

mr. social control presents

REMARKS ON THE DOLE

by
Rt.Hon Michael Portillo M.P.

This Top Secret cabinet document, clandestinely passed on to the notorious performance poet Mr.Social Control by a very close friend, reveals some uncomfortable truths about the current state of government thinking. Within its pages, Employment Secretary Michael Portillo argues that the problem of Social Security spending cannot be solved until the purpose of the Dole is ascertained. In search of this purpose, he treats his colleagues to a wide-ranging discussion, including his thoughts upon the nature of work itself. His style is crisply cynical and his conclusions will be, to many, abhorrent. This document should never have seen the light of day.

I've bothered to reproduce this document because I am convinced of its authenticity having had it passed to me by a very reliable source. The next presentation in the Sexually Re-Press Mr.Social Control Presents series is a document called "Protocols of the Elders of Pharamakon", purporting to be the secret programme of a cartel of pharmaceutical companies intending to manipulate public conceptions of health and sickness through the clandestine encouragement of so-called Alternative Medicine. And the third pamphlet in the series will be an entirely genuine reprint of the sadly neglected 70s feminist classic "All Men are Bastards - Except Hegel" together with its 90s sequel "On the Origin of Compulsive Reading-Books-about-Eating-Disorders Disorders", both by Amantia Paperknife. If you'd like to write to me suggesting any future reprints, or to be put on my mailing list advertising publications and live performances, or for any other reason, then my most reliable address is:

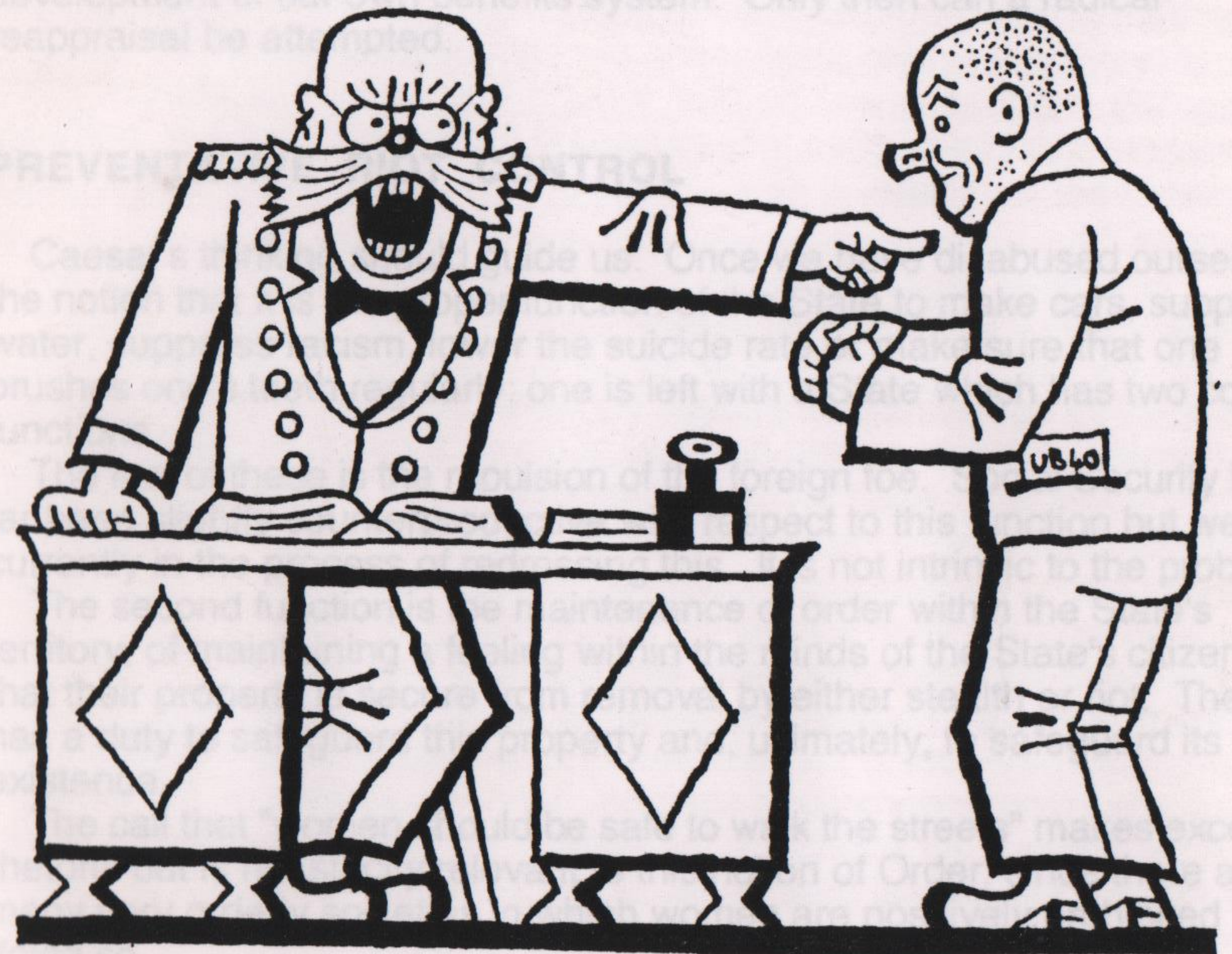
Mr.Social Control
Sexually Re-Press



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We on the right of our party have consistently argued that crime is the result of wickedness. We have rubbished the liberal claim that deprivation is to blame by pointing out that were this the case then all poor people would steal. In fact they do not, because not all the deprived are wicked. The unspoken and unfortunate corollary of this is that neither are all the wicked deprived. I myself am profoundly wicked yet I am driven to shoplift only when a shopkeeper seems particularly surly or impoverished. In most

THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROBLEM

The problem with Social Security is one of cost. This year the DSS budget is £88 billion. Next year it could well top £100 billion. A hundred years ago Britain spent ten times more on her Navy than on Social Security. The proportions are now more than reversed.

Each successive attempt to "require more of the unemployed" (1) so as to restrict eligibility for dole, ends up costing more to administer than it saves in benefits. We have tried to "hassle" dole claimants but have ended up hassling only ourselves.

Even proposals as audacious as Mr. Clarke's plan to rename Unemployment Benefit, may well prove insufficient. A new concept is needed that will do for Social Security what the internal market has done for Health and the national curriculum for Education.

The trouble is that since Julius Caesar first instituted the Roman corn-dole, a number of different ideas have arisen as to what social security is for. These ideas ought to be critically examined in the light of the development of our own benefits system. Only then can a radical reappraisal be attempted.

PREVENTATIVE RIOT CONTROL

Caesar's thinking should guide us. Once we have disabused ourselves of the notion that it is the proper function of the State to make cars, supply water, suppress racism, lower the suicide rate or make sure that one brushes one's teeth regularly; one is left with a State which has two core functions.

The first of these is the repulsion of the foreign foe. Social Security has so far been slightly counterproductive with respect to this function but we are currently in the process of redressing this. It is not intrinsic to the problem.

The second function is the maintenance of order within the State's territory, of maintaining a feeling within the minds of the State's citizenry that their property is secure from removal by either stealth or riot. The State has a duty to safeguard this property and, ultimately, to safeguard its own existence.

The call that "women should be safe to walk the streets" makes excellent rhetoric but is not strictly relevant to this notion of Order, since there are many very orderly societies in which women are positively prohibited from doing so.

In a society such as ours, property can be vested in processes of commerce or transport as well as held as physical objects, so the maintenance of order is more a matter of allowing the due processes of "business-as-usual" to continue, by for instance maintaining traffic flow, than of protecting individuals from molestation.

We on the right of our party have consistently argued that crime is the result of wickedness. We have rubbished the liberal claim that deprivation is to blame by pointing out that were this the case then all poor people would steal. In fact they do not, because not all the deprived are wicked. The unspoken and unfortunate corollary of this is that neither are all the wicked deprived. I myself am profoundly wicked yet I am driven to shoplift only when a shopkeeper seems particularly surly or impoverished. In most

individuals, natural wickedness is counterbalanced by an equal and opposite laziness. It is often only when this laziness is itself neutralised by real or perceived necessity, that the wickedness can come into play and a crime against property be committed.

So it is that, as Caesar observed, the mob are governed chiefly by their bellies. Accordingly it has been found that the most expedient way of preserving the civil peace is by judicial apprehension, judicial deterrence and the dole.

As the then Quentin Hogg said in the 40s, "We must give them social reform or they will give us social revolution". Less succinctly it has been remarked that "the desire to relieve social tensions and preclude the possibility of socialist revolution was indeed an element in the motivation of many of those concerned with the introduction of welfare legislation...But such motivations will only appear cynical to one who uncritically accepts the Marxist analysis of capitalism as a total social system which inevitably operates to the benefit of one social class at the expense of others. To one who holds that the preservation of private property is conducive to the common good of all classes in society, the mitigation of social tensions through the relief of hardship is, at once, the most politically legitimate and the most morally desirable justification of centrally funded welfare provision"(2) which may well be true, though the question of whether the preservation of property does indeed benefit the lower classes is, perhaps, irrelevant to our purposes.

MAKING THE DOLE REDUNDANT

If a strategy against property crime consists of these three elements of apprehension, deterrence and removal of cause through Social Security, then the necessity for each element is created by the failings of the others. The relationship between apprehension and deterrence is well illustrated by the problem of "faredodging" on public transport.

London Transport has recently adopted a costly strategy of apprehension. It faces the costs of inspectors, computerised ticket barriers, the administration of a complex regimen of prices and, potentially, of compensation pay-outs to the relatives of those fatally trapped by the barriers in burning underground stations. Vienna's system on the other hand is far simpler. All tickets are the same price and it can seem to the visitor that the the natural orderliness of the Viennese is enough to ensure that journeys are properly paid for, that is until one encounters one of the city's ticket inspectors. These fearsome gentlemen wear an astonishing uniform, half HMS Pinafore, half SS officer, are accompanied by snarling dogs and possess powers of detention and fining that must be the envy of the Indonesian secret police. On any one journey the chance of meeting an inspector is small but the consequences are so terrifying that faredodging is almost unknown.

We can see that the more effective our deterrence, the less the necessity for actually catching criminals. Inversely: a telepathic teleporting police force would, through their powers of apprehension, obviate the need to deliberately deter crime. Crime, like any other economic behaviour is subject to cost-benefit analysis, weighing the benefit of the crime against the likelihood, and likely cost, of being caught.

A similar inverse relationship exists between the dole and the judiciary. A

wholly effective system of deterrence and apprehension would stop the wicked in their tracks, however hungry they were. Similarly a wholly ineffective judiciary would compel us to keep the entire populace in the lap of luxury, lest they should want something enough to steal it. It is for this reason that dole systems have existed for so long.

So, unlike the NHS, the dole is not solely a product of the postwar Bevanite settlement, that can be dismembered if only a sufficiently obfuscatory method of doing so can be devised. Even in the admirably free economy of the Byzantine Empire, there was a rudimentary dole system involving a wooden ticket which could be used to obtain various goods. When Emperor Justinian I resolved to reduce to beggary the popular war-hero Belisarius he had not only to put out his eyes with hot needles but also to suspend his benefit by disbaring him from obtaining this Byzantine UB40.

This does not mean that the dole must continue forever. Advances in the technology of surveillance can be expected to produce an ever closer approximation to the perfect judiciary. The current extension in the use of CCTV in town centres represents a positive step in this direction. Of course such surveillance does not really deter theft, it merely displaces it from the commercial realm. However the realm that is the tendency of the mob to prey on one another's meagre effects, is scarcely of any concern to the civil Order. It is perhaps an appreciation of this last point that unconsciously, allows the middle classes to be swayed in their assent to CCTV by the rather fatuous arguments that being watched is not injurious in itself and that the innocent have nothing to fear. Such arguments could, after all, apply equally well to the installation of cameras in their bedrooms.

Despite widespread support such measures have not yet progressed sufficiently to affect provision of Social Security. In any case we can envisage other technological advances that would turn the existence of a pool of workless persons into a positive advantage. A biological engineering scheme whereby claimants would be required to "rent" their kidneys to the water authorities, rather like a dialysis machine in reverse, might soon be feasible. Similarly, recent United Nations pronouncements creating fiscal incentives for national ownership of the genetic diversity of organisms, might soon turn the unemployed into valuable depositories of saleable biodiversity. We can only wait and see, and realise that we cannot, for the moment abolish the dole.

THE POLL BENEFIT

The Social Security bill is not spiralling because we are paying more money to more claimants. Instead it is the administrative costs of distinguishing between genuine claims and false, of deterring deliberate scrounging, of eliminating fraud and of keeping the system intimidatingly complex, that burden us with extra cost. If our only purpose was to supply such relief to the needy as was necessary for the civil peace, then this could be achieved without recourse to our enormous administrative apparatus.

By far the simplest form of Social Security to administer would be a Poll Benefit, a payment by head, a Poll Tax in reverse, which would consist of a fortnightly giro of, say, £100 obtainable by every adult citizen. The cost in benefits would be high but the administrative costs limited to the compilation of a register, similar to that required by the Poll Tax but which would be unlikely to suffer from the same widespread evasion. Pensions,

payments to students, sickness and unemployment benefits and most of our other doles could be abolished at a stroke. The decennial census would become unnecessary. Wages would drop throughout the economy leading to an investment boom. A real Poll Tax could be introduced since payment could not be resisted if it were universally deducted at source. Social Security fraud, apart from multiple claims, would become meaningless as fraudsters suddenly found themselves entitled to monies they had hitherto collected dishonestly. Dole offices could be closed and their employees sacked. Citizens could be required to collect their giro's from small high street kiosks, saving about £30 million pa in postage. Finally at least half of the money paid out could be clawed back in the form of increased National Insurance payments from the longterm employed. The national Social Security bill would be reduced to a third or even a quarter its present size and there would be substantial savings in other areas.

The problem of multiple claims would of course remain. However I believe that a sensible balance between apprehension and deterrence of fraudsters would simply impose fierce penalties and secure a small number of well publicised convictions. Our friends in the tabloid press have already proved themselves able allies in this respect. Such a strategy against fraud, like the overall concept of the Poll Benefit, would be cheap to run and would achieve its ostensible aims effectively. However, I suspect that you, my colleagues, upon reading this paper, are not warming to my proposals. Unlike Mr. Howerd's speech to conference in 1993, they do not strike a chord. My proposals meet their aims efficiently. Yet somehow that is not the way we want to do things. There is in fact something else we want from a Social Security system than that the necessary protection money be paid out to the mob. We have our pride after all and do not wish to give in so cravenly to what is, in effect, a threat of mainforce. It is for this that we are spending so many billions each year. It is for this that we have dug ourselves into a deep semantic and political hole over the concept of "Training". Our desire is quite simple, ideological rather than fiscal. Our desire is to punish the unemployed.

THE VIRTUES OF WORK

As Conservatives we are morally committed to the virtues of hard work. We believe that "God doth allow none to live idly"(3) and that "It is swinish and sinful not to labour"(4). In addition we are economically committed to the virtues of economic growth. Intuitively these two commitments are linked; how else is the net value of work to increase unless everyone works hard?

We might therefore be said to possess a "work ethic", sometimes called the Protestant work ethic since the Bible strongly condemns idleness and since the Roman church has often been thought thriftless. Personally I feel that not too much emphasis should be placed on biblical injunction, since the same volume also condemns masturbation (e.g. Corinthians 6:9-10) and I suspect that all but a tiny handful of my colleagues in cabinet would be opposed to spending another £88 billion pa stamping out this particular vice.

Religion aside, our objections to unemployment are several. Not only are the unemployed a waste of labour, the hand that signs on could instead be

serving me my dinner, but they are also the source of several potential dangers. Chief amongst these is that of combination, the danger that having been dissuaded from making a nuisance of themselves from hunger, they will make a nuisance of themselves from broadly political motives, for instance by combining in ragged bands to hinder the construction of highways or to commit some other mischief.

A second and related danger is moral rather than political, a danger that the unemployed will demoralise the rest of the workforce. Just as wretched beggars visible on the streets act as an excellent moral lesson to the young on the dangers of sloth, so would a contented, mischievous or culturally visible class of unemployed persons exercise a malign influence on the employed. Work is largely driven by perceived necessity. By psychological necessity, the need to have "something to do" with one's life, and by material necessity, the need to earn enough to keep the car on the road, have a social life, pay the mortgage, go on holiday and so on. The continuing tendency of the working classes to work is therefore dependent upon them perceiving no alternative to their usual recreations.

The unemployed however have a tendency to circumvent their poverty by providing their own amusements, witness the apparently ineradicable pop festivals that plague the country each summer. Left unchecked this tendency could lead to a worst-case scenario of a widespread decoupling of the notions of "doing something" and of earning money. We can imagine demands for part-time work, a labour shortage and workers, no longer fearful of the sack, being in a position to dictate wages and conditions. Less money would be spent, leading the economy first into decline, then into an abyss, an abyss of a barely organised society, producing its necessities informally, its luxuries at whim and with the conditions of this labour under the control of irregular committees of workmen, no doubt guided by fashionable ideas of "ecological sustainability" and therefore producing as little as possible. Under such conditions there would be little left of our freedom to choose between competing products.

Luckily many factors militate against such a course of events ever taking place. We have an increasingly vocational education system, equipping pupils for the real world of the workplace. We have a political left as committed as we ourselves to maintaining the conflation of "work" meaning one's identity, vocation and source of achievement with "work" meaning paid employment, itself no mean feat considering the nature of most jobs. We have a car-based transport system requiring massive personal investment from its users. We have an advertising industry cleverly extolling, in almost ever living room, the glamour of expensive leisure recreations. We have a popular system of insurances, savings schemes and pensions that allow their consumers to imagine that they have a stake in the very social situations that create the perils against which they insure themselves. We have a cut-off point for eligibility to means-tested benefits that discourages part-time work, which might otherwise serve as a bridgehead for the entry of a dole-ethic into the workplace. We have a general tendency in the land which sociologists refer to as "individuation", that is, the shifting of public responsibilities, activities or production methods, onto the individual, helping to insulate workers from demoralising forces. All in all, what the Marxists once sneered at as "commodity fetishism", and what we might more simply call the desire to spend money, has never been more in more excellent health. Our work ethic is working

and the key to its continuation is the alarm felt by employees at the prospect of unemployment.

To keep the unemployed out of trouble we must punish them by keeping them busy and by seeking to instruct them in the matter of their attitudes towards work. To keep workers fearful we must be seen to punish the workless.

Happily our capacity to inflict such measures is great, owing to claimants' financial dependence on the State. Although our use of the term "dependency culture" is sanctimonious since dole claimants are clearly no more dependent on the State than are soldiers or politicians, indeed no more dependent than is any section of society upon those institutions that feed it, it is nonetheless true that dependent they are and therefore at our beck and call should we wish to instruct them.

Our most basic means of instruction is through our requirement that each claimant be "available for", "actively seeking" and now "making substantial efforts to find" paid employment, and that they should be regularly reassessed as to their eligibility. It is not important whether the claimant is truthfully willing to do any job for any hours for any wages. The point is that they have been made to agree that they ought to be.

Our only difficulty with this method lies with the reliability of those employed to enforce the regulations. Any resistance to work on their part includes resistance to the work involved in, say, assessing whether a particular claimant really is "making substantial efforts". This resistance is perhaps fostered by intermittent sympathy felt for the claimants and by the contagious appeal of indolence.

Such regulations are always best administered by those barely capable of understanding them, and applied most cavalierly by those most confident in their understanding. It has therefore been in our interest to create as complex as possible a system of benefits, tribunals, adjudicators, mandatory placements and so on. The effect of these arbitrarily framed, irregularly applied and continuously amended regulations is to involve the claimant in a process of continually proving his eligibility. It is common wisdom amongst the unemployed that "your file on them has to be as fat as their file on you". In other words each claimant is forced to become their own bureaucrat, a process that since it involves making effort to obtain money, could almost be called Work. Such work of course produces nothing useful, but the same could be said of estate agency or the drafting of documents such as this.

These requirements of eligibility are doubtless effective in producing insecurity in the mind of the claimant, however their very success raises the question of what else the unemployed can be compelled to do.

THE LESSONS OF THE SCHEMES

Remarkable success has already been achieved in the field of preaching to the unemployed. The pilot scheme in this field was the Induction day of the Enterprise Allowance Scheme of the late 80s. This scheme functioned almost as a Poll Benefit, allowing some enterprising souls to spend their entire allowance in Portugal. It was therefore considered a highly desirable way of earning money so inductees were willing to sit through a days helpful

advice on how they were going to run their alleged businesses. Some inductees, touchingly, even began to submit accounts to the Inland Revenue describing their unremunerative hobbies. Others went not nearly so far but may still be presumed to believe that their piffling economic behaviours constituted a business. The change induced in the claimant occurs not in the economic domain but in that of discourse.

Even where the claimant knew their "business" to be a fiction, they were at least aware that the fiction was their own property. The EAS individuated the process of lying to the Department of Employment. Instead of them signing up to our fiction of "actively seeking work", we signed up to their fictions of running enterprises. In effect even the most cynical were genuinely in business, the business of lying to the dole. They might be expected, just as much as the genuine "entrepreneurs", to think of themselves in an individuated way, perhaps identifying more strongly than other dole claimants with political statements like "the needs of business dictate that" or "these policies have been good for business".

Another successful scheme was Jobclub, a non-mandatory course in applying for jobs, which claimants could be pressured into attending. 1992 saw the introduction of Restart courses and Jobplan Workshops for the longterm unemployed. To what extent the attendees of these schemes were transformed into model workers is doubtful. The important finding is that resistance to the imposition of these courses has been negligible. Clearly there is great scope for extending the idea that the unemployed are to be morally instructed.

THE DISASTER OF TRAINING

The punitive effects of instructional schemes are certainly satisfying. The fact that these schemes have exerted a disproportionate pressure on the long-term unemployed, encouraging more of them to enter the job market, presumably with lower wage expectations than their more recently unemployed rivals, may be presumed to have exerted a downward pressure on wages in general. That this downward pressure must logically affect the wages of the public sector, including those of the very employees paid to enforce attendance on the schemes is an even more satisfying irony. Our ideal scheme, however, would do much more. The ideal scheme would keep the shiftless out of mischief just as effectively as would a job, whilst turning a profit rather than incurring a cost.

This ideal is described as "workfare" -making claimants work for their benefits. To avoid being seen as purely vindictive, all our prototype workfare schemes, YTS, Employment Action etc. have been described as Training. We have alleged that this Training, together with the eligibility requirements and the instructional schemes, constitute "helping the unemployed back to work". "Helping you back to work" has even become the supposed purpose of the Employment Service.

In order to justify the need for this "help" we have appealed to the existence of a Poverty Trap. We have argued that the Trap comes about partly because the unemployed do not find it financially worthwhile to work, and partly because their motivation is drained by their joblessness.

Financial Traps are a consequence of any means-tested benefit or tax.

Any system of banding people necessarily creates a disgruntled group who are only just in the wrong band, and therefore a disincentive to enter that group, in this case those earning only just too much to be eligible for the dole. The Trap is a consequence of our disincentives to part-time work, but it is politically useful since it allows us to imply that it is the levels of benefits themselves, rather than their means-tested-ness, that create the Trap and that benefits are doing their claimants no favours by being overgenerous.

The appeal to pop psychology of the notion of the motivational Trap has also been useful. It has been immensely popular with the Left, who are always keen to see the jobless as hapless victims of some dreadful injustice. The Guardian newspaper recently went so far as to declare that "All unemployed people suffer from psychological difficulties"(5). We can imagine with relish the reaction of its readership were it to make the same remark about, say, homosexualist women or about a particular ethnic minority. It should be added that this same leader, since it was advocating an acceptance of compulsory Workfare, was referring to the psychological difficulties inherent in worklessness itself, rather than any that might be successfully induced by the efforts of my Department.

The motivational Trap has proved an equally popular idea with our own supporters, who are, in their own way, just as keen as the Left to see claimants as victims of their own indolence. However the very success of this consensus has created a demand that our "help" be extended further in the form of more Training. We have in fact created for our opponent's use a ready-made socialist policy of State Training for All, a policy upon which they have pounced, perhaps out of pity for the Trapped but more probably out of a passion for public spending for its own sake.

So, the overall effect of this notion of Training is not only to falsely declare it to be the State's duty to "help" claimants find work (there is after all no *a priori* reason why the State should seek to help any particular claimant any more than it should seek to hamper another); it is not only to declare it to be the State's duty to Train the unemployed up to any standard that Industry may dictate; it is not only to increase the extent of the State's duties more than any government since Attlee's; it is also to bring the State into utter disrepute by laying claim to responsibilities that cannot possibly be discharge

For however much we were to spend, were we to spend £20 thousand a head Training each and every claimant to perform any number of exacting trades to the highest possible standard, then the total number who eventually found themselves working would be precisely the number who find jobs at present, since the limiting factor here is the number of jobs available. The only route by which the Employment Service can actually increase this number, apart from by taking on more staff itself as Trainers, is by lowering wages by forcing ever more claimants to chase each vacancy. However even if wages could be lowered by as much as 5%, the cost of an equivalent wage subsidy to employers would be a fraction of the total running costs of Mr. Lilley's and my own Departments. Such wage subsidies would, of course, represent an odious form of state intervention, but the fact that they would be so much cheaper than hassling claimants, proves the inadequacy of Training as a means of encouraging lower wages.

The creation of a giant National Training Scheme, of the kind Mr. Kinnock

intended to establish on his first day in office, is as far beyond our means as it is beyond our desires. It would, in any case, be as likely to produce a culture of resistance to work, as to produce a skilled workforce. The proper function of my department is to harrass dole claimants *pour encourager les autres*. It is certainly not to teach them how to type.

Appealingly mendacious as it seemed when first broached, the entire idea of Training has proved disastrous. It must be abandoned as soon as possible.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Our initial problem is to remove the State's responsibility to Train in the face of an Industry that demands it and an Opposition that offers it. To visibly abandon the word would be to invite still further ridicule so I propose that we redefine it by stealth, first extending it to cover the instructional functions of the Department, then restricting it to these functions, leaving what is now called Training stranded with the pleasing new term Apprenticeship.

The first stage of this process would be to extend the function of the Industry-led Training and Enterprise Councils to cover the administration of Workfare. The Department's role would be merely to provide dole for the apprentices and to act as a Guarantor of Universal Training Standards, a role that could itself be reduced by progressive deregulation. The TECs, renamed Guaranteed Universal Industrial Learning Developers, would administer their own, vocationally specific, qualifications to displace the cumbersome NVQ system.

Training, in the new sense, would be a condition of entry into the GUILDS. It would be tendered out to a second tranche of workshop-based institutions, building on the success of Jobplan Workshops by offering jobskills such as thrift, industry, timekeeping and cleanliness. Eligibility for benefit would be dependent on attendance, whilst eligibility for attendance would be dependent on the maintenance of certain standards on the trainee's part. A society of opportunity necessitates the existence of poverty, but there is no reason why poverty should necessitate unsightliness.

The agencies submitting successful tenders to carry out these Workshops would themselves be required to tender out for the presentation of particular modules of their Training Curriculum. It should prove perfectly possible to cut costs by involving the voluntary sector here. The economic benefits to voluntary service providers would be negligible but in many cases it is not desire for money that motivates individuals in this sector, rather a desire to oversee the improvement of society, that is, a desire for power. In this respect, today's Child Poverty Action Group worker does not differ from some Victorian philanthropiste preaching temperance and bloomers amongst the fallen women. Socially improving schemes such as the now-defunct Community Programme and the current Community Action have certainly had no difficulty in utilising the logistical resources of this sector, despite the doubts one might expect social improvers to have about schemes transparently designed to lower the cost of labour. Perhaps their doubts are quelled by the presence of the word "Community". If so, then new-style Training ought to be called Community Empowerment and any future policy of racial segregation in our cities ought to be referred to as

Community Cleansing. The tough eligibility criteria of CE would certainly make CC easier to implement, given the powers that the Training agencies would have over the location of the workless.

An administrative cost that could be borne as capital investment by the franchising agencies, rather than as infrastructural investment by the State, would be the acquisition of the "Helping you back to Work"-Houses in which CE would take place. A certain legal leeway as to condition of such premises would allow for a reduction in the tendering fee offered to franchisers, however the franchisers ought to be expected to conform to a sparse style of corporate design, perhaps with an improving slogan displayed in the dining area. "To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail" has already been popular with Jobclubs but no doubt other encouraging homilies could be devised.

The jobskills taught by CE need not be elaborate to nonetheless actually produce saleable goods. Even if they proved saleable only to customers whose incomes were provided by CE, this would still reduce the running costs to the franchisers and ultimately to the Department. Benefits and tendering fee should be construed as a single sum whose allocation would be at the franchisers' discretion. Such discretion would relieve the Department of more costly administration.

If Housing Associations in particular were offered incentives to become CE agencies then eligibility for housing could also become dependent on willingness to attend CE. The resultant residential/Training institutions would be well placed to subsume the functions of both the Youth Training Scheme and of Local Authority care. This would relieve Local Authorities of many burdensome responsibilities whilst creating opportunities to provide youngsters with valuable work experience.

Once in place, both CE and the GUILDS would be largely self-financing with the Department's role restricted to the provision of ever smaller tendering fees. In time the fee could even go the other way, with prospective agencies paying for a licence to profitably Train. Such a structure would promote social cohesion, answer the cry for Training, reduce public spending, keep the unemployed out of trouble and keep the employed hard at work. I believe however that an additional measure would be needed to deal with the residue of claimants unamenable to CE.

A new vocation would have to be created for which to train these untrainables. Were this Training to consist in the competitive display of simple skills, then it could be funded by satellite media conglomerates who would then possess broadcasting rights, and by the owners of football stadia in which the displays would be held. Such firms would naturally find the maximum market value in the displays if the element of personal risk were very great. Training in the use of modern weapons might be injurious to social stability, so more archaic forms of combat such as swordsmanship or the use of the trident and net might be favoured by the new GUILD of Community Catharsis Workers. On the other hand, firefights with Uzis would surely be market leaders if carefully staged.

The CCWs would draw their trainees not only from CE but also from other institutions with responsibility for costly social groups. Additional inward investment could be attracted if the Royal Family were to participate, whether as combatants or, more realistically, as public patrons of the

GUILD. I have no doubt that these displays would be immensely popular, so much so that it might be advisable to hold the first Cathartic Games shortly before a General Election. An additional variation would be the use of exotic wild animals in the combat, a move which would also help end the recurrent financial crises at Regent's Park.

As one final reform, I would like to propose that the Department of Social Security adopt a new name suggestive of both almsgiving and the fostering of popular entertainments. The Department of Bread and Circuses would be appropriate. I am sure Caesar would have approved.

A FINAL WORD

Finally a word on secrecy. I hope you have been stimulated by this discussion document but I hope you will find it imperative to let it circulate solely within our own echelons. If Mr. Blair were to get hold of these proposals, he would surely claim them as his own.

REFERENCES

- (1) David Hunt MP writing to the Sunday Times 22nd May 1994.
- (2) David J. Levy "The Politics of Welfare", Salisbury Review Vol.4 No.1 1985 pp10-13.
- (3) Arthur Dent "The Plaine Man's Pathway to Heaven" 1601 pp191-2.
- (4) Richard Baxter "The Catechizing of Families" 1683 p278.
- (5) The Guardian "Making the Principle of Work Fair" 1st August 1994.