

In this issue:

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- Taxation
- Bad science
- And more

KEEPING A COOL HEAD AMIDST THE HYSTERIA

It seems that the various worldwide “difficulties” that came to the fore in the latter half of 2008 affected the SIF and *The Individual* as well. Well, not exactly. But I hope that this longer-than-normal issue goes some way towards making amends.

So, on to 2009. I am by training a social scientist. So here, formulated approximately properly, is a null hypothesis: That there is no association in attitudes towards the election of Tony Blair and New Labour in 1997, the death of Princess Diana also in 1997, and the election and inauguration of Barack Obama in 2008 and 2009.

Or, to put it in everyday terms, those who gushed sycophantically at the Second Coming of messiahs Blair and Obama were also the sort of people who broke down in hysteria at the death of Diana.

This does not imply unalloyed criticism of, let alone contempt for, any of these people. The death of Diana was a tragic affair and Obama’s ending of what any reasonable person would call torture at Guantanamo is to his credit.

Over the years, various atheists have tried

to popularise the term “Brights” for those who subscribe to a “naturalistic worldview which is free of supernatural and mystical elements”. I am a lifelong atheist, at least in terms of a rejection of a god as understood by traditional Christianity, Judaism or Islam. Yet I have many intelligent friends who are theists of one sort or another, and I find the term rather offensive with its clear implications for those who must therefore be considered “Dims”.

And yet on a psychological level, when looking at politics, is there not something to the basic principle more generally? This being that some of us do not possess the “gene” (or have an immunising “gene”) that seems to leave some people so readily predisposed to seek and find a saviour (however implausible, as rational consideration would suggest), or to otherwise lose themselves in some instance of collective hysteria (however unwarranted).

Some of us look on these orgies of individual surrender to the herd and just go, “Huh?!”

Nigel Meek

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SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT “THE WEST”

Joe Peacott

Western Promises

I'm not convinced. While the writers in the last issue of *The Individual*¹ argued, in one way or another, that the “West” is better than the rest of the world, the articles were, taken both individually and as a group, less than persuasive. While their critique of the nefarious actions of various representatives of the non-West and their “multiculti” defenders in Europe and America are often well taken, the authors either overlook, minimize, or apologize for the wrongdoing of Westerners.

Contra McNaron and Levitt, the West is not a homogeneous social structure which can be easily categorized and then compared to other such entities. Europe and America are made up of millions of different individuals with a near infinite variety of ideas, wants, ways of living, and levels of education. And both regions have histories that contain both great intellectual achievements and barbaric episodes of murder and mayhem. *The Individual's* authors, however, focus on the former while glossing over the latter in their attempt to show how much better “their” culture is (and was) that those of the rest of the world. Anyone who does not see the superiority of all things European is dismissed as a self-hating multiculturalist, employing relativistic arguments to undermine true European values.

Idyll Worship

But in their article on Eurocentrism, Levitt and McNaron engage in exactly the kind of argument that they accuse their opponents of using. They say that the multiculturalists paint an undeservedly flattering picture of life in Africa and Asia before their conquest by Europeans. Quite true. But the authors then go on to do exactly the same thing regarding Europe. They seem to believe that the “authentic” culture of Europe is the enlightenment and mathematics (forgetting the Arab/Islamic contributions to mathematics as well as chemistry and other sciences), while forgetting about distinctly western phenomena like state communism and national socialism, which resulted, quite recently in historical terms, in the destruction of millions of Western lives.

In a bizarre twist, they even accuse the “anti-Western” multiculturalists of similarities with Hitler, who was nothing if not Western. By claiming that European philosophy and science are what characterizes the West, while treating the holocaust as a footnote to European history, it is they who are creating a fantastic idyll.

This is not to detract from their critique of nasty governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Nor do I defend multiculturalism, as should be obvious from my writings elsewhere. But one does not have to believe that other parts of the world are nice in order to critique the governments and societies one finds closer to home.

Better Than a Sharp Stick in the Eye?

Although I believe that Western society is infinitely more flawed than do Levitt and McNaron, that still leaves open the question whether, even if there are bad aspects to Western civilization, it is still better than others. But this is difficult to answer because it depends on whom you ask. And I don't mean whether one asks a Eurocentrist instead of a multiculturalist.

If one is an educated Londoner with a good job and a nice flat, the answer is likely to be that the West is better. But if you are a resident of Iraq, whose country was repeatedly bombed for years at the orders of various American presidents, whose home can be searched at gunpoint at the whim of an occupying Western army, and a number of whose relatives have been killed by the invaders, is the West really better?

When it comes to governments and societies, one's viewpoint on the justice and fairness of those systems is based not only on one's economic and social position, or whether one is a member of the homeland or a victim of its military forces in another country. People's individual desires, ethics, and social and economic views come into play as well. For, unlike in the world of those who think in us-versus-them terms, we are all individuals in our own unique circumstances. There is no

“They seem to believe that the “authentic” culture of Europe is the enlightenment ... while forgetting about distinctly western phenomena like state communism and national socialism ...”

West and no Third World in the sense that one can assume, simply because of the location in which one or one's ancestors lives or lived, that one either thinks, or lives or dreams like everyone else who lives near them. That is the individualist perspective, one sorely lacking from the approach of these writers.

For Better or for Worse

I recognize of course that there are differences between governments and societies. I have a hell of a lot more freedom to live, think, write, and act as I please here in the United States than I would if I lived in Cuba or China or Zimbabwe or Singapore. That is one reason I remain in this country. On the other hand, I also understand that I live in a place where people can be executed by the government, imprisoned for victimless activities that the authorities have made illegal, and/or locked up and tormented without benefit of due legal process, while the powers-that-be use their military, paid for with money extorted from people who actually work for a living, to bully other countries and terrorize people around the world. Although Cuba locks up internal dissidents, it doesn't bomb civilians in Somalia, Panama, or Serbia. So perhaps Cuba is actually better than the United States if you are the relative of a non-combatant killed by American bombs in Pakistan.

For the individualist and libertarian, the governments and societies of Europe and America are far less than perfect and absolutely appropriate targets for criticism and change. As the anti-voting slogan has it, the lesser of two evils is still evil. The fact that another society is worse than one's own in some ways should do nothing to guide one's actions vis-à-vis domestic impositions on one's or others' freedoms.

Keeping Out the Riff-Raff

Levitt and McNaron, on the other hand, do not appear to have any criticisms of current Western society, except that it is too easy for outsiders to enter. But not only do they seem to think that immigrants will contaminate our pristine Western existence unless they give up everything from their prior lives to become

new Westerners, they also claim that restricting immigration is in the best interests of those kept out.

Migration across borders is as much a western tradition as any these authors hold dear. Whether it was the Huguenots coming to London, the Pilgrims moving to Leyden and then Plymouth, or the Irish, Jews and Italians going to America, free movement to new lands is clearly part of European and American history. But for Levitt and McNaron the time has come to close the doors, because non-Westerners are knocking and threaten to bring non-Western (whatever that means) ideas and practices with them.

But in order not be accused of being illiberal, the authors claim their real concern is for the immigrants themselves. They believe the best way to help foreigners is to make them stay home and force their rulers to treat them better, even if that means Western military intervention. They even argue that it was OK for the United States authorities not to admit Jews fleeing the Nazis, because starting a war with Germany in 1939 would have been a better approach. Apparently policing the world with the Western military and denying entry to victims of nasty governments elsewhere are the kind of values that make Europe and America better than other places.

By this way of thinking, the American Indians should have forced out the European immigrants to Massachusetts in 1620 and invaded England to make them treat their religious minorities better. But I guess since the Indians were not Westerners (in Levitt and McNaron's sense of the term), that would not have been acceptable behavior, since they would not have been defending Western values, simply their backward non-European customs. Now that America has a "European heritage," however, the "situation is dire" in regard to migration, leading Levitt and McNaron to bemoan the fact that Los Angeles has a large immigrant population.

Peaceful migration sometimes discomfits people in the receiving country, but it generally ends up benefiting all concerned. Americans commonly deride immigration and complain

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Joe Peacott (l) and SIF editor Nigel Meek (r), London, October 2008

about its impact on the availability of jobs, but immigrants almost always take jobs the “natives” either can’t or won’t fill. Nurses from the Philippines do not displace American nurses, they take positions that would otherwise remain vacant. American consumers gladly patronize businesses whose products are relatively cheap because they are staffed by immigrants working for lower wages than Americans would be willing to accept. And the culinary, artistic, and musical innovation and melding brought about by mixing of people from different traditions can be enriching for new and old residents alike.

Migration is not to be feared. Anti-individualist and anti-freedom ideas and practices should be. But these are not tied to one’s place of origin, but to one’s social outlook. Levitt and McNaron seem to forget there are liberal, tolerant immigrants from Pakistan and Mexico, just as there are bigoted fascists and racists in both the US and the UK. Geography is not destiny.

Slavery and the Constitution

Perhaps if the original European immigrants had been turned away by the prior inhabitants of the Americas, there never would have been a transatlantic trade in African slaves. But there was. And Levitt and McNaron, as well as Richards, do their best to put a positive shine even on this nasty bit of western history.

While Levitt and McNaron acknowledge that people in the United States practiced slavery, they do their best to forgive them for it by referring to the pretty words in the declaration of independence about the “rights” of “all men.” Apparently, these writers value words over actions. In their view, since slavery was eventually abolished (although it was followed by 100 years or so of institutionalized segregation which did not differ in its essence from the “peculiar institution”) the grand ideas expressed by Jefferson *et al* are more emblematic of western culture than the inhumane conduct engaged in by him and the other founders.

While Richards’ article takes a different approach to the history of slavery and its abolition, his analysis is just as unsatisfying. The fact that slavery occurred elsewhere is beside the point when discussing the Atlantic slave trade. Slavery was evil in the Arab world and evil in Britain and America. And the fact that revolutionary America, in particular, could countenance this institution is especially dam-

aging to the premise of this whole issue of *The Individual*: that the West is and was different from, and in fact better than, the rest of the world. While I share his rejection of the need for anyone who did not participate in the slave trade to apologize for it, his praise of England for abolishing this loathsome business is misplaced. While Wilberforce and his associates were clearly on the side of the angels on this issue, to then generalize the virtues of these individuals to England as a whole is hardly logical. Just as modern westerners do not need to share the guilt of their ancestors, England as a whole has no business sharing the kudos due to the opponents of slavery, since much of that country and its government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into abolition.

The situation in the United States was similar in that the abolitionists were a clear minority, but slavery was ended there only through a brutal war that did more to expand government power over individuals than it did to improve the lives of black people. Another difference was that Garrison (whom Richards quotes) and the other radical abolitionists went a step further than their British counterparts. They extended their opposition to human bondage to encompass all people, not just black slaves, and not just Americans. They were true universalists and called for the abolition of government itself and with it the wars and servitude it creates. Not surprisingly, these abolitionists’ take on the founders was at odds with that of McNaron and Levitt in their article. The Garrisonians believed that the old revolutionaries’ actions and documents, in particular the constitution, were the reason slavery persisted up until their own time. Garrison described this piece of paper as a “compact formed at the sacrifice of the bodies and souls of millions,” a document “dripping... with human blood.” He was so contemptuous of the hypocrisy of the founders and their high-sounding words that he publicly burnt a copy of the constitution at an Independence Day abolitionist picnic in Framingham in 1854, declaring, “So perish all compromises with tyranny.”

In the case of western slavery, as in their overall analysis, *The Individual’s* contributors are picking and choosing which parts of Western history to emphasize and which to minimize or dismiss. It is true that chattel slavery has been eliminated in the west, but this is true of most of the rest of the world as well. And slavery persisted in the west when it had already vanished in some other parts of the

“Just as modern westerners do not need to share the guilt of their ancestors, England as a whole has no business sharing the kudos due to the opponents of slavery ...”

world. Once again, the historical record does not support the case for western virtue in the face of eastern vice.

Some Comments on Terrorism

In his introductory remarks, the editor explains why he included my friend Richard Garner’s short piece on terrorism in this issue of *The Individual*. While Richard does not pursue the same arguments about the glories of the West that the other writers do, it could be inferred from the fact that this article is published alongside the others that the terrorists he discusses must be evil non-Westerners, and the more humane air force bombers examples of Western high-mindedness.

Whatever the merits of the double effect doctrine, the scenarios Richard presents are not the full story of Western military tactics. Even if the “collateral damage” caused in an air raid intended to kill opposing militaries forces were less morally reprehensible than a suicide bombing in a market (a position with which I disagree), the western military has often engaged in actions as frankly terroristic as any of those engaged in by Black September or al Qaeda. Where to begin? The fire bombings of Dresden and Tokyo, the bombing of a bridge full of non-combatants in Serbia, the destruction of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and the burning of residential areas of Panama City spring to mind. One wonders why these would not qualify as terrorist acts, while the attack on the American Pentagon, a clear military target, is generally seen as such.

I understand that Richard has not argued that the military adventures I have listed above are not terroristic, but I believe that failing to include such incidents in his discussion leaves the impression that the only time western military forces kill non-combatants is in the type of setting he postulates in his article.

Peace and Prosperity?

While it is surely true that people in general are better off economically and socially in Europe and America than in most other parts of the world, it is absolutely false to believe that this somehow sets them apart morally and “culturally” as well. The “peace and prosperity” described by McNaron and Levitt certainly exist in parts of Europe, but they fail to mention the recent bloodbaths in the former Yugoslavia and the ongoing wars in the Cauca-

sus, and seem to believe that invading and occupying other countries are grand humanitarian gestures. Maybe it’s that the Balkans, Chechnya, and Georgia are too far east to qualify for inclusion in the west. And, of course, people who live in Iraq and Afghanistan are way beyond the pale and are deserving only of the guidance of the enlightened despots imposed on them by the British and American militaries. As long as the killing takes place outside of the US and the EU, the pretense can be maintained that the west is at peace.

Although science and philosophy are clearly an important part of European/western history and identity, so are the inquisition, National Socialism, state communism, and international war on a grand scale. There is and has been good and bad in all regions of the world and all historical periods. Before Westerners tout their moral superiority over the great unwashed elsewhere, they should put aside their cultural chauvinism and look at the facts a bit more closely.

Note

(1) Stephen Levitt & David McNaron, ‘Eurocentrism versus Multiculturalism’ (pp. 2-7); David McNaron, ‘The Trouble with Multiculturalism’ (pp. 7-11); Richard Garner, ‘Terrorism, Collateral Damage and Double Effects’ (pp. 11-12); Peter Richards, ‘Slavery and the Slave Trade: Apologies, Abolition and Justification’ (pp. 13-19), all in *The Individual*, July 2008.



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“As long as the killing takes place outside of the US and the EU, the pretense can be maintained that the west is at peace.”

“GLOBAL WARMING”: SOME INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

Peter Richards

Introduction

The 2008 Olympics made the host country, China, the focus of the world's attention. One of the criticisms levelled at this vast Far Eastern nation is that, because of its rapidly expanding economy, it is adding to global warming by emitting ever-increasing amounts of greenhouse gas.

Concerns over CO₂ emissions and their supposed global warming effect have been with us for some time.

The American politician and former Vice-President Al Gore presented the case for urgent action to tackle global warming in his influential film entitled *An Inconvenient Truth*. This American documentary movie was released in 2006 to much acclaim, and was accompanied by the book and DVD of the same name. All three claim that man-made emissions of CO₂ are causing global warming and that the consequences will be catastrophic unless action is taken.

In this essay, I present a list of facts that don't sit easily with the basic premise of Al Gore's film. I challenge the prevailing orthodoxy of human-caused global warming itself by naming a few inconvenient truths.

Politicians Often Make Our Lives Worse

Politicians have put climate change at the top of the political agenda. When Tony Blair was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom he declared that it was, “the single most important issue”.¹ Global warming has been described by the European Union as, “one of the most threatening issues that we are facing today”.¹

Even the IPCC (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), originally set up in 1988 to advise governments on matters relating to global warming has, according to Nigel Lawson, “mutated in the minds of most of those who head it into something more like a politically correct alarmist pressure group”.² There is no doubt that the IPCC is a powerful and influential body and it is urging politicians of

all nations to take action to cut carbon emissions.

When politicians reach the conclusion that something must be done, their next step is to exercise their power by dissuading people from doing things and by stopping people from doing things. They do this by increasing taxes and by banning things. This means making our lives miserable. And so before we go along with all this scaremongering we need to be sure that the theory fits the facts.

The Starting Point

Scientists on both sides of the argument generally accept the following:

- Emissions of CO₂ into the atmosphere have increased since the Industrial Revolution.
- In the last quarter of the 20th century, the temperature of the planet has increased by about 0.5°C.

That the first is the cause of the second is much less certain. Al Gore and his scaremongering associates are not averse to disseminating misleading information to get their message across; and so in order to get to the truth, their claims, and those of other global warming alarmists, need to be rigorously scrutinised.

Beware Of Misleading Images

The image of a polar bear stood on a tiny iceberg floating in the sea is often used by campaigners to symbolise how global warming is threatening the world's wildlife populations with extinction. The image is a powerful one but nonetheless misleading. According to the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the world's polar bear population has increased from about 5,000 in the 1960s to approximately 25,000 today. This 5-fold increase over the last four decades has largely been achieved by regulating hunting. Of the 20 distinct populations existing today, more than half are stable or increasing in number. The two declining populations in Baffin Bay are in areas that are getting colder, and there are two populations around the Beaufort Sea that are definitely increasing, and they are in an area where

“... the world's polar bear population has increased from about 5,000 in the 1960's to approximately 25,000 today.”

the climate is getting warmer.

There have also been reports from Canada, home to more than half of the world's polar bears, that numbers are increasing.

A report in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2007 was headed: 'Polar bears 'thriving as Arctic warms up''.

Referring to a survey of animals' numbers in Canada's eastern Arctic it stated that:

In the Davis Strait area, a 140,000 square kilometre region, the polar bear population has grown from 850 in the mid-1980s to 2100 today.

"There aren't just a few more bears. There are a hell of a lot more bears," said Mitch Taylor, a polar bear biologist who has spent 20 years studying the animals.

His findings back the claims of Inuit hunters who have long claimed they were seeing more bears.³

I believe that the lesson we must learn from this tale is to beware of misleading images, because these doom-watching environmental evangelists, by whom I mean Al Gore and his ilk, are very willing to sex-up their sermons in order to save us.

The Climate Has Always Been Changing

Throughout its 4.5 billion year history, the earth's climate has constantly been changing. It is commonly known that the earth has been through a series of Ice Ages. Glaciations and interglacial periods of climate warming, each lasting thousands of years, are an undeniable part of the geological story of our planet.

It is therefore unreasonable to assume that any climate change occurring today is entirely due to man-made emissions of CO₂.

The Roman Warming (200BC-540AD) and the Medieval Warming (900-1300 AD) are two examples of global warming; both occurred before the Industrial Revolution and therefore precede any man-made rise in CO₂ levels in the atmosphere. In addition, the so-called Little Cooling (1940-1975) in the 20th Century inconveniently occurred at a time when CO₂

levels were rising.

Scaremongering Scientists Have Been Wrong In The Past

I am old enough to remember that in the early 1970s, scientists were warning us of a new impending crisis that we were facing: a new ice age caused by global cooling. The scientists, supported by environmentalists and the media, were predicting disastrous consequences for the planet.

In 1973 Science Digest had run an article headed, 'Brace yourself for another ice age'. This described how, as the earth gradually cooled and the icecaps of Greenland and Antarctica grew, winter would eventually last the year round, cities would be buried in snow and an immense sheet of ice could cover North America as far south as Cincinnati'.⁴

A recently published book describes how this scare came about:

There was a simple explanation for this temporary hysteria over cooling in the 1970s. In imagining the future, as we know from the history of science fiction, human beings like to project onto it an exaggerated version of some tendency already evident in their own time. And what scientists were noticing in the 1970s was that, for more than 30 years, the average temperature of the earth had been in decline.⁴

And so now, when scientists talk about global warming, how can we be sure they are right?

Today's Storms And Hurricanes Are Not Caused By Global Warming

It is widely accepted amongst followers of the new climate change belief-system that many of the extreme weather conditions occurring today, such as storms and hurricanes, are due to global warming. A study of Royal Naval log books dating back to the 17th century suggests something completely different. A *Sunday Times* report headed "Captains' logs yield climate clues" explains:

A preliminary study of 6,000 log-

"... in the early 1970s, scientists were warning us of a new impending crisis that we were facing: a new ice age caused by global cooling."

books has produced results that raise questions about climate change theories. One paper, published by Dr Dennis Wheeler, a Sunderland University geographer, in the journal *The Holocene*, details a surge in the frequency of summer storms over Britain in the 1680s and 1690s.

Many scientists believe storms are a consequence of global warming but these were the coldest decades of the so called Little Ice Age that hit Europe from about 1600 to 1850.

Wheeler and his colleagues have since won European Union funding to extend this research to 1750. This shows that during the 1730s, Europe underwent a period of rapid warming similar to that recorded recently — and which must have had natural origins.⁵

The *Sunday Times* report goes on to say:

The ships' logs have also shed light on extreme weather events such as hurricanes. It is commonly believed that hurricanes form in the eastern Atlantic and track westwards, so scientists were shocked in 2005 when Hurricane Vince instead moved northeast to hit southern Spain and Portugal. Many interpreted this as a consequence of climate change; but Wheeler, along with colleagues at the University of Madrid, used old ships' logs to show that this had also happened in 1842, when a hurricane followed the same trajectory into Andalusia.⁵

The conclusion we can draw from this is that we should not be too hasty to blame extreme weather conditions on human-caused greenhouse gas emissions — there may well be another explanation, as these historical records suggest.

Global Warming Has Stopped

In the last eight years there has been no global warming. During the 21st century so far, global warming has stopped. This may well be a lull and global warming may well resume, but the fact remains that this was not predicted

by scientists. Needless to say, throughout this period, anthropogenic carbon emissions have continued unabated, with China and India adding their contributions to those of the West.

As Nigel Lawson has pointed out:

The 21st century standstill (to date), which has occurred at a time when global CO₂ emissions have been rising faster than ever, is something that the conventional wisdom, and the computer models on which it relies, completely failed to predict.⁶

The Great Global Warming Swindle

A Channel 4 documentary shown in March 2007 provided an alternative theory. It suggested that climate change is not driven by levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere but by solar activity. According to some evidence presented on the programme, increases in the CO₂ levels lag behind temperature rises by about 800 years and so therefore can't be their cause. On the other hand, solar activity matches changes in temperature precisely over several hundred years and so is much more likely to be the cause.

Global Warming Is Occurring On Mars

Not only is global warming occurring on Mars but also throughout the solar system. Observations by the Hubble telescope in 1998 have revealed that Triton, Neptune's largest moon, has increased in temperature significantly since a space probe visited it in 1989. In 2002, astronomers reported an increase in temperature on Pluto and in 2006, the Hubble telescope was reporting a temperature increase on Jupiter. The temperature on Mars is also rising as Christopher Booker and Richard North inform us:

In 2003 the project manager for NASA's Odyssey mission, orbiting Mars, reported that there was also evidence of global warming on Mars. In 2005 NASA confirmed that the CO₂ 'ice caps' near Mars's South Pole had been diminishing three summers in a row. Habibullo Abdussamatov, head of the Pulkovo Observatory in St Petersburg, described this as evidence that the current global

"In the last eight years there has been no global warming. During the 21st century so far, global warming has stopped."

*warming on earth was being caused by changes in the sun. 'Man-made greenhouse warming', he said, 'has made a small contribution to the warming seen on Earth in recent years, but it cannot compete with the increase in solar irradiance.'*⁷

All this global warming that is being observed in the solar system is evidently taking place without any man-made CO₂ emissions to cause it — another inconvenient truth.

Last Word

I believe we should not allow ourselves to be brainwashed by propaganda into supporting the introduction of tax increases amounting to billions of pounds, based on a theory that is unsubstantiated by all the facts.

As the celebrated American economist Thomas Sowell said:

*Would you bet your paycheck on a weather forecast for tomorrow? If not, then why should this country bet millions on 'global warming' predictions that have even less foundation?*⁸

Notes

- (1) Bjorn Lomborg, *Cool It*, Marshall Cavendish Limited, London, 2007, p. 1.
- (2) Nigel Lawson, *An Appeal to Reason*, Duckworth Overlook, London, 2008, p. 12.
- (3) *Daily Telegraph*, 9th March 2007.
- (4) Christopher Booker & Richard North, *Scared to Death*, Continuum UK, London, 2007, p. 333.
- (5) *Sunday Times*, 3rd August 2008.
- (6) Lawson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- (7) Booker & North, *op. cit.*, p. 398.
- (8) http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Thomas_Sowell.



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“... global warming that is being observed in the solar system is evidently taking place without any man-made CO₂ emissions to cause it ...”

ENVY AND THE INTELLECTUAL DEFICIT OF THE COLLECTIVIST

Michael Payne

“Sin” and the Condition of Man

Man’s life can be summed up as the never ending desire to fulfil certain basic needs. Many readers will be familiar with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the concept that we can move upwards from physiological needs such as food and water at the bottom to self-actualization involving such things as creativity and morality at the top. I will not waste my time in recalling all of the various nuances involved when discussing these motivating factors. It shall suffice to say that man is driven by want, in his most elemental form he is compelled to quench his desires by the means at his disposal, whether it be industriousness or villainy. The

yearning to calm this insatiable beast that forever hounds mankind lends itself to frustration, in part to its never ending pull on the soul of mankind. The end result of this frustration manifests itself in that emotion all too common to man, envy. Much has been written about envy and the power it possesses over man; its ability to blind one out of lust or its detrimental effect on everyday social relationships. Although envy is counted amongst Christianity’s seven deadly sins and universally condemned by religious institutions of all denominations for its adverse affect on the human spirit, the positive effects of envy on man are often ignored despite its beneficial service to those in possession of a superior intellect.

The purpose of this discussion is not only to touch upon the negative affects of envy on man, and they are legion, but the power it possesses to motivate man to strive towards a better existence as well as the root mechanisms inherent in the human psyche which manifest said emotion.

The negative effect produced by the presence of envy is most pronounced in the man of a lesser intellectual character and the poor who, despite their potential, often fall prey to its devices. As it is, most men fall under these categories, lacking not only the intellectual but the moral understanding of the most effective and satisfying manner in which to gratify their primal needs. It is in these poor wretches that envy takes on its most insidious character, driving men to the depths of moral depredation. In this sort of man, instead of utilizing his own means to procure the fulfilment needed to satisfy the urges of the will, he often resorts to nefarious means to thwart his frustrations. As a substitute for industry he turns to the numerous deprivations open to him; gambling, intoxicants, theft, violence, and the sensual pleasures are all that he feels are available to quench the thirst of his will.

I am of the opinion that this is where the perception of envy as sin originates; not in the actual act of envy, but in man's resultant actions. Men are generally lazy creatures and will often seek the path of least resistance in their drive to fulfil their wants and needs. Therefore in the expedition of life undertaken by every man to stoke this fire within, those who lack that rare balance of will and intellect often succumb to the more easily obtained methods to satisfy their desires. Resulting from his lack of intellect he will often pursue means deemed socially and religiously immoral. While the end result may truly be detrimental to the social order and in the eyes of those who profess to be religious, deemed a sin, the bare emotion of envy is not to be blamed for the despicable action itself. This is a misguided verdict on the part of theologians and moralist of all denominations, as the will to action does not lie at the root of man's sin. It is the misguided deed, resulting from the absence of the tempering character of the intellect, functioning as a moral guide, which rests as the true source of his corruption. Men predisposed to these means are just as guilty of the sin of ignorance and malice of forethought as they are to any number of condemnations pronounced by the clergy. To blame it on envy alone is to deny that the emotion, or

reaction, provoked by envy has no redeeming character in the slightest.

Envy as a Force for Good

What of the morally righteous man? How does envy affect those amongst us who possess a superior intellect enabling him to apply reason and rationality in his quest to satisfy his will? In men of this stripe we remarkably find that envy produces an effect the complete polar opposite as that of the wretch. In the man of intellect we see that envy causes him not to indulge in the ills of society, but instead provides the impetus to increase his production thereby elevating society as a whole. When he encounters others who possess more than he, rather than fall into a state of frustration which leads to anger, he determines to eclipse them through the exertion of his will, combined with intellect, as opposed to succumbing to it. This pursuit in and of it self extinguishes some degree of desire induced by the will for he feel satisfaction in the quest itself, and what desire remains is pleased upon the attainment of his goals. Envy serves as a motivational force in this man as opposed to the destructive or malicious compulsions we observe in the lesser. In the superior man of intellect envy is not a vice, but a virtue, one capable of compelling man to achieve his dreams and in turn elevating the overall plight of society. He depends not upon others to provide the satisfaction his will requires, and instead seeks out methods of his own accord to provide what he needs.

In men of this character the will is balanced against the intellect and both form the complementary elements of a symbiotic relationship. The will thrives as its desires are met and fulfilled while the intellect is free to guide man through his undertakings. Through his pursuit to satisfy his will and its resultant desires he is bound by the tempering effects of the intellect and the moral impetus it places on one's actions. It is precisely at this point that the differences between the educated man and the man of meagre intellectual powers become most evident as it produces a stark difference in the course of action each respectively assume. The intellect serves to modify the behaviour of the will through the previously mentioned faculties of reason and rationality, elements sorely missing from those lacking in intellect. It allows him judiciously to evaluate various courses of action and determine the one best suited to soothe the will while holding true to his responsibilities to society as a

"Men are generally lazy creatures and will often seek the path of least resistance in their drive to fulfil their wants and needs."

whole, and his fellow man as individuals. He is bound through the power of the intellect to act in a morally responsible manner while at the same time he is driven to pursue his self interests through a similar approach. Sadly because of the huge disparity in numbers between those who are subject to the woes of envy and those who are amongst the benefactors of its influence, the general tendency is to ascribe to it a negative connotation. In the general sense this could be true, but to do so vanquishes the positive effects it often carries and causes the inspiration inherent to its positive character to be ignored.

The Malign Influence of Collectivism

The only excuse that can be made for those present-day philosophers and moralists who openly condemn and harangue the virtues of envy rest in the realization that they simply cannot recognize it from within their own ideologically determined frame of reference. To the collectivist, envy lies at the heart of all the evils inherent in capitalism, and all those who profess to its positive characteristics must be blinded by their greed and lack of concern for their fellow man. While pointing this crooked finger of accusation squarely at the motivations of the individual the collectivist fails to see the contradiction produced by their faulty logic. All of their actions from inception are the end result of the negative characteristic of envy and its domination over the intellect. The entire premise of the collectivist philosophy, both root and branch, demonstrates for all to see the malignant attributes from which envy, in its unrestrained form, derives its malevolent reputation. Collectivism is simply envy on a political scale for it seeks to right the perceived deficiencies of want on a social level through the immoral act of unjustly confiscating property from the individual and redistributing it across the social strata. Here most assuredly lies the underlying reason envy is held in such contempt by those who have been ordained as today's great thinkers, as it lays before all free-thinking men the hypocrisy of their position.

It too betrays the general powers of the intellect possessed by those who adhere to collectivist philosophies, as it presents the central truth that emotion, chiefly that of envy, can easily overwhelm and disarm the powers of the intellect at their disposal. Emotion often trumps the intellect in men of this stripe as they often seek to assuage the self imposed guilt resulting from an overindulgence of the

will by relying on emotion as a moral compass. The intellect is left to wither on the vine, so to speak, and the will is nourished by any means at their disposal; for its ability to motivate far outweighs what meagre resistance its mirror image may still possess. In reality all of their miseries and torments are self inflicted as they neglect any inner yearning or calling to develop the intellect and instead focus on satisfying the primal urges of the will. As a result that mechanism of moral reasoning inherent in the expression of the intellect is absent from the decision-making of the collectivist. Emotion, that spiritual residue exuded by the will, influences every action while rationality and reason, the twin progeny of the intellect, have only marginal influence, if any at all, in the matter.

No Pity for the Poor

It is for this reason that I harbour no pity for the poor in the world today, and in fact hold the vast majority of them in great contempt. The act of neglecting the intellect is reprehensible on various levels, but for the sake of our discussion we must focus on its effect on the motivation of men who suffer from its deficiencies. Please forgive me, but I no longer have the patience to deal with those who wish to remain mired in the lowest depths of the social order. Are there not means available to these people who perpetually contend for the scraps from the table of those of those who contribute to the betterment of our world? This is not to say that I have no compassion for those who are infirm, whether it be in a mental capacity, those suffering permanent injury to their persons, or those who, now beset by the ravages of old age, have fallen into poverty. No, it is not these poor souls of which I am speaking when I condemn the poor, it is those amongst this division of society who crave not advancement or a better life for themselves but are content permanently to siphon wealth from the upper reaches of the ladder. These dregs are, in my opinion, to be held in the highest form of contempt.

In the lives of the poor the intellect is universally sacrificed at the expense of the impetus of the will. To those who are mired in the depths of poverty the intellect is of no concern for they have been programmed through various nefarious devices that the powers of the intellect are reserved only for those upon whom nature has endowed with a powerful mind and who possess the inherent ability to cultivate it. They all too often fail to under-

"In the man of intellect we see that envy causes him not to indulge in the ills of society, but instead provides the impetus to increase his production thereby elevating society as a whole."

stand that they alone possess the ability to strengthen the intellect as the force of their will is all but irresistible. The drive to feed the will becomes all-encompassing as its appeasement is artificially achieved through physical pleasures easily obtained in the modern world. They become creatures of their will as it becomes stronger; all the while, through their self imposed disdain for any stimuli that might energize the intellect their minds become all the weaker. They, as a social class, suffer from a chronic deficit of self-respect and lack the motivation to elevate themselves and develop the means by which they can succeed and contribute to society.

What affliction causes a man to sit for hours on end idly passing the time caring not for what he can contribute to our world and instead expends a tremendous amount of effort into devising new and original ways to defraud the rest of us? Has he no self-respect, no drive that motivates him to succeed? The tools are there if he were only to seize them with his own hands and use them in a constructive manner. How sad it must be to lack the basic motivations inherent in the simplest creatures who determine to not provide for themselves and instead depend upon others to provide their basic sustenance. But does the blame rest solely upon their shoulders, or are there more treacherous actions afoot?

Collectivism: The Enemy of the Poor

The argument could be made that those capable of productive contributions to the social order are held bound in their dire circumstances by forces which are content to exploit their misery for political gain. Yes, in a sense the poor are victims, but not of the sort most in positions of power would have you believe. They are victims not of exploitation by the wealthy, but by those of the collectivist mindset who wish to manipulate their suffering into successes at the ballot box. The collectivists are more than willing to talk from both sides of their mouth. One voice cries out for compassion and government sponsored charity, while the other whispers behind the closed doors of the party offices that these people are their path to power and control, and that they must keep them subjugated long enough so that their corpses can line their road power. They promise everything and deliver nothing, again and again, nothing. Strangely enough the poor continue to flock to these charlatans, believing every lie that they are told, despite the fact that they have been told the same

thing time and time again, yet they remain in their desperate situation.

Absent are reason and rationality and in their place exist only unfettered envy and hatred for those who possess slightly more than they themselves possess. This represents the most vivid example of the negative characteristics of envy, as it exists within a moral vacuum devoid of the intellect. The poor are not in possession of the tools necessary to reach the realization that they are simply objects by which the collectivist can fashion their misguided utopian delusion. Those in power will never lift a finger to help elevate the poor, either economically or in matters of the intellect, as they are too valuable in the pursuit of their end goal. To break free of the philosophies that hold them in their position of poverty and misery the poor must not only strengthen their intellect but, more importantly, begin to question the basic premise of the collectivist ideology. Without this individual rebellion against what they incorrectly perceive as justice they will forever remain bound in their deplorable state and entertain no possibility of rectifying it.

It is for this reason that the poor deserve contempt. Not out of the sheer fact that they possess no wealth, but because they do not possess the wherewithal to realize a lie when told to them, even more so when told to them multiple times. Blinded by unrestrained envy for those amongst us who produce and consume by the sweat of our brow, they are unwilling to break free from the collectivist chains that bind their minds shut and seek a way other than state sponsored assistance to alleviate their suffering. These poor wicked fools deserve everything that they have, nothing, and despite all of the promises made by their master, that is all that they will ever have. I do not shed a tear for their plight; no I shed a tear for their idiocy and lack of self respect. I pity the poor not because of what they lack but for what they cannot see. Before them lie untold opportunities available to all men in a free society, yet they are unwilling to seize upon them because it is all too easy to sit and wait for the productive members of society to pull them along. They sit and consume promises of equality and wealth if only they continue to despise those who possess more, but these dreams are never fulfilled. Until these hapless simpletons desist in their self-inflicted misery I shall offer no compassion and continue to heap contempt upon their plight.

“Absent are reason and rationality and in their place exist only unfettered envy and hatred for those who possess slightly more than they themselves possess. “

Breaking the Shackles

“Those in power will never lift a finger to help elevate the poor, either economically or in matters of the intellect, as they are too valuable in the pursuit of their end goal.”

It must be made clear to all that while the deficiencies of the intellect that plague the collectivist, and those whom they seek to influence, are responsible, to a considerable degree, for the error in their philosophy, it alone can not account for their delusion as a whole. Other factors stemming from their defective epistemology (their theory of knowledge and its acquisition) as well as their flawed logic produce any number of foolish assumptions about society and man in general. That being said, their deficit in intellect does lie at the root of their affliction and dissatisfaction for it clouds their ontological perspective (their theory of the nature of existence and reality) while at the same time it corrupts their moral understanding of the world in which we live. They are content to live under the cloud of false assumptions and emotionally driven morality and seek no cure for their malady. To the collectivist there exists no deficit of the intel-

lect, for from their perspective they are the sole repository of intellectual thought in the world today. Sadly it is this false premise which prevents them from developing and nurturing the intellect to a degree from which they can construct and implement a sound moral structure that will free them from the shackles of ignorance and deliver them into enlightenment.



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I have high hopes...

... that President Obama will turn out to be as dishonest as he showed himself in his campaign and as unprincipled as his political background would indicate. That would be much better than a Marxist ideologue, which is what some people were afraid of when they looked at his early friends and mentors. If Obama used the likes of Bill Ayers to rise in politics, my tears will remain unshed. My high hopes are vindicated by the numerous references to “humility” made by the most arrogant, self-obsessed politician ever to be elected to the Presidency, in front of a crowd that, unnervingly, was chanting his name, instead of being awed by the office and the event. I think dishonesty covers that quite well.

Dr Helen Szamuely, *EU Referendum* blog, 21st January 2009,
<http://eureferendum.blogspot.com/2009/01/i-have-high-hopes.html>.



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SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT: THE ARGUMENT ABOUT UNIVERSITY FEES AND THE HISTORICAL RECORD ON THE NON-STATE PROVISION OF EDUCATION

Richard Garner

Not Fair on the Poor

Someone I know well once said to me that the government's whole justification for top-up fees is ridiculous. The argument we hear from government ministers is that top-up fees are the fairer way to fund higher education than general taxation because general taxation would force poor people to pay for education that their children are not receiving and which generally goes to benefit the non-poor. My associate said that this must be wrong because such an argument would justify privatising the entire education industry.

Quite! Libertarians have been using that argument for decades for precisely that purpose. Yes, it does justify privatising the education industry and most other parts of the so-called public sector.

What is interesting, though, is why should the fact that the logic of the argument justifies policies that my associate (and the Labour party) do not want to accept make that logic false? It doesn't make the argument any less true at all. If funding higher education through general taxation forces poor families to pay for the education of non-poor children, without delivering any benefits to the non-university going (or even non-existent) kids of poor households, then such an arrangement is hardly fair. Pointing out that other state services are unfair on precisely the same grounds is not a good reason to suddenly start thinking that it is fair after all!

As long ago as 1973, the anarchist communist author, Colin Ward, made precisely the same argument in his classic *Anarchy in Action*,¹

Today, as the educational budgets of both rich and poor nations get more and more gigantic, we would add a further criticism of the role of the state as educator throughout the world: the affront to the idea of social justice. An immense effort by well intentioned reformers has

gone into the attempt to manipulate the education system to provide equality of opportunity, but this has simply resulted in a theoretical and illusory equal start in a competition to become more and more unequal. The greater the sums of money that are poured into the education industries of the world, the smaller the benefit to the people at the bottom of the educational, occupational and social hierarchy. The universal education system turns out to be yet another way in which the poor subsidise the rich. Everett Reimer, for instance, remarking that schools are an almost perfectly regressive form of taxation, notes that the children of the poorest one-tenth of the population in the United States cost the public in schooling \$2,500 each over a lifetime, while the children of the richest one-tenth cost about \$35,000. Assuming that one-third of this is private expenditure, the richest one-tenth still gets ten times as much as the poorest one tenth.

In his suppressed UNESCO report of 1970 Michael Huberman reached the same conclusion for the majority of countries in the world. In Britain, ignoring completely the university aspect, we spend twice as much on the secondary school life of a grammar-school sixth former as on a secondary modern school-leaver, while, if we do include university expenditure, we spend as much on an undergraduate in one year as on a normal schoolchild throughout his life. While the highest social group benefit seventeen times as much as the lowest group from the expenditure on our universities, they only contribute five times as much revenue. We must

"The greater the sums of money that are poured into the education industries of the world, the smaller the benefit to the people at the bottom..."

thus conclude that one significant role of the state education system is to perpetuate social and economic injustice.

Arguments in Favour of Fees

There are, of course, arguments against this view point. One of them is that the rich pay more in taxes, so whilst they get more in public funds they also pay into them more. This is possible, but not massively likely. The non-poor do not pay enormously more tax than the poor do, since income tax cannot collect that much and indirect taxes fall very much on the poor.

Another argument against it that is popular in government circles is that education benefits the whole of society. This is a popular argument in favour of public funding of schooling. It may be seen as an argument against the idea that public funding of schooling is a regressive taxation on the grounds that those that hold this position believe that there are enormous external benefits of education that do not solely go to the consumer, but go to everyone. Hence, even if the non-poor do get more education than the poor, the poor may benefit.

This argument says that society as a whole benefits from generations of well-educated school leavers, most obviously because of the increased productivity they can bring. Of course, the only reason, economically speaking, as to why this might be a case for state intervention (and a very weak one at that) is if this external benefit is so great that it encourages people to free-ride it and so not bear any of the costs. In this case, a person, seeing how much he benefits if everybody else goes to school, realises that he benefits substantially, even if he doesn't go to school himself, and so has no incentive to go. The result of people thinking like this, though, is that nobody goes to school, and so that a generation of well educated school children does not appear and neither do any of its benefits — a classic prisoner's dilemma game.

Rebuttal

The trouble is that this theory is nonsense! Is it really plausible to suggest that I might be much better off not going to school than going, so long as everybody else goes? Is the cost of my paying for my own education (or anybody else doing so voluntarily for me) really

more than the additional benefit I would gain if I sat on my backside waiting for the benefits of that generation of well-educated kids to come rolling round to me? Of course not. So, no free-rider problem, no lack of demand for education due to major positive externalities, and so no reason to assume that the market would undersupply schooling. David Friedman² has one of the best on-line articles regarding education that I have seen. He discusses this very same “a-good-education-system-benefits-society-as-a-whole-and-not-just-student-or-pupils” argument:

It is said that since education increases human productivity, by educating my child I increase the wealth of the whole society, making all of us better off. One obvious problem with this argument is that, if correct, it applies to a lot of things other than education. Physical capital also increases productivity; does it follow that all investments ought to be subsidized? Better transportation allows workers to spend more time working and less time commuting; should we subsidize the production of cars? The argument suggests that everything worth doing ought to be subsidized — leaving us with the puzzle of what we are to tax in order to raise the money for the subsidies.

What is wrong with this argument is that it misses the way in which the price system already allocates “social benefits” to those who produce them. Building a factory may increase the wealth of my society — but most (in the limit of perfect competition, all) of the increase goes to the investors whose capital paid for the factory. If I use a car instead of a bus to commute, the savings in time is added either to my leisure or my income. If education makes me a more productive worker, my income will be higher as a result. That is why top law schools are able to sell schooling to willing customers at a price of about twenty thousand dollars a year.

Schooling — like a new car — produces non-market benefits as well. But these too go mostly to the stu-

“Is it really plausible to suggest that I might be much better off not going to school than going..?”

dent, enabled by education to appreciate more of the riches of the culture he lives in. There may be effects on other people as well, but they are typically small compared to the benefits to the student, and their sign is not always clear. When my child becomes an expert in Shakespeare and quantum mechanics one result may be to enlighten and entertain her friends, but another may be to make them feel stupid. In just the same way, the beauty of my new car may produce the pleasures of aesthetic appreciation or the pains of envy in those who watch me drive it down the street. To base the design of our institutions for schooling on the uncertain effect on such third parties rather than the direct effect on the schooled makes no more sense than to base the design of cars on their value to everyone except the owner.

Murray Rothbard has written,³

While in a free private school market most children would undoubtedly attend schools near their homes, the present system compels a monopoly of one school per district, and thereby coerces uniformity throughout each area. Children who, for whatever reason, would prefer to attend a school in another district are prohibited from doing so. The result is enforced geographic homogeneity, and it also means that the character of each school is completely dependent on its residential neighborhood.

It is then inevitable that public schools [in its US sense, i.e. state schools], instead of being totally uniform, will be uniform within each district, and the composition of pupils, the financing of each school, and the quality of education will come to depend upon the values, the wealth, and the tax base, of each geographical area. The fact that wealthy school districts will have costlier and higher-quality teaching, higher teaching salaries, and better working conditions than the poorer districts, then be-

comes inevitable. Teachers will regard the better schools as the superior teaching posts, and the better teachers will gravitate to the better school districts, while the poorer ones must remain in the lower-income areas. Hence, the operation of district public schools inevitably results in the negation of the very egalitarian goal which is supposed to be a major aim of the public school system in the first place.

Moreover, if the residential areas are racially segregated, as they often tend to be, the result of a compulsory geographical monopoly is the compulsory racial segregation of the public schools. Those parents who prefer integrated schooling have to come up against the geographical monopoly system...

The geographical nature of the public school system has also led to a coerced pattern of residential segregation, in income and consequently in race, throughout the country and particularly in the suburbs. As everyone knows, the United States since World War II has seen an expansion of population, not in the inner central cities, but in the surrounding suburban areas. As new and younger families have moved to the suburbs, by far the largest and growing burden of local budgets has been to pay for the public schools, which have to accommodate a young population with a relatively high proportion of children per capita. These schools invariably have been financed from growing property taxation, which largely falls on the suburban residences. This means that the wealthier the suburban family, and the more expensive its home, the greater will be its tax contribution for the local school.

Hence, as the burden of school taxes increases steadily, the suburbanites try desperately to encourage an inflow of wealthy residents and expensive homes, and to discourage an inflow of poorer citizens. There is, in short, a break-even point of the price of a house beyond which a

“... the result of a compulsory geographical monopoly is ... compulsory racial segregation...”

new family in a new house will more than pay for its children's education in its property taxes. Families in homes below that cost level will not pay enough in property taxes to finance their children's education and hence will throw a greater tax burden on the existing population of the suburb. Realizing this, suburbs have generally adopted rigorous zoning laws which prohibit the erection of housing below a minimum cost level — and thereby freeze out any inflow of poorer citizens.

Since the proportion of Negro poor is far greater than white poor, this effectively also bars Negroes from joining the move to the suburbs. And since in recent years there has been an increasing shift of jobs and industry from the central city to the suburbs as well, the result is an increasing pressure of unemployment on the Negroes — a pressure which is bound to intensify as the job shift accelerates. The abolition of the public schools, and therefore of the school burden—property tax linkage, would go a long way toward removing zoning restrictions and ending the suburb as an upper middle-class-white preserve.

Rothbard was writing in the context of the US, but his arguments apply equally well here. The UK has similar monopolistic “school district” arrangements, in that secondary schools give priority to those people that live within their catchment areas, and only if there are spaces left do they give them to people that live outside these areas. So again, there is good reason to believe that state interference in education benefits the non-poor at the expense of the poor.

The Education Market and the Price Mechanism

Spending more on education means spending less on other things. People who say that enough is not being spent on education therefore imply that too much is being spent on other things, and that spending on jobs and investment in the areas of the economy producing those other things should be cut. OK, socialists sometimes say, “sure, cut the money

spent on bombs and war in Iraq,” but this money came at the expense of other things too. Less had to be spent employing people in other industries, and less had to be spent investing in other industries, so that either the arms or the education industry could be funded. I am happy with this — it is inevitable that resources cannot be used to produce every good but will be allocated to some areas of the economy and away from others. However, the question, at least for a utilitarian, is surely “are resources being used in the most valuable way — are we allocating resources to where they are most valued, and away from where they are valued the least?” This is a question that the proponent of increased state funding for education needs to answer. Is the increased funding to education worth all the lost goods, lower incomes, lost wages, and decreased investment elsewhere? And how do you know?

The definitely not a libertarian (he was a student of Marxist G.A. Cohen), philosopher Jonathon Wolff, in his *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, writes,⁴

Suppose that a certain good — garlic, say — costs a certain price: 50 pence per bulb. Then a respected scientist publishes a report indicating that consuming a bulb of garlic a day wards off cancer and heart disease. Accordingly, demand for garlic soars. Garlic retailers sell out rapidly, and prices spiral. Huge profits are made in the garlic industry.

The prospect of such profits will prompt new producers to enter the garlic market. Supply begins to rise, and as it does the price falls again, until a new equilibrium is established. Eventually demand equals supply at a price where garlic producers achieve the same profit levels as are available elsewhere in the economy.

This banal example of economic life shows the remarkable powers of markets. First, the price system is a way of transmitting information. The fact that the price of a good rises indicates that the good is in short supply; if the price falls then it is oversupplied. Second, the profit motive gives people a reason

“Spending more on education means spending less on other things. People who say that enough is not being spent on education therefore imply that too much is being spent on other things...”

to respond to that information. If prices rise in a sector because of increasing demand, this normally means that larger than average profits are to be made, and so new producers rush in. If prices fall, because of falling demand, generally profits will fall, and so some firms will leave the industry. In both cases the equilibrium will eventually be established, where the rate of profit for the industry is roughly equivalent to the average rate of profit for the economy as a whole.

These are the key features of the market: it signals information and it gives people an incentive to respond to that information by changing production patterns. Nor should we forget the importance of competition in driving down prices, and driving up quality. In combination these factors lead to the consequence that, broadly, in markets people (with money) get what they want from other people.

Many theorists accept that the market can distribute goods to individuals in a way in which no planned economy could match. If I want a certain good and if I have the money I can go and buy it. I can express my preferences in my purchasing behaviour, and others try to make as much profit as they can by responding to them. In the planned economy there are two problems. How will the planner know what I want? It might be common knowledge that people like ice cream and need socks, but how can the planner know that I prefer vanilla ice cream to chocolate, or plain socks to patterned ones? And why should the planner take the trouble to make sure I get what I want?

Real planned economies have been plagued by chronic shortages of some goods, such as winter tights, over-production of others such as low-grade vodka, and a depressing lack of quality and variety in those goods that are available. In order to run an economy as efficiently as

the free market, the planner needs a level of omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence rarely attributed to mere human beings.

If the demand for schooling in a free market rises, then profits to be made from supplying this increased demand also rise. These increased profits attract new suppliers, these suppliers will need labour, land and capital, but since their demand for such would increase, incomes to be made from working in the education industry, or investing in it will rise, attracting new people into it. Obviously, these new increases will come from elsewhere in the economy, but since people would be buying more education, they would be buying less of other things, thus causing a drop in demand for those other things, and so fewer profits and less incentive to provide them. The fact that they choose to do this proves that they value increased schooling more than they value other uses of their money, which means that the resources being allocated to education and away from elsewhere are being allocated to where they are most valued and away from where they are less valued. Without the price mechanism, the state has no means of knowing whether its investment in education is more valuable than the resources and jobs and investments it is destroying elsewhere, or less.

Wolff said that there were exceptions to the general superiority of free markets, in the case of market failures. Examples he gave were of positive externalities. I don't agree that such cases justify, either on utilitarian grounds or on grounds of justice, state interference, but that is irrelevant, since we have already seen, with the quote from David Friedman, that these examples of market failure do not apply in the case of education, which is almost a pure private good, with no free-rider problem.

Since firms in the free market are under pressure from competition, they have every incentive to make sure they deliver the greatest benefits to their customers, utilising the least amount of resources. This inbuilt mechanism protecting against wastage means that education providers in a free market have every incentive to keep their costs as low as they can. A nationalised education system has no such features, since it doesn't have to compete for its revenue to cover its costs, nor actually work to please those that use it, in order to obtain this revenue. Local Education Authorities tend to absorb any additional funds for

“Since firms in the free market are under pressure from competition, they have every incentive to make sure they deliver the greatest benefits to their customers, utilising the least amount of resources.”

schools, and workers in the industry present powerful special interest groups.

And just as Mars prefers to price its chocolates as close to cost as it can and get lots of customers, rather than price them extraordinarily highly and hope that rich people with extremely sweet teeth will cover the company's entire costs, firms in the education industry will tend to price their services within reach of as many people as possible. After all, the car industry doesn't only provide gold plated cars for billionaires.

The Lesson from History

Of course, many people will talk about the nineteenth century and people not receiving education before it was compulsory and tax funded. However, first, in the early nineteenth century, newspaper sales were very high — indeed, conservatives were worried about radical literature falling into the hands of the poor (so they imposed the stamp duty, and taxed paper) — and so literacy was actually quite high and widespread.⁵ Further circumstantial evidence on widespread literacy in the nineteenth century comes from the US, where the complex novel *The Last of the Mohicans* sold five million copies.⁶ Similarly popular novels, even aimed at children exist in Britain — *Alice in Wonderland* springs to mind.

Another circumstantial piece of evidence in support of claim that literacy was widespread prior to compulsion and extensive state funding of schooling comes from marriage signatures. In 1840, half the women who got married in England and Wales signed the register with a mark rather than a signature. By 1870 the figure was down to 27 percent, and in 1891 it had fallen to only 6.4 per cent. For men, the figures also fell, so that by 1891 only 6.4 per cent signed with a mark. Of course, this was twenty one years after W.E. Forster's *Elementary Education Act*, so some may claim that this increased literacy was due to the provision of state schools and compulsion. However, since the average age of marriage amongst men was 28, and the average school leaving age was eleven, most of these men would have been affected very little by Forster's Act.⁷ However, this evidence should still be considered circumstantial, since the ability to sign one's name is not evidence of great literacy. Indeed it may be said that people would make the effort to learn to write that more than to write in general, especially for a special occasion like a wedding.

Less circumstantial evidence comes from other, more official surveys. The Council on Education, in 1840, wanted to know how many people could read. An assessment was made on their behalf of the literacy of miners in Northumberland and Durham. It was found that a large majority of them, 79 per cent, could read, whilst over half of them, 53 per cent, could write. Twenty-five years later, a survey was made of men in the navy and marines. It was shown that 80 per cent of the marines and 89 per cent of the seamen could read. These men would have been educated, on average, a decade or so earlier. A survey of boys newly recruited from straight from schools found that 99 per cent could read.⁸

Secondly, one of the most important and prolific writers on the history of education before and after compulsion and public funding, Edwin West, wrote,⁹

Contrary to popular belief, the supply of schooling in Britain between 1800 and 1840 was relatively substantial prior to any government intervention, although it depended almost completely on private funds. At this time, moreover, the largest contributors to education revenue were working parents and the second largest was the Church. Of course, there was less education per child than today, just as there was less of everything else, because the national income was so much smaller. I have calculated, nevertheless, that the percentage of the net national income spent on day-schooling of children of all ages in England in 1833 was approximately 1 percent. By 1920, when schooling had become "free" and compulsory by special statute, the proportion had fallen to 0.7 percent.

The first comprehensive survey to discover what proportion of the population were in schooling was conducted in 1820 by Henry Brougham's Select Committee, and found that in 1818 1 in 14 or 15 of the entire population, including adults, were being schooled. In his own private capacity, Brougham followed up this report in 1828 with a 5 per cent survey of the same sources (the parochial clergy) and found that the figure had doubled. In 1833 the principle of state subsidies to schools was accepted and a grant that amounted to only

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£20,000 was handed to two large voluntary school organisations. However, in this year Parliament authorised another survey of the whole country, and its findings confirmed those of Brougham's private estimate of the rate of growth. It was found that the numbers in schools had increased from 478,000 in 1818 to 1,294,000 in 1834.¹⁰

The next estimates of schooling for the whole country came in 1851 when the Registrar General made a compilation with the help of the district enumerators who were conducting the population census in that year. They found that there were 2,144,378 children attending day schools out of a total population of adults and children of about 18 million — so a proportion of 1 in 8.36 of the population were in school. Indeed, the report shows that there was a veritable explosion in private schooling, *in spite* of the provision of state endowments — in some of the intervening years, endowed schools were rejected in favour of private ones.¹¹

The Newcastle Commission on Popular Education published a massive report in 1861. The Commission sought to find out how many children were at school and then estimate what percentage of all children must be receiving schooling. They found that in 1858, in the country as a whole, there were 2,535,462 pupils in day schools. They then tried to find out how many children *did not* receive a schooling. The Commission found that the evidence indicated that the bulk of children who attended elementary schools had their names on the books of some school from six to ten years of age, though a considerable number went before they were six, and many stayed until they were twelve. To calculate the number of children that should have been at school at a given time the Commissioners assumed that the average period of school attendance did not exceed six years. With this assumption they maintained that one-half of the total number of children between 3 years and 15 years should have been at school. This figure, obtainable from the Registrar General, was 2,655,767. Since the number of children actually on the books was 2,535,462, the shortfall was only 120,305. However, this deficiency can be accounted for in part by children who had bodily or mental infirmities, or were being educated at home. Moreover, the Commissioners information from the specimen districts shows their assumption of six years attendance to be inaccurate — the average was actually 5.7 years. If this had been assumed

instead, the deficiency would have been negligible.

In other words, the figures show that nearly all children were receiving some schooling. The Newcastle Commission's conclusion was that 95.5 per cent of children received schooling, but the more accurate figure may be closer to 100 per cent. The proportion of scholars to the population in the middle of 1858 was 1 in 7.7 compared with 1 in 8.36 in the 1851 Census. The Commission checked their estimate. Both the information gathered centrally through societies connected with education, and the returns collected by the Assistant Commissioners in their specimen districts confirmed the proportion of about 1 in 7.7. In Prussia, the first fully state funded and compulsory education system in the world, the figure was 1 in 6.27. In Holland it was 1 in 8.11, and France it was 1 in 9.0. So the UK compared favourably with the rest of Western Europe's industrialising nations.¹²

When W.E. Forster introduced his bill into parliament in 1870 he made no mention of the Newcastle Commission's findings, but instead referred to evidence from a small-scale survey conducted by two inspectors in 1869, over a few months in four industrial towns, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham. In Liverpool, Forster claimed, out of an estimated 80,000 children of school age,

20,000 of them attended no school whatever, while at least another 20,000 attend schools where they get an education not worth having.

At first glance, this claim seems to be a major discrepancy with the Newcastle Commission's findings. However, the devil in the detail is in the phrase "school age." What age is that? The Newcastle commission found that a typical child was at school for an average of 5.7 years. Forster assumed that the school age population was of children between five and thirteen — eight years. Even if we assumed that the school-age period had increased from 5.7 years to 6 by the time of Forster's survey, we are likely to find a reduced figure of 60,000 (that is, three quarters of 80,000). This was exactly the figure that Forster found in school! As James Tooley says, "The fallacy that Forster committed would be rather like defining the proper school-leaving age in England as 20 years, and then claiming that, say, 25% of 'school-age' children were not in school at all."¹³

"In other words, the figures show that nearly all children were receiving some schooling."

Responses to Critics of the Laissez-Faire Approach

One critic of E.G. West, the educational historian Andy Green, suggests that West

has attempted to rehabilitate the reputation of English educational laissez faire, arguing that reformers ... exaggerate English deficiencies. However, comparative data, which West largely ignores, vindicates the deficiency verdict, at least of the relative position of English education.¹⁴

Other European education systems were highly interventionist (free, compulsory state education was introduced early in Germany, for instance), and Green's claim is that, when compared to these systems, English education, which was relatively *laissez faire*, was deficient in terms of achieving high levels of enrolment and literacy. However, when Green himself reviews the evidence, even according to him, England's relative position in the mid 19th century is better than that of France in terms of the percentage of the population receiving schooling (p. 15) and in terms of literacy (p. 25). Green does not dispute that there was a widespread "national network" of schools in Victorian England and Wales without the state (p. 8), nor dispute that it was more effective than the highly centralised state education system in France. Another historian, W.B. Stephens, notes that in the period 1850-60 "The proportion of literate persons in England was higher in France, though lower than in Germany".

Stephens, however, is another historian critical of West. He suggests that West took the Newcastle Commission's findings too literally, saying that their estimate of time spent in school was probably on the optimistic side:

At all events this time probably included years spent as toddlers from three years of age upwards, and anyway, being an average, varied greatly from place to place, and was in practice reduced by irregular attendance.¹⁵

The trouble is that even if this claim is correct, it does not undermine West's basic claim that, with only minimal state interference, schooling rates were very high. Stephen's is only haggling over the specific percentage of chil-

dren in schooling, or suggesting some geographical variations. The most important way we can respond to his criticism is to ask what extent any geographical shortcomings in schooling provisions or irregular attendance were the result of poverty. John Stuart Mill, writing in 1834, said "As far, therefore, as quantity of teaching is concerned, the education of our people is, or will speedily be, amply provided for." Mill's real concern, and the appropriate concern for critics of *laissez faire* was about *quality*:

It is the quality which so grievously demands the amending hand of government. And this is the demand which is principally in danger of being obstructed by popular apathy and ignorance.¹⁶

Even if there was enough schooling, as even some of West's critics agree, that is not the same as saying that the schooling was of 'adequate' quality absent the state.

However, West's critic, Green himself points out that, in Germany, where the state was heavily involved in education,

this does not mean that what [was] taught was necessarily desirable from all points of view, and indeed, the kinds of knowledge and attitudes that were transmitted by the most efficient systems, notably in Prussia, often reflected most illiberal and doctrinaire purposes of the state, and consequently engendered great suspicion amongst those with more democratic leanings.¹⁷

Mill himself warned that

A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another ... in a proportion as it is efficient and successful, it established a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body.¹⁸

As West says, there wasn't universal education because the national income was too small to provide this. However, his writing seems to suggest that as productivity increased through out the nineteenth century, so consumption of education increased.

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This matches contemporary views. According to UNESCO, in developing countries in 1926, 75 per cent of the population were illiterate. In 1948 this had fallen to 52 per cent, and by 1970 it had fallen to 20 per cent. Between 1965 and 1998, the average income of the world's citizen almost doubled, from \$2,497, to \$4,839. However, this didn't come about through the richest nations multiplying their incomes. During the same period, the average income in the richest one-fifth of the world's population increased from \$8,315 to \$14,623, which is by almost 75%. The average income in the poorest one-fifth, though, more than doubled, from \$551 to \$1,137. So consumption of education increases as prosperity increases, and so it increases as productivity increases.

Against State Education

So, state education redistributes money from the poor to the non-poor, misallocates funds, can't plan the provision of the good, relative to other goods, or relative to alternative forms of the good properly without a price mechanism to reveal demand. It is burden on poor families, and on everybody else, and we would be better off without it.

Notes

(1) Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action*, 1973, retrieved 17th January 2009, <http://www.hwcn.org/~ap951/ward.html>.

(2) David Friedman, 'The Weak Case for Public Schooling', 7th July 1993, retrieved 19th January 2009, http://www.davidfriedman.com/Libertarian/Public%20Schools/Public_Schools1.html.

(3) Murray Rothbard, *For A New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto*, 1973/2002, retrieved 19th January 2009, <http://www.mises.org/rothbard/newlibertywhole.asp>.

(4) Jonathan Wolff, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, Oxford, OUP, 1996.

(5) David Botsford, *The British Road from Freedom To Despotism*, London, Libertarian Alliance, 1993.

(6) Mary Ruwart, *Healing Our World in an Age of Aggression*, Kalamazoo, MI, Sunstar Press, 2003, p. 145.

(7) James Bartholomew, *The Welfare State We're In*, London, Politico's, 2004, pp. 159.

(8) *Ibid*.

(9) Edwin West, 'The Spread of Education Before Compulsion', 1st July 1996, retrieved 19th January 2009, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=307>.

(10) Edwin West, *Education and the State*, Indianapolis, IN, Liberty Fund, 1994, p. 171-2.

(11) *Ibid*, pp. 174-5.

(12) *Ibid*, pp. 177-180.

(13) James Tooley, *Education Without The State*, London, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1996, p. 33.

(14) Andy Green, *Education and State Formation*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990, p. 11.

(15) W.B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-70: The Geography of Diversity in Provincial England*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1987, p. 52.

(16) Quoted in Tooley, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

(17) Green, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

(18) John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, London, J.M. Dent, 1859/1972, p. 175.



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"state education ...
we would be better
off without it."

Taxation

In late medieval times, tax riots, tax revolts and revolutions kept abusive taxation in check. In effect, one use of force — taxation — was restrained by another — the threatened violence of the streets. The result, achieved by the 19th century in most modern states, was a rather limited, relatively nonintrusive tax system.

By the 20th century, however, the balance of power between tax collectors and tax protestors had shifted. Tax riots and revolts disappeared. In fact, tax protests ceased entirely! While all sorts of other groups — women, trade unionists, temperance crusaders, religious and racial bigots, and so on — used rallies, marches and demonstrations in order to get their way, taxpayers became utterly silent.

The decline in visible opposition to taxation meant that by the 20th century, tax administrators and government officials began to have everything their own way.

Of course, harsh punitive practices had declined, but within modern standards of criminal prosecution and punishment, tax managers were granted alarming powers. They could raise taxes as they saw fit and adopt intrusive and objectionable ways of collecting and enforcing them, without having to fear blood in the streets or even an embarrassing demonstration. The withholding of taxes from wages is an example of the kind of measure that would have led to massive riots two centuries ago. Yet 20th century governments have been able to adopt this practice without a whimper of public protest.

Modern tax systems stripped away banking privacy; they were allowed to ignore many civil rights, including due process, freedom of expression, freedom from illegal searches and seizures, the right to face accusers, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and the right against self-incrimination. Tax officials were given the authority to set up and enforce broad systems of control and surveillance with procedures that demand citizens report on their financial dealings with each other.

Such power breeds arrogance. In Yorkshire the tax office can insist upon timed responses to their queries. Switch the enquiry the other way around and the hapless victim learns of a “6-8 week delay” in responding to correspondence.

Taxation was born as a regularised system of extracting war booty from defeated enemies. Once established it became a way of extracting revenue from anyone. Rulers began to realise that the same system that brought them funds from abroad could be used against their own people.

Least, the ones without much power.

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The SIF's Aim:

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The SIF is a classical liberal organisation that believes in the economic and personal freedom of the individual, subject only to the equal freedom of others.

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- ✓ The sovereignty of Parliament and its effective control over the Executive.
- ✓ The rule of law and the independence of the Judicature.
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The Law of Equal Freedom

*"Every man has freedom to do all that he wills,
provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man."*

Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, 1851