

LET'S START WORLD WAR THREE:

IDEAS ARE OUR BOMBS AND WORDS ARE OUR BULLETS

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This article was originally suggested by (and the author would like to express his gratitude to) Tim Sturm, for publication in the New Zealand libertarian magazine *The Free Radical*, for which Sturm has also written. (See Sturm's *Libertarianism, Kiwi Style: What Can Britain Learn From New Zealand?*, Political Notes No. 165, and *TFR*.) *TFR* editor Lindsay Perigo (author of *Antipoden Altruism: The Limitations of and Political Failure of New Zealand's "Reforms"*, Political Notes No. 167, and *TFR*) accepted the piece for publication with enthusiasm. Indeed, so pleased was Lindsay that on January 15th 2001, he quoted the last three paragraphs of it on his Radio Pacific "Politically Incorrect Show", the show that, to quote from earlier on in the same broadcast: "... says bugger the politicians and bureaucrats and all the other bossyboots busybodies who try to run our lives with our money; that stands for free enterprise, achievement, profit and excellence, against the state-worshippers in our midst; that stands above all for the most sacred thing in the universe, the liberty of the human individual."

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FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

BRITAIN CIRCA 2000

Despite being considered a low-tax regime, the government still takes a little over 40% of the national wealth and squanders much of it. The labyrinth of tax provisions has grown to such eye-popping complexity that even professional advisers are having a hard time coping and each year that passes the regulatory burden on individuals and business grows, it seems, exponentially.

In the midst of all this the government (and the plethora of busy-body organisations that swarm around it like flies around a cow-pat) wages relentless cultural and economic jihad against smokers, drinkers, motorists, hunters and, a few weeks ago, some government talking head on the BBC exhorted the nation to take a stand against what she called "rampant heterosexuality" (and just what constitutes "rampant heterosexuality" by the way?).

Owning any sort of firearm in this country is fast becoming nigh-on impossible and the national Olympic shooting squad has to go to Switzerland to train because handguns cannot even be permitted on this country's soil. Among the things that could land you in jail are tackling a burglar in your home, any attempt to prevent some street urchin from hot-wiring your car and making an ill-judged remark to a member of an ethnic minority. School teachers dare not rub sun-cream on their little charges in the summer for fear of being accused of 'inappropriate contact' or worse.

The government is pressing ahead with plans to allow the police to seize assets from suspected 'criminals' without having to go to the inconvenience of prosecuting said 'criminals' beforehand and, from now on, if a person is accused of drug-dealing or racism they will no longer have the benefit of the presumption of innocence and it will be incumbent on the accused to prove that they are not guilty.

Internet Service Providers in this country have been forced to accept, and pay for, Security Service 'black boxes' which will be used to monitor all internet traffic and anyone using encryption can be forced to hand over the key or face prosecution. The Security Services, together with the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise, are pressing the government for permission to monitor every telephone call made in the country and every e-mail sent.

The traditional and long-standing tax havens surrounding this country are being bullied and bludgeoned into abandoning their secrecy laws, children are encouraged to report their parents to the authorities if they make racist or homophobic remarks in their home and State Hospitals are euthanasing anyone over the age of 55 because they simply don't have the will or the resources to treat them.

Pharmacists in this country are forbidden from selling any individual more than 16 paracetamol in case they do 'something silly', having a baby will prompt a visit from a Social Worker to assure, on behalf of the state, that you are looking after it properly and the country's ports and airports increasingly look and feel like military bases as a result of attempts to stem the flow of illegal immigrants and cheap tobacco.

The government's very favourite word is 'crackdown' and the only thing still considered scandalous is 'lack of regulation'.

Is this the Austro-Hungarian Empire at its height? Is this Czechoslovakia before the Prague Spring? Is this Poland before Glasnost? No, I'm afraid it's Britain circa 2000.

What, you may well ask, is the response of the British people to all this? Are they howling in protest at being nannied into oblivion? Are they taking to the streets in rebellion against unlimited state incursions into their lives? Are they calling for individuality and freedom of choice to be respected?

Are they heck? And that, gentle reader, is where our problem lies.

GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME GOD

For the life has drained out of Britain. This once-dynamic little powerhouse of a country that spawned the Industrial Revolution and an Empire that covered more than half the globe can now barely muster the enthusiasm to mention these things in polite conversation unless they are couched in terms of grovelling guilt. The rugged individualism and adventurous spirit of the Anglo-Saxons is dead and what has replaced it is a truly obnoxious combination of risk-aversion, health neurosis, self-loathing and mawkish sentimentality. The famous stiff upper lip has transmuted into a permanently trembling bottom one.

This decline of spirit is more than just political and social for you can forget everything you have heard about Brit-pop, Brit-Art and Brit-Lit. It's all execrable, empty, vacuous and plebian. We are living in a cultural stony-desert. As I type these words, one of London's most popular shows consists of two naked Australians contorting their genitals into funny shapes. I have no desire to prohibit or restrict such activities but I do feel that it is deeply symptomatic of a culture of low expectations that this is considered to be entertainment.

This is a land where rank silliness has become serious discourse, where feeling has replaced thinking and thinking has become unfashionable, subversive even.

The words 'individuality' and 'freedom' are not merely dirty words, they are profanities. Individuality is a euphemism for naked greed. Freedom means paedophiles, drug-dealers and terrorists doing as they please and drunken, speeding motorists mowing down rosy-cheeked children like ninepins. Liberty for all is widely taken to mean the liberty for old folk to die of hypothermia in lonely hovels and liberty for single mothers to traipse the rain-sodden streets cradling their starving charges, begging for the kindness of strangers. 'Privacy' means having something to hide.

In short, freedom is dangerous and the good folk of this Sceptred Isle want none of it, thank you very much. No, they want someone to hold their pudgy little hands, mop their fevered brows, tuck them up between crisp, cool linen sheets and sing them a lullaby of love; soothe them with eternal declarations of care and concern. Not so much Big Brother as Big Mother. Civil liberties are merely the bugbear of a handful of twisted cranks and holocaust-deniers. No, the *real* issues are how much the government can hand out and what they could and should ban. For the average British voter is frightened; fearful of the world around him and fearful and mistrusting of his fellow citizens. For him, government is the Great Protector, the Great Teacher, the Great Saviour. In short, government has become God.

What we are witnessing is the gradual rolling back of the Enlightenment; the diminution of every self-confident instinct that gave birth to Western civilisation. Unless we can arrest this trend, we risk being frozen in amber or, worse still, regressing to some medieval state of huddled peasantry, trembling at the clap of thunder.

THE LONG MARCH OF THE LEFT

What then must we do, us Libertarians? In Britain, too many regard Tony Blair and the Labour Party as the root of all evil. If only we can rid ourselves of him, they say, we can usher in a new dawn. But that is tackling the symptom and not the disease itself. If Mr Blair fell under a bus tomorrow nothing, but nothing whatsoever, would change.

The real disease is the default socialism of so many of our fellow citizens who cannot conceive of any alternative way to have a civilised society. Is it any wonder that they so readily absorb the dishonest and misanthropic bleatings of the eco-lefties and health fascists when those same arch-trolls have been permitted to occupy the intellectual high-ground unmolested?

This hegemony of bad ideas is largely due to the absence of the good ideas required to push them out and this is where true Conservatives and Libertarians have failed so lamentably in recent decades.

The smug complacency of the Right following the fall of the Soviet Union is already well discussed and generally recognised as being a mistake but I would submit that the problems have a longer provenance than that. The real failure, in Britain at least, dates back to the 1930's when the Leftists began their 'Long March'. In the seventy years since we have witnessed them gradually working their way into every institution from the media to academia to the legal system to the point where they now dominate all of them.

During this same period the Right has gradually retreated, restrained it seems by a lack of belief in their own cause and a complete absence of the kind of street-fighting instincts that are part and parcel of the socialist pathology. As evidence of this, I recently met with a senior Conservative politician who conceded that the party pulls its punches when it comes to the truth about the European Union for fear of "offending the BBC" (a leftist hotbed since about 1935). The naturally evolved civility and decency of the true English Liberal tradition has been ruthlessly used against it.

OFFEND. OFFEND, AND OFFEND AGAIN

This cannot go on. We can no longer retreat and give way to the environmentalists, marxists and femiNazis simply because it makes life easier to do so. Unless we fight back we will soon find that life, far from being easy, is not actually worth living. It is not enough merely to be right. Being right does not necessarily mean that we will prevail.

Any historian of World War Two might tell you that Capitalist, Free Market America would eventually overwhelm Statist, Corporatist Nazi Germany. But the troops on the ground will tell you that the victory would not have happened without bloody hand-to-hand combat over every beachhead, every bunker, every street and every hill.

That's where we are now; huddled in landing craft, sodden and cold and tossed upon the grey, choppy seas of political obscurity, waiting for the first flare of battle. Well, the whistle has sounded, the sky has lit up and it's time to steel our nerves and run up onto the sands to fight the enemy. It's time for World War Three.

Ideas are our bombs and words are our bullets. Use them liberally. Challenge every flatulent, lock-step left/green assumption you encounter; slaughter every sacred cow, leave no sensibility uninjured, prick every bubble and deflate every ego. Let the snide slurs and hoots of derision whistle around your head for we are electric and frightening and terrible. We eat lightning and we crap thunder. We are uranium tipped and armour-plated and they can only harm us if we let them.

Lose friends if necessary and make enemies if you have to. After all, it's war and there are bound to be casualties so offend, offend, and offend again. Leave them drop-jawed and pop-eyed at your audacity. Take no prisoners and give no quarter. Let's make them cry and whine and squirm and run and when we finally hoist our flag over their citadel we will be truly amazed at how puny and insubstantial they were all along.

WHAT YOU DID IN THE WAR

D-Day looms. We must prepare to enter the fray, else it is not just liberty that may be lost but the essence of what makes us human. Fail and a Millennium of Darkness beckons. Succeed and you will live to tell your grandchildren about what you did in the war.