

***Free Life*, Issue 34 - October 1999**

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Editorial: Days of Shame and Degradation

As will be apparent from the Letters Page of the current issue, some of my readers have chosen to complain about the unrelievedly gloomy tone of my Editorials. This is a complaint that has been made at various times during the past eight years, and I propose to give it the same consideration now that I have always given it in the past. I will therefore proceed with my thoughts on the ejection of the hereditary Peers from the House of Lords.

For future historians, nothing else, I suspect, will more perfectly show the degeneracy of our present age. An assembly that is older than England itself, the origins of which are lost in the gloom of the forests that once overspread the north of Europe, has been destroyed in the name of what our masters are pleased to call "democracy" and "modernity". I grant that something called the House of Lords will continue to meet and to transact parliamentary business. But this will not be the House of the English Peerage. It will soon have become entirely what it is intended to be - a rubber stamp for the most worthless and despotic government this country has ever known. Mr Blair has created more life Peers in the past two years than Mrs Thatcher created in eleven. I cannot recall a Prime Minister who created more Peers in so short a time. Nor will he stop until the House is packed with his own nominees. This is treason, and it must not be forgotten, even in the years of further constitutional vandalism that lie before us, who struck the loudest and perhaps the hardest blow against the free and immemorial English Constitution .

What is most shocking about this treason is the near silence of opposition to it. The debates of 90 years ago over the Bill to limit the veto of the Peers filled the whole country with noise; and the defence of the Peerage, though immediately unsuccessful, was conducted with a brilliance and passion that deterred all later governments before this one from repeating the attack. But when eventually it was repeated, the attack was barely resisted.

I will pause here to admire Lord Burford, eldest son of the Duke of St Albans. As an eldest son, his rights are confined to sitting in the Lords to hear debates, but not to take part. As the debate on destruction was beginning, though, he broke the rules of the House and made a short speech from the steps of the Throne. He said:

This Bill, drafted in Brussels, is treason. What we are witnessing is the abolition of Britain. Before us lies the wasteland - no Queen, no culture, no sovereignty, no freedom. Stand up for your Queen and country and vote the Bill down.

There is little need for a commentary on this. It is short and clear and plainly the cry of an honest man. It is the sort of statement that could never be made in the Commons, for the simple reason that the elected politicians have spent so much of their lives posturing and lying that they can no longer even imitate the language of unadorned truth. It also shows the *practical* justification for the existence of an hereditary peerage.

But however noble, Lord Burford's intervention was a set of words without significant echo. The newspapers of the Quisling Right poured scorn on him, recalling that he was descended from Charles II and Nell Gwynne, and that he held unorthodox views about the plays of William Shakespeare - as if either fact had any relevance to the validity of his words. They had already combined with the Conservative Party to make a defence of the Lords so short and feeble that not even an awareness of how stupid are the personalities directly involved can erase the suspicion of deliberate sabotage. The leading members of the Peerage had no interest in defending their order, as they had already been bought off with promises of life Peerages that would allow them to continue profiting financially from their titles. As for the ordinary Peers, they were, like the French nobility before them, too soaked in democratic sentiment to believe any more in their right to sit in Parliament.

And so the Lords are no more. As a libertarian, I tremble for what remains of our freedom. We are threatened with the abolition of the double jeopardy rule in criminal cases, with the withdrawal of many criminal matters to what the Government knows is the more indulgent scope of the civil courts, with an e-commerce law that will make it a criminal offence to rely on our Common Law privilege against self-crimination, with a final neutering of Trial by Jury, with an extradition law that will allow foreign police officers to come into this country and arrest and deport suspects without so much as notifying the British courts - and generally with a torrent of oppressive and arbitrary legislation that will turn the words "English Liberty" into an oxymoron. The Lords who would once have resisted this for us have been themselves swept aside. I do not expect much in the way of a defence from "Lord" Bragg and "Lady" Jay.

But I am also a conservative, and I stand appalled at the loss of ancient landmarks in this wild, Jacobinical orgy of destruction. I can do no more than quote Wordsworth on an earlier horror:

Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is pass'd away.

Sean Gabb

Thoughts on the Character of Tony Blair by Robert Henderson

In November 1984, the Leader of the Opposition asked Blair to come to his room. 'Tony was absolutely shivering,' recalls Charles Clarke, Neil Kinnock's Chief of Staff. (John Rentoul's biography *Tony Blair*, p161). Despite attempts to get to the heart of Mr Blair, however, Miss Barak found him 'boring' and 'timid'. 'He was like a scared child', she told the Telegraph last night. ...There doesn't appear to be a message there. He may be an average politician but I don't see him as a leader." (Report of an interview between Mr Blair and Daphne Barak of NBC - *Daily Telegraph* 4/2/97 P4)

These two quotes provide the only clues needed to go to the core of the Blair character; he is by nature very nervous. The first describes Mr Blair's behaviour as a recently elected MP; the second

shows Mr Blair as the leader of a party which was shortly to go into a General Election as just about the hottest electoral favourites ever. Twelve years experience and the assumption of the highest office in his party had made absolutely no difference. He was still incredibly anxious because basic character is forever. Behaviour may to a degree be learned, but such learnt behaviour is situational not general. For example, a coward may gain confidence as he grows older in circumstances to which he becomes accustomed, but he never becomes naturally brave.

Even with the office of prime minister to bolster him, two years experience of government, a largely quiescent media and no political opposition worthy of the name, Mr Blair is still extremely unsure of himself and finds it immensely difficult to handle any setback, for example, his tremulous response to questions about the 1999 EU election defeat. If readers wish to discover in an objective fashion how unconfident Mr Blair is, I suggest that they tape either an interview in which he is under pressure or his performance at Prime Minister's Question Time. Then play the tape back in slow motion. The reader will then see what psychologists call micro expressions. These are fleeting facial expressions which are so rapid that human beings pick them up if at all subliminally. Mr Blair's most common micro expressions are those of anxiety. Nor does it take much to cause Mr Blair to display signs of anxiety: it happens whenever he is feels that people are not wholly with him, for instance at the 1999 TUC conference. Mr Blair has undoubtedly gained in situational confidence since the election, but give him one good emotional belt and he will be back to emotional square one.

This nervousness finds its constant expression in his obsessive desire to control. Before the election, we saw that trait primarily in the subjection of his party. Since he became prime minister it has contaminated all parts of political life. Indeed, Mr Blair's first days in power confirmed the view that he is a nervous authoritarian. There he was in May 1997 as secure as a politician can ever be, yet one of his first decisions was to attempt to emasculate Question Time by reducing it to once a week.

Since then, Mr Blair has engaged in a massive exercise of pacification of opposition through (1) a tightening of the hold of the Labour hierarchy on the selection of electoral candidates, (2) by threatening to withdraw the whip from Labour members, most notably in the case of those who campaigned against devolution, (3) through the sending of Labour members away from Westminster on a rota basis to "tend their constituencies", (4) by unashamed cronyism and the seduction of his supposed opponents (Messrs Ashdown, Hesletine, Patten, Clarke *et al*) with a mixture of specious influence and jobs, (5) by the diffusing effects of devolution, (6) through the proposed effective abolition of the Lords and its replacement with second chamber utterly dominated by political placemen, (7) by the deliberate diminishment of the importance of the House of Commons through a combination of his frequent personal absence and the persistent habit of breaking policy to the public via the media before a statement is made to the Commons and, not least, (8) by the adoption of a presidential style and (9) the virtual end of cabinet government. In addition to these directly political acts, he has been largely successful in controlling the media through a combination of bullying and complicity with those who control the organs of the media. He has now reached the position of every natural dictator whereby anyone who disagrees with him is either mad, bad or an extremist, vide his outbursts against those who do not wish to get rid of the pound and the extraordinary intolerance he displayed during his speech to the 1999 Labour Party Conference, when everyone who disagreed with him was treated not merely as wrong but in morally defective. Out of his weakness and paranoia grow megalomania.

In a country without any stable political tradition, where violence and *coup* are the staples of political life, such behaviour might be considered normal even rational. In a country with the strongest non violent political tradition in the world it smacks of rampant paranoia. It is also fundamentally undemocratic.

Because of Mr Blair's fetish of control, many assume that he is a natural leader, yet before becoming Labour leader he had never occupied a position of prime authority. An extraordinary fact but true. At his school, Fettes, he was not even a prefect let alone head boy. At Oxford he took no leading part in student politics. As a lawyer he never rose beyond the ranks. His career as a politician was coolly unremarkable until he became Labour leader. This in itself suggests that Mr Blair is far from being one of Nature's number ones.

His frantic efforts to avoid blame also point to a subordinate character, while his remarkable ageing since he became prime minister indicates a man under great stress. Being comparatively young, the effect of ageing is perhaps more dramatic than it would be in an older man. Yet even allowing for that, the transformation is striking: an unnatural gauntness, a face lacking muscle tone, dry hair and substantial lining of the face - he looks a good ten years older than when he took office. Interestingly a rumour was floated in *The Sunday Telegraph* a few months back which suggested that he might step down in the foreseeable future. I would not utterly discount it, although it should be treated as a very long shot. Plainly he is finding the business of leading a government a tremendous burden. Why, it might be asked, did he seek high political office if he was so unfitted for it temperamentally? I attribute it to a childlike ego and a failure of imagination. Mr Blair wanted to be PM because his self-esteem required that he was in the same way a boy might want to be captain of football. His ego and the lack of imagination ensured that he completely failed to understand the massive difference between being an opposition leader and prime minister. If he wishes to get out, his problem (and ours) is that he is now trapped by circumstances and may find it impossible to relinquish control even if he wishes to. Such a situation would drive him to ever greater attempts a control.

Most people will say to me at this stage, hold on Robert, this man was barrister for ten years; how can he be a profoundly nervous, subordinate creature? Well, that's most people for you, always looking for the obvious and missing it. The depressing fact is that the vast majority of barristers show considerable signs of nervousness before entering a court. Many do so within court. That is the first thing to note. The second thing to understand is that a courtroom is a very structured environment where the rules are all in favour of the lawyer. He decides what evidence is to be introduced on his side of the case; he decides what questions are to be asked; he decides the order of questions; above all he cannot be questioned. In addition, the majority of witnesses will be people who will be unaccustomed to appearing in public and possessed of a lessor education than the barrister. All in all, the courtroom is the ideal venue for the nervous person possessed of public ambition, once the procedural rules have been learned and the environment learned.

Those are the general advantages of the courtroom for barristers. However, the barrister can make the environment even safer by his choice of the field of law in which he practices. Mr Blair specialised in employment and trade law. Thus he rarely had to appear before a jury, which is generally considered within the legal profession to be the most difficult of legal tests. Perhaps equally importantly, this area of practice meant that a great deal of his arguing would have been done in pre-trial submissions rather than orally before a judge. Mr Blair would also have avoided the most difficult type of expert witness, namely the scientific witness. (If the ordinary person wishes to see lawyers making complete fools of themselves, I suggest that he or she goes along to a run-of-the-mill murder trial which turns on forensic evidence. It is a most depressing experience to see the sheer level of lawyerly incompetence generally on display). It should also be noted that a barrister cannot be sued for incompetence.

Why is Mr Blair so nervous? I put my money on a lack of emotional development and the uncertainties produced by intellectual mediocrity. In his behaviour, Mr Blair is a caricature of adolescence. His hilariously bogus attempts at public emotion; the childlike belief, never better demonstrated than over Kosovo, that the speaking of high flown and impractical ideals wills their

end, his continuing uncertainty in public debate and above all his desperate need to control, all suggest someone who is forever sixteen and dreadfully afraid that they will not be taken seriously as an adult.

Mr Blair's speech to the 1999 Labour Party Conference displayed his adolescent nature beautifully. We had the exhibitionism of his constant references to how well he had done in his life and how often he met important people. We had the equation of conservatives with evil and the designation of anyone who disagreed with him as conservative. We had the horribly contrived sentimentality particularly in his references to children. We had the fifth form PC idealism. All of this delivered in a language best described as advanced Mawkish, with his piping fifteen year old's voice and his usual hilariously inept phrasing. (Incidentally, the micro expressions during the speech also said he was extremely nervous.)

How bright is Mr Blair? Obviously he is not a complete dimwit. Indeed, I suspect that he would score respectably in an IQ test. But equally there is solid evidence that he is at best an educated dullard, able to spout the odd piece of learning and capable of shallow superficial analysis, but devoid of any deep understanding of anything and originality of thought. He gained only a second at a university (Oxford) notorious for its generosity in granting good degrees in a subject (law) where hard work will get you most of the way to a first. Moreover, Mr Blair achieved this middling degree despite having no great undergraduate distractions such as serious involvement in student politics. I think we can say that was a mediocre performance. To that we may add his performance in the Bar Examination, where according to his biographer John Rentoul he "achieved an undistinguished Third Class". That was an indication of pure laziness which points to the debilitating disease of intellectual idleness. It is probably that fault rather than an innate lack of intelligence which is the biggest stumbling block to Mr Blair's ability to understand.

Intellectual idleness is a big, big problem, because the intellectually lazy will, in the nature of things, generally fail to comprehend a complex problem adequately. In government that can be very expensive in terms of sins of omission and commission as the intellectually lazy politician acts recklessly or fails to act, both out of ignorance.

Time and again Mr Blair gives evidence that he does not understand the consequences of his policies, vide devolution, the social chapter and the single currency. Worse, he appears driven by ideas that are suited to student debates but not government. His stance on Kosovo provides the most vivid demonstration of these various weaknesses.

During the Kossovan war, Mr Blair constantly behaved in a most uncontrolled manner. He urged the use of ground troops, including a very substantial British contingent, he agreed to take in unlimited numbers of Albanian refugees, he said that cost was no object, he was willing to commit a large proportion of our military forces as "peacekeepers" for what would certainly be years and could be generations and gave no heed to the cost either of that or of reconstructing the damage caused by Nato military action (and this at a time when cuts to British welfare are very much on the agenda). Yet all those massive commitments did not come at the outset of hostilities. Rather, they were the consequences of a miscalculation of President Milosevic's resolve and a threadbare military strategy. Not content with those irresponsible commitments, Mr Blair has maintained a reckless aggressiveness towards Mr Milosevic since the formal end of hostilities which has virtually ensured that he stays in power. In the longer term, Mr Blair has stored up resentments against Britain, not least amongst the Russian political class, for seemingly driving Nato's hardline approach which effectively humiliated Russia by treating it as of no account. All these things were done gratuitously and without apparent thought for the consequences and we have no indication that Mr Blair understands the consequences.

Most worryingly Mr Blair has shown himself to be an unashamed warmonger. I would like to believe that his public words were simply a cynical manipulation of the public to promote his reputation and were made in the certain knowledge that President Clinton would not commit troops to a land war. Unfortunately I think that Mr Blair was anything but cynical in his belligerence. *The Observer* reported on the 18th July 1999 that Mr Blair had agreed to send 50,000 British troops to take part in an invasion force of 170,000 if Mr Milosevic had not conceded Kosovo to Nato. Incredible as this may seem, (and it was not denied by Downing Street) such recklessness fits in with Mr Blair's general behaviour. So there you have it, our prime minister would have committed the majority of Britain's armed forces to a land war in which we have no national interest, regardless of the cost, deaths and injuries. The danger remains that Mr Blair will find another adventure which does result in a land war. Over Kosovo, he behaved like a reckless adolescent and nearly came a fatal political cropper. Yet Mr Blair appears to have learnt nothing from the experience, *vide* the unpleasant and malicious fanaticism in Messrs Blair and Cook's declarations of their intent to unseat Mr Milosevic from power and bring him before an international court, *vide* the humiliation of Russia, *vide* the ever more absurd declarations of internationalist intent since hostilities ceased. That adolescent idealists' mind set could lead Britain down a very dark path indeed. It is also incompatible with a foreign policy that supposedly encourages elected governments (however imperfect they are) over dictatorships.

I do not subscribe to the view that Mr Blair has no political policies: he has all too many drawn from the ragbags of political correctness and internationalism. What he lacks is any constancy of thought in his attachment to the detailed political ideas needed to achieve his general ends. He has detailed ideas, but not for long. All politicians change their views to a degree: Mr Blair has most comprehensively altered his. Some time ago I went systematically through John Rentoul's biography of Mr Blair noting his varying positions at different times on all important areas of policy. Incredibly, there is not a single one on which he has not described a 180 degree turn. For example in 1988 he said this about the need to protect British industry: "Without an active interventionist industrial policy... Britain faces the future of having to compete on dangerously unequal terms." (Iain Dale: *The Blair Necessities*, p.57). Compare that with his present hardline free trading stance in government.

Equally noteworthy is the manner in which he changes his mind. Mr Blair does not do what any normal man would do in his position, namely gradually inch towards a new policy. No, with Mr Blair it is X one day and Y the next with damn all meaningful explanation of the change. All he ever says is that some such nonsense as "time has moved on" or "those were yesterday's ideas". Such behaviour raises a most pertinent question, how does one distinguish between a man who continually changes his mind without warning and a calculating liar? There is in principle no objective test to decide between the two circumstances. In effect, Mr Blair is saying that he should never be held to account for anything. In fact, one of his strongest traits is a desperate determination to avoid blame.

This inconstancy of principle takes us neatly to the discrepancy between what he says and does. Mr Blair presents himself as Mr Compassionate Morality. Yet his public and private actions (and increasingly his words) persistently belie this. The lines "The more he spoke of his honour, the faster we counted the spoons" come to mind.

In his domestic policy Mr Blair has adopted a tone of aggressive intent against those least able to fend for themselves: the poor, single mothers and the disabled. This comes as no surprise to those who remember his words before he became prime minister on the subject of beggars, whom he represented in an interview in the magazine *The Big Issue* as aggressive and unworthy of help. The mixture of disgust and exaggerated fear in that interview was wonderful and ancient. On being asked whether he gave money to beggars he said he did not. And this from a man whose life is

comfortable going on rich. It was the mentality of the selfish aristocrat who is utterly divorced from the lives of the masses and is both revolted and scared by them.

So much for Mr Blair's self advertised compassion, but he also likes to portray himself as the Common Man. His lifestyle and that of his wife are a bit of a barrier to this. Most notably they failed to send their children to nonselective state schools despite Mr Blair's public decrying selective schools in accordance with Labour Party policy. Actually that little piece of business is very revealing. Mr Blair effectively changed one of the Labour Party's most cherished policies - non-selective education - by personal *fiat* for once the leader had crossed the selective Rubicon the Party had to of necessity follow. Shameless hypocrisy allied to utter egotism.

So what do we have? A man who is essentially a megalomaniac adolescent; a weak authoritarian who is nervous, paranoid, cowardly, intellectually lazy, hypocritical, morally vicious, without fixed principles and seemingly oblivious to shame. A man who is never in the wrong. A man whose is highly manipulative. A man who is the most tremendous egoist. Put all that together and the word psychopath comes to mind.

What is a psychopath? The term does not mean, as is popularly thought, someone who does not understand the difference between right and wrong. In fact the psychopath is as aware of the moral rules of a society as the next man. What distinguishes psychopathic behaviour from the norm is the perpetrator's ability to break moral laws without experiencing the normal emotional pain of doing so. In other words, these are actions without conscience.

All human beings are capable of psychopathic behaviour. But most people will only engage in such behaviour in exceptional circumstances, such as times of extreme stress or where a society's morality is tribal rather than general. The classic instance of both types of behaviour may be found in war, which on the one hand produces a willingness to kill through fear of attack, and on the other creates a state of mind which allows the ordinary man to kill even when not immediately threatened, and to accept as reasonable killing by his fellow countrymen and allies which is to all intents and purposes murder. All bombing of civilians falls into the latter category.

What distinguishes the psychopath from the mass of men is that the psychopath's normal behaviour is psychopathic. Mr Blair meets this criteria. His common actions include the following: he breaks his word as a matter of course but exhibits no signs of emotional discomfort when doing so. He changes policy from one day to the next. He lies without compunction, for example the pledges he made to persuade the Ulster Unionists to accept the "peace" Agreement which have subsequently been dishonoured in the breach utterly as hundreds of convicted IRA terrorists have been released without a single weapon being handed in. He behaves without regard to the consequences of his actions on others. He is the most consummate hypocrite. He refuses to accept blame. He constantly attempts to manipulate others. Most tellingly, he claims a high moral position whilst committing all these immoralities.

What do Mr Blair's character defects mean for his (and our) government? Shortly before he died, the historian Max Beloff wrote a piece for the Times newspaper entitled "Third Way or Third Reich?" (9/2/99) in which he charted the similarities between New Labour's tactics and those of the Nazis, such behaviour as the enticement of political figures from other parties to camouflage New Labour's purpose, the tacit concordat with business whereby donations and support were traded for an understanding that a Blair government would not be radical in its treatment of the economy, and the obsessive party control. Lord Beloff also suggested that Mr Blair might eventually be enticed by the attractions of the *Führer* principle.

Lord Beloff's views were met publicly with a mixture of outrage and derision. But they are based on objective facts coupled to hard arguing. Moreover, Mr Blair's language and views are often remarkably similar to those of fascists, in particular to the views of Oswald Mosely. Consider these startlingly similar sentiments taken from Mr Blair (*The Blair Necessities* - BN) and Mosley (*Varieties of Fascism* - VoF):

I believe we have broken through the traditional barriers of right and left; that we are developing a new and radical economic approach for the left and centre (BN 1996 p.14)

Above all it is a realistic creed. It has no use for immortal principles in relation to the facts of bread-and-butter; and it despises the windy rhetoric which ascribes importance to mere formula. (VoF p170)

One Britain. That is the patriotism for the future. (BN 1996 p.13)

It must be absolutely clear to the British people that we are a political arm of no one other than the British people themselves (BN 1996 p.14)

We need a new social morality. (BN 1996 p.19)

We seek to establish a new ideal of public service, and a new authority based on merit (Albert Hall April 1934 VoF)

The case advanced in these pages covers, not only a new political policy, but also a new conception of life. In our view, these purposes can only be achieved by the creation of a modern movement invading every sphere of national life. (VoF p.171)

The new establishment is not a meritocracy, but a power elite of money-shifters, middle men and speculators... people whose self-interest will always come before the national or the public interest. (BN 1996 p.42)

Many more instances exist of such echoes.

Any authoritarian is bad enough, but with Mr Blair one gets the worst of all possible worlds for he is the most damaging type of authoritarian. He is not a strong, able man who brooks no argument because he believes that he knows best and has a record of achievement to support his pretensions. Rather he is a weak, fearful character who suppresses dissent because he doubts his own capacity. Incompetent authoritarians are always the harshest enemies of free expression for the very good reason that they keep creating ever greater crises which can only be publicly hidden, albeit temporarily, by ever greater repression of dissent.

The dangers of Mr Blair's authoritarian tendencies are amplified by the nature of those about him. Forget all the protestations of a change of Labour heart. These are cavorting prigs harnessed from the same stable as previous Labour governments. H.L. Mencken's "Show me a puritan and I will show you a sonofabitch" comes readily to mind. The exact *foci* of their meddling may have changed, the desire to meddle has not. They will feed Mr Blair's natural dictatorial instincts.

Instances of Mr Blair's fascistic desire to control grow by the day. These range from the risible such as his seemingly insatiable desire to comment formally on such great affairs of state as spats in football and golf (*vide* the Ryder Cup) and the downright dangerous such as the planned testing of all criminal suspects for drug use.

Most forms of government are institutionalised gangsterism. That is what I foresee Mr Blair creating in Britain if he is given ten years in power. Far fetched? What would we call the behaviour of a Third World leader who appointed close personal friends to two of the three most senior positions in a country's legal ministry. (Question: How would a person taking legal action against the Blairs be assured of impartiality? Answer: You tell me.) All the indications are, from cronyism

to Mr Blair's unhealthy attitude to any form of dissent, that a Blair government will be one based on the primitive idea that justice is for one's political friends and injustice for one's political foes.

Mr Blair controls because he fears dealing with the consequences of the unpredicted. He is a weak egotist who will behave both incompetently and viciously should he come under real pressure. He lacks courage and that is always a fatal lack in the long run.

(**Robert Henderson** is a writer and political analyst whose special interest is the character of Tony Blair.)

Thoughts on the Character of Michael Portillo by Peter Tatchell

Outrage!, which is the gay human rights group in which I am involved, has long had Michael Portillo on its list of prominent anti-homosexuals who are themselves gay. Sadly, this country's draconian libel laws prevented us from naming him, as there was no one prepared to go public with what they knew about his secret gay life. Now he has outed himself.

Further to his self-outing in *The Times* on the 9th September 1999, I must denounce Michael Portillo as a hypocrite and homophobe. Despite his own gay relationships, he has consistently opposed gay human rights and has never shown any sympathy or support for the gay community. Mr Portillo is no friend of queer people. He voted for Section 28, against an equal age of consent and, as Defence Secretary, he enforced the ban on lesbians and gays in the armed forces.

We are planning to intervene in the selection of the Conservative candidate for Kensington, and in the Kensington by-election, to highlight Michael Portillo's hypocrisy, homophobia and failure to tell the full truth about his homosexuality. Our plan is to embarrass Michael Portillo and the leadership of the Conservative Party. Details of what we plan remain secret, but I can promise fireworks and dynamite.

As his former lover Nigel Hart has revealed, Mr Portillo's account of his past gay relationships is not the whole story. He has presented a dishonest version of his homosexual experiences. He asserts that his gayness was a passing dalliance, when he was a "young person", during his student days at Cambridge. But he was having gay sex with Nigel Hart until he was 27, long after he had left university. And, contrary to his stated claims, it was a very "full relationship". Mr Portillo's public version of events is evidently false.

His homosexuality should not be used to bar his selection as a Tory candidate for Kensington. It is his hypocrisy, homophobia and economy with the truth that renders him unfit and unworthy to hold public office. How can the people of Kensington trust a candidate who has given a misleading account of his life?

The issues we shall be highlighting in the Kensington selection and by-election are homophobia, hypocrisy, trust and integrity. On all four issues, Mr. Portillo is not a fit and proper candidate.

Michael Portillo is a hypocrite and homophobe. Despite his own gay relationships, he has consistently opposed gay human rights and has never shown any sympathy or support for the gay community.

On the 15th December 1987, Mr Portillo voted against amendments that would have allowed local authorities:

1. To discourage anti-gay discrimination and protect the civil rights of homosexuals;
2. To provide counselling, advice and support to vulnerable, isolated lesbian and gay pupils;
3. To permit schools to teach awareness of different sexual orientations.

Mr Portillo's vote against these three amendments shows him to be an unreconstructed hardline homophobe. Since Section 28, he has never expressed an ounce of regret for the way he voted.

Although taking a hard-line stand on law and order, Mr Portillo broke the law by having gay sex with Nigel Hart at the age of 19, at a time when the homosexual age of consent was 21. He showed no respect for the law in his youth, but he now supports an age of consent law that criminalises 16 and 17 year old gay men. This is further evidence of his hypocrisy and double-standards.

Since coming out, he has not recanted his past support for discrimination against homosexuals. This shows that his claimed conversion to sexual tolerance and to the caring, liberal wing of conservatism is a fraud. His continued unwillingness to express any empathy for the lesbian and gay community shows that he remains a cold-hearted, compassionless homophobe.

Mr Portillo not only voted for Section 28. He also voted against three amendments to protect and support vulnerable young lesbians and gays, effectively endorsing the isolation and victimisation of homosexual teenagers.

On the night Parliament voted against an equal age of consent in 1994, when news of the defeat on equality came through, 5,000 lesbians and gays massed outside the House of Commons spontaneously broke into a chant of 'Portillo is a faggot', furious that he voted against equalisation at 16.

That is nothing compared with what we will intentionally do in Kensington.

Editor's Note: Though I oppose calls for public spending on homosexual welfare and for anti-discrimination laws, I do broadly agree with Mr Tatchell's article. Mr Portillo has behaved dishonourably. He has been an active and enthusiastic homosexual in private - even to the extent of breaking the law - while in public upholding the continued persecution of homosexuals. If he had not the courage to admit his own preferences, he should at least have taken a neutral line on the issue.

I also doubt Mr Portillo's political sense. Had he confessed himself more fully in the *Times* interview, he would have silenced all criticism - excepting only Mr Tatchell's. No one of importance in the Conservative Party would have dared say a word against him. He would have sailed through the Kensington and Chelsea selection, and probably also through the by-election. What he did instead was to make a semi-confession that was immediately revealed as an untruth.

Of course, there are people who say that he deserves the support of our Movement even so. He remains the only credible alternative to William Hague as Leader of the Conservative Party; and we are encouraged to forget about matters of personal honesty and political common sense in giving him our unqualified support. There are times when the public danger requires an individual's abilities to be recognised and his personal failings overlooked. I am minded of the corruption and even treason of the first Duke of Marlborough.

But Mr Portillo is a man of no identifiable abilities whatever. He is simply another member of the Quisling Right - likely to say one thing if it will gather in the votes, and then to do the exact

opposite once elected to office. This is a man who when in Parliament voted for the Single European Act and the Treaty of Maastricht. As Minister of Defence, he sent British servicemen to fight in wars directed by foreign powers and contrary to the obvious interests of this country.

To sabotage Mr Portillo's return to politics will do this country no harm, and might do it some good. For these reasons, I wish Mr Tatchell all the best.

(**Peter Tatchell** has an interest in Michael Portillo so great that it may result in his reading this number of *Free Life* in a police cell.)

**Sean Gabb, Brian Micklethwait
and the Argument over Libertarian Strategy
by Sean Gabb**

In this debate, see also previous articles in *Free Life* nos. 33, 34 and 37.

The purpose of this article is to explain the grounds of my dispute with Brian Micklethwait, the Editorial Director of the Libertarian Alliance, and to try justifying my own side in this dispute. It is a more regular and extended version of the argument reported in the last issue of *Free Life*.¹

Now, in using the word "dispute", I do not wish to give any impression of the rancorous, brawling arguments that divide people into a state of permanent hostility. I have the highest personal regard for Brian, and am sensible of the trust and kindness that he has always shown me during the past 18 years of our friendship. Though we believe our dispute is over matters of great importance, we have so far conducted it as friends; and now that it is emerging into print, I have no doubt that this will continue.

We are arguing over the best political means of advancing libertarianism. There are, broadly speaking, four main strategies. First, there is setting up a libertarian party and trying to get elected to office. Second, there is developing policies that enable or extend markets and that also suit the interests of those already in power. Third, there is savage and often negative abuse of the whole political class, holding up every failing and those responsible for it to public revulsion. Fourth, there are attempts to convert the politicians to libertarianism - by assuming that they act in good faith, by praising them when they do right, any by patiently explaining the nature and consequences of error when they do wrong.

On the futility of the first strategy, Brian and I are entirely in agreement. Libertarian political parties are a waste of time - about as sensible a way of getting what we want as playing the lottery is of getting rich. On the second, we are also at least broadly agreed. In two issues of *Free Life Commentary* written last year, I argued that the marketisation strategy had tended to increase rather than diminish the oppressive powers of the State.² In a recent pamphlet, I find Brian arguing much the same:

[There] is the 'efficiency experts for the state' objection to many apparently libertarian policies. Somewhere between spreading enthusiasm for life, liberty and property and applauding when businesses compete for the contract to supply poison gas to the government's Population Purity Department, lines must be drawn.³

Our dispute lies over the merits of the third and fourth strategies listed above. Brian disagrees with my insistence that the politicians are all conspiring in various ways to make the world into a unified slave society with them and their friends on top. Since I am not aware that he has written any of this down, I must gather his views from snatches of argument and conversation over the past few years. But it does not seem unfair to say that Brian prefers a gentler approach. He would rather be able to

sit down in a television studio and put Tony Blair through a Socratic dialogue, in the course of which there would be agreement on the nature of the Good and how it should be pursued. My tendency to revile every politician I come across is not considered very helpful to this calm, dispassionate intercourse of minds. It lets me collect a fan club of paranoid Americans and British eccentrics. It entertains large numbers of people on the Internet and on television and the wireless. But it fails to engage the mighty in a debate from which they might emerge as converts to libertarianism.

My reply to Brian - assuming this is his argument - is in two parts. First, his strategy will not in itself succeed given the nature of the politicians who currently get into power. Second, there is more to my strategy than accusations and abuse. Let us take these points in order.

First, I have yet to see the smallest sign that anyone in the British political class is acting in good faith. Every member of the present Government is an obvious hypocrite. Those old enough to have done so supported unilateral nuclear disarmament in the 1980s and the Alternative Economic Strategy. Robin Cook used to write articles in *The New Statesman* opposing the purchase of Cruise and Trident missiles. He also used to oppose British membership of the European Union. In government, he has said nothing against the nuclear deterrent, and has just made a speech praising the Euro as good for creating jobs. Clare Short spent the Gulf War of 1991 crying up the sufferings of the Iraqi people. She has said nothing against the continued bombing of Iraq by the Government of which she is now a member.⁴ Jack Straw opposed the Michael Howard proposals to limit the right of Trial by Jury. He is now pushing ahead with those proposals. Labour used to oppose identity cards and controls on encryption. It has changed its mind on the second, and has already introduced a new Driving Licence that is plainly intended to achieve the first. Let us ignore the matter of Labour's economic policies. It would need more than a paragraph even to list the differences between Old and New Labour.

Let us also ignore the lies and hypocrisy of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat politicians. It is enough to say that every politician currently in or near power is interested in ideas just so far as they will advance his own career. This is true of the politicians we see in the newspapers and on television; and it is true of all the young men and women scurrying about them, hoping one day to succeed them. It will not reform their behaviour to explain to these people how they are acting against the public good - because the public good is not on their agenda. The public good is simply two words used to justify politicians in getting what they want. And what they want is power and money and status. Of course, this has always been so to some extent. But there is something new about the lack of regard shown this generation for the interest or even the wishes of the governed - and especially something about the barefaced lying and use of a controlled media to suppress both facts and comment about what is happening. This is because what is happening cannot be justified in any liberal or democratic sense. The money and power and status all come nowadays most securely by promoting a New World Order, in which politicians will be freed from the constraints of democratic politics and legal norms, and big business will be freed from the burdens of market competition.

There is no point in assuming that Jack Straw and his people want less crime, and then trying to convince them that making the country into a police state is not the best way of getting this. They want a police state, and whatever they say about crime is a set of disposable excuses - knock down one, and they will switch to another. Tell them, for example, that identity cards are not needed to stop personation in driving tests, and they start talking about terrorism. Tell them that terrorists abroad always have perfectly forged identity cards when needed, and they raise the matter of underage drinking. Deal with this excuse and then with half a dozen others, and they go back to the driving test argument. The only value of such arguing is to show the genuine reason why identity

cards are desired - this being to give our rulers absolute knowledge of and therefore control over our actions.

If I have heard him right, Brian thinks that sweet reason is enough to stop the imposition of *Corpus Juris* and roll back the money laundering laws. This will not work. If we ever are to stop the drift to global despotism, the people in charge of this and the other participating countries will need stronger pressure than Brian can supply from a television studio.

This brings me to the second part of my reply. My purpose in writing as I do is not to argue with those in power. Arguing to convert the other side is normally a waste of time. It works with people who have a commitment to truth that overrides personal interest, and with people who are only feebly convinced of their own case. But these are a minority - especially among the apparatchiks who get ahead now in politics, business and the media. The proper aim of arguing is to convince third parties and thereby to build a majority in favour of one's own case. Brian tells me that if I were to meet and argue with a Cabinet Minister, there would be no constructive debate. The Minister would think me mad or dangerous or both. This is true, but it is not my wish to argue *with* these people; it is instead to argue *about* them. I am not trying to persuade them from their agenda of total control, but rather to draw attention to it and to show just how our liberties and our identities are marked for destruction. I am self-consciously part of a movement that is mostly American, but that includes many in this country. My purpose in writing is to help delegitimise the existing order.

It is not enough for an establishment to have power and wealth. Authority and status are desired as well. Its members want not just to be obeyed, but also to be accepted as the natural, rightful leaders of a society. To have this, they must govern in at least the vague interest of the governed. They do not need to be liberal democrats. They can run a chaotic, highly incompetent state. They do not need to give very good security to life and property. But they must show some regard for the interests, or perhaps the passions, of the majority. When they begin to define their interests as both separate from and opposed to those of the nation as a whole - when they set about abolishing established liberties and customs, and seeming to put the country under some kind of foreign rule - the acceptance of their right to govern becomes questionable. And it unsettles them when this acceptance comes seriously into question. It unsettles them to be called traitors and fools, to have their motives doubted - and doubted even in those instances where no deception is intended - to be made fun of, to have rooms fall silent as they walk in, to hear suppressed sniggers behind their backs, to hear praise from their inferiors that might come as easily from fear as from respect, to be regarded as a burden on the nation; to be suffered and obeyed only so long as they have the force to maintain themselves in power.

Once it has started, it is impossible to suppress this kind of murmuring. The established media can be set to work on the usual delicate combination of ignoring and defaming the opposition. Individuals who have been too outspoken can be punished in various ways. But every act of suppression brings an increase in opposition. When people are sacked from their jobs or put in prison, they become martyrs, and others pay attention to their message - often assuming without further thought that it must be true if coercion is the only argument against it. It is now that members of the Establishment begin to fear being alone and defenceless among the governed. They start to receive hate mail. Jokes circulate about how the waiters in some expensive restaurant routinely urinate in the soup or spit phlegm into the salad. There is the occasional violent attack, and rumours about death lists.

Historically, there have been two responses to this kind of separation of rulers and ruled. The rulers can lose faith in their own right to rule, and give way at the first shock that needs unusual firmness of reaction. This is what happened in France after 1788. The mockery of Voltaire, the denunciation

of Rousseau, the repeated scandals in law and administration and in the private conduct of the powerful, had all persuaded the rulers of France that they had no right to continue as they had done. The leaders of the Third Estate remodelled the Constitution and swept away the power of the other two Estates without serious opposition - even though right up to the point of no return, the Old Order had a theoretical superiority of force. Much the same happened with the British departure from India in 1947. The costs of the War had made upholding the Raj difficult, but probably not impossible. What made for the suddenness and completeness of departure was that radical opposition in Britain and nationalist opposition in India had already convinced the authorities that the Raj was not worth upholding - that it had no right to be upheld. And thus the work of two centuries of brilliant conquest and inspired administration could be levelled to the ground in a few months.

Or the rulers can decide on firmer measures of repression. They can protect themselves by withdrawing into armed compounds, and disarm the ruled. They can establish a secret police, and weaken or abolish due process in cases of "state security". They can try to seek out and destroy the opposition. There are hundreds of precedents for this response, but I think particularly of Czarist Russia and the last Shah of Iran. It will not work without the last extremes of terror. Short of that, there will eventually be an uprising to sweep the established order away, and the ferocity of the uprising will be proportionate to the force of the repression that preceded it. And even with the last extreme of terror, the best on offer is a long age of grim despotism punctuated by intervals of chaotic bloodshed. Such was the history of the slave revolts against Rome, and of the *Jaqueries* of early modern France.

Unless it crumbles from within, an establishment will do what is needed to maintain itself in power. But losing the consent of the governed is not something to be lightly risked in the first place. I remember in 1982 seeing Dennis Healey at a bus stop in Charing Cross Road. At the time, he was Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, and until quite recently had been Chancellor of the Exchequer. In my view, he had been - and might be again - a leading member of a very bad government. All I did on seeing him, though, was to nod politely and carry on walking down to the railway station. Others passing by did much the same. I have no idea what he was doing at a bus stop, but Mr Healey was plainly enjoying himself. He would have enjoyed himself far less if circumstances had required him to be driven round London in a bullet-proof car, and hurried through the briefest possible exposure to the public with a crowd of armed guards around him. I am sure the average MP or BBC Governor likes to go shopping in the local supermarket, and not have to worry about what might be placed under the family car while it is parked with all the others. The managing directors of big companies do not live in continual fear of having their children kidnapped from school. Though Irish terrorists have made an effort to change things, England remains a nice, civilised country in which to be powerful or rich. It is surely worth making an effort to maintain this.

Yet already we are at the murmuring stage of delegitimation. Most people do not believe what the politicians say any more. A minority are claiming - and, I believe, claiming truly - that those in power have an agenda that involves stripping us of our personal liberty and our national identity and independence. The response has been a pack of lies, joined by what so far have been clumsy and half-hearted attempts at persecution. There was, for example, the prosecution of George Staunton for racially aggravated criminal damage. He was caught sticking up posters against the European Union. Had the case against him not been largely withdrawn once publicised, an old man of 78 would have faced a maximum punishment of 14 years in prison.⁵ That is the sort of mistake that establishments make when they start to falter. Another few years, and such cases will be proceeded with regardless of public opinion: the purpose then will be to frighten the governed regardless of unpopularity.

But murmuring is the earliest stage, and we are not far into that. There is still time for pulling back. As at other times in English history, we can still hope for a compromise between rulers and ruled. All our rulers need to do is withdraw the country from the European Union and start paying at least some respect for constitutional rights. Give us that, and they can keep their old boy networks and their interlocking patterns of financial and political power and the general fun of being accepted as the natural lords of creation in a wealthy, powerful country. Give us that, and the next generation of establishment figures will contain names like Bonham-Carter, Toynbee, Trevelyan, Waldegrave, and even Blair and Prescott. Press on with the agenda of control, and the downward spiral of hatred and fear can begin properly.

Of course, what Brian and I are attempting is not mutually exclusive. Indeed, each of us naturally complements the other. Brian needs some motive to force the Establishment to take him seriously and start letting him conduct his Socratic dialogues on television. I desperately want people like Brian to negotiate the compromise. Though I believe in the right of resistance to tyranny, I do not really want to see an English Liberation Army setting off bombs in the London office of the European Commission. I want a lot more freedom, and that includes much lower taxes and regulations. But I do not want to overthrow the existing order of things in this country - not, at least, unless it commits itself irrevocably to the New World Order.

But this is my purpose in writing. This is why I make Brian squirm with e

[Here, Dr. Gabb's published version tantalizingly breaks off in mid-sentence.]

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

I have just spent some time reading *Free Life* No.33, August 1999, and wanted to congratulate you on what is an excellent read.

As an LA Gold subscriber, I am delighted that this publication now appears every month. Its insightful, informative and provocative articles always enthral and entertain me. I particularly liked your recent Editorial on the state of the Conservative Party entitled "Come Out of Her, My People".

I very much hope that in the months ahead I will find the time to write for *Free Life* myself. It is such an excellent publication, I would expect it to inspire many other like minded individuals to put pen to paper.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Tim Evans

tim@trident.demon.co.uk

Sir,

I wonder if you would be so kind as to cancel my subscription.

I have always felt some interest in your viewpoint, if only because sometimes you were funny, in a psychopathological kind of a way. But the not quite loveable eccentricity has a sordid edge to it now, as you have chosen to associate yourself with the American gun lobby.

Are you really so brainless as to sucker for their poisonous propaganda, or are you just another American agent like your beloved Tory Party?

Don't answer that question, I don't want to know. Anyhow, please stop sending me your sad stream of third rate crap.

Tom

tom@bubblefish.demon.co.uk

Sir,

I write regarding your Editorial in *Free Life* No.33.

You are without doubt one of "the good guys" in British politics and our political philosophy is almost identical.

I too find the Tory Party often infuriating (I was a Conservative parliamentary candidate at the last election, a former National Chairman of the Young Conservatives etc.). Yet despite all its faults, the Tory Party is vastly preferable for free marketeers to the Labour Party. Tony Blair has raped our pension funds, has hiked taxes and is bereft of principles.

Please turn your guns on New Labour - they are still infinitely worse than the Conservatives !

With kind regards.

Jason Hollands

Jason.Hollands@dial.pipex.com

Sir,

The Tory Party has survived the Glorious Revolution and the Corn Laws, I think it can survive New Labour and you. Complaining about it and hoping for a replacement is about as futile as complaining about an iceberg.

The Tories are not immoral but are, like Old and New Labour, amoral. They have their own institutional imperative for survival, and being largely independent of the state they cannot be dismantled by a Labour Government, whether or not the Government use secret service files to libel the largest donors. (Didn't hear you complaining about that abuse of state power- but as New Labour is so morally superior to the Tories then it's better not to look too closely).

The point is that the Tories are likely to be here for a long, long time and due to historical accident are at the moment closer to what you and I believe than the alternative. If you are serious about the prospects of withdrawal from the EU and the restoration of clear rights to self-defence who are you going to look to, those whose rhetoric is part of the way towards it but who'll let you down most of the time, or those whose rhetoric is dead against it?

I don't care whether this or that Tory is on-side, it's what they are going to be forced to do. A political party survives on fear and greed, if you can tell a party that either it's going to lose a chunk

of support (in the ballot box or bank account) or will gain a chunk of support then the party will do it. They do not have the institutional barriers to a Euro-Sceptic position which they did even five years ago, and I don't believe that they are as morally attached to Europe as you seem to believe. As far as self defence goes, I believe that our biggest problem is not politicians (of either party) but hysterical public opinion; for which that morally superior bunch in New-Labour bid for with their nonsense on hand guns. I think too many people on the fringes of politics want to get rich quick, and think that they can hijack the political process by appealing to a political elite to be "on-side" without the back up of public opinion, campaign donors or potential activists. They then get bitter when their new friends in politics don't deliver- but I would say that this is the fault of the unrealistic expectations of immature "factional operators", not the fault of any impersonal political process. If someone in politics or journalism is genuinely on-side then that is an undoubted bonus, but never rely on them, ever. The route to salvation, as you have rightly said lies primarily in personal action, but this route is more and more blocked by government. People will sadly have to get their hands dirty in politics, but the way to do this is the long hard slog of identifying and mobilising sympathetic interests, and educating public opinion. It's not fun, it's not fast and it doesn't make you feel big, but it is the only way to win.

A strike at the top of politics looks spectacular, but it is very rarely backed up by any long term gain.

I would suggest growing up rather than thunderous denunciations, but then thundering denunciations are quicker and more immediately satisfying.

Yours sincerely,

James Spencer

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Sir,

I was struck by your Editorial in the last issue of *Free Life* - chiefly by how similar it is to the kinds of things people on the Left wrote about the Wilson/Callaghan years after 1970 and then after 1979. As with them, it achieves its power by serious exaggeration. I have interspersed some comments in your text.

The Conservatives governed this country for 18 years. During this time, they broke every promise they made or implied.

Not True - manifestly not true: for example they promised to reduce inflation, and did - eventually.

They promised lower taxes. They raised taxes.

Half True They raised indirect taxes - largely because of the economic costs of their idiotic economic policies of the first term.

They promised a return to free enterprise. They made state control more efficient.

Half True What about privatisation? In any case, out here on the left it is agreed that to achieve "free enterprise" you will need a strong state to keep the poor, unemployed etc quiet. CF miners' strike of 1984 etc.

They promised more individual freedom. They made the country into a police state.

Wild Exaggeration CF real police states.

They promised to make the country respected abroad. They began its abolition by merger into a European federal state.

Half True They certainly did "make Britain respected abroad" in certain quarters. (A combination of North Sea, Maggie's rhetoric which appealed to some people, and North Sea oil revenues.) But did they begin to abolish this "country?" You mean state, I guess, in that sentence. Even after the creation of the European super state - which by my reading is receding rather fast at the moment - the countries of France, Belgium etc will still be there.

They read out speeches and signed newspaper articles promising a new dawn of classical liberalism.

Not True - Well, maybe. I've read quite a bit of the Tory stuff from 1976-79 and I do not remember promises of "classical liberalism" - jeez, hardly anyone in the Shadow Cabinet on 1979 would have had faintest idea of what it was; and most would have abhorred it if they did.

They promised bread, and gave us a stone. And when finally driven from office, they left a state machinery so powerful and uncontrolled by law that New Labour has in some respects felt obliged to dismantle it.

Comment This is weird, because out here on the left one of the most striking things about New Labour is their acceptance of the impotence of governments and states in the face of markets/capital. New Labour think they are essentially powerless - certainly in the economic sphere.

Guess it depends on where you are sitting!

Best wishes,

Robin Ramsay

Editor, *Lobster*

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Sir,

Sorry to be contacting from beyond the grave but I hear you have been preaching against the Conservative Party for not achieving enough to gratify the libertarian cause.

The real question surely is - what on earth has the Libertarian Alliance ever done in practice for the cause of liberty?

At least the Conservative Party pushed through a wide range of privatisations, cut personal taxes, took on the Unions and are the most Eurosceptic Party with a vague chance of winning elections.

Of course the LA has achieved a great many practical victories ie. sitting around in Brian Micklethwait's lounge drinking coffee once a month and sending junk e-mails to other libertarians - wow ! That really shows up William Hague's awful record doesn't it.

What was that saying about people in glass houses not casting stone?

PS Von Mises also agrees with me! Can't get in touch with Ayn Rand - she didn't believe in heaven.

F.A. Hayek

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Review Article:

Wild in Woods: The Myth of the Noble Eco-Savage

Robert Whelan

Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1999, 69pp, £8 (pbk)

(ISBN 0 255 36447 4)

Surveying modern political thought, most of the important divisions have centred around the real or perceived differences between the condition and/or nature of men (*sic*) compared with other men. For example, in the last century or so two of the most important and catastrophic ones have revolved around considerations of socio-economic class operationalised through organisations split according to their attitudes towards economic egalitarianism, and the concept of the relative inferiority and superiority in some manner of racial collectivities. More recent divisions have brought to the fore such variables as gender and sexual orientation.

Another type of division, and perhaps a more ancient one, has been based upon man's relationship with 'something else', usually god or the spirit world in some form. However, at least in much of the West, we live in a secularised age and one might have thought that this had irretrievably declined in political importance compared to the more straightforwardly sociological differences noted above. Nevertheless, within the last few decades and especially since the 1980s another such division has risen to prominence: Environmentalism or Greenism which claims to explore and explain, usually unfavourably, man's relationship with the rest of the environment.

Robert Whelan's book, another in the excellent series published by the IEA's Environment Unit, focuses on one particular aspect of the Green weltanschauung: the deployment of the 'noble savage myth' (NSM) which purports to show that 'primitives' with their supposedly more environmentally-friendly and spiritually wholesome lifestyles should be taken as exemplars for us here in the decaying, materialistic Western world.

Whilst the book itself is not presented in quite so reductionist a manner and many issues are interwoven throughout, Mr Whelan discusses a number of identifiable themes. Ultimately they all add up to one thing: that the NSM is just that, a myth.

Looking at the rise of Greenism generally, an important factor in its recent success has been the bringing together of previously disparate fringe elements into a more coherent (*sic*) whole (p20). Within this, the neo-primitivists, i.e. those that adhere to the superiority of an often frankly pre-industrial age, are an important component.

It is important to note that, as Mr Whelan explains in some detail, the NSM is not a new phenomena at all. In some form it certainly stretches back to the writers of both classical and Judeo-Christian traditions, but these tended to be musings upon some hypothetical Golden Age, often irretrievably long-lost at least in this life (p5). Later, the idea of the noble savage was again deployed, but these tended to be literary devices to examine perceived, and often very real, shortcomings in the writer's own contemporary society.

The real burst of enthusiasm for the NSM as we now know it came in the post-Columbus era of European contact with primitives, most noticeably from the Americas north and south but also from Australia, New Zealand, and other such places (pp1ff). In the centuries that followed, a veritable

blizzard of writings arose from authors such as Montaigne, Aphra Behn, John Cleland, but above all Jean-Jacques Rousseau (pp2-18) purporting to show the superiority of the primitives' *actually existing society* over the West; many of these works claimed to be based upon discussions with primitives, although most clearly were little more than, or indeed were, fiction (pp3 & 11).

Moreover, many of them, in a way similar to the more modern case of Margaret Mead noted below, often wrote in a manner which was shamelessly self-serving of their own particular hobby-horses (p13). Mr Whelan notes that in Western literature and thinking the prevalence or not of the NSM, and the form that it takes, says at least as much, and often more, about the particular epoch and certain Westerners' view of their own society than it does about any actual objective evidence that might be available concerning the primitive cultures themselves. In other words, the NSM has been deployed as a stick with which to beat domestic political opponents.

Carrying on from this, Mr Whelan agrees with other authors that different versions of the NSM have been frequently deployed by various decidedly anti-liberal writers and regimes in recent history. Says Mr Whelan: "Rousseau's attack on private property portrayed the savage as proto-communist, while the primitivist fantasies of unrestrained masculinity dreamed up by neurotics and neurasthenics like Nietzsche and D.H. Lawrence went some way towards smoothing the path to power of fascist dictators" (p19).

Turning to matters more empirical, in a number of places in the book Mr Whelan demonstrates the rather key point that the NSM is simply not true. For example, far from being 'transparent' upon the natural environment, these much-adored 'custodians of the earth' have often been, by the Green's own standards, amongst the most black-hearted of eco-villains (p34-36).

To take one example, American Indians often used a hunting technique known as the 'jump' which simply involved hunters stampeding and directing whole herds of animals over the side of cliffs. In the west of what is now the USA, sites used for this process can contain the remains of tens and sometimes hundreds of *thousands* of buffalo. This process was so efficient, but so grotesquely wasteful in its overkill, that a vast amount of meat was just left to rot, and there were such large bone deposits that they were later a valuable source of fertiliser. Unsurprisingly, throughout the American continent and also in Australasia and Madagascar all places where mankind was a relative late-comer compared to Europe and Africa the supposedly eco-friendly natives had managed to exterminate whole species of larger-sized fauna before the European colonists got in on the act.

In the same way, claims for the quality of life of the primitives, referring here just to empirically measurable variables such as the prevalence, or rather claimed lack of prevalence, of disease, are also not true. As Mr Whelan remarks, one might forgive this in early European explorers who themselves knew nothing about the aetiology of disease, but when such claims are still made by more modern writers who sincerely believe that primitives led lives free from illness (pp26-27) one's sympathy vanishes.

Yet another version of this is, when moving away from considerations of the purely material, the oft-recounted notion that primitives are somehow spiritually and morally superior to Westerners. Again, the evidence suggests that they have no particular tendency to be any more morally righteous than anyone else. Mr Whelan recounts the story of the rock-star Sting hawking a Kayapo Amazonian Indian chief around the West in the late 1980s with the aim of stopping the building of a hydro-electric dam, to which end the campaign was successful (pp48-50). Moreover, the Indians were given special rights over 25,000 square miles of rainforest, whereupon the Indian chiefs began forging lucrative deals with logging companies for the massive extraction of resources. The saddest part of the story was that most of the riches went to the chiefs and their families alone: the

commoners still lacked basic health care and one-quarter of their children died in infancy. To his credit, Sting later acknowledged his naivety.

Incidentally, even though Mr Whelan correctly notes that the worst and most appalling cases of demographic collapse in native populations were largely due to the unwitting introduction of diseases by European colonists against which the native populations had little resistance (pp29-30), none of the book is to be taken as an exoneration of the very real crimes committed against those peoples that the Europeans encountered. Nonetheless, this population collapse has had the side-effect of giving to many the erroneous impression that the European colonisation, especially of North America, was one of large-scale invasion by mankind of virgin territory where previously there had been only small bands of natives (p30). What was perceived to be virgin forest and other wilderness was really worked land that had reverted to nature due to the massive perhaps by as much as 90% population crash.

Mr Whelan notes the absurd, one might say quasi-religious, tenacity with which adherents of the NSM cling on to their beliefs even in the face of overwhelming and irrefutable evidence to the contrary. The most infamous example of this is probably the now well-rehearsed saga of Margaret Mead's 1928 book *Coming of Age in Samoa* where she reported on a carefree society where crimes such as murder and rape were virtually unknown and where, free from oppressive Western morality, the young men and most definitely women passed their time engaging in guilt-free sexual intercourse (pp13-15). The worst part of the whole affair, perhaps beyond both Mead's methodological incompetence in Samoa at the time crime rates were very high and a strict code of restrictive sexual morality was enforced and also the willingness of the anthropological establishment to accept a story which so neatly fitted their own social-determinist views, was that Derek Freeman, the man who did most to expose conclusively the truth, was subjected to bitter attacks from Mead's colleagues despite, or rather because of, being shown to be unequivocally factually wrong; Mead's associates acting like, as Matt Ridley described them, "... a tribe whose cult had been attacked and shrine desecrated ..." (p15).

Attitudes by the Western eco-lobby and cowed (or morally corrupt and/or stupid) politicians towards actual, existing primitives rather than their fantasy variant can be remarkably schizophrenic. On the one hand they are sometimes allowed by the authorities to carry on with decidedly environmentally unfriendly practices which local non-primitives are prohibited from using just because they are, in fact, deemed to be damaging (p50). Examples of this include the plight of salmon and big game stocks in various parts of North America which have been devastated by permitted Indian hunting practices which others are wholly or partly prohibited from using on the grounds that they are demonstrably so destructive.

Conversely, when the Western Greens get some particularly (to them) reprehensible practice in their sights and manage to convince Western consumers to stop buying into it, then this can have a devastating impact on primitives who, under the more politically correct guise of 'indigenous peoples', these self-same Greens are usually so ready to hold up as paragons of eco-virtue (pp55-58). The highly successful campaign against the fur trade had the additional consequence of devastating the Inuit communities who relied so heavily on fur for their livelihood. As was pointed out when all of this was at its height in the late 1980s, it had only been a short time previously when these same Inuit were being held up as people living simple lives in spiritual contact with nature. It was subsequently a shock for the Greens to be attacked by such people who derided them both for their arrogance and their ignorance of genuine Inuit culture.

As Alston Chase is quoted: "hunter-gatherers ... were attractive to white people only so long as they were no longer hunting or gathering" (p58). As Mr Whelan claims throughout his book, there has been a very strong tendency by Western Greens to project onto actually existing primitives their

own fantasies. In the end, he says, this leads to a situation where, using here the most memorable and amusing passage from the book, "... these Westernised Indians ... bore as much resemblance to the real American Indians as the 'Indian Chief' in Village People, who used to prance around in a feathered headdress singing the praises of the Young Men's Christian Association" (p46).

There is one theme in Mr Whelan's book that is from the Green perspective the most bitterly ironic, and from the free-market perspective the most delicious. Despite the long catalogue of eco-crimes that can be laid at the door of primitive peoples, they have nonetheless on occasion shown themselves to be, within their technological limitations, indeed conservers of the environment. However, this is not due to some mythical inherent conservationism on their part, instead it is just as soon as they take up those (by many Greens, especially those who originally come from a socialist or communist background) much-hated Western concepts of trading for profit, the need therefore to ensure long-term availability of tradable goods by careful husbanding and nurturing, and the corollary to all of this: property rights (pp37-39). The Montagne Indians only started acting in a consciously conservationist manner when they realised not only that they could make good money by selling beaver pelts to whites but that if they wanted to keep on doing this then they had to trap beavers in a manner which ensured a continuing supply of them, i.e. not just to slaughter all they could lay their hands on in the shortest possible time (p38). Under this type of economic and social system, the wasteful 'jump' method described above is very much less likely, to say the least.

To look at this issue from the opposite direction, the claims that primitives are necessarily better conservationists just because of their spiritual attachment to the flora and fauna is, firstly as noted above, not borne out by the facts, but anyway does not possess the seemingly incontestable logic that its proponents seem to think. To put it crudely, reverence for the kill does not make the animal any less dead (pp40-41), and, unaccompanied by those things which we know really do encourage careful husbandry such as the desire for future and continuing profit, cannot be taken as some necessarily beneficial means of carrying on.

Much of what Mr Whelan writes about deals at least in part with material issues. However, a profound philosophical one which he touches on, and which serves to highlight that Greenism really is a quasi-religion, is his claim that much of the Greenist manifesto is based on a rejection of the Judeo-Christian tradition whereby mankind, at least in a moral if not a physical sense, stands aside from nature (pp21-22). It might be added that whether this separateness comes from the possession of souls or is secularised into the possession of reasoning minds is irrelevant. To deny it is to put mankind on a level with the amoeba.

Whelan concludes with the simple but often ignored observation that it really is best if one looks at the world as it actually is and not as one would wish it to be (pp66-67). Regrettably given their current political impact, as noted above the Greens have been consistently guilty of doing the latter. But in this they are very far from the first and, I am sure, will not be the last. Much of the appeal of socialism was always its propagandists' skilful comparison of 'actually existing capitalism', albeit often using worse-case examples, with the fantasy-land of their socialist utopia. Nineteenth-century classical liberal writers such as Herbert Spencer predicted what the reality of socialism would be like, and that the more socialistic it was the worse it would be. So too, I fear, with Greenism.

Unless we keep faith with an enlightenment ethos of science and culture, whilst always honestly acknowledging its imperfect nature and the erroneous conclusions sometimes drawn, we shall find that a great many of our fellows have been enticed, as the American horror writer H.P. Lovecraft wrote in an only slightly different context, to "...flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age".

Excellently written, highly accessible books like Mr Whelan's can do much to highlight the factual inaccuracies and often straightforward mendacities of Greenism, and they can also emphasise its quasi-religious nature. I am much less optimistic about the willingness of its adherents or fellow-travellers, let alone a credulous general public, to abandon their ersatz faith simply because it is nonsense, and dangerous nonsense at that.

Nigel Meek

(**Nigel Meek** is a research student at the London Guildhall University)

Review Article:
The Perestroika Deception
Anatoli Golitsyn
Edward Harle Ltd, London, 1998
(ISBN 1 899798 03 X)

In a memorandum to the CIA dated March 1989 Anatoli Golitsyn wrote "...The final period of 'restructuring' in the United States and Western Europe would be accompanied, not only by the physical extermination of active anti-Communists, but also by the extermination of the political, military, financial and religious elites. Blood would be spilled and political re-education camps would be introduced...."

That might sound unbelievable, but don't bet your life on it. Mr Golitsyn's predictions about the behaviour of the Soviet Union have a 94 per cent success rate, according to Mark Riebling (Author of *Wedge: The Secret War between the FBI and the CIA*).

Mr Golitsyn was a member of the KGB, having been trained at the counter-intelligence faculty of the High Intelligence School in Moscow. He defected to the USA in 1961. He spent his there in analysing what the Soviet Union was doing, and reporting his findings to the CIA. Of course nothing was done about his reports, so he asked the CIA for permission to publish his reports, and the result is this book.

The Soviets spent from 1958 to 1961 reviewing their long term strategy. Following that they implemented their drug war on the west. (See my review of Red Cocaine published in *Free Life*, No.33, August 1999). They also decided to abandon their policy of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in favour of the "state of the whole people". They did so because their overt repression was not winning them sufficient influence in the west. Lenin's objective of destroying the free societies of the west is still their prime objective, only the methods have been changed. Instead of threatening us the Soviet Union pleads for subsidies which it uses to strengthen its economy and weaken the west.

No doubt you are wondering why I am using the present tense to describe a *régime* that collapsed in 1991. In fact it did nothing of the sort. The collapse was a piece of theatre designed to fool us into believing that socialism was dead and that the west had won the cold war. According to Mr Golitsyn, Mr Gorbachev is still the President of the Soviet Union and is executing the policies laid out by the collective leadership.

The purpose of this deception is to allow the Soviet Union to converge with the west and then take us over by destroying our free societies and enslaving us. Eventually their policy of collective security will result in one world wide Communist government.

Mr Golitsyn describes what he calls the seven keys to an understanding of the Soviet's long range strategy. They are as follows:

1. The lesson of Lenin's New Economic Policy;
2. The preparation of the political and security potential of the Soviet bloc;
3. The Creation of Controlled Political Opposition;
4. Forging of New and Old Forms for Developing Socialism with a human face;
5. The Deployment of Controlled Political Opposition in Democratic and Non-Communists Structures;
6. Fake independence of Soviet Bloc countries;
7. The Deployment of Bloc's Full Political and Security Potential in the Execution of Anti-Western Strategy

1. Although conventional economists might have seen the NEP as an admission of failure by the Soviet Union, it was intended by Lenin as a means of getting the western Capitalists to strengthen the Soviet Union's economy. Anyone who has read any revisionist history will know that it worked. Western companies fell over themselves to industrialise the Soviet Union. That lesson is now being applied to the whole of the Soviet bloc, using the money of Western taxpayers to strengthen the economies of the bloc and weaken those of the west.

2. Basically this means that the Soviet Union has spent many years becoming a military superpower and has trained 19 million dedicated communists to serve Marxism-Leninism. Some of them have studied the western media in order to manipulate what is reported and how. Political Correctness is a KGB invention. Look at the damage that has inflicted on western universities.

However Lenin's system still relies on terror. The dedication of these Marxists is not all that it might seem. Everyone of them is watched by three others, so that any failure or refusal to obey orders is quickly noticed and earns the death penalty.

3. One of the supposed benefits of the collapse of Communism was the transition of the Soviet bloc countries to democracy. Remember all those dissidents that we all cheered on for their courageous opposition to the Soviet regime? Every one was a fake, carefully nurtured by the KGB and the satellite intelligence services to prepare the west for the fake collapse of Communism. There was a precedent for this again in Lenin's time. It was the 'Trust', which supposedly was a group of anti-communists seeking the overthrow of the Soviet Union. In fact it was a KGB deception operation which the western intelligence services accepted as genuine.

4. This was another one of Lenin's ideas. It means that they will say and do anything to promote their cause. They have abandoned their hard left rhetoric; they speak in peaceful tones while they make war against us.

5. This is the corollary of key No 3. The Soviet bloc countries have apparently become 'democratic' but in fact the democrats in those countries are just Soviet stooges. Elections may be won by parties opposed to the Communists, but the latter remain in power behind the scenes.

6. Lenin gave a spurious independence to the Far East Soviet Republics as a means of combatting Japanese threats to the Soviet Union in that area. By secretly cooperating with these "Independent Republics" that threat was neutralised. The same thing is happening today with the Soviet bloc countries of Eastern Europe. They are co-ordinating all of their policies with Moscow as their contribution to the destruction of the West. The enlargement of the European Union is particularly worrying in this respect because it will mean that the communists will gain direct control over the EU. They will use every opportunity to corrupt and blackmail anyone who works in the Commission. The economic and political consequences of that will be quite horrendous.

7. Mr Golitsyn argues that "Fukuyama's End of History" theory is a mistake. The idea that there is no one left in the former Soviet Union that believes in Communism any more is totally wrong. On the contrary the party members are convinced that Capitalism is based on class conflicts that Socialism can exploit. Using the "Full Political and Security Potential" of the Soviet Union involves all sorts of contacts with the West. The Gorbachev Foundation is a good example. It is based inside the enemy's camp, and cultivates all manner of agents of influence in the West. They argue for co-operation with Russia, and for Western subsidies for it. An other example is the FBI co-operation with the Russian Federal Police (*ie* the KGB in its latest disguise) over such matters as drugs. Mr Golitsyn does not mention this but all that this co-operation achieves is to give away the FBI's operational methods and intelligence to its worst enemy.

Mr Golitsyn expresses his regrets that because of the failure of the Western intelligence services to understand the long range Soviet strategy against the West the Perestroika deception has succeeded. The greatest casualty in this farce has been individual liberty. Every Western country is now ruled by a self-serving clique who claim ever more power over the life of every individual, which is precisely what the Soviets want. They want to corrupt the West to give up liberty without a struggle. The Soviets see themselves as "...the vanguard which will bring about the higher form of society free of capitalism, which they purport to see as the cause of wars and human exploitation."

Perestroika is the last phase of the Soviet Union's planned destruction of the West. If you want to know what is happening to the West and why it is losing every battle in the war against collectivism, this book is mandatory reading.

David Ellams

(David Ellams has supported the Libertarian Alliance for many years)

Review Article:
Heartland: The Conservative Party Magazine
Published by the Conservative Party,
Smith Square, London, SW1, October 1999
(No ISBN)

Despite not having paid a subscription this year, and despite having recommended and voted for another party at the European elections last June, and despite having drawn these and other facts repeatedly to the attention of Central Office, I find myself still counted as a member of the Conservative Party. This may be an effect of bureaucratic incompetence, or it may proceed from a desire not to cross names off the membership register of without better reasons than I have managed so far to provide - namely a court order or at least an obituary in *The Daily Telegraph*. But whatever the reason, I have been sent a copy of the first issue of this magazine.

Leaving aside its glossy, three colour appearance, *Heartland* is sad stuff - and is sad stuff even compared with *Conservative Newslines* and other previous efforts at a Party magazine. Its main item

is a fawning interview with William Hague, written by James Bartholomew, about whom I have no biographical details are given, but against whose name I have placed a question mark on my Candidlist - that is, my Internet list of Conservative candidates and where they stand on Europe.

Even with complete control over the questions asked, and control over the reporting of the answers, Mr Hague manages to make a fool of himself. He agrees, for example, that the slogan "In Europe but not run by Europe" is "the most successful the Party has used for years". He adds: "And we did not have to get it from advertising agency. We just said what we meant. It was my slogan."

It is, of course, a fatuous slogan, intended to deceive the unwary into thinking that Tory policy on Europe is firmer than it had really is. And it implies an insult to the intelligence of the public, with Mr Hague's belief that constant repetition of six words can take the place of rational argument. In its expression of a readily coherent doctrine, it is the political equivalent of the Athanasian creed.

Again, he accuses the Government and of being "weak" in its fight against crime. In the obvious sense, this is true. The Government will not restore the death penalty for murder, will not restore corporal punishment for a juvenile offences against life and property, and will not allow individuals the means to defend themselves against crime. But Mr Hague is not being obvious here. He does not believe in these simple but effective answer to crime. Instead, he wants the Government to go even further than it does in fighting the War on Drugs, which is a war on freedom of choice that can be fought only with the weapons of a police state. He wants more at bugging and burgling of homes by police fiat, faster moves towards civil asset forfeiture on the American model, and more effort to establish a national identity card scheme. He calls this conservatism. I will say that William Pitt, in the worst days of the war against Revolutionary France, where our foreign allies were all overrun, and our credit was exhausted, and there were genuine fears of a Jacobin fifth column in Ireland, Scotland and even England, would have rejected such measures with scornful contempt.

All else in the magazine is equally worthless. Looking through these 18 pages of insipid prose, I was reduced in the end to a underlining the grammatical errors, of which I found an astonishing number. Perhaps the worst was a misused apostrophe on the back page - "An affectionate look at the House of Lords in the words of *it's* own members". How these people can dare speak about education standards is beyond me.

I have thrown the magazine away, but cannot so easily forget how shockingly bad it is. And the badness of it hurts. For all my rejection of the leadership and its official policies, my political home remains in the Conservative Party. It is corrupted. It has betrayed the ideals and interests of its members. But I draw no pleasure from contemplating its presently ruinous state. I really do wish that *Heartland* had been a better magazine, and that it were part of a Conservative revival that would sweep out of power not merely the persons of New Labour, but also the whole mass of intellectual tendencies that it embodies. But we are stuck with *Heartland* as it is - the official voice of a Party led by a man who, for all the impression he finds it convenient to give in his speeches to the Party Conference, would sit very comfortably as a junior member of the Blair Cabinet.

Sean Gabb

Review Article:
The Next Leaders?
Madsen Pirie and Robert Worcester
The Adam Smith Institute, 23 Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BL, 1999, 46pp, £10 (pbk)
(ISBN 1 902737 01 1)

The Adam Smith Institute has followed up its MORI poll of the 16-21 year-olds (*The Millennial Generation*, November 1998) with a new MORI survey of student life and attitudes. The new poll, conducted among nearly 1,000 students in 10 universities, shows them serious about career choices, but quite ready to enjoy the lifestyle that goes with a university education. Success, they think, will depend on their own qualities, and not on external factors. They would like to see universities gain greater independence from government, and by an overwhelming margin, they think a university education is a superb investment.

They are a tolerant crowd, neither racist nor homophobic, and also tolerant of regular drug users. They do not, however, tolerate intolerance, and most of them do not count religious zealots, racists, or members of extremist groups among their friends.

They spend freely on drink, entertainment, clothes and personal convenience goods, but rather less on books. Booze beats books by four to one. More than half admit to using illegal drugs within the last year, though this varies between universities. Nearly a third report they have sex once a week, although a fifth of them have not had it at all in the last 12 months.

The new poll shows considerable differences between universities. 61 per cent of all students state they have never used illegal drugs. This is highest at South Bank (77 per cent), Cambridge (75 per cent) and Warwick (73 per cent). It is lowest at Manchester, with 31 per cent.

Manchester has the highest proportion who use them every day (4 per cent), and once a week (16 per cent). It is highest (with UCL) among those who use them once a month or less (23 per cent). Thus Manchester tops every bracket of illegal drug use, and has the lowest number saying 'never.'

Nearly a third of students (31 per cent) reported having sex "at least once a week." This was 40 per cent at Manchester, which also tops the table of those who do it "every day" (at 9 per cent, or one in every eleven Manchester students). Cambridge also scored 9 per cent for "every day." Manchester also topped the table (at 33 per cent) for those who do it sometimes - once a month or less," but had the lowest score saying they had not done it within the last year (9 per cent compared with a student average of 20 per cent).

Although Manchester also scored top in spending on drink, Cambridge students probably drink more. Manchester students spend £25.39 per week on drink, compared with a national average of £20.32, and 80 per cent of Manchester students spend over £10 a week on drink. Cambridge seems lower at £18.02 per week, but the difference is that Manchester students mostly drink off campus, whereas Cambridge students usually (and uniquely) drink in college at subsidized prices (typically half the price outside). Thus Cambridge students almost certainly drink more than anyone else.

The average student spends £20.32 per week on drink, £17.90 on entertainment, £11.66 on clothes, £7.43 on personal convenience goods (including CDS, mobile phones, walkmans), and £5.65 on books (all books). Thus the average student spends 4 times more on drink, 3 times more on entertainment, and twice as much on clothes as they do on books.

Cambridge students spend least on entertainment (£3.30 per week: like drink, they get it in college) and on personal convenience goods (£4.68 per week). Students at the University of Central England spend most on books (£7.56 per week), and most on clothes (£19.47), but 18 per cent of them report spending nothing at all on entertainment.

Asked what influences their career choice, 59 per cent say working with sociable and friendly colleagues. 48 per cent say a high salary. 34 per cent list opportunities for foreign travel. At Central England foreign travel interests only 14 per cent, and at Cambridge fully 35 per cent want work

which does not interfere with their social life (!) The top ingredient for success is determination and ambition, say 77 per cent of all students. It is also educational qualifications, say 74 per cent.

Only 19 per cent think it is social background (lowest of all in Cambridge at 10 per cent). A mere 7 per cent think European integration will help them; and even fewer (5 per cent) think that help and support from the government will do anything; only 4 per cent think that increased globalization of the economy will matter.

By nearly three to one they think that universities would do better running themselves than bureaucrats and politicians do. Similarly, three-fifths think universities should have more control of their own finances. By 86 per cent to 6 per cent they rate a university education as one of the best investments they could make.

86 per cent have friends from black or ethnic minorities. 57 per cent have friends who are gay or lesbian (this is 84 per cent in Cambridge). Over half, 52 per cent, have friends who are regular drug users (for Manchester and UCL this is 71 per cent). But, only 18 per cent have friends who are religious fundamentalists or racists, and only 10 per cent have friends who belong to extremist parties.

Iti Saflaia

(**Iti Saflaia** is the President of Africans for a Free Market Economy)

Final Jottings Brian Micklethwait

In this debate, see also articles in *Free Life* nos 33, 34 and 37.

One

I have yet to sit down and do a real reply to Our Editor's attack on me carried in this issue, and sketched in Our Editor's *Free Life* 33 Jottings) contrasting his and my tactical inclinations. My main reaction so far is that Our Editor has described the differences between him and me pretty accurately. The test for this, I suppose, is that a *Free Life* reader who shares my attitude and opposes Our Editor's, would probably, if he read Our Editor's descriptions of our two positions, recognise mine as his and Our Editor's as one he disagrees with. Our Editor had a spontaneous jottings go at me following that original argument *chez moi*, and then a real go, and I have in mind to do something similar.

One way of describing our differences is that Our Editor is concerned ultimately with how people act, and I am content merely to influence how they think. Once I have spread a bit more libertarianism, I will let the cards of human action fall where they will.

When I sit down to write one of my Libertarian Alliance pieces, I am usually trying to put across just a few libertarian notions - often just the one. I generally suggest how the central idea I'm concerned with relates to other libertarian ideas. But, I don't insist that in order to accept my central idea, one must necessarily swallow libertarianism as a whole. Indeed, I think that the content of "libertarianism as a whole" is controversial, this being one of my favourite separate libertarian notions, from which a lot of other controversial ideas follow.

Recently I've been writing, both in these jottings and in a Libertarian Alliance pamphlet (Educational Notes No. 32), about the so-called "Kumon" system of maths teaching. My central purpose has been simply to describe this system, so that libertarians will have at their disposal another example of a voluntarily organised system of teaching which seems to work well. I have also been footnoting the writings of James Tooley, which will help libertarians to find out about other such arrangements. James Tooley is now doing for late twentieth and early twenty first century non-state education what E.G. West did for the non-state education of the nineteenth century. (See also Tooley's Educational Notes No. 31, *Should The Private Sector Profit From Education? The Seven Virtues of Highly Effective Markets.*) You will also be aware that another of my favourite ideas is that, as I've written before several times, good ideas need repeating.

So. Non-state education is not only a fine and decent thing in an abstract way - it is also being done around the world by millions of non-rich folks in South London and South Africa, India and Brazil. This idea sallies forth into the world, passing from head to head, and I join in. Some of the heads now containing this idea agree with it enthusiastically, and they help with the early spreading of it. Other heads find the notion abhorrent. They insist on the necessity for state education - even state monopoly education - and find all this branded freelance corner-shop and Tesco-type education repulsive, but part of the idea being spread is that millions of other folks are not nearly as repulsed as they are, so these antis find the notion hard to ignore. Other heads receive the idea, but aren't sure what to think about it. They've paid their taxes and resent paying again for their children to be educated, and regard state education as an inevitable part of the scenery. But if a few more quid a month might help their little Harry or Max or Eloise to get ahead, why not give it a go?

These last ones particularly interest me. These are the ones who absolutely must not be denounced as the tools of tyranny, merely because they aren't sure about state education, favour increased funding for the National Health Service, and oppose the right to buy rocket launchers in their local High Street hardware store and the legalisation of heroin. I am happy to tell them, if they ask, that I have contrary opinions to theirs on these other matters, but that's different from lumping them into the enemy army and opening rhetorical fire on them. "And I suppose you also think ...!" I try to make no such suppositions.

Two

To switch back to abstract generalisation, I try, not to bind libertarian ideas together into larger packages ("And I suppose you also think...!"), but to separate ideas out from one another and discuss each of them separately. That way, each separate libertarian idea can roam free, and gather many more supporters than it would have if sold only as part of a package deal. This is especially important when some of the ideas routinely bound together into a libertarian bundle are just plain wrong. Consider that awful perpetration of one of Margaret Thatcher's speechwriters: "There is No Such Thing as Society." Yes there is. True, "society" is not a single entity like a small dog or an Anglican Archbishop, with a single separate consciousness and single separate demands and the means of expressing these demands to other individual members of society. "We should not be too judgemental", "I want to go walkies!", etc. But that doesn't mean that "society" doesn't exist. A vegetable doesn't have much in the way of a single separate consciousness, and any sense we might have of what it is saying about how it feels is probably anthropomorphic nonsense. Trombones don't have single separate thoughts, and can express nothing unless a trombonist is present. Depressions coming in from the Atlantic don't have deep thoughts, or have much to say for themselves. But they still exist. Society is like that. It is not a single separate thing like a statue. It has no thoughts peculiar to itself, for it expresses itself only through the voices of its members. Yet there it is, pushing us this way and that way.

Notice how people who deny the existence of something routinely confuse defining it with proving its non existence. "But 'society' is only the sum total of its individual members, who together ..." etc. Yes, exactly so. That is indeed what "society" is. Got it in one. And because that definition is so unwieldy to trot out every time we think of these things, we say "society". The TV comedian Harry Enfield does a character similar to this kind of libertarian, who confuses a reductionist definition of something with a proof that it is uninteresting: "All that is is a bunch of blokes kicking a blown-up sphere of leather around on a large grass field, seeking to place the sphere of leather into one or other of two rectangles facing one another at each end of the field. I don't think much of that."

Madame Thatcher's disastrous pronouncement about the non-existence of society has been siezed upon ever since by anti-libertarians to illustrate their claim that we libertarians are all uncaring fools, indifferent to the wider social implications of the extreme individualist polices that we all favour. All rights. No responsibilities. Hurrah for individualism. Damn the social consequences.

Personally I love being told that I think society doesn't exist, because it gives me a chance to denounce this notion as the poppycock that it is. Most certainly society exists, I reply. And the best way of getting a better society is to have more individual liberty.

The best way for people to learn to be decent and thrifty is for them to experience the horrible long and even quite short-term consequences to themselves of being vicious and wasteful, by those around them having the right to act upon their adverse judgements of such bad and stupid people. In a world where some nasty and stupid people buy huge stereo kits they can't afford and play them deafeningly at three in the morning, the rest of us should have the right to enforce our contracts with them by repossessing their toys and putting them on credit blacklists and by expelling them from our housing estates. The rest of us would, in short, have the right to discriminate against them. Barbarians would either learn to behave better, or else live miserable lives. Onlookers would observe all this, perhaps through their net curtains. Children would have these lessons drummed into them by parents and teachers who would now be able to point at some actual facts about the constraisting consequences to oneself of goodness and badness which support the case for being good. And society - a word I now refuse any longer to castrate with inverted commas - would improve.

As it is, egged on a tiny few "society does not exist" libertarians, we libertarians have allowed libertarianism to be presented by anti-libertarians as the rationalisation of the very barbarities which earlier anti-libertarian arrangements did so much to encourage and which more libertarianism would actually do so much to discourage. Society does exist. And we know better than anti-libertarians how to do it well, just as we know how to make better washing machines.

Three

Last week I attended a small dinner party. Present were our host, who is a building contractor and property owner, a Shadow Ministerial Policy Adviser, a young lady from New Zealand who does personal fitness coaching, and me. The evening was, on the whole, most enjoyable. The Policy Adviser has recently become more bulbous than he likes. I'm becoming a "fat thin man", he said, and happily signed up for some Personal Fitness Coaching. (I am also becoming a fat thin man, but I don't care about my shape enough to want to do anything New Zealandish about it.) The Political Adviser also signified his strong agreement with the freedom-makes-society better theory, and quoted his political master, the Shadow Deputy Grand Panjandrum, saying similar things in what sounded like a sensible and interesting manner.

Sadly, he also gave me a lambasting to pass on to Our Editor, Our Editor having some months back sent a nasty letter to the Political Adviser's political master, the Shadow Deputy Grand Panjandrum. Why does our Editor behave so abusively? He should stick to "philosophy" and leave political tactics to those who know something about them. I promised to pass it on, but otherwise confined myself to muttering that I and Our Editor didn't see entirely eye to eye on libertarian tactics either. I began to sketch out this disagreement in a bit of detail, saying that ideas mattered to me more than taking sides in huge political confrontations. I was, for example, just as glad to see a socialist become a bit less of a socialist (by accepting one libertarian notion but continuing to reject most others), as I was to see a libertarian become even more of a libertarian. The point, for me, is to spread these ideas around.

I had in mind something like the idea that lower percentage tax rates won't necessarily mean less governmental income for the government to slosh around, but before I could say anything along these lines, the Political Adviser astounded me by saying with great vehemence that I was utterly wrong. If anything, the present Blairite *régime* ought to become more socialist, so that its now concealed socialism would become more obvious, and so that the country would be forced to rescue itself from the gradual but inevitable decline that the cunningly diluted socialism of the present government now condemns it to. What we need is for the present government to screw up. And what we don't need is for libertarians to attack the Conservative Party, which is now the best hope - he may even have said only hope - that libertarianism in Britain has.

I was so appalled by all this that I could think of nothing else to say except that I preferred a nicer government to a nastier one. Not that this mattered, because the Political Adviser's portable phone then exploded with late night and early next morning demands and he had to leave.

This Political Adviser and Our Editor have their differences, but they have in common that they both divide the world into the Good Guys and the Bad Guys. What made them fly at each other's throats was that Our Editor puts the Political Adviser in the Bad Guys camp, and that the Political Adviser will soon, if he hasn't already done so, be reciprocating in kind, and denouncing our Editor as Objectively Pro-Labour. For the Political Adviser it's Good Conservatives against Bad Labour. For Our Editor it's New World Order against all those who can see through the New World Order's schemes and are willing to denounce them. The Conservatives, who fail to denounce the New World Orderliness of Labour in all the ways he wants them to, are, in the eyes of Our Editor, objectively pro New World Order, and must accordingly be sent denunciatory letters and e-mails. These do achieve the desired purpose, by the way, if that purpose is to get under the skins of those on the receiving end of them. The Political Adviser was most upset.

Four

I used to be a Good Guys Versus Bad Guys guy myself, during the Cold War. I saw a world historical melodrama that meant at least as much to me then as the spreading of libertarianism. Better yet, it was a melodrama that might soon have winners and losers. I never thought that the USSR was about to conquer the world. On the contrary, I have writings from those days to prove that I thought that the USSR might soon collapse and thereby end the Cold War. The USSR did not threaten the world in any straightforward way. But it did divide the world, which was a threat to the world of another sort. I wrote savage Good Guy versus Bad Guy denunciations of, e.g., anti-anti-Communists, which apparently cheered up some of the real Cold Warriors quite considerably, as John Major would say.

Our Editor thought that the Cold War was a non-event, a mere excuse for New World Order nastiness by our side. To some extent this was surely true. Perhaps the Cold War was based on an

imaginary Soviet offensive threat to the West. Maybe the West was propping up the old USSR rather than seeking its collapse. All the more reason to end the Cold War, to deny to the New World Order the excuse of the Cold War when it wanted to do nasty things.

But the Cold War was an extremely odd conflict. It had the strange property that the defining characteristic of one of the contending parties, Communism, was capable of being completely removed from the chess board of history. Much more common in such conflicts is that nothing dramatic can be done to settle the matter. It would be folly, for example, to suppose that Islamic beliefs could ever be eliminated from serious world politics. Islam is here to stay. But Soviet Communism had the bizarre property of both threatening the world in a huge way while it persisted, but of being completely smashable.

The conflict between the New World Order and its enemies is not going to go away through some magic trick similar to the collapse of Soviet Communism. The New World Order has too much momentum behind it, and is supported by too many sincerely held, honourably held, and widely dispersed beliefs for that to happen, to say nothing of trends in modern communications technology that would be even harder to reverse.

I agree with Our Editor that there are huge dangers in the drift towards a World Government that is now happening, and which so many millions now support so enthusiastically. But even if you really do believe that this is basically a Good Guys Versus Bad Guys story, little is achieved by accusing the "Bad Guys" of being that and only that. Many of these "Bad Guys", and millions of their supporters, think as they do because they prefer peace to war, and comfort to destitution for poor people in all those poor countries now riven or threatened by civil war, and because they simply don't agree that a World Government is any sort of threat, any more than they think of their national government as a threat. I think that the problem with a World Government that learns how to prevent civil wars is that it will also prevent other things that ought to be left alone, like small businesses which are rather casual about child labour laws or safety regulations, or the making of chemicals which are not nearly as dangerous as various clutches of World Governors claim and are actually very useful. A World Government may eventually prey upon the world in much the same way that the nastier national governments prey upon their nations now. And of course, with a single World Government, there'll be no contemporary comparisons to be made (like the comparison between the USSR and the West during the Cold War, or between Euroland and America now) and nowhere to run if you want to escape it.

So let's say all this. We shouldn't accuse people who want wars stopped simply of being Bad Guys. They aren't, and they'll just cast you in their melodrama as one of their Bad Guys, using the extreme implausibility of your nastier accusations as further evidence of their rightness and of your absurdity.

Five

Two final thoughts occur to me. First, even when shouting at the top of my voice from the touchline during the Cold War, I still concerned myself with ideas, and with the unbundling of them. It was, for example, vital to distinguish between despising Communists and Communism and making life hell for Russians. Russians were, on the contrary, among the leading victims of Soviet Communism. Understanding that distinction was crucial to the winning of the Cold War.

And second, I am now unbundling the various ideas that swirl around the New World Order, and the argument about how to resist its rise to supremacy, in response to the more personalised and, I think, implausible denunciations launched against various New World Orderers by Our Editor.

People such as Our Editor who inhabit melodramas have a sense of urgency. There is a good fight to fight. There are dragons who must be slain if act five is to turn out right. Our Editor launches his writings on the Internet on a daily basis. Much of his product is unpersuasive and over-the-top abuse of people who aren't that ghastly, but he sure does churn the stuff out. I, on the other hand, am not so inclined to see a crisis in the present state of the world, so I write less. I have trouble persuading myself that what I say makes much difference to anything that I really care about. I have only stirred myself to write this in response to Our Editor's tauntings. Which illustrates that melodrama is not the automatic enemy of scrupulous and persuasive analysis. Emotion is not only necessary in order to emote, the brain scientists now tell us; without emotion you can't even think straight. You certainly don't write anything without some emotional fuel, or get anything done. By spreading heat as well as light, the melodramatists often stir their quieter comrades into self-justificatory eloquence.

Well, those are my first jottings in reply to Our Editor's criticisms. They need pulling together into something more coherent, an editorial complaint I often aim at the writings of others. But I hope some sort of preliminary pattern can be detected in them nevertheless.