Whites will be an ethnic minority in Britain by the end of the century. Analysis of official figures indicate that, at current fertility rates and levels of immigration, there will be more non-whites than whites by 2100.²⁰

With a small and credible adjustment to the extrapolated trends, minority status could be reached as soon as 2040. Long before either date, though, national life would have been wholly transformed. For this would not be accompanied by an assimilation in which white Englishmen were joined by black and brown Englishmen, and the nation went on much as before. Ethnic change would bring with it cultural displacement. Whole areas of the country would become alien; and within them, the physical appearances, place names, festivals, rituals and general customs of the past would be effaced—in much the same way as happened when, from the 5th century, the northern barbarians displaced the Romanised Celts who had inhabited this country before them. Then, the ruling class could be safe. It would be presiding over an empire, not a nation, and would be safe from effective challenge.

The second outcome is that the English—or British—will turn nasty while still the majority. I do not think this would be an original nastiness. The French would probably turn first, or the Israelis. But there may come a time when the harsh ethnic nationalism of that police officer becomes the consensus. Then there will be a spiritual casting out of "strangers" from the nation, followed by ethnic cleansing of the strangers, and severe legal and social disabilities for those allowed to remain. And among these strangers will be many who are now unambiguously accepted as of the nation and who regard themselves as of the nation. It is worth recalling that, until the National Socialists redrew the spiritual boundaries of the nation, many Jews were German nationalists. I suppose I should add here that I do not want our own spiritual boundaries redrawn, nor will I lift a finger to help redraw them. But I can easily see their being redrawn if present trends are allowed to continue.

There is a third possible outcome. This is that present trends will not be allowed to continue, that the multicultural discourse will be overthrown before it is too late, that freedom of speech and action will be restored, and that private and public arrangements will be made to encourage assimilation of all British citizens to the cultural values of the majority. This will not bring us to Dr Parekh's land of harmonious diversity. But it is the only basis on which people of widely different appearances are ever likely to live at peace with each other.

Sadly, I need only close my eyes to see the lips of my readers curling at these words. It may already be too late.

¹⁹ Paul Brown, "Minorities up 40%, census reveals", *The Guardian*, London, 4th September 2003.

²⁰ Anthony Browne, "UK whites will be minority by 2100", *The Observer*, London, 3rd September 2000. The demographer "wished to remain anonymous for fear of accusations of racism".

Last Things

Sean Gabb

The emergence of Michael Howard as leader of the Conservative Party has left me as surprised as everyone else. When it first became public, I assumed the plotting against Mr Duncan Smith was the beginning of more embarrassment and annoyance, and that the Ministers in this most worthless of governments would be able to sleep more soundly in their beds—assured that whatever their own followers might say or do against them, they could rely on the official opposition to say and do nothing. As it turns out, the button was pressed, and Mr Duncan Smith vanished about a day later into the oblivion where all now agree he should have been allowed to remain. In his place sits a man of apparent firmness and ability. Looking at the actions of the Parliamentary Conservative Party during the past ten days, it is as though a mental defective had stopped twitching in his wheelchair and turned into something like a Bond villain.

I ought to say that I share the general relief on the right. When he was Home Secretary, I used to turn out occasional philippics against Mr Howard. He had no respect for our constitutional traditions, I would say. He was transforming the country into a police state. He was a bad Home Secretary.

However, while I do not retract anything I said against him at the time, circumstances are now altered. We face a government that is not incidentally bad, but essentially so. Its obvious ambition is to destroy us as a nation and to enslave us as individuals. It is led by a psychopathic liar and war criminal. It is rolling back the economic reforms of the 1980s and bringing us ever closer to the economic stagnation of continental Europe. At such a time, we need a man of firmness and ability to reshape us into a credible movement. Satan was doubtless also a bad person. But had I been one of those fallen angels groaning individually in the lake of black fire, I know it would have thrilled me to have a leader stand up and cry

Awake, arise, or be forever fallen

It certainly beats straining for the whispered cough of a quiet man.

There is “something of the night” about Mr Howard. But this is no disqualification to be our leader. Indeed, just as Margaret Thatcher used the “Iron Lady” insult to her advantage, Mr Howard could easily benefit from the abuse now heaped on him by the leftist media. The country has had enough of Mr Blair and his murderous grin. The mood, I feel, is ready to accept a leader who can be respected and even a little feared.

This does not, of course, mean that we can look forward to an age of reaction. Conservative governments hardly ever turn back the clock on what their radical opponents have done. At best, they can be expected to clear up some of the mess they inherit and reach a wary compromise with the entrenched power of an ideological state apparatus that they have not the personnel to replace or the imagination to destroy.

On the other hand, the looming crisis on Europe and other

issues may now be so great that there is no alternative to reaction. Though they usually disappoint, Conservative Governments can occasionally surprise.

Whatever the case, though, Mr Howard will have to do. And so, when he sits high on his throne of royal state, I too will bow down before him and give not Heaven for lost.

But the question remains how did they do it? For the past six years, I have watched from an advantaged view as the Parliamentary Conservative Party ran about like terrified sheep in the dark. How have they managed this *coup* so quickly and so well? The simplest explanation is to say that enough of them saw the possibility of losing their seats at the next election and that desperation supplied the lack of courage. I like to believe, however, in a more complex explanation. Mine is not a standard conspiracy theory, as I claim little prior evidence in its support. Instead, I reason back from perceived effects to possible causes. It may be entirely false, but it pleases me to entertain it. Here it goes.

As said, this is not an ordinary Labour Government, but something of wonderful malevolence. It does not so much want to change the running of the country as to destroy it. There is the continued sapping of the Monarchy—the threatened removal of royal powers, and the degradation of Her Majesty from our Head of State to citizen of a United States of Europe. There is the determination to outlaw hunting and to destroy farming and to remove all the hereditary peers from the House of Lords. There is the progressive hobbling of the City financial institutions with European levels of tax and regulation. There is the use of the armed forces as American mercenaries—and without any advantage gained in return. There is the possible murder and undoubtedly the forced suicide of someone senior in the foreign policy and intelligence establishment.

The remnants of the Old Order may finally have realised that there is no compromise on offer from this Government, and may now be doing something about it. The Monarchy, the landed and mercantile interests, and the security services—these are even now a formidable combination. Perhaps 1688 is finally come again. Then, an alarmed old order realised the nature of its enemy and took up the cause of an aroused but leaderless nation. Perhaps Mr Blair is to play the role of James II, and Mr Howard of Prince William.

On this analysis, the Parliamentary Conservative Party did not so much press a button last week as respond to its pressing by some other person or persons.

Is there any truth in this? Or am I just an old romantic? We shall see.