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- The side-effects of “well-intentioned” meddling in the labour market.
- Britain and freedom: A *tour d’horizon*.

NEVER SURRENDER!

Welcome to the latest edition of *The Individual*. Better late than never, and increasingly an example of perseverance. Or perhaps a bone-headed refusal to accept the way things are going. It has been announced that *The Freethinker*, the world’s oldest secularist journal, will cease hardcopy publication in the next month or so. As I understand it, the journal is haemorrhaging money and anyway far more people look at the online version than in hardcopy. Fortunately, the situation is better for the SIF and *The Individual*. Careful husbanding of resources by our treasurer Lucy Ryder, along with some generous benefactors over the years, mean that we’re still in the black. Nevertheless, over the course of months and years, more copies of the PDF version of *The Individual* are downloaded from our website than are ever printed, and postage costs are now very high.

More than money – although this is always nice! – what journals like ours rely on is authors prepared to write coherent “beginning, middle and end” essays in the 1000 to 5000-word range. It seems that everyone wants to be a blogger!

On an unrelated matter, a colleague of mine in another organization sent the outline of an

essay praising aspects of Japanese culture. I, too, have long been something of a Japanophile. It is true that the Japanese have never come to terms with what happened in the 1930s and 1940s in the way that the Germans have. It also true that some of their politicians occasionally say and do things that are unwise. But modern Japan is a civilised, democratic country. One of “us”. It is insufferable to hear contemporary mainland Chinese leaders criticising their Japanese counterparts for lapses in judgement when, as my own article in this issue indicates, their own country performs so badly in many ways and they are the *direct* heirs of Mao, an equal member of that grisly triumvirate of 20th century evil alongside Hitler and Stalin. It is all the more galling to see how Western politicians and the media are now too afraid of China to say just this.

Finally, on behalf of the SIF I wish to extend our belated sympathies to the family and friends of long-time SIF officer, Cynthia Campbell-Savours, who died last year.

Dr Nigel Gervas Meek

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THE CONTINUED EROSION OF FREEDOM IN BRITAIN TODAY

Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies

Introduction

The continued existence of the Society for Individual Freedom, together with its list of well-known aims, is possibly more important for the future of our country and its individual inhabitants than at any time in the society's history.

Many changes have been incorporated into our country over recent years which have been introduced in extremely subtle and devious ways as far as the man in the street is concerned. Many may well agree with at least some of these changes but I would venture to suggest that a little detailed perusal of the possible long term effects of such changes might produce a radical change in attitude towards them.

Another important point to realise from the outset is that the media coverage of many of these changes has been largely one-sided and, in the cases where there has been so-called consultation that has been the form of consultation favoured by institutions more interested in their own retention of power than in learning and incorporating the views of those to be affected by the changes proposed – that is, views are gathered so that consultation can be said to have occurred but the outcome was always predetermined. This is a classic, well-known manoeuvre which works because so few in any population really keep abreast of what's happening around them and those who do are invariably confined to a small minority which can have little effect on future events.

It is true also that, as will be explored in more detail later, many of these potentially dangerous innovations are presented in a way carefully designed to appeal to the vast majority of the electorate while concealing their true purpose. As was pointed out in another recent contribution to *The Individual*,¹ events in this country are showing closer and closer links with things that are occurring across the Atlantic in the USA.

The ideas of Saul Alinsky

Although little, if anything, has been reported in the British media, there is deep concern being expressed in several publications in the USA concerning the way individual freedom is being steadily, but seemingly irrevocably, eroded in the USA under its present regime especially.

Recently, reference has been made quite openly to a book written by one of the 'gurus' said to have had a great influence on the views of the present President, Barack Obama, and it certainly is extremely easy to read influence from this man's philosophy in much that has happened in the USA under both terms of this present administration. The book concerned is *Rules for Radicals* by Saul Alinsky.² In this book it is claimed that there are various levels of control that you need to achieve before you are able to create a social state. These levels have been re-phrased more recently in language possibly more easily understandable and applicable to the situation facing us today. Although not necessarily in order of importance, these re-phrased notions are:

1. *Healthcare*: Control healthcare and you control the people.
2. *Poverty*: Increase the poverty level as high as possible, poor people are easier to control and will not fight back if you are providing everything for them to live.
3. *Debt*: Increase the national debt to an unsustainable level. That way you are able to increase taxes, and this will produce more poverty.
4. *Gun Control*: Remove the ability to defend themselves from the Government. That way you are able to create a police state.
5. *Welfare*: Take control of every aspect of their lives (food, housing, and income).
6. *Education*: Take control of what people read and listen to and take control of what children learn in school.
7. *Religion*: Remove the belief in God from the Government and schools.
8. *Class Warfare*: Divide the people into

"... many of these potentially dangerous innovations are presented in a way carefully designed to appeal to the vast majority of the electorate while concealing their true purpose."

the wealthy and the poor. This will cause more discontent and it will be easier to tax the wealthy with the support of the poor.

Certainly some entries in this list are likely to cause eyebrows to rise at the mere suggestion that there is anything wrong with them. For example, few in this country would think anything wrong with the establishment of our National Health Service, although many would feel its organization leaves much to be desired. However, it is necessary to consider the entire list of eight topics as a whole rather than as individual entities and consider them in the context of their ultimate aim of being to secure a true social state or, if you prefer, an ultimate aim of producing a state which controls virtually every aspect of the individual's life at the expense of all individual freedom; a realization of George Orwell's nightmare scenario! This, remember, is what is really meant by Alinsky when he talks of creating a social state!

The NHS and the Welfare State

In this country, most people regard our National Health Service as being almost a national treasure which must never ever be even criticized and certainly must never be kept short of finances. This latter point has become more and more important as medical advances have resulted in more and more expensive treatments which have inflicted additional strain on the resources of the various trusts involved with providing health cover across the nation. Of course, no one seems to question the overall organization of the NHS which, to anyone who thinks about it, obviously leaves much to be desired both in terms of provision of patient care and use of funds available.

In the present context though, the point is that most of us in this country do depend on the NHS for most, if not all, of our health care. We are dependent on the state to provide our health care and this makes us vulnerable to the state. With what could our present NHS be replaced so that we would be less vulnerable? This is, of course, the huge next question as far as health care is concerned and the answer is none too easy to find, especially given that we are all so used to the NHS being in existence. It is, however, a question which needs to be given some serious thought by those better qualified to do so than I.

Obviously, all references to a national provision of health could be included in level five since such health provision is really another section of welfare. It is interesting and possibly important though to note that it is listed separately and its position as first on the list is stressed as being relevant, although other actual placements in the list are not, it seems, as being of similar importance. A moment's reflection makes one realize the true importance of health care provision to anyone wishing to dominate a population. All fear for their health and, indeed, their lives and, if the state takes care of these worries, it immediately removes a huge burden from the shoulders of all recipients of such seemingly generous largesse. No longer would anyone have to search through a pile of insurance company brochures to find the best cover affordable in given circumstances; no longer would anyone be compelled to make agonizing decisions over what could and could not be afforded. No; all that hassle, which would be more difficult to handle for some rather than others for a wide variety of reasons, would be removed and apparently everything any individual requires by way of health care would be miraculously provided by the all-caring state.

Few if any, I hasten to suggest, would question this at the time of the setting up of such a system. The unfortunate consequences of this only become apparent when the state finds itself short of money to provide all that people have grown to expect from such a service. These consequences are becoming more and more apparent in present-day Britain. As medical advances result in an increasing number of increasingly expensive life-saving treatments, the dependent public sees no reason why they – each and every one of them – should not benefit from these. It is trivially simple to extend this reasoning to any section of welfare, including the specific items listed above in level five.

The Role of Poverty and Taxation

The second level in the above list is to increase poverty. The reasoning behind this aim is precisely as stated; poor people are easier to control and will not fight back if you are providing everything for them to live. This yet again makes people dependent on the state for even more in their lives; first, dependent for health care and now for most other things necessary in life.

“A moment's reflection makes one realize the true importance of health care provision to anyone wishing to dominate a population.”

The third level in the list, increasing national debt to unsustainable levels, links immediately with this point in that the acknowledged way to deal with any national debt is to increase taxes. Rarely, if ever, is reduction in expense the main or only way adopted to deal with any such increase but, increasing taxes inevitably places more burden on the taxpayer and those taxpayers at the lower end of the income scale feel the pinch more readily. Hence, bit by bit as taxes increase, the number of those at the bottom end of the income scale increase and more become directly dependent on the state to provide the basic needs of living.

Of course, these two levels also link immediately with level eight because another consequence of increasing poverty is to increase the number of poor and decrease the proportion of rich people in our society. This has several undesirable effects. Firstly, it increases tension between the two sections in our society and allows the politics of envy to be used to a greater extent. It follows that the idea of taxing the so-called rich even more becomes a popular policy and, if followed, the policy produces even more dependent on the state for their everyday needs. The other effect is that, if the finances of the rich are decreased, they will be unable to continue to invest in their businesses and, indeed, the country. As a consequence, more of the poorer in our society will find themselves out of work and dependent on the state. It is interesting to note that, as far as this latter point is concerned, it is rarely recognized publicly in Britain that increasing taxes often reduces the revenue gathered in, whereas reduction of taxation frequently results in increased revenue for the treasury.

There have been several studies in the USA showing this and it is interesting to realize that the presidents who increased or decreased taxation are not distinguishable along party lines. For example, two presidents who decreased taxes were Kennedy and Reagan who most people would feel poles apart politically.³ In both these cases, reduction in taxation resulted in greatly increased revenue for the treasury. As has been pointed out, one reason for this is that, if and when taxation becomes high, the 'rich' are able to move their money about to avoid the rise and the end result is that the treasury receives nothing rather than a smaller percentage of the incomes. However, the details of this prob-

lem are more in the province of a professional economist and I merely comment on the findings of such people. However, it might be realized that these professionals on whose knowledge and expertise I draw come from a wide variety of backgrounds in the USA and are of different races but all come to the same conclusion on this matter.

Incidentally, many in the USA also wish to see an abolition of the minimum wage, claiming that its existence places too much financial pressure on many small businesses which often results in them closing down and the workers losing their employment. They also feel existence of a minimum wage produces lack of ambition to better themselves in many people. Here the views of two eminent black economics professors, Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell, both of whom had distinctly unprivileged backgrounds, are both interesting and informative. Whether or not they are correct in their assessment and whether or not people in Britain would agree with their views is not absolutely clear but it is certainly the case that any introduction and/or increase of a minimum wage helps strengthen the state's grip on the lives of at least some people.

Of course, this point concerning a minimum wage returns us to level five where 'income' is included under the heading welfare. Should the welfare state be involved in this way? Many would immediately answer 'Yes' but it seems that, ideally, there should be an open discussion of points such as this with evidence and opinion being provided by such as Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell. With their distinctly underprivileged backgrounds, both could provide useful information without the background and, therefore, prejudice provided by our present advanced welfare state in this country. In fact I would go so far as to suggest that many in positions of real authority in this country could do worse that read the weekly columns of these two wise gentlemen.⁴ Such people may not agree with all that they read but, provided they read with open minds, they would learn a lot and would certainly have extra wisdom to use when facing future problems.

Educational and Religious Issues

Mention of the politics of envy brings us logically to level six concerning education and it is only too easy to remember how edu-

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cation has been made a very obvious political football, at least since the end of World War II. Elements of educational policy have been blatantly used as political vote catchers and some have been so clever that all political parties have adopted policies purely, as they see it, to avoid losing votes. The tactic has always been to rely on some people being encouraged to be envious of others and hence cast their votes for the people most likely, in their eyes, to remove the cause of what they see, and are encouraged to see, as an iniquity. The most obvious example of this is the naked envy introduced in the lives of many by the whole question of the grammar schools. Initially, some areas of the country – in particular Glamorgan in South Wales – chose people for local grammar schools by a serious written examination which lasted a whole day.

It is worth recording also that, at least in this case, there were equal numbers of places for boys and girls. In those days, many people from what would now be described as disadvantaged backgrounds secured places in grammar schools and went on to achieve highly. A typical example would be the Welsh teacher, playwright and member of the BBC's 'Braintrust' panel, Gwyn Thomas, who from a genuinely disadvantaged background proceeded to Oxford to read for a degree and thence to a career as outlined above. How many in a similar starting position today would progress in like manner? I venture to suggest very few. In those days it was the norm for Welsh miners to encourage their children to make the most of any educational opportunity offered to them as they, almost to a man, didn't wish their children to have to work down a pit. How different a few years later when the serious written scholarship examination was replaced by the 11+. From that moment, troubles with our educational system increased. The cry from virtually all politicians was to draw attention to the 'unfairness' of the system because too many were effectively discarded academically at the age of eleven.

To be fair, in Glamorgan for many years this had simply not been true because the authority operated a policy whereby children who flourished in the secondary modern schools could be, and were, transferred to the local grammar school and those who proved unsuitable at the grammar school for whatever reason could be transferred to the secondary

modern school. No-one would claim even that system perfect; no system ever is. However, this example shows that a system which at least produced good results for a reasonable percentage of our young people from a wide variety of backgrounds could be made reasonably fair and possible further tweaking of it might even improve it more.

The authorities though chose simply to throw out the entire system and effectively start afresh with almost countrywide comprehensive of secondary education. All this achieved by the politics of envy and nowhere, not even today, does anyone in authority truly recognize the evil achieved.

Effectively everyone was deemed suitable for an academic education. No-one recognized the value of practical skills. No one recognized society's need for tradesmen such as bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, and so on. No one recognized that these trades-people are as skilled in their field as any high-flying academic is in his. The only important point to acknowledge is that their skills are different. No one should be saying one is more important or useful than the other because that simply wouldn't be true. If you taxed politicians face to face with this, I have no doubt they would agree with this last point. However, their actions always speak differently as they use the politics of envy to get what they want, which is more power over the populace.

In recent years, we have seen more and more intrusions by politicians – advised, no doubt, by people with vested interests to protect – into the compilation of the school curriculum. Much that has formed the basis of the country's past greatness in a wide variety of fields has been removed in favour of more nebulous topics. Good solid science courses have been replaced by ones in which the basics, or, if you prefer, the foundations, are not even taught. The end result has been an automatic watering down of many university courses because so much time has to be spent teaching those missing basics. The students then claim this boring and the result is that enrolment in those courses declines and the universities, most of whom nowadays care more about money than educational standards, close down those courses for lack of numbers. Admittedly the students involved lose out because they end up studying

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for nonsense degrees before finding out, when it is too late, that such degrees do not lead to jobs. The end result of all this tinkering with the curriculum at all levels though has been to lower the final educational standard of many.

One should not be too cynical but one must wonder whether this is a deliberate ploy to have a populace largely uneducated because such would be easier to dominate? As mentioned above in level six, if you control what people read and hear, if you control what children learn, you can effectively control all those people. Alinsky's point is just this. This is yet another way to increase state control because, controlling education as outlined, eventually enables the rulers to control the minds of the people. Also, universities used to train people to think but that is rarely the case today and people who don't think are easier to control by those in authority. Is this all an extreme claim? Possibly, but it is a way in which many in positions of authority seem to be moving and it must be resisted before it is too late.

Maybe we should all take note of Juliette's explanation of his actions to King Ferdinand in the Marquis de Sade's *L'Histoire de Juliette*:

*You fear the powerful eye of genius,
that is why you encourage ignorance.
This opium you feed your people, so
that, drugged, they do not feel their
burts, inflicted by you.*⁵

The first point of interest here is de Sade's idea that, because a ruler fears intelligence, he encourages ignorance. Surely that is the end effect of so many more recent developments in our educational system. Many complain but the truth is that there is a definite appearance of our educational system encouraging ignorance – maybe not directly or overtly, but encouraging it none the less. I suppose the point at question here is who is behind such policies since, if their public utterances are to be believed, it is not the politicians in this case. It is interesting, also, to note de Sade's use of the word opium here as that substance forms the basis of a famous statement attributable to Karl Marx concerning religion:

*Religion is the sigh of the oppressed
creature, the heart of a heartless*

*world, and the soul of soulless conditions.
It is the opium of the people.*⁶

This then leads us immediately to number seven in the list of levels attributed to Alinsky. To remove any belief in God from government and schools would have an immediate derogatory effect on our society. Such removal would leave a terrible void for all, even to atheists and agnostics. To all, such removal would alter the focus of much in everyday life to which most have grown accustomed. The religiously inclined would, if they were able to truly obey such a dictat, be facing a real dilemma over future actions whatever religion they followed and the unbelievers would be left without a subject on which to focus their thoughts and, in some cases, their ire.

All that would be left would be the all powerful, all embracing state! However, that would be the object of the exercise, to leave the state as the only entity on which people could focus their attention. In effect, the state would eventually become the peoples' new god. Everything from that point on would be devoted to serving the state and nothing else. It is with this realisation that the true ultimate meaning of the list of eight levels becomes completely clear although that still leaves the seemingly 'hot potato' of gun control.

Gun Control

Few would disagree with the introduction of some control of weapons in everyday life. The crucial question, though, is how far should such control extend? The list which forms the impetus for this piece originated in the USA and it must be admitted immediately that very different basic attitudes exist in our two countries over this particular issue, due in part to the two countries' very different historical backgrounds. Also, when considering the USA, it is always necessary to remember that many in that country jealously guard the contents of their written constitution which all presidents swear to uphold, even if some do not seem to take that solemn oath too seriously.

In Britain we do not have a background of people commonly carrying guns and so our starting point here is totally different. However, sense must prevail and we must not enact rules which have the effect of handing

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yet more power to the state. In this country, gun control was, in my view, quite reasonable and effective. If people were so inclined they could target shoot and those involved in the countryside could shoot game and vermin.

Then came Dunblane. Horrific as that incident was, the knee jerk reaction of banning handguns was out of all proportion and has since proved to be ineffective as far as illegal use of handguns is concerned; it was quite simply an expedient, blatantly political ploy at the time. There is absolutely no guarantee that, if such a ban had been in place earlier, the Dunblane tragedy would not have occurred. People have always been able to acquire guns if they really wanted them as is evidenced by the more recent gunning down of the two female police officers in Manchester when this ban was in place. No; the Dunblane tragedy must be viewed in isolation and one should be asking how the gunman had a valid licence even though the Callendar gun club had apparently – if reports at the time were correct – refused him membership because he was felt to be unstable.

Again, the issue raised its head again in the USA with the ghastly incident at Sandy Hook where again so many children were killed. Again though, all the emphasis was on guns and little coverage was given by the media to a school killing in China at roughly the same time where a knife was the weapon used. The emphasis all along was on the use of guns. In fact, even the recent mass knife killing in China has received far less public coverage than one might expect and probably would have been the case if guns had been used.

The whole question of gun control and banning of guns has become far too emotive and the situation which has developed is highly reminiscent of the one surrounding grammar schools and the 11+ where the blatant politics of envy was allowed to dominate all rational thought. Here again, emotion has taken the place of reason and the end result has done little, if anything, to lessen the supply of handguns to criminals; it has merely deprived our Olympic shooters of the opportunity to practice at home. As an extra point, it seems intriguing, if a little hypocritical, that our Government should grant a special dispensation to the 2012 Olympics so that the pistol shooting events could take place. Hence, presumably our home-grown shoot-

ers could compete on British soil but not practice!

A roundup of comments on Alinsky's set of levels

Hence, having looked at at least some aspects of each of the rephrased levels alluded to by Saul Alinsky, it is clear that all may be used to reduce the personal freedom of the individual just as they were designed to do. The big problem facing us all is the surreptitious nature of this assault on that personal freedom and the realisation that such an attack is not being perpetrated by one political group. In truth, all political parties have adopted these tactics, just as all political parties adopted that great panacea for all educational evils: comprehensivisation.

It is worth considering the educational situation to see how this all happens. With the issue of grammar schools and the 11+, a group started claiming that it was unfair and many people were being disadvantaged by the system. This was an immediately popular pitch, especially for families whose offspring had failed to get into grammar school. It became apparent very quickly that this stance was a gilt-edged vote winner and, therefore, a definite vote loser if you opposed it. Hence, all, whatever their political allegiance, adopted the anti grammar school, anti-11+ position with little or no thought for the consequences for education in this country or, indeed, for any other more general far reaching consequences for the country as a whole. No-one even considered improving the system in place by, for example, expanding the Glamorgan system mentioned above. No; grammar schools and the 11+ had to go because it was expedient as a vote catcher and for no other reason. The fact that the policy also took away a slice of personal freedom was allowed, accidentally or deliberately, to slip under the radar!

The above represents a very brief examination of the eight levels of control deemed necessary for securing a so-called social state. The list was compiled in a hope of influencing policy in the USA but a brief glance at it shows that many aspects of the list have been achieved to some extent already in this country. It should be stressed also that, although Alinsky is regarded as a rather extreme left-winger politically in the USA, the implementation of these levels of control over here has

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received support from all political parties. For example, people always talk about the great achievement of Aneurin Bevan in establishing our National Health Service and I would not wish to take any credit away from him but it should always be remembered that the Tories had a plan for a national health service developed in and around 1943. Hence, this idea, like comprehensivisation of our secondary schools, was not anathema to the Tories either.

Worrying developments in our legal system

All the above possible infringements of peoples' personal freedom have been, or are being, introduced by successive governments and certainly the scope seems to have been extended in recent years. However, personal freedom is not only under attack from governments but from other sources too, particularly the legal establishment. Obviously not all members of that establishment are involved but a substantial number seems to be. Until recently, many people believed that British justice was the best in the world and that at the heart of that judicial system was the belief that everyone was assumed innocent until proven guilty, and that guilt had to be proven *beyond reasonable doubt!*

However, this belief has been called into question in recent years and, if the recent utterances issuing forth from the recently retired Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Keir Starmer, are to be believed, this latter point will not be part of future prosecutions in certain cases if he has his way. He has seemed to say that in cases of sexual abuse, sufficient allegations should themselves be evidence enough to secure conviction. Even in such cases, this must be regarded as an extremely dangerous notion but, if accepted in such cases, how long would it be before the notion was extended to other areas where obtaining a conviction under the present belief of requiring guilt beyond reasonable doubt proves difficult?

In recent times of course, the media has been filled with allegations against Jimmy Savile and other well-known public figures. Several high profile court cases have resulted in acquittals, much to the annoyance, one suspects, of some involved with the prosecutions. However, from what one reads, in none of these cases was any real evidence of

wrong-doing produced; there was no forensic evidence (how could there be for events supposedly occurring fifty or more years ago?) and no corroborating testimony from even one independent, totally unbiased witness. Hence, however one looks at it, in these cases there was never any chance of gaining a conviction under the accepted principal of British justice that someone is innocent until proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt. It follows that these cases should never have come to trial and the judges concerned must shoulder some of the blame for not refusing to set trial dates.

We must always remember that, according to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the judge should only set a trial date if the case satisfies two criteria:

- i. It is in the public interest.
- ii. The case stands a better than 50% chance of a successful prosecution.

If these criteria are not met, the case should not proceed and the taxpayer should be saved an enormous amount of unnecessary expense. However, Mr Starmer's dangerous suggestion might have been provoked in part by the call for more successful prosecutions in rape cases. Again though, surely only those actually guilty of rape should be punished and, if you cannot prove someone guilty beyond reasonable doubt, they should go free? In these cases once again, in order to gain a safe conviction, the evidence *must* include forensic evidence and/or the testimony of a reliable, independent witness; merely having a list of allegations from different so-called victims can never ever be deemed sufficient. It is immediately obvious that, if adopted, Mr Starmer's suggestion would alter the entire basic framework of our legal system and would erode personal freedom tremendously. Yet again, the 'big brother' state would be gaining more power over the individual.

Before leaving this topic, two more points need to be placed on record. Firstly, in the Jimmy Savile case, although there were several hundred allegations, as far the public record is concerned no real *proof* to support any of these claims was provided. Indeed, in some cases, information emerged which made the validity of the original claim extremely dubious. Also Mr Savile is dead and in no position to defend himself but it is interesting that this hasn't deterred avaricious

“... allegations should themselves be evidence enough to secure conviction.”

lawyers from claiming compensation for alleged victims while pocketing a substantial fee themselves for their activities which cannot by any stretch of the imagination be deemed moral. It might be noted incidentally that, in some cases, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority has seemingly paid compensation to alleged victims of sexual assault before the case has even come to court. It has also been admitted that it is possible for ‘victims’ to have been paid compensation after the alleged assailant has been found ‘Not Guilty’!

It is difficult to obtain too much information on these particular matters but there is a distinct impression abroad that some public money is being misused by this subsection of the Home Office and it certainly seems to be a matter of genuine public interest for which answers should be obtainable under Freedom of Information legislation.

The second point which concerns virtually all the recent cases is that the alleged events occurred many years ago in the 50’s and 60’s. Many of the alleged ‘victims’ would have been in their teens at the time but this was an age when teenagers did throw themselves at ‘pop stars’. To paraphrase what one very famous pop star said recently, in those days the big names didn’t have to go looking for women because the women were simply throwing themselves at them. In many cases these women would undoubtedly have been under age but made up to look much older. Yes; it was still a crime to have sex with an underage person but society stood by at the time while all this was happening and, by turning a blind eye, effectively condoned this behaviour. Some spoke out but were usually ridiculed by all in and outside the media for their ‘fuddy duddy’ attitude.

It would do the authorities, especially the legal authorities, well to remember this because they were a part of this at the time and many of today’s allegations are being made by people who were, quite possibly, members of that group throwing themselves at pop stars and other big name celebrities.

Is our compensation culture, fuelled by avaricious lawyers, to be allowed to continue this hypocrisy and ruin yet more lives and reputations? If people break the law, they should be punished but only if their guilt can be established beyond reasonable doubt. Recent

and pending cases certainly raise doubts about the impartiality of our legal system and it certainly seems to be moving far away from its original path and tending to impose itself more and more on one opposed to personal freedom.

Conclusions

As I said at the beginning, I feel the need for the Society for Individual Freedom is possibly greater now than for many years; possibly more important than at any time in its history. Organisations such as it, and there are a few other voices crying in the wilderness, are all that stand between the individual and a totalitarian state such as envisaged by Saul Alinsky. It is to be hoped that the society’s influence will increase and existing members will do all they can both to support the society and, possibly more importantly, help to increase its membership so that that influence will increase even more. I’m very much afraid that, in words often linked with the late Lord Kitchener, the society’s advertisement should read ‘Your country needs you!’

Notes

- (1) Jeremy Dunning-Davies, ‘Some thoughts on freedom in present-day Britain and the USA’, *The Individual*, April 2013, pp. 13-22.
- (2) Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*, Random House, 1971.
- (3) See Stephen Moore, *Who’s the fairest of them all?*, Encounter Books, New York, 2012.
- (4) The works of both Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell can be found on the townhall.com website.
- (5) Marquis de Sade, *L’Histoire de Juliette*, 1797.
- (6) Karl Marx, introduction to a proposed work *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*. This introduction appeared in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in 1844.

About the author

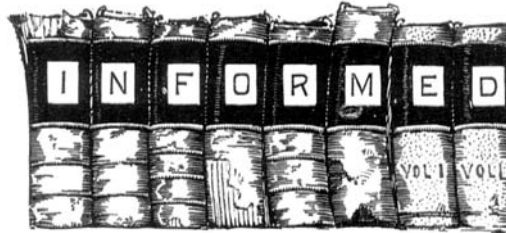
Dr Jeremy Dunning-Davies was born in 1941 in Glamorgan, the son of a primary school headmaster. His mother and wife were also teachers before their respective marriages and this teaching background has given Jeremy an abiding interest in education at all levels. He was appointed to the Applied Mathematics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

“If people break the law, they should be punished but only if their guilt can be established beyond reasonable doubt.”

coming 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*.



A 'BENEVOLENT' CARTEL: MINIMUM WAGES AND MONOPOLY PRICES

Richard Garner

A hidden cartel

An interesting possible line of argument not explored often enough is that the minimum wage law is actually a monopolistic privilege, effectively enforcing cartelisation of the labour supply.

Think of it like this: A cartel is classically thought of as occurring when different competitors in an industry who supply a particular type of good or service get together to agree not to undercut each other. They threaten to withhold supply of goods unless buyers agree to pay a higher price, or they just reduce the supply anyway, so that supply falls relative to demand, and prices increase.

Well, what examples do we have of this? People like to allege that supermarkets do this, that railways did it in the nineteenth century, and other such examples. However, surely the most common occurrence of a cartel, or collusion in order to withhold supply in order to raise prices is one that people just don't like to point out. Maybe because they are supposed to be nice, benevolent things. The most common attempts at forming cartels are unions.

Think about it. Unions are when suppliers of labour get together so that they can threaten to strike unless they get a better wage. Ultimately, the idea of "collective bargaining" with union negotiated wages rests on this power of striking: the threat to withhold supply unless the price rises. This is classical, typical cartel behaviour.

Cartels in a free-market economy

Now, libertarians believe that people have a right to form unions. Unions may well occur in free markets but this is not to say that they can effect general wage levels, because they will not be able to charge monopoly prices. The reason why people should be free to form unions is because if one person has a right to withhold his labour by virtue of owning himself and hence his labour, it follows that a large number of people have the same rights. On utilitarian grounds, though, people sometimes fear the power of unions "in restraint of trade." I think they are wrong to do so, because cartels are inherently unstable in a free market economy.

Why is this the case? For at least two reasons. Firstly, and the most obvious, that if you were a businessman and you, with rea-

"... libertarians believe that people have a right to form unions."

sonable certainty, knew that your competitors were going to keep their prices high, or raise them, though costs, say, were falling, what would you do? Cut your prices, of course, and take business from your competitors. A cartel agreement provides this certainty, by definition. It is when a group of your competitors, and you, get together and announce to each other that you will fix prices. However, you don't know if anybody else will stick to this agreement, so perhaps it is not so certain. So, suppose you don't know whether your competitors will keep their prices high. Again, you will reduce yours, so that you don't lose business to them in case they cut prices too.

So, either you can be certain they will stick to the cartel agreement, in which case you don't. Or you can't be certain they will stick to it, in which case you don't. Either way it simply is not rational for you to abide by the cartel agreement.

Secondly, though, the new, higher price will attract new suppliers to compete with the established suppliers in that industry. The cartel would then be forced to compete with these new suppliers, and could only do that by reducing prices.

Away from the market

However, moving away from a free-market, a cartel can be made more stable if these instabilities are removed. What the cartel needs is a means to ensure that members will abide by the agreement to keep prices high – that means a method to enforce the cartel agreement. But what is also needed is a way to stop new competitors selling at less than the cartel price.

Unions have accomplished both these things. Cartel agreements are strengthened by unions threatening to withhold benefits or legal support or protection and so on for members that cross picket lines. They also support legislation preventing employers from hiring “scabs,” or even to force workers in a particular workplace to join a particular union. In fact, many unions workers are also professional workers, meaning that workers in that industry must be licensed, and the licensing authorities are usually staffed by members of that industry, probably unionised.

However, one of the most effective ways of enforcing the cartel agreement is for the government to simply enforce the cartel price, and make it illegal for members of the cartel to sell at less than the monopoly price. This is precisely what the minimum wage does.

Milton and Rose Friedman wrote in *Free to Choose* that:

These laws are defended as a way to help low income people. In fact, they hurt low-income people. The source of pressure for them is demonstrated by the people who testify before Congress in favour of a higher minimum wage. They are not representatives of the poor people. They are mostly representatives of organized labour, of the AFL-CIO [the largest federation of unions in the USA] and other labour organisations. No member of their unions works for a wage anywhere close for the legal minimum. Despite all the rhetoric about helping the poor, they favour an ever higher minimum wage as a way to protect the members of their unions from competition.¹

The minimum wage is a means of ripping off employers by enforcing a cartel agreement.

Note

(1) First published in 1980 and referenced *inter alia* in James Pethokoukis, 4th February 2012, retrieved 20th March 2014, ‘5 books Romney should read (Obama, too) on economic freedom’, <http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/02/5-books-romney-should-read-obama-too-on-economic-freedom/>.

About the author

Richard Garner was a friend, academic and libertarian as well as 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 now publish. This article is an edited version of one that appeared on his own blog on the 9th May 2009.

“...one of the most effective ways of enforcing the cartel agreement is for the government to simply enforce the cartel price... This is precisely what the minimum wage does.”

FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD: AN INTERNATIONAL ANALYSIS

Dr Nigel Gervas Meek

An hypothesis revisited

Over 10 years ago, I researched and wrote a pamphlet for the Libertarian Alliance with the title *Economic Freedom, Civil Freedom, And Material Prosperity: An International Correlational Study*.¹ Without going into the full background of the motivation behind this work, there were a number of hypotheses. The core one was that economic freedom and political/civil freedom were positively associated with each other. In other words, that countries which had relatively free-market economies tended to have a relatively high regard for civil liberties (and vice-versa).

Here, I rerun the analysis although at a rather simpler level. I also use the same data sources, albeit the up-to-date, 2014, editions.

For measures of political/civil liberties, I again turn to the US-based NGO, Freedom House.² Analysing countries around the world, they award points for a number of both political rights indicators and civil liberties indicators. The political rights indicators are: Electoral Process, Political Pluralism and Participation, and Functioning of Government. The civil liberties indicators are Freedom of Expression and Belief, Associational and Organizational Rights, Rule of Law, and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights. Ultimately, Freedom House produces a three-level typology of nations: Free, Partly free, and Unfree.

For measures of economic freedom, I again turn to the US-based NGO, the Heritage Foundation.³ They measure economic freedom based on 10 factors, grouped into four broad categories. These are: Rule of Law (property rights, freedom from corruption); Limited Government (fiscal freedom, government spending); Regulatory Efficiency (business freedom, labour freedom, monetary freedom); and Open Markets (trade freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom). Ultimately, the Heritage Foundation produces a five-level typology of nations: Free, Mostly

free, Moderately free, Mostly unfree, and Repressed.

Elements of the measures produced by Freedom House and the Heritage Foundation are, inevitably, open to objections. Readers are invited to look at my earlier (and longer) Libertarian Alliance paper. However, for the illustrative purposes of this simpler essay, they will do.

The Freedoms analysed

Using a combination of the applications *Excel* and *PSPP*, I calculated the association between the two types of freedom. The use of the three- and five-level final versions of the two measures – as opposed to the rawer data produced at earlier stages in the investigations by both organisations – is simple but adequate for illustrative purposes. It also helps to smooth out some outliers (extreme findings) in the data.

The experimental hypothesis (H_1) is that there is a significant correlation between the two measures. I.e. that the more economically free a country is then the more politically free it will tend to be (and vice-versa). I need to state a null hypothesis (H_0) as well. This is that there is no association between the two measures.

I will spare the reader much in the way of technical detail. There was data along *both* measures for 177 countries. Some missing countries are microstates that are are/were too small to analyse meaningfully and others are countries too war-torn or otherwise chaotic to measure. (Although in the latter case one suspects that this might go in the direction of our hypothesis.)

A simple chi-squared analysis finds a two-tailed significance level of <0.005 and so we can reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is less than one-half of a percent chance of rejecting the null hypothesis when that hypothesis is true.

“The experimental hypothesis ... is that ... the economically more free a country is then the more politically free it will tend to be...”

In everyday terms, we can be at least 99.5% sure that there is an association between the measures in the way hypothesised. *That is, that economic and political freedom, if not indivisible, strongly tend to go together.*

“So, where do I go?”

Imagine for a moment that the SIF set up its own travel agency catering for those of a libertarian inclination. Where might we advise our customers to visit? More seriously, what are the most and least free countries in the world?

To examine this, I used the same data. I had to perform one additional operation, however. It will be remembered that the scales of the two measures are different: three- and five-level. They have to be “standardised” into z-scores with a mean (average) for each measure of zero. Fortunately, *PSPP* can do this. I then added the two measures together.

The observed numerical results look very odd and are not reproduced here. However, a visual inspection reveals that when added together the two measures form 14 groups with equal scores – albeit some with only two or three members – and these are reported in the list on page 14. Of course, this whole process inevitably attenuates some of the finer detail. For example, North Korea is reported in the 14th and worst group along with a number of other countries. It is probably fair to say that North Korea is the least free country in the world.

I will not patronise the reader by, in effect, reiterating the list. The findings are obvious. “Liberty” as most readers of this journal will understand it is overwhelmingly located in Europe – particularly northern, western and central Europe – and those countries directly founded thereof. It surely cannot be a coincidence that three of the four members of the first and freest group are members of our own Old Commonwealth (although not the UK itself) and that a large proportion of those in this and the second group are those whose primary language is “Germanic” or “Nordic” or some-such. (Although a glance back at recent history suggests that this is not a fail-safe guide...)

The one coherent group of countries that stand outside of this cultural/geographical origin are those remarkable oriental nations

of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. All three were within living memory decidedly unpleasant authoritarian regimes but which have now been stable democracies for many years. And, of course, the population of all three is non-white. This is important. Some may read into my comments in the preceding paragraph a degree of racial determinism that I actually reject.

The sparsely populated Groups 3 and 8 are rather interesting. Again, it must be kept in mind that placement in any of the 14 groups is a result of the adding together of different sets of data measuring different things produced by two, independent organisations. Group 3 consists solely of those two Oriental city-states, Hong Kong and Singapore. A closer inspection reveals that their unusual placement results from an extremely “good” score on the economic dimension with a somewhat “problematic” history on civil liberties. Hong Kong is, of course, now a semi-detached part of China.

(Wither mainland China in the coming years and decades? Still in the wretched Group 13 as it is now? Or a move to emulating the rather better Hong Kong (which would be a major reverse take-over)? Or will it emulate its admirable “lost province” of Taiwan? My word, what a boon to humanity that would be.)

Group 8 clearly consists of the “better” Gulf states with a poor record on human rights but not so bad on the economic measure.

As for the rest, with the honourable exceptions noted above as well as some others such as Ghana and Botswana, then the tendency is that as one moves into Asia, Arabia and Africa the worse it gets.

The list needs little further exposition.

Islam and freedom

However, I will go a little further into a “controversial” area. Moreover, I do so with some reluctance since the relatively small number of people of Muslim origin that I know are amongst the most decent folk that one could hope to meet. Nevertheless, we must be honest enough not to succumb to the ecological or individualistic fallacies⁴ (depending which way around one is approaching the matter).

“ ‘Liberty’ ... is overwhelmingly located in Europe ... and those countries directly founded thereof.”

Freedom: International Rankings

GROUP 1 (MOST FREE)

Australia
Canada
New Zealand
Switzerland

GROUP 2

Austria
Botswana
Chile
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
Germany
Iceland
Ireland
Japan
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Mauritius
Netherlands
Norway
Saint Lucia
South Korea
Sweden
Taiwan
United Kingdom
United States

GROUP 3

Hong Kong
Singapore

GROUP 4

Bahamas
Barbados
Belgium
Bulgaria
Cape Verde
Costa Rica
Croatia
Cyprus
Dominica
Dominican Republic
El Salvador
France
Ghana
Hungary
Israel
Italy
Jamaica

Latvia
Malta
Montenegro
Panama
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Romania
St Vincent & Grenadines
Samoa
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Trinidad & Tobago
Uruguay

GROUP 5

Colombia
Georgia

GROUP 6

Belize
Benin
Brazil
Greece
Guyana
India
Mongolia
Namibia
Senegal
Serbia
Suriname
Tonga
Vanuatu

GROUP 7

Albania
Armenia
Guatemala
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Macedonia
Madagascar
Malaysia
Mexico
Paraguay
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Turkey
Zambia

GROUP 8

Bahrain
Qatar
United Arab Emirates

GROUP 9

Argentina
Kiribati
Lesotho
Micronesia
Sao Tome & Principe

GROUP 10

Bangladesh
Bhutan
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Comoros
Fiji
Guinea
Honduras
Indonesia
Ivory Coast
Kenya
Lebanon
Liberia
Malawi
Maldives
Mali
Moldova
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Nicaragua
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Tanzania
Tunisia
Uganda

GROUP 11

Azerbaijan
Brunei
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Oman

Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Swaziland

GROUP 12

Bolivia
East Timor
Ecuador
Haiti
Solomon Islands
Togo
Ukraine
Venezuela

GROUP 13

Algeria
Belarus
Cameroon
Cambodia
China
Djibouti
Egypt
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Guinea-Bissau
Laos
Mauritania
Russia
Tajikistan
Vietnam
Yemen

GROUP 14 (LEAST FREE)

Angola
Central African Republic
Chad
Congo DR
Congo Republic
Cuba
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Iran
Myanmar
North Korea
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

Who now remembers with anything other than scorn or embarrassment the “end of history” hypothesis? In its most (in)famous manifestation, following the collapse of the Soviet Union it proposed the idea that Western, secular liberal democracy represented this end-point. Others had something to say about this. In particular, Islam represents, at least in principle, a coherent alternate body of thought presently adhered to in some manner by well over a billion people.

With that in mind, I simply observe the fact that not a single Muslim-majority country⁵ is found in the first five – i.e. freest – of our groups. (Ironically, Israel is one of the few countries with a substantial Muslim population found in the freer groups!) There is a sole representative in Group 6: Senegal. It is only from Group 7 downwards that Muslim-majority countries make regular appearances in the list.

Of course, a proportion of Muslims – just like old-fashioned socialists in their own way – would greet such a finding with acclamation. For them, “individual liberty” is a Western, bourgeois decadence to be decried. Well, that is the whole point of having an alternate set of values. In any case, the facts on the ground suggest that Islam or at least a strong Islamic heritage tends to be hostile towards individual liberty as we understand it in the West. Therefore, I offer this as an hypothesis that we might find being tested: “That in a country not presently Muslim-majority, the increasing influence of Islam through either a growing population and/or the incorporation of Islamic values by the indigenous elites will tend to be associated with an overall diminution in liberty in that country.” Discuss...

The obvious needs to be stated

And that’s it for now. Nothing has changed in recent years and the findings that economic and political/civil liberties tend to go together will not surprise many readers of this journal.

Nevertheless, in the immensely messy series of natural experiments that are the countries of the world, the findings are clear and so, I would suggest, are the implications. Those who, no matter how sincerely, advocate a diminution in the freedom of individuals in this or that area to help in some other area of

human life instead risk diminishing it for everyone everywhere. In other words – to use the American terminology – “progressives” who advocate ever more state control of the economy to address perceived injustices and inequalities may elicit a diminution in the civil liberties that they cherish; and “conservatives” who seek to challenge various (consensual adult) acts that they consider immoral might find that the entrepreneurship and wealth creation that they espouse is also diminished.

Theoretical considerations aside, these things just seem to go together.

Notes

- (1) Nigel G. Meek, *Economic Freedom, Civil Freedom, And Material Prosperity: An International Correlational Study*, London, Libertarian Alliance, 2003.
- (2) Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2014 Methodology*, 2014, retrieved 4th April 2014, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Methodology%20FIW%202014.pdf>.
- (3) Heritage Foundation, ‘2014 Index of Economic Freedom’, 2014, retrieved 4th April 2014, <http://www.heritage.org/index/about>.
- (4) The “ecological fallacy” is where inferences about individuals are deduced from the group to which those individuals belong. The “individualistic fallacy” is where inferences about a group are deduced from observations of (possibly unrepresentative) individual members.
- (5) Pew Research, ‘The Future of the Global Muslim Population’, 2011, retrieved 4th April 2014, <http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population/>. (If the data was available, I wonder into which group the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus would fall. I suspect that it might be fairly high up the list.)

About the author

Dr Nigel Gervas Meek is the editor and/or membership secretary of the SIF, the Libertarian Alliance and the Campaign Against Censorship. He recently published a major quantitative study of British Conservative Party politicians: *Conservative Party Politicians at the Turn of the 20th/21st Centuries: Their Attitudes, Behaviour and Background* (London, Civic Education & Research Trust, 2012, 390 pages).

“Those who ...
advocate a
diminution in the
freedom of
individuals in this
or that area ...
instead risk
diminishing it for
everyone
everywhere.”

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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.

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*"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