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- More on the “benefits” of a planned economy
- Freedom today
- Silver!
- News about the SIF and CiPS
- Cuttings of interest

THE INDIVIDUAL: OLD AND NEW

Welcome to the latest issue of *The Individual*. It continues the theme of the last one of having a small number of longer articles.

We are privileged to publish ‘Part II’ of Professor Alice Coleman’s remarkable investigation into the errors and casualties of Britain’s post-war planning mania. In the short-term and with clear and agreed objectives in sight – such as adapting the whole economy to see off and then defeat Nazi Germany – planning can work better than a free market. However, in the longer term and working in an open-ended and free society, it does not. Britain has probably never recovered from the undoubtedly sincere belief that the war socialism of Churchill’s coalition government could be carried over into peacetime.

Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies takes up most of the other half of this issue with a fascinating essay: a *tour d’horizon* of the political situation in the UK and the USA, with specific reference to the SIF’s stated beliefs. Even I sometimes forget

that *The Individual* is the “organ” of a formally constituted, membership-based organisation that actually believes in things!

Both of these essays are quite lengthy. Good. There are limits to what can be conveyed in a standard blog post let alone 140 characters on Twitter. As Albert Einstein once said, “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

The final article is rather different. As long-time readers of *The Individual* will recall, Richard Garner died tragically young in 2011. However, I am still mining – if I will be forgiven for putting it like that given the topic of his piece – a small stock of hitherto unpublished (in hardcopy) essays that he wrote in the years before his death. Reading through his essay, I can still hear his voice...

There have been a few SIF-related events

(Continued on page 26)

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THE PLANNING TRAVESTY: PART II

Professor Alice Coleman

Part I of this paper (The Individual, August 2012, pp. 28-40) explained how the planning profession substituted building design for the original land-use purpose of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and created both a housing shortage and rising crime. Part II discusses other problems due to planning and possible solutions.

The UK is a small country but at the time of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act it was one of the world's most densely populated, exceeded only by The Netherlands and Hong Kong. This made it essential not to squander its land resource and it was argued that planning professionals would safeguard it more wisely than a multiplicity of individuals, firms and organizations concerned with their own needs. This hope has not been fulfilled. It has been said that all power corrupts and planning power is not entirely an exception. But before embarking on an account of planning's land use follies I should explain my own expertise.

The Land Utilisation Surveys of Britain

Like all geographers, I was impressed by Sir Dudley Stamp's national Land Utilisation Survey. Its field maps were reduced to 1:63360 scale (one inch to the mile) for the publication of seven use-categories: forest/woodland, arable land, improved grass, heath/moor/rough grazings, orchards/nurseries/allotments, buildings/yards/mines/cemeteries, and water areas. It was not quite complete at the outbreak of World War II, but the national economic system of exporting manufactures and importing food and raw materials was upset by the diversion of factories to munitions and the torpedoing of food ships, so home food production was boosted, and as Stamp's maps showed where farming could be improved after its decay during the great inter-war depression, the government funded the remaining survey, publication and measurement.

Stamp's masterpiece, *The Land of Britain: Its Use and Misuse*,¹ analysed the findings but its fifth edition hinted that planning was being slow to improve land-use. He inspired the World Land Use Survey but planning did not

produce a British update, so in 1960 I launched a Second Land Utilisation Survey, publishing 70 use-categories on the Ordnance Survey's new 1:25,000 series.^{2,3} There were some 3000 voluntary surveyors, mainly teachers and sixth-formers and as mapwork had not yet succumbed to computer use, their work standard was excellent.

Stamp's method of measuring his seven categories would not suffice for the Second Survey's greater detail so I researched 19 methods for accuracy, speed, equipment cost, labour cost, etc., and chose regular point sampling,⁴ which had been shunned because of the statistical fashion for random sampling. But it was highly labour-saving as 151,136 points were already on the maps as grid-line intersections and later it was proved more accurate than the random alternative. Bedford Council asked me to check an area which had taken 250 man-days to measure by planimeter and in one day I produced figures that proved extremely close to theirs.

Land use trends

The measurements showed that, since Stamp's survey, improved farmland had been lost at a rate which, if unchecked, would see its total extinction in about 160 years from now.⁵ This was partly due to the 1930s spread of semi-detached houses but more the result of planning's low-density principle. Sample resurveys of large areas⁶ revealed much inner-city dereliction and other problems due to planning ineptitude.⁷ For example, in 1705 km² of east London, south Essex and north Kent, 35 km² of housing had been demolished and 35.5 km² of new housing built on farmland, and as the new was at a lower density, there were fewer homes, despite the severe shortage. Planning's chief creation was land disuse. New dereliction, rough waste and bushy scrub were 71 times the area of housing increase. Second largest was green space. Basic needs such as food and shelter were neglected. Similar incompetence proved to be widespread.

A frequent reaction to my wasteland findings was "I never noticed it before but now I see

The measurements showed that ... improved farmland had been lost at a rate which, if unchecked, would see its total extinction in about 160 years...

it everywhere”, and there were wasteland conferences. But green space did not offend and “cherished land” is still that which feasts the eye but does not feed the stomach.

The low-density principle produced outward dispersal. Inner cities were emptied and farmland built on. Planning seemed to regard rural areas as mere anonymous space to take over as they wished. Fields were not bought for the adjacent areas made unfarmable by the newcomers’ pastime activities so farmers were robbed without compensation. This ubiquitous waste received its own acronym, SLOAP: Space Left Over After Planning. Farmers I met while mapping mentioned 80 kinds of harm to their land or livestock, so I published a questionnaire in *The Farmers’ Weekly*. The over 600 replies were mainly from active planning areas - town fringes and new towns - and their extra information revealed over 300 ways in which farming was being defrauded. Some were utterly cruel, e.g. cows’ eyes gouged out and lambs tied to a railway line to be cut in half by trains. This has recently escalated to skinning sheep alive. Semi-detached houses had not generated such problems, as they had gardens to work in, a pleasure denied by planning’s common greens, which sent people out to ruin agriculture in pursuit of recreation.

The centrifugal thrust also improved moorland for farming. This slightly reduced the loss but its poorer soils did not fully replace the top-grade ones that were being sterilized faster than the other four grades. Planning began when severe food rationing made the conservation of productive land paramount but recovery from the war was expected to restore the export of manufactures and import of food and raw materials. It was not foreseen that vast inflation would undermine industry and drive much of it overseas, and the Coalition still ignores the need to balance this loss by producing food and raw materials instead. We have already exhausted most of our mineral resources, so we need the biological ones of farm and forest, but the government has already tried to close the Forestry Commission and is sacrificing farmland to development. Landscape conservation is stressed but not the all-important production.

New settlement sprawl invaded farmscape and newcomers’ right to roam left many fields unfarmable...

Land Use Analysis

My 70 categories needed an integrated explanation and a national summary map. The use-type classification of the Department of the Environment (DOE)⁸ was unsuitable as individual uses would be smaller than pinpoints at national scale and diversities could not be portrayed. The map should neither be overwhelmed by detail nor overgeneralize it. A solution emerged from my research of 108,000 acres of reverted land in and near Ottawa, where I found five disuse patterns and termed their areas townscape, farmscape, wildscape, rurban (rural-urban) fringe and marginal fringe. My book on their diverse problems, *The Planning Challenge of the Ottawa Area*,⁹ was widely read and the Mayor of Ottawa had a copy sent to every Canadian MP.

British scapes and fringes had to be identified from all land uses, not just disuses. Scapes were largely compatible uses. Townscape consisted of the settlement “supercategory”, e.g. houses, shops, offices, factories, parks, etc. The farmscape supercategory comprised agricultural uses and the wildscape supercategory was vegetation, e.g. woodland, heath, moor and waste. Each scape had to exceed a minimum size and could also include alien uses, provided that they were sufficiently small and far apart. Greater incompatibles created the conflicts of fringes.

Marginal fringe was a patchy pattern of farmland and vegetation, with fields reclaimed in prosperous times and left to revert in depressed times. It was hard work to upgrade them and sadness when they had to be let go, but it did not need planning intervention. Rurban fringe was the great area of incompatibilities. New settlement sprawl invaded farmscape and newcomers’ right to roam left many fields unfarmable, adding rundown waste vegetation, so all three supercategories are intermixed. Besides the growing rurban fringes there were inner-city “rurban inliers” due to planned demolition and “rurban outliers”, due to mineral extraction, disused airfields or badly planned new towns. Planning was supposed to ensure harmonious land use change but it seemed a sad fact that most of the areas it affected became highly problematic.

My research team and I developed a key to make our national map¹⁰ doubly objective: (a) so precise that independent workers pro-

duced identical boundaries and (b) a meaningful representation of the real world. We could easily check (a), and were helped with (b) from the many visitors who came for land-use information and recognized the scapes and fringes of their home areas. This exactitude allowed a calculation of *planning scores* showing the degree of each county's land-use harmony. Only Lincolnshire scored above 90%. The 12 authorities scoring under 50% were mainly those where planners had not restored derelict land but increased it by demolition. Scores would have been much better before the shadow of planning fell upon them.

Another low-scoring component was bracken, which causes cancer in farm animals. Its two carcinogens are rain-washed into the water supply and the bracken acreages proved to be very highly significantly related to local stomach cancer rates. These had declined as refrigerators reduced the smoking of food but not in Birmingham, supplied from the bracken-fringed Elan reservoir. Assessing a proposal to enlarge this reservoir, W.G.V. Balchin advised eradicating the bracken first. I advocated afforesting all bracken areas but planning remained indifferent.

The Scape and Fringe map replaces the secretiveness with which planning has equipped itself. It shows the problem areas' locations and its explanatory book notes which kinds of change could be permitted without consulting planners and incurring their expensive delays.

Planning Secretiveness

Planning flouts a basic principle of British justice, that the law must be known so that it can be obeyed. It is not stated which land uses are legal and makes us pay to find out. Nor do planners know themselves and take an unconscionable time to work it out in each individual case. Even then their decisions may be just whims, as recently exemplified in a letter to the press, which reported that a local protest against a wind-farm had been denied by planners who had acceded to several such protests and decided that they "might as well refuse this one".

The USA tries to obviate secretiveness by means of zoning ordinances that narrowly define a land use for each specific area, but

this may not match the zones' sizes to actual need. Overestimates leave disused areas and underestimates do not satisfy the call for the given use.

The Scape and Fringe map and book prescribe more flexibility. Any of each scape's compatible uses could go ahead without planning intervention but not incompatible ones. Townscape examples are extending one's home without blocking neighbours' light, building houses with gardens but not flats and converting homes for non-noisy, non-smoky businesses. Farmscape could accept any agricultural use and wildscape could be afforested, to shade out bracken or restore productivity to nearly half a million acres of non-nutritious mat-grass. Rurban areas could be upgraded by new-build on disused land to help convert it to townscape. A full gamut of initiatives could be freed from planning's costs and delays and end its secretiveness.

The Coalition is nibbling away at planning control, but its positive ideas seem miniscule, e.g. easier permission for a few changes of building use and no complete by-pass of planning. Its major changes are badly counterproductive. For example, the highest yielding farmland has been made the preferential area for development and building more flats than houses has not been stopped, so there will be a huge crime rise in rural areas. Planning ignorance still prevails.

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act gave planning unrestricted control over every use, and the very name "planning" implies responsibility for future well-being, including care for the economy. This requires the opposite of ignorance and the DOE should ensure that training departments give planning students a clear understanding of vital factors for air, water, food, housing, energy, transport, industry and raw materials, trade, employment and social interaction. A properly structured knowledge of these aspects would let each planning application receive a quick response, but the lack of such a purview results in tardy decisions that are often harmful.

Pure Air

Air is our first essential; we cannot live more than a few minutes without it. It is freely available and the need is to ensure its purity.

Planning flouts a basic principle of British justice, that the law must be known so that it can be obeyed.

When planning control began, urban atmospheres were badly polluted. Redecoration of my college's exterior woodwork saw black smuts stuck in the white paint before it dried. But improvement did not come from planning. It was triggered by the great London smog of 1952. Despite fast-closed windows, the murk seeped in to smear the walls, especially near large railway stations, where coal-fired locomotives emitted sooty smoke. Factory effluvia contributed but the biggest share came from dwelling chimneys. The week's death roll of 4000, including babies, was double the normal, and led to the 1956 Clean Air Act.

British Rail embarked upon electrification, and power stations began to trap soot and carbon dioxide instead of releasing them. Planning discouraged coal fires in new homes in favour of gas or electricity but it increased air pollution in other ways. Its failure to produce maps of the real world meant that its own layouts were oversimplified, with some uses segregated. The industrial quarters caused many to need mechanized transport with fumes instead of walking to work as previously and no thought was given to the possibility that working in a concentration of smoky buildings might harm health more than the less dense pollution of scattered smoke sources. Fortunately, new industries were likely to use clean energy but this meant they could have been dispersed, retaining the benefit of walking to work. Concentrating schools also created traffic pollution. Planners did not react when education authorities closed thousands of small village schools and introduced school buses to take pupils into towns.

People decanted to the rural fringe had to commute to work, thus increasing transport fumes, especially where trains ran on diesel. Longer journeys also leave less time for exercise, possibly aiding the spread of obesity. And planning's ubiquitous closes in lieu of interconnected road networks meant going round in four directions to reach friends a few yards away beyond the closes' heads. Canadian research shows that if destinations involve over eight minutes walking time, there is usually resort to the car and its air pollution. Recent closes often have an elaborate dendritic layout, with twigs sealed off from nearby through roads and coalescing towards a sole exit that takes over eight minutes to reach on foot. After some 50 years,

planners began to perceive the invisible pollution menace but instead of recognizing that they had boosted it and therefore applying DICE-type solutions (Design Improvement Controlled Experiment) they did nothing to avoid the persecution of motorists.

Another air problem is the exponential increase in carbon dioxide. This was alleged to be caused by industrial and transport emissions and in turn cause a dangerous rise in temperature, foreshadowing an unbearably hot earth with alligators basking at the North Pole. DOE planners, as usual, failed to examine this contention scientifically and allowed the government to take economically destructive action based on its fallacies. During the Labour administration our industrial output was gravely reduced and our national debt was hugely increased by payments to British and international global-warming "experts".

A first fallacy was that the temperature rise was caused by man-made carbon dioxide emissions. When, in 1988, world temperature began to exceed its 20th-century mean to reach a peak in 1998, astronomers observed similar warming on the moon and planets where there was neither carbon dioxide nor industry nor transport to account for it. The cause must have been solar variation, which would also have affected planet Earth.

A second fallacy was the assertion that carbon dioxide caused the rising temperature. If this were true, both should have risen similarly but their time-graphs are quite different. Carbon dioxide rose continuously throughout the 20th century, but the temperature rise of the first 40 years was succeeded by such severe cooling that climatologists seriously envisaged a new ice age.¹¹ It eventually recovered but 1998 was still slightly cooler than 1934, while carbon dioxide was much greater and has gone on increasing over the last 14 years when temperature has not.

Thirdly, despite slight post-1998 cooling, warmists alleged that the rise was ongoing, perhaps to protect their jobs. Data suppression by East Anglian warmists was dismissed as naïveté and not deliberation, but do we really want naive advisers for an expensive field of global policy? Scandal has also tainted The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

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Fourthly, warmists claim to be accurate scientists and calumniate critics by asserting that they are non-scientists paid by industry to object. Yet it is the warmists who are paid and who may not be scientists. Lord Stern, of polar-alligator fame, applied his mathematics to economics, not science, and a serious denial of the warming hypothesis was signed by 31,000 real scientists.

So why does carbon dioxide increase? Its time-graph parallels that of world population growth and both involve carbon dioxide. On average we each exhale an annual quarter of a ton of it and the balance between animals' CO₂ output and plants' oxygen output is now being undermined, not only by the increased human respiration but also by losing vegetation to building sites. How soon will atmospheric oxygen's safe 21 % be reduced two degrees to an unhealthy and even lethal level, as found in aircraft where oxygen must be provided for those affected.

When deciding to fund poorer countries' development, it was argued that this would help them reduce family sizes and avert the disaster of a 5-billion world population in AD 2000. This has failed. The present 7-billion suggests that a major result of aid has been the production of more people needing aid. A different solution is needed. It is essential to increase our re-oxygenating plant cover but planning is doing the opposite, in its eager rural coverage and its preference for flats with shorn grass instead of houses with their more richly vegetated gardens.

Water Problems

Water is the second essential for life. Several days without liquid intake may be enough to cause fatal dehydration and an overabundance can drown. The Anglo-Saxons already knew enough to avoid settling in damp clay vales and L.J.A. Munro has shown that infant mortality rates on well-drained chalk are significantly lower than those on nearby clay,¹² where children also win fewer grammar school places. Planning ignores this and, even worse, has approved the building of thousands of homes on flood-prone land. Pre-planning local builders avoided flood-plains but planning delays forced them out of business and today's larger firms often lack the relevant neighbourhood knowledge. Planners seem to find it easier to ascribe increased flooding to global warming than to

blame themselves for endorsing floodable sites. One half-baked idea is to build homes on stilts to lift them above flood level but this would need an advance understanding of the terrain and still leave residents marooned.

Planners confer with water authorities about connecting up proposed sites, which could easily be arranged by suppliers and builders without planning delays. And ability to connect does not ensure an adequate supply. The South-East is threatened by shortages, so DOE planners should long ago have encouraged the repair of leaks, which are estimated to waste half the volume purified by the water authorities. They should also have created a national water grid as that would also have helped prevent flooding in wetter areas by piping water to drier ones.

The first planning appeal where I testified had an absurd water plan. It ignored East Kent's ample Chalk groundwater and wanted to pump river-water 200 feet up to create a valley reservoir, recouping the pumping cost by charging farmers on Thanet's marshland. The reservoir would have sterilized oxygenating fields and woods and the farmers did not need extra water as they had drainage dykes. So our objection prevailed and no water shortage has ensued.

The irony is that a 1948 visit to the newly established Ministry of Town and Country Planning revealed that one civil servant was making a national map of flood plains. This was intended to guide planners where to refuse development permission for buildings. What happened to that document that it has been so grossly ignored?

Food

A third life-sustaining essential is food. The Malthusian warning of population increase outstripping food supply has been ridiculed as the developed world has staved it off by improving agriculture, and genetic modification (GM) offers a further postponement. But there must be an ultimate limit,¹³ even if we all retreat underground and purify enough seawater to drain the continental shelf for farmland. Malthus's prophecies have already come true in parts of the globe and are having an economic effect here, through a 4% annual rise in food-import prices.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

British agriculture became so productive that its total output exceeded that of Australia and New Zealand combined. The last Conservative government had a policy of “More Food From Our Own Resources”, and brought national production up to about three-quarters of our needs. But rural areas are largely Conservative and the Labour administration did not hesitate to punish them. The outbreak of foot and mouth disease was not treated normally but much more harshly, leading to many farmer suicides and a large reduction of our home output to only 64% of our requirements. This was an appreciable drop in the world food supply, so abroad as well as here Labour departed from its self-projected image of kindly care.

The Coalition, too, will seriously reduce home-grown food. Letting planners loose over the countryside to produce low-density sprawl and wasteland could reduce our food output even more than Labour did, as well as raising the crime rate. And the on-going world population increase is likely to reduce food exports further and continue to drive up our import prices. This is quite needless. Cameron could locate new housing as the DICE Project did, where it was welcomed with pro-votes and rapidly reduced high crime to a negligible rate.

Planning decanted many millions of people from our cities, which therefore have ample room for the two million new homes now needed. Copious wasteland would be greatly improved by building houses with gardens on it and as the density-reducing greens (but not parks) proved the strongest factor in crime-creation, they too would bring benefits if covered with individual homes. This would leave rural land both productive and oxygenating.

Planners should examine the validity of vegetarians’ pressure to make everyone adopt their dietary regime. It does not suit us all. I was a vegetarian for six years and my health suffered but quickly recovered when I went back to eating meat. My *Land Use Survey* revealed that improved pasture occupied 65% of England and Wales and rough grazings a further 15%, so the vegeboosters are urging that 80% of the total area must change its use. However, pastures are suited to wetter land where arable cultivation is difficult and crop failures would multiply.

Furthermore, ecologists urge keeping hedges around fields. These can disadvantage arable land as their shade delays crop ripening along the field edges and may necessitate a second harvesting phase. But they are an asset for stock-rearing as they prevent straying and include trees to give the animals shade in hot weather. And all-year-round grass, hedges and trees are more oxygenating than arable fields which are ploughed up and left bare for some months.

Raw materials and energy

We need to produce raw materials from forest and farm. Timber, leather and wool are obvious products, but we need to consider how non-renewable mineral resources can be replaced with renewable ones. The Coalition is not the best agency for this; business is better equipped with the necessary factual and imaginative originality. The present orchestrated wave of metal theft draws attention to one group of resources, for which the plastics industry has found some substitutes but not yet enough, and the threat of energy decline is receiving inadequate official treatment. Certainly linseed and rapeseed crops are encouraged for oil, but a farmer who grew his own vehicle fuel was very badly treated. Gordon Brown made him pay the petrol tax on it so he abandoned his splendid invention.

The Nazis developed a substitute for petrol, using carbon dioxide and also methane, which Prince Charles is having manufactured. South Africa still produces the Nazi’s type of fuel but critics say it is too expensive to help solve the greenhouse gas problem. However, that was once said of gas and electricity, so this, too, might develop economies of scale and better techniques.

Gas-shale fracking is possible but British Gas has warned that they would need a decade to develop it. This recalls the problems of Labour’s post-war nationalizations. One of them decreed bulk-buying of imports, leading to even stricter food rationing than in wartime, until the Conservatives abolished it and ended rationing. Socialists thought all private traders sought only their own benefit, and did not see how such benefit depended on meeting people’s real needs. The influential Harold Macmillan retained other nationalizations. His biographer, Francis Beckett¹⁴ explains that he was Liberal by conviction but

“To catch the reader’s attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

chose election as a Conservative because he felt that party had a better future. So it was not until Margaret Thatcher's premiership that further industries were set free, with the competition that promotes success.

Post-Thatcher denationalizations were bogus. Firms had to take financial responsibility but still submit to official control, now termed "regulation". So, unlike bus companies freed by abolishing the Combine, rail firms were kept in thrall, paying an annual franchise fee, and periodically competing with rivals to offer the best payment. This was not an honest auction where the winner could just top its competitors' limit, but a bid-in-the-dark that made the existing firms overbid to ensure keeping what they had invested in. Government no doubt delighted in the inflated sums but it caused business tragedies. The efficient GNER could not meet its offer but instead of having it reduced, the company was pitilessly ousted and others subjected to another blind bidding. A similar fate has also destroyed the popular West Coast line.

Energy firms, too, have no genuine independence and the Coalition makes them overcharge their customers as a way of cutting energy use to reduce global warming. The firm that lured me by promising cheaper gas and electricity rates not only upped the authorized fees but also direct-debited far more and eventually had to refund over £1200 taken wrongfully. If the renewable-energy development had been left to private enterprise, wind-farms would soon have been rejected as unreliable power sources and solar panels would have become cheaper instead of having their prices propped up by government subsidies. They could have multiplied on buildings instead of covering fields where they suppress both production and oxygenation.

A few nationalisations remain unaltered. The NHS has waiting lists that did not exist before it was founded and we increasingly read of medical murderers, and the killing of the old in the Death Pathway. The Social Services leave vulnerable children with abusive families and steal babies from mothers they say might harm them. Is this related to adopters' wish for very young ones and the bonuses for social workers supplying them? Court hearings for care orders are held in secret with the parents' case excluded - an evil denial of British justice, so Social Service

denationalization seems highly desirable. State education also began to be harmfully nationalized by progressive education after World War II and its increasing stranglehold has caused illiteracy to reach 42% of school-leavers in 2010. Some teachers who used better reading methods to prevent it have been sacked for forsaking progressivism.

After this digression I return to planning. It was a nationalization of land use initiatives and it shares the drawbacks of other such takeovers. Many people feel their planning applications have been badly treated but few see the systematic failure of planning as a whole. Good planners exist but not in sufficient numbers to overcome the widespread harm.

Planning delays

Many decades ago, the Crown Estates reported that planning delays were already costing them £8 million annually and a typical delay affected a recent case where I was asked to help oppose the conversion of the last local public house/ restaurant into a block of flats. There were no fewer than 900 objections and I added the criminogenic effect of the proposed block.

Even if the planners understood the objections, they did not explain them to the developer, whose next application retained all the undesirable features with only a few small irrelevant changes. It seems normal to go on re-applying until the objectors grow tired, but these persisted until a public appeal supported them. The developer had argued that no publican restaurateur was willing to take the business on, but when the opportunity re-opened, one quickly applied.

Planners could have refused at once instead of leaving the area without a restaurant for nearly three years but such delays are normal - and inflationary. They benefit planning staff by suggesting that lengthy pondering is necessary but penalize builders by deferring a return on site purchases and making them pay two or three years' interest on purchase loans before they can start work or, if there is a refusal, sell the land. This extra cost must be recouped by increasing the prices paid by the eventual buyers and planning also has other inflationary effects.

Post-Thatcher denationalizations were bogus. Firms had to take financial responsibility but still submit to official control, now termed "regulation".

Inflation caused by planning

1. Taxation is inflated by the cost of central and local government planners, with their support staff, buildings, furnishings and equipment, etc.
2. There is a charge for making a planning application and sometimes extraction of a very costly donation, e.g. 60 acres of land from the firm constructing the M25 in Surrey.
3. The cost effect of planning delays was too inflationary to be sustained by small local builders, who were forced out, creating a new pattern of large firms.
4. Lower urban densities left fewer people to fund each area, so council taxes rose.
5. Many of the people evicted to create lower density had to pay for a longer journey to work.
6. Wages might not cover the journey cost so employers had to pay their staff more.
7. Higher wages increased business costs, leading to increased prices for goods and services.
8. This rising cost of living required a further wage increase, setting up a vicious spiral of inflation and, after a time, the expectation of an annual rise.
9. Attempts to minimize the on-going increase led to many strikes - a further cost.
10. Commuter trains had to be run empty to be in place for the rush hours and this expense has raised commuter fares.
11. The fare increase further intensified the inflation spiral.
12. The cost of journey to work by road had a similar inflationary effect.
13. Increased road traffic triggered the cost of new major roads in urban areas.
14. New roads broke up communities and forced more people out, adding to the wage spiral.
15. Denser road traffic has led to inflationary congestion charges in many cities.
16. Traffic jam fumes impair health and lead to increased NHS cost and taxation.
17. Inner-city shops and services were left with fewer customers, forcing some to close, which inflated the need for unemployment pay.
18. Crowded trains and dense traffic increase stress, which is considered at least a partial cause of 200 types of illness. A Japanese study showed that such journeys significantly increased miscarriages. So this inflates the cost of the NHS, borne by the taxpayer.
19. Longer journeys to work added time to the working day and led to bargaining for fewer work hours in both the public and the private sectors. This increased employers' costs and exacerbated the inflationary chain reaction.
20. The compulsory purchase system for development land was all the more inflationary because the low density principle extended it to larger areas than were really needed.
21. Low density rural sites were entirely surrounded by farmland, which was recreationalized out of farm use on four sides instead of just one as it would have been if new-build had joined townscape compactly. Deprived farmers might need public assistance.
22. Low density meant longer roads, pipes and cables to reach more spaced-out buildings. By the time of the Structure Plans to take effect from 1971, city population had been reduced more than originally intended. London had lost 1.7 million people instead of the prescribed 1 million. But planning aimed to eject 1.4 million more, as part of 5 million nationally.
23. A further inflationary chain reaction arose from planning's failure to satisfy the housing need. Shortages increased dwelling prices and rents, again necessitating higher wages. New houses are now over 600 times the price of similar ones built before planning.
24. This increased cost also affected that of any necessary building repairs.
25. Higher repair costs caused insurance companies to increase their building premiums.
26. To solve the homelessness due to the high rents and prices caused by planning misjudgements, the government introduced housing and heating benefits paid for by taxes.
27. Council housing, increased to help offset planning-induced shortages, was for long subsidized by ratepayers, in-

New roads broke up communities and forced more people out...

The planning preference for flats has a criminogenic effect on many children raised in them and increases crime on a grand scale...

- flating their outgoings and making their wages inadequate.
28. The lifts, landings and corridors of flats cost about 10% more per dwelling than houses but house prices rose because of their scarcity in relation to people's preferences.
 29. Compelling builders to leave unbuilt green spaces also raised prices or rents.
 30. The twenty years of planned demolition were at the taxpayers' expense.
 31. The short time before many blocks of council flats needed expensive regeneration or a second round of demolition also added to the taxpayer's financial burden.
 32. There was a succession of costly but ineffective schemes for alleviating the plight of the problem estates created by planning. These included improvement grants and assisted-area funding. The one scientifically-based and successful scheme, DICE (Design Improvement Controlled Experiment), was cancelled.
 33. The planning preference for flats has a criminogenic effect on many children raised in them and increases crime on a grand scale, with enormous cost inflation for police, probation officers, court officials, etc., and all their premises.
 34. To save the cost of more prison space, criminals are released prematurely or not jailed. So the victims of these right-to-roam felons must pay for repairs and replacements after break-ins, and for locks, burglar alarms, car alarms, etc.
 35. Living in crime-ridden blocks increases stress, depression, etc. Tenants of DICE-improved estates say, "We no longer need sleeping tablets", "We don't need the psychiatrist now", showing how planned design inflates mental-health cost as well as that for physical-health.
 36. Modernism has led to decades of employing psychiatrists to try to redeem convicts, with little success in stemming recidivism and none in reversing the soaring crime rate.
 37. Private sector costs for counsellors has also increased. Some years ago their number had risen to 13,000 of them and there must be still more now.
 38. Planning has left inner cities in need of defences such as all-night corridor lighting and the provision of concierges, with continuous funding to try to keep crime at bay, unlike DICE redesign's single investment giving permanently less crime and anti-social behaviour.
 39. All these aspects of inflation have made many British businesses unable to compete with foreign competitors and they have avoided bankruptcy by transferring their premises overseas. The reduced employment opportunities have escalated the number on the dole. There are other causes of unemployment, notably the creation of illiteracy by progressive education, but planning's contribution is substantial.
 40. A new inflationary element is the increase of insurance premiums by a flood-compensation fee, even where there is no flood risk. This stems from increased flooding due to planning approval for new homes on flood plains.
 41. There is also the health-hazard cost in homes permitted in ill-drained clay vales, etc. So planning's ignorance of geology is another drain on the NHS.
 42. Possibly the health cost of obesity can also be traced back to planning's creation of longer journeys to work. These lengthened the period away from home and probably caused snacking while awaiting homebound trains. Station snack outlets have greatly multiplied and so has the snacking habit, which hardly existed before planning.
 43. Another unfair planning cost is currently emerging. Free loft insulation is available to cut the escape of heat, but the occupants of houses with planning's flat roofs must still go on paying for this heat loss because no insulating method has yet been found for them.
 44. There seems little doubt that planning control has been a main engine of inflation – whether price or monetary – and misallocation of resources over the 65 years of its existence and the current plan for extensive rural development will lead to even longer journeys to work and launch another round of inflationary pressures.

Planning's self-protection

Planners have fended off criticism by persuading people (a) that things were much worse before planning came to the rescue and (b) would be totally chaotic in the future if planning's safeguards were to cease. Neither allegation is true.

The first one is accepted because few of today's people are old enough to remember preplanning conditions, especially as the 1939-45 period of World War II was not typical. Peacetime dealt with problems by legislation to remedy problems as they arose, for example the 1935 Ribbon Development Act. Certainly there were still some problems, especially dereliction, but when Stamp's maps revealed it, there could have been another preventive law also providing for the reclamation of what existed. There was no need to impose an expensive blanket ban on every conceivable change without official permission, which fed to Labour's greed for centralized power.

And abolition of planning would not inevitably produce chaos. If developed as outlined in my *Scapes and Fringes* book, it could reduce the chaos that planning itself has created, as well as cutting its cost and freeing useful initiatives to bear fruit. One possibility that does not even cross our mind today could be adoption of USA's whole-house removal technique to transport modern flood-prone homes to urban or rural wasteland and restore the economy of walking distances. We need to recognize that nationalizing our land-use initiatives has been a disaster.

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About the author

Professor Alice Coleman has been interested in planning ever since its 1948 inauguration. When it failed to produce a land use map as factual background for its decisions, she undertook a national survey herself with excellent volunteers. It revealed serious planning errors and little achievement. Her book, *Utopia on Trial* (1985), was read by the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who empowered her to change bad designs and bring high crime rates rapidly down. Her work in Canada resulted in an official published book, *The Planning Challenge of the Ottawa Area* (1969), which was presented to every Canadian MP.



There was no need to impose an expensive blanket ban on every conceivable change without official permission...

The battle lines are drawn...

In the early 17th century the polarisation of the nobility and the newly-wealthy commonality led to a civil war that ended the last vestiges of feudal government. In the early 19th century the ascendancy of the winners of 1688 – wealthy merchants, landowners, the professional classes, householders, the Church and army, well-done-by commoners all – was challenged by the disenfranchised commonality, the labourers, cottagers and boarders.

At the start of the 21st the conflict lines are forming again. On the one side the out-of-touch political class and the dying parties, the international corporates and a mandarin and bureaucracy serving the interests of both. On the other a mass of disenfranchised and disadvantaged consumers and taxpayers hungry for change.

Raedwald blog, <http://tinyurl.com/bwz7c3k>, 12th December 2012.

The logo for the Libertarian Alliance, featuring a stylized 'LA' monogram followed by the words 'Libertarian Alliance' in a bold, sans-serif font.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON FREEDOM IN PRESENT-DAY BRITAIN AND THE USA

Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies

The aims of the SIF

As amended and formally approved on the 27th October 2004, the aims of the Society for Individual Freedom include the beliefs:

1. that the individual, rather than the State, is the font of liberty, morality and authority,
2. that private citizens should have the freedom to act as they wish provided their actions do not harm others,
3. that the law should exist principally to guarantee individual liberty and not to act as a paternalistic guardian,
4. that an efficient free-market economy benefits all, and that the State's economic function should mainly be limited to the prevention of violence and fraud and similar obstacles to honest competition and co-operation,
5. that taxes in the United Kingdom are too high and erode individual responsibility and enterprise,
6. that State assistance should be concentrated upon cases of unavoidable hardship,
7. that Parliament is the supreme law-making body in the United Kingdom,
8. that there is too much influence on government from pressure groups that call for legislation of an unnecessary and restrictive nature.

It is worth reflecting on the fact that, both here and in the USA, many of these aims are, at the very least, under serious threat. Indeed, many would claim that quite a few are effectively ignored in our present-day society. Some may wonder why mention of the USA is included here since that society is seemingly very different from ours in Britain and even appears to have different foundations. However, the similarities are extensive and the similarities of abuse possibly even more striking. In Britain, many of the bases of our nation and culture are under threat; in the USA, even the continued existence of their written Constitution, which embodies many of the Society's aims as listed above, is under threat. The similarities in our two situations

are far too great to ignore, particularly since our Governments so often give the appearance of operating in parallel and even on occasions of Britain carrying out directives from Washington. In truth, this may not be the case but all too often the appearance of such behaviour is impossible to ignore.

The first point to make absolutely clear is that we, in Britain, are not always made aware of all the issues at stake in the USA. We are usually presented with a biased view of events taking place in that country which is supposed to be our greatest ally. However, reading comments in various American publications and particularly on websites, quickly shows that there are, as expected, various facets to stories emanating from that country. In recent months, caused no doubt by the recent Presidential election, more details of restrictions of freedom in the USA have come to light and careful observers might have noticed possible effects on our own country. One might wonder, for example, about the expressed intention to allow official access to private emails and computers in this country. Although many may have suspected this had long been the case, the actual announcement of this followed a visit by our Prime Minister to President Obama in the USA. Was this coincidence? In a sense, the answer to that question is unimportant but the fact that anyone might even raise the query is in that it indicates a suspicion in the mind that this country might well not be acting independently in areas which are quite clearly the sole concern of this country and its Government.

However, if members of our Government are being influenced unduly by Americans, it would not be the first time. As Professor Alice Coleman has pointed in the pages of this journal,¹ we can trace the decline of our educational system to the infiltration of American doctrines, emanating from Dewey, at around the time of the end of World War II. This country is still reaping the disastrous effects of that. During a recent visit to the area, Lord Heseltine was speaking of the lack

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of skills and educational achievement in the Hull and East Riding region and pointing out that, if the region is to achieve real regeneration, those lacks will have to be remedied first. But who is to blame for those lacks? From my own experiences lecturing on Mathematics and Physics in Hull University for in excess of forty years and, in that time, having come across numerous Hull born and bred students, I can state with no fear of contradiction that the area is producing a good number of highly intelligent people who should be well able to reach the levels of academic achievement required. I have little doubt the same is true of the required skills situation.

There is little doubt that this area and its young people have been let down very badly by the system and also by a widespread anti-education attitude. However, all of the inadequacies of the educational system involved may be traced back to political desire on the part of some to level down our once envied education and this was all achieved through the importation of the ideas of Dewey. Hence, having done much to wreck the American educational system, this country imported the same ideas, put them in place and now the present generation is suffering from the results and will continue to do so unless and until drastic changes are implemented. It should be noted, as Professor Coleman has pointed out, that such changes would have to involve the removal of many influential people in all areas of educational administration and training from their positions of power. Here though, it is easy to see a direct influence emanating from the USA. In many areas there may be no influence but the similarities in the positions in the two countries are there for all to see.

Compensation culture

From all one reads or sees in films and on television, the USA has a very advanced compensation culture which is very obviously fuelled by the avarice of the legal profession over there and backed by their judiciary. This culture has been gradually infiltrating the British way of life too. It is only in relatively recent years that the public has been bombarded by the (to me) unethical advertising, on television and radio especially, of accident lawyers offering to represent people involved in any kind of accident. The offer either is along the lines of 'no win, no fee' or

assures people they will receive 100% of the agreed compensation or both. From where the incurred legal fees come is never mentioned. Often it may well be the case that people should receive compensation for some accident or other happening but, in a sense, by its very nature, an accident is just that – an accident! In such a case, the person involved is as much responsible as anyone else and frequently no-one is really to blame.

It would seem, however, that in our present society that cannot be the case. Whatever the circumstances, someone (or some organisation) must be to blame and that someone (or organisation) must be made to pay. Some years ago, in a small private school, a young child dived off the top of some steps in the playground and was killed. In court, it was said that the school didn't have enough people on playground duty and, therefore, the owners were found responsible for the child's death. The damages awarded resulted in the school having to close and the owners were left virtually penniless. Some might well feel that justice was done in this case but a moment's serious reflection makes you realise that, although this was a terrible tragedy, it was the sort of disaster that could easily have happened even if there had been a one to one correspondence between pupils and supervisors in that little school playground. In this case, the compensation culture prevailed, aided by the silken tongue of a lawyer. However, what happens in bigger, more powerful institutions?

In this country, one huge organisation which has been hard hit by this compensation culture must surely be the National Health Service. How often do we read of large compensation payments for supposed medical mistakes. I understand there are far more than the public is aware of because in many cases the medical insurance scheme simply pays up. This immediately raises the question of whether or not these privately-settled claims are, in fact, valid. For example, it is suspected by many that some claims made against car insurance for injuries obtained in a motor accident are not really valid; one often wonders how one can be certain someone has suffered from whiplash, for example.

Of course, many of these claims arise because of what some might regard as quite aggressive advertising by so-called 'accident lawyers' and such advertising is certainly on

... by its very nature, an accident is just that – an accident!

the increase in Britain. In fact, it has now become quite specific with one radio advertisement specifically targeting people dissatisfied with hip replacement procedures. It does seem that such behaviour is achieving little real good for any other than the lawyers involved who probably make money more easily by these means than by following what many would feel a more ethical approach. Again though, if one can believe what one reads and sees on television, this approach, where making money seems more important to legal firms than merely upholding the law, seems to have been imported from the USA. However, if it is originally an American approach, it does seem to have been embraced enthusiastically by some firms, at least, over here.

Alleged abuse and rape

This legal avarice is being brought more and more into the public eye by the recent revelations concerning the late Sir Jimmy Savile. Whether or not these allegations – for that is what they are still – are true or false, the seeking of compensation from either Sir Jimmy's estate or the BBC has started already. It is being assumed, therefore, at least by some, that the allegations are true for all the clients being represented in these processes. However, after such a lengthy delay, how is one to be absolutely certain that even one of the allegations is true? It may very well be the case that all are true but how can that be proved *beyond reasonable doubt* in even one case? This is the crux of the entire matter. It is often said that something must be proved beyond reasonable doubt under British law but, in a situation such as that alluded to here, how is that possible? To establish such a position with any degree of confidence, it would surely be necessary to have either a totally unimpeachable independent witness and/or forensic evidence in each case. With the passing of time, neither can be the case.

At the same time, while organisations such as the BBC in this case, are being publicly castigated for the stance they have adopted, what is the position of all those highly placed people who, once the story began to emerge, suddenly found that they had had suspicions for a large number of years? One realises the law of libel may prevent some from voicing their suspicions but, in this particular case, so many now claim to have harboured serious suspicions that it is difficult, if not impossi-

ble, to accept that no-one was ever in a position to act if something really was amiss. Also, in the wider context, it is disturbing to see how others have seemingly jumped on the bandwagon of making allegations against people and, once again, these allegations refer to incidents which supposedly occurred many years ago so that, yet again, there can be no forensic evidence and there has been no mention of independent witnesses. However, prosecutions proceed and it is this point which should be of concern, particularly bearing in mind the recent announcement from the Director of Public Prosecutions concerning the possible reinvestigation of numbers of old allegations.

For many years now, young people have been able to make allegations, especially against teachers, knowing that they will be believed and that, at the very least, the poor unfortunate teacher will be suspended but, whatever the eventual outcome, the teacher's career will have been ruined irrevocably. This has undoubtedly contributed to the decrease in levels of discipline in our schools as it is often against the disciplinarian teacher that the allegations are made. The present furore concerning alleged improper sexual advances is now very much in that category in that it seems that everyone is expected to believe in the validity of this latest series of allegations. As an aside, it might be noted that, if he were still alive and had to face trial, it is virtually certain that Sir Jimmy Savile simply could not face a fair trial anywhere in this country.

However, when it comes to discussing peoples' freedom in this country, the above cases indicate a great need for care in evaluating forthcoming events for another area where some are becoming more vociferous. This concerns the bringing to justice of perpetrators of rape. It is heard fairly commonly that there are not enough successful prosecutions for rape in this country. This may well be so but it must be remembered that, as mentioned above, under British law a person should only be convicted if found guilty beyond reasonable doubt. What is reasonable doubt? That is a very difficult question to answer in that different juries probably have different ideas as to what constitutes such reasonable doubt. However, it seems incorrect to assume that a person can be convicted of an alleged crime on the basis of a statement by a single person. If it's a case of one

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person's word against another's, caution and common sense would indicate returning a not guilty verdict. Hence, once again, it reduces to a need for either the statement of an unimpeachable independent witness and/or forensic evidence. With neither of these provided, any conviction would be totally unsafe and yet this is precisely what the baying hounds are demanding, although they never state their aim quite so lucidly but this is precisely what is meant when it is claimed that there are too few convictions for rape in this country.

In all these instances when a case comes to court, the public is solemnly informed of how brave the alleged victim has been in speaking out against the alleged aggressor. This is acceptable when the alleged aggressor is, in fact, guilty of the alleged offense but, when the accused is innocent, that 'brave' accuser is guilty of perjury, of breaking the ninth commandment – 'thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour' – and should be dealt with accordingly by the courts but, in the main, British judges seem to lack the courage to do their sworn duty in this respect.

This whole approach of someone being accused in public with no evidence available always results in the accused suffering personally; their name is made public alongside the alleged offence but the accuser's name is invariably withheld. Hence, the accused's name is blackened regardless of whether any offence has been committed and, in many cases, the person's life and position are made intolerable as a consequence. A little further rational thought brings the realisation of the far reaching dangers of the above. If our country were to embark along the path of people being convicted of criminal offences simply on the basis of one person's word, it would be the first step on the path towards the secret police terrors of such as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, not to mention several other equally evil regimes.

Follow-on from Hillsborough

Recently, the whole issue of the Hillsborough disaster has hit the headlines once again and yet again judgement appears to have been handed down by the media. Mr David Crompton, South Yorkshire Chief Constable, supposedly said that the families' "version of certain events has become 'the truth' even

though it isn't". Apparently, the Independent Police Complaints Commission has said of these comments that they were "at best ill judged and at worst offensive and upsetting". However, is this really so? There can be little doubt that not all the facts surrounding that tragedy were made public at the time. As seems to be the case in the vast majority of controversial situations, the media boosts the currently accepted line but, once that line is challenged to the extent that it appears to be overturned, it seems to switch completely to support of the other camp. There never seems to be a middle path but usually that middle path is the real truth of the situation.

In this particular case, there does appear to have been some failing by the authorities and we are led to believe those same authorities sought to cover up those failings. The end result though should probably be the situation covered by Mr Crompton's remarks and I for one do not feel the Independent Police Complaints Commission has done anyone any favours – least of all our hard-pressed police force - with remarks such as the one cited here.

The 'Baby P' affair

However, it does seem that the 'law', or possibly more accurately the legal establishment, is encroaching more and more in the lives of private citizens and, very often, the potential ramifications go unreported and unheralded. Recently, the whole dreadful saga of what came to be known as the 'Baby P' affair drew to a conclusion. In this tragic case, a young baby, who was supposedly under the watchful eye of Social Services, died. The head of the Social Services Department involved, a Miss Sharon Shoemith, was sacked, seemingly on the instructions of the then Government Minister, the Rt. Hon Ed Balls. Miss Shoemith appealed this decision and, quite recently, was found in the High Court to have been incorrectly dismissed. The terms of any settlement have not been announced as far as this writer knows. However, the actual final judgement is what should be concerning all. In all probability, the reason Lord Justice Maurice Kaye found in Miss Shoemith's favour was a technicality of procedure, something which is causing more trouble than a little in this country today.

While this is worrying in itself since it seems to be tying the hands of employers far too

... the 'law', or possibly more accurately the legal establishment, is encroaching more and more in the lives of private citizens...

firmly, it is the bigger picture which is even more disturbing. Someone like Miss Shoemith was undoubtedly paid the salary she was partly because of the responsibility she was expected to shoulder in her role as Head of the particular Social Services Department. In other words, even if she knew absolutely nothing of the 'Baby P' case, she was ultimately responsible. Undoubtedly, the judgement by Lord Justice Kaye may be interpreted as saying that, even if you are paid to take responsibility, when the time comes to actually shoulder that responsibility, you needn't be expected to do so.

It is difficult to imagine the consequences for Britain when the full ramifications of this judgement are realised. It might be remembered at this point though that, although no court cases ever occurred, all the heads of the Nation's banks followed the route now seemingly endorsed in law of not shouldering their paid responsibilities when trouble came and, although the remuneration involved may have been large by average standards in Miss Shoemith's case, in the case of the heads of the banks the remuneration involved was enormous.

It does, of course, leave us with a huge question which is, in the event of problems in an organisation, who is responsible? It is, of course, ridiculous simply to place all the blame on the Government of the day even though it could be claimed that the ultimate responsibility does rest with Parliament. This final point obviously raises grave questions about the position of Sir David Nicholson, the head of the NHS in England. He was previously chief executive of West Midlands strategic health authority while the crisis at the Mid Staffordshire hospital trust was unfolding and he is now under pressure to resign. Once again, we are faced with a person in a position of great responsibility, and paid accordingly, showing a total unwillingness to accept that responsibility.

There is little doubt that Lord Justice Kaye's ruling could be called to back his decision not to resign but this case shows, yet again, the lack of honour among these so-called 'top', highly paid people. Regardless of all other issues, if this man and, indeed, Miss Sharon Shoemith had had any semblance of honour, both would have resigned before there was time to raise any questions about their respective futures. It must always be remem-

bered that self-interest and honour are almost mutually exclusive things. On the field of battle, the hero very obviously relinquishes self-interest in favour of honour, even if this isn't a truly conscious decision at the time. In the field of everyday life, it is abundantly clear that few so-called top people adopt this approach but theirs is a conscious decision. No; it seems honour is becoming a thing of the past and certainly isn't present in the characters of some alluded to here.

Parliament the supreme law-maker

This also raises further questions relating quite specifically to item 7 in the above list of this society's aims. Is it still Parliament which is the supreme law-making body in the United Kingdom? So often in recent times, our Government has had its decisions challenged in the Courts and has frequently lost as a result of British judges quoting European law. This is an untenable situation which must be rectified as a matter of extreme urgency because, in many of the said cases, matters of national security and public safety have been involved.

It is amazing to some that British legal firms are apparently quite willing to risk national security or the health of fellow citizens in order to make money. It is also intriguing to query who has funded the lawyers involved in some of these high-profile cases which have been continuing for years and years. Is the British tax payer funding all this legal arguing and paying for the upkeep of all the people involved? No; all who are truly British and wish to live in this country must be willing to accept the country's laws and its way of life. All should be treated with respect but, in the final analysis, this is Britain with its own way of life and, if people choose to come to live and work here, we should accept them with good grace but they, in turn, must realise they are coming to live in a society with a certain, very definite basis and must accept that.

There must always be a place for peaceful protest but all those who preach sedition must be treated accordingly and uniformly – dubious aspects of European-imposed law must never be allowed to interrupt the due process of British law. If this means withdrawing from some European treaties then so be it unless this country, as a whole, agrees to become part of some all-embracing Euro-

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pean super-state whose Parliament would effectively supersede the authority of the British Parliament and that of any other country that was a part of it. In the event of this becoming the situation, item 7 above would become irrelevant but then Britain, as we know it, would have ceased to exist, as would its Parliament.

The position in the USA

In the USA, similar problems are arising as a result of the State becoming guardian of all – a situation never envisaged by that country's Founding Fathers. It has proved interesting to read of the situation over there and what has preceded it from the pens of several eminent writers and it might be noted that two of the best of these are black academics – Dr Walter Williams and Dr Thomas Sowell. Personally, since childhood in South Wales, I have never understood why some people put so much store by a person's colour but, given the present climate, it seems of genuine interest to note this point in the American context.

In the course of this reading, I have learned things about American history which are totally contrary to what I'd always been led to believe. For instance, at the present time, several states – notably Texas – are seeking leave to secede from the Union. Apparently, this course of action is allowed by the Constitution and was allowed at the time of the American Civil War. In other words, the notion that one reason the American civil war started was because some Southern States wished to secede is untrue. It is also the case that the Founding Fathers of the USA wished more power to remain with the people in their separate states, rather than be transferred to some national body and so originally little power was invested in the central government. In more recent times, however, the central government has gathered more and more power to itself and its bureaucracy has increased accordingly in a frightening manner. According to many American commentators the situation is due to deteriorate even more following the recent Presidential Election.

Already many of the freedoms included in the list of aims for this society have been abandoned and the state is moving to abandon the remainder. If we consider item 6 in the list for example, some commentators

claim as many as 49% of Americans are in receipt of some form of benefit and it is not difficult to envisage the effect of such a percentage on any future Presidential Election. Further, the Founding Fathers were against the existence of a central bank but, in quite recent times, the Federal Reserve has been established and has gathered enormous power to itself; so much so that one can easily see why the Founding Fathers were cautious of such an institution existing. It is not without interest to note the way the role of the Bank of England has been changing in such ways as seemingly to mirror the American Federal Reserve. It may well be wondered if this is a move in the right direction for this country? Is it, in fact, another move which helps erode personal freedom in Britain? This is, I think, a point worth contemplating.

When one considers the ways in which the government of these two nations, Britain and America, has evolved in more recent decades, it is tempting to follow the path of conspiracy theories. This is normally a rather futile past-time but recent events in both countries do tend to lead one to at least contemplate this path. Take, for example, the recent banking crisis. I suppose only a trained economist can truly dissect and evaluate what happened but even then one would be faced with deciding between a Keynesian approach and a von Mises one. It is pointed out that most western economies follow the Keynesian approach and it is this which is criticised by many. However, whichever approach is adopted, it seems impossible to ignore the input of such huge financial institutions as Goldman-Sachs and others. Do these enormously powerful; financial institutions exercise more power than the general public realises? Are they really the ones pulling the strings of, to them, puppet chancellors?

As far as Britain is concerned, it is an added worry to note, as mentioned previously, the influence of European legislation on the running of this country. Of course, that had to be expected to some extent when the country entered what was at the time known as the Common Market. The problem now is that that organisation has changed out of all recognition and seems to want to head in the direction of becoming a United States of Europe with a single central government. Unlike the USA though, its constitution probably would not provide the easy option

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of secession or include genuine safeguards for individual freedom such as people in Britain have enjoyed for so many years.

Gun control

The latest big issue to face America is one faced, in a sense, by Britain some years ago and that is the issue of gun control and the same ill-informed frenzy seems to be running things once again. Years ago when faced by the tragedy which occurred at Dunblane, the British authorities immediately honed in on the fact that hand guns had been used. Consequently, the knee-jerk reaction of banning all hand guns followed. In many ways, this was an understandable reaction but was it correct and was it just? In retrospect, it is obvious that the only people to lose out with this ban were those who indulged in target shooting with hand guns. Specifically, the country's Olympic shooting team was placed at a huge disadvantage compared with others since they could no longer practise in this country. For those who wished to use hand guns nefariously though, the situation had hardly changed. Such weapons could still be obtained relatively easily as is illustrated all too tragically by the relatively recent gunning down of two young female police officers – the wonderful ban didn't help them!

Of course the ban didn't help in that case because its introduction didn't even begin to address the original problem but rather distracted attention away from many of the reported 'facts' in the Dunblane case. For example, it was stated at the time that the gunman had been refused membership of a local gun club on the basis of what was perceived as an unstable personality. Notwithstanding, the local police force subsequently granted the man a gun license. It seems there were several factors in this case which, apparently, were never explored publicly. All attention was focused on the use of a hand gun and, if you ponder it awhile, you will realise that was the least important issue. Now this same issue has been raised in the USA after the tragedy at Sandy Hook but attention has been diverted from a similar incident in China which happened at about the same time as the American tragedy. The Chinese incident as reported involved children in a school being killed but with a knife! Obviously publicising this event too much would weaken the anti-gun lobby. The subsequent furore in America following this latest school shooting

is highly reminiscent of the situation here in Britain following Dunblane.

In the USA of course the situation is far different from over here in that the American Constitution allows citizens to bear arms. As far as the USA is concerned though, it might be worth considering the following comments from Dr Walter Williams² relating to all the talk of banning so-called assault weapons in that country:

Last year, Chicago had 512 homicides; Detroit had 411; Philadelphia had 331; and Baltimore had 215. Those cities are joined by other dangerous cities – such as St Louis, Memphis, Tenn., Flint, Mich., and Camden, N.J. – and they also lead the nation in shootings, assaults, rapes and robberies. Both the populations of those cities and their crime victims are predominantly black. Each year, more than 7,000 blacks are murdered. Close to 100 percent of the time, the murderer is another black person. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1976 and 2011, there were 279,384 black murder victims. Though blacks are 13 percent of the nation's population, they account for more than 50 percent of homicide victims. Nationally, the black homicide victimization rate is six times that of whites, and in some cities, it's 22 times that of whites. Coupled with being most of the nation's homicide victims, blacks are also most of the victims of violent personal crimes, such as assault and robbery. The magnitude of this tragedy can be seen in another light. According to a Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute study, between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 blacks were lynched at the hands of whites

What percentage of murders, irrespective of race, are committed with what are being called assault weapons? You'd be hard put to come up with an amount greater than 1 or 2 percent. In fact, according to FBI data from 2011, there were 323 murders committed with a rifle of any kind but 496 murders committed with a hammer or a club. But people who want to weaken our Second Amendment

For those who wished to use hand guns nefariously though, the situation had hardly changed. Such weapons could still be obtained... relatively easily

guarantees employ a doubtful strategy. They can't do much about hammers, clubs, fists or pistols, but by exploiting public ignorance, they might have a bit of success getting an "assault weapon" ban that will have little impact on violent crime.

These are, I feel, enlightening comments coming from an older, highly educated black American and should be heeded by that country's law makers.

However, as with Dunblane, the Sandy Hook situation is possibly being exploited by people with another agenda. It is interesting to note how many facts associated with the disaster are being hidden away, possibly because the follow-up agenda of gun control is all important, and the official Sandy Hook scenario must stand, in order to forward that agenda. For example, where is the video footage from inside the Sandy Hook Elementary School, footage that surely exists and should show at least some part of the massacre? Also, having just had a new security system installed, how did the accused killer gain entrance to the school? What was the exact story concerning the other suspects detained and questioned by the police? These are simply a few of the questions I've seen raised in connection with this tragedy. So, as with Dunblane, many unanswered questions relating to Sandy Hook remain. Also, as with Dunblane, if some form of gun control is introduced in the USA as a result of this tragic happening, then a little more individual freedom will have been lost in that country, just as it was lost over here.

To many, all guns should be banned and that is a stance I can understand but, as someone who has never owned a gun nor wished to do so, the erosion of personal freedom involved in gun control is a concern and possibly even more so where the USA is concerned since it means that yet again that country's written constitution could be violated. As Judge Andrew Napolitano³ has written recently:

And to those who believe that the Constitution means what it says, the essence of this debate is not about the law; it is about personal liberty in a free society. It is the exercise of this particular personal liberty – the freedom to defend yourself when the police cannot or will not and the freedom to

use weapons to repel tyrants if they take over the government – that the big-government crowd fears the most.

Taxation

It is probably clear to everyone that, one way or another, all the above listed aims of the Society, except one, have been covered in these few thoughts emanating from recent events. It should therefore also be clear that these stated aims, while totally reasonable in any free democratic society, are coming under attack increasingly. However, as yet, one of the above listed aims hasn't been mentioned and that is number 5 which claims that taxes in the United Kingdom are too high and erode individual responsibility and enterprise. It is interesting that with all the talk of equality in society in the run-up and aftermath of the recent American election, several academics in the USA took a long hard look at the situation with regard to tax in that country. Two of those concerned were Dr Williams and Dr Sowell, with Dr Sowell conducting a detailed statistical analysis of the topic. It was found that, with the introduction of higher and higher taxes on those regarded as rich, the actual total revenue collected fell. Whereas during periods when tax was lowered as under Presidents Kennedy and Reagan – note one Democrat and one Republican are cited as examples – total revenue increased. It is surmised that this is due, at least in part, to the fact that the rich are, in the main, quite willing to pay reasonable amounts of tax but, when the rate is too high in their eyes, they simply move their money out of the country. This cannot be dismissed as merely greed; it is also so that they retain enough money to continue investing in their various business ventures and hence help to offer employment to people less financially fortunate than themselves.

To some this will appear overly simplistic and possibly it is to some extent, but not entirely. As mentioned already, this problem has been studied in the USA and has resulted in, amongst other things, a book on the subject by an editorial board member and senior economics writer at the *Wall Street Journal*, Stephen Moore. In his book, *Who's the Fairest of Them All?* (Encounter Books, New York, 2012), the entire subject is covered in detail and the truth of the above statements is established beyond any reasonable doubt. It serves to show that the fifth of the society's

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aims as listed above should be adopted as a definite aim for all this country's political parties and should be put into effect as soon as they achieve power. It's not a question of pandering to greed as some politicians would have us believe, it's quite simply what would be best for this country. The whole attitude of apparently wanting to tax those with a little money or, indeed, a lot of money, until it hurts benefits no-one and it must always be remembered that, whether it is right or wrong, in the final analysis the very rich can always hide their money away if taxes become too high; it is the man in the middle who has used his income wisely and carefully who is most affected by high taxes which are often introduced as a result of awakening envy for those with money by those who, for whatever reason but often their own, are less fortunate financially.

Which brings us back nicely to the sixth of those aims listed. Some time ago, it was reported in *The Telegraph* that in the 2009-10 tax year, more than 16,000 people declared an annual income of more than £1 million to HM Revenue and Customs. This number fell to just 6,000 after Gordon Brown introduced the new 50p top rate of income tax. The figures have been seized upon by the Conservatives to claim that increasing the highest rate of tax actually led to a loss in revenues for the Government. It is believed that rich Britons moved abroad or took steps to avoid paying the new levy by reducing their taxable incomes. While some might be offended by these actions of the so-called rich, it should be remembered always that such actions were quite legal and quite possibly advised by accountants. As a final point here, it might be remembered also that Vladimir Lenin, one of the inventors of communism, famously said, "The way to crush the bourgeoisie is to grind them between the millstones of taxation and inflation." Incidentally, by the bourgeoisie that Lenin hates so much is meant the middle class!

Some closing thoughts

It is, I think, apparent from all the above that, both here and in the USA, individual freedom is under serious threat. It is not too late to avert this threat but to do so means battles on a number of different fronts and that is always difficult since, if such a strategy is pursued, it immediately gives some advantage to those who wish to divide and con-

quer. There is also the grave suspicion that the powers that be in the USA see themselves as being in a position to exert influence over the British Government. One example of this was their recently expressed opinion on whether or not Britain should remain in the EU. Apparently some Americans saw it in their interests for this country to stay in but, in fact, all that should concern us and particularly our Government is the interests of this country.

It seems there are worrying times ahead for both countries but, as far as Britain is concerned, if the aims of this society are born in mind and the long-standing traditions of the country are kept well to the forefront of peoples' minds, any threat should be repelled. The same is true, of course, for the USA but they must always remember the details of their written Constitution and their rulers should abide by it, not merely agree to do so but then renege when it suits them. All leaders should remember that it is the well being of the country they lead which is, and must remain, of paramount importance; their job is to lead by example and solve the problems facing their nation.

Much of what has gone before has concerned issues of law and the people who make their living as lawyers at all levels. It is worth noting that many national leaders and aspiring leaders these days have legal backgrounds. At the most recent National Prayer Breakfast in the USA, the eminent paediatric neurosurgeon Dr Benjamin Carson, from Johns Hopkins University Hospital, commented that in college lawyers 'learn to win by hook or by crook' and he went on to say that this is not the route to follow for our leaders; they must set about solving the problems facing their nations. Let us hope both our country's leaders follow this advice in the future.

It is possibly worth ending this essay with a relevant quote⁴ from *Taki's Magazine*:

Lord Acton's famous maxim that "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is such a nakedly accurate observation of human nature that one might assume no one ever needed to articulate it, much less keep reminding anyone about it. But a cornerstone of the Grand Leftist Delusion is the notion that when you give human beings the power to

a cornerstone of the Grand Leftist Delusion is the notion that when you give human beings the power to legally extort a significant chunk of other human beings' productive income, this will bring out their best behaviour rather than their worst.

legally extort a significant chunk of other human beings' productive income, this will bring out their best behaviour rather than their worst. And yet, as luck and magic would have it, wherever there is government on Earth, there is corruption. And it's almost an inviolable law of physics that the bigger the government, the bigger the corruption. In February, a former Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister eloquently lamented the widespread corruption in his country and elsewhere:

"Now there are no more values to hold on to. Parents not only encourage their children to beat the system, they aid and abet the children in the nefarious activities. No one believes anymore in the concept of society. It is every man for himself and God for us all... In my youth, to be accused of theft or any other criminal offence was tantamount to being banished from society, not only for the accused but for his entire family. To be convicted was tantamount to suicide....But now, no one asks for the source of wealth. People in jail, accused of murder, run for and win elections."

It would seem that people occupying positions of power and authority in both Britain and the USA should take note of these words and act accordingly if our two nations are to have any really worthwhile future.

Notes

- (1) Alice Coleman, 'A Low-Cost Rescue of Education', *The Individual*, February 2011, pp. 11-19.

(2) Walter Williams, 'Cultural Deviancy, Not Guns', *Townhall*, 13th February 2013, retrieved 20th March 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/a9wv6v4>.

(3) Andrew Napolitano, 'The Right to Self-Defense', *LewRockwell*, 7th March 2013, retrieved 20th March 2013, <http://lewrockwell.com/napolitano/napolitano90.1.html>.

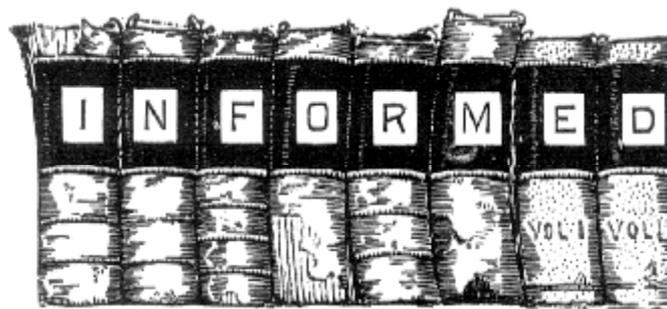
(4) Editorial, '2013: The Year So Far in Corruption', *Taki's Magazine*, 3rd March 2013, retrieved 20th March 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/d5ynlmz>.

About the author

Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies was born in 1941 in Glamorgan, the son of a primary school headmaster. His mother and wife were also teachers before their respective marriages and this teaching background has given Jeremy an abiding interest in education at all levels. He was appointed to the Applied Mathematics Department of Hull University in 1966, becoming a senior lecturer in 1981. In 2002, he transferred to the Physics Department at Hull.

Works include: *Mathematical Methods for Mathematicians, Physical Scientists and Engineers* (Ellis Horwood, 1982); *Concise Thermodynamics* (Albion Publishing, 1996, 2007); *Exploding a Myth* (Horwood Publishing, 2007); and about 150 articles mainly on thermodynamics and its applications, particularly in astrophysics, but also including articles that have appeared in previous issues of *The Individual*.

Parents not only encourage their children to beat the system, they aid and abet the children in the nefarious activities.



What libertarianism is and is not

Libertarianism is not, and never has been, about money or its pursuit. Money is incidental. It is about empowering ordinary people to take control of their own lives and arrange them in ways that best suit them. It is about the sanctity of contract, the endless possibilities of voluntary arrangement and real wealth to be found in reputation, decency, civility and honour.

David Carr, Samizdata, <http://tinyurl.com/b2yw4ab>, 22nd July 2002.

So much for "austerity"...

David Cameron's policy is to increase Britain's debt by 60 per cent, more than any European country. To increase it more over five years than Labour did over 13 years...

Just 6 per cent of the public realise that the national debt is rising.

Fraser Nelson, *The Spectator*, <http://tinyurl.com/aqdbu6b>, 23rd January 2013

What is easy and what is right

The true test of whether you are in favour of freedom is this: if someone else is doing something you hate, but which does no violence to others, are you willing to leave them alone on principle?

If you are willing to leave others alone even if you dislike their behaviour provided that behaviour doesn't physically harm third parties, then you support human freedom for its own sake. If you are only willing to leave others alone if you actively approve of their behaviour, you are simply reinforcing your own tastes.

Perry Metzger, Samizdata, <http://tinyurl.com/brgu6wd>, 25th January 2013.

AGAINST NATIONALISATION: OWNING SILVER VEINS

Richard Garner

“Fairness” and silver in Bolivia

I had a heated discussion with two close relatives touching on third world poverty. It was suggested that the wealth in the third world is being taken to the first world and enriching people there rather than in the poor countries. (Forgetting, of course, that incomes of the world’s poorest quintile or fifth have been rising faster than those of the richest.)

As an example, it was pointed out that in Bolivia a new, massive vein of silver had been discovered, but the silver belongs to an American company, so they would be profiting from it, not the Bolivians. My relatives supported the proposition, instead, that Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, nationalise the mine, so that its profits can be put to public use. I, on the other hand, felt that natural resources should belong to whoever first finds them and uses them, by mixing their labour with, or working them, regardless of what country the individual or organisation that finds them comes from, or what country they are found in.

I could discern two positions from my relatives’ arguments. The first was that, as was pointed out to me explicitly, mineral deposits belong to the person under whose property they are found, and this was “quite legal, proper and fair.” The second position was that those displaced by the silver mine should be compensated. I suppose the first position may follow from the second, or be a motive for supporting it.

Against “nationalisation”

It is, of course, legal practice that people own the mineral rights under their property. Under the *ad coelum* doctrine, the theory is that people’s property extends in a gradually diminishing cone (to make space for other property) to the Earth’s core. Of course, the same theory is that their property extends in a gradually increasing cone outwards and upwards from the earth. The result, of course, is that, if this theory of property should be the one we adopt, it would be incredibly hard to arrange flight plans without committing

trespass: every flyover would be a tort. Presumably, this consequence would be ridiculous.

The idea that people displaced by the mine should be compensated may motivate people to cling to this odd legal doctrine, but it employs a fallacy. Sure, I shouldn’t damage your house, or your farm, or whatever, on the surface, but it doesn’t follow that you should therefore own whatever is under your property, or over it. If property rights exist, at least in part, to protect our uses of things, then so long as my mining under your property doesn’t damage your property, then what claim do you have against me? Or, in other words, if it is the case that people are being forced off their land so this US corporation can mine silver, then this should not occur, and is a gross injustice. However, it doesn’t follow from that that the silver should be nationalised, or given to people who own property over it, or that it should not belong to an American company able to mine it without damaging the property of those over it or without forcibly depriving them of it.

In any case, neither of these arguments seems to justify nationalisation. Nationalisation would be making the silver the property of the entire nation. Of course, that would really mean that the people who get to decide about it, and decide who benefits from it the most, would be the ruling class and their lackeys. Unless all votes by the entire country regarding it and income earned from it were passed by unanimous vote, it wouldn’t really be the entire nation enjoying it, but only some of the nation. Morales and his co-workers would be the only ones with power to decide what is done with it, and they would benefit those with the most political pull, because that is how government works.

Regardless of this, though, let’s just think of nationalisation in the abstract. It belongs to the nation. Why? Why is “the nation’s” claim any better than anybody else’s? Remember, the arguments were that a) it is established legal practice that mineral rights belong to those under whose property they are, and that b) people will be displaced by

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the mine, losing their homes, etc. But both of these arguments, if they have any weight at all, which I have disputed, suggest that the silver should belong to those who have property in the top soil over it, not to the entire nation. Why should the fact that demolishing my house to make way for a silver mine makes me homeless imply that everybody else in the country, and nobody else, has as much right to that silver, and the income it generates, as I do? Or why should the fact that the silver is under my land, and established law extends property conically to the earth's core, mean that it belongs to everybody else in the country, and nobody else, as much as it belongs to me? Neither of these positions justifies the silver being seized by the state.

Lines on a map

I suppose it could be suggested that, if the established legal practice is that property extends conically to the centre of the earth, and the silver was found under Bolivia, then the silver belongs to Bolivia, and so everybody in it. But, then, "Bolivia" is an arbitrary designation in itself. Why does the border of Bolivia stop where it does rather than extend, say, fifty miles further out, or fifty miles further in? A person is a Bolivian simply due to being accidentally born one side of a line that could have been drawn anywhere and has probably only been drawn where it is because that has been the point where strength of arms, the might of war, has only been sufficient to maintain it. The silver is as much under South America as it is under Bolivia, or as much under America as it is South America, etc, etc. It is certainly far more under the property of the people displaced from the mine that it is under a part of Bolivia possibly hundreds of miles away.

The sentiment seems to be that Bolivians are being made worse off by somebody other than their state owning this silver. Ignoring the possibility that land was seized to make way for the mine, which is not what I am defending anyway, Bolivians may well not be made worse off. The reason? They didn't even know the silver was there, and were not making use of it. Somebody else profiting from something that I knew nothing about and wasn't trying to use does not worsen me. They may not be bettering themselves, that is true, but that is not the same as being worsened. Of course, it will be said, "fine, then it

should be nationalised, not because the US company is making Bolivians worse off, but because, by nationalising it, Bolivians will be made better off." Sure. But are the Bolivians the worst off people in the world? Maybe not. In which case, maybe the Bolivian silver should be nationalised by, say, Ethiopia? Why better the position of Bolivians rather than some other group?

In praise of homesteading

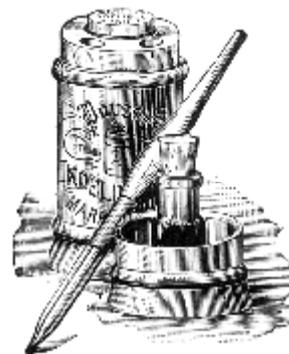
In the end, it is deeply odd to say that some Bolivian who did nothing to get the silver, nothing to, in effect, create it (since, for all intents and purposes, until its discovery, it may as well not have existed), nothing to make it useful to people, and whose life is not worsened, though it may not be improved, by somebody else taking the silver has a better claim to it than those who did these and was using the silver first.

About the author

Richard Garner was a friend, libertarian philosopher and a frequent contributor to the SIF and the Libertarian Alliance until his premature death in 2011 at the age of 33. He left behind some work that we will try to publish. This article is an edited version of one that appeared on his personal blog on the 10th September 2008.

.....

But are the Bolivians the worst off people in the world? ...[M]aybe the Bolivian silver should be nationalised by, say, Ethiopia?



(Continued from page 1)

since the last issue of *The Individual*. Professor David Myddelton, the Chairman of the SIF's National Council, co-authored a report by the Institute of Economic Affairs calling for "for a new approach to financial regulation based on simple legal frameworks, rather than the current obsession with complex, detailed specifications." Further details can be found on the IEA's website.

Your editor has spent some time updating the SIF's online archive. I have started to scan pre-2002 issues of *The Individual*, thus converting them into fully searchable PDFs. These are available from our website. Other matters intervened, so this is work in progress. However, I would be interested to hear from any of our "longer serving" members who have old SIF material squirreled away. I am particularly interested in material from the 1980s or earlier. Failing that, it might be worth exploring what is available through the British Library. An exploration of their online catalogue produces some tantalising SIF-related results dating back to the 1940s!

Sticking with the archive theme, thanks are due to Maurice Knights for passing on a stock of old Choice in Personal Safety material. (CiPS campaigns against compulsion in seatbelt laws and similar matters.)

However, this kind gesture was prompted by a sad event: the death in 2012 of CiPS chairman Don Furness. Our thoughts are with his family and friends. Don's death raises the question about what to do about CiPS. It is no secret that it has not been active for some time. We would be interested to hear from any CiPS member – or, indeed, anyone sympathetic to the cause – who wanted to pick up the baton.

Looking to the future of the SIF more generally, just before Christmas there was an informal meeting of a small group of SIF officers. One or two useful ideas were put forward, but it is early days yet. Above all, it is acknowledged that the SIF needs an injection of fresh blood. We also need to restart our public talks.

That said, we're still here. I noted above the ongoing project to lodge archive material on the SIF's website. The website itself under-

went a major overhaul last year and has attracted nearly 25,000 hits since then.

And, of course, there is the continued – if a little erratic – publication of *The Individual*. It is 11 years and nearly 30 issues since I took over as editor from the sadly now-departed Paul Anderton. Another voice that I can easily bring to mind...

* * *

Sticking with publishing but on a more personal matter, thank you to those who have said nice things about my book, *Conservative Party Politicians and the Turn of the 20th/21st Centuries* (London, Civic Education & Research Trust, 2012). (Again, this is not a "political book" but an academic book "about politics".) It can now be found in academic libraries up and down the country. It has even sold a handful of copies! Moreover, as one reader of *The Individual* kindly demonstrated, it can also be ordered through public lending libraries via the inter-library loan system.

* * *

As an editor of a journal – and also an officer of the Campaign Against Censorship – I ought to say something about the proposed new press regulations. However, the whole thing looks such a mess and may be subject to boycotts and legal challenges of various sorts that few seem to have any idea what the outcome will be.

However, in simple terms: *No state regulation of the press whatsoever!* Actions such as "hacking" mobile phones or bribing police officers to obtain information are/were illegal anyway.

Many have commented on this issue. I'll pluck one at random: *The Economist* on the 23rd March 2013 (<http://tinyurl.com/cvbf8ce>):

For us, the choice is clear: we believe society gains more from a free press than it loses from the tabloids' occasional abuse of defenceless people. Because that view has held sway in Britain, the press has remained free of state intervention for over 300 years. Fleet Street does not have an impeccable record. It has broken the law and victimised innocent people. But it has

I would be interested to hear from any of our "longer serving" members who have old SIF material squirreled away.

also, time and again, exposed the lies and incompetence of politicians... Fortunately, their proposal is such a mess that it looks as though it may fall apart.

* * *

In any event, for now we still have a free-ish press. We also have a sort-of democratic political system. However, to use the old saying, "Democracy is not a spectator sport". I have almost always belonged to a political party since my late teens. (Albeit not necessarily the same one!) When I hear people whingeing about what *they* are doing – The Man, to use a rather anachronistic slang phrase – I tend to mutter under my breath, "Well, what are *you* doing about it?"

And this applies to "getting involved" more generally. If "we" do not get involved, then ever more power over our lives and our social, political and economic environment will fall into the hands of a small group of self-selecting, self promoting and often self-serving people.

People need to take an interest in the world around them beyond the mere "clicktivism" of spending a few seconds signing the occa-

sional online petition. E.g. getting involved in local civic groups.

But I seem to be in a minority. Perhaps it's a generational thing. I live in Bromley (one of the many areas of Kent and the other Home Counties that became part of London during the *Anschluss* of the mid-1960s).

In 1982, a gentleman named Andrew Martin wrote a fascinating book on local history with the self-explanatory title, *Not a Mile from Milk Street: A Short History of St Andrew's Parish, Bromley*. I recall that my late father bought a copy at the time. In 2012, Mr Martin brought out a revised, second edition. It was widely publicised in the local area. I applied for a copy. One Saturday just before Christmas, I attended the book launch at St Andrew's church. I think that I was the only person there who was under 50 (albeit just).

* * *

Finally for now, I wish readers of *The Individual* well for the spring and summer. One can only hope that they compensate for the dreadful winter!

Dr Nigel G. Meek

Well, what are you doing about it?

"But as the animals look from Napoleon to Pilkington, from man to pig and from pig back to man, they find that they are unable to tell the difference."

I have often argued that there is little to commend leaving the EU if the outcome was simply to take back powers from Brussels and hand them over to the same establishment which gave them away in the first place.

If the EU has been a secret revolution, along the lines of Orwell's Animal Farm, where man has been replaced by pig, only for pig to become man, giving powers back to Whitehall and to the gatherers of expenses in Westminster, is simply replacing pig with man. It gets us nowhere. It achieves nothing for the ordinary voter.

Dr Richard North, *EU Referendum*, <http://tinyurl.com/d9k2cjs>, 24th March 2013.

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The SIF's Aim:

“To promote responsible individual freedom”

Founded in the 1940s, 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.

The SIF promotes...

- ✓ The freedom, importance and personal responsibility of the individual.
- ✓ The sovereignty of Parliament and its effective control over the Executive.
- ✓ The rule of law and the independence of the Judicature.
- ✓ Free enterprise.

SIF Activities

The SIF organises public meetings featuring speakers of note, holds occasional luncheons at the Houses of Parliament, publishes this journal to which contributions are welcome, and has its own website. The SIF also has two associated campaigns: Tell-IT, that seeks to make information on outcomes of drugs and medical treatments more widely known and available to doctors and patients alike, and Choice in Personal Safety (CIPS), that opposes seatbelt compulsion and similar measures.

Joining the SIF

If you broadly share our objectives and wish to support our work, then please write to us at the address on this page, enclosing a cheque for £15 (minimum) made payable to ‘Society for Individual Freedom’.

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