

Talk to Bath Branch, The Freedom Association.

“The Denial of Liberty and the Decay of Public Life”

If I were asked to supply an appropriate motto for Britain today, I would suggest Freedom of Speech. Of course, we do have complete freedom of speech – only you are not allowed to say anything. We have the worst combination imaginable in the form of our government: a nanny state in which nanny has an iron fist. There is no area of life left in peace by the interfering diktats of public policy: what we shall eat – which I believe is five portions of Virginia Bottomley a day. How many units we shall drink. What is this absurd notion of units? Do I go into the pub and ask for two units of best bitter and three units of crème de menthe for my genteel friend?

What this state interference in our private lives produces is the demoralisation of society. A man is said to be “suffering from problems with alcohol” and a woman is “suffering from obesity.” In a moral universe they would be described as drunk and fat. How far is this medicalisation of conduct to be taken? How long before a career burglar is excused on the grounds he is suffering from kleptomania? Unfortunately, this is not as far-fetched as it sounds. In fact it is happening already, commonplace.

For example, a few years ago an eighteen-year-old man murdered his parents for their credit cards and took off to New York with his girlfriend. When he was arrested and charged, he escaped a jail sentence because, and I am not making this up, the psychiatric report said he was “suffering from narcissistic personality disorder.” What I’d like to know is the difference between suffering from narcissistic personality disorder and being a murderous little prat.

This freedom for which we are alleged to be fighting – in other people’s countries – what does it amount to? The government is pledged, in a time of economic depression, to spend billions on identity cards. In other words we shall be obliged to prove who we are in our own country, where already our births are registered and we pay our taxes. I will not carry an identity card. Even if it means they come and lock me up. If freedom starts anywhere, it starts with the freedom to go about one’s private business in the public realm without being required to prove you identity. Your identity is your British citizenship which is your birthright. But they have sold our birthright and for much less than a mess of potage.

There are new government proposals to read all our emails and listen to our phone conversations. All I can say is that, given the puerile jabber people talk into their mobile phones, the authorities listening in will hopefully die of boredom. “I’m on the train.” Incidentally, what do EU bureaucrats say on their mobile phones? Perhaps it’s “I’m on the gravy train.”

We have one of the longest periods of detention without trial in the western world. This is said – along with identity cards and all the other restrictions on our natural freedoms – to be in order to protect us from terrorist attacks. How very considerate of the government to provide such protection for us. So why then do they free named Islamic militants and pay them compensation for the period we detained them for questioning?

If you want to know the time, ask a policeman – so long as you don't photograph him while he's looking at his watch. Make sure you put your rubbish in the correctly coloured recycling sack. How long before global warming denial becomes a criminal offence? Last week an academic environmentalist described the trains taking coal to power stations as "death trains" – with the clear intention of inviting the comparison between coal wagons and the trains that took millions to the death camps.

We have the worst of all worlds. We have a government which ignores or treats lightly the really serious crimes but which comes down heavily on law-abiding subjects who happen to infringe any one of the new crackpot laws or regulations. Ordinary common sense counts for nothing while the opinions of the fashionably-obsessed activists are licensed and approved: environmentalists preaching the pagan fantasy of global warming, apparatchiks in the race relations industry and in the "equality" and "rights" rackets. There you have it again: the nanny state in her velvet glove and inside it the iron fist.

Under a new Bill in Parliament, involving the coroners, it is proposed to allow our private medical records to be sold off to insurance agencies or almost any organisation prepared to pay for them.

We have a race-relations authority which, by its policies, is doing its level best to promote racial discord. It does this by basing its philosophy on that singular piece of idiocy, The Macpherson Report. Let me remind you of the actual text. The Report defines a racist incident as "Any incident reported by the victim, or any other person." (Oh, and there's never a shortage of "victims" is there?) Such a catch-all definition is totalitarian. It means we can all be judged guilty whatever we do. If I invite you for a cup of tea, you can, under Macpherson, if you are perverse enough, sue me for racism. And, believe me, there are many people who *are* perverse enough. It was Macpherson who invented that other piece of scandalous rubbish "institutional racism." It is rubbish because racism implies intention, and intention is a function of the individual will – not of a whole institution such as the Church of England or the Metropolitan Police. There is no more institutional racism than there is institutional incontinence.

But we need to ask ourselves concerning the cause and purpose of the new totalitarianism. Why is it being promoted? For what purpose? It is being orchestrated by a so-called liberal elite which despises all traditional values and wants to obliterate our historic way of life in this

country. This elite, this coterie of the dubious, the envious and the sly, wants to get rid of all the natural distinctions in society. So for instance if you work hard and earn a bit of money, you are condemned as “privileged” and taxed till the pips squeak. If, on the other hand, you are a member of the vast, idle, predatory and hugely subsidised underclass slumped in front of Big Brother with a gallon of strong cider, you will be officially patronised and indulged and your state subsidy will be increased – everlastingly. Blair and Brown have created the underclass – and the extra one million of public servants to cater for them – in order to provide the Labour party with voting fodder. They have, like Lenin before them, established themselves a client state.

This new elite despise excellence wherever it appears. The icon of contemporary womanhood is not the classical scholar and English Rose, Gail Trimble, but the celeb-trash “reality TV” star Jade Goody. Reality TV? You see how the new Establishment defines “reality”: morons behaving like pigs for the entertainment of the underclass. Have you noticed how the BBC and the so-called serious newspapers – do you remember when The Daily Telegraph used to be a newspaper? – how they have redefined “music” to mean “pop music.” Any raucous producer of the most nerve-jangling din is now described as “a musician” and what we used to regard as real music is consigned to the margins.

English history is not taught in schools except for the purposes of inculcating guilt in the children. Not only do we have to apologise for the slave trade – which of course was actually abolished by Christian English statesmen and policed by the Royal Navy, while the Muslims continued to operate the trade – we are also required to say sorry for the Crusades. Apologise for the Crusades? You might as well require the Italian ice cream sellers to apologise for the fall of the Roman Empire.

I have been thinking about the causes of our decline since it really gathered pace in the 1960s. Until fairly recently I used to think it was part of a general secularising trend, but now I think it isn't that. Because a secularising elite would be opposed to religion generally and most extremely opposed to those religions which are themselves the most extreme. But that is not what we find. Instead, we see every provision allowed for the practise of Islam. But woe betide anyone who makes even the most modest criticism of the religion of the Prophet. Observe, there is even a word for such criticism – “Islamophobia.”; but there is no “Christianophobia.”

No, the secular elite targets Christianity in particular because it sees Christianity as the embodiment of those historic and traditional values which, until the contemporary reversal, made this country a place to be proud of. A few years ago there was an obscene theatrical show called “Jerry Springer: The Musical.” In this – broadcast incidentally by the BBC whose Director General claims to be a Roman Catholic – there were some 3500 blasphemies of God

and Jesus Christ and many insults directed at The Virgin Mary. Jesus wore a nappy. A case was brought and the programme was judged to be inoffensive.

Now look here: I've written a few musicals in my time. How do you think I would get on if I were to submit my latest proposal to the BBC "Mohammed: The Teenage Years" – with Shi'ite nudity and a pulsating rock score?

No, the secular elite, these uncultured despisers, attack Christianity because it is a soft target. They are too cowardly to criticise Islam. Worse, they actually use Islam as a stick to beat the Christians. They claim that the public display of Christian symbolism is "offensive" to Muslims. But I have never come across a Muslim who objects to Christmas decorations or the wearing of the Cross or the public exhibition of the Bible. The truth is different. The secular elite despises Islam every bit as it hates Christianity, but it finds it useful to invoke an allegedly outraged Islamic sensitivity in order to persecute the Christian faith.

So the praying nurse is censured. The airline worker who wears a discreet Cross is sacked. A child may not discuss God at junior school. Libraries have been instructed to place Bibles on the highest shelf – as if they were some sort of pornography likely to deprave and corrupt. We must not discriminate – except in favour of secularism. It is an offence to teach Christianity in schools as something that is true – though the 1944 Butler Education Act assumed it is true. Christianity now must be taught only as one among many religions. The only way this can be done is from the secular perspective. This is atheism by state decree.

Of course the secular Establishment has been massively helped by the very people who might have been reckoned to oppose it. The Bishops and Synods have sidelined the Book of Common Prayer and The King James Bible and introduced their mindless jogging for Jesus new liturgies. And no traditionalist has the vaguest hope of preferment to higher office. The church has supported all the so called social "reforms" involving homosexuality, abortion and the marriage laws – with the resulting breakdown of society which many predicted a generation ago.

I happen to be priest but this is not a sermon. I am not here tonight to convert you to the Christian faith. Many of you indeed need no such conversion in any case. I am here only to draw attention to the plain fact that Europe, and particularly our nation, was formed out of Christian values. The assumption nowadays is that you can remove Christianity and all the other good things will stay in place. What we are seeing very clearly is that they won't. Let me quote in support someone who is not a Christian, the secularist President of the Italian Senate, Professor Marcello Pera. He says:

"Christianity is so consubstantial with the West that any surrender on its part would have devastating consequences."

T.S. Eliot saw the way things were going more than sixty years ago when he wrote:

“An individual European may not even believe that the Christian Faith is true, but what he says and makes and does will all spring out of this history of European culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning. Only a Christian culture could have produced a Nietzsche or a Voltaire. I do not believe that the culture of Europe could survive the complete disappearance of the Christian Faith. And I am convinced of that not merely because I am a Christian myself, but as a student of social biology. If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready-made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism. We should not live to see the new culture, nor would our great-great-great grandchildren: and if we did, not one of us would be happy in it.”

The appalling truth is that our civilization has developed a culture of self-hatred, a death-wish of which the present assaults on liberty are only to be expected. As in St Augustine’s day, the repression of freedom is accompanied by the tawdriest and lewdest entertainments and public spectacles. What a falling off there has been. We inhabit the electronic, techno-digital version of the bread and circuses of Augustine’s time. As C.H. Sisson said, “The remarkable thing about Augustine is that he lived through times very like ours – and rejected them.”

Traditionalists, Christians, natural free Englishmen of good will, we are all under persecution. I do not resent this persecution. I welcome it. For it will weed out the pseudo-Christians, the wimpish bishops and the caved-in Synod. By persecution we discover who our true friends actually are. Persecution? Bring it on, I say. We will stand for what is good and right as free men knowing whose subjects we are.